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Using online assessment to inform teaching and learning in primary and secondary classrooms

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Using online assessment to inform teaching and learning in primary and secondary classrooms

Abstract
In the 1980’s there was a conscious effort around Australia and in many other countries around the world to shift the focus in assessment from notions of passing and failing to those of monitoring growth; from comparing students against each other to building up an image of what it is that students know and can do at particular stages in their development; and, from collecting marks to summarise performance to providing students and teachers with information from assessment activities that can be used to help diagnose potential weaknesses and strengths and lead to improved learning. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has recently developed an online assessment instrument that takes advantage of the latest advances in psychometric theory to provide schools and students with a powerful tool to support learning at school and at home.

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The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has recently developed an online assessment instrument that takes advantage of the latest advances in psychometric theory to provide schools and students with a powerful tool to support learning at school and at home.

The instrument provides

- an online testing program in mathematics and English for the equivalent of Years 3 to 10;
- tests that assess the generic skills that underpin learning in the subject areas of English and mathematics;
- tests that are tailored to the individual needs of children;
- instantaneous feedback using student reports and progress maps to show where a child is located on a continuum of performance that is linked directly to learning in the classroom; and,

- users with the ability to monitor student progress over time.

This presentation will describe the instrument and its underlying rationale, show how the feedback can be used to inform teaching and learning, and discuss ways that the instrument and the feedback might be developed further in the future to ensure that the advantages that accrue from information technology are being fully harnessed in an attempt to continually improve learning.