

Educake Case Study
Davenant Foundation School
Essex





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Background

The Davenant Foundation School is an 11-18 mixed suburban comprehensive academy, with about 1200 students. A high-achieving school, 74% of students achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSEs in 2016 and their Progress 8 score was +0.26. Deprivation is low, with around 10% of students on Pupil Premium. The school was rated as outstanding in their most recent OFSTED report.

Davenant Foundation School started using Educake in September 2015, and their students have answered over a quarter of a million Educake questions. We talked to David Liebeschuetz, Head of Science, and began by asking why Davenant Foundation School started using Educake:

Why did you start using Educake?

David: I had an overwhelming feeling that I had to do something about homework.

I didn't feel we were giving students enough homework, often enough. I know some schools have abandoned homework but I still feel that, especially for science, there is a very important role for it in consolidating learning.

I was at the ASE Conference, spotted Educake and took a leaflet. When I was thinking about

online homework later in the year, we started a free trial and then subscribed.

How did you get your students started with Educake?

It was quite straightforward. We handed out their usernames and passwords and they started using it. Then, when our new Year 7 students arrived we talked to them about Educake and explained that they will use it throughout school.

Educake follows the new KS3 curriculum, and because we weren't using that last year, we didn't use it as much at KS3 compared to our GCSE classes. However, we will be using the new KS3 curriculum next year and then expect to use Educake much more in that age group.

What do you use Educake for?

We mainly use it for homework, especially at the end of a topic. A brilliant example is that because it's split into small topics that match the specification you can set Educake tests for each topic as they learn, and then set a multiple topic tests for preparation for an end of term test.

For low ability groups, we use Educake in class with laptops, which is great because you can then go round and help them. It's a good in-class resource. On the other hand, if we want to set a top set homework on a single topic that will take an hour, Educake can do that.

Another major use of Educake is students setting their own revision tests with it, which we encourage.

What has the response been from teachers?

There has been a lot of positivity about it.

Some teachers use it for almost all their homeworks after every lesson. Having said that, some don't use it as much and there has been some reticence. I sometimes wonder whether this is because some teachers feel a bit guilty because it's so easy to set homework, and you don't have to mark it. Or it might be some individuals' attitude to technology, which can vary. I could push it more but at the moment I'm leaving it to the individual teachers.

What is your IT set up like?

It is good, with pretty good wireless internet. We are lucky now because we have two trolleys of laptops in the department, which I much prefer to a dedicated computer room.

How does Educake compare to other digital resources you've tried?

We use online textbooks from a large publisher which are good, but the cost does start to add up once you have subscriptions to all the different GCSEs and KS3.

We did try an online homework that came with the textbooks but we are now abandoning it in favour of Educake because teachers were just not using it, so we are now committing to Educake for the long term. This is because of the breadth of content and activities and the simplicity of the system. Also, the fact that kids can set themselves tests is a massive plus over other resources.

And don't get me started on [name removed]. It was terrible, and just incredibly disappointing.

In contrast, Educake has gone from a desirable extra to an essential part of our curriculum.

What has your overall impression of Educake been?

Very positive. We started with two online homework systems and are abandoning the other in favour of Educake. I can't give a better testimonial than that.

I think it's the simplicity and ease of use, and the breadth of content that makes Educake so good.

The constant challenge in science is a lack of time. The curriculum is stuffed with content and there is really too much to cover. Because of this I embrace a system like Educake that allows students to consolidate their knowledge. How can you not want to use a system that makes the students work harder but doesn't increase your workload?

David Liebeschuetz was speaking to Charley Darbshire, founder of Educake, in February 2017.

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