Digital Badges

Digital Badges: *Improving Attainment and Progress through Accreditation*

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Overview

Project Aims

- Creating Digital Badges raises student attainment by improving:

  - Self-confidence
  - Student engagement
  - Presentation skills
  - Group working
  - ICT skills

- Digital Badges are most appropriate with students in Year groups 5-8. They can be used in a range of ways including:

  - For a whole year group throughout the school year
  - As an extra-curricular activity such as in Saturday School, during half terms, in extended schools etc.

Rationale

- The idea of introducing Digital Badges at Shireland Collegiate Academy came from various discussions on different ways of accrediting informal education.

- To provide better support to students that continue to work outside curriculum hours, it was agreed that Shireland would implement digital badges through our Saturday School. We wanted to raise attainment by giving students the opportunity to build an online portfolio of work which could be used as a 'record of achievement'.

- This new mechanism of teaching would also give teachers a different way of accrediting to that of the traditional norm.

Impact

- Class teachers have seen an improvement in students' ICT skills and use of the English language in their work.

- Students have responded enthusiastically to the project and the use of digital badges (via the Makewaves site).

- Students have engaged extremely well, especially when given the opportunity to create their online profiles and work towards earning their electronic badges.

- Activity usage is very high on the Makewaves site and students have been uploading work on a weekly basis. This has impacted positively on their ICT and presentation skills.

- So far, over 30 digital badges have been awarded to individual students and they have now begun to work in groups to achieve more badges that are accessible from the site in order to advance further their achievements.

  NB: there are different pieces of digital badges software available to use. However, the software that I will be using and focussing on will be Makewaves.

Teacher comments

Five teachers involved in Digital Dragons Den were asked the following questions:

1. **Would you use digital badges as a tool for improving student attainment?**

   5/5 – agreed that they would.

2. **Would you be able to deliver the project without the support of the extended schools coordinator?**

   5/5* – agreed they would.

   *The project would need to be part of something they are already leading on or teaching. A project delivered independently of this would need the support of another staff member.

3. **Would you use the Makewaves software again?**

   5/5 – agreed that they would.

"I had no prior knowledge of digital badges and how it can be used to support curriculum based work. The feedback from students has been really positive and we have continued to use and embed the badge system at our school since it was introduced to us in 2014. I had support in delivering these workshops and feel other schools would need the same level of support in the early stages of delivery. "
Year 5 class teacher, Cape Primary School

"I believe that you can use digital badges as an alternative form of teaching to improve specific aspects of student learning. I would use the software again as there is mileage in the tasks I can create and set to students."
Shireland Collegiate Academy, class teacher

"It is a great way of introducing the school's technology to new students though the Makewaves site will need to be monitored by a member of staff on a regular basis."
Shireland Collegiate Academy, class teacher

"Digital badges can be implemented within many core subjects."
Shireland Collegiate Academy, class teacher

"I can use the Makewaves software to set homework tasks students are able to access at home."
Shireland Collegiate Academy, class teacher

Student Comments

"I enjoyed it all. It gave me the chance to take part in different activities and I loved each one."

"I had fun creating my Makewaves account and learning how to use movie maker."

"I enjoyed learning about the technology in the school. I want to start earning my digital badges."

How To

Example of project delivered – 'Digital Dragons Den'

- The project is aimed at our New Year 7 students, to allow them to gain a greater understanding of the technology used in Shireland Collegiate Academy.

- Students will be working in groups over 3 days and have the opportunity to plan and create their project using a range of resources provided by the Academy.

- On the final day, students will present their work to the Dragons.

Learning Expectations

All students should:

- Gain a greater understanding of the technology used within Shireland Collegiate Academy.

- Use a range of IT based resources to create a group project.

- Learn key skills needed in order to present their work confidently and successfully.

- Use an online profile on Makewaves to evidence their work throughout the project.

Resources Required:

Camera/Video Camera	Digital Badges Software (e.g. Makewaves app)	Microsoft Software	Laptops

Software Used:

Macromedia Flash	Macromedia Fireworks	Macromedia Dreamweaver	Microsoft PowerPoint	Windows Movie Maker

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Measuring Success: Rewarding Badges

Criteria: I have attended 2 Digital Dragons Den workshops.

Criteria: I have shown that I can work well as part of a team.

Criteria: I have attended 4 Digital Dragons Den workshops.

Criteria: I am now regarded as a Digital Leader through all the hard work I have undertaken during Digital Dragons Den.

Running the Project – Digital Dragons Den

Planning

- Register your school to Makewaves, www.makewav.es/

- Identify a lead member of staff to oversee the project (Extended Schools Coordinator, Family Support worker, Pastoral worker or SENCO teacher).

- Identify students to take part in the project.

- Select the theme of your workshop e.g. leadership, resilience, citizenship, information technology.

- Set a date to start the project.

NOTE:
- When selecting your students you may initially want to start with a class size and then expand once you are comfortable using the badge software.
- When selecting the theme, aim to have a workshop that can be delivered over a term to give yourself a greater chance of evaluating progress and attainment.
- Preparation time is key prior to the workshops taking place.

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Getting Ready: creating your Makewaves Account

1. On your schools Makewaves homepage, join the site by selecting 'student' or 'teacher'.

2. Fill in personal details required and select 'Yes, that's all correct'.

3. You are now able to create and explore channels on your schools Makewaves account.

NOTE: when setting up an account on Makewaves, students will need to create usernames and passwords. Keeping record of all this information may prove useful.

Allow students enough time to create their Makewaves student account and familiarise themselves with the site.

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Getting Ready: Creating your Badge
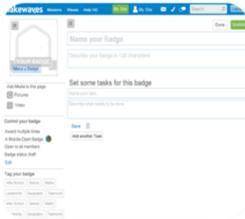
1. In order to create a badge select **My Site > Badges > Add Badge Mission > Make a Badge**.
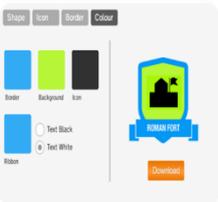
2. Select the shape, icon, border and colour you wish your badge to have, choose the badge settings and save.

3. Add tasks to the badge that you want students to complete in order to be awarded this badge before publishing your badge mission.

4. After publishing, students will be able to take on the badge mission and complete all the relevant tasks.

5. After completing tasks, students are able to upload their evidence through many formats including photos, videos and Microsoft documents.

6. When students are undertaking the badge mission, the teacher can look at the 'Badge Dashboard' and see the progress students are making with each task.

7. Once tasks are completed and evidence has been added, teachers are able to add feedback for students to see.

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Getting Ready: Running the Workshop

Planning and Set-up

1. Prepare workshops that provide students with the opportunity to learn new ICT skills, ensuring all staff are trained to use the chosen software.

2. Put students into groups which they will work in for the length of the project.

3. Explain the project to students, highlighting the theme they will be focusing their work on.

4. Students are to work in their groups to plan the presentation they wish to deliver to the Dragons.

5. Following planning, students should split up from their group and attend prepared workshops.

6. It is recommended to allocate extra time at the start of the first workshop to ensure all students have created their own Makewaves account.

Workshops

7. Over a period of two days students are to attend all workshops creating work to be used for their final presentation.

8. Students should use Makewaves accounts in order to save all work.

9. Students should now get back into their groups where they will be given the opportunity to collate their work into a presentation they wish to present to the Dragons.

Ceremony

10. A ceremony outline should be prepared for the Dragons Den presentation.

11. Each group is to present to the Dragons.

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12. After watching all presentations, Dragons decide on winning presentation.

13. Students are awarded prizes for individual achievements throughout the 3 days.

14. Winning groups of the overall project are rewarded with prizes by Dragons.

Possible Student Topics

Here are examples of five different tasks, available via the Makewaves site that can be used to support Digital projects:

1. **Safe Level 1** - Your teacher will take your through the Safe activities which you must complete to earn this badge. For each task submit a blog which explains what you have done to complete the lesson.

2. **Creative Badge** - Be creative and use your imagination to create something original. It can be a piece of music that you record, a performance or recital that you film. It can be anything that is original and you have created. So enjoy using your imagination and share your exciting talents or new learning.

3. **Food Bank** - How often do you give back to your community? By completing this badge you will learn about different ways of giving back to your community. In order to achieve this badge you must complete two tasks.

4. **Cultural Awareness** - How culturally aware are you of the diversity within your community? By completing this badge you will learn about different cultural holidays and how people's faiths inspire them. In order to achieve this badge you must complete two tasks.

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5. **Being a Positive Force** - Are you ready to take part in the Giant Walking Bus? By completing this badge you will learn about your individual leadership skills and ways you can implement those skills during a charity walk. In order to achieve this badge you must complete two tasks.

> **NOTE:** visit www.makewav.es/shirelands for more information on badge missions.

Things to consider

- How will you introduce Digital Badges?

- How will you assess the learning?

- What learning purpose will your badges serve?

- What models of learning will you incorporate in your projects?

What else supports Digital Badges?

- Allowing external organisations to run sessions as part of your chosen theme.

- Day trips to support learning. Evidence collected result in reward of badge.

- Empowering students to become 'Digital Leaders' where they are given the chance to lead on a project.

- Incorporating families with their children's education (afterschool clubs, half term activities).

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NOTE:

- Use the different forms of media (video, picture, sound) as tools to deliver workshops.
- When considering group size, 4-5 children is recommended however this is changeable depending on the theme of the project.
- Teachers should ensure they provide support to groups throughout planning process to make sure groups are making sufficient progress.
- When creating the Makewaves account with students, it may help to follow a guided PowerPoint example and going through the process step by step as a group.
- A shared group area where students can save their work should be made prior to the start of the project so that students have the opportunity to back up any work they upload to Makewaves.
- Extra time should be allocated for presentations in case of technical difficulties.