

21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING ALLIANCE  
TEACHER FELLOWSHIP  
UPDATE REPORT

THE IMPACT OF NETBOOKS ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING

THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL  
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## **Introduction**

At The Bishop's Stortford High School we are working on a trial scheme investigating the impact of Netbook computers on children's learning. The Netbooks are being issued to a third of the Year 7 cohort for a term over this academic year. Research is being undertaken to investigate the effects on teaching and learning.

The Leading Learning Team responsible for piloting the scheme has completed several elements of the project. The first is the contribution to the BECTA sponsored Nottingham University Impact 09 study. This involved four staff being involved in focus interviews and a number of lesson evaluations where the Netbook technologies were being employed. The study also interviewed a number of children about the use of technology to support learning. The results of this study have not yet been published but are due imminently.

## **The research**

A further component of our work has been quantitative studies on the use of technology at home by Year 7 students asking the year group how they use ICT at home. As a follow-up the views of parents on the use of Netbooks to support learning were also surveyed. The overriding view was that given certain conditions both parents and students were in favour of the scheme. An examination of the effects on teaching and learning at a classroom level has also taken place through controlled classroom observation and teacher lesson evaluations. This has been hugely beneficial in giving insight into how the scheme can be extended next year and the circumstances under which the impact on learning will be at its greatest. The findings of the study have been communicated through the use of a project blog (<http://tbshsnetbooks.wordpress.com/>) and more formally through the ICT strategy team and ELT. A formal 'academic' report of the findings will take place over the next two months and will be in the form of a TLA (Teacher Learning Academy) stage three presentation.

As a result of our initial observations, further discussion is taking place concerning the need for an enhanced infrastructure to support the additional 'traffic' and changes needed to the learning platform.

In terms of the choice of handheld device, the market for these products has changed significantly over the last six months with the advent of touch screen devices such as the Apple iPad and the HP tablet. We are watching these developments with great interest as part of our work. Staff participants in the project are being encouraged to have their work recognised through the Teacher Learning Academy.

During an away day INSET we visited other schools that have similar schemes, we are particularly grateful to Perins School in Hampshire for their help.

## **Conclusion**

Our involvement with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Alliance has provided both financial support and challenge to our thinking, supporting the projects in a number of ways. A visit to BETT provided an excellent opportunity to meet the other fellows where we gave updates on the progress of our projects and heard about some of the really exciting developments going on around the country. It was also an excellent opportunity to see some of the latest software and hardware developments that may influence our thinking. In addition, Tony Richardson (my e-mentor) and his team at BECTA organised a really interesting day, where I was able to meet a number of different team members who gave very helpful insight into a number of issues that we are having to grapple with. It was particularly interesting to take this opportunity to consider some of the staff development issues that we will be considering alongside the introduction of new technology. There was also re-assurance and confirmation of some of our thinking concerning the possibilities associated with “cloud computing”. We will be exploring some of these issues in the next phase of the project.

Andrew Hook

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