



Case Study on Readiness to Use E-Assessment at Grosvenor Grammar School

Background

Grosvenor Grammar School is a co-educational controlled grammar school. The school completed an £18.5 m renovation and refurbishment in April 2010. The current enrolment at the school is 1088, with 73 full-time teachers.

Capacity for e-assessment

At Grosvenor Grammar School, we have three dedicated ICT rooms with ninety computers in total. We have four other rooms in the school that house terminals: three with 20 terminals each and one with 30 terminals. We have 21 iMacs in the music suite as well as nine legacy PCs.

We also have 70 laptops, available on trollies, which teachers can book. We also have 15 older laptops in the careers department, but these are not used for assessments.

We have recently bought 65 iPads to use in school. In May 2014, we gave iPads to all thirty heads of department as part of a pilot programme. Each head of department received training from iTech. We are piloting iPads in subject departments. We will use feedback from this pilot to inform the Board of Governors of plans for using iPads in the school. We aim to use iPads to improve pupil engagement, literacy skills and teaching and learning in the classroom.

As a pilot scheme in the Modern Languages department, the head of Spanish is leading an initiative to use 20 iPads in Spanish classes. Teachers use these to improve teaching and learning in the classroom and explore further applications.

We have issued teaching staff in the Physical Education (PE) department with iPads to investigate their use in PE. Teachers are using these to analyse technique in sport, including their own. They will also use iPads for internal assessments.

Each department head has an Apple TV to use along with their iPad. We are in the very early stages of iPad use for heads of departments. They are exploring how they might want to use these in the future. Apple TV projects what is happening on the iPad onto a large screen. This allows the teacher

to take pictures of pupil work and display it on the whiteboard. In PE, teachers can use Apple TV to project movies from the iPad onto a screen so that pupils can peer and self-assess. Teachers can also use apps to give feedback on technical ability in sport. We are not currently using iPads in external assessments for either Spanish or PE.

Staff are free to use their iPads as electronic mark books and teacher planners or anything else they find useful. We have not yet focused on using iPads for assessment, as we need to provide further training.

We are just discovering how we can use iPads to enhance teaching and learning. We have learned that iPads:

- are excellent for peer and self-assessment;
- engage pupils; and
- have many apps that can enhance learning, in particular Keynote and Explain Everything.

We have discovered that, with an appropriate app, we can use the iPad as an administrative tool. We are also exploring how teachers can create their own books, using iBooks and Google Docs.

We currently have a private network running on 20 Mb BT broadband. We plan to move to a 40 Mb service during 2015. We also use the C2k network in school, which has 100 Mb broadband. We have 160 computers connected to the internal legacy network.

Culture

One of our vice principals is responsible for the school's ICT strategy. Along with a senior teacher, he liaises with C2k. We also have two full-time ICT technicians. Two members of our teaching staff have one management point each for promoting using ICT in the school. We have held training sessions on:

- virtual learning environments (VLEs);
- how to share best practice;
- our ICT strategy;
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP); and
- our ICT acceptable use policy.

We currently have three specialist ICT teachers. However, we have no formal policy for e-learning or e-assessment.

The leadership team is committed to training school staff. The ICT-based in-house training that we receive as part of almost every school INSET day reflects this. Staff members have also received

training at Studio-On (Belfast). We have supported some staff members to take ICT-related courses at Belfast Metropolitan College.

We have embedded Using ICT (Cross-Curricular Skills) throughout the school. Staff members communicate with each other by email. All pupil reporting in the school is now electronic. The Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) programme always features an ICT element.

VLE

The leadership team is more focused on e-learning than e-assessment. The team wants to be progressive. It has been looking for a good virtual learning environment (VLE). We will probably use Fronter because C2k provides and supports it and private provision is expensive. We estimate that private provision would cost in the region of £16k – £18k.

Using e-assessment

The school uses Year 11 information systems (Yellis) and middle years information systems (MidYIS) to test Key Stage 3 pupils and advanced level information systems (ALIS) for post-16 pupils. These tests are online and run smoothly in the school environment.

Teachers are using online tests as part of their non-formal assessments. For self-assessment, they use First Class Tests and Google forms. The modern languages department uses SurveyMonkey and Edmodo. The English department also uses Edmodo. Teachers with expertise and interest increasingly use online assessment. They feel that pupils respond well to this form of testing.

All Year 4 and 5 pupils take the MS Office Specialist (MOS) online assessment, comprising MS Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and Access.

We have encountered some barriers to using e-assessment. These are:

- having the right computer configurations for a number of different assessments from different providers;
- having appropriate invigilation expertise; and
- providing the appropriate rooms and room layouts for assessments.

We hope to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom: that is our core purpose. We look forward to a time when we can facilitate more assessment online to benefit our pupils.