

Getting started with Assessment for Learning with technology

Mark Anderson

Whether you're new to the profession or have many years under your belt, the benefits to student progress and learning using low stakes quizzing as a means of Assessment for Learning (AfL) have been well documented.

Whether you link it to retrieval practice or not, the benefits are clear - and when you consider the efficiencies and time-saving benefits of undertaking low stakes quizzing using technology, you are on to a sure-fire winner for effective teaching and learning.

What about the research?!

Don't just take my word for it, the research and subsequent evidence base behind this is rigid.

For example, it is showcased in the Education Endowment Foundation's various toolkits and reports, such as the "Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning" report from March 2019, where it states:

"Using technology can increase the accuracy of assessment, and the speed with which assessment information is collected, with the potential to inform teachers' decision-making and reduce workload." And... "Using technology to support AfL can bring retention of key ideas and knowledge."

It should therefore be pertinent, relevant and of interest to all to explore the benefits that using technology to support assessment for learning can bring.

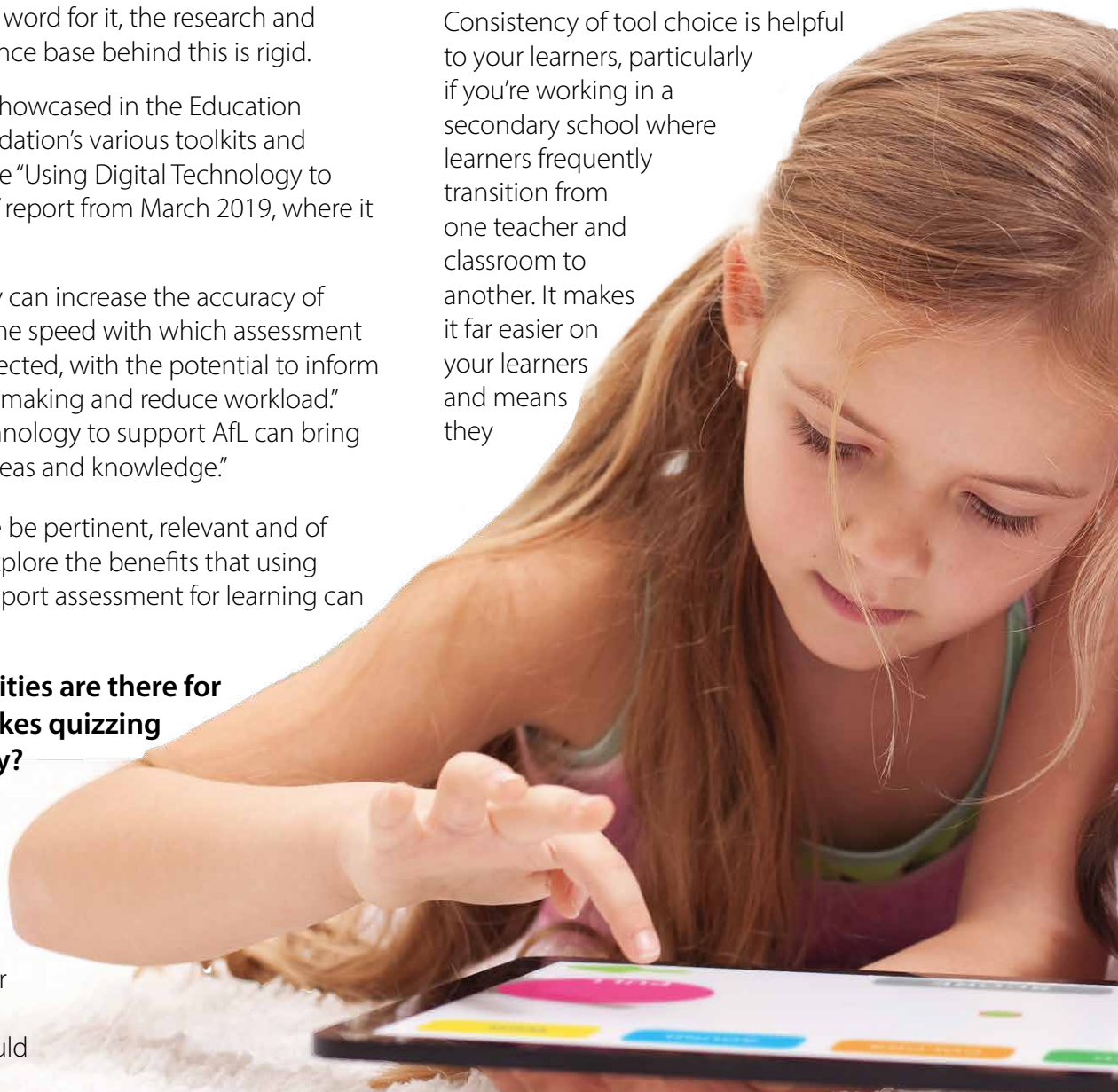
What opportunities are there for AfL and low-stakes quizzing with technology?

There are several keys to success. It isn't just a case of considering their ease of use but there are other factors you could and probably should

consider. In no particular order of preference:

- Can benefits be gained by working collaboratively?
- Can you easily share the quizzes with your learners?
- Do you have the technology required for your learners to access the quizzes?
- Does the platform have accessibility options?
- Does the platform promote low-stakes quizzing as opposed to high-stakes competitive quizzing?
- Does the tool require separate logins or will it work with single sign-on using your existing platform, such as Google or Microsoft?

Consistency of tool choice is helpful to your learners, particularly if you're working in a secondary school where learners frequently transition from one teacher and classroom to another. It makes it far easier on your learners and means they



can focus on their academics rather than worrying about how to use a particular tool for a particular teacher. Another benefit of using a tool consistently is that you can keep your students' data safely compiled together in one place and space. Often, you can also more easily share quizzes and other AfL activities you've created or used with your colleagues.

What should I use?

It can be somewhat of a minefield when it comes to the vast number of apps and sites that are available for teachers to use. If you're a Google school, you could easily use Google Forms to quiz your learners and, equally, if you're in a Microsoft-centric school, Microsoft Forms does a similarly good job.

Both have a plethora of different questioning types – from multiple choice to checkboxes to video responses to even allowing learners to upload files to provide evidence of task or activity completion. Often, there are also some great integration opportunities

where you can easily share your quizzes inside your tools of choice, such as OneNote,

Teams, Google Classroom, etc.

One area where Google and Microsoft Forms don't fare well when compared to some of the other tools available is that there isn't a huge repository of pre-created quizzes for you to call upon. These catalogues of quizzes can save you time in creating your own from scratch. Popular tools for assessment for learning and low-stakes quizzing such as Quizizz, Quizlet and Kahoot, all come with their own quiz banks and have many tens of thousands to choose from, so this may be a factor in your considerations when choosing a tool to use.

Another aspect is that of accessibility. Quizizz, for example, comes with a readability mode and Microsoft Forms has Immersive Reader built in as standard; so, if accessibility is a consideration for your learners (which it should be), factoring that into your decision-making process is an important area to think about, too.

To sum up

With so many tools and features to choose from, I would always argue that you shouldn't be led by the functionality but by the principles of keeping pedagogy at the heart of what you are trying to achieve. Additionally, you can consider the ways in which your tool of choice helps with accessibility, reducing workload, ease of collaboration and sharing, consistent approaches and integration with your chosen ecosystems; namely, Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace for Education. By doing this, you are giving you, your colleagues and most importantly, your learners, the best opportunities for success.



Mark is a global speaker, education technology expert, consultant, trainer and award-winning blogger and author, known as the ICT Evangelist.