Using digital technology to increase levels of engagement and motivation in an S2 French lesson.

What did you do?

Over the course of 6 weeks, I implemented a new digital technology teaching approach using the application AHA slides, which required the learners to engage with the lesson using their mobile phones. I introduced the new topic of holidays and also an IDL project on the Auld Alliance using AHA slides which included questionnaires, quizzes, timed activities, word clouds and multiple choice activities which pupils would respond to using their mobile phones and watch their submissions appear on the main classroom interactive board. These 6 weeks focussed on getting the pupils comfortable and confident with using AHA slides, assess whether they enjoyed the lessons more using this teaching approach and assess whether their levels of engagement and motivation increased using both AHA slides and their mobile phones.

I collected my evidence using the data provided to me by AHA slides, formative assessment carried out in class at the end of the lessons and using pupil voice in the form of a focus group. The focus group consisted of 6 pupils of mixed abilities and I asked them the same 3 questions during week 1, week 3 and week 6 to record any changes in responses and opinions throughout the enquiry (See S2 Focus Group bar graph below). The data shows positive results in all areas questioned and pupils could identify the positive progress being made using AHA slides in terms of engagement.

Why did you plan on this particular focus?

Digital learning and technology can move you toward meeting the needs of each student and providing an individualized approach to education (Blackorby et al., 2022).

As part of my School's Improvement Plan, there was a great focus on increasing both motivation and engagement which had dropped due to home learning and increase digital literacy of all pupils. I saw this as an opportunity to target these two areas by using new digital teaching and learning approaches to increase pupil participation. I specifically wanted to use mobile phones as a way of interacting with the lesson as I noted all the pupils in this specific class had a mobile phone and I wanted to find a way to use these productively and not as the usual distraction.
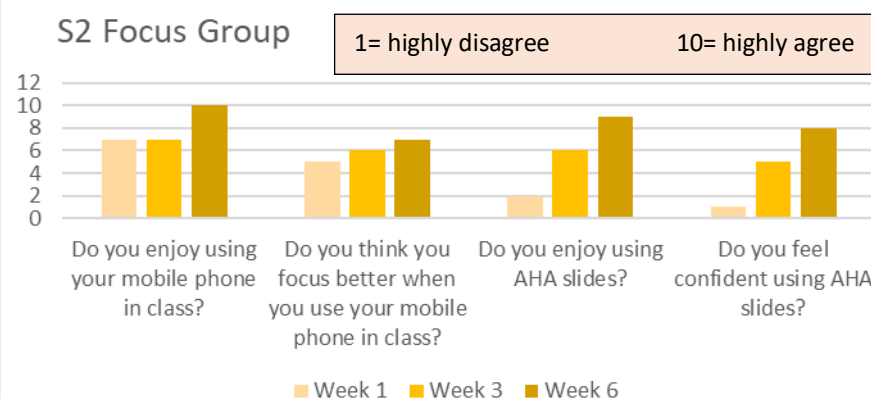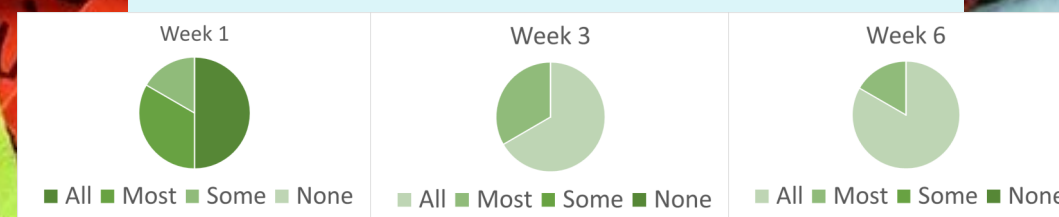
It is both logical and desirable that an increased and more effective use of digital technology will result in all of Scotland's learners developing a level of digital skills that will be essential in today's increasingly digitised world (The Scottish Government, 2016). Preparing our young people with skills for life and work in this modern society is vital as it is now difficult to imagine a job or industry that doesn't involve some level of digital skills (The Scottish Government, 2016).

What happened as a result?

It is inevitable for teachers integrating information technology into subjects to assist in students' learning with teaching materials, teaching methods, and diversified teaching media (Lin, Chen and Liu, 2017). It is necessary for lessons to be exciting and interesting in order for learners to be engaged. Using AHA slides was a new concept which sparked the curiosity of most and encouraged pupils to participate in order to become comfortable and confident in using it.

In order to make my results fair, I used AHA slides twice a week and without once a week, so I could compare levels of engagement with and without the use of digital technologies. I collected the data provided by AHA slides which showed many factors such as engagement levels throughout the lesson, how many were actively using their phones for the activities and who were not, at what pace each pupil was completing the activities and comparing data with previous sessions to compare engagement levels. I included a variety of different activities which required pupils to answer questions throughout the lesson, refer to their LI and SC and also to formatively assess themselves at the end of the lesson and actively demonstrate their learning. These are activities which I differentiated to using non-digitally to see how pupils engage with the same activities with and without the digital aspect. I also asked the pupils involved in the focus group to tell me what they think their own engagement is like in French and I recorded their answers for any changes. The results show that progressively over the 6 week period, pupils were able to identify that the were engaging in more lesson activities throughout the professional enquiry.

> *"How many of the class activities do you fully engage with in French?"*

Week 1 | Week 3 | Week 6

■ All ■ Most ■ Some ■ None

S2 Focus Group

1= highly disagree   10= highly agree

Do you enjoy using your mobile phone in class? | Do you think you focus better when you use your mobile phone in class? | Do you enjoy using AHA slides? | Do you feel confident using AHA slides?

■ Week 1 ■ Week 3 ■ Week 6

What are the implications?

Going forward, from the data collected from the professional enquiry, I feel confident in using digital technologies such as AHA slides and mobile phones to increase active learning approaches within the classroom. This style of active learning has certainly increased levels of engagement and motivation in a class which was displaying particularly difficult behaviour in those areas. It allowed the pupils to use their mobile phones in a productive way and limit the distractions caused by them, resulting in a more consistent and successful lesson.

Based on the positive results, I will now incorporate this method into other classes. This will be particularly useful for differentiating for mixed ability classrooms as it allows pupils to follow and interact with the lesson content at their own pace. The lower-ability pupils in the focus group noted that this was something which they found helpful for them and resulted in them being engaged for more of the lesson and less chance for them to become overwhelmed by the lesson pace. It is tailoring support to each student's strengths, interests, learning styles, and time considerations allows for empowering the individual learner by focusing on their competencies and enabling real-time assessment (Blackorby et al., 2022) .

In conclusion, it is certain that digital technology is not the sole solution to a lack of engagement but it can certainly help when used productively, is accessible to every pupil and both practitioner and learner is confident in using it.

References:

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