



Moorside School Community Technology College

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People in Frog schools are changing the way their school works. Leaders, teachers and pupils are all finding new and more effective approaches. Statements from staff in schools indicate that Frog enables this much better than other platforms. Frog users can design and create systems and pages very easily – be this for departmental websites and lessons, communication or admin systems, or areas students develop for each other. We believe that it is the exceptional creative control possible in Frog, through which all can demonstrate their passion and desire to help others, that makes the users of these areas of the school's digital environment much more willing to engage.

This series of 'white papers', produced from conversations between an independent consultant and the schools, explores the way this increased engagement is changing attitudes. An accumulation of relatively small projects is spiraling into major developments. The end result is the overall startling improvements referred to in comments from staff at all levels.

Embedding Frog into every day life at Moorside:

Brian Elliott is in his 4th year and was appointed eLearning coordinator (and teacher) at Moorside Community Technology College as a direct result of the impact he has made on the school. Along with Jonathan Morris, Headteacher, Brian has been a driving force behind the implementation of the many positive strands that are making the school so successful.

Although it is now taken for granted as a vital part of the school, the school has used their Frog to make large strides forward. One of the initial steps was to ensure that at ground roots level all administration such as meetings, action plans, timetables, lesson planning, assessment and policies etc were made easily accessible through their Frog. Use of all of these is now embedded into every life at Moorside.

All students are actively encouraged to access lesson plans to make more sense of the objectives set out, as well as review content covered, work missed and what is to come next. As part of that process, work is automatically personalised by teachers sending specific work to groups/individuals as well as the work sent to the whole class. By emailing tasks and activities in this way students are able to work at their own level and also (particularly at home) at their own pace and whenever they feel like working.

The Discipline for Learners (DfL) policy set up has been a really successful system that permeates through the school. It allows teachers to immediately notify about students causing trouble or behaving unacceptably. This allows Form teachers and Heads of Year to be aware of problems arising and aids escalation if necessary to resolve the problems.



The school has made requests of Frog that go beyond what is possible with other learning platforms. They are now awaiting improved links between Frog and their MIS, so information about pupils can be remotely and seamlessly accessed by students, parents and staff.

Becoming the country's most improved school

Using their Frog platform has become an integral part of the way the school operates. As a direct result of progress made in all areas, Moorside has been highlighted as the most improved school for raising standards. One of the key issues from their 2001 Ofsted Inspection was to raise standards in ICT, but the impact of Frog has been much wider than just ICT. By 2007 the school had improved overall from satisfactory to good. The Key Issues they addressed were:

- Raising standards of attainment in Key Stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Making better use of the information that the college has, on students' progress in subjects, to plan learning activities that meet the individual needs of students.
- Improving the use of questioning in lessons, to challenge higher-attaining students, or support those finding the work difficult.

Each of these Key Issues has been addressed effectively – with evidence of successes achieved being seen through the way the school has embedded the facilities that Frog offers. Brian's story of the way he has set about planning and implementing initiatives include:

1. Setting up the departmental Product Design website as a stunning model of a departmental website. This was then added to and the model used over and over again with departments. The richness of the resources and functionality also virtually guarantees any teacher an outstanding lesson.
2. He has the support of the head with the rest of the staff into buying into the advantages of Frog. Staff have been actively encouraged to alter, redesign and add to their departmental websites. This has generated staff ownership of them.
3. Along with the head, Brian has provided the range of resources (such as interactive whiteboards, DVD players and sound systems) that staff needed to enable a dramatic change in the styles of teaching. A major strength of the school is the similarity of approach the teachers bring to delivering the curriculum and lessons across the school.
4. The way the school has used Frog to change the administrative work processes of teachers has positively changed the way teachers operate on a day to day level. All teachers log-in every day to check the daily news sheet, to read and pass messages to students, so it is easy to access the other administrative functions in their Frog.
5. Techniques have been used to make processes easier. For example the calendar messages are colour coded on the right hand side of the front page of the school web-



site daily briefing – with Governors’ or subject departments’ messages written in particular colours. This enables people read their own messages first and to not waste time reading everything!

Standards improve as teaching and learning practices change.

The effective way staff have used email with students, and planned the curriculum to differentiate between ability groups in each year and then personalise tasks within those groups, have improved standards across the school. Even homework has become more meaningful and has been re-named by the school; it is now called Independent Study.

As in school, the rapid feedback by email is much appreciated by students. Once students have uploaded work, they receive instant or at least rapid feedback. As a result there is greater motivation to improve and students are able to break the ‘its not cool to study’ attitude.

Leading from the top

The staff being told by the Headteacher to only use the school’s Frog for some purposes sounds ‘draconian’ – but it was an extremely effective way of ensuring immediate similarity of approaches across the school which has benefited everyone.

Communication has been noticeably improved by making staff use email as the way to communicate across the school and with each other. Another positive development has been that each of the subject departments has tailor-made and created their own web-sites saving, storing and continually adding to resources that are then much more easily accessible by staff and students.

Using the Frog recording and assessment system teachers are alerted when students have submitted their work. They can easily see which students have completed tasks and where work is ready to mark. Grades and comments made are likewise easily visible to both teacher and student. Students are able to ask teachers questions on-line and the on-line record sheet shows how many attempts students have posted.

The Product Design website.

Product Design was the first subject area to lead the way in modelling their own web-site. They have incorporated a whole range of resources that have been continually added to. The resources are available for teachers and students and include planning, starter activities, complete projects, exam papers, interactive lessons, quizzes, grade/level descriptors and exemplars of work.

One example the ‘lamps’ project to make model lamps that light up, has exemplars with pictures and photos of what is expected from students, level descriptors so that



students can see what needs to be included in their project and objectives - in addition to the resources available. This makes it much clearer to students what they need to achieve.

The rich English Departmental website has major impacts.

The English teachers are a typical example of a department that has planned and put up lessons for ability groups. Within each 'set' of lessons the teachers use there is a brilliant range of engaging 'fun' games that can be used as starter activities in lessons – for example Countdown where students have to create words from jumbled letters, as in the Countdown TV programme. Teachers create their own countdown games to focus on key words to be learnt in a lesson.

English staff have uploaded videos, and added their own audio comments, to instruct students about tasks set. Tasks are then emailed to students as Independent Study (Homework) assignments. Since they started using Frog, staff are now thinking far more carefully about the way they set up lessons, what they can do to improve and add to lessons year on year, and what activities students can do.

Staff across the school have successfully been able to get students to recognise that when they email completed tasks that is not the end of the task - teachers will respond with annotated marks and comments identifying strengths, errors, and what they need to do improve grades. When students see that grades can be very easily improved they rapidly alter their attitudes to learning in school. Perhaps best of all is the improved student-teacher trust and relationships that have been built.

The atmosphere in classrooms clearly exhibits the positive changes. There is similarity of underlying approach so students know what to expect. The teachers work hard to improve the delivery of teaching and make learning more enjoyable. For example teachers introduce lessons with starter activities to set the scene and get students into 'work mode' in that subject. It is notable how relaxed and friendly the atmosphere was in each room visited, with students all engaged and on task, with teachers able to move freely around the room, speaking quietly to students.

The change process is continuing. Websites are being further developed for staff and students in all subjects. Through using the email and planner, teachers in school are now developing the trust with students necessary for them to improve the standard of their work. Students are now completing their coursework by end of year, instead of teachers having to chase students to finish coursework.



Mathematics department adds blogs, revision videos, IEPs.....

The Maths department has also led in the initiatives taking place across the school. Their departmental website now houses a range of documents, that includes plans and support for all lessons. The department has its own blogs, forum, notice board and calendar. The Maths team have also added a range of games and revision videos for their students directly linked to Maths concepts. Such games are highly effective in order to help students learn basic Maths concepts. They have even included activities where the Maths programmes mark and assess students' work entered and recorded onto the school's network.

The Maths team have also created individual education programmes (IEPs) for students with special needs, which adds to the consistency of teaching and learning across the department.

Other subjects follow the lead of English and Maths.

One fear for teachers is that working online during the evening increases teacher workload. However, by teachers allowing students to email assignments out of school hours and receiving, marking assessing and annotating work online before it is returned to students, means teachers are working more effectively. At Moorside, teachers are finding that taking a few minutes to respond to students during the evening is a far more productive way of eliciting the best from their students, than by speaking to them at length in class or straight after lessons, when other children and distractions are present.

Teachers are able to highlight errors and annotate work easily so that students have a very clear and helpful picture of the level at which they are working. Students appreciate the near instant responses from teachers and are made aware of mistakes made. They are also able to ask questions when they get stuck at home (knowing they get rapid responses). This ties in with the school's Assessment for Learning Policy, indicating the sorts of additions necessary for them to improve their work and showing them they have the potential to move from, for example, 'D' to 'C' or 'B' to 'A' grades.

Students, particularly those who are quiet or timid, are now finding they too have a voice that is listened to away from their peers. They often work late into the evening and get additional encouragement from parents.

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