



10. Technology

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What's the idea?

Tech-based formative assessment tools make it easier to collect and analyse responses from whole classes instantly.

What does it mean?

There's a wide range of technology designed to assist feedback and questioning. Used well, these devices and apps can give teachers access to the thinking (and mistakes) of a whole class at once, allowing them to swiftly intervene and adjust the direction of the lesson. They are many examples to explore:

- 1. Online Polling Sites:** If students have access to a tablet or phone they can respond to a (usually multiple-choice question) instantly and anonymously. Try: Poll Everywhere.
- 2. Online Quizzing:** Great for a quick knowledge recap, starter or plenary. Try: Quizlet or Kahoot.
- 3. Plickers:** Allows teachers to capture a QR code response ('A, B, C or D') from each student, thereby eliminating the need for every student to have their own tech.

What are the implications for teachers?

There are two areas to explore:

- 1. The in-class response** – using student answers to guide your teaching
- 2. The data analysis** that some tools offer, which help you to generate data over time.

Ensure that the technology does not interfere with the learning or take longer than the usual activity; these strategies are only effective if they add to students' understanding of a concept or topic. This means you need to practise.

Check your school policy about devices and its resources: Plickers is an example where only the teacher needs a device, but other examples rely on every student having their own. Ideally tablets and other devices should be provided by the school or there would be a well-established 'BYOD' approach with appropriate guidance.

If students are using their own devices, establish clear rules and routines, and practise little and often. This creates an atmosphere of learning and trust. Also check your tech: make sure everything is working before the lesson starts so you aren't left without an activity!

TOP TIP / It's easy to get caught up in the gimmick of technology, but remember that the questions being asked are still the most important aspect of these activities. Plan carefully for maximum impact.

Want to know more?

Picardo, J. (2018) How to do IT. Available at: <http://www.josepicardo.com/education/how-to-do-it/>
There are lots of companies out there to explore, many of which will offer free trials for teachers. Try Poll Everywhere, Quizlet, Kahoot or Plickers.

