

## New functions and upgrades extend GradeXpert's scope

**G**radeXpert 10 is a major upgrade to the GradeXpert Student Data Management system. New functions have been added and enhancements made to most areas of the software, based largely on suggestions from users.

There are dozens of new features in student maps, reporting, reports presentation, student attendance, learning plans, parent communications and working offsite functionality.

Student Maps (a customisable Excel-like function that displays assessment results or allows entry of assessment results for any cohort of students) can now contain multiple pages (e.g. Maths, Reading, Science etc.), accessed by tabs above the map, making it much easier to organise and view more information on a smaller screen.

Maps can include results for previous terms or semesters, e.g. 'Include previous three terms data for PM Benchmarking' or 'Include the previous semester result for English – Reading & viewing'. And there's a handy new time-saving option in Student Maps called 'Open this map when starting GradeXpert' that will open the current map automatically when logging in. Maps can also show growth and/or effect size between tests taken between any two dates.

A new 'Graph Map' button creates a one-page graphical view of every set of results in the map. This makes it very easy to interpret assessment and behaviour data in a single view. Graphs can be displayed as a comparison with other students or as a distribution of results. Maps can now optionally show the mean (average), median and/or standard deviation of all the results the teacher is working on in the student map.

In Reports, comment groups are now arranged within comment categories, to give a third level to the comment bank organisation. Comment categories can now be made available to specific users (e.g. all Year 4 teachers, or just the PE teachers), instead of just all other users.

When it comes to designing interim or semester reports, any font type or font size on the user's PC can be used, even when they are not installed on all teachers' computers.

Teachers and other school staff can now send notifications to parents through GradeXpert, which integrates the well-known Tiqbiz parent communication tool, so that notifications sent to parents can be shown on their smartphone or by logging in to the Tiqbiz website.

Using this new feature, schools can send student semester reports, behavioural incident notes, welfare notes, individual learning plans and 'please explain' requests for unexplained absences. Parents simply install the free Tiqbiz



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app on their smartphone to receive these notifications.

One of the most popular features of GradeXpert is Work Offline which enables teachers to work at home and automatically upload their work to the school database when they are in school. This latest update now allows teachers to create new map layouts at home.

Additional improvements include checks for sufficient hard disk space at startup and automatic removal of old offline backups to free up disk space.

Sandy Cartwright, Principal of Alawa Primary School in Darwin has been a keen GradeXpert user since mid-2014 when she was appointed as head to the school and wanted a student information system that would work for the P6 co-ed school.

She said: "We were looking for a system that would let me look at data by student, by class, by year and whole school and give our teachers access to detailed student information to inform their planning.

"GradeXpert does all of that... and whenever

we have made 'we would like it to do this or that' suggestions, they have been taken up in new modules."

Cartwright acknowledges that she has become something of an Ambassador for GradeXpert in the NT, with the system now in use in more than 50 schools in Darwin, Katherine, Palmerston and many remote regions.

"One of the pluses is how easy it is for primary schools to send comprehensive data on students leaving to start secondary school. The one record can start with preschool and continue through all their stages of schooling."

Lucy Ford heads the assessment and reporting team at Gardenvale Primary School in Melbourne and is another keen GradeXpert user. The school has 600 students in two campuses, Prep to Year 2 and Years 3–6 in the Senior Campus, which is a short stroll away from the juniors.

It has been four years since GradeXpert was first installed at the school, originally to record assessment data and generate reports. The school's usage has expanded year by year since and in 2017 the school will "do everything, including updating the school's assessment schedule and ensure all formal assessments are on GradeXpert," Ford says.

"We want it to be a 'one-stop-shop' for everything... assessments, parent contacts, even incidents in the playground. For our teaching staff, the ability work at home and update their data when they come into school in the morning is real time saver."