

CASE STUDY



**Providing exciting opportunities
How Reading LA have encouraged use
of Netmedia's Learning Platform
throughout the authority**



**Contact us today to find out how Netmedia can help
to transform teaching and learning in your school or LA.**

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Netmedia is pleased
to have been selected as a
'Becta Learning Platform
Services Framework Supplier.'



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Choosing a Learning Platform

After consultation with schools, Reading LA made the decision to provide access to Netmedia's Learning Platform (LP) to all its primary and secondary schools in 2005. The LA wanted all their schools to be using the same LP in order to gain the maximum benefit in terms of sharing and collaboration. They felt that Netmedia's LP was suited for both their primary and secondary schools, especially as they are able to change the "look and feel", enabling personalisation at all levels. This 'one LP' approach creates continuity throughout a pupil's time in education. With Netmedia, the LA's investment provided them with a flexible solution to enable personalised e-learning to become a reality across their whole authority.

Focused training provides direct benefits

From the very beginning the LA knew that the LP implementation would only be successful if they provided support and training to all their schools. Being a small LA provided some advantages, as the authority could focus on targeted training sessions to meet specific needs. Initial introductions to the LP were made to specific job-holders, e.g. Primary ICT Co-ordinators, Secondary Head Teachers, allowing each to see exactly how the LP was relevant to them and how it will benefit the school. Plus, a group of pilot schools set-up before the LP roll-out fed 'lessons learned' into the training sessions so that schools could directly benefit from their experiences.

Subsequent training sessions for the schools have been paid for by the LA as they felt it was important to show continued commitment 'from above' to the initiative and to spare schools having to cover this additional expense. **Janet Gavin, ICT Consultant** for the LA, feels that this has encouraged schools to seek additional support specific to their needs without having to worry about the budgetary impact. Also, the LA has taken a proactive role in supporting schools and will approach them with the offer of training if they do not appear to be making best use of the LP.

Extending usage through specific projects

The LA quickly developed a 'project based' approach, using the Learning Platform to address specific needs that they and the schools had identified. Successful projects which the LA have developed over the past year include:

Reading Blogs: Specifically aimed at reluctant boy readers in primary schools, the *Journal "Property"* was used to encourage pupils to create their own reading blogs. The pupils could keep the blogs private, with only themselves and the class teacher being able to access, or share this "Property" with other members of the class. Utilising a scenario that was familiar provided motivation for the pupils and this project has been very successful in engaging children in thinking about books and has encouraged wider reading.

LA Resources and Information: The LA quickly realised that the information they were providing their schools could all be consolidated into one small area within the LP. The LA set up a number of 'resource areas' with relevant information such as the weekly bulletins, curriculum resources, guidance materials and policies and procedures. Then, an *Index "Property"* was set up to link all these resource areas together so schools only need access to one "Property" for all this information. Having all the information stored in the LP also provides a greater level of transparency, as all information is accessible to all staff in the schools.

Helping EAL teachers to communicate and collaborate: The EAL teachers, who are part of Equality Services, are not based within one school. As such, they often feel isolated and find it difficult to communicate both with the schools they work in and with each other. A 'Class' was set up within MyClasses for the EAL teachers, which included a *calendar*, a shared resources area, a *notice board* for sharing useful websites and a *notice board* for communicating with each other. The LA have found that the EAL teachers now feel more involved in the life of the schools they are working at and feel positive that they can share ideas and resources with each other through the LP. These teachers now feel less isolated in their work and feel part of a team.

Key Stage 2 Maths Project: This project was set-up with about 12 schools who needed to improve their overall SATs results for Maths. A 'Class' within the MyClasses area was set up for the teachers involved which included websites, useful information, booster materials, practice activities and a suggestion area to request additional information. A similar Class was also set up for the pupils providing extra help and resources for their SATs revision.

Transition Project: This post-SATs activity was run with one secondary school and four of its feeder primary schools. The project was built on the idea of travelling to a new planet and the activities included creating an e-passport and composing music. Although cross-curricular in nature, all outcomes were related to ICT. There was also an "Ask the Expert" section where primary pupils could ask questions and set up e-buddies. The project was so successful that the LA would like to roll this out to all schools.

GCSE revision help: Areas have been set-up within MyClasses to assist with GCSE revision. Similar to the KS2 Maths Classes, these areas contain curriculum information, notes from the relevant lessons, past exam questions pupils can complete and information to help them with their revision. With all the information in one place the pupils are able to access this 'anytime, anywhere' and will be able to spend less time searching for the resources and more on their revision.

"Playing for Success": Developed in conjunction with Reading FC, this after-school project focuses on Literacy and Numeracy in the context of football. Pupils attended after-school sessions for 10-week blocks at the Reading FC grounds. The use of the LP enabled introductory and follow up work to take place in an environment familiar to the pupils. Pupils attending were able to share their achievements back at school and at home. In addition it provided evidence of the work completed to their schools.

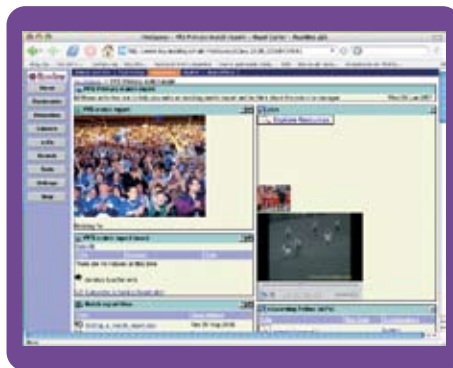
This approach, introducing the LP's tools and functionality to schools within discrete projects with very specific outcomes, has resulted in strong and frequent use of the LP. Schools perceive the LP as a useful resource area which complements their existing curriculum and a great learning opportunity for pupils. The benefits of using the platform with children extend beyond the schools with both Equality Services and Youth and Community Services keen to develop the use of the LP within their work, further embedding the LP across the whole authority.



Reading LA's MyDesktop



KS2 Maths Project Class



"Playing for Success" Class