

How to use 3 different digital resources within the Learning Area of Expressive Arts

By Sally Williams

Why use Digital Technology in the Special Needs classroom?

- Since September 2016 the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) has been taken onboard by all schools in Wales.
- The DCF recognises the need for skills, knowledge and attitudes that give learners the ability to use technology in an increasingly technical world in more confident, creative and critical ways.
- The DCF consists of 4 areas :- Citizenship, Interacting and Collaborating, Producing and Data and Computational Thinking.
- Digital technology has brought about 3 main changes in education (N. Morris 2017): 1) It has increased the flexibility of the learner allowing them to alter the pace, place and mode of learning. 2) Fundamental changes in the ways learners are able to gain knowledge and skills. 3) It has also changed the way learners are able to interact with others all around the world, enabling a huge increase in cultural awareness and globalization (Donaldson)
- In the Special Needs Code of Practice (2001) 4 main areas of need were recognised :- Communication and interaction, cognition and learning, behavior, emotional and social development and sensory and / or physical.
- These areas are the main barriers to learning unless adaptations are made.
- The use of digital technology allows for the adaption of the curriculum and can be tools to break down these barriers.
- Effective special educational needs teaching involves adapting the curriculum bringing about inclusion and eliminating barriers to the participation in education.
- Care needs to be taken when implementing technology into classrooms to make sure that it is truly effective and not merely done for the sake of it.
- The SAMR model by Dr Ruben Puentedura (2014) demonstrates different levels of effectively using technology in the classroom.

Enhancement

Substitution:-

Technology acts as a direct substitution with no functional change.

Augmentation:-

Technology acts as a direct tool substitute, with function improvement.

Transformation

Modification:-

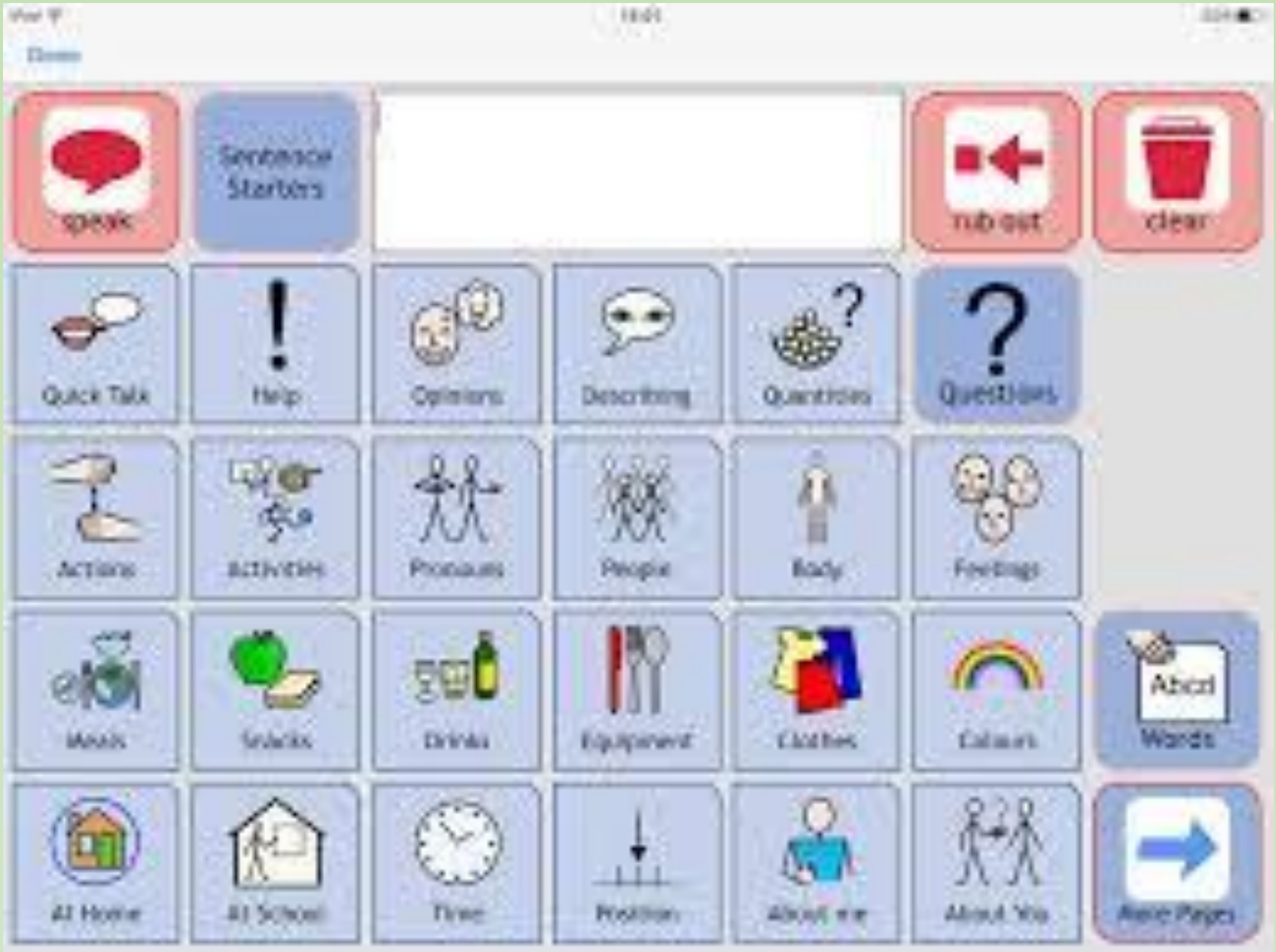
Technology allows for significant task redesign.

Redefinition:-

Technology allows for the creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable.

- The three digital technologies that are explained in this poster are interlinked with the Expressive Arts Area of Learning. They all help pupils to communicate their needs, collaborate, create and produce work and problem solve.

Grid Player



- Grid Player is an Alternative and Augmentative Communication (ACC).
- Grid Player helps people who cannot speak or who have unclear speech to communicate.
- Sentences that are created are spoken out loud in either a male or female voice.
- There are three complete grid sets; A, B and C.
- All three use widge symbols with over two thousand words in over fifty topics.
- When deciding to use grid player with a pupil for the first time consult with the speech and language team and consult that pupil's speech and language programme.
- If that pupil can read and understand PEC's then they should be able to transition to grid player.
- When first using the grid player support the pupil by introducing the iPad at a time that is not associated with free time or choice i.e. so that there is no confusion that they are choosing the iPad so they can play on it.
- It is important to try and establish a difference between playing on the iPad and using it as a means of communication.
- When first using the grid player the pupil will need support to navigate their way through the various screens. Doing a bit of role play in a quiet part of the classroom would be a useful way to first start using the screens.
- Pupils will need to be reminded to use the grid player when trying to communicate particularly if they are getting frustrated that they are not being understood.
- If you feel that the pupil is easily navigating the Symbol Talker A and would cope with more choices then move onto Symbol Talker B.
- Symbol Talker C is more complicated and also gives the pupil the option of typing more complicated and developed answers.
- As Grid Player is a communication aide it fits perfectly within all learning areas.
- It allows for all pupils to be included within the classroom and helps to eliminate barriers to this. (Florian L, 2004)
- For direct involvement within the Expressive Arts Area of Learning the Grid Player has subject areas such as music and art. It allows pupils to choose instruments / paint etc and to also be able to give feedback on their work and that of their peers.

Eye Gaze



- Eye gaze is one of the latest forms of ACC technology.
- It allows the user to control a computer to communicate and to create and to produce.
- Eye gaze is often chosen to be used by professionals not because there is no alternative but because it fits other criteria such as being less effort for the pupil than other methods also it allows the pupil to be in a more comfortable position using eye gaze than using other control methods and eye gaze control can be less painful than other methods.
- As shown below using an E Tran Frame pupils can make limited choices but this has drawbacks in so much as the choices are limited and controlled by another. Also it is difficult to produce anything or truly collaborate.
- Eye gaze further develops and builds upon skills developed using the E Tran Frame.



- When using eye gaze take time to make sure that the pupil is in a comfortable position.
- Discuss with the pupil that they are about to use eye gaze and if appropriate start with some simple fixing and tracking exercises.
- When comfortably seated set up eye gaze and have pupil to run through start up programme to see whether they are tracking correctly.
- Using Tobii gaze eye gaze programmes follow pupils' last eye gaze tracking record or if unknown start at first level checking pupils' ability to track and follow.
- Once tracking and following has been established build upon levels of difficulty and tasks that need completing.
- If pupils are new to eye gaze start with programme for ten minutes and then build time up.

- Eye gaze links directly to Expressive Arts Area of Learning by allowing pupils to create sounds and patterns with programs and to be able to use colour to draw and to express emotions.
- It allows pupils who have difficulty in moving other parts of their body to fully engage in the movement of a lesson and to independently create a piece of work. Allowing pupils to use technology in a transformational way not just enhancement (Puentedura 2014)

Garage Band



- Garage Band is an app that is loaded on the school iPads; it is a way for pupils to create and produce pieces of music.
- Garage Band complements the Expressive Arts Area of Learning by allowing pupils to take part in music lessons when they may at times have physical problems handling and managing instruments.
- Garage Band allows pupils to explore different types of instruments such as piano, guitar and drums.
- It's an app that allows pupils to lay down layers of music over the course of the lesson or even a number of lessons.
- It is a great app for giving pupils the chance to collaborate with each other and to produce work.
- When helping pupils with Garage Band firstly discuss with the class teacher what the objective of the lesson will be so to be familiar with what the teacher hopes to achieve.
- Help pupils to familiarise themselves with the app by aiding them to find the tool they need.
- Help them to navigate through the different choices giving them time to choose.
- If the pupil struggles with choice help to narrow down the choice so they choose between two or three options rather than more.

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