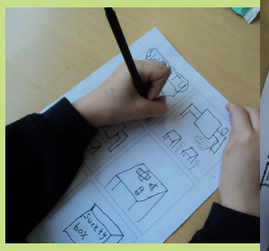
FaSMEd NEWSLETTER

Issue 9 **31st March 2016**

Welcome to our ninth issue of the FaSMEd newsletter. This issue includes news and updates from across the project

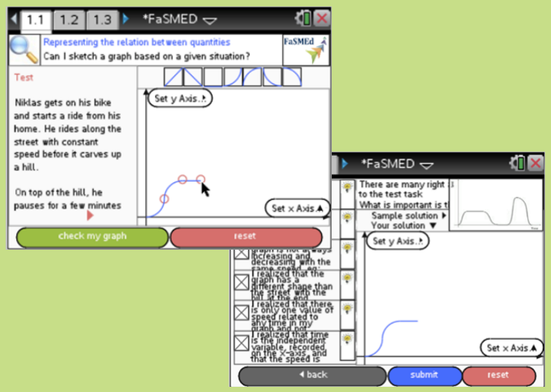
Student Voice: using comics to reflect on maths learning in the FaSMEd project

'Comics Boss' Lydia Wysocki Applied Comics Etc (http://www.appliedcomicsetc.com/) worked with FaSMEd to run a lunchtime comics club at George Stephenson High School, helping students age 12-13 to make comics as a way to reflect on their new-style science and maths lessons. These were the fastest comics workshops we've ever done: 35minutes a week, including lunch! The students' comics are fantastic, and the comic is now in the process of being put together and published. We're looking forward to sharing the finished comics in 2016.



FaSMEd partner news from Germany

After cycles of testing and redeveloping, the German FaSMEd team is proud to present a first running draft of a digital tool for formative self-assessment. The tool uses the software TI Nspire Navigator and gives students the opportunity to explore the mathematical content of functions. Thereby, they adopt the role of the assessor themselves, which is more than deciding if a solution is right or wrong. It encourages learners to question their thinking, giving self-feedback and use metacognitive strategies.



The project FaSMEd has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 612337

FaSMEd Project Consortium meeting in Cape Town

February 2016

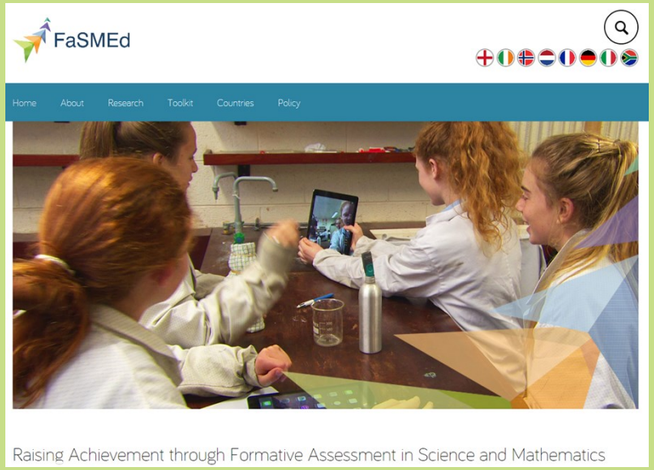
It is difficult to believe that the FaSMEd project is now two years in! In February 2016, we held our consortium meeting in Cape Town in South Africa, wonderfully hosted by our South African partners at AIMSSEC. AIMSSEC is an initiative of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), a centre for education and research based in Muizenberg, Cape Town. Established in 2003 as a partnership project with Cambridge, Cape Town, Oxford, Paris Sud XI, Stellenbosch, and Western Cape Universities, AIMS promotes mathematics and science in Africa, recruits and trains talented students and teachers and works to build capacity for African initiatives in education, research, and technology.

This was a significant meeting as we reflected on particular Work Packages and how we take our work forward in the final year. In recent months each partner has completed a huge body of work – our case studies – which are an essential and very fruitful source of data from our interventions. This was our first opportunity to share our case studies and initial findings across all partners. We dedicated significant time to discussing the analysis of our interventions and case studies across our partner countries and agreed on a process for taking this forward.

The web-based toolkit

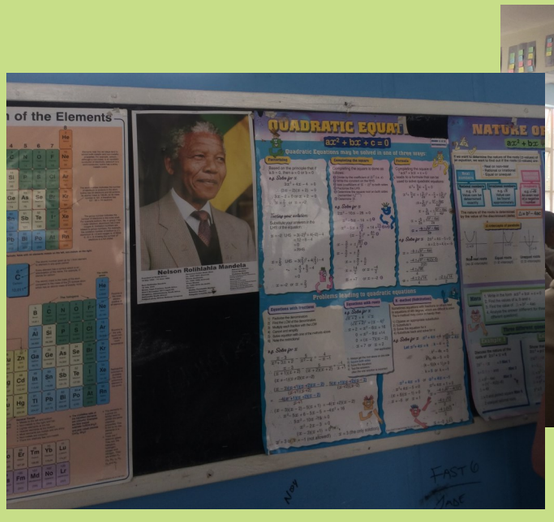
We were also able to present our latest (work in progress) version of the web-based toolkit. This is being designed by a local Newcastle-based graphic design company called Ready Salted. This company has a great deal of experience of working with the University and so the process of producing the website has been very straightforward.

Since returning from South Africa David Wright has met with the designers again to ensure that the suggestions for improvements to the design proposed by the partners will be enacted.



School visits

One of the highlights of the programme was our visits to some of the schools that our South African partners have been working with during the FaSMEd project. Our AIMSSEC partners organised for us to visit three different (and contrasting) schools in the area, and each school visit took place in the morning and then we returned to Muizenburg for our meetings. The school visits were both inspiring and thought-provoking, and illustrated the differences of the schools, and schooling, compared to some of our partner schools. Our inclusion of a South African partner has always been prompted by the fact that there are such obvious differences and that we can learn from this, and our visits really brought this to life for all our partners.



Invigorated by the beautiful country and location, we returned to our particular countries with renewed vigour and a fresh perspective.

FaSMEd Project Developments …

FaSMEd filming: Ruth Marshall from MLM Learning Design keeps us up-to-date

It has been a pleasure liaising with different team members and partners across the project, to gather material for the video outputs. Our aim is to capture an essential witness to the activity of the project and to provide a legacy, in video, that not only celebrates the work of the project, but also delivers video sequences that will fuel discussions and have a place in teachers' professional development – and, where appropriate, initial training. In doing this, we have been privileged to have been invited into a diverse range of classrooms.

Ireland. Julian travelled to Maynooth, Ireland in October 2015 to record at three very different schools. The visit gave Julian an excellent opportunity to capture video of students using technology while trying some of the FaSMEd mathematics and science tasks, along with some valuable interviews with teachers, students and the Maynooth University team. We were encouraged not solely in pupils' engagement with the tasks, but also their willingness to perceive themselves as collaborators in gaining a better understanding of their own learning. We are very grateful to Majella and Niamh for their welcome and for organising the visits, and also to staff and pupils at Coláiste Pobail Setanta, Oaklands Community College and Maynooth Community College.

South Africa. Meanwhile, Marie and Ingrid at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMSSEC) have been busy capturing a range of evidence on video from numerous settings, reflecting the enthusiasm, energy and commitment of their teachers. We are grateful to Marie and Ingrid for not only sharing much of this with us, but also for gathering a record of the consortium conference in February. We are now enjoying looking through the recordings to gain insights into partners' thinking now that we are towards the end of the project.

Germany. Julian is looking forward to travelling to Essen in April, to capture something of the reasoning behind the design of some of the classroom tasks on evaporation. We send our thanks to Phillip, Raphael and colleagues from the University of Duisburg-Essen for helping to set this filming up and for corralling us all into a workable schedule. Julian looks forward to meeting the team after the Easter break.

Outcomes. What we've seen so far, is not simply the industrious gathering of research data, but teachers and students who are excited by their involvement in the project. The interest of researchers has encouraged teachers and schools not only to consider the technologies, but also to reflect more deeply on teaching and learning, and the contribution pupils can bring to the process.

For further information please see: http://research.ncl.ac.uk/fasmed
Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/fasmedproject
Follow us on Twitter @ FaSMEdProject
Or email: fasmed@ncl.ac.uk

The project FaSMEd has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 612337