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Guide for Leadership to Navigate Digital Transformation & Establish Formative Practices for Long Term Success

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Introduction

98% of students who receive individual instruction perform better than those in traditional classroom settings (Bloom, 1984).

Before now, teachers had very little opportunity to engage with technology at the level we have seen over the last 24 months leading to positive changes towards more individualised instruction and reducing the inequity created through traditional teaching methods. In addition to the pandemic, education systems have seen a shift towards more continuous and holistic assessment of students and their learning progress leading to an increase in teacher workload especially as they navigate towards formative teaching and learning strategies. Now more than ever school leaders and teachers need to carefully plan and consider what technologies they use in their classrooms.

This document will provide you with some useful guidelines towards successfully digitising formative feedback, planning for implementing effective and lasting change, and how to navigate digital transformation in a meaningful way.

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1 Developing a shared vision for continuous assessment:

Over the past two decades, education systems worldwide have been moving away from the traditional high stakes terminal examination towards more integrated continuous assessments throughout a student's learning journey.

With the shift towards continuous assessment (CA) becoming more prominent, teachers are finding new ways to assess their students.

The development of a shared policy for CA is the first and most important step. At leadership level, a minimum standard across all subject departments should be established.

Try this:

Introduce "one formative assessment with feedback" per month as a minimum requirement and survey the teachers for their feedback on the exercise at the month's end.

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2 Department collaboration:

An essential component of making any successful change - particularly with digital transformation - is collaboration within subject departments.

When a subject department rally behind a particular digital technology the next transformative step is to plan for its integration.

Co-creating assignments, lessons, assessment tasks or innovative teaching strategies all lead to a higher probability of the selected technology being successfully integrated into the subject.

As a school leader, encouraging subject departments to meet regularly and coordinate their actions with the new technology will lead to more innovative and effective use of said technology, thereby enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning.

Try this:

identify the teacher that is most competent with technology in the department. Let them host a 1-hour workshop with the other subject teachers where they brainstorm how they can make better use of the new technology.

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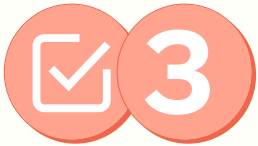
3 Features of good feedback

There has been extensive research showing the importance of feedback on student achievement - one such paper is <u>Black and Williams (2006)</u> paper examining the link between assessment, feedback, and learning.

**For starters, focus on the 3 features of good feedback:**

Good Feedback

1) Ensure the Feedback clearly aligns with the intended goals/learning objectives/success criteria

2) Provide feedback on the process rather than the outcome

3) Provide information on where to go next

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Try this: print and cut out the above graphic, stick it up on the door exiting the staff room. Let it there as a reminder to staff that effective feedback really is the key to creating self directed learners, investing in being a good giver of feedback actually takes the strain off the teacher long term.
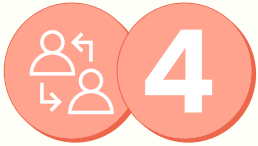
Ensuring student engagement with feedback

A huge pain point for teachers is the lack of engagement from students when they receive their feedback. Research has shown that this can be attributed to two main factors: 1) Student confidence and 2) Engaging the ego.

Students who are high in confidence spent less time engaging with any feedback, regardless of their level of correctness while those with lower levels of confidence spend more time engaging with feedback.

Mixed into this is the involvement of the ego, once a students ego has been engaged i.e. received a score, they disengage from the feedback process, therefore implementing practices that delay the ego response are necessary. Uncovering student confidence also leads to higher levels of engagement as teachers can specifically target students at risk of disengagement or those in need of well deserved praise.

Try this:

Try this: if not using a software, a teacher can leave no mark at the end of their corrected assignment. After correction, a class can be dedicated to the students reviewing the comments and writing a written reflection, each student can then come up to the teacher in turn to reflect on their work before receiving their grade.

The alternative to this would be to use Nurtures software to gather the reflections automatically, this is only possible as we've built withholding grades into the software.

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5 Digital Transformation:

The education system was subjected to unprecedented change overnight. Homes were transformed into places of work, learning, and living. While schools successfully rose up to the challenge of remote teaching and learning, it is now that schools must reflect and consider how they can continue to successfully further transform their practices using digital technologies. However, it cannot be stressed enough that digital technologies in and of themselves will not transform teaching, learning, and assessment practices. Schools must critically evaluate the technologies themselves and ensure that they complement the pedagogical strategies deployed by the teachers.

Technology is a tool through which a teacher's pedagogy is the labourer.

Try this:

Ask your teachers to identify the key pedagogical strategies and assessment techniques that they utilise in their subject areas, then conduct a technical assessment of a technology to see if it aligns with those key strategies; if not, the technology will not assist the teacher.

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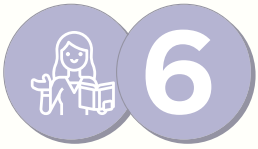
Designing for effective and lasting change - Early Adopter Phase:

When it comes to enacting lasting change, following the early adopter route has been very effective, particularly when assessing how effective digital technologies are in a school environment. To successfully enact this: identify 4-8 key teachers (Early Adopters), base your decision on:

1) self election 2) innovation in teaching and learning 3) openness to trying new technologies and 4) an ability to critique a technology based on its alignment with sound pedagogical practices.

Next, invite these teachers to trial the technology for a period of at least three months. Periodically, ask for feedback from both teachers and students.

Try this:

Be an observer in a lesson where the technology is used, this is hugely beneficial to understanding the ability of a product to assist with meaningful change, so sit in at least one lesson where the technology is used.

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7   Designing for effective and lasting change - Expansion Phase:

If the early adopter group experiences success with the technology and a green light for it to be rolled out to the wider school community, then the next step is to follow a phased rollout.

Some schools we've worked with have opted for the "Buddy-up System" whereby the Early Adopters train up a buddy. Other schools have found success with subject department rollouts, asking a whole subject group to integrate the technology into their practice and reporting on their success.

Try this:

if you have success with the early adopter programme, survey your teachers, asking them to value how confident they are with technology. Once you have the results, buddy the strongest up with the weakest to work together before rolling out the software to the wider group.

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Checklist for School Leaders for using best practice in effective formative feedback

Statement	Yes	No
"The school has a clear assessment policy on formative assessment and feedback" Expand:	☐	☐
"I hold my teachers accountable to upholding the agreed assessment policy" Expand:	☐	☐
"I encourage department level collaboration between teachers to collectively develop a common approach" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have set planning and preparation time aside for my teachers/subject groups" Expand:	☐	☐
"My staff are aware of the goal of effective feedback" Expand:	☐	☐
"Students are made aware of the assessment policy and therefore have their expectations correctly set" Expand:	☐	☐
"We have developed measures that ensure students engage with formative feedback" Expand:	☐	☐
"Self-reflection is an important aspect of our assessment policy and students are encouraged to reflect" Expand:	☐	☐

Checklist for school leaders to prepare for digital transformation of a specific technology

Statement	Yes	No
"We have a clear vision on how to assess a digital technologies applicability for our school/subject/cohort" Expand:	☐	☐
"My teachers understand what practices work well in their subject and share these within their subject group" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have a group of early adopter teachers who are willing to trial out the new technology" Expand:	☐	☐
"The group of early adopters have met and agreed on what success looks like" Expand:	☐	☐
"We have planned for feedback gathering exercises from both teachers and students during this trial period" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have made provisions to observe the technology in action in one (or more lessons)" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have a clear vision for the next steps of this technology" Expand:	☐	☐
"I am prepared to mandate the use of successful technologies where significant changes in teaching and learning are observed and recorded" Expand:	☐	☐

Checklist for teachers for using best practice in effective formative feedback

Statement	Yes	No
"I understand the assessment policy in my school and have a clear idea of how to align my own strategies with this policy"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"My subject department ensures we collectively develop a common approach to formative assessment and feedback"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"As a subject department, we meet regularly to share our practices and align to best practices"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"I understand the goals of effective feedback"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"My students are aware of the differences between the level of feedback they receive and when"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"I enact my own measures to ensure students fully engage with the feedback I have given them"	☐	☐
Expand:		
"I encourage student self-reflection and have strategies that I use for specific cohorts"	☐	☐
Expand:		

Checklist for teachers to prepare for digital transformation of a specific technology

Statement	Yes	No
"We have a clear vision of how to assess a digital technologies applicability for our school/subject/cohort" Expand:	☐	☐
"I understand what practices work well in my subject and will use these to assess the technology" Expand:	☐	☐
"I'll collaborate with my early adopter group to share my experiences, challenge my/our usage" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have a plan in place to achieve the goal agreed" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have planned to include the student voice in the process of trailing out the technology" Expand:	☐	☐
"I have identified a lesson for my school leader to observe the technology in use" Expand:	☐	☐

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Teacher & Student Software for Better Feedback, Faster.

Our Teaching & **Learning team in the past 6 months have trained in hundreds of teachers in best practice for formative assessment.**

Stephen Comiskey
Ph.D. Educational Technology
Previous experience as a Physics, Maths & Chemistry teacher

Niamh Murray
MSc Education
Previous experience as a Assistant Principal & as a Irish & History teacher

500+ Teachers
Onboarded

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Glad you've made it through our digitised assessment and feedback guide. Hopefully you'll take away some actionable insights! If you have some feedback for us on this, the Nurture team would love to hear them.

If you would like to book in for a demo of the Nurture software you can do that here.

You can always pop me (Stephen!) an email if you would like to chat more about this guide - stephen@gonurture.com

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