

OLA Case Study

STUDENT 1: I thought it was much easier and quicker to do and easy to move through these questions compared to a written test.

STUDENT 2: I found the test easier to use. It was online and I'm used to using computers every day.

STUDENT 3: I found it really easy to adjust to the electronic test, and the format of the questions was, really, quite clear and straightforward.

STUDENT 4: My main differences when doing the electronic test compared to the paper was that you were able to work at your own pace, but, also, it kept you aware of how much time you had left.

STUDENT 2: The timing was good because it really-- It's good enough for everyone to use. It's giving you a lot of time to do the test and check over it.

STUDENT 4: I found the stimulus easy to use because you're able to listen to the stimulus several times before actually having to answer a question.

STUDENT 2: The images, they were clear and you were able to know what they were, and read them as well.

STUDENT 4: It was easy to add the words with accents because there was a wee keyboard at the bottom of the screen to help you.

STUDENT 2: Yeah, you're able to go back through the questions in case you got one wrong and you needed to check it before submitting. It was really useful.

TEACHER: As Head of Modern Languages, I would like to promote Modern Languages throughout the school, and I think the introduction of electronic tests may help us. Young people are used to online activities in all aspects of their life, and I think it makes sense that education should also move with the times. Modern Languages will benefit from this innovative connection with ICT. It opens up the opportunity for learners and teachers to experience a new way of learning and testing.

In this Modern Language assessment, candidates are tested in four areas. Namely, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The speaking test is conducted separately, but the other three areas are tested electronically in three separate tests. The teacher plays the same role as the invigilator, and has the same basic function: To administer the tests and to ensure that examination procedures are adhered to.

Firstly, we have invigilation. The system allows the teacher to create a specific test for each class sitting. The invigilation module is very user-friendly. It lets me create sessions in seconds, add candidates to that session, generate candidate passwords and usernames, add in extra time for candidates if required.

I am impressed with the way in which the e-Assessment method has simplified the whole process of invigilation. It has a straightforward menu which is intuitive and user-friendly. It is set up to allow complete control of the start and finish times of the tests. This means that the class can all start at the same time.

The delivery module allows candidates to take the test electronically. In general, the test lasts 20 minutes. The candidate is provided with a secure login, in order to access the electronic test. Once

access is activated by the invigilator or teacher, the candidate is presented with a series of stimuli, such as listening stimuli, images and text. They have to respond to the stimuli by answering questions.

The candidate can scroll through the questions in any order. An added feature is the little keyboard, which enables foreign accents to be added to the letters as necessary. The system saves the candidates responses continuously, and whenever the test is complete, the candidate simply saves and submits the test for marking.

The marking of this test is carried out partly by the system, and partly by the teacher. Approximately two-thirds of the candidate's answers are marked automatically, and only questions which require the teacher's judgment are allocated to the teacher for marking. There are 12 different question types ranging from Drag and Drop, Gap Fill, Free Text Response, True and False Questions.

The sheer variety of question types is appealing, and is a positive change for candidates. The main benefits, to me, lie in the fact that it makes the whole language more appealing to young learners. In general, candidates are used to doing things online, and for them, it is more interesting to be tested in this way. The overall effect will be to raise motivation, and encourage young people to do languages. Clearly, the quantity of marking to be done is reduced considerably, when compared with the old paper-based test.

The method is efficient, and reduces the marking burden considerably. The main benefit to the candidates is that they can now take the test in an electronic environment. For most candidates, this is an attractive method of testing.

It is straightforward, more colourful, and looking to the future. Probably a much more natural testing environment for this age group. The technician has a significant role in the successful running of the test by setting up links in advance, ensuring hardware is working well. The teacher requires very basic ICT skills. The system is designed to take you through a series of logical steps. And once the teacher has done this once, it is easy to do again. Support is available throughout the process so I feel confident about language teaching in the future.