

# keeping learning going...

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how can we design and deliver great remote lessons to secondary students?

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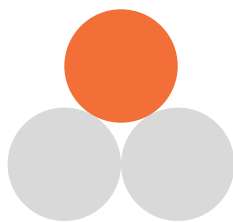


# why is this important?

It goes without saying that designing and delivering engaging remote lessons is key to keeping learning going over the coming weeks and months. As teachers, we know the impact that missing just a few days of learning can have on a learner's progress. The well researched 'summer learning loss', where kids' achievement declines by a whole month of school learning time over the holidays, is a great reminder of the importance of supporting students to stay motivated and engaged for every remote lesson. Unfortunately, the pull of House Party, Instagram and Tiger King mean we have a lot to contend with when we're designing and delivering remote lessons!

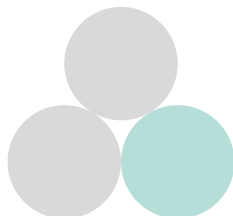
We know you're amazing at designing lessons for your classroom, and with this rapid switch to remote learning design we wanted to share some tips for designing and delivering lessons that capture student interest and, most importantly, ensure their learning continues despite all of the crazy going on in the world at the moment. This is a brilliant opportunity to support your students to see themselves as life-long learners who can adapt to learn and work in any environment; important skills for their futures in the evolving world of work!

## key ideas in this kit



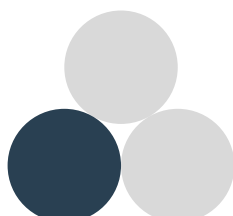
### **the structure of a great remote lesson**

Maintaining energy and momentum when designing remote lessons for secondary students.



### **tools to keep learners engaged**

Keeping secondary learners engaged and excited about learning, even from their family's dining room table.



### **keeping track of learning progress**

Remote tools for formative assessment and feedback to keep track of secondary students' progress.

# the structure of a great remote lesson

## reflection

When this switch to remote learning first happened, perhaps the easiest thing for us to do was to convert our pre-planned lessons into remote lessons, maintaining as many of the learning outcomes, lesson activities and feedback junctures as possible. Whilst this approach worked in the early phase, we're now at a stage where we can think really purposefully about the differences in design and delivery of remote lessons.

Before you read ahead, consider what are the key differences (and even advantages) in structuring a remote lesson compared with a normal lesson?

## tools

There are a couple of key things you can do to ensure you maintain energy and momentum when designing and delivering lessons.

- **Keep them short:** If you're video conferencing with students, keep your sessions to 45 minutes maximum and talk for no longer than 10 minutes at a time. Those of us who have engaged in MOOC learning or tried to do an online degree know how hard it is to stay focused and listen to someone talking for hours on end. When we're sitting at our computer, even the most disciplined among us get distracted by email notifications, writing shopping lists, and scrolling on Instagram for the latest MAFS disaster story. Students are no different, although thinking about what they need from the supermarket might not be a Year 9's first point of distraction! Set yourself a 10 minute timer with an alarm every time you start talking during the conference call, or ask one of your students to do it for you, and stop talking if the alarm goes off.

# the structure of a great remote lesson

- **Flip the learning:** We understand that not all of your students will have access to technology all day. If you can't video conference and run synchronous learning, you can create an important point of connection between you and your students by sharing a quick video with them at the beginning of every day explaining the day's tasks and making the learning meaningful. You can also use flipped learning videos to share key content and skills. Tools like Explain Everything are great for recording short bursts of content with visual aids - it's almost like having a whiteboard! And a simple screen recording of a slideshow with your audio over the top might be useful, too. There are loads of resources on sites like Edrolo, Khan Academy and even YouTube that you can share with students. (Although if you're choosing to use YouTube videos, make sure you watch them all the way to the end and you're confident about the source and quality of the content - it can be a little like directing students to Wikipedia for information).
- **Online and offline:** Regardless of how engaging a tool or activity is on first use, if you have to use it day-in-day-out for months on end it will quickly lose its appeal! Consider all of the activities you have available to you: asking students to take photographs of things they can then write about; asking them to record a video talking about the challenges they faced with their learning or unpacking a mistake they made; working on a whole class project where students have different roles and you bring all of the pieces of the puzzle together at the end of the week; getting them to write, perform and record a piece of creative writing; asking them to make something that makes their community a better place amidst the chaos; providing them with media articles to analyse and question, etc. There are so many opportunities for engaging learning and variety is key to keeping things interesting.

## **action**

Take some time to brain-dump all of the different types of activities you could lead with your students in your subject area over the coming weeks and months. List as many different types as possible, aiming for at least 100. You might like to recruit a colleague to help you! Use this list as inspiration as you design and plan your remote lessons.

# keeping learners engaged

## reflection

There are lots of tools we have under our belt as teachers that we use to keep learners engaged each lesson regardless of whether we're in the room with them or not! We've seen some awesome lessons happening in schools, from teachers dressed as zombies in a zombie apocalypse to inspiring guest speakers sharing harrowing stories about personal experiences. If we get the 'hook' of a lesson right, students come with us on the learning journey.

Perhaps start by making a list of the top three 'hooks' you've used in lessons to capture the interest and attention of students.

## tools

There are three questions you can ask yourself when you're planning an engaging remote lesson. To help answer the questions, we've included some tools and ideas to keep lesson design and delivery fresh and exciting!

- **Make it matter:** If you can't answer this question, your students definitely won't be able to answer it! Showing students why their work is important is key to any long-term engagement. Your role is to work out ways of connecting the key content and skills to students' experiences, interests and goals, which means knowing your students well! Some ideas here to boost authenticity include inviting guest speakers to Zoom into one of your lessons or to create a flipped learning video for your particular group of learners. Aim to make connections between the content and skills you're teaching and the global or local news, or frame all learning around big ideas and design questions that the students are engaged in so that they're working to solve problems they care about. For inspiration to design these big ideas and questions, take a look at the projects developed and shared on the High Tech High website.

# keeping learners engaged

- **Stretch their thinking:** Moving through a bulk of content often results in broad but shallow learning. Instead, we'd encourage you to dive deep into a set number of content areas over the coming weeks, using questioning and provocations to encourage students to think and question deeply. Use a provocation like a YouTube video, a poem, a news article or an interview to get students thinking about the bigger picture and the context in which their learning sits, and then use a series of questions over the course of the lesson to build depth of understanding and metacognition. You might like to take a look at socratic questioning frameworks to help scaffold a series of questions, or the SOLO taxonomy. As you're planning your lesson, detail the provocation and questions you want students to move through as they engage in the learning.
- **Share the learning:** Learning for the sake of learning might engage students who will go on to be philosophers and academics, or who are really exam-score driven, but the majority of students in our classes will want to have a purpose for their learning. They'll want to produce something tangible that can be celebrated and that they can get feedback about. As you're planning each lesson, consider how your students will share their learning with you and how you can make this meaningful. In a project based learning unit, this would be called 'the public product' - the production of something significant and tangible, presented to an authentic audience at the end of a long unit of work. We should consider this at a micro level of lesson design, too. If a student works for 45 minutes on something, where does that something go? Who will see it? How will they know if it is of value, or if they are on the right track?

## **action**

Reflect on the current lesson planning template you're using for each of your remote lessons. Does it help you to reflect on these three questions when you're designing learning? If not, take some time now to develop your own lesson planning template.

# keeping track of learning progress

## reflection

We can design the best learning experiences in the world for our students, but if we're not getting feedback about their progress and modifying our approach accordingly, we might as well be delivering the content to the empty tables and chairs in our classrooms!

Reflecting on the last lesson you delivered remotely, how did you differentiate the content for different learners, conduct formative assessments or provide feedback?

## tools

All great teachers have a range of strategies they use to differentiate, run formative assessments and provide students with feedback. Here are some of our best tips when it comes to using these key teaching tools in remote learning environments.

- **Keep differentiating:** There are three ways you can differentiate learning strategies and materials in remote learning. First, consider the content of the lesson. In doing so, we're delivering different parts of the curriculum to different students depending on their starting level and what you expect them to learn in that lesson. There are some great online tools like Newsela which translates content into a variety of levels so that all students can access the materials. Next, consider the process of the lesson, or the modes used. Some students might want to work independently to explore a topic, whilst others might want to form teams and work collaboratively on a document at set times during the day so that they feel connected and part of a team. Finally, you might want to differentiate the product students are creating through their learning. For example, to demonstrate their understanding of the techniques used in a piece of theatre, one student may write their own play, while another student writes a review of the piece of theatre being analysed.

# keeping track of learning progress

- **Formative assessment:** Also known as 'assessment as learning', formative assessment helps students and teachers reflect on individuals' progress towards set learning objectives and success criteria. The guru on formative assessment is Dylan Wiliam and we're sure you're aware of his classroom tools like talking sticks, traffic light cups and mini-whiteboards. When it comes to assessing formatively in remote learning environments, the mode of feedback delivery is probably highly dependent on the mode of learning you're using and whether lessons are being delivered synchronously or asynchronously. If you're delivering synchronous or live learning, try the use of emojis during temperature checks throughout lessons, pausing every now and again for students to post in a messaging service a green tick if they're confident with the work and ready to be challenged further, a yellow okay hand if they understand but might need help and more practice, and a red no entry sign if they are not confident and need more help to progress. If learning is happening in students' own time, you might like to share an online form with the learning intentions and success criteria embedded in questions for students to reflect on and respond to once they've completed their learning. Additionally, we anticipate you'll ask them to submit their work so that you can provide feedback.
- **Feedback:** When we're designing and delivering remote learning, new avenues for giving feedback are open to us. One of the best strategies we've seen is the use of screen recordings by teachers who open the work submitted on their computer and record themselves reading through it in live time and providing feedback and comments on the learning as they read. For a more low tech version of this if your internet upload speeds aren't great, make good use of the 'Comment' function in Google Docs and in Microsoft Word to provide feedback on student work.

## action

Reflect on the remote lesson planning template you've started to design or you use currently. Does it prompt you to differentiate content, process and product every lesson, to design formative assessment opportunities, and to provide feedback to learners? If not, modify your template now. You might then want to share your designed template for the benefit of colleagues at your school and beyond using #keepinglearninggoing!



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