

Summary of an independent evaluation completed by Lancaster University¹

A wide-ranging, independent academic evaluation into the efficacy and value of the Espresso digital service has been conducted. It consisted of in-depth teacher interviews, questionnaires and usage data from over 330 schools.

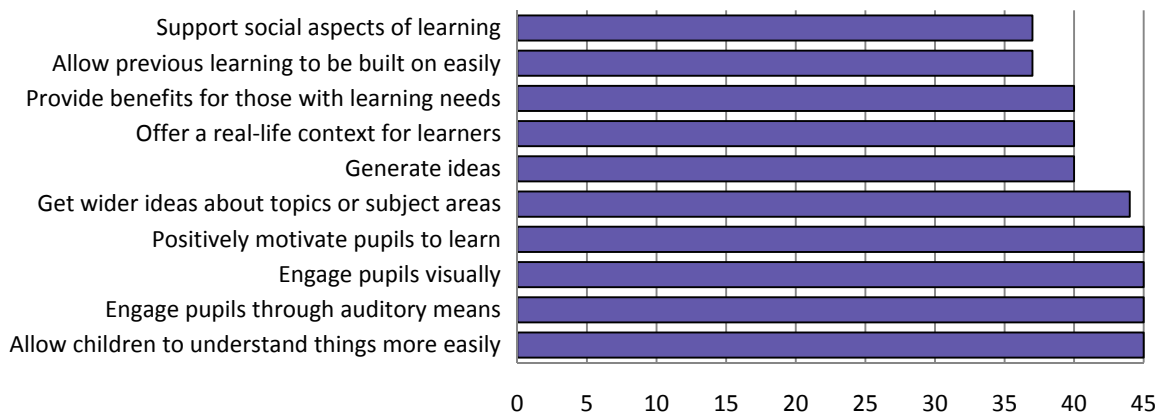
In total, 45 teacher interviews, survey responses from 338 teachers and analyses of usage and performance involving 337 school sets of data have been analysed. The size of this sample represents 4% of the total number of schools currently subscribing to Espresso. The key findings of this evaluation follow.

Teachers use Espresso resources to support teaching and learning widely

Teachers in the survey agreed that Espresso impacts on 19 learning measures. The ten measures of impact that rated the highest (80 to 100%) were associated with Espresso's key product qualities and reflect how Espresso was used by teachers in lessons.

The positive qualities of Espresso that were identified by teachers in the survey were: Espresso is a highly flexible resource; Espresso supports traditional subject-based teaching as well as thematic or topic-based approaches; Espresso supports the delivery of core subjects as well as humanities and languages; Espresso's resources are distinct – rich visually as well as in auditory terms, through video clip and imagery-based materials.

Impacts on learners and learning reported by a representative range of teachers (n=45)



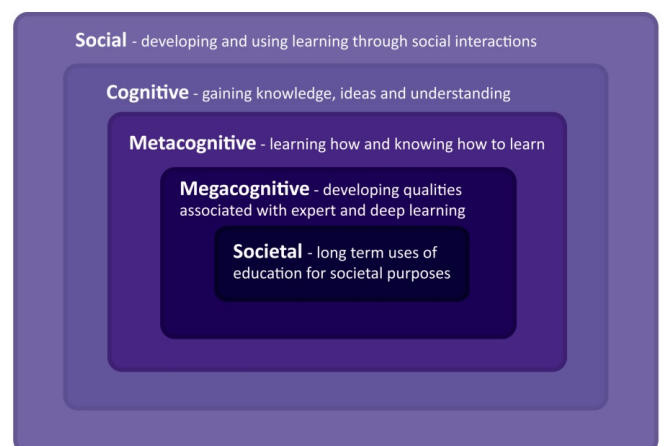
Espresso supports 'deeper and wider' learning

The evaluation shows that Espresso encourages children to think beyond the simple fact, generating interest, questioning and discussion, which deepens and widens the learning of concepts. This can give a child's learning additional meaning and value – it helps them to retain and recall their learning later.

The evaluation shows that Espresso resources impact in all five critical areas of learning that contribute to children's understanding, but impacts particularly strongly in three of the five: megacognitive, cognitive and social.

Megacognitive

Espresso provides a range of up-to-date, real and authentic material which is presented in a wide range of social and geographical contexts. It covers topics that are concerned with emotional and social issues as well as traditional subject topics. In this way, Espresso resources can support deeper and wider meaning to learning, allowing learners to think beyond the simple facts and, crucially, to link learning elements together so they can be transferred to other subjects.



¹ Passey, D. (2011). *Independent evaluation of the uses of Espresso online digital resources in primary schools*. The report is authored by Don Passey, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University.

Cognitive

Children approach learning in different ways. The wide range of the interactive resources in Espresso accommodates these differences. Teachers are able to provide activities that suit a wide range of learning approaches: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, emotional, social, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, textual, mathematical and logical. Learning can lead to longer term benefits when appropriate resources are matched to individual learning approaches; when matched, learning is retained and recalled more easily by the child for use later. Tools that match individual children's learning approaches to support their memorisation processes can support an effective preparation for tests.

Social

The resources in Espresso provide a platform for teachers and learners to interact in different direct and dynamic ways, including explaining, demonstrating, questioning and consolidating. In fact, the research shows that the level of impact is wider than any other resource evaluated by this senior researcher using a framework analysis. What this means for a child is that Espresso can enhance meaning to learning, encouraging the development of practices that are associated with expert thinkers and supporting the needs for emotional learners.

In summary, it is the range, combination and strength of megacognitive, cognitive and social learning that make Espresso unique.

“Resources often support certain areas of learning better than others. The width of learning aspects covered by a resource enable teachers and learners to engage more widely and in different ways with those resources. In this respect, Espresso offers the widest overall picture of a set of resources that I've ever evaluated.”

Don Passey, Senior Research Fellow, University of Lancaster

Early use of Espresso is associated with higher attainment in the long-term

The evaluation shows that earlier use of Espresso is associated with higher levels of attainment in Key Stage 2 SATs. In these schools, Espresso was embedded into the school's long term plan so teachers were using Espresso resources more frequently from early ages, and, according to teacher responses, likely to be targeting support to children's learning.

Use of Espresso supports wider and deeper learning; this can impact understanding and achievement when used over a period of time with children. Although frequency of use of Espresso is likely to be important for some learners, it is the pattern of usage over time that is associated with higher end and longer term results. Espresso offers teachers a variety of resources they can use to target support. It also provides activities to suit the starting point of the learner and the needs of the learner.

Using Espresso saves teachers time and represents a significant value to schools

Espresso saves teachers time – it's a fact. Espresso resources are presented in such a way that teachers find them with relative ease and are able to recognise the positive qualities that they offer. On average, it takes 6.85 minutes to find a resource on Espresso compared to 13.35 minutes to search, vet and assess a resource on the Internet. This saves 50% of a teacher's time and when applied across a school, this represents a significant reduction in lesson planning time. Furthermore, with the ability to access Espresso outside school, teachers have the flexibility and control to plan where and when it best fits in with their lifestyle and priorities.

Example 1: In an hour's PPA time, a teacher could find nine relevant resources on Espresso compared to 4.5 resources on the Internet.

Example 2: If a school has 16 teachers who each spend four hours per week looking for resources, this could benefit the school in time terms by 32 hours, which in value terms is £1,920 based on a teacher average hourly rate of £60.

A school will benefit greatly from teachers who re-gain their valuable professional and personal time to improve their work-life balance.

Summary

Espresso knows that teachers are motivated to help children of all abilities to learn, develop and grow. We, at Espresso, share that motivation and passion. As a result, we are delighted to have had our beliefs confirmed by this independent evaluation which demonstrates that well-planned, consistent use of Espresso can make a significant difference to learning outcomes in your school. We hope that this summary leaves you with even more assurance that your investment in Espresso is an excellent decision – providing best value to teachers and pupils.

For more information about Discovery Education Espresso please visit: discoveryeducation.co.uk/espresso