

## Chromebooks let students work together better

Proceeding from a specific vision of the classroom, **Corlaer College** in Nijkerk is the first school in the Netherlands to make a proper use of Chromebooks for teaching on a large scale. Over two-thirds of its 1900 students are now equipped with a robust **Acer Chromebook**, and the resulting experiences have been extremely positive. In particular, Chromebooks made it much easier for students to work together, according to **Rob de Groot**, senior system controller.

### *‘The classroom isn’t nearly as unruly now’*

“We are now more than two years into our Chromebook project. In the meantime we have **1300 machines** in use, particularly among the lower graders, and every day our WiFi handles 900 gigabits of Internet traffic. Students have the 4GB version with an 11.6 inch screen, as this Chromebook fits easily into their schoolbags, while staff use a 13 inch machine. By 2017 or so, every student will have their own Chromebook.”

Corlaer regularly checks how the Chromebooks impact on teaching performance. “The project hasn’t actually been running long enough to already identify significant improvements, but we do notice that the classroom isn’t nearly as unruly now’. Students come in, open up their Chromebooks and get down to work, either on their own or in groups. This has made it much easier for students to work together, and they of course benefit from this throughout their life. The Google Docs application in particular has a positive impact here. It’s very easy to share documents, so letting several people work on one document at the same time.”



## Individualised approach

According to De Groot the Chromebooks have even more benefits to offer. They allow the subject matter of each lesson to be tailored far better to individual student needs. It is easier for teachers to see which students are slower or faster than the rest and so to provide them with the level of attention they require.

To make a proper use of the product teachers have had to adapt their lessons to make them suitable for the Chromebook. This was a problem for some of them, along with the new teaching method also required here. De Groot: "In the past they used classical methods of teaching. Supervising lessons was easy, as students just did their work in an exercise book. Now they sit behind their screens and can do completely different things to what the teacher has in mind. Staff then have to be very careful they don't start policing students. Indeed, they have to give them a high level of freedom and teach them to be independent, and that's not easy."

Fortunately, technology offers teachers a helping hand here, says De Groot: "The **Google Classroom** application is an enormous support for teachers. It makes it very easy for them to hand out documents and assignments to students, and the entire procedure, including the management of rights, is also handled by the application itself. That saves teachers a whole lot of work."

## 'The Google Classroom application is an enormous support for teachers'

## Super-quick startup

Corlaer College is part of the Christian Meerwegen scholengroep, which currently provides secondary education in Amersfoort, Bunschoten and Nijkerk. The group has a total of 6100 students and 700 employees. Corlaer College is showing strong growth within the school group: some 1950 students are expected for the 2015-2016 academic year.

It was already a while ago that the school identified the options offered by IT to improve and enrich lessons. This is how a number of employees developed a plan to make use of personal computing in 2012. At the time the choice was between trendy iPads, laptops and Chromebooks. De Groot comments, "iPads were all the rage in 2012, but we quickly realised they wouldn't be sufficient for our purposes. An iPad is great if you're a consumer, for example looking at websites, but you can't produce a piece of work on them. They're also costly, although we find functionality more important than price. Windows laptops likewise fell by the wayside as a laptop is more likely to become damaged because it contains far more components, like a hard disk."

That left the Chromebook: "Besides being cheap at less than 300 euros each, the super-quick startup time of under two seconds is a special advantage. That's really handy at school. And Chromebooks are attractive in control terms. If something goes wrong, a simple reset is generally all that's needed, and in five minutes the student's Chromebook is working again, with all data being safely stored in the cloud."

