

City of London Academy Eclipse Case Study

“It has been great to return to the familiarity and reliability of a system, confident that it will meet all my needs in an easy to use way and that the MLS team will respond to any new demands that schools may make”.

I was appointed in June 2005 as Librarian at a new school in a brand new building. The school had been functioning in temporary accommodation for two years previously but in September 2005 they moved into their brand new state of the art building in Bermondsey, South East London. The library is physically at the heart of the school and makes a big visual impact as you enter the impressive new building but my aim was now to develop a library that would also be at the heart of the school educationally.

A Schools' Library Service had been involved in the planning of the new library in previous months and had arranged for the Heritage library management system to be installed prior to my arrival. In my previous school I had worked with Limes, subsequently changing to Eclipse and was a little disappointed that I had not had the opportunity to select Eclipse for the new school as I knew how user friendly it was and felt I was familiar with the helpful staff on the Eclipse Help Desk but, on recommendations from several other schools and the SLS, was convinced that Heritage was a powerful system and with a day or two's training I would soon get to grips with all its functions and be able to exploit its many features.

We opened to students and staff in the first week of term with approximately 5,000 uncatalogued items on the shelves. With help I started on the task of cataloguing the new stock we had purchased which was relatively straightforward with Heritage. The sticking points came towards the end of the first term. A keen and responsive form tutor asked “Could you tell me who has got books out in my tutor group?” A fairly obvious request one would have thought but I found the report functionality in Heritage to be complex and hard to set up and use.

In my previous school I aimed to produce some termly data on how the library was being used – which were the most popular titles, who were the keenest readers, which tutor group had borrowed the most books etc to publicise around the school, award prizes and raise the profile of the library and reading generally but found it difficult to extract this information without again writing my own reports which, given the inevitable time constraints at the busy end of term, was impossible.

I decided to persevere with Heritage for the rest of the year but began to put together a report to my Head recommending we consider looking at Eclipse as preferable for a number of reasons:

- Easy access to reporting data geared to a school's needs
- Provision of book covers, reviews and synopses on the catalogue
- The link with Accelerated Reader. The school had launched AR in the Spring term with 1,000 quizzes and I was keen to help students identify easily which books we had in stock had quizzes for them to do to encourage them with their reading.



City of London Academy

Eclipse Case Study

The offer of a very competitive fee for transferring from Heritage was a great help in convincing the Head such a change was feasible so in September 2006 we started the new school year with Eclipse fully functioning. The transfer of data was simple and problem free (the network manager was impressed with the clarity and ease of use of the system when installing it) and within days students themselves recognised the changes – they could see the book covers of the titles they searched on the catalogue; they could identify easily which books they had read had AR quizzes; they could submit book reviews and recommendations for which library staff would award merits, and student library assistants found the system easy to use.

After our first term of use we are ready to develop the system further with our cataloguing of websites (we already subscribe to Carel Press's Weblinks), networking the system and making it available to students at home with a link via the school's VLE, and incorporating the "SearchStar and the Curriculum" activities into our Year 7 induction sessions for next September. Several of our local feeder primaries have also recently installed Junior Librarian which will mean many students will already be familiar with the system and its format.

The arrival of a new Head of English and my circulating of a paper to the English department to create "A Reading School" bodes well for increased use of the system during English and Literacy sessions in the library. Students will be further encouraged to search the catalogue for "a good book" assisted by the keywording, bookcovers, reviews, synopses, the library map and the link with Accelerated Reader.

In our first year we launched the Accelerated Reader system, I was able to easily and quickly identify which books we had purchased had AR quizzes available by importing the AR Quiz Manager which interfaced with Eclipse. Currently we now have over 1,000 quizzes and multiple copies of many of these books. I was then able to import the Accelerated Reader quiz records into Eclipse as the AR Management program allows you to create your own quiz list. I have now set up a View on SearchStar highlighting for students which books have a quiz available and including in it details of the AR Level and Points available for each quiz. Students can now read, write a review and then by clicking on "Take Quiz" immediately do a quiz on a book they have read.

Teachers have been impressed with the support we can offer them with cataloguing their textbooks and issuing them to their GCSE students. We are also interested in the potential that the new web-based net version may offer us.

I have also now purchased an annual subscription to the MLSConnect module which has enabled me to import student data from our school MIS system (SIMS) including photographs, tutor group details, full postal and email addresses and ensure this information is kept up to date and accurate. A dynamic link is created which can be set to update automatically each week or manually if required. This is a real timesaver particularly at the beginnings of each school year when enrolling new students and amending tutor group details for all 1,000 students.

"In our first year we launched the Accelerated Reader system, I was able to easily and quickly identify which books we had purchased had AR quizzes available by importing the AR Quiz Manager which interfaced with Eclipse".

Laura Taylor
Librarian.

