Action Research 3

Improving the quality and speed of teacher feedback from Blended Learning

What we did:

Following the introduction of Seneca and Google Classroom, the focus in AR3 was the way teachers feedback to students' blended learning assignments.

It was important to do this within our existing platforms and not add another platform for cost and ease of teacher use purposes.

Three Google extensions were trialled; Mote, Screencastify and Loom. Following the trial, the extensions were launched to the staff in a CPD event. After a period of implementation, a Student Voice survey was undertaken to ascertain the student experience.

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What was our question?

Why did you choose this project?
- Google Classroom has been transformational in terms of connecting students to their learning at home. However, teacher feedback via typed comments can be time consuming and is dependent to a certain extend on the format of the assignment submitted by the student. Also, it was unclear to what extent students engaged with the written comments. For these reasons, alternative methods to typed comments were sought.

What outcomes were you expecting?
- Teacher feedback would be quicker
- Student engagement with teacher feedback would be improved

What did you hope to achieve?
- Students interacting with a variety of media to access their teacher feedback. This would mean key groups of students such as SEN students not having to read as much text and instead could interact with a video or audio file
- Reducing the time teachers spend on feedback to blended learning assignments.

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What happened?

What were the positive/negative impacts of the project?
- Three applicable Google extensions were identified:
  - Screencastify - this enables the user to make a short video of the screen (of the student's work), writing over the work and leaving verbal feedback
  - Mote - an audio recording extension where you can leave 45 second audio feedback file
  - Loom - a screen recording tool with the presenter featured in a circular window
- Additional hardware is useful with some of these extensions (e.g. tablet and stylus) - sometimes staff bought this at their own expense
- An initial launch event helped publicise the tools, but further follow sessions were required to embed these feedback methods into teacher's practice.

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What did we learn?

What did you observe?
- Student engagement increased
- Some teachers adopted the new tools and said they welcomed feeding back to students in modes other than typing.
- Limited evidence that the new platforms saved feedback time. The ease of leaving audio files may have led to more feedback being given rather than the same amount and saving marking time.

What did teachers / pupils learn?
- We are still learning, but so far we have noted:
  - Students report they like to receive feedback in a variety of ways.
  - Some subjects or topics within a subject lend themselves better to one format of feedback over another (e.g. the audio extension worked well for general feedback on an essay at the end of the work whereas the screen capture extension tools worked better for more detailed feedback on say, the solving of equations.

How did behaviour change?
- An initial launch event helped publicise the tools, but further follow sessions required to embed these feedback methods into teacher's practice.
- In the trial class, students reported they engaged more with the feedback

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What will we change?

What will you do again?
- Staff survey, Launch event, Staff Training (but maintain support for staff for longer post implementation)

What will you do again but differently?
- Engage with a small team of early adopters at the onset so that they can champion these tools within their departments

What will you stop doing?
- Introduce more platforms - keeping the tools within our existing Google platform makes things simpler for staff.

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What questions do we have now?

- What other feedback mechanisms are there that help improve student engagement with feedback and reduce the time teachers spend leaving feedback for their students?
- The use of Rubrics and the leaving of automatic feedback is an area of interest and a possible future research project
- How should blended learning assignments be marked - is there a one size fits all approach or is flexibility in the approaches used key here?