



How to Measure the Impact and Value of School Resources

Dominic Salles, Assistant Head at Chipping Campden School in Gloucestershire shares his approach.

School budgets are under increasing pressure so it has never been more important to demonstrate a return on investment when it comes to purchasing new technology, new software or introducing a new initiative. But all too often providing an accurate, quantitative impact evaluation proves mighty difficult within a school setting where teaching and learning tools are rarely used in isolation, which means that impact assessment is often based on gut feeling.

Gut feeling and anecdotal feedback can often be the best form of evaluation but aren't always sufficient to justify additional spending, renewal subscriptions or Ofsted.

Dominic Salles, Assistant Head at Chipping Campden School, a state secondary school in Gloucestershire wanted to find a more objective way of evaluating the impact and determining the school's ROI on its subscription to GCSEPod.

"We introduced GCSEPod in to school in December 2012 because we were interested in embracing mobile learning. It didn't take long to see that that the content was being used.



"Students across the board were downloading the podcasts and anecdotal feedback from students indicated that it was a useful resource. What's more, our 5 A* to C exam results that year, 2012 - 2013 increased by 13 %.

"Some might say... well, there's your answer, GCSEPod must be working. Whilst my gut feeling told me that this was the case, I knew that the improvements in our exam results may well be in part due to GCSEPod, but that success was due to a combination of efforts and resources, including the dedication of our teaching staff who have undoubtedly got better at training our children to prepare for exams.

"The time was coming to renew our subscription to GCSEPod. We had been deliberately cautious in buying only an annual subscription, and I wanted to see if the results could support renewing for

three years. At around £2,500 per year, was GCSEPod the bargain that it seemed?

"At the time, like many other schools we used Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data to set progress targets equivalent to the top 25% of performers.

"I decided to take this data and look at how individuals performed against their FFTD score and compare this to their use of GCSEPod. In essence I was looking to see if a pattern might emerge; would students who downloaded a greater number of podcasts be more likely to outperform their FFTD scores or would this have little bearing?

"I looked at individuals across four core subjects where GCSEPod had been well utilised- German, French, English and Science.



"I looked at the amount of downloads and compared this to the student's VA against their FFTD target grade.

"In every subject a pattern emerged. The students who had downloaded only a handful of podcasts had slightly underperformed against all four criteria whereas the students who had downloaded the most podcasts had greatly outperformed against their FFTDs, often achieving a full grade higher than expected.

"This armed me with quite powerful evidence that our subscription was delivering a return.

"But then what's to say that those students who downloaded the most podcasts are not simply studious and conscientious natural achievers and would work hard to achieve their best regardless of the revision tools available?

"To ensure this wasn't the case, I looked at the results that these students achieved in subjects where they did not have access to GCSEPod and used alternative revision techniques. In every case, the students downloading in excess of 50 podcasts in any one subject, achieved or significantly outperformed their FFTD target grade more consistently than they did in subjects where they hadn't used GCSEPod.

"GCSEPod are incredibly friendly and helpful, and we were correct in our belief that we would get a bespoke service. GCSEPod has helped achieve higher progress for our students. I love that the Pods are continually improving, and growing in coverage."

This evidence made the case for renewing for a further three years.

Fast forward two years and FFTD is no longer a matrix used in schools. However, the simple evaluation technique I developed in 2014 still withstands, although this time we are using Progress 8 scores to monitor the impact of GCSEPod and are measuring usage across Year 10 as well as Year 11 in order to develop a better set of data.

In fact Progress 8 provides a perfect platform on which to evaluate the impact of GCSEPod and because the Progress 8 target is set higher for more able students, we are able to get a true reflection of usage v impact across the board.

Two years ago it was clear to me that a £2,500 subscription was a bargain when compared to the £18,000 of a TA, or the £1,000 annual cost of a weekly hour of intervention; it was a no brainer which we simply couldn't afford not to.

That £2,500 continues to offer the same value for money but this time it's not only the students benefitting. A growing number of teachers are using GCSEPod as part of their teaching resources; using the content as a starter activity to introduce a topic or to recap on information and more are now using it as a homework tool enabling them to set meaningful homework which is quick and easy to assess and respond to.

- GCSE CONTENT FOR MOBILE
- DEDICATED PROJECT MANAGER
- LIVE USAGE REPORTING
- SET & MARK HOMEWORK
- MEASURABLE IMPACT
- 20 EXAM MAPPED SUBJECTS

