



Christ Church Grammar School

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Using Technology to Cater for Individual Differences

Reflections of a Year 4 teacher

My study evolved from the boys' interest in technology, a theme which emerged from our ethnographic study. Student interviews from across the Preparatory School indicated that boys enjoy using technology, both at home and school, and spent significant time using technology. However, they generally acknowledged the need for balanced and appropriate use, and even found technology overwhelming at times.

This led me to consider how I might use Mathematics class time more creatively with the help of Nexus, our School's virtual learning environment. My study had two endeavours: to minimise time spent providing lesson instructions and reiteration of instructions by communicating these through Nexus; and to give students autonomy over where and how they learn in Mathematics. I also considered how my classroom space could be reconfigured to better cater for students' preferred way of working.

Utilising a range of learning stations with different furniture and configurations, students could choose a style of learning which suited their preference, both within the classroom and outside. Nexus enabled me to differentiate learning by assigning selected tasks to certain students, allowed students to self-direct their learning at their own pace, and supported me to provide students with personalised, timely feedback.

For some tasks, I used a social stream in Nexus. Boys were able to post their work and give and receive feedback to and from each other.

Why it worked?

The use of learning stations enabled the teacher to cater for boys' individual differences by using Nexus to deploy tiered learning activities to different learning stations. Nexus, our virtual learning environment, provided a useful platform for self-directed learning and formative assessment. This freed the teacher to be able to personalise instruction and feedback. Also, the teacher used Nexus to create and reinforce a culture of collaboration by using the social stream, which created the opportunity for boys to learn from other boys.