





### Attitudes and Motivation

The national monitoring assessment programme recognises the impact of attitudinal and motivational factors on student achievement in individual assessment tasks. Students' attitudes, interests and liking for a subject have a strong bearing on progress and learning outcomes. Students are influenced and shaped by the quality and style of curriculum delivery, the choice of content and the suitability of resources. Other important factors influencing students' achievements are the expectations and support of significant people in their lives, the opportunities and experiences they have in and out of school, and the extent to which they have feelings of personal success and capability.

### Technology Survey

The national monitoring technology survey sought information from students about their curriculum preferences and their perceptions of their achievement and potential in technology. Students were also asked about their involvement in technology related activities within school and beyond. The survey was administered to both year 4 and year 8 students in a one-to-one interview setting, with most questions requiring short written answers and others a written or spoken response. There are numerous research questions that could be asked when investigating student attitudes and engagement. In national monitoring it has been necessary to focus on a few key questions that give an overall impression of how students regard technology in relation to themselves.



Responses of Year 4 Students to the Technology Survey				%response
				
1. How much do you like doing technology at school?	57	38	4	1
2. How good do you think you are at technology compared to other subjects?	22	56	18	4
	<i>lots</i>	<i>quite often</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>never</i>
3. How often do you use a computer at school?	10	20	62	8
4. How often do you use a computer when not at school?	27	18	30	25

Year 4 students were generally positive about doing technology at school. Fifty-seven percent chose the highest rating for the first question (how much they liked to do technology at school), and only five percent chose negative ratings. Students perceptions of their expertise in technology compared to other subject (question 2) were also quite positive.





Only 30 percent of year 4 students reported that they used a computer at school “lots” or “quite often”, but 45 percent reported that they used a computer “lots” or “quite often” when not at school. One quarter of the students said they never used a computer when not at school.

In response to a question not listed in the table above, year 4 students described what they thought technology was. Their responses were categorised into eight categories. The three popular categories were:

- making and designing (16 percent of students)
- using tools, computers or other equipment (14 percent of students)
- modifying or finding out how things work (14 percent of students).

A further open-ended question asked year 4 students to describe the technology their class did at school. The two popular response categories used in these responses were:

- using computers (37 percent of students)
- making and designing (23 percent of students)

Responses of Year 8 Students to the Technology Survey				%response
				
1. How much do you like doing technology at school?	45	48	6	1
2. How good do you think you are at technology compared to other subjects?	18	62	17	3
	<i>lots</i>	<i>quite often</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>never</i>
3. How often do you use a computer at school?	9	31	57	3
4. How often do you use a computer when not at school?	26	22	34	18

Year 8 students were slightly less positive than year 4 students about doing technology at school. Our experience to date in national monitoring suggests that similar declines in enthusiasm occur in most curriculum areas. Forty-five percent of the year 8 students chose the highest rating for the first question (how much they liked to do technology at school), and only seven percent chose negative ratings. Students' perceptions of their expertise in technology compared to other subjects (question 2) were quite positive, with very similar percentages to those recorded for year 4 students.

Only 40 percent of year 8 students reported that they used a computer at school "lots" or "quite often," while 48 percent reported that they used a computer "lots" or "quite often" when not at school. The percentage who said that they never used a computer when not at school was a little lower than for year 4 students, at 18 percent.

Like year 4 students, year 8 students described what they thought technology was, and their responses were placed into eight categories.

The most common responses were:

- using tools, computers or other equipment (31 percent of students)
- making and designing (29 percent of students)
- modifying or finding out how things work (27 percent of students).

Year 8 students were also asked to describe in writing the technology their class did at school. The most popular response categories used were:

- using computers (41 percent of students)
- making and designing (40 percent of students)
- workshop/manual subjects (36 percent of students).

The responses to the two open-ended questions show that year 8 students have more definite ideas about what technology is than year 4 students do. This does not mean, however, that the responses are consistent with each other or with emphases of the new technology curriculum. The responses seem to include three main threads: the use of computers, workshop and manual activities, and making and designing activities.