

General Biography

For over two decades, my primary focus in teaching and research has been in digital learning. This focus has never been more important in an uncertain, rapidly changing digital world where a key challenge for educators is to prepare learners who can leverage the power of digital tools to think critically and creatively in order to generate original solutions, solve problems and have the confidence to bring about positive change. Informed by sociocultural principles, I believe human action is shaped in essential ways through and with the use of the available cultural tools; that humans think and act by means of these cultural tools and that human action can only be understood by taking into consideration the ways that cultural tools are a part of and mediate this action (Wertsch, 1991; 1998). Questions of how digital technologies, the cultural tools of today, are to be used in education cannot therefore be viewed in isolation but must be considered in the context of understandings of knowledge, learning and teaching. This is the hallmark of my practice and within this context, my research has continually explored what being digital in learning can mean and how teachers, learners and digital technologies can interact to create powerful learning environments that prepare students to live and work in the 21st century.

The Digital Strategy for Schools (2015-2020) (DES, 2015) and the Digital Learning Framework (DLF) for primary and post-primary schools (DES 2017a; 2017b) have been introduced to help teachers to reflect on their current understanding and use of digital technologies in their practice current understanding and use of digital technologies in their practice and also to guide them on how to use digital technologies effectively to transform their teaching, learning and assessment practices. While encouraging and findings from the most recent reports indicate that digital technologies are being used more regularly as part of teaching and learning in schools (DE, 2020; Feerick et al), many struggle to understand what is meant by 'effectively' using digital technologies for teaching, learning, and assessment. Further and ongoing support is therefore required towards embedding technology in ways that promote more innovative and effective teaching and learning approaches.

As a RiRS panel member, I would like to support schools or clusters of primary schools as they work towards embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment. Driven by the expressed needs and interests of schools, I would like to guide and support teachers to construct deeper understandings of digital learning; to work with them as they engage with innovative and emerging pedagogies which take advantage of the affordances of digital technologies to facilitate student learning and 'being a Digital Learner' (NCCA, 2020).

I have extensive experience in the theory and practice of digital learning and the development of professional learning programmes for teachers. I have been involved in a broad range of school-based research projects and initiatives and would enjoy working in the following areas:

- Whole school approaches to digital learning
- Game Based Learning
- Computational thinking and coding
- Use of multimedia for learning (image, digital video, sound, etc)
- Digital literacy