

Case study:

Cramlington Learning Cycle moves up a gear with IRIS Connect

...transforming observations and sharing best practice...



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Cramlington Learning Village is a Comprehensive School in the North East of England, with 2300 students on the roll and 150 full-time teachers. It has been graded 'outstanding' in its last three OfSTED inspections.

Cramlington operates a clear vision of teaching and learning, known as the Cramlington Learning Cycle, which informs all lesson planning and drives continuous professional development (CPD) throughout the school. Lessons are developed around a six-part lesson-planning cycle, derived from Alistair Smith's 'Accelerated Learning' concepts.

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Ken Brechin was also attracted to IRIS Connect by the immediacy and quality of the feedback. He believes that commenting in context on the recording makes it so much easier for the teacher to absorb and implement the feedback. As Brechin says “With traditional observations and ‘post mortem’ feedback, it takes someone with very sophisticated powers of reflection to recall the moment, absorb the full impact and put change into practice immediately. By comparison, *the traditional method of observations looks like a blunt instrument.*”

Dr. Stuart Kemp, a Chemistry Teacher with just over a year’s experience, was one of the first volunteers to use IRIS Connect. Having experienced traditional observations, he felt that their value was limited by his ability to recreate the classroom situation in his mind. He finds IRIS Connect helps in this respect: “With the video and the contemporaneous notes, it feels more immediate. The review meeting is more valuable because it’s more of a dialogue than a one-way stream of feedback.”

Dr. Stuart Kemp believes that quantity and quality of observations are equally important to an individual’s progress: “There is no doubt in my mind that the more you observe, the more and the faster you learn. IRIS Connect lets you look at your own lessons in precise detail, analysing aspects such as physical positioning, vocal style, questioning technique and mannerisms. Also, colleagues can choose to share their lessons with me so that I can pick out the best bits and incorporate into my own practice.”



Cramlington Learning Cycle

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at Cramlington attend a three-day induction programme, where they are introduced to the model and given tools to help them with lesson planning. Ken Brechin meets with NQTs every half-term to coach them with effective teacher behaviour and classroom management. IRIS Connect has a key role to play, building a bank of best practice recordings to share with the new teachers so that they can incorporate the techniques into their lessons.

Ken Brechin concludes: “With IRIS Connect, teachers can now see the lesson through the eyes of a colleague. That has transformed the effectiveness of coaching and observations at Cramlington.”

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**An innovation in classroom based
professional development**

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