

CREATIVE USE OF TABLETS IN SCHOOLS: MODULE 1

SECTION 1.4 (INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO TABLETS)

How you introduce your students to tablets will vary according to how old they are. Teachers tend to take one of two ways, either they give out the tablets and take the students through some of the tools and apps all together, or they design a series of tasks which ultimately will enable the students to learn the basic features of the tablet. The “instruction” approach can sometimes make it difficult to challenge the more able students, so if you give them a series of tasks, the students get stuck in and begin to show you just what they can do. This is really helpful because you become aware of the students in the class who know how to use the devices.

Some teachers find it useful to have a list of “I can” statements so that students can see the types of things you want them to be able to do. So a list that would say:

“I can use the camera”

“I can record a video clip”

If you are in a secondary school or working with older students, you need to collaborate with other staff and decide how the devices will be introduced because the students don’t want the same introduction each time they go to a different subject.

To begin with, teachers often find it helpful to set up rotating tasks, this basically means that the students will work in small groups and go around a series of tasks within a certain amount of time. This means the students soon become familiar with what the tablet can do and the teacher can support the different tasks.

Depending upon your specialist subject, you may have particular software or applications that you want the students to be able to use. Again, it can be hard trying to get 25 to 30 students all doing the same. One of the CCL teachers found it really helpful to train six of her students to use any new app. This meant that during lessons she always had six “trainers” to work with the other students. This is a great method to try and it means that the teacher has some support within the lesson.

A number of schools that I have worked with have also found it helpful to have some lessons with more than one teacher. Whilst this can be a bit difficult to organise, if you join two classes together for the introductory lessons, it will mean those two teachers can feed back to other teachers in school about what worked and what needs to be changed.