

Assess@Learning newsletter

Empower students with **digital formative** assessment

2nd Issue - June 2021



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How do teachers know what their students actually learn and who is in need of additional support? How can students become more empowered in their own learning? How can digital tools support student learning? And does Corona change the way we think about these questions?

This newsletter aims to engage organisations working on assessment, as well as teachers, school heads, policy makers and anyone else who is interested in an exchange around these questions.

Share your views with us!

What is learning – and assessment – for you in one word? Watch two very short – and fun- videos to see what [learning](#) and [assessment](#) are for different stakeholders. What would you answer? [Let us know](#). We will share some of your answers in the next issues.

Subscribe to our newsletter

Do you want to join us on our learning journey? [Just subscribe!](#) This newsletter is published twice a year until February 2023.

Does Covid-19 change our thinking about learning and assessment?

'We got used to e-learning and are not so afraid of using digital tools and teaching in other ways anymore', so Maja Lindstrøm Adbilgaard, [Buddinge school](#), Denmark. Her colleague Renée Bæch Sørensen added that solutions like using online collaborative tools to stay in touch with students can also be useful beyond Covid-19, e.g. when a teacher cannot come to school but is not really sick.

'One of the main issues when facing remote education was assessment and we identified formative assessment with the help of digital tools as a potential solution', according to César Herrero Ramila, [INTEF](#), Spain. We asked Dylan William, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at University College London and policy makers how they think Covid-19 has changed the way we think about assessment. [Watch this video](#) to find out what else they said. Formative assessment can help teachers to identify students' learning gaps and strengthen teacher-student relationships, as also outlined in the [first issue of our newsletter](#).

How does the future of assessment look like beyond Covid-19? We want to explore this question together with you continuously! Would you like to share your experience and views on the topic with us? [Let us know!](#)

How do we actually know that students learn what we teach them?

'Which of the following are living? A. Grass B. Bus C. Tree D. Computer'

This is an example of a well designed question to check if young children have a fundamental misconception about living things, and that is that they move. Dylan William, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment - UCL Institute of Education, UK, highlights in his article [Why there is no such thing as formative assessment](#) how important it is for teachers to ask the right question to identify misconceptions students may have, and plan their next steps on the basis of quality data.

But how can a teacher use this information to empower students in their learning? [This video](#) (in English) tells the story of first grader Austin whose job was to draw a butterfly. He improved his drawing of the butterfly with the help of feedback from his peers. Watch this video (even if you do not usually watch videos in English) to see how empowering feedback can be for students! Teachers across different countries use this video to explain to their students how feedback from their classmates can be helpful for them.



Nathalie Thorpe and Kathleen Chambers, proficient teachers at [Amaroo school](#), Australia, use a range of different formative assessment practices to help their students progress. They explain that they seek to create moments for reflection for their students and to create equal opportunities for active participation for everybody. [Watch this video to find out more.](#)

What is the main purpose of assessment for you? Let us know via this short form. We will present a selection of your answers in the next issues of this newsletter.

Country focus - Assessment in Spain

Spain defines by law (2018 National Law of the Educational System [LOMCE](#)) that the assessment of students will be continuous, formative and integrating. In the national curriculum, assessment has been developed taking into account not only assessment criteria, but also learning standards - this makes it easier to focus on the formative continuous character of the assessment of students in secondary education. The [Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#) finds it important for teachers to not only include technology in their daily educational practice but also in the evaluation of the students' outcomes. Both digital and 'learning to learn' competences are core and compulsory. The Spanish Ministry of Education and VET, through the National Institute of Educational Technology and Teacher training (INTEF) is responsible, at national level, for the teacher training plans and for the projects focused on promoting and integrating technologies in schools. On their website, [INTEF](#) also offers online trainings for teachers and example practices of DFA.

3 questions about learning and assessment – Interview with Eric Welp

Are you also a professional working on the topics of formative and digital assessment and would like to appear here? [Just let us know!](#)

1. Why should we promote students to get more involved in their own learning?

If you as a student are not involved in your learning process and are not involved in decisions on what and how you want to learn, you will never learn. From the long-term research on brain development and learning you know that getting involved and having a say in the learning process is really key for learning.

2. What misconceptions exist around learning and assessment?

The major misconception at least here in the Netherlands is that learning with formative assessment necessarily means learning without grades. This is not the case. Many people also have a wrong understanding of the relation between summative and formative assessment. In fact, all summative information can be used in a formative way and any of that information can provide input for a discussion between teachers and students about their learning. Formative assessment is just a way to work with children, that helps you to define your starting point, your goals, and how you want to get there.

3. How to promote the use of digital tools for learning while keeping students safe online?

This is a complex question as on the one hand you want to promote the use of digital tools as they are strong in revealing information from students but on the other hand you want to be restrictive in your use of digital tools. For instance, you do not want your student data to be stored in the US where it can be used for different purposes. Kahoot and Socrative are great examples of strong digital tools for collecting student information. However, if you use such tools you need to know where their data is stored. School heads that want to be proactive on this matter can propose a list of 20 tools that have already been checked and are actually safe for teachers to use. Kennisnet provides such a list for schools.



Eric Welp works as Advisor at [Kennisnet](#), Netherlands. He is a specialist in the field of ICT, (digital) tests and learning analytics. He uses a lot of creativity to make the connection between (new) technology and education. Making ICT work for education is his main motivation. He uses his experience as a teacher, trainer and curriculum developer for this.

About our newsletter

We aim to provide you with new evidence on student learning and assessment with digital tools in an easy and engaging way. We warmly invite all newsletter readers to **contribute with their own views and questions to the newsletter** – it does not matter if you are an expert or novice to the topic!

Does this sound ambitious to you? Do you have a particular question that you would like us to address? Provide us with your [anonymous feedback](#) on our newsletter and let us know what you still would like to improve.

In our next issue, we will:

- look at how school leaders can promote a new approach to learning and assessment at their schools
- hear from Eszter Salamon, Director at Parents International about the parents' perspective on their children's learning
- put our country focus on Finland

About the Assess@Learning project

Do you want to find out more about the project? Check out our [website](#).



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