

How to
Assess ICT Capability
A Guide for Primary Educators



Improvement



Written and Edited by:
Michael Hilkemeijer
ICTE Solutions Australia

A Note to the Reader

This book will enable you as a Primary teacher to assess the use of ICT across the curriculum in Australia and assess student ICT capability in the United Kingdom. If you are a teacher in Victoria, Australia, you are required to report on student progress and the contents of this book will help you considerably in achieving this.

However, the principles and practices discussed in this book also applies to other curriculums where ICT is integrated across the range of contexts that it covers. So if you *don't teach* the Australian version - don't worry! **This book is also for you!**

As a teacher, you may have already used ICT in many situations of your classroom practice. The content of this book will provide you with real world examples that will give you the tools and knowledge to see past the finished student product and determine the true capabilities. They come from the dozens of books that I have researched about [teaching](#) and [assessing ICT capability](#). I have basically done all the leg work for you! In addition, most of this researched was derived from some of the most ICT capable schools around. So you know right from the start that these strategies will work for you as they have for your colleagues in their classroom practices.

In this book, I will give you examples of the best software to use, what your desired result should be and the best practices to get there. What you won't find are the dozens of teacher resources that you could use to follow through on this advice. You can access these resources from my NESA accredited online PD - [Primary Classroom Strategies: Assess ICT Capability Today](#). This course will cover the **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers 2.6.2** and **5.1.2** towards maintaining Proficient Teacher accreditation. I strongly encourage you to enrol in this course as it will give you the opportunity to collaborate with other enrolled teachers and share your thoughts about the various strategies. The advantage becoming a student means that you can include these standards *plus* the hours into your continual professional development records and earn accreditation as a Proficient teacher as an added bonus if you teach in New South Wales. If not, other Australian states all recognise these standards.

This book is unique because it was written for YOU:

- YOU are someone who sees the potential of students in your classroom;
- YOU want practical and immediately actionable advice on strategies;
- YOU want to meet the requirements of your national curriculum;
- YOU want to ensure progression in student capabilities;
- YOU integrate ICT a lot in your classroom practice;
- YOU would like to create opportunities for learning in lessons and;
- YOU are committed to following through with what you are about to learn.

This is why YOU are here!

Keep this in mind. Every piece of advice and strategy mentioned here has been tried and tested not only by myself but the other teachers found in ICT capable classrooms. Today, I look back over my 15 years experience as an ICT teacher and look for better ways to [develop student ICT capability](#).

So pick up a pen and paper and be ready to take some notes. ***Let's get started!***

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THE ASSESSMENT OF ICT CAPABILITY

The Importance of Assessment

Assessment is closely linked to forward planning and so if you intend to plan for the progression of ICT capability with students, it is vital that you have an appreciation of where the children are, where they ought to be and where they might be heading next.

In order to help your students develop their ICT capability begin by determining their starting point followed by accurate directions that will enable them to plot a course for success.

The [assessment of ICT capability](#) is vital as it will allow you to track progress and to plan appropriately for students to achieve their capabilities. Proper assessment will provide you with real evidence and knowledge of where the students are up to. Without it any planning conducted would be worthless.

The Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (2017) principles of assessment include the following:

The main purpose assessment is to inform teaching and improve learning;

- *Assessment is underpinned by equity principles. It takes account of the diverse needs of students and contexts of education;*
- *Assessment is aligned with curriculum, pedagogy and reporting. Quality assessment has curricular and instructional validity – what is taught informs what is assessed, and what is assessed informs what is reported;*
- *Assessment alignment with curriculum, pedagogy and reporting includes assessment of deep knowledge of core concepts within and across the disciplines, problem-solving, collaboration, analysis, synthesis and critical thinking;*
- *Assessment involves collecting evidence of expected learning as the basis of judgements about the achieved quality of that learning. Quality is judged with reference to fixed standards and is based on evidence;*
- *Assessment evidence may come from a range of assessment activities. The assessment activity is selected because of its relevance to the knowledge, skills and understanding to be assessed, and the purpose of the assessment;*
- *Information collected through assessment activities is sufficient and suitable to enable defensible judgements to be made. To show the depth and breadth of the student learning, evidence of the student learning is compiled over time. Standards are reviewed periodically and adjusted according to evidence to facilitate continuous improvement;*
- *Approaches to assessment are consistent with and responsive to local and jurisdictional policies, priorities and contexts. It is important that schools have the freedom and support to develop quality assessment practices and programs that suit their particular circumstances and those of the students they are assessing;*
- *Assessment practices and reporting are transparent. It is important that there is professional and public confidence in the processes used, the information obtained and decisions made.*

Australian Curriculum

Like literacy and numeracy, the 21st century skill ICT capability is embedded throughout all Learning Areas of the Australian Curriculum as a General Capability. Teachers are required to teach and assess General Capabilities to the extent that they are included in the Learning Areas content.

Primary educators have a significant duty to ensure that they comply with the expectations imposed on them by the curriculum as Levels 1 to 4 of the ICT capability Learning Continuum lie within their realm. From Foundation Year to Year 6 student progression in ICT capability must be developed in primary education.

What am I assessing?

The use of ICT in subjects is often represented by printouts or finished products from students. As a result it creates a common misconception amongst teachers that this indicates the level of ICT capability a student has. Products created by students is really the final element of a much longer, more complex process. It is the actual process that truly gives you the opportunity to [assessment ICT capability](#).

For example:

“The printout of a document will not show whether the positioning of text has been achieved by the repeated use of the space bar, the use of tab marks, the inclusion of an invisible table or the use of alignment tools (e.g. left, centre or right align). Similarly, unless you know the origins of a piece of Internet-based text, you will be uncertain as to the extent a student has edited the text or how long and how extensively the student searched for and located relevant pieces of information and/or images.”

(Bennett et al., 2007, p58)

A finished product will only provide you with a limited and partial [assessment of a student's ICT capability](#). It is important to remember then that the key elements of ICT capability are mostly practical. ICT capability, however, is more than just the use of ICT techniques and skills. It also includes having conceptual understanding and making use of higher order skills. Having a proper mix of all of the elements (routines, concepts, techniques, processes and higher order skills) in an ICT activity will help you to ascertain the level of ICT capability of an individual student.

While it may be easier to assess the less important aspects of learning such as the way a printout looks because you can actually see it, you must avoid this temptation. More important things will be left out that will accurately measure a student's capabilities.

What is the desired destination?

Now that you know what to assess it is just as important to understand what exactly you are hoping to achieve. In other words, what is the desired result? With many occupations now calling for knowledge workers who are fluent in the use of ICT your aim therefore needs be that. There are many terms that can be used to describe this – digital literate, ICT literate, computer literate, technology literate or ICT capable. The term which is most appropriate for yourself is entirely up to you. However, ICT capability is the general capability in the national curriculum and therefore, for this purpose your aim needs to be that your students are ICT capable. Regardless of which term you prefer to use they are all consistent with being associated with lifelong learning and contain values that strongly facilitate higher order skills.

Having links to lifelong learning, however, means that a person can never be fully ICT capable as learning and re-learning are implicitly coupled with ICT capability. Despite this, research (Crawford, 2011, pp. 6-7) has indicated that ICT capable students can be identified. For example, students found with high levels of ICT capability could:

- Use ICT to support their learning in all subjects;
- Use common ICT tools;

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