



## How Can Digital Resources Help to Close the Gap?

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'Closing the Gap' became part of education dialogue before the pandemic but is now even more relevant and arguably encompasses a wider number of students. Whilst this means that there may be gaps, we can in fact look for positive ways to close them.

Many educationalists are now moving away from the term 'learning loss,' preferring to think instead of 'instructional loss.' This means that, whilst there may be gaps in expected age-related understanding, this does not need remediation but acceleration.

'Accelerated Learning' has emerged as a methodology for helping to address gaps in learning, whatever their root cause. Larry Ferlazzo, in his Education Week piece ['Five Strategies for Implementing Accelerated Learning.'](#) stresses that "Remediation is slow; acceleration is quick." Whilst Mollie Breeze, of Branching Minds, expands on this in a [recent blog](#) "...acceleration is **not** remediation.

It is not going back and attempting to fill in every student's gap in knowledge..."

In her book ['Learning in the Fast Lane'](#) Suzy Pepper Collins emphasises that acceleration "...strategically prepares students for success in the present — *this* week, on *this* content." The key here is that we move forward together, whilst identifying and addressing the gaps learners may have AS we move forward.

Digital resources can play an essential part in helping teachers to address gaps and accelerate learning in the context of new age-appropriate content. When students have access to technology at home adopting, or adapting, a flipped learning approach can be one great way to identify and address gaps.

For example, we could share videos addressing aspects of prior learning connected to a concept that we are about to study. These can be supported by

interactives, audio, or texts to explore the concept further. Current understanding can then be assessed with targeted questions focused on key prior learning objectives. This approach can allow the teacher and the student to identify any gaps, however it can also actually close the gaps during the process, by providing an opportunity to actively engage with important prior knowledge before we embark on the new age-appropriate learning.

Many digital tools provide potential for this sort of approach. At Discovery Education our Studio tool, which is part of our learning platform, allows teachers to curate engaging, relevant resources and to include questions which provide instant feedback both to students and teachers. For example, in preparation for working on using pronouns and nouns across sentences, we could create and share a resource which covers key aspects of prior learning, including concept videos and interactive tasks about nouns and pronouns. Student understanding can then be assessed and analysed by adding questions – including automatically marked questions.

This can provide useful input on prior knowledge, potentially closing gaps without the need for additional remediation or intervention. Any remaining gaps can then identified and targeted support provided.

An even more targeted approach to acceleration can be supported digitally, by creating skills building resources to be shared before or during new learning. Once again video can be especially helpful here, as it can provide multi-modal ways of explaining, modelling, contextualising, and reinforcing a concept or skill.

Using tools like Discovery Education's Video Quiz, we can embed questions directly into a video to check understanding or reinforce key points. For example, we could prepare to learn about simplifying fractions, by creating a video quiz on equivalent fractions a key prior step. Following this we can target any identified gaps with further video quizzes, for example around identifying basic equivalent fractions or ordering fractions.

Putting digital tools in the hands of the children can be a way of harnessing creativity as we identify and address possible gaps. One way of being digitally creative, whilst assessing understanding, is to make 'Paper Slide' videos. Ask children to use paper and pen to create a series of 'slides' including graphics and key words. They then write and rehearse a supporting script, then film their video in one-take using a mobile device focused on the slides. This can be done individually or in groups, it can be used following an input video, or activity or to assess current understanding.

Children preparing to learn about building electrical circuits in science could be provided with access to a collection of resources on basic circuits. They can create a 'Paper Slide' to demonstrate their understanding of electricity, scaffolded by asking them to use specific terms in the video – such as circuit, conductor, insulator, component etc. Once again, this acts both as a potential gap filler as well as identifying areas for support. Discovery Education provides 'Channels' of curriculum themed assets, which can easily be used to support a creative response like this.

It is worth reinforcing that these examples can all be completed at home, meaning more time is available in school to address any remaining gaps as the class 'moves forward together.'

Hear more around how digital resources can help close the gap  
[discoveryeducation.co.uk/closethegap](https://discoveryeducation.co.uk/closethegap)

