Reducing teacher workload at the British School of Kuwait

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DODDLE
for international schools

Product	Region	Curriculum
Doddle	**Middle East**	**English National**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Teachers' time is better spent adapting curriculum-specific resources for each class, than trawling through resource banks trying to find the right content

- Students enjoy the freedom to be able to access resources from home, enabling them to read up on a topic before their lesson or catch-up afterwards

- Doddle KS3 resources provide useful intervention for KS4 students struggling with difficult concepts, while the GCSE resources can be used to stretch high-ability students

The British School of Kuwait is a co-educational international school in Salwa, Kuwait. David Williams is the Biology Coordinator at the school, teaching students from 11 through to 18.

In recent years, the school has seen their intake increase, to the extent that the number of sets studying for their Biology IGCSE has grown from five to nine.

With more students comes a greater range of abilities, as well as a large cohort of EAL learners, meaning that teachers are having to differentiate their teaching and the resources they use. At the same time, like many international schools, the school has a number of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and non-specialists, making the teaching of the complex science specifications all the more challenging.

> *None of the problems we face are insurmountable, but when they're put together, it becomes a bit more challenging.*

Reducing teacher workload

For David, one of the best ways to support his department was to improve the quality of its available resources. He gives the example of a colleague, a chemistry specialist who hadn't studied biology since school. David believes that teachers shouldn't be spending all their time looking for resources or making new ones, but rather adapting them for their classes.

In order to ensure his colleague could still teach the subject effectively, the two collaborated on a number of resources that would help explain complicated concepts to her students in both an engaging and accessible way.

The introduction of Doddle in 2016 had two objectives: to reduce teacher workload and to ensure a high quality of learning across the science department.

The department needed a system that would work in combination with the whole school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each year is set up on the VLE, lesson by lesson, and in correlation with the science department's schemes of work. This enables students to see what they're studying in every class at all times, so that they can catch up on missed lessons or read ahead.


This is an example of a topic on the school's VLE. The class are studying the movement of water in plants. On the VLE, David has pinpointed a potometer simulation found on Doddle. "The interactive nature of this meant we could build a review lesson from this experiment," he explained, while a Doddle quiz was also set as homework for students to complete.

> *We didn't want students spending all their time looking around, trying to find resources, so we built Doddle into our schemes of work, our teaching and our assessments.*

Integrating Doddle into the VLE

Having used Boardworks resources before, the science department knew how valuable the presentations (now updated and on Doddle) could be to teaching, in particular the interactive activities which work well as lesson starters or revision recaps. Now there is an added value with self-marking quizzes, which are set as homework at least once every unit. All of the students' results from these quizzes feed into an online markbook, which enables teachers to more effectively set targets, and track engagement through student activity, for example how many resources they've launched in their own time.
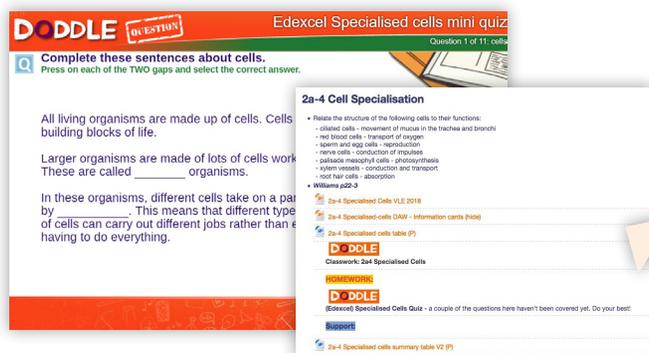
The VLE contains content students have studied in class, as well as resources they can rely on for revision and extra support. A homework activity is set to the students: a self-marking quiz on Doddle.

Engaging different learners

The science department also use Doddle to set extension work for high ability students, as well as intervention work for students who may need more support. In particular, the Key Stage 3 resources can also be used at Key Stage 4, providing support resources for low-ability students. The content is still relevant, and takes students through complex concepts at a slower pace, enabling them to better access the topics they are studying in class.

At the end of every unit, the department gather feedback from students to ensure they are getting the most out of the platform. Some students use Doddle purely as a homework tool, where they will complete their assignments, while for others it can be a useful revision tool.

" Doddle has been well-received by the students that use it. Some students like the fact that they can re-do the lesson by themselves and at their own pace, while the interactive nature of the animations really appeals to them. "

Supporting EAL students

One of the biggest challenges The British School of Kuwait faces is provision for their high number of EAL students, with limited resources available to support them. The science department have tried a number of different approaches to help EAL students as best they can: this can be anything from textbooks (which are very visual, with little text) and word activities to aid their English language comprehension.

In science a limited proficiency in English can cause problems, because there is so much vocabulary to learn, some of which is quite complex. This is where Doddle can provide extra support for EAL students, with key vocabulary presented at the end of most presentations, and word games, such as anagrams, which reinforce key vocabulary. With each student having their own login, EAL students are also able to look at the resources in their own time, enabling them to digest new information at their own pace.

" What students do like is the fact that we can link our content with Doddle. This enables them to go away and look at the resources as much as they want in their own time, so they can work at a more leisurely pace. "

Conclusion and next steps

The time David invested into creating schemes of work and integrating these with both Doddle and the VLE, has proved invaluable, "Now students have everything they need to know resource-wise ahead of their lessons, while if students want to read ahead, as a few of them do, they are able to with Doddle."

Like every school, however, time for intervention is limited and the department aren't always able to do everything they would like to. The next step for David is to make more of the question-level analysis in Doddle quizzes. The markbook provides powerful data on a class and individual student level, helping teachers to highlight areas of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. With time, the information this generates will enable teachers to set intervention work, using their own resources or Doddle content.