



Online Learning in Colleges

Virtual learning responses from SFCA members

Thursday 2nd April 2020

1. Portsmouth College

- In these incredibly challenging times, teachers and students from Portsmouth College have quickly made the transition from face to face interaction to online teaching and learning. As an Apple Distinguished School, teachers already have excellent levels of digital literacy and they are confidently delivering lessons using a range of platforms and apps, ensuring that our students are making good progress from home.
- A common starting point is [Google Hangouts](#). Teachers are making videos introducing the lesson in person, with students asking questions using the chat feature, outlining expectations and learning aims. It's also a chance for us to say hello, and check in with our students in person which we see as an essential means of supporting our students' mental health at this time. [Google Classroom](#) is a well-established resource but teachers are now using the virtual classrooms on this platform in far more creative ways. They continue to share key resources and set assignments but are now using online timers for starter activities and for quick recall tasks following more detailed work as a means of breaking up activities into manageable chunks. The link feature is a really easy way to enable students to quickly access a range of materials on the internet which significantly helps target their research. In Science, students have been paired up using [Google Meet](#), where they ask and answer exam questions, sharing understanding and finding and filling the gaps in each other's knowledge, supported by their teacher who is accessible via a muted mic.
- In practical subjects such as the Performing Arts, Sport and Public Services, teachers are increasingly turning to video as an essential tool. Uploading video of professional dancers, actors and sports people for students to analyse and develop their own practice from have been very successful means of engaging students who are isolated at home. Dance and Sport students have used [TikTok](#) to share evidence of them developing their individual skills and a Public Services teacher has made a video of herself demonstrating a circuit that students can do with limited space whilst in social isolation to ensure they keep their fitness levels up.
- Teachers in Humanities are using [Kahoot](#) to host class discussions and surveys to gather opinion, along with quizzes to check understanding. English teachers have

created [Keynote](#) (powerpoints) that students can collaborate on along with interactive [Popplet](#) (a mind map app) enabling students to analyse poems, building on each other's understanding. They have also set up a You Tube channel and have created videos demonstrating how to annotate a poem, for example. Streaming webchats with poets, novelists and playwrights are also common. Psychology teachers have live streamed themselves using mini whiteboards to interpret statistics in real time (supported by the Google Hangout chat feature) and use the [Loom](#) app to narrate over slides. In Criminology, timed [Socrative](#) tests have been a very successful means of checking understanding in lieu of a plenary.

- These are just some of the many ways that teachers are engaging with students at Portsmouth College (also the [Notability](#), [Padlet](#), [Garage Band](#) and [iMovie](#) apps...the list goes on). What is also clear is that teachers are significantly developing their own digital practice at the same time, constantly innovating as they look for ways to engage and inspire our students with the aim of evoking their curiosity... from an appropriate distance.

2. Rochdale Sixth Form College

- Our strategy is a simple one, to provide continued structure, reassurance, and guidance so that all of our students keep on learning and keep well over the coming weeks. In effect, while the college building may be closed, the college itself will continue to operate, albeit through an online platform and study packs.
 - From Monday 23rd March all lessons have been delivered via [Microsoft Teams](#). The lessons are a mixture of live and recorded sessions, and opportunities to work on assignments. Students attend these online lessons at the usual time on their timetable. Overall attendance in the first week was 95%, around the same level of attendance as would be expected in a normal week.
 - Microsoft Teams is being supplemented with support materials on [Moodle](#), videos on [Clickview](#), and 'hard copy' study packs.
 - Technical problems with Microsoft Teams have been minimal. All students have access to the platform via their phone, tablet or computer. Students have been provided with a laptop where needed.
 - SPDLs continue to monitor students' attendance at online lessons. If a student is unable to attend an online lesson, they must inform their SPDL and teachers with a reason for the absence and a request for missed work
 - Enrichment, achievement centre placements, and social development programmes are not currently being delivered.
 - Teaching will continue as normal for year 12 students until the end of term. An end date of May half term has been determined for year 13 students.
 - To help keep students' brains active, and provide structure over the Easter holidays, we are putting together an activities guide. Some of the activities are linked to courses, some to careers and university, and some just for fun.
- There are 67 students in total, which have been classed as vulnerable by the SPDLs. These students fall into one or more of the following categories;
 - Education healthcare plan
 - Social worker

- Looked after children
- Safeguarding concern

All of these students were given the opportunity to come into the college building once the college was closed to students. SPDLs ensured that alternative arrangements were made for all of these students. The SPDLs are contacting all students who are a safeguarding concern daily and welfare checks are added to the monitoring system ([CPOMS](#)) daily.

LSOs are working with students who have an EHCP and are supporting them with lessons on Microsoft Teams and their independent learning. All other students are being contacted at least once a week.

The RSFC Social Club is still running for students who find it difficult to socialise in normal circumstances. The students have been playing virtual Uno in the group and have been keeping in touch with each other.

All students on the bursary are paid £20 per week depending on attendance.

- Student wellbeing is being monitored closely. All students have weekly tutorials, and in addition are being contacted at least once every two weeks by their SPDL. This call is used to check on welfare, give support with work, advice on managing their time and any other concerns they may have. Where appropriate SPDLs are also speaking to parents/carers of these students. Teachers are monitoring students' wellbeing and reporting to SPDLs where necessary.

3. Leyton Sixth Form College

- Leyton Sixth Form College Sport Department have released their Healthy Home Guide. A weekly publication to keep body and mind active which includes:
 - Home Exercise Ideas
 - Healthy Body-Healthy Mind
 - Healthy Recipe Idea
 - Just for Fun - puzzles and quizzes to beat the boredom

4. Hills Road Sixth Form College

- To help students maintain their learning during these unprecedented times, the information should help students and parents to understand more about the College's approach to online learning and support website we've created devoted to the new [Hills Online](#) digital experience.
- The webpage includes links to:
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Study Skills
 - Careers Advice
 - Exams
 - Guidance and Support
 - General Advice

5. Barton Peveril Sixth Form College

- Barton Peveril Sixth Form College has 3600 16-19 learners now being taught by over 140 teachers from home. Students are attending all their normal timetabled lessons including tutor and enrichment and can access counsellors, progress advisers, the college nurse and careers and HE advisers, albeit remotely.
- The college wide adoption of [G Suite for Education](#) has undoubtedly made the wholesale transition to distance learning easier for both the students and teachers. [Google Classroom](#) is already used college-wide to empower learners, support independent learning and deliver flipped classrooms. Through it, teachers communicate, post resources and prework, manage assignments, mark and offer written or audio feedback. The library offers 50 Google subject sites with 24/7 access to e-resources, academic social media and Apps.
- Study Skills actively encourage learners to embrace technologies: [Todoist](#) and [Egenda](#) to plan their time effectively trialling what works best for them; to use Apps to aid organisation, note taking, revision, concentration, self-care, stress management and sleep; to improve their touch typing skills using websites such as [Typing Club](#) and their writing using [Grammarly](#); To use technology to improve their focus, including apps such as [Forest](#) and [Freedom](#) and convert long chunks of text and revision notes to MP3 files.
- Prior to the Covid-19 closure period, 91% of students already rated the quality of digital provision good or above compared to 71% nationally; 91% had access to online course materials compared to 75% nationally and 79% rated the digital teaching and learning quality good or above compared to 69% nationally (JISC Student Digital Experience Insights Study 2019).
- Nonetheless, last week, prior to the government's announcement, the College decided to further upskill over 200 teaching and support staff across 10 sessions to facilitate class and team video conferencing via [Google Meet](#) and broadcasting pre-recorded audio lesson presentations using [Screencastify](#).
- The College takes a cloud-first and web-first software approach that is truly device-agnostic. Students can access Google Classroom and Google Hangouts via any device be they laptops, smartphones or tablets as long as they have internet connectivity. Last Friday, those without a home device were swiftly loaned a College Chromebook.
- Learners are now registering for every lesson ticking the option 'I'm here' to a question posted on their Google Classroom. Teachers are now creating lessons, recording their screen using annotation tools and adding voice overs whilst a picture-in-picture overlay shows them on webcam. Lessons are being delivered via Google Hangouts Meet and recorded and Screencastify presentations saved to the teacher's Google Drive and shared via Google Classroom with learners. This ensures any missing can catch up and all learners are able to review lessons later.

- High Needs Learners continue to have in class support. Learning Support Assistants are members of each student's Google Classrooms. They are now working virtually alongside learners supplementing their notes and responding to questions via a shared Google Doc just as they did in their lessons before and are able to speak with them via Google Hangouts Meet. All learners can also still access texthelp's [Read & Write](#), a Chrome extension, to listen back to work and dictate.

Teachers offer a variety of tasks, directing students to access resources that are fully digital and accessible to all. Assignments are undertaken individually or collaboratively using shared Googledocs. Understanding and progress is monitored and assessed in real time through online submissions or [Kahoot](#) and [Socrative](#) and [Google Forms](#) that are automatically marked.

- Student feedback has been very positive as Katie Snugg, a First Year reflected, *'it's so easy to access everything that teachers set us, and it's even easier in the sense that we can turn in work that's due. Screencastify is also extremely helpful as it's similar to being in class. We hear the teacher's voice and see the Powerpoint at the same time. I haven't felt stressed about not knowing content at all as it can be taught in a similar way. It's nice to hear the voice of the teacher explaining things so I know I'm not doing anything wrong!'*
- Since moving to distance learning on Monday, the number of active online Google Classrooms have risen from 500 to 762 and the number of online teacher posts from 300 a day to over 1,600. As Mark Robinson, (Director of Humanities) *commented "It feels like we are only now beginning to understand the full potential of on-line learning, and that an exciting journey lies ahead."*
- Teachers and students continue to be supported by the Barton Peveril's Digital Learning Hub as well as IT Team.
- Summing up Jonathan Prest (Principal) observed - *'It has been remarkable to see teachers and support staff's willingness to rise to the challenge of distance learning, and I am convinced we are still offering a valuable experience to our students at this time of national crisis' "Is it all perfect? The truth is that there is still a steep learning curve for most staff (including the leadership team) both in terms of technological upskilling and understanding how to create an effective online lesson. We have been surprised by the number of students who have been challenged by using the technology, occupying large amounts of staff time (we all tend to think that the millennials have IT skills running in their blood!). From a pedagogical perspective, staff have found it a real challenge to check learning as quickly online as they can do by circulating in a classroom or even reading student faces in the room. And learning a new job in days is hugely time consuming: it can take hours to prepare lessons. But if you had asked me 3 weeks ago whether we could offer an education online to the whole college I would have been very sceptical, yet our staff have done it! Like workers in the health and care services and in deliveries and supermarkets, there is much heroism out there in the virtual classroom.'*