

Parrot Fashion

supporting young people in developing enterprise capability

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The New National Curriculum Looms!

What is your school doing about skills based learning?

The new National Curriculum, to be rolled out in Year 7 from September 2008, is designed to allow schools to deliver a more rounded, creative educational experience for young people. Up and down the country, schools are planning exciting and original ways to structure learning, including the introduction of skills based learning.

QCA has developed an excellent framework of Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) to support schools (www.QCA.org.uk). Other frameworks, such as that which underpins RSA's 'Opening Minds' project, have already been adopted by schools interested in rejuvenating Key Stage 3 in particular.

For those of us interested in enterprise, these developments are fantastic news. A quick glance at any of these frameworks is enough to see that enterprise is embedded throughout; showing initiative, taking risks and solving problems to name but a few of the capabilities enterprising young people should possess.

But how will your school assess and track the development of skills? In the frantic rush to plan delivery of a new curriculum, this aspect is often forgotten. However, we all know that if you can't measure it, it isn't valued. And if you can't show impact, how do you know it's working?

Take a look at PET and its innovative approach to involving teachers and students in the assessment of their skills. Schools using PET have shown that it provides focus for skills based learning, engages students and collects sound data for demonstrating impact and progress.

For more information on how you can use PET to underpin the new National Curriculum, contact Matthew Evans at m.evans@forest.wokingham.sch.uk

The PET Seminar

Over the last two years Perfect Education has run successful seminars looking at the methodology behind PET and demonstration the tool itself. We are looking to hold a spring seminar in May and are currently looking for a suitable venue. If you would like to hold a seminar in your area and have a suitable venue then let me know.

The idea of the seminar is to allow people to use PET, learn how to set up an enterprise activity and complete the assessment process. The seminar will practically illustrate how PET can be used to structure enterprise learning within a school. It is a good way of seeing the tool in action before you sign up for the free 90 day trial.

To register your interest in attending a future seminar or if you have a venue available then please contact me.

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For more details about the Personal Effectiveness Tool then please visit our website www.petonline.org.uk

Question and Answer

Question

We understand that in order to use our version of PET we need to add in school data but we are worried about the safety of passing our student information to Perfect Education, what should we do?

Answer

Perfect Education Ltd recognize that under the data protection act we have a duty of care to the school (data controller), student (data subject) and to teachers.

Perfect Education has spoken to the Information Commissioners office regarding the use of data in PET. The clear message that came across is that provided;

- the data is being shared for valid reasons i.e. furtherance of education
- reasonable steps are taken to secure data in the online environment – passwords, firewalls etc
- and that those whose data is being used are aware of the use

Schools are quite within their rights to use online tools such as PET and the ICO would not want data issues to get in the way of the use of valuable online services.

As a “data controller” the school has to operate within the constraints of the Data Protection Act. To minimize any risks associated with this operation PET only requires student names, and year of entry. This data alone means that nobody would be able to identify, trace or contact individuals. PET support loads the data onto secure servers protected by firewalls and passwords. This is similar to schools Virtual Learning Environments and other online tools used by schools. Schools also often share more sensitive data for work related learning activities with other supplier organizations.

To get your schools PET operational student and teacher data needs to be entered. This can be done by the school manually, through the teacher admin section, or you can email Perfect Education basic student and teacher data in CSV or Excel files and we will enter the data for you. The data entered into your schools version of PET is password protected and not accessible to others.

To date 25 schools have provided data to Perfect Education and are successfully using PET. Some of these schools have chosen to inform parents that students will be using PET by writing to the parents of PET students. This in effect allows parents and/or students to raise any concerns they may have. Other schools have not done this either because they deemed this to be not necessary or because they already felt parents were aware of online activity.

To further minimize risks we will shortly have a new version of PET that enables the school to upload the data onto the PET servers thereby by passing the need to send data in emails.

The detail above is Perfect Educations view of the data protection issues and as a data controller decisions regarding the handling of data lie with the schools. Further information can be found at the Information Commissioners Office publications – www.ico.gov.uk

Do you have a question about using PET, or about enterprise learning in general? Please email us on marie.siford@perfecteducation.org.uk

Look out for more tips for using PET in next month's issue of Parrot Fashion!

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