

Case study



Anthony Bek School

Learning Technologies supporting Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Over recent years a broad range of technologies have become a central part of how we teach and learn. In addition to these technologies, various software applications are also used in schools for management, accounting and assessment. However, at Anthony Bek Community Primary School in Mansfield, an ICT resource normally used in learning activities is being used to support their AfL initiative.

Established to raise standards and improve the learning of every child and raise standards, Anthony Bek School has managed to use SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards to successfully integrate AfL into everyday classroom practice.

Based on the AfL initiative, the school is a strong believer in that for effective learning to take place, pupils need to appreciate what it is they are trying to achieve, understand how they progress towards this and know how they can work to achieve this goal.

The majority of schools bring assessment into everyday teaching activities and although the school wanted to formalise it, it also knew that if AfL were to be introduced successfully it was important that this did not place any additional demands on the teachers' time.

Challenge

Like many schools, Anthony Bek's teachers spent valuable time reinventing the wheel when it came to lesson and assessment activities.

SMART solution

Up until this time, the use of SMART Board interactive whiteboards was purely for lesson activities, to encourage children to be engaged in their learning. However, as the teachers were all very comfortable using the SMART Notebook™ software format, it was agreed that this was the ideal format for collating and presenting the goals and assessment criteria of each lesson activity.

Result

Today, Anthony Bek's teachers are now all at the same development points, with shared resources across the intranet that everyone, but primarily the pupils, can benefit from.

Headteacher, Matt Freeston, who was graded as outstanding with inspirational leadership qualities at a recent OfSTED inspection provides the background to the initiative.

“Historically, like many schools, our teachers spent valuable time reinventing the wheel when it came to lesson and assessment activities. We therefore decided to establish cross curricular targets in every lesson to reduce duplication of effort and increase the sharing of knowledge.”

Accessibility is key to any AfL strategy. The whole school plan was to collate and store a list of targets for each lesson activity centrally on their intranet so that they were accessible by everyone. The targets of each lesson activity are displayed to all the pupils to ensure they understand the goals they are pursuing and the criteria that will be applied in assessing their work. These displayed targets include a series of questions that will be asked at the start of the lesson with the key steps that the lesson activity should take to answer them.

Matt continues: “Historically our use of SMART Board was purely for lesson activities, to encourage children to be engaged in their learning. Therefore, as the teachers were all very comfortable using the SMART Notebook software format, we all agreed that this was the ideal format for collating and presenting the goals and assessment criteria of each activity.

As each teacher already used Notebook for their lesson activities, its use added a level of cohesion across the school. The Notebook pages were displayed in class, each containing a series of questions to be asked at the start of the lesson with the key steps that the lesson activity should take.

Each teacher now fully engages each child in their learning and development. Peer assessment and self assessment have become a key part of the process.”

Any AfL programme should focus on how pupils learn so that they become as aware of the ‘how’ of their learning as they are of the ‘what’. With this in mind the first phase of the lesson is to identify the outcome of the activity. The Notebook page shows the children that they are required to be able to understand. Taking a history lesson as an example, where a discussion around a historical picture is a part of the lesson activity, the children would have a demonstration on what they should deduce, infer or interpret from the picture image, and suggest the language that the author would use. The teacher goes through the list of objectives and suggests how children should be able to demonstrate achievement of these goals.

A whole class discussion can follow covering the learning activity’s objectives. For instance when looking at a picture of the Vikings, a discussion can follow covering: What does that part of the picture suggest about living in those times? Was life tough or easier than today? Each pupil can be invited to give their thoughts on the picture providing a suggestion about what it tells us about this period. As long as they can justify their comments each pupil’s statement has equal value to building up an understanding of the story behind the picture.

Each week classes can reassess what they have learned. This can be written up on the interactive whiteboard and saved to the school web site for parents to access. The AfL initiative seeks to encourage parental involvement in a child’s learning and with only 15-17% of a pupil’s waking hours spent at school it is important for us to recognise the opportunities for learning at home.

“We had a full spectrum of staff to train, including people who said that they were apprehensive about having interactive whiteboards. Today, these people would not be without one. We are now all at the same development points, with shared resources across the intranet that everyone, but primarily the pupils, can benefit from. We have found that we can trust in SMART. Technology should always support learning, and therefore be reliable; SMART Technologies has provided us with this platform to build the successes of our pupils” concludes Matt.

“Each teacher at Anthony Bek now fully engages each child in their learning and development.”

Matt Freeston
Headteacher
Anthony Bek School

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global education market segment leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. The award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboard is the most widely installed interactive whiteboard in the world.

Many school jurisdictions have standardised on the product, which is used to provide interactive learning opportunities and enhance student achievement in more than 450,000 classrooms spanning every U.S. state, every Canadian province, every Local Authority in the UK and in more than 100 countries worldwide. SMART products also include interactive pen displays, interactive digital signage, wireless slates and software. Using SMART products, groups can access and share the information they need to meet, teach, train and present. SMART’s education customers include New York City Board of Education (U.S.), Oxford University (UK), Kobe City Board of Education (Japan), Barrier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany), Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (U.S.) and Harvard University (U.S.).

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 900 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Ottawa, and offices in Bonn, Tokyo, China, New York City and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in joint product development and marketing efforts, and Intel’s equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

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Steljes creates opportunity for partners, customers and end users by pioneering innovative technologies that enable people to interact and communicate more effectively while working and learning.

