

What have you based your decision making on? Research background

Detailed research and analysis of the most effective teaching strategies to teach remotely is still being developed. However there is an increasingly strong evidence base of thinking we can use to inform our pedagogical practice. (Links to all sources referenced can be found at the end of the document).

The DfE have recognised that: ‘Some unhelpful myths exist about remote education, which are not based on evidence.

It is important to therefore realise that these statements are not true:

- *remote education is fundamentally different to other forms of teaching/learning*
- *remote education is a different curriculum/offer to the content that would be delivered normally*
- *the best forms of remote education are digital*
- *the best way to deliver remote education is always through live lessons*
- *the most important thing is pupils’ engagement’*
(DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)

Instead, the key points include the following:

- Teaching the curriculum well is the most important consideration:
 - ‘This means that everything we know about what a quality curriculum looks like still applies. The remote education curriculum needs to be aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible. And, just like the classroom curriculum, it needs to be carefully sequenced and ensure that pupils obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step. Curricular goals should be made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom.’ (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)
 - ‘While it is important to engage pupils, this is only a precondition for learning, not the thing itself. There is only so much a teacher can do to engage pupils remotely. We therefore need to make sure that efforts to engage don’t distract us from teaching the curriculum. We also need to check whether pupils have actually learned the content we want them to through assessment.’ (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)
- The debate about whether asynchronous (not live) or synchronous (live) teaching is most effective is less important than the actual pedagogical strategies employed:
 - ‘...ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present, for example through clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback - is more important than how or when lessons or support are provided.’ (Rapid evidence assessment - Distance Learning - EEF, 2020)
 - ‘Some think that a live lesson is the ‘gold standard’ of remote education. This isn’t necessarily the case...There are some specific difficulties in doing live lessons. It can be hard to build in interaction and flexibility. This means that giving feedback can actually be less effective than when we use recorded lesson segments followed by interactive chats, or tasks and feedback.’ (What’s working well in remote education - DfE - 11/01/21)
 - ‘Pre-recorded lessons also mean that pupils can pause, rewind and revisit explanations they have struggled with, which, let’s face it, would be an incredibly useful feature to keep back in the classroom. You don’t need to repeat an instruction a dozen times; they can check it themselves.’ (Mark Enser - TES - 06/01/21)

- ‘By pre-recording, you can think more carefully about the quality of explanation...Your concentration is entirely on the material produced rather than on what everyone else in the session is doing.’ (Mark Enser - TES - 06/01/21)
 - ‘Pedagogy trumps format. This should be welcome news to teachers and something that guides everything they do.’ (Professor Becky Francis - TES - 11/01/21)
 - ‘Recorded video lessons can...free up valuable time to offer individual conversations with pupils about work, to support learning via email or platforms’ chat functions, and to focus conversations on pastoral support. As the Department for Education states, it is the *‘frequent contact between pupils and teachers [that] is crucial’*, and this can occur through a range of effective approaches outside of the live lesson.’ (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
 - ‘Quality of teaching is far more important than how lessons are delivered.’ (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)
- Disadvantage can be further entrenched if not all students have access to the technology needed to access their learning:
 - ‘It is important that support is provided to ensure that disadvantaged pupils – who are more likely to face these barriers – have access to technology.’ (Rapid evidence assessment - Distance Learning - EEF, 2020)
 - ‘over-reliance on live remote learning could negatively impact the most disadvantaged in our society.’ (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
 - ‘we need to think carefully about whether pupils have access to the right kind of device when we’re using digital remote education. If they don’t, and we can’t provide enough devices, it might be better to consider non-digital approaches as well’. (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)
- Interaction with other students has a positive impact on students’ attitude and achievement:
 - ‘Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes’ (Rapid evidence assessment - Distance Learning - EEF, 2020)
 - ‘I have found that live sessions are really useful for keeping pupils motivated, for keeping in touch and for giving feedback on previous work. They can work really well with a smaller group of pupils for a short time, investigating a particular question.’ (Mark Enser - TES - 06/01/21)
 - ‘A well-planned diet of daily live lessons can provide structure to the day, build on relationships forged in the classroom, support peer interaction as a way to motivate pupils and improve outcomes, and offer the reassurance of a trusted voice ‘in the room’. (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
 - ‘important to acknowledge the limitations of recorded lessons too. They can reduce the feeling of continued connection of pupils to school and their teachers. Also, it may be difficult to encourage valuable peer interaction without the ‘in the room’ impact of a live lesson.’ (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
 - ‘Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes. It’s therefore worth considering enabling these through, for example, chat groups or video-linking functions. They will also help pupils maintain their social skills’. (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)
 - ‘Engagement increases when pupils feel part of the school or college community. Whole-school digital assemblies and feedback, for example through newsletters to pupils

and parents, can help them feel part of the community even when learning remotely.’ (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)

- Students who are supported and taught how to work independently are likely to achieve well:
 - ‘Multiple reviews identify the value of strategies that help pupils work independently with success.’ (Rapid evidence assessment - Distance Learning - EEF, 2020)
 - ‘Recorded lessons can develop pupils’ independence, encouraging them to pause, to rewind, to manage their time, and to reduce the anxiety attached to inviting your class into your home.’ (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
- There is no one size fits all approach to remote learning that will suit every lesson:
 - ‘Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should be supported to consider which approaches are best suited to the content they are teaching and the age of their pupils.’ (Rapid evidence assessment - Distance Learning - EEF, 2020)
 - ‘The best available evidence on remote teaching indicates that we should not necessarily assume that live lessons are intrinsically better than pre-recorded alternatives, and that adopting either one of these approaches requires careful thought and planning. It might be that schools decide to implement a mix of both, aiming to yield the potential benefits of each approach – and communicating this clearly to parents so they understand your reasoning. Ultimately, learning through lockdown is about doing what is best for your pupils, your community, your teachers, and your school.’ (EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence? 07/01/21)
 - ‘Because evidence suggests that concentration online is shorter than the length of a typical lesson, filming a classroom lesson may be ineffective. Different approaches to remote education suit different types of content and pupils. Mixed models may be effective in some cases. For example, you could use the so-called ‘flipped learning’ model. In this, new content is taught through an asynchronous recorded lesson. Practice, tutoring and feedback are then done synchronously.’ (DfE, ‘What’s working well in remote education, 11/01/21)

Live interaction

- Doug Lemov (author of ‘Teach Like a Champion’ and ‘Teaching in the Online Classroom’) has coined the term ‘semi-synchronous’ teaching, where students are in a live lesson but working independently for part of the time with the teacher still monitoring and supporting as needed. Lemov describes the ‘passive safety net’ of the teacher as being very positive in maintaining student engagement and effort. (Lemov, “ ‘Semi-synchronous-ness’ is our new favorite thing, blog post, 30.07.20)
- A key element of ensuring consistently high levels of student engagement and effort online is the establishment of strong procedures and routines (as in a physical classroom). These mean that teachers are able to manage their class effectively to maximise their learning. Some examples from Lemov’s research that will help the planning of our pre-recorded lessons and for live interaction include:
 - Starting with an active task in the first 3 minutes so the message that ‘this will be active learning’ is clear.
 - ‘A balance of activities to ensure student engagement and focus and a variety of modes of interaction’ (e.g. show on screen the view of the whole class to welcome them, then show

- on screen slides with new information, then show on screen slides with instructions for independent work, then go back to showing the whole class view to give feedback).
- 'Dissolving the screen' - this means taking down slides that you're sharing with the class to show the faces of the whole class on the screen (when in a Google Meet) - thereby reinforcing peer-to-peer listening and improving the ability to read participant's reactions.
 - 'Wait question' - A question that everyone is asked to think about and the answer isn't given until everyone has time to think.
 - 'Pause points' - an instruction from the teacher to pause the video (if working asynchronously) to complete a task - ideally with a method built in of checking students have done this to ensure active engagement.

Research links

[DfE guidance - What's working well in remote education](#)

[Remote learning - How to apply Rosenshine's Principles](#)

[Why research on remote learning offers hope](#)

[Are live online lessons better than recorded ones?](#)

[EEF Blog: Live teaching and pre-recorded video lessons - how can we best navigate the evidence?](#)

[EEF Best Evidence on Supporting students to learn remotely](#)

[EEF Rapid evidence assessment summary - Impact of school closures on the attainment gap](#)

[EEF SEN in Mainstream Schools](#)

[EEF Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning](#)