



How CPSQ can help students take more ownership of learning to promote better learning outcomes



The importance of behaviours and study habits

Wells Cathedral School recently undertook a trial of the Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire® (CPSQ), an online assessment which gives insights into students' attitudes and behaviours. 'With the transition to A Level, where the curriculum requires more ownership of learning, we find that academically able students can sometimes start to struggle,' explains Charlotte Wilde, Wells Cathedral School's Head of Academic Enrichment. 'We had a hypothesis that behaviours and study habits were crucial to achieving improved learner outcomes, so we decided to trial CPSQ.'

Wells uses a baseline assessment (Alis from Cambridge CEM) to identify students at risk of underperforming on A Levels. In certain cases, teachers observed that low scorers were students who had done well in GCSE, but who were easily distracted and disorganised. 'I hoped that CPSQ could help us add data to anecdote and provide evidence on which teachers could act,' said Charlotte. 'We also wanted to raise students' self-awareness and provide tutors with a tool to guide development of productive study habits and behaviours.'



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Contact us

Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing
The Triangle Building
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8EA
United Kingdom

admissionstesting@
cambridgeassessment.org.uk

About CPSQ for Schools

The Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire for Schools is an online, non-cognitive assessment that provides an insight into a student's attitudes and behaviours, helping schools apply a holistic approach to education.

About Wells Cathedral School

Founded in AD909, Wells Cathedral School is among the oldest schools in Europe with a reputation for academic, sporting and musical excellence and outstanding pastoral care. Over 700 students attend Wells' Nursery, Junior, Music, Senior Schools and Sixth-form, both as boarders and day pupils.

About Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing

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Using CPSQ in the school tutoring programme

Following training provided by Cambridge (including presentations to share with colleagues and information for students) CPSQ was introduced as part of the school's tutoring programme which (up to then) had focused primarily on academic progress. 'Students completed the questionnaire in 30 minutes, on a variety of devices in the tutor session, and feedback was very positive,' says Charlotte. 'Students said the questions were sensible, not intrusive, and easy to understand, even for EAL [English as an Additional Language] students. Overall they felt they were being treated as "grown ups". They also said that CPSQ prompted them to think in new and different ways about what they do, which meant that reflection was starting with the questionnaire, not just with the results.'

The CPSQ feedback report was first reviewed by the tutor before being discussed with the student as part of formal 'grade coaching' conversations. This approach made sure students didn't ignore the feedback report, and that the findings were fully understood, especially by EAL students and those with dyslexia. Both tutors and students agree that CPSQ reports are accurate and revealing, and that the feedback helped them to connect and discuss previously hidden issues that affected wellbeing and academic achievement.

As the CPSQ report feedback is presented as behavioural statements, as well as scores, this helped guide conversations. Tutors made use of the statements in the report to frame coaching questions (e.g. 'Tell me more about ...', 'Can you give me an example of when you ...') and dig deeper into a competency. Students found the statements provided a model for discussing approaches to learning with their tutor – something which particularly helped more reserved students who are less likely to open up.

Enabling in-depth conversations

Having completed the trial, Charlotte can now reflect on the key benefits of using CPSQ as a tool to enrich the tutoring programme. 'CPSQ has enabled in-depth conversations, using a common language, which can encourage students' sense of responsibility and guide them towards better study habits and behaviours,' says Charlotte. CPSQ's focus on the individual – rather than the collective – has been warmly welcomed by tutors and students. Tutors felt that CPSQ helped them really get to know their tutees, with follow-up discussions providing 'time to see where they want to go from here and how they can get there with my help, and what they can do to help themselves get there too', as one tutor put it. Students also valued the conversations, with one student saying that CPSQ was 'the first time an adult has "seen" me and taken the time to have a conversation with me'.

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