

**TITLE**

Embedding exam preparation in learning activities

**VISION (ASPIRATION AND AIMS)**

- to support learners to use technology effectively to enhance their exam preparation and to develop their communication skills

**BACKGROUND MOTIVATION STATEMENT**

Students and teachers are confronted by increasing demands from assessment and examinations, which can lead to restrictions in the range of pedagogic activities carried out. This scenario helps resolve this by providing both students and teachers with useful and innovative ways of using technology to build a bank of resources that can be used for ongoing learning and revision. This enables the teacher to introduce transferable skills and cross-curricular activities whilst still addressing the certification needs of the students.

**NARRATIVE**

At the beginning of the year students and I brainstorm different ways and methods of revising, and how these might be used for different topics. As the year progresses I choose appropriate revision methods to be used during the teaching process. My colleague decides to plan this in advance, but I prefer to choose a method from the list for each part of the curriculum when we get to it.

To help in my planning, I identify those methods that are primarily intended for an audience and not only for the person who makes the resources (eg video or podcasts). These need to be more carefully scheduled into class activities because they take more time and planning. At the end of each topic the students prepare the revision resources which they will also use to prepare for the final exam. These are stored online on a platform that they can access from anywhere (with password protection), and can be shared with more people if we decide to.

The resources which my group prepares include flash cards for widgets or (for example) Android mobile phones; mind maps (including shared online mind maps); printed flash cards; audio podcasts; videos; animations of models and processes; simulations; wiki notes; and quizzes, crossword puzzles, and online games (where there are kits available). To carry out the classroom activities, I use iTEC tools and resources which are designed for production of each type of revision method.

I identify different processes for developing the resources, which I vary throughout the year. For example:

- Divide into groups of five and each team produces a resource. These are then peer reviewed, improved and posted on the revision collections site.
- Each student prepares their resource at home and uploads it to the revision collections site. The students vote for the ones they think will be most useful when they come to the revision period. (eg like/dislike on Facebook, print them out and post comments or votes).
- Joint creation of an online mindmap or virtual representation of processes from the full class group (eg Mindmeister, Exploratree).
- Collaborative production of a video that documents a week-long look at a curriculum area, as part of the learning activities and not just for revision after the event.

After exams at the end of the year, the class votes for the resource for each topic that they found most useful. With the consent of the authors, this is also made public on the school website. I am also invited by the head of the school to share my experiences with other teachers in the school.

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### TREND/S

#### Encouraging independence, or not?

Better performing teachers are being promised more independence in several education systems in Europe, but assessment and accountability systems are still hard to change. This puts many teachers in awkward and frustrating situations, in which their ability and willingness to innovate are compromised by tight controls and external pressures and expectations. For this reason, the current trend is that most teachers still choose to “play it safe” rather than being independent and taking risks.

### KEY CONCEPTS

Revision, exams, smart-assessment, developing understanding, creating digital resources

### ENVIRONMENT

- students develop resources in classrooms, resource centres or outside of the classroom (eg filming a video outdoors)
- these shared resources can be used for revision at home
- online environment for sharing resources

### PEOPLE & ROLES

- teacher actively facilitating and managing students’ revision and their use of technology to communicate understandings
- students practice the development of representations of knowledge using digital technologies and assess the usefulness of these representations

### INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- students peer-to-peer teaching/revising
- teacher creates the structure and framework that students contribute to and work within
- sharing of resources with other teachers and wider community

### ACTIVITIES

- teacher coordinates schedules, facilitates development of materials, identifies resources
- students plan, develop, share and evaluate resources that support revision of topics, using a variety of technologies

### RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- online space for revision resources bank that contains resources, training materials and instructions from teacher – accessible anywhere and secure.
- mobile devices for accessing resources (optional)
- technologies to create resources (eg widget flash card kit, audio and video recorders, online resources, mindmap tools)
- training materials on using digital technologies or creating resources for teachers and students
- IT support