

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0997_13

Senator Mason asked on 14 February 2013 , Hansard page 79

Question

Use of the Improve tool by teachers

Senator MASON: This means that of about 290,000 teachers only about 7,600 are registered users of Improve and that is about two per cent. Are you satisfied with that number? Ms Bloor: The Improve tool was launched in December 2011. It has been growing steadily in its usage, but it is very much a tool in development by Education Services Australia. Senator MASON: That is 14 months ago or so and two per cent of teachers or thereabouts who are registered users of Improve. It does not sound like a marvellous success. Ms Paul: We may have to take on notice what the rate of progress is and why that might be. I think that is the best thing to do.

Answer

Improve was released by Education Services Australia (ESA) in December 2011. Teacher registration and use has fluctuated in line with school terms and teaching and assessment cycles.

Improve is currently targeted at numeracy (66 per cent of test items), literacy (29 per cent) and science (5 per cent), predominately targeting students in Years 3 to 9. As such, it is not directly relevant for many teachers who teach outside these year levels and subject areas, which may affect overall take-up of the tool.

While *Improve* is available to teachers nationally, some jurisdictions prefer not to actively promote online resources outside their own online teacher environment, which may have had an impact on uptake. ESA is currently working with these jurisdictions to promote the tool.

Online formative assessment is a relatively new technology that has, to date, predominately attracted 'early adopters' among teachers. This is consistent with views commonly expressed by education authorities; that a quite a small percentage of teachers are early adopters of new technologies, while a majority of teachers require more time and support to recognise benefits, and develop the skills and confidence to incorporate new tools into their regular practice.

To support teacher uptake of the tool, ESA offered *Improve* professional development opportunities to government and non-government education authorities on a train-the-trainer basis during 2012. Similar opportunities will be available in 2013. ESA will also undertake additional promotion of *Improve* to education authorities and users of the national digital resources portal, *Scottle*.

ESA usage data indicates that teachers that do use *Improve* find it to be an effective and efficient tool that assists them in identifying and catering for students' individual learning needs.

The benefits of using *Improve* accrue over time as teachers are able to reuse, adapt and share items and tests, and become more adept at exploiting the full potential of the technology.