

The Future of Formative Assessment: Innovations in Digital Tools for Writing and Maths Education



Executive Summary

As the chair of the evening and as an associate for 'TransforMATive' – it was a great opportunity to be able to facilitate discussions between leaders from across the MAT sector with leaders 3P Learning kindly sponsoring the event. We all felt very honoured to be hosted in the Boisdale Restaurant in the Heart of London. We are very grateful to both Jenna Pipchuck and Sandy Heldsinger from 3P Learning for their leadership and support across the evening.

During the evening, we wanted to delve into the transformative power of digital assessment tools in education. So the evening focussed on the latest innovations reshaping formative assessments in writing and mathematics, highlighting how these advancements are revolutionising teaching methods and student learning outcomes in modern classrooms. Leaders from 3P Learning stated their desire to listen and learn from educators at the chalk face of these developments.

The dinner attracted a wide selection of leaders from across the MAT sector. We were joined by Curriculum Directors, Directors of Technology, Directors of Schools Improvement, CEOs and Deputy CEOs and Digital Transformation leads. The diversity of the group led to some very rich conversations and learning. What was evident was that all leaders from the MAT sector were at very different starting points, but were all keen to learn from each other.

As the dinner began it was recognised by the group that society stands at the crossroads of education and technology. The landscape of learning is evolving rapidly, shaped by the ever-changing digital world. The role as educators and

leaders is not only to keep pace with this change but to harness it, to enhance the educational experiences of all students. So it was important that the discussion focussed on the pivotal element of education: formative assessment. It was recognised that this evaluation process is crucial in understanding and supporting the individual learning journeys of all students. In the realms of writing and maths, formative assessment plays a vital role in developing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

As the discussions continued it was emphasised by some colleagues that digital tools are now revolutionising formative assessment in these core subjects. Innovations in technology offer unprecedented opportunities to personalise learning, provide immediate feedback, and engage students in new and exciting ways. From AI-driven writing assistants to adaptive learning platforms in maths, these tools are not just changing how teach is delivered, but they are transforming how students learn. It was outlined in the discussion that there some very real challenges facing the sector in this area such as ensuring equitable access to technology, maintaining academic integrity, and balancing digital innovations with traditional teaching methodologies.

As the dinner progressed - there were three clear themes that stemmed from the discussions: the practical challenges and opportunities using Digital Assessment, methodologies using Writing assessments and how the leadership of people and change was key to this. In the section these themes of learning are summarised in greater depth with a wide range of recommendations set out.



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Themes of Learning



Digital Assessment

Integration and Implementation: Digital assessment tools need to be seamlessly integrated into existing educational frameworks, especially in subjects like writing and maths, without disrupting the traditional learning process.

Data Privacy and Security: With the increasing use of digital assessment tools, measures should be implemented to ensure the privacy and security of student data, and trusts need to provide policies need to be published that reassure parents and students.

Equity and Accessibility: Digital assessment tools were seen as a positive way to promote equity in education, particularly in providing access to students from varied socio-economic backgrounds and with different learning needs.

Feedback and Adaptability: Digital assessment tools should be optimised to provide meaningful, personalised feedback to students.

Teacher Training and Support: Professional development was key to the success of the digital assessment and going forward educators will need significant support to effectively utilise digital assessment tools in their teaching practices.

Long-Term Impact and Evaluation: The long-term impact of digital assessment tools on student learning and achievement needs to be measured, and what benchmarks need to be designed to evaluate their success and areas for improvement.



Writing Assessment

From across the sector it is recognised that Curriculum and Standards teams are focusing upon improving student writing performance as a priority. So MATs should be using the efficiency of these systems to boost students learning.

Enhancing Teacher Skills: The sector needs to effectively increase the assessment skills of literacy teachers, ensuring they are equipped to evaluate and provide constructive feedback on student writing in a diverse educational landscape.

Themes of Learning



Writing Assessment (continued)

Efficiency in Assessment: MAT leaders should be utilising strategies to be employed to make the assessment of writing more efficient and less time-consuming for teachers, while still maintaining a high standard of accuracy and feedback quality.

Role of Assessment in Literacy Improvement: MAT leaders should be ensuring assessment is a critical component in improving student literacy, and ensuring regular, formative assessments positively impact students' writing abilities and confidence.

Feedback and Improvement Loop: All feedback from writing assessments is structured to provide meaningful and actionable insights for students, thereby used by all schools could be a powerful tool for their development.



People & Change

Professional Development: Intensive professional development strategies should be implemented to boost teachers' skills and confidence in assessing student work, particularly in light of the evolving demands of digital and writing assessments. Educators need to be the innovators.

Balancing Workload: With teachers already facing significant workloads, it was recognised that they need to be supporting in acquiring new assessment skills without adding to their existing responsibilities.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement: Feedback mechanisms need to be established for teachers to continuously improve their assessment techniques. It was highlighted that peer collaboration and mentoring can play an important role in enhancing their assessment capabilities and confidence.

Strategic Change Management: MATs should collaborate and ensure there are successful change management strategies that have been employed in schools to smoothly transition teachers into new initiatives, ensuring that these changes are sustainable and do not negatively impact their existing workload.

As Chair I am grateful for the wonderful contributions made by all colleagues through the evening. It is an exciting time ahead and we believe these evenings of collaboration will only accelerate the great work of trust working together.