**File: T4.mp3  
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START AUDIO

Interviewer: How many sessions did you use Group Spinner for?

T4: I used it for two.

Interviewer: How many groups were there in each session?

T4: In the first session there were four, and in the second session there were five.

Interviewer: It was the same class each time?

T4: The same class both times, yes.

Interviewer: About how many students to a group?

T4: In the first one there was about five students to a group and in the second one there was probably six students to a group.

Interviewer: What subject were you doing?

T4: RE.

Interviewer: How were you using the tool in general, how did you go about the process?

T4: I used it differently the first and second time. The first time I forgot my iPad, so I did it retrospectively, so I made some notes in the lesson and then I put them on to the Group Spinner. Then the second time I had my Group Spinner there, and then when I was wandering around I kept changing things and tweaking the graph slightly.

Interviewer: So when and how do you tag the behaviours?

T4: The second time’s probably a better example to talk about for that. The second time it was as and when I spotted them, so just wandering around and talking to the groups. Then as I sort of came away if there was something that I thought I needed to remember then I would tag it then.

Interviewer: Did you positively and negatively tag?

T4: Yes, so I might have seen a group collaborating really well, so I put it quite high, but then noticed perhaps as time went on they were less collaborative with one another, so then I tweaked it.

Interviewer: Did you tend to use the list of criteria or the graph, or both of those in collaboration?

T4: I used the graph, I used the list of criteria to sort of help me understand what it was that I was evaluating on those different axes, but then I used the graph. I think the reason why I chose that was because I felt like if I was plusing and minusing then that would take me too far out of the lesson, rather than talking with the students. Whereas with the graph it was quite a quick up and down.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you use the comparison and average buttons?

T4: I used the comparative one in the debrief on the second SOLE with the students. So I spoke to them about why- well, I asked them to think about why their group’s graph may have changed. There were some different variables, they worked in slightly different groups the first time to the second time, but why I might have marked them up on something, what had they done better or why they might have not done it as well. Why they weren’t as good as they were the last time.

Interviewer: So thinking about your teaching practice, did the use of the tool prompt you to change how you were doing the SOLE sessions or how you were perceiving the SOLE sessions at all?

T4: I would probably say no if I’m honest, it gave me something different to use during the debrief, but I don’t think it necessarily changed my perception. I suppose it made me more aware of different things that I could look at, but to be honest they fit with the school learning habits. So in my head I was already looking for those types of things, and then I almost hooked the learning habits on to different axes. So I suppose it’s just different words for the same thing that I was already looking for.

Interviewer: Okay, did you use it as a self-reflection tool or as a tool to recognise an evidence of students’ development, or both of those things?

T4: I don’t really know, because like I said, the second time was when I debriefed with the students, so for them it was, “Why do you think my perception of how well you’ve done’s changed?” So for them to be reflective on how they’d done in SOLE one versus SOLE two. Then I’m not sure if I would then use that as an evidence base moving forward, if that makes sense. So it was useful for that conversation, but I’m not sure what the value will be moving forward.

It was at the end of term, perhaps if it was the same class and I was using it with them six times over the course of a year, rather than two weeks back to back it would be useful to remind them where they were last time and what they need to be thinking about moving forward. So I didn’t really use it, but that might be particular to that context as opposed to particular to how I may use it.

Interviewer: So would you use it to communicate certain information such as evidence of learning behaviours to other people, to students or to teachers or to management or to parents?

T4: I think I would, I used it with students because they’re the people whose learning the tool is measuring. I think if you were to- I could see the value of it in using it with another teacher who teaches that same class. So it would be interesting to see whether they noticed the same behaviours, say there was a kid that you had a particular issue with, “You’ve done a SOLE with them, how did they behave then?” Using it as a point of comparison might be valuable.

I suppose that by being aware of those different axes, we all report to parents about students and what they do well and what they need to work on, so in that sense it might be used to form a report. In the circumstance that I used it in it didn’t because, like I said, it was at the end of the school year. Anything that makes you think about how well a student’s learning would become part of the formalised reporting system surely?

Interviewer: Would it need to be whole school system for it to be meaningful?

T4: Well like I said, because we’ve got the school learning habits it was almost like it was a part of the whole school system. So for instance when we were talking about one of the axes, one of the kids went, “Oh it’s making links.” So they made it fit the school system. So if it was something that they were more familiar with, then I think potentially it could be more valuable.

Teachers would be able to see, “Last time they got this score,” but then the issue there is the subjectivity between one teacher and the next teacher. Because I might think that the kids are fully engaged and working well as a team even if they’ve gone off on a tangent, whereas someone else might think that that’s actually not engaged in the question, do you know what I mean? So I think that there’s some potential barriers there to it being used as a whole school thing, because different people have different ways of viewing things.

Interviewer: You’ve mentioned that you talked about it with the students in the debrief, how did you discuss the tool with them? Did you tell them about it beforehand, did you just bring it up in the debrief, how did that..?

T4: I told them that I was using it, and they had the letters as well. So in that sense they knew that it was being used, and because I was monitoring their behaviour it made sense that I shared with them what it was that I found from that. In the same sense that if I was monitoring their use of key terms I would give them feedback on that or get them to think about their own achievement in that sense. So I think, I used it as part of the debrief, but they knew that I was using the spinner. We didn’t as a group go through all the different criteria because I felt like that would have taken up too much of the time, but we did use it to compare in the debriefs.

Interviewer: If you were going to use it regularly over time would you go through that criteria with them or would you let that happen more organically?

T4: I think I would let it happen organically, because different- I think if you go through all of them, I think the value might be that you spot something that gives you the opportunity to talk about it. I think if you’re giving them, “Here are 20 things that make a good SOLE,” are you distracting from what a good SOLE is, that they’re engaged and that they’re working. So I think if you then have one thing that you can say to them like, You’ve got to this point this time, last time you were only here, what did you do differently?” I think that’s a much more valuable conversation than having 10 minutes of me going, “This is this and I would also like to see this.”

I think it just then takes away some of that beauty of the openness of what SOLE is, but it’s useful for framing the conversation afterwards.

Interviewer: Was there any interesting feedback from students about the tool or the criteria or anything, did they have any observations?

T4: Like I said, some of them sort of redefined the different axes in terms of the language that we use in the school. So they made something that wasn’t specific to our school specific to our school, which I thought was useful because that then meant everyone knew what exactly that was that we were talking about. They didn’t really have any feedback on the tool, they had feedback on what they’d done differently or what had changed between one lesson or the next. Like I said, they weren’t I exactly the same groups so some groups tried to blame one particular student for the change in the graph, if it was worse. If it was better then they didn’t point out one person who’s made all the difference, but I wouldn’t necessarily say that they had any comments about the spinner as such.

Interviewer: Would you have had those conversations without that Group Spinner experience?

T4: I think we always have a chat about how they’ve gone through things, but having a graph and, “Why do you think I’ve changed this from this point to this point?” We wouldn’t have had perhaps such a visual way of me giving some feedback. Then to be honest it wasn’t me giving them feedback, it was, “This is my perceptions, why do you think I have them? What could you do differently? This group has got so much better at this particular skill, lets’ talk to them about what they’ve done differently and what can we learn from them?”

Interviewer: Do you see a value in using this tool?

T4: I think there’s some value there, I think if we were able to pick the axes, then that might make it more valuable. Like I said, if it was more linked to our school’s learning habits, so then we’ve got this shared language and the students can then see the transferability of it from RE to geography and maths to science, then that potentially would make it more valuable for them. I think having something visual is always quite useful for stimulating discussion.

Interviewer: Do you think that the value increases with repeated use, or doesn’t it make any difference?

T4: I think the more familiar students get to it then potentially that could have more value, they can think, “In this subject it was this,” but then the issue there is the subjective nature of each individual teacher’s perceptions of something. I think having one point and a second point to compare with and asking students, “What was different today?” I think that’s an interesting feature that you can get from it. So a repeated use, because I’ve only done it twice I don’t know how that would necessarily build up over a longer period of time.

In RE we try and do one SOLE in every topic, so if it was six weeks ago that they were last in the SOLE room, it might be quite interesting to say, “This is where we got to last time, what do you think your priorities should be for trying to do even better today?” It’s more useful I think for debrief than the start, but then I don’t know whether that’s just because of the time that I had to trial it within.

Interviewer: Did using it add to your workload?

T4: It was dead easy to use, I don’t think it added to my workload because it was just moving the axes about as I was going through the lesson. I think if I’d have done the plus and minus one that would have been I think a bit more labour intensive. I did it as I was wandering round and chatting to different groups, so it just was between groups I’d do a little bit of an evaluation on the group, but I don’t think it necessarily added to the workload. I think it’s quite easy to use.

Interviewer: So, my follow-up question would have been, if it does add to the workload is it worth the effort, so I guess that you decided that the tagging part wasn’t worth the effort.

T4: No, but the sliding scale bit is seconds, and because I’m using it consistently within that class, as in I’m making those judgments on each group, there’s some sort of truism between where the judgements on the axes lie I suppose. Whereas the plus and the minus, I think just with 30 bodies in the room that would be quite difficult to do.

Interviewer: Okay, and it doesn’t add anything extra, you didn’t feel you needed that extra information?

T4: No.

Interviewer: Okay, students’ learning and their learning behaviour, use of the tool, did it help you to recognise development or any changes in the students’ learning and learning behaviour with respect to the identified axes, that you might have missed otherwise?

T4: I don’t necessarily think so, like I said, because we’ve got the learning habits, it was sort of like we translated the axes into the learning habits. So it’s things that I’m looking for anyway, so I don’t think it necessarily made me think of things any differently to what I would ordinarily look for when a class is doing any class, not even just a SOLE, but are they being engaged, are they trying to reason, are they evaluating? If they’re not getting something right? I think perhaps not so much.

Interviewer: Did you ask the students to do any self-assessment with it?

T4: I didn’t use the self-assessment bit of the app, but we did reflect on my judgements. So there was some self-assessment, but it was very informal in, “Why do you think my perception has necessarily changed?”

Interviewer: Did you think that getting them to do that reflection made them more aware of other things that happen in the SOLE apart from the presentation that they give at the end?

T4: I think it also made them aware of other things that were happening with other groups, if that made sense, so if one group had made a big improvement then we were able to talk about, “What was it that was different this week to the last time that we did it?” So in that sense it made them more aware I suppose of the process, because it isn’t an evaluation of what they did at the end, it’s an evaluation of what they’ve done throughout. In that sense in connects the outcome of the process perhaps a little bit more.

Interviewer: So you then had discussions with the students about the self-assessment, would you have had those anyway or did this tool prompt that?

T4: I think it- I always try and do it, but like I said, I think having something visual as a, “Here’s my thinking of how you’ve done,” I don’t know whether that necessarily gave it greater meaning. It was interesting and the things that kids came up with about why they’d gotten better or worse at something, that was quite interesting, just to see how aware they were of what they had done. Sometimes there was things that I hadn’t even picked up on that they then gave value to, which hopefully just having that conversation, but we would have had that conversation, it might have changed the focus of it potentially.

Interviewer: Over time would you be interested to use that self-assessment part of the tool, or would you always keep it more to the format that you had here?

T4: I think the thing that I liked about it was being able to look at one graph and then look at the second graph over the top for a group, and then say, “Why is it different, what is different this time to last time?” Because the group I was doing it with, they’re a really motivated and engaged class, so I don’t think it would ever be, “We didn’t care, we do care.” I think they’re more sophisticated in their reasoning for that.

I think it would be interesting for them to compare theirs with mine potentially, “So you as a group now create your version of the shape and we’ll compare what yours looks like with mine. Were we aligned, were we not aligned, what are the reasons for that?” I think in that sense it would be interesting, I think it would be interesting in school [as I learn 0:19:24], that might be where it has a real impact in the self-assessment bit. Because they create an axes graph quite similar. So if it was, “This is what you do in SOLE, but this is what your personal axes look like for what you’ve gone through.” That might be quite an interesting comparison, I think that’s how they report to the parents in year seven as well.

So I think that might, I think it would be useful, but until you’ve done it you don’t want to say it’s amazing, because they might give themselves maximum on every axes possible. Or you might have that one thing where sometimes some of them are like, “I didn’t do very well.” They come up with the most sophisticated answer in the history of the world but, “I could have done this more.” I don’t know.

Interviewer: Moving on to the actual tool, do you have any comments on the axes themselves and their indicators, is there anything you’d remove or change?

T4: I think it would be nice if they were able to be personalised for different schools or different classes, or different key stages. Because I think you saw with my sixth from classes, they’re already fairly successful learners by that point, if you’re able to then think about, “Why is it that I’m using SOLE at this particular time with this particular class?” Then put in things that were the things that are going to help them. I suppose at that point you’re looking for a sophisticated synthesis of different information sources, so the solo taxonomy one, they shouldn’t be down the lower end.

I think if there were different ones for different, if you could tweak or you could make your own then I think that might be quite useful.

Interviewer: With regards to the fact that you can tag multiple occurrences of things, you can move the- you didn’t really do the tagging but you moved the graph whenever you wanted to, did that work? Would you prefer some kind of five-star rating?

T4: I think the sliding scale worked fine for me, I didn’t want to start plusing and minusing because I feel like you can’t watch 30 people at once. So you might notice one kid slyly checking their phone to see what the time is, and then – negative one for that, but then there might be four other kids doing that or worse and you don’t see that so you don’t tag it in that way. I feel like the axes works to get a sort of flavour of that group because unless you’re going to be- When you move them you are thinking about, there’s a reason for you to move it, so that reason then sticks in your head. I think the plus and minus thing, unless you’re going to remember every occurrence of plus and minus, I’m not sure how valuable that bit is, but I like the sliding scale bit.

Interviewer: Were you basing that sliding scale on how well they did something, or did you move it up a bit every time you saw them doing something good or bad?

T4: For me it was kind of like, if this was the maximum of what I could expect them to be doing, whereabouts are they in relation to that? So are they doing all of these things every second of that SOLE? Because I think perhaps my reason for doing that was because what you expect from different classes depends on how used to doing a SOLE they are. Minus one, a class who I’ve taught for 2 years, I’ve been to the SOLE room probably 10 times with them in that time, so they are really familiar with it. If it was a year seven class who I was taking for the first time and they’d never done that before, then what you could maximally expect from them in that time would be very different from what you would expect minus one or the year 12 sociology class who I took a couple of days before, what you would expect of them.

So I think a five star, there’s that temptation that they can only get- whereas the axes, if you can give what you expect as- you know, the top of the axes for a year seven class might be a 5, whereas your next class might need to be a 10 or a 15. I think it then gives you that freedom to move it around.

Interviewer: To change what they mean essentially?

T4: Yes.

Interviewer: Were there any usability issues with the tool at all?

T4: No, sorry, I’m shaking my head, that’s not much use. No it worked fine, it was good.

Interviewer: Anything else about the tool generally?

T4: Not that I can think of.

Interviewer: Just the last few questions; what did you like most about using it?

T4: I liked the debriefing bit, showing the students graph one versus graph two, and asking then what they thought had changed.

Interviewer: What did you not like?

T4: I think some of the axes are more useful than some of the others, but I believe that if you could personalise them then that could be more useful.

Interviewer: My next question was what would you change, or suggestions for improvement? Is it just that personalisation of the axes?

T4: I think so.

Interviewer: Do you think that you will continue to use it over the next school year?

T4: I think I will do, I think if there’s big gaps between SOLES then I think that could potentially make it more useful, “This is where we were last time, let’s build on this now and do this and concentrate on what was it that you found difficult? How are you going to make those better potentially?”

Interviewer: Just in SOLE, would you use it for anything else?

T4: I suppose that you’re constantly doing it as a teacher every time that you give students a task to do, you’re always thinking about what do they need to do that’s going to help them to get better? It could be quite useful, I suppose you could use it with other tasks and see how well they do on those. I think perhaps a SOLE, it’s a longer task firstly than perhaps an in class activity, because our lessons are 50/55 minutes long. So by the time that you’ve done the starter, you’ve introduced something, they’re doing it, you also want to debrief what they’ve done, see if they can apply it to something else and get everything sorted the longest task that they’re probably doing is 20 minutes.

Whereas in a SOLE you’ve got time to move around and check and monitor I suppose.

Interviewer: Would you worry that it could be used for performance measures either for students or for your own professional development?

T4: No, because I don’t think that school necessarily operates that way in terms of performance management. So I just don’t believe that it would be used in that sense. Also I’m constantly as a teacher evaluating the performance of my students, I don’t think it necessarily has any greater or lesser value than anything else that I think about the students. So just because a student has an off day, that’s not necessarily going to make me think that they’re devil child, I don’t think it necessarily works that way. It can help share an opinion if you see something consistently, but I don’t think it necessarily would be used in a negative way regarding student performance.

Also, you can’t necessarily compare on teacher’s perceptions to another, because it’s so subjective.

Interviewer: Would you worry if someone was coming in to watch you and you’d used Group Spinner and you’d done six SOLES with the class, if the progress- obviously you can see by layering up the graphs how the progress has gone, would you worry about showing someone who was watching that actually there have been sessions where they’ve, according to these graphs their progress has-?

T4: Not been as-?

Interviewer: Gone backwards almost.

T4: I don’t think learning’s necessarily a straightforward line, and I also think that there are so many different variables. As teachers we always say about the weather, but if you give them a question which is more abstract, then that might potentially be the reason why. I think that as a professional I would then be able to say, “They’ve not done as well today because the question that I gave them was this. and they really struggled with it. If I’m honest it was perhaps partially due to the question that I asked rather than to do with anything about the group.”

It could be that you had them lesson six as opposed to lesson one, but then you had a conversation with the students about that. I wouldn’t necessarily be worried about saying they sometimes find something more challenging, but here are the reasons potentially why they did. Like I said, learning’s not a straight line it’s up and down, we did this at the start of a topic, we did it at the end of a topic, we’d done something the lesson before about justifying so they were better at-

You can also say that your expectations change as you go through, as students get better then you should be raising what you expect from them, and having that sort of, a maximal-ness, what is maximal might change as you go through the course of a year. Because you shouldn’t be necessarily judging a class at the start of the year by exactly the same standards of what you expect from them by the end. Especially, they’re learning so much so quickly that they get better at stuff, so you then expect more from them if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Okay, and is there anything else? That’s all my questions, but is there anything else about it that occurred to you that I haven’t asked about?

T4: Not that I can think of no.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

T4: See I’m a chatter.

END AUDIO

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