Remote Learning

We appreciate the immense amount of work dedicated to developing remote learning in schools and, to support this, we have brought together some of the key findings from recent research. Some of the contents will be familiar to you, but we hope that this summary will enable everyone to contribute to discussion and reflection on remote learning, regardless of your school’s approach.

Research Findings:

Researchers agreed on key learning elements, which may be obvious to experienced professionals; however, these could be used for wider discussions. Links to the actual research, for in-depth reading, are included at the bottom of this document.

Teaching:

Researchers found that teachers should invest time and effort in adapting the content and delivery of the curriculum, by focusing on clear basics and essential elements of learning. Whatever remote learning approaches are used, explanations need to be clear and learning needs to link into previous content and provide a secure foundation for new learning. Researchers found use of scaffolding is helpful in developing confidence in new learning and independent follow-up work should allow opportunities for application of new knowledge or skills.

To summarise, focus on practice and retrieval in any remote system is essential. However, as in the classroom, researchers found that different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils. Therefore, live lessons may not always be the best option.

As a result of ongoing work on curriculum development, schools have already been discussing cognition and how pupils learn. These elements need to be kept in mind whilst preparing remote learning, especially as schools know some pupil groups need specific inputs to make effective progress. An example of this would be reinforcement of specific subject or technical vocabulary for some pupils. Remote education should encapsulate good curriculum design in terms of width and depth of subjects. Some thought should also be given to opportunities for ‘stretch and challenge’ through open-ended tasks across the curriculum and application of core skills across subjects.

Supportive environment/feedback/assessment:

As within the classroom, researchers found the most important aspects of learning and progress rested on the interaction between teachers and pupils. Within remote learning this raises the need to consider both social/motivational interaction and academic feedback. There have been a number of examples of online choirs, assemblies, activities and phone calls which have engaged pupils in social interaction with peers, and also encouraged motivational and pastoral discussions with staff.

For academic feedback to support pupil progress in learning, schools need to question how well and how timely feedback is in informing assessments and in enabling planning for next steps. Quality feedback should always allow pupils to know where they currently are in terms of the topic, task or knowledge they are working on; where they need to get to, and how they can close any gap between the two.

Technology:

Whilst some schools have developed various ways to deliver remote learning, from online platforms to providing packs of work, research has shown there are pros and cons for any approach. Many schools, particularly primary and special, are using a blended approach.

With digital methods, research would suggest that aspects of best practice include:

* Training of staff
* Independence of pupils to access learning
* Initial audits and regular checks of device availability for pupils
* Online safety policies that are reviewed, and staff following agreed practices
* Senior Leaders being able to drop in on lessons.
* Individual lessons for intervention or SEND support that are open for Senior Leaders to drop in. Where this is the case, staff should ensure that parents are aware, and invited to any one-to-one interactions with pupils. (see DfE Guidance link below).
* Pre-recorded lessons that can be accessed at around siblings sharing devices; parents’ ability to support younger children or those who need to access information several times/ have pre-teaching.

With remote learning that is non-digital, this is often very effective:

* For pupils who would find it difficult to maintain a focus on live lessons for a long period of time, due to age or stage of development.
* Where physical packs for younger children or those with SEND are essential to support their learning development.
* Support for curricular areas that are very resource based such as art or some aspects of science.

Next steps:

Schools have developed these new ways of working over a short and pressured period of time due to necessity. The pandemic has accelerated the uptake of new technologies, but now professionals are seeing new ways of working that will continue to support learning and hopefully lead to effective time saving new practices.

To support this development, the Learning Improvement Service will be offering further surgeries and training opportunities for secondary and primary schools across a wide range of online platforms with our EdTech Schools, as well as focused, virtual meetings to discuss, share ideas and seek solutions.

Please feel free to inform us of any training needs or requests to support remote learning. This will help us to scope the size of the issue and seek solutions.

For example, we are aware that some schools have an issue with families requiring support to use or log onto devices. You can contact us by emailing your local area business support using the subject heading **‘remote learning needs’**. LIS.BusinessSupportCarlisle@cumbria.gov.uk, LIS.BusinessSupportKendal@cumbria.gov.uk LIS.BusinessSupportWhitehaven@cumbria.gov.uk

Research Links:

EEF

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/distance-learning-rapid-evidence-assessment/#closeSignup>

Ofsted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-research/remote-education-research#engagement>

DfE

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remote-education-good-practice>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>

EdTech <https://edtechhub.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/04/Remote_Learning_Rapid_Evidence_Assessment.pdf>

 Outlines several research studies including Means et al, and Vasquez, Straub.

DfE blog

<https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/category/covid-19support/remoteeducation/?gclid=CIDp7O20vu4CFYaRGwodab8I4Q>

Means et al

<https://agronomy.unl.edu/online/documents/Effectiveness_of_online_learning.pdf>

Vasquez

<https://www.researchgate.net/>