

Using Technology for Formative Assessment at PS 101

Annie Wong: So I'm going to give you a little quiz. I'm going to call tables one at a time. You are going to pick your Sentio pieces, your Sentio devices. Bring your math notebook and a pencil and that's what you'll need.

Gregg Korrol: The problem with the assessments is that a lot of people think of assessments almost like in a bad way. In other words you can take a test and three or four months later, you find out how you did, it's useless. The point of assessment is that you can get immediate feedback that will give you a next step. We wanted to find better ways to use technology and we needed assessments to give us instant feedback. So the answer was kind of obvious. It went hand in hand. Our ELL students are using iPods, and probably will eventually use iPads, to record themselves and hear themselves back and they self assess. The concept being, "How does a dancer self correct?" They watch themselves dancing in the mirror. How does a person is learning a language self correct? They have to hear themselves.

Jessica Rivera: Okay you had the passages set up in front of you already. So all I want you to do is just get started. If you forget the steps, they're up on the board on the Smartboard, and you all know you have to record yourself first, then you're going to check for mistakes, listen to the teacher's model, and then when you're done with that and you find it there are no mistakes then you come up and raise your hand and ask for help. Okay, go ahead and begin.

After they've recorded and they decided that yes, their passage, their reading, is as good as the fluency model, then I come to them, I put one ear bud to my ear and they also have to listen because I feel like it's really important when we do together. And we go through the passage and if I notice any mistakes, while I do first is I circle their mistakes, then I want them to rewind and have them listen to it again and see if they find their own mistake.

Okay so here you said 'where'. That's right so you have to ask like a question. Now I'm going to replay it and let's see if you could find the other one, okay? Okay so there's another issue here. What did we forget here?

Student: The period.

Jessica Rivera: Okay. And what does it mean when you see a period?

Student: We've got to stop a little.

Jessica Rivera: Right. What happens if you don't stop a little?

Student: It will combine with the other sentence.

Jessica Rivera: And sound like what?

Student: Like there's a funny sentence.

Jessica Rivera: Like a really long one right? Now as you see the issue there?

The most important part of this though is that I want them to provide the dialogue about why there is a mistake there and why that's so important. The whole point of fluency is comprehension. They need to know how it affects the meaning behind that passage. Before we had the iPods, when I did the assessments it felt like I had to, okay, okay today we're going to be stop the lesson and we're going to take a test. Whereas when I have the iPods, the assessments are already built into lesson. There's no break in the lesson flow. It just becomes their weekly routine. This way I get the piece that I need in order to assess them. But they feel like they're just learning.

Gregg Korrol: A lot of people put the focus on the technology itself but we really put the focus on instruction. The question is really about how do you use technology to support the instruction that we have.

Annie Wong: I'm going to give you a couple of questions, okay, about math and I know some of it may look familiar to you. Some of it might look new to you, but just do the best you can, just select your answer in Sentio okay? Because this is going to help me decide which group you're going to be in for our activity.

Sentio is a handheld device where students are able to input any answer based on the question I post on the Smartboard and basically the software quickly gathers all my students' responses into a database where I can see their response.

Okay great, all right let's take a look at this question. Okay, so we can see that 60% of our class already know how to solve this problem really well. Very good.

Sentio has given me the opportunity to really quickly assess my students right at the spot of my lesson. And just by the click of a button I'm able to see who had showed clear understanding and who needs extra support. So in my lesson today, I had the students who have already master the skill be challenged by creating a Powerpoint presentation to teach a fourth grade student how to add and subtract mixed numbers. I want them to bring it to the next level where there are actually being now the teacher and teaching another student the skill.

The way I structured the lesson, it was actually helpful to have the mastery of students' work on something more independent and more challenging to them so I can give my students who need extra support more instructional time. If I have $1/4^{\text{th}}$ and $1/4^{\text{th}}$, how many fourths do I have, Fernando?

Fernando: Two fourths.

Jessica Rivera: I have $2/4^{\text{th}}$ s right. Now I have $2/4$, now I can move on to adding the whole numbers. Do you see why I mean by splitting method, I'm actually splitting the whole number and the fraction apart and focus on the fraction first and then the whole number? So my whole number I have two wholes, okay, plus one whole which is one dozen in this case. So how many dozen of eggs does he have all together, Andrew?

Andrew: Three.

Jessica Rivera: Three, not only three but three and?

Female Student: Two fourths.

Jessica Rivera: Two fourths, do you see how we can use the model to help us solve this problem?

The handheld device really benefited my students, especially those who are very shy. They actually allow my students to be all engaged. They know which question they got right and which question they did not get right.

Gregg Korrol: One of the things that technology gives you is that it allows you to customize your learning to what you need. It's really instant motivation into education.

Joyce Li: I gave you a new writing piece and I want you to be able to give me a grade, whatever grade you think that person deserves according to our rubric, and you're going to tell me what they need to make that for. Whether they need more writing, whether they need more details, whether they need to work on their grammar, or whether they just, you feel that they deserve a four because they have everything they needed on the rubric. Understand your task?

The purpose of my lesson was to teach children how to self assess their writing pieces.

Female Student: She wrote the first task.

Joyce Li: The first task, so she's missing words in her writing so according to the rubric do you think she's going to higher or do you think she's going to lower with the grade?

Female Student: Lower.

Joyce Li: Lower because she's missing things. We use the magic wand which is a hands on scanner where we scan their work and we plug it into the computer and we get the result that we need right in the front of the computer. Before I had the magic wand and the Smartboard, if I wanted them to look at students' work I would have to hold up a piece of paper and show them and the paper these kids wouldn't be able to see it and I would have to verbally read it to them. But now with the Smartboard we can come about as a class and talk about what we need as improvement, what we can do as a next step and what we can do to help them achieve the score that they wanted.

Gregg Korrol: We know what kids need to learn but we need to teach in the context of the world in which they live. So we have to look at what technology is out there that can support the things that we're going to be doing on a day to day basis in terms of education.