Blended Learning Update

January 2018

The development of a blended learning approach to classroom collaboration at Inveralmond High School entered its next phase in August 2017. Use of Yammer was extended to a Higher Modern Studies class and a new Politics class with an increased cohort.

Additionally, the application has been introduced across the school in a number of other departments following the 2016-2017 pilot. It has been used for a range of purposes, including the sharing of lesson resources and the delivery of homework tasks.

The following initial observations were made by the Modern Studies/Politics class teacher:

- Doubling the number of learners involved in an online conversation has presented some challenges:
  - There has been an emerging difference between the two classes who are engaged online in terms of their willingness to post information and be involved in discussions.
  - One class has shown greater reluctance to collaborate openly, preferring private messaging or email contact with the teacher.
  - One learner summed this up in the following way. “I don’t want to post online for everyone to see in case I get it wrong”.

- The difference between classes refers to last year’s class compared to the classes this year. A potential explanation for this is that Yammer has been rolled out whole school as a ‘transmission’ tool in many classes, announcing deadlines and homework tasks, when assemblies are etc. Last year it was being used by the students in the politics class solely as a cooperative/collaborative learning tool

- The vast majority of learners have a preference for accessing course content and conversations using their mobile phones (Microsoft Teams on Glow may offer a solution to the integration of content and discussions).

- Where they are using email as a means of support, the vast majority of learners have stated a preference for using their own personal email accounts as opposed to the school/authority approved system.
Feedback from learners suggested they were less likely to contribute to an online conversation where participants included ‘outside’ members, such as local authority staff who had supported conversations in the original pilot.

Course resources have now been moved from a SharePoint site to Microsoft Teams on Glow. This has improved the sharing of content between learners and could potentially improve online conversations.

Next steps in this approach will be to work with learners to evaluate the technologies being used and the strategies that can support wider collaboration.