Technology & Assessment: Using Mobile Devices to Gather Evidence of Learning

Good assessment begins with good planning.

When I reflect on my practice as a classroom teacher, often the assessment struggles I encountered were the result of my own failure to plan sufficiently. When I was not totally clear about the achievement criteria for a performance task or assignment, invariably my students weren't clear either. When I did not consider the strengths and learning needs of my students, all too often individual students "fell through the cracks" or the quality of their work suffered. If I did not plan from the outset how we would gather evidence of learning, no one knew where they were going or what was expected of them until the very last minute -- often with catastrophic results. So in retrospect, the bottom line is that when I put the cart before the horse (activities ahead of solid planning), the goal was unclear and most of the time, this meant it was missed by students completely.

However, assuming that the criteria are clear to both teacher and student, today teachers have more options for HOW they will gather evidence of learning than ever before -- if they plan for it!

While ALL interaction with students yield some sort of assessment evidence, **the four main types of evidence** we can use to determine if students have met the learning goal(s) are:

- **Products or Performances**
- **Observations**
- **Conversations**
- **Student self-reflections**

Almost all mobile devices these days have certain "affordances" -- strengths or features -- that make them well suited for gathering a wide range of evidence of learning in the classroom.

1. **They are readily available and often student owned!**
2. **They can take high quality digital photographs!**
3. **They have the ability to record audio!**
4. **They provide easy-to-use video recording!**
5. **They are portable and mobile!**

The following page includes a few ideas, organized according to evidence type that teachers and students can use to gather and share evidence of learning. Many of these ideas can be used both formatively and summatively.

Products or Performances:

Student might:

- Create a video of themselves rehearsing a presentation, and comparing their performance to the success criteria/rubric descriptors to determine areas for improvement/next steps
- Create a video of themselves and receive peer feedback from a classmate comparing their performance to the success criteria/rubric descriptors to determine areas for improvement/next steps
- Take a photograph of a visual he/she created and compare it to exemplars or with the rubric criteria; student would make changes as necessary

Teacher might:

- Photograph each student's product/work and provide feedback on their analysis as well as recommend revisions as needed
- Videotape the final presentation and use it to evaluate against the rubric criteria

Observations:

Student might:

- Take a photograph of each step in the building process during a science project (gathering materials, brainstorming/planning diagram, blueprint, construction of model, testing…) and create a digital story evaluating the final product

Teacher might:

- Create a video of each student during the construction phase and ask students to show how their model reflects the planning blueprint they've created

Conversations:

Student might:

- Record an audio or video conversation with their teacher about the work and use the feedback to adjust the strategy and revise their work

Teacher might:

- Record (audio or video) a conversation with students to gain clarity/more insight into their thinking process for the purpose of identifying misconceptions and providing further instruction

Student self-reflection:

Student might:

- Use oral self-reflection with prompts provided by the teacher and record reflection (audio or video); share with a classmate and have them provide feedback
- Choose an area they personally struggled with and create a video discussing what they are having difficulty with. Submit to teacher for feedback.

Teacher might:

- Capture video evidence of students reflecting on their difficulties completing a task, and then use this information to plan supports to help students
- Keep copies of video evidence and share this at parent-teacher conferences

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