

Teaching and Learning Online

Safe Practice Guidelines
for Online & Blended Learning
in Community and
Comprehensive Schools



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha

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Finally, ACCS acknowledges the external expertise of H2 Learning in developing resources designed to help schools plan for good online blended learning in August 2020.

Paul Thornton,
Chairperson of ACCS ICT Subcommittee

John Irwin,
General Secretary, ACCS

Introduction

Covid-19 has brought real and significant challenges to our daily lives as we adapt to ongoing public health measures including the closure of all schools in March 2020. *The requirement to stay at home and for physical distancing measures has created additional challenges in terms of wellbeing, restricted access to friends and increased social isolation.* Schools have risen to the challenges, striving to work with students in a fully remote learning environment and upskilling rapidly in digital technologies in response to the current crisis. This emergency response has had varying levels of success for many different reasons depending on different school contexts, equity of access, health concerns and capacity of stakeholders to engage fully.

As we continue to face uncertainty and plan for reopening of schools, we move away from a fully remote learning environment and turn our attention to a blended learning approach.

Blended learning is defined as:
Any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised bricks-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace: often used synchronously with hybrid learning.

(International Association for K-12 Online Learning 2011; in Barbour 2013)

This Framework aims to support Community and Comprehensive Schools as they develop and implement a strategic response to managing the delivery of education in an online space and prepare for remote learning with the use of blended

learning as we plan for reopening schools/return to a new academic year in August 2020. It is designed to provide useful and clear guidance for schools and promotes a school wide response to the challenges faced by the Covid 19.

While there is no doubt that individual schools and teachers are in very different places on their digital journey, this Framework promotes the ACCS approach to the challenges ahead. Schools are advised, where possible, to adopt a school wide approach to the work, which is coordinated, and which seeks to include all stakeholders. Working in the world of technology presents many wonderful opportunities and many challenges for both learners and teachers. Navigating this vast world safely and securely is critical and Child Protection, Acceptable Use, Data Protection, and other relevant policies in schools will require review to ensure that all remain safe while engaged in this work.

Schools are advised to

- ✓ ***adopt a consistent approach,***
- ✓ ***work collaboratively,***
- ✓ ***take small incremental steps to build capacity of all stakeholders engaged in blended learning at this time.***

It will be important to ensure that everyone in the school community upskills and develops their online activity to benefit both teacher and learner experiences and to achieve learner outcomes while engaged in this new approach.

Context

ACCS and the wider system

This Framework was produced by the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools to assist our schools in establishing good practice when working in a Blended Learning Environment. It is designed for our post primary schools and our further education providers in recognition that much learning and best practice can be shared between both sectors.

The Framework is set firmly in the context of the existing guidelines and frameworks (See Appendix 1) within the system including:

- ✓ *The ACCS Strategic Plan*
- ✓ *The Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools*
- ✓ *The School Self Evaluation Six Step Process*
- ✓ *Looking at our School 2016 - A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools*
- ✓ *The SOLAS / ETBI Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning* in Further Education and Training 2016-2019.***

**Technology Enhanced Learning = using Technology to facilitate and support innovative Teaching and Learning Practices.*

***Further Education and Training courses are delivered in over 51 schools in the Community Comprehensive Sector. Further Education and Training programmes include: PLC, BTEI and Self-financing Adult Education Evening Course programmes. The sector has total enrolments in excess of 31,000 learners.*

ACCS Survey

Digital Technologies in Community and Comprehensive Schools June 2020

1. Schools - (96 Responses - All C & C schools responded to the ACCS Microsoft Forms survey in June 2020).

2. Does the school have a Digital Learning Plan which has been developed/updated in the last 3 years?

- Yes 91
● No.....5



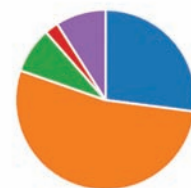
3. Does the school have a Digital Learning Team which supports work and planning in this area?

- Yes 88
● No.....6



4. Which of the following Digital Teaching & Learning Platforms are being used by your school?

- Google for Education (G Suite).. 33
● Microsoft Education..... 65
● Edmodo10
● Apple (Schoology)3
● Other..... 11



Other platforms in use in schools include Zoom, Nearpod, Edpuzzle, Schoolwise and Padlet. While only one school noted that teachers use different platforms and it is their intention to agree on one for all going forward in August 2020, it is evident that a number of schools have more than one platform in use.

5. Do all students have a school email account?

- Yes 93
- No.....2



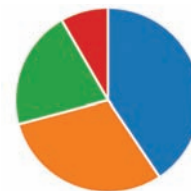
6. Do all staff have a school email account?

- Yes 96
- No.....0



7. Do staff have access to their own school device for their work other than PCs in classrooms, staff workrooms etc.?

- Yes 39
- No..... 29
- Less than half of the staff 20
- More than half of the staff..... 8



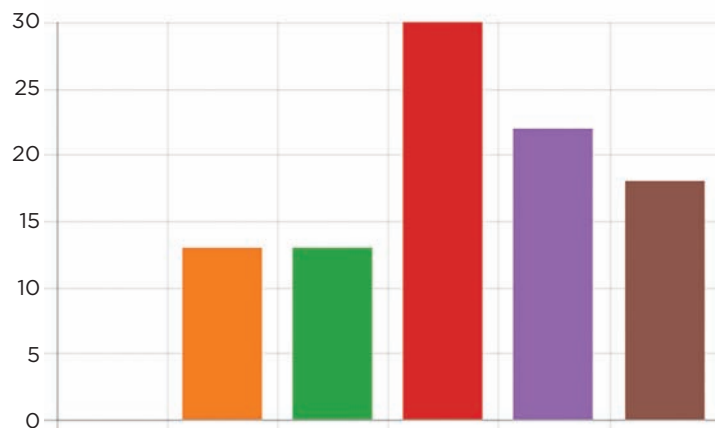
8. Do students have their own school device? (not BYOD system)

- Yes 6
- No. 87
- Students in Junior Cycle only . 3

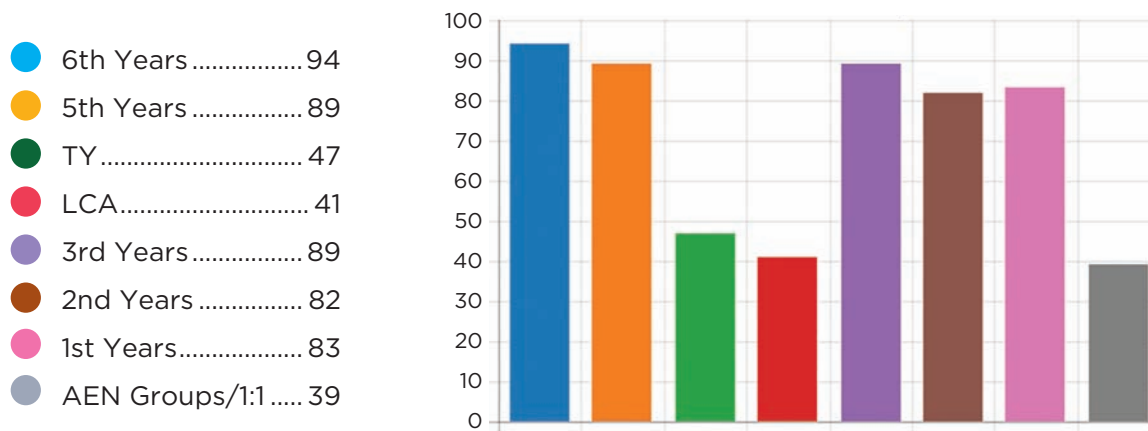


9. During school closure (March - June 2020) how many teachers delivered online classes with their students?

- None..... 0
- 1-25%..... 13
- 26-50%..... 13
- 51-75%..... 30
- 76-90%..... 22
- 91-100%..... 18



10. During school closure, which year groups/students were invited to participate in live classes?



11. Comments/Observations from Schools

See all comments – ACCS Survey – June 2020 in Appendix 2.

Synchronous and asynchronous activities

1. *“We developed a system that enabled all classes to have 3-4 live classes each day. Work was uploaded to MS Teams for days that there were not live classes in a subject. Teachers used a mix of methods to complement the live classes including pre-recorded voice messages, voice over recordings on PowerPoint and videos.”*

The importance of social interaction

1. *“Students benefited socially from the live lessons (Google Meet). They loved to see each other and their teacher. Reluctance of many students to speak noticeable - circle time for greetings at the start of lesson/meet helped.”*
2. *“Overall, we found that students, especially 6th Years craved the structure of a digital timetable and we received very positive feedback once this was in place for senior students as it provided focus and clarity during a very difficult time.”*

Staff Confidence/Efficacy/Skill & CPD

1. *“There is a realisation among staff (from staff feedback) that “every teacher is a teacher of digital skills” and a commitment to this on return to school.”*
2. *“Teachers enjoyed and were surprised by the capacity for and effectiveness of individual feedback online - also to be continued on return.”*

Engagement

1. *“As expected, some students engaged better with online learning than others for a variety of reasons. SEN students need to be in school if at all possible.”*
2. *“Many students did not want to be seen or heard in their home due to challenging family circumstances, poverty etc...”*

Devices/Wi-Fi/Digital Divide

1. *“Our school has conducted surveys with parents and students re online learning and teaching during the school closure. Two key issues emerged: a high number of students accessing schoolwork via mobile phone (28%); a high number of students do not have unlimited data (35%).”*
2. *“The issues with lack of technology at home, no space etc... have all been acknowledged. Unbelievably there needs to be time spent on addressing the reality that some failed to engage because they were too embarrassed to “be seen” by peers/teachers.”*

Additional Supports

1. *“DPs checked and made supportive calls to teachers (assigned by subject department) in the early weeks.”*
2. *“For staff meetings and student assemblies we found the use of a teacher not directly involved /contributing to act as MC really helpful. They know the agenda and can focus on maintaining flow and also deal with technical issues.”*

Looking ahead

1. *“We are working on a requirement of, at a minimum, one live session in perhaps every 4 hours of timetable subject.”*
2. *“We need to work with students’ skills uploading work and need to upskill students on digital etiquette.”*

First Steps

What have we learned from our work in school self-evaluation and in our work developing an effective DL Plan at school level which can be applied to the current circumstances and the context of blended learning approaches as necessary / required in Covid 19 /pandemic times? Most ACCS schools have a Digital Learning Team and a Digital Learning Plan in place and both will need to be reviewed in the context of Covid 19 and the challenges which this has brought schools. The following steps (if not already in place) might be a useful map for schools.

1. **Put a Digital Learning Team in Place** which represents a cross section of the school community and can coordinate the process of developing a plan to effectively embed blended or hybrid learning during this time and which will support students and staff in their learning and development of key skills in this area.
2. **Develop a Vision for Digital Learning (Blended Learning)** which provides guidance and CPD for all stakeholders, exploring potential and possibilities for teachers and learners in using technology to support face to face teaching and enabling a review of current practices in the use of digital technology in the real or virtual classroom. Review and update any relevant policies such as the Acceptable Use Policy, the Data Protection Policy and others.
3. **Identify Focus** to establish *how well a school is doing* in delivering a blended curriculum over the past few months. This will require evidence gathering from a range of sources and from the

key stakeholders. See stakeholders' survey templates in Appendix 3.

4. **Analyse and Make Judgements** in terms of existing digital infrastructure and practices. *"In so doing the school should determine, affirm and celebrate the strengths they identify in the aspects of practice being evaluated while acknowledging the areas that should be prioritised for improvement."*

Page 20, Digital Learning Planning GUIDELINES.

5. **Agree and Share a Digital Learning Plan** which is a single document outlining what the school will need to do in order to enhance its DL practices **to meet the current Covid 19 circumstances and challenges**. It will include a summary of strengths and areas requiring improvement, (SMART) targets for improvement and actions required, names of those who will undertake, monitor and review the actions outlined in a given timeframe. It will reference how students, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders will be involved.
6. **Put the plan in action** with all stakeholders who understand their roles and responsibilities in making this plan a success. *"All relevant school personnel should share ownership of the actions to be implemented at individual teacher, class, or whole-school level. These actions should become part of the normal teaching and learning process and, as such, should be capable of being implemented by all teachers. The entire school community has a role and a responsibility to successfully implement the DL Plan. The Digital Strategy notes that ALL teachers should have the requisite knowledge and skills*

to integrate digital technologies effectively into their practice. Thus, putting the plan into action is key to ensuring that all teachers are confident in embedding digital learning into their practice. Creating and implementing a successful DL Plan requires a whole school approach, where all staff play their part.

The purpose of monitoring the DL Plan is to maintain control of the plan, to keep it on track and to ensure its successful completion by helping to identify problems early on, so that solutions may be found.”

See Appendix 4

Digital Learning Planning Guidelines

7. **Monitor Actions and Evaluate Impact** by regular gathering and use of information at specified intervals to check on the impact of DL practices on student learning and teachers’ and students’ experiences of the blended approach to teaching and learning brought about by Covid 19.

Gorey Community School

A whole school approach to planning for enhancing Digital Learning Practices:

With a student population of approx. 1,600, it was fortunate that Gorey Community School had implemented the Digital Learning Framework (DLF), having been selected as one of the 40 pilot schools a few years ago. With the support of Siobhan O’Sullivan, our PDST Advisor, we worked on a digital plan and our Acceptable Use Policy for ICT.

Staff were quick to buy into the DLF as it was closely aligned to our SSE targets and the benefits of ICT were obvious to many. We formed a Digital Leaders Team (15 members of staff across a range of subjects) and sought to address some of the digital challenges we faced.

We prioritised staff training, introduced Digital Media classes for all First Years, and adopted Microsoft Teams as our communication platform. The DLF has been transformative. Teachers and SNAs communicate, share resources and collaborate seamlessly, ensuring efficiency and greater productivity. Each year staff are surveyed on how we spend our ICT budget, with subject departments making requests for financial support for technology to enhance teaching and learning.”

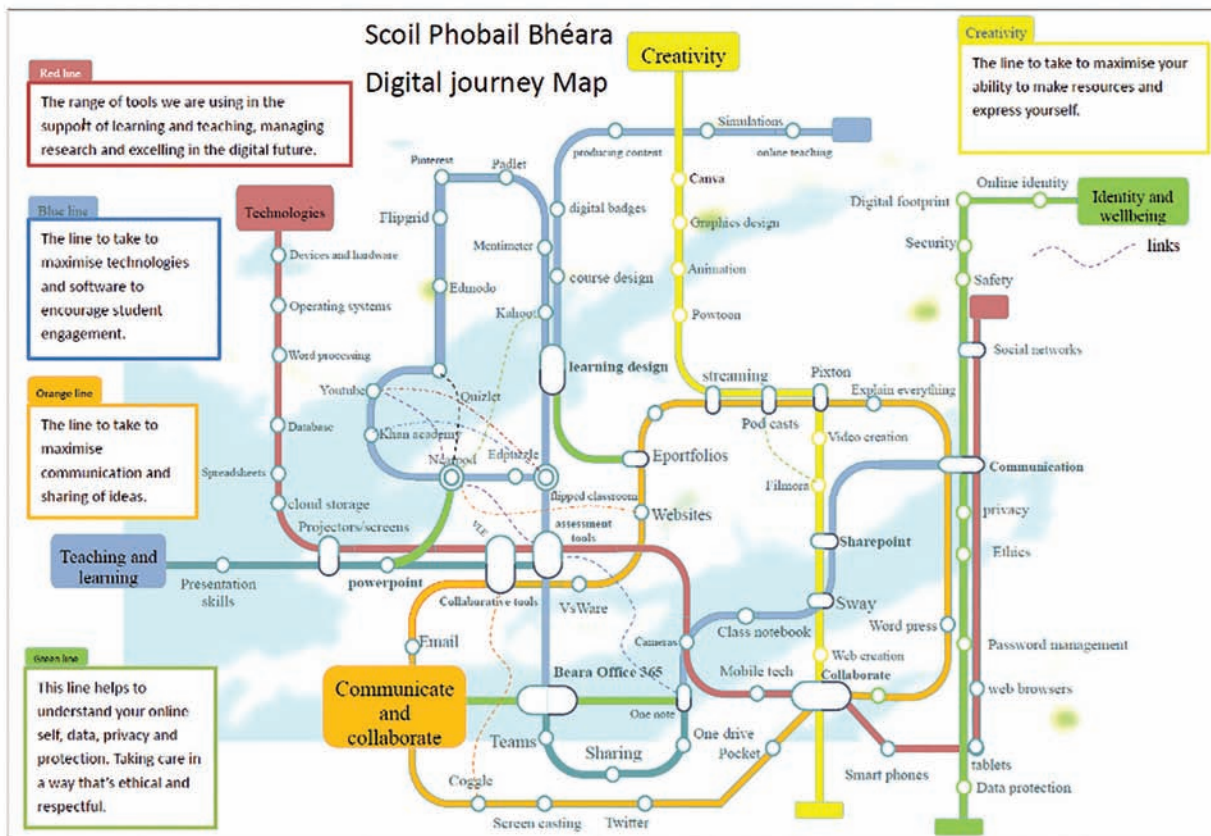
Brendan O’Sullivan, Gorey Community School

Scoil Phobail Bhéara

The school uses this graphic to identify all technologies being used currently. It is set out like a subway map with each line representing a different element in the process. The staff have found it very useful to keep them on track. The idea is like any new city you visit, it is best to stay within the planned routes, get familiar with those and then as you become more confident don't be afraid to venture onto other routes. You don't have to stop at every station but perhaps try and stop at at least two stations on every line.

"It's still a work in progress and I'm adding to it every week. I gave it to teachers with some unnamed stations so as new technologies appear and as some stations (apps) may close, they can personalise it".

Noel O'Sullivan, Scoil Phobail Bhéara



Good Practice in Blended Learning

Actions & Responsibilities

Phase	Action(s)	Responsibility
Planning	Whole School Approach to Online Teaching and Learning / Blended Learning to be implemented from the outset.	Senior Management Digital Learning Team All Staff
	Communication with parents is essential. Choose ONE platform for outgoing information to parents.	Senior Management HSLC
	CPD for staff on the integration of technology in a meaningful way and the pedagogy of online / blended learning.	Senior Management
	Technical Support for staff and students to initially access the platforms. Audit of access to devices among students.	Senior Management
	Teacher Collaboration. Establishing 'Communities of Practice' for subject departments. This means working more closely with subject department colleagues to make sure lessons and materials meet the needs of all students, partnering with others in our subject area to plan instruction, working together on cross-curricular projects, and dividing up the things all students need (like technology instruction) among teachers on a team so students aren't doing the same lessons over and over and	Senior Management Subject Department Heads
Implementing	Devote the first week of school to building Community and Digital competence among teachers and students. Communicate expectations clearly to all stakeholders.	All Staff Parents
	Staying Connected with colleagues. Staff Meetings, Virtual Coffee Breaks, Weekly meetings of Year heads with the teaching team.	Senior Management All Staff
	Use face to face teaching and synchronous online teaching for active learning and engaging work. Asynchronous learning can be used for reading or self-paced work.	All Staff
Review / Evaluate / Improve	"Review" the blended learning activity at regular intervals. Methods: Early satisfaction survey two weeks into the Blended Learning process to gather satisfaction rates among teachers and students. Review student engagement statistics. Seek feedback from parents. Re-engage with the Whole School Approach to Online Teaching and Learning / Blended Learning plan, identify new strategies from improvement, implement strategies, review / evaluate at regular intervals and adjust the Whole School Approach to Online Teaching and Learning / Blended Learning based on the findings.	Senior Management Digital Learning Team All Staff
Immediate Action Points	Update subject plans to include the use of ICT in Teaching and Learning when schools are operating as 'normal'. This will build and develop knowledge, skills and competence in teachers and students on the use of learning platforms and other education apps when a move to the Online / Blended Learning environment is required.	Senior Management Digital Learning Team All Staff

Some Guidelines

Practical Advice for those new to Online Teaching

Many learners, teachers and students find the thoughts of working online in delivering and accessing curriculum quite daunting. In Community and Comprehensive Schools across the country strong relationships between learners, school and home have been developed and enriched and are recognised as critical to learning experiences and outcomes. There is a concern that the face-to-face relationships and the social element of teaching and learning may be compromised, lessened or indeed lost in the online environment. Many teachers and students fear being left behind in this new and sometimes confusing environment. These concerns are valid and should be acknowledged by all stakeholders involved in developing and implementing the plan for integrating online learning into the current practices in school.

“...we had one or two Zoom classes every week...focussed on mental health and that ...go into subgroups and talk to our friends ...one of the best parts... because we missed our friends from school and do you know, we missed speaking to them every day...” ...definitely one of the main things that you’d miss (friends) especially, even school itself like you’d miss talking to the teachers, you’d miss everything really...”

(Ciara, 6th Year, St John the Baptist CS)

“My mom was still working, I’ve no brothers or sisters so... I had no motivation and then when I would try to do something and I find it so hard to grasp things...I can’t grasp things fast like other students. I just missed the communication with the teachers and if there is something wrong I missed being able to just go to a teacher... because my mom wasn’t even here ...”

(Ellie, 3rd Year, Mountmellick CS)

“...some teachers sent the notes in and then they would screen record it and send voice messages, just explaining notes, going in further detail and that helped as well ... also it was like listening to your teacher in class going over notes and just explaining what you’re actually learning and it’s just easier to hear what exactly is important like pick out the main things instead of reading a passage and not knowing what are the main notes in it so that really helped having the voice memos and kind of video recordings to look back on and it was good to hear the voices and not just read something like it was like reading and listening at same time. It was like learning it a lot better. So that (screencast) was a really good one to have... it’s like a sense of normal, like it’s normality, like you’re in class listening to your teacher... I think a lot of times when the teacher is explaining, you’re sitting there listening and you’re soaking in the information...”

(Nicole, 5th Year, Holy Family CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars - June 2020

The following advice* may be useful to consider when moving online.

*adapted from <https://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.com/2020/03/why-coronavirus-may-just-make-you.html>

1. Be positive and communicate

See this as an opportunity to expand your skills. Model good behaviour online. Keep yourself and your learners positive. Offer reassurance and grasp the opportunities. Communication is critical to successful learning in the classroom and online so

communicate with your students and listen to them. They will have ideas and solve problems... Don't rush it with pages of links. Build slowly. Step-by-step - it's a case of less is more.

2. It's been done before

Remember millions of people have learnt and are learning online This means there is a wealth of techniques and technology that have been tried and tested.

3. Only use the technology and platform you know how to use safely. (School authorised platforms)

Your school most likely already has a platform that has loads of functionality which is often underused. Start with what you know and seek to build on this knowledge to enhance the online experience for you and your students. The advantage of working within the school's chosen technologies is that it is the safest and most secure route. This approach promotes easy internal collaboration and sharing of best practice between colleagues.

4. Asynchronous online activities

Asynchronous activities include all activities which are NOT in real time or live face-to-face events. If you don't want to do live classes online, you can always record them using PowerPoint etc. You may already have recorded classes which you and colleagues can share. Keep them short and simple (research has shown that 6 minute chunks is a good limit). Use email, or other social media platforms to communicate with students. Consider the plethora of online resources such as YouTube videos, podcasts and open source online learning content rather than trying to create all the content yourself.

“...we would be given some videos, for example in Maths and then we could watch them on our own time and maybe play back again to, yeah, to go back to points we missed which I found really helpful...”

(Daniella, 6th Year, St Mark's CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars - June 2020

5. Synchronous activities online

Synchronous activities take place in real-time like webinars and live teaching sessions. Make asynchronous your starting point but over time, do include synchronous activities which will enhance engagement for you and your learners. While these do require a more complex set of skills, there are plenty of resources available to help upskill in this area. One of the advantages of synchronous teaching is that you can also link out to other online resources. Remember that you can also take questions and encourage discussion, create groups discussions, breakout groups and so on, with such systems. Your sessions can also be recorded for students to revisit as many times as they wish. Use of SCREENSHARE to show worked examples is particularly useful.

“...I really like the live classes. I think they give a sense of structure like that for even outside of school that you still feel like you're getting up in the morning, you're going to your class and then you have the work to do after that. You're getting some form of routine...”

(Emma, 5th Year, Kinsale CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars - June 2020

6. Assessment and Feedback

Start with formative assessment to keep the learning on track. Use the opportunity of working online to develop effective and regular feedback. For example, start every new session with a recap of the last session and end with a recap of what you've just done. Check in regularly with the students in their class groups and individually to enhance engagement.

“Teachers reported pacing and differentiation to be more easily achieved online. Google forms useful for some kinds of assessment. Teachers enjoyed and were surprised by the capacity for and effectiveness of individual feedback online - also to be continued on return.”

ACCS Survey - June 2020 - See Appendix 2

Deputy principal of Old Bawn Community School, Sarah Gibbons, explains: “As a school, we are eager to safeguard our students’ learning should unforeseen circumstances such as school closures occur, and we are confident that our digital progress has created the foundations for this. We moved to a digital platform for planning, recording and submitting students’ work, assignments and CBAs and we use Office 365 apps in a variety of different ways to suit the needs of each subject and the students’ learning styles. Student work can quickly be uploaded by the teachers, completed by the students and graded with feedback using either a rubric, free text or annotation directly on the students’ submitted piece of work.”

Keeping the classroom open, www.wriggle.ie

7. Timetable and Pacing

Work within the agreed school wide approach to the timetable in the context of blended learning. Routine is important. Communicate regularly with your students without flooding them with emails and work. Give them time to complete tasks and to generate their own work. Follow up with students who do not meet deadlines as you would when you are in the classroom. Keep up a measured momentum. Ensure a healthy balance of online and of line activities for students. There are lots of great opportunities for students to learn on and of line!

“...what I found and what teachers found as well is that there is nearly 24/7 availability online so you can be submitting assignments or asking questions at any time of the day... and that has its pros and its cons,

you know, if you’re doing work and if you need something, if you need help straight away it’s great there but it’s not so great at 11:00 o’clock at night... and so it’s a bit of an adjustment as well from our side...”

(Michael, 6th Year, St Peter’s CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars June 2020

8. Expectations

Often technology doesn’t work in the way we intend. In the face-to-face classroom if something doesn’t work, we usually try something else, perhaps something simpler. This approach should be mirrored in the remote classroom. Don’t be too ambitious with the tech. There’s always an alternative. Keep it simple. Above all, involve the students in the process. Ask them for help. They may just be more online savvy than you think. Set clear expectations for students when engaging in online learning.

9. Support

Seek support from your colleagues in school and from other communities of practice supporting the effective use of technology in teaching and learning. Lots of our schools have digital champions who support best practice in school. Ensure students are made aware of what they can do if they encounter something inappropriate or upsetting online.

“From the start two APs worked with me to lead T and L. Teachers said that they found having a go to person very supportive and helped alleviate the high levels of stress and frustration.”

ACCS Survey - June 2020 - See Appendix 2

CPD & Resources

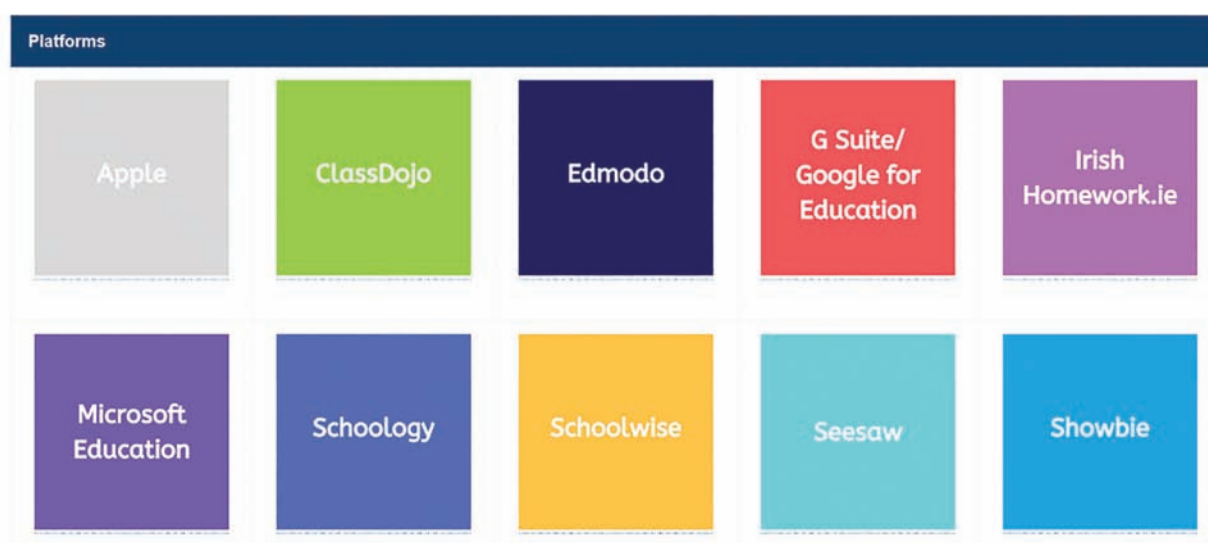
Subject Associations, PDST, The Teaching Council and other agencies deliver regular professional development programmes and host webinars to support online and blended delivery.

(See H2 Blended Learning Workshop 2020.)

Platforms used in ACCS schools

(See ACCS Survey – June 2020, Appendix 2)

Visit www.pdst.ie for information on the available platforms for schools and a selection of video tutorials from the PDST Digital Technologies team showing a range of online tools which can be used to support teaching, learning and assessment. These tools have been selected as they can also support distance learning.





























Schools are advised not to use unsupported platforms and other resources not designed for educational use which may be unsafe and unsecure. Schools may choose to use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp to share successes and achievements with the school and wider community. These are designed for social use rather than for teaching and learning. The agreed school platform more than likely has controls to manage activity and will be in compliance with the school's data protection, acceptable use, anti-bullying and other relevant policies.

(See links to ACCS Social Media Guidelines 2018 & The Teaching Council Draft Social Media Guidelines 2019)

<https://www.accs.ie/s/guidelines-for-social-media-use-in-schools-march-2019.docx>

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/Website/en/Fitness-to-Teach/Consultation-Draft-Social-Media-Guidelines/Draft-Guidelines-for-Registered-Teachers-Social-Media.pdf>

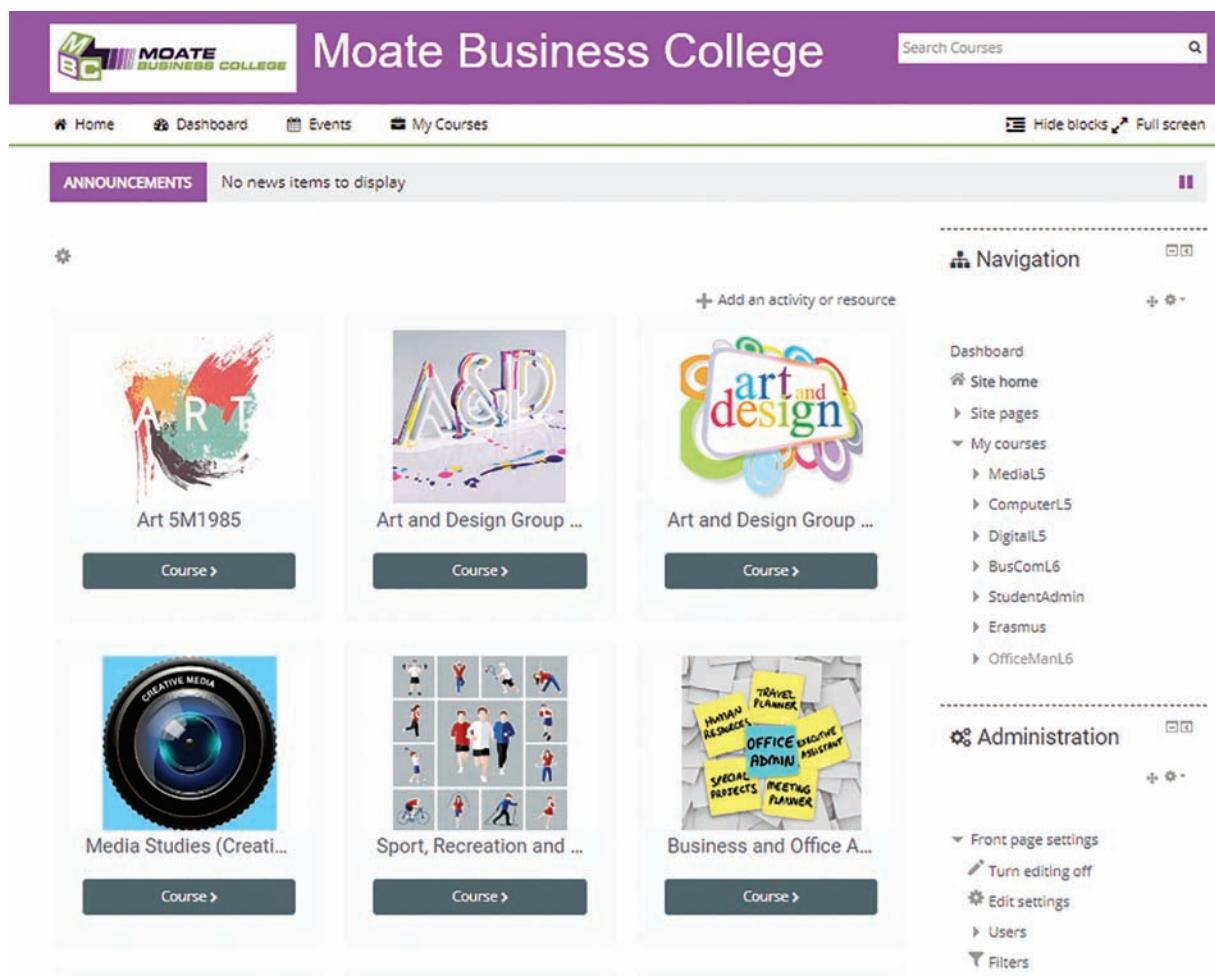
Access the PDST links below for online tutorials and guidance re. platforms and other apps.

Additional Resources				
				
Resources to support distance learning, including reliable sources of information and video content	Digital tools that can be used to support teaching and learning remotely	Online tutorials for digital tools suitable for supporting distance learning		
				
Digital ebook and virtual tour libraries that are available to support students and teachers in a classroom or home setting	Digital tools suitable for video conferencing, live classes or video calls	Online tutorials showing how digital tools can be used for assessment and to provide effective feedback		
				
Formative	Google Forms	Google Meet	Loom	Mentimeter
				
Microsoft One Drive	Microsoft Stream	Microsoft Teams	Microsoft Word	Nearpod
				
Quizizz	Screencast-o-matic	Showbie	Socrative	Wakelet
				
VideoScribe	Webex	Write Reader	YouTube Playlists	Zoom

Platforms used in ACCS schools delivering Further Education Programmes

Moate Business College - Using Moodle VLE

Figure 1 - Moate Business College's Moodle Home Page



The screenshot shows the Moodle home page for Moate Business College. The header is purple and features the college's logo, the name 'Moate Business College', and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Dashboard, Events, and My Courses. A central announcement bar states 'No news items to display'. The main content area is a grid of course cards, each with a representative image and a 'Course >' button. The courses include 'Art 5M1985', 'Art and Design Group ...', 'Media Studies (Creati...', 'Sport, Recreation and ...', and 'Business and Office A...'. On the right side, there is a 'Navigation' sidebar with a tree view of site pages and courses, and an 'Administration' sidebar with settings for the front page, editing, and users.

The College has been using Moodle for the past 10 years – for the first 7 years we managed, updated and hosted it on our own website.

Three years ago, we migrated it to the SOLAS platform which we find to be an excellent resource.

For the most part, prior to the lockdown, the college had utilised Moodle in the following ways:

1. As a repository, which was divided into classes and where teachers could upload class notes, extra reading, exercises and other resources for students.
2. As a means of communication between teachers and students
3. As a means of submission of assignments by learners.

These included:

1. **Chats** – Teachers were able to have real-time synchronous text-based discussions with their student groups through the Chats activity. Some teachers set the chat up so that it was repeated every day. Because the chat sessions are saved and made available to everyone in the class, teachers found it to be a very good way of answering questions about assignments etc.
2. **Forums** – This is text based like the Chat session but is different in that it is asynchronous and can last over a period of time. These were set up so that the students could converse with each other about work and also so that the teacher could check in and give their advice if the class found that they were having difficulties on any aspect of the work. We felt that this resource was very beneficial in the way it promoted student-led learning.
3. **Quiz** – Some sections of summative exams contained multiple choice sections. We found that the Quiz activity in Moodle allowed for this section of the exam to be completed in exam-like conditions. It was also a very good revision tool.
4. **Assignments** – The assignment feature in Moodle is very impressive in that

it allows the teacher to see exactly who has submitted work. It also flags any learners who is overdue with their submission. It allows for learners to submit drafts and for teachers to provide feedback through digital annotations on work received.

5. **External Tool** – the External Tool activity was used in conjunction with some of the TEL tools provided by SOLAS. Specifically, a number of teachers used the Learnkey resources which they could embed into Moodle. The Learnkey resources provided workbooks, notes, videos and practice assignments on a wide range of subjects and helped the learners when they weren't able to attend online classes.
6. **Files and URL's** – teachers used these resources to upload class notes, website addresses, question sheets etc. These can then be downloaded by students in their own time. Along with the tools in Moodle, teachers utilised TEL tools such as **Socrative**, **Kahoot** and **Quizlet** to create interactive resources for learners. MBC also used Virtual Classroom Technology such as **Microsoft Teams** and **Zoom** to conduct real-time classes with student groups.

Aileen Martin, Moate Business College,
Moodle Administrator

Gorey Community School

PLC Department

Google Suite for Education is used daily in our PLC department. Staff and students receive regular training throughout the year on the use of G Suite for Education. As a result of school closure due to COVID 19 instructional videos and schedules have been prepared to support the delivery of the programmes exclusively online for the foreseeable future.

*All modules can be delivered successfully through our online platform. By using a host of apps within G Suite for Education learners can **receive instruction** from tutors, avail of **group and individual support**, get **feedback** on assignments and **present completed assignments** for assessment.*

Online support is available 24/7 for the learner's G Suite accounts. Two weeks before we were closed the Director of PLC posted a message to the platform encouraging students who were experiencing any problems with their service or accounts to come forward to have the problems resolved.

The Director of PLC manages the G Suite accounts and his contact was circulated to the student's weeks in advance of the closure to provide IT support remotely. The teaching staff has been using G Suite for education for about 4 years and are well trained and practiced in augmenting their delivery through the online platform and classroom-based activities daily.

The transition to exclusively online for a period of time is not seen as a problem. Google Hangouts Meet is a mobile and desktop app that will allow students to interact on group projects remotely and will also allow staff meet to plan programme delivery.

Paul Carter, PLC Co-ordinator, Gorey Community School

Synchronous Teaching

Videoconferencing Tips and Etiquette

A good class requires careful planning, and this is no different when online. A live event such as the use of video conferencing is the closest activity to face-to-face

teaching and as such is one of the most valuable resources available to schools. It brings learners together in a social and collaborative setting.

Holy Family Community School

Remote Co-Teaching

Remote Co-Teaching took place in several subjects and took the format of two subject specialists co-hosting a live class via Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams screen-share facility enabled teachers to deliver and annotate content from whichever medium they chose. It also allowed for recording of the lesson, which could then be distributed to students unable to sign on at that time.

Live lessons allowed for the facilitation of actual 'real-time' engagement between teachers and students. It also allowed for active differentiation and scaffolding, as well as some summative assessment when coupled with Microsoft forms. While proving a highly effective way of teaching remotely, it also provided a gateway for the development of a structured routine for students, presenting opportunities to collaborate and communicate with peers in a structured manner. The feedback from students in relation to the live classes was excellent.

Michael Fiorentini, Holy Family Community School

(Navigating the uncharted territories of remote teaching and learning)

The following tips are designed to support schools in using tools such as MS Teams, Google Hangouts, ZOOM and others.

While live streaming is a great way to communicate, there are lots of things to consider and to manage to ensure a safe, productive learning experience.

Consider the terms of service, age requirements and the functions of the service – for example is there a chat option and can this be moderated?

Familiarise yourself with the functions of the service, most good services allow hosts to manage the permissions of participants for example; disabling user audio and video cameras. Be aware of the privacy settings, who can see the content, who can comment, most services allow you to adjust privacy settings.

Tip: If using conferencing/videos services we recommend using a service that allows teachers to disable student audio and video www.webwise.ie

In advance of using video conferencing, schools should set out school wide expectations in relation to using such technology in line with its Acceptable Use, Data Protection and other relevant policies. Face-to-Face time should be put aside to explore/remind people how these technologies can be used to their best advantage in the safest way. (Induction for staff and students)

Consider the following:

- Set **school wide expectations** and general rules when engaging with video conferencing in line with the school's Anti Bullying and Acceptable Use policies and other relevant policies.
- Ensure that learners have and use their own **school email and login credentials**.
- Ensure students know how to **download the relevant app** and that they have done this at the beginning of the year.
- Spend some time to go through **the application's functionality** and how learners can contribute online to the class.
- Classes to be delivered as **synchronous events should be scheduled well in advance across the week** and always within the subject timetable for the relevant class to avoid clashes of these events. All stakeholders understand that these periods are for timetabling synchronous events in that subject with that class and that teacher. Remember the *face-to-face* schedule for the class. As in normal times, everyone works within their own timetables to avoid clashes and frustrations.

- Outline **online etiquette** and expectations of the learners in your first virtual class and periodically revisit the topic – include space for discussion.
- All stakeholders must at all times **respect the privacy of others**, who may be in the homes of students or staff during online classes. Show students how to turn off their camera and microphone and if required how to select a suitable background.

Set **reasonable expectations**. It is important to appreciate the pressures that some learners may encounter when they are trying to learn from home such as inadequate access to technology or have to share a device with other family members etc. If sharing devices the privacy of other device users must be respected and screens or data from the device should never be shared in the virtual classroom.

“... I really like the live classes. I think they give a sense of structure like that for even outside of school that you still feel like you're getting up in the morning, you're going to your class and then you have the work to do after that. You're getting some form of routine...”

(Emma, 5th Year, Kinsale CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars – June 2020

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

- **Email the invitation link** with clear specific instructions for learners in advance of each class.
- Join your class **a few minutes early** to ensure a proper connection and that you are there well in advance of learners. This will enable the class to start promptly on time.
- Set aside time to ensure that learners are able to **connect** their audio and video.
- Give an **agenda or plan for each class in advance**.
- **Monitor online attendance** and record on the school's online portal.
- If not in school and working remotely, choose an appropriate quiet location, one where you will not be interrupted, and you are comfortable and can present professionally.
- Encourage learners to also find an **appropriate quiet space** in which to participate where they won't be interrupted.
- Consider the **use of headphones** and also ask the learners to use headphones to reduce background noise and ensure clarity of voice .
- Approach the class as you would an of ine class. Dress and speak **as if you are face-to-face** with the class while ensuring you're at the appropriate distance from the microphone for the best audio experience .
- Consider **recording** the class. If you are recording, ensure that learners have given fully informed consent before commencing. Inform learners of their right to turn off their camera and/or microphone if they do not want to be recorded. Learners who choose not to be recorded should be encouraged to use the chat functionality to participate.
- **Speak clearly** and take a little bit longer than you normally would, explaining key concepts or ideas. You do not have the same opportunity online to read body language and gauge understanding from facial prompts.
- **Test your content in advance** – Check how it looks on mobile devices (tablets & smartphones). Many of your learners may not be accessing the content on PCs or Laptops.
- When delivering content, **give your learners a moment** to open or take in what you've shared particularly when sharing videos or presentations.
- In general, **screen-sharing** is better than talking heads. Have resources ready to share and use in your lessons.
- **Encourage maximum interaction** and use of the chat function for questions, comments and reactions. Consider setting a target for learners (e. g. – minimum of 2 comments per learner in each lesson).
- Generally, it is best, particularly for larger class groups, to get learners to write their questions in **chat** and you can unmute them to discuss rather than allowing learners to interrupt when they have a question.
- **Involve learners** – In time consider asking them to present and share content or presentations with the class.

Schools set up live classes for Leaving Certificate students where the subject teacher was assisted by a colleague from the Care Team. At the beginning of class, the co-teacher recorded the absences and followed these up in *live time* contacting homes reminding students that they had a class at that time. This initiative carried out over one week, greatly enhanced participation and engagement rates in live classes.

Effectively blending synchronous and asynchronous activities can support learning:

"...there was an awful lot coming at us... we had a really good zoom timetable that was set up by our school and we had a one hour zoom class at 9.00 and then a one hour zoom class at twenty past ten and we had like 20 minute breaks in between. So what we did in the zoom classes was..., we corrected our work and had more work set for when our next ZOOM class was two days after ... we take the next day and be able to do it then. Zoom classes were really good for that but we had one class where we got a loom video....So a loom video was... the teacher would be in the bottom right corner and we would be able to see his computer screen behind him and his notes and he videoed a 20 minute video and sent it out to us through Edmodo and we were able to watch that video and pause it and take down the notes and then do the tasks that he said... and when we were back in class, ask how to do it... and do it at our own pace. It suited our timetable... we had time to do it..."

(Megan, 3rd Year, Mountmellick CS) ACCS Student Voice Webinars – June 2020

OTHER OPTIONS

Record your classes if you do not wish to deliver a live online class.

Teachers can decide to record a class and share it with students if they are not comfortable delivering a live online class. This is also effective in situations where learners are unwell or are struggling with internet access and miss a live streamed class. Record videos instead and send them to your learners so that they can watch in their own time.

"...we would be given some videos, for example in Maths and then we could watch them in our own time and maybe play back again to, yeah, to go back to points we missed which I found really helpful. Like Sophia, I like doing stuff in my own time because at home I have four siblings and that (class) would be ... lunchtime or like around noon, it would be very loud, so I like doing things, my work, without my brothers in the evening..."

(Daniella, 6th Year, St Mark's CS)

"...the teacher did record them so at least if you missed them you could go back and watch them and even if you were present for the live classes, it meant that if you forgot something you could go back and watch it later on."

(Mia, 2nd Year, Old Bawn CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars – June 2020

Record Short Presentations

You can now easily record presentations in PowerPoint or simply record your voice using your phone or an online voice recorder (e.g. - <https://online-voice-recorder.com>). You can then share the presentation or audio file online in teams.

"...Well yeah, we were doing the online classes of course and the teachers would be going over the PowerPoints and I found that very useful like you get a visual of it as well as what they're talking about but also after the class was over they would upload more PowerPoints and slide shows to make you further understand it and also they'd maybe send you a link or to watch YouTube videos to make you revise what you have been taught which I found useful as well..."

(Killian, 5th Year, Ashbourne CS)

ACCS Student Voice Webinars – June 2020

Use Short Videos

These can be personal recordings or Video Content sourced online or shared by colleagues. If using content developed by others, you need to ensure that the content is free to use and share (e.g. – Creative Commons content) and use is compliant with copyright legislation. Videos should be short – ideally no more than 5 minutes. Videos longer than 15 minutes can cause issues of slow downloading and learner distraction. If you have more to say, record two or three short videos.

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES AND RESOURCES



Scoilnet is the Department of Education and Skills' official online portal for Irish education and contains over 20,000 resources mapped to the Irish curriculum. All students and teachers can access World Book Online, an online encyclopedia through Scoilnet. Teachers can create a free Scoilnet account and upload their resources to share with other teachers and students throughout the country. Teachers now have access to the Irish Newspaper Archive (via a Scoilnet Account sign in).

www.scoilnet.ie



Additional links from PDST Technology in Education to support teachers working from home, including links to **good practice videos that contain activities which can be adapted for online teaching**. Digital learning planning resources are also available, please visit **PDST Technology in Education** for more information.

www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie



There are a variety of short online courses available on **TeacherCPD.ie** which teachers can access to upskill in the area of digital technologies. Please visit TeacherCPD.ie to view the current selection available.

www.teacherCPD.ie



As pupils/students will also be engaging in online learning at home throughout this period, we would advise teachers and parents to visit the **Webwise** website to find out more about online safety and relevant considerations. **The parents section** of the website is also particularly useful in highlighting popular apps and their features.

www.webwise.ie

A Place of (Remote) Belonging

How educators can create a welcoming classroom community during distance learning

While content is important, there is no doubt that *connection* is key to successful learning. Our students missed school, their friends, their teachers, the classroom and the corridors. They missed the daily routines of school life. For many being at home was isolating and challenging. Our schools came up with many ways to creatively engage with and connect to their students and the wider school community and many of our students recognised and appreciated their efforts. Here is one example of how a school connected with its most important stakeholders.

While instructional approaches to education are adjusting to remote learning, a sense of belonging and community is still **critical** to ensuring students remain engaged and enthusiastic learners. Students may be accustomed to finding that sense of belonging from interactions with their peers and classmates during transitions or unstructured periods like lunch. As instruction is delivered virtually, they are likely to feel more disconnected, uncertain, or even get distracted in their new learning space.

Holy Family Community School

"...The podcast started as a newsletter on the Monday after lockdown. After a couple weeks I just found that the newsletter, the printed word, wasn't connecting with students. It wasn't giving me what I wanted, and I didn't feel like it was giving other people what they wanted as well. I toyed around with the idea of creating a podcast and I wasn't sure whether or not, I would physically, technically be able to do it and how much time would it take... but as teachers and students started to submit audio recordings to me, I just loved hearing their voices in my house... for me that just really worked so the podcast naturally evolved.

Following the indicators of wellbeing, we've got four podcasts done and two more planned for September and October... the response has been really phenomenal from the students, from parents, from politicians, from random people who are listening... it's about students sharing their experiences... what it's been like in lockdown for them... just the tiny little snippets that really connect and teachers have been doing the same and it's funny because the more episodes that we have done, the more willing teachers and students are to share their experiences and their life with everyone, with the audience and the audience is whoever is listening around the world. So we have people listening from America and UK, Australia and Canada... It's been really quite amazing..."

Pádraig Meredith, Wellbeing Coordinator, Holy Family Community School

ACCS The HFCS Wellbeing Podcast.docx

Educators should take into account how class time and instruction can address their students' new concerns. Creating a virtual community is just as important for remote learning as it is in a physical classroom.

Old Bawn Community School

So, what have we noticed in our school? (During school closure - Spring 2020)

- The rare **online synchronous class** has become common, frequent and numerous. Teachers are talking about teams and differentiated digital strategies, forms and flipgrids, forums and feedback.
- The first video meeting of the leadership team has become the at least twice daily **online face-to-face** that is second nature.
- The trepidation of calling the **first whole staff meeting** has been replaced with a desire to share, design and deliver meaningful multimedia, information and online collaboration.
- Online **subject meetings** are second nature.
- A daily **timetabled staff online coffee break** is a necessity rather than a novelty.
- An **online timetable** for students works!
- The **Care Team** hold their meetings at the same time but from their own homes and discuss innovative ways of how to address the care needs of the school community.
- The SEN Teachers and Team have included the **remote nature of learning into their IEPs**.
- **APIs** meet to discuss school strategy, but now in cyberspace.
- The Board **oversees and governs through a screen!**
- **Year teams, and discussions and assemblies** are not only possible online but worthwhile and productive.
- **The Student Voice has become louder** and closer as they operate through a medium that is natural and native to them.
- **Competitions and extracurricular activities and awards through digital media** are being explored and delivered and enhance the community spirit of the whole school.

A series of resources now being used by Harvard instructors contains the following suggestions, which can help educators at every grade level re-establish norms, connections, and a sense of belonging.

Create ways to show caring

- If the class is small enough, greet students by name when they enter the chat room.
- Begin with a check in. Ask students how they are doing or asking them to express their week with a meme or emoji. In larger classes, a chatroom can help enable this check in.
- Build in time for announcements and free time for students to interact with each other, since the virtual format often limits the amount of time students can chat.
- Model vulnerability and share your own uncertainties. Setting an example as the instructor will encourage and signal to students it's OK to do the same.
- Encourage students to respond to each other using the chat feature, which allows them to message one another or the whole group. (But make sure the chat function doesn't get too distracting; consider limiting the time you leave it open.)
- End class with a closing circle. Have students express a takeaway or a question via chat — or a Google doc if time is short.

Establish norms

- Revisit any norms the class may have established at the beginning. What should still hold true in the new format and what may need to change?
- See if the platform allows users to set up profiles. Have students personalize theirs with a picture and pronouns.
- Decide if students should speak up or if they should use the “raise hand” feature or another signal.

- Ask students to set an intention and to be present. Consider whether they should close their other browser windows, move phones, and take notes.

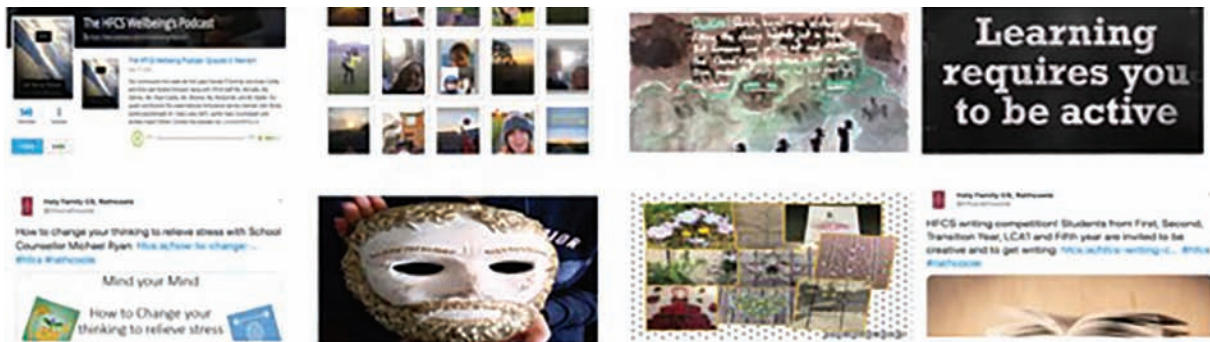
Promote engagement

- Give clear instructions to avoid unnecessary confusion. Post instructions in the chat room so that students can readily access them.
- If students are in a breakout room, circulate through the rooms and check in on how students are progressing.
- Encourage students to come prepared to lead discussions themselves — have them prepare questions or take on a role that helps facilitate the class (recorder, time keeper, reporter).
- Give students stretch breaks for sessions longer than 40 minutes.
- Provide support to make learning accessible for all
- Demo any Zoom features you wish students to use, particularly collaboration tools.
- Consider students accessing the meeting via phone. They do not have access to the chat room or breakout sessions. To help, read questions or comments from the chat room allowed and allow students on the phone to remain in the main conference room and discuss with others there.
- Describe any slides and post them online for students to access before or after the class.
- Refer to speakers by name so that everyone can follow the conversation, regardless of how they are accessing the meeting.

Ref: Harvard Graduate School of Education. <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/20/04/place-remote-belonging>

Examples of Remote school initiatives:

- A 'Weekly Wellbeing Newsletter' that developed into a 'Weekly Wellbeing Podcast'
- Remote creative writing and art competitions
- A series of study tips released via the schools Twitter account by the Guidance Department.
- A series of videos from our school counsellor to aid stress management during the trying times of Covid 19.
- A 'Remote Sunrise Appeal' in aid of Pieta House.



Holy Family Community School

Finding a new balance:

There is no substitute for the mutualistic environments of our classrooms, and there is no way to remotely emulate the countless opportunities for the social and emotional development that comes from being in school, surrounded by teachers and peers. If anything has come from this period of remote teaching and learning, it has been appreciating that the importance of the relationships established when in school cannot be understated. There must be a balanced approach whereby we can take the lessons learned and skills developed during this period of remote teaching and blend them into our normal practices to reinforce our already strong secondary education and 'future-proof' it.

Michael Fiorentini, Holy Family Community School

(Navigating the uncharted territories of remote teaching and learning)

Digital Inclusion

Reaching out to all learners with additional educational needs

ICT has the potential to support inclusion in a number of ways across the system by providing opportunities for students to learn outside the normal school setting or to enable learners with special educational needs to participate more fully in their education.

The Integrated Reform Delivery Plan, Education and Training Sector 2015 (Department of Education and Skills, 2014) states: “We want an Education and Training system that welcomes and meaningfully includes learners with disabilities and special educational needs, learners from disadvantaged communities/ backgrounds and those with language, cultural and social differences.

“the educational experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all”.

The Framework for Junior Cycle

In adopting ICT for teaching and learning the Department will ensure that information will be accessible to all learners in line with requirements under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- *the obligation to ‘provide accessible information to persons with disabilities’ (Article 4);*
- *the need for ‘the design, development, production and distribution of accessible ICT’ (Article 9);*
- *the right to education ‘without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity’ for persons with disabilities (Article 24).*

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

ICT has the potential to support learners, whose first language is not English, to enhance their oral and written literacy. In general, there is a recognition that digital technology has the potential to create a more inclusive education system for all learners.

ICT is a principal enabler for children at risk of educational disadvantage, with low levels of achievement in the formal education system. When it is appropriately embedded into an educational setting, ICT can enable students to learn in new and exciting ways, encouraging their engagement and making communication easier. Furthermore, there is evidence to indicate that the creative application of ICT in education can allow students at risk of early school leaving to connect with learning in new ways, resulting in improved motivation, attendance and application across subject areas.

The Strategy recognises that ICT has the potential to enable parents/guardians to become more actively involved in their children’s learning by engaging in conversations with teachers and by accessing and commenting on students’ work. ICT can also offer new learning possibilities by connecting with other schools.

On Inclusion... Consider the following...

“What do we want students to be able to do when they leave school? Ultimately, we want our students to be as independent as possible. Students have access to plenty of academic content. More is not necessary. Learning isn’t dependent on the individual ‘waves’ of content delivered to students; it is more about the tide they rise on.

Affirm students’ efforts to engage in ‘life’ lessons- chores, baking, cooking, exercising, maintaining hygiene, managing a routine, looking after younger siblings etc. Acknowledging and affirming development of key life skills will support all of us in achieving the ultimate goal for students- inclusion and maximum levels of independence in their communities post school.

Student engagement with learning is critical but herein lies the challenge, particularly for those unable to access learning for a multitude of reasons. **Teaching and learning is ALL about the relationship.** This relationship is even more important to the most marginalised in the school community. Staying connected with students is critical. As a school, develop a system to identify students not engaging with online content. Find alternative ways to reach them- phone, letter, free An Post postcard! The SET/ SENCO can have a key role here in mediating learning (academic, social, emotional) for the student and teachers.

Academic learning is dependent on student’s possessing non-academic skills to promote access and engagement. SETs/SENCOs are well positioned to support the development on non-academic skills such as organisation, study skills, social skills, self-regulation, life skills etc. Working with home and the student to put in place a structure to scaffold academic learning might be a useful exercise.

A conversation with the student/parent in relation to key priorities for the student and implementing a feasible plan of action with due consideration to the home context may alleviate the sense of disconnection and powerlessness some may be feeling. It will also facilitate the student’s voice. If schools are engaging with Student Support Plans, the SSP may be a good starting point.

This article offers a great perspective: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus>

It may be helpful to school leaders in deciding how to navigate this current situation and prioritise what is important to the school. Do schools have a shared understanding of what the core values are in this changed landscape? It could be used to support leaders to reflect on what is of critical importance right now.”

DR. JOHANNA FITZGERALD
Head of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education
Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, Ireland, V94 VN26
Tel: +353 61 204517 | www.mic.ul.ie

Some Thoughts and Resources for Supporting Children with Additional Needs during the COVID-19 Closure Period

Children with additional needs are just like any other kids and this period of school closure and uncertainty will raise issues in terms of **anxiety, routine and learning**. It is a difficult time for kids, parents and teachers as they are all trying to balance various aspects of their lives not to mention managing the emotional turmoil associated with a global shock such as this one. **We need to be patient and kind in all of our interactions and engagements with families and colleagues. This is not a time to overload anyone. School work may not be a priority in some homes but it could help to provide routine and structure for children.**

Most children with additional needs may need to be supported more on an individual level than on a group level, this is where **student support files** can become very useful. Where children are working towards **specific targets** then work could be designed to support this learning at home.

We have listed a few links and websites that people find useful. We are sure you have your own favourites and there are many more available but we are conscious here that **people are under significant time pressure** so these are just a few to get you started. Any support you offer kids with additional needs will be welcome and we wish you well with the weeks ahead.

Good luck to all the teachers, students and parents doing such amazing work under such difficult circumstances.

Kevin Cahill & Dan O'Sullivan, School of Education, University College Cork

See the complete articles and list of useful resources from Johanna (MIC) and Kevin & Dan (UCC) on www.accs.ie in the Covid 19 Resources section "Supporting Students with AEN"
See Appendix 5 for other useful websites.



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

Digital Wellbeing

Safeguarding Children – a key part of the planning stages of any changes/updates to the learning environment. Ref: www.webwise.ie

- **School Acceptable Use Policy**

School leaders and teachers should re-familiarise themselves with their AUP. Updates may need to be made if you are using new learning environments or additional tools to facilitate distance learning. It is a good time to remind staff, parents and students of the AUP any updates.

For more information on updating your AUP, go to: webwise.ie/aup-2/

Sample templates are also available at www.accs.ie

- **Child Safeguarding** - Teachers should re-familiarise themselves with child safeguarding policies and statements and follow best-practice.
- **Privacy** - Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings and policy of any new online services. Teachers should also be mindful of their own privacy and boundaries. For example, it is best to avoid giving personal details, personal email or contact numbers. Use school email and school-approved communication services.
- **Age** - It is important to consider the age of the students before introducing new technology or apps for learning. Check age requirements and appropriateness of the platform. GDPR – The **Digital Age of Consent** is 16 years old in Ireland and is designed to protect personal information of children. If new services

or platforms are being introduced and students are required to sign-up for that service, use school emails and check that the service is GDPR compliant.

- **Social Media** - Social media has an important role to play during these uncertain times, it is a great way for families to stay in touch and for communities to connect. Communication between schools, teachers and students must be professional and adhere to current policies (for example; AUP, social media policies, etc.) that are in place. Before using a communication tool, check your school policy, age restrictions, terms of service and appropriateness of service.
- **Code of Conduct** - It is a good time for educators to re-familiarise themselves with the teaching Council Code of Conduct: teachingcouncil.ie/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-for-Teachers
- **Professional Conduct** - 3.7 ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites.
- **Healthy Balance** - If using technology to engage in distance learning, ensure a healthy balance of online and of line activities for students. There are lots of great opportunities for students to learn on and of ine.

- **Respect and Safety**

Staff/students should contact the School Principal/ICT Coordinator/relevant personnel if the staff member is concerned about any incident or behaviour which they encounter during an on-line class. The normal and agreed referral procedures should be followed in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Behaviour.

- **Resources**

Be Safe Online - www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/ is the Government's campaign to highlight ways to help you stay safe online. This webpage provides access to a wide range of online safety resources, to support online safety for all. including www.webwise.ie. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) offers detailed advice for securing virtual meetings: <https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/pdfs/WFH-Advisory.pdf>)

Access St Mark's Community School's Video Conferencing Student Agreement and the school's video conferencing protocols at the following link. The school's chosen platform is Google.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5de4ebae5719bc363911df16/t/5eb52931d7c53419e85749c8/1588930866175/Protocols+St+Marks+CS%5B7535%5D.pdf>



Netiquette

“the rules of correct or polite behaviour among people using the Internet” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary)

Netiquette Guidelines

Managing expectations is a key part of successful online interactions. Establishing a positive culture of communication online with students is a great way to encourage positive interactions from the beginning.

Here are some guidelines for managing online sessions (including webinars) which should help them to run more smoothly and could be the source of discussion about netiquette and expectations. These have been adapted from Warwick University:

- *Treat all participants with respect. If you would not say something to someone’s face, do not say it to them when online.*
- *Respect the privacy of others.*
- *Be careful when using humour or sarcasm as it can easily give offence, especially when you cannot see facial expressions.*
- *Use clear and concise language, English may not be the student’s first language.*
- *Keep caps lock use to a minimum as IT CAN MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING.*
- *Use standard fonts and sizes such as Arial 11-14 font size.*
- *Avoid text speak and slang (e.g. LOL or besties).*
- *Only use emoticons when appropriate.*
- *Think about the use of attachments; are the files really relevant and are they suitable for use on any device? PDF’s are device neutral if you really need to share something.*
- *Have you considered copyright on any images you share? If in doubt share a link to an image as this puts the copyright onus on the website owner, not you.*
- *Save specialised/private conversations for offline.*
- *Use your camera unless Wi-Fi is poor – (Stop your camera and use audio only to improve the quality)*
- *Use the mute button to eliminate distracting background noise. Don’t forget to unmute yourself when it’s your turn to talk.*
- *Make use of the chat function to ask and answer questions.*
- *Vary the activities when you are presenting, giving time to Q&A or to take short breaks for questions/class discussions.*

Ref: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cte/student-partners/academictechnology/academictechnologies/otherat/blackboardcollaborate/netiquette>

Check out the **Webwise** top tips for developing Digital Literacy: Communication Skills and for creating your own class “netiquette”

Celbridge Community School

In the following document, Celbridge Community School has set out its rationale, and “compiled a list of guidelines and expectations for members of our school community to support us all to engage in high quality, effective and safe distance learning. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with all our school policies, including Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, ICT Code of Conduct etc. We have also referred to the ‘Guidance on Continuity of Schooling’ documents (in relation to teaching and learning online, SEN, Guidance Counselling etc.) issued by the Department of Education and Skills.”

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5de4ebae5719bc363911df16/t/5eb152ce0a8f9e414b932ff6/1588679377990/CCS+Distance+Learning+Guidelines+17+April+V3+copy.pdf>

Malahide Community School

Malahide Community School sets out its protocol in the context of its Code of Behaviour reminding students, parents, and guardians that the code applies when engaging with Remote Learning. We summarise this as follows:

- *Respect Yourself*
- *Respect Others*
- *Respect Your Environment*

See the full Remote Learning Protocol below which was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2020.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5de4ebae5719bc363911df16/t/5eb154e047d954454251aec8/1588679905579/Malahide+CS+Remote+Learning+Protocol+for+Students+Parents+Guardians+update+1.pdf>

GDPR Regulations

and Data Protection when using Digital Technologies

Devices

- Take extra care that devices, such as USBs, phones, laptops, or tablets, are not lost or misplaced.
- Make sure that any device has the necessary updates, such as operating system updates (like iOS or android) and software/antivirus updates.
- Ensure your computer, laptop, or device, is used in a safe location, for example where you can keep sight of it and minimise who else can view the screen, particularly if working with sensitive personal data.
- Lock your device if you do have to leave it unattended for any reason.
- Make sure your devices are turned off, locked, or stored carefully when not in use.
- Use effective access controls (such as multi-factor authentication and strong passwords) and, where available, encryption to restrict access to the device, and to reduce the risk if a device is stolen or misplaced. See “Physical Security” below for some more tips.

- When a device is lost or stolen, you should take steps immediately to ensure a remote memory wipe, where possible.

Emails

- Use school email accounts rather than personal ones for work-related emails involving personal data. If you must use personal email, make sure contents and attachments are encrypted and avoid using personal or confidential data in subject lines.
- Be careful that the email address is accurate as email can often accidentally go to the wrong person. Before sending an email, ensure you are sending it to the correct recipient, particularly for emails involving large amounts of personal data or sensitive personal data.
- To avoid data breaches, extra security precautions need to be taken in relation to the content of emails. Be careful what you are disclosing in emails and to whom they are being sent.

Some tips for students emailing teachers

1. Do not **‘reply all’** to an email sent to a class or year group - just reply to the teacher.
2. Include a clear, direct subject line so the receiver knows what the email is about.
3. Explain the reason for your email, e.g. work attached, or question you want to ask.
4. When you are attaching work, please mention what is attached. Do not just attach documents or images of work with no subject to the email or information - always explain what is attached. Please name the document you are sharing clearly rather than calling it e.g. Document1.
5. Remember to be polite in any emails you send on your school email please.
6. Start the email with Dear Ms/Mr or Hi Ms/Mr.....
7. Close the email politely and include your name, class and year group.
8. Where possible, keep the sending of emails to during the school hours from Monday to Friday.

Caroline Mathews, TY Coordinator, Ashbourne CS

Remember that your email could be forwarded to someone else in the future, so be aware of the content and whether there is an expectation of confidentiality.

- Use the bcc field instead of the cc field when sending an email to a group of people who may not know each other or may not want their email addresses to be shared.

Online file sharing:

Online file-sharing services may not be secure enough for sensitive and confidential communications. All large files or data sets should be sent using applications that provide a number of security features, including:

1. Encryption,
2. Link-expiry settings,
3. Number of allowed downloads,
4. Password protection.

Cloud and Network Access

- Where possible only use the school's trusted networks or cloud services and complying with any school rules and procedures about cloud or network access, login and, data sharing.
- If you are working without cloud or network access, ensure any locally stored data is adequately backed up in a secure manner.

Online Educational Platforms (e.g. Microsoft Office, Google Classroom)

- Choose platforms (online teaching tools used to support blended learning) which are specifically designed for educational use. These platforms are much more likely to comply with best practice in teaching and learning. Platforms with controls to manage activity are safer and more likely to be safe and secure and comply with GDPR requirements. Manage access and activity on the platform. Access to platforms should preferably be by '*Invitation only*'

using learner school credentials (where possible). Ideally access should also be password protected and posts to the platform should be moderated/ approved by you prior to posting. Platforms with safe practice functionality such as profanity filters are preferable.

Downloading Applications

- School staff need to satisfy themselves on their GDPR obligations in the use of all products, in the normal manner. We would caution against use of apps that have not been assessed as GDPR compliant. Before using any teaching resource, you should carefully read the privacy statement/settings and satisfy yourself that usage of the resource/ platform conforms to the school's AUP and to Teaching Council draft social media guidelines (2019).

Paper Records

- It's important to remember that data protection applies to not only electronically stored or processed data, but also personal data in manual form (such as paper records) where it is, or is intended to be, part of filing system.
- Where you are working remotely with paper records, take steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of these records, such as keeping them locked in a filing cabinet or drawer when not in use, disposing of them securely (e.g. shredding) when no longer needed, and making sure they are not left somewhere where they could be misplaced or stolen.
- If you're dealing with records that contain special categories of personal data (e.g. health data) you should take extra care to ensure their security and confidentiality, and only remove such records from a secure location where it is strictly necessary to carry out your work.

- Where possible, you should keep a written record of which records and files have been taken home, in order to maintain good data access and governance practices.

General Advice and Security

- **General:** You need to be realistic about what can be achieved with technology given people's existing capabilities and skills.
- **Fraud / phishing:** Attempts are unfortunately on the increase. Phishing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.
- **Physical security:** Even when working from home, PCs and laptops should ideally have two step password protection (encryption). This means that you would have to enter a (different) password at two different stages when logging in to your device. It is an added layer of security that makes it more difficult for unauthorised access.

- **Privacy:** Individuals are potentially more vulnerable to having their privacy rights exploited when their image and voice is being beamed remotely over the web. *Students must be reminded that the use of mobile phones or other devices to photograph or record staff or other students for the purposes of publication elsewhere is strictly prohibited and in breach of those individuals' basic human right to privacy.*

Schools should also communicate with parents/guardians that they need to satisfy themselves that they are comfortable with their child's use of distant learning platforms from a privacy perspective. Parents should be aware that their child is in video communication with their teachers and SNAs and ensure they are comfortable with how these communications are being conducted.



Universal Design for Learning

(Further Education)

SOLAS have launched the ambitious new strategy for Ireland's Further Education and Training Sector: 'Future FET: Transforming Learning', The National Further education and Training (FET) Strategy 2020 - 2024.

One of the key priorities outlined in the Strategy is: Fostering Inclusion through consistent learner supports by adopting a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach.

UDL Explained

Providing a fully inclusive learning environment is complex in creating a culture of engagement and inclusion that works for all students requires a shift in thinking and a change of behaviour at an institutional level. In this ever changing and increasingly diverse further and higher education landscape, **Universal Design for Learning** (UDL) provides an effective framework to improve the learning experience of all students within the mainstream teaching environment.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn, including students with Disabilities. UDL aims to improve the educational experience of all students by introducing more flexible methods of teaching, assessment and service provision to cater for the diversity of learners in our classrooms. This approach is underpinned by research in the field of neuroscience and is designed to improve the learning experience and outcomes for all students. (source AHEAD 2020).

The UDL guidelines provided by US organisation CAST are based on the idea that there is no such thing as a 'typical' or 'average' student, that all students learn differently and that to successfully teach for all students, we have to introduce greater flexibility into teaching and learning practice. They say that educators should follow 3 core principles when designing learning experiences, building in:

Multiple Means of Engagement

Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.



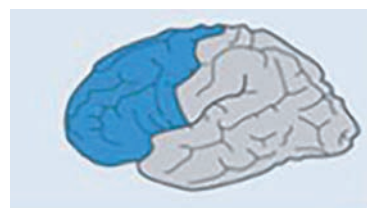
Multiple Means of Representation

Present information and content in a variety of ways to support understanding by students with different learning styles/abilities.



Multiple Means of Action/Expression

Offer options for students to demonstrate their learning in various ways (e.g. allow choice of assessment type)



UDL and Technology

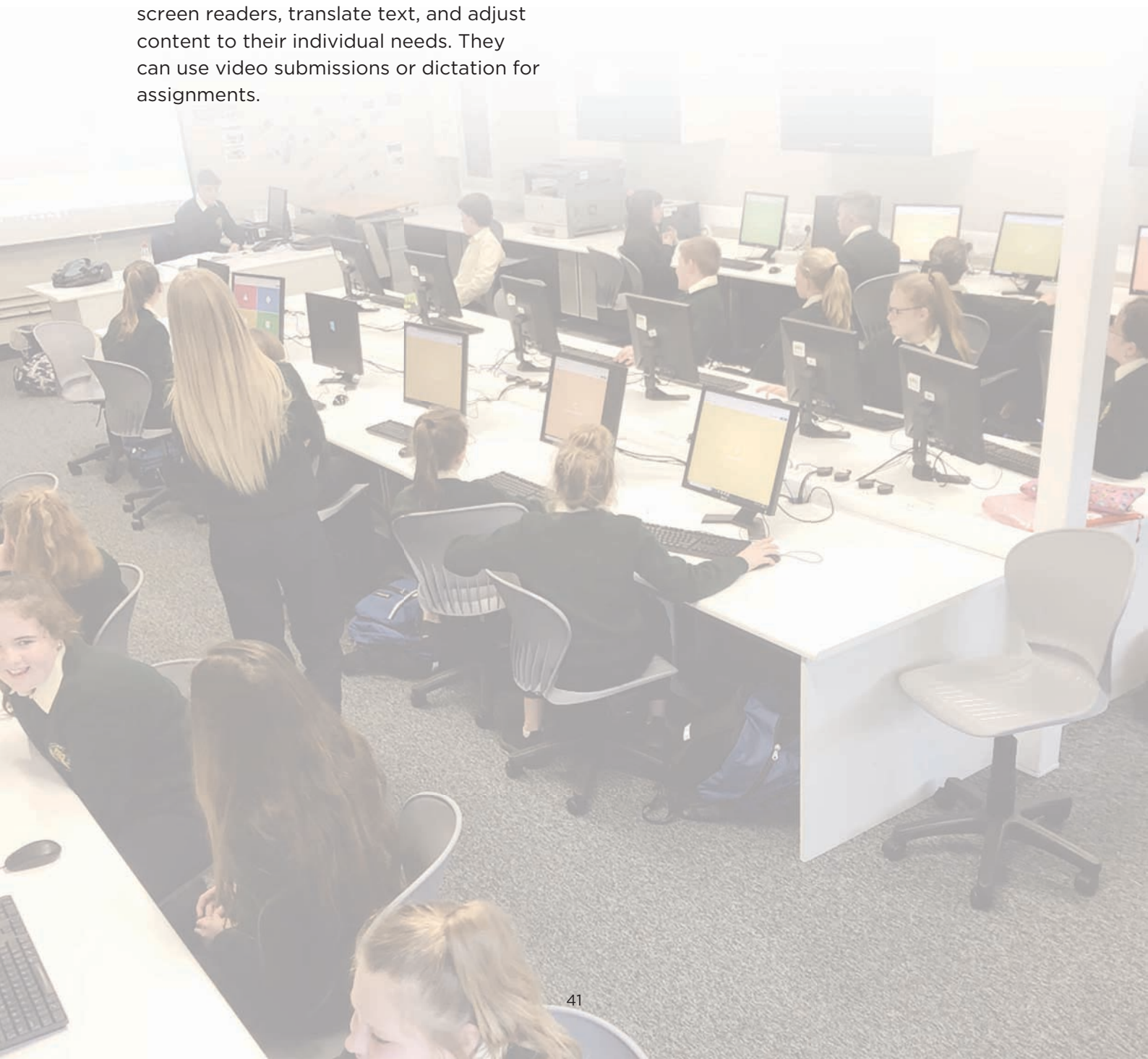
Accessible / Assistive technologies can help students with disabilities to unlock their full potential by addressing their diversity of needs.

Technology advances have had a revolutionary impact on UDL by enabling universal access to learning content. When learning materials are presented through digital platforms, they can adapt uniquely to all learners and their needs and preferences. Learners can use screen readers, translate text, and adjust content to their individual needs. They can use video submissions or dictation for assignments.

Simply using technology is not however a guarantee of inclusion. Sometimes technology can create new barriers for learners especially those who are vulnerable in a traditional learning situation, such as learners with disabilities.

Learn more about UDL

Further information on UDL can be sourced at: <https://www.ahead.ie/udl>



Useful Readings & Resources

1. Teaching and Learning During School Closures: Lessons Learned. Irish Second-Level Teacher Perspectives

Ann Devitt, Aibhin Bray, Joanne Banks, Eilís Ní Chorcora, Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, July, 2020.

This report provides an analysis of teaching and learning during school closures from the perspective of a representative sample of teachers working in second level schools. Given their centrality in engaging and providing continuity of learning for students, it is essential for policy development that the perspectives of teachers are captured, and their experiences of online teaching understood.

Teaching-and-Learning-during-COVID-shutdown-Post-Primary-Teacher-Perspectives-Report_July_USE_web.pdf (PDF)

<http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/92883>

2. Education Reimagined: The Future of Learning

The fallout from COVID-19, continuing advances in digital technology, and intensifying pent-up demand for student centered learning have combined to present an unprecedented opportunity to transform education across whole systems. We have been impressed by the tireless action to address the emergency needs of students and families. We are deeply encouraged by the growing desire to seize the opportunity to focus on the deep purpose of education through the twin pillars of well-being and learning. Learning for all will spark a new interest and commitment to equity, where diverse students will be drawn to Global Competencies (such as our 6Cs), learning more about their worlds

as they commit to building a better future for themselves and humanity.

This powerful shift to a learner-centred system will be amplified by technology and driven by education that is steeped in purpose and meaning. We are excited to join Microsoft to help accelerate this development.

Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn, Global Directors, New Pedagogies for Deep Learning
<https://edudownloads.azureedge.net/msdownloads/Microsoft-EducationReimagined-Paper.pdf>

www.npd.global (access selection of webinars with Michael Fullan incl. Nuanced Leadership in a Time of Change 1st June 2020).

3. Blended learning in school education – guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21

The purpose of these guidelines is to be a practical reference to:

- explore the pedagogical opportunities and challenges of a blended learning model and to identify key considerations that can help with reflection and strategic planning.
- specifically support planning for the start of the next academic year; however, they may also inspire lasting positive change for inclusive and innovative school education.
- guide policy makers in considering the system as a whole but will also be useful to regional and local authorities, school leaders, and other stakeholders in their own contexts.
- complement existing guidelines by national authorities and international organisations² on school reopening and on distance learning and support new national guidelines that will enable all

learners to benefit from combining in-school and distance learning.

- a broad perspective by considering: school leadership; legislation to support decision making; the management of in-school and distance learning environments for all learners; the teacher's role, competences, and working conditions; learner assessment; the well-being of staff and pupils; collaboration and school community; and quality assurance.

https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Blended%20learning%20in%20school%20education_European%20Commission_June%202020.pdf

4. 9 Ways Online Teaching should be different from Face-to-Face July 5, 2020 Jennifer Gonzalez

1. The first weeks of school should be devoted to community building and digital competency.
2. Communication with parents needs to be more thorough, streamlined and predictable.
3. Community and connection need to be a priority for teachers too...

An interview with Melanie Kitchen, a Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Staff Development serving 19 school districts in Western New York state.

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/9-ways-online-teaching/>

5. A checklist for an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

This report aims at supporting education decision making to develop and implement effective education responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The report explains why the necessary social isolation measures will disrupt school-based education for several months in most countries around the world. Absent an intentional and effective strategy to protect opportunity to

learn during this period, this disruption will cause severe learning losses for students. The report proposes that leaders of education systems and organisations develop plans for the continuation of education through alternate modalities, during the period of necessary social isolation. It offers a framework of areas to be covered by such plans. Based on a rapid assessment of education needs and emerging responses in ninety-eight countries, the report identifies the most salient needs that should be addressed in these plans, as well as the areas likely to face more implementation challenges. It also examines the education responses of various countries to the crisis. Based on an analysis of data from the most recent administration of the PISA survey, the report also describes the challenges facing various education systems to depend on online education as an alternative modality. https://globaled.gse.harvard.edu/files/geii/files/framework_guide_v1_002.pdf

6. Visible Learning Effect Sizes when Schools are Closed: What Matters and What Does Not

Professor Hattie was the adviser for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority that oversaw school examinations after the devastating Christchurch earthquakes of 2011. Schools were closed for weeks and most students did not have the opportunity for online learning or discussion with teachers. But results did not suffer and high school students did not drop out. "The students' performance actually went up in the final exams," Professor Hattie said. He said the difference was teachers focused on "what has to be learned" instead of getting through a lot of curriculum.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-17/will-missing-school-due-to-covid-19-matter-for-school->

7. Blended Learning: A Guide for Teachers and Resources to Flip Your Classroom (Study.com)

Today's educators know that technology has had a profound impact on how teaching and learning work. One of the phenomena that has come to play an increasingly important role in education is blended learning. However, what is blended learning, actually? The idea of **blended learning** is that some students can benefit from doing part of their learning in a digital environment, and part of it face to face. The **benefits of blended learning** include the fact that many students can learn best independently, on their own timeframe, and via interface with digital technology. At the same time, learning done in this virtual way is often best consolidated by in-person interactions. In many ways, blended learning combines the best of both worlds.

<https://study.com/teach/blended-learning.html>

A flipped classroom consists of students completing direct instruction, such as viewing a lecture online, prior to the in-class discussion of the material. The intent is for students to see the material beforehand, also known as first-exposure learning, so they can learn the concepts at their own pace. By doing so, students are better able to focus on participating in class and receive feedback on their efforts during the lesson — not just after.

Teachers that utilize a flipped classroom model are better able to help their students engage **in active learning**. Students become much more involved during the lesson discussion with the flipped classroom style of instruction by engaging in debates, small group discussions, or in-depth investigations. In essence, a flipped class switches the activities traditionally done in class with those completed after class.

<https://study.com/teach/flipped-classroom.html>

8. Irish Medium e-Hub Pilot Project, May 2018 (DES and H2 Learning)

In seeking to address this challenge, the Policy identified the potential for the establishment of a pilot Irish-medium e-learning hub to extend the range of subject choices through Irish available to students in small post-primary Gaeltacht schools and Units (Aonaid). Other countries have experienced similar challenges in offering an expanded range of subjects to students and the Department recognises the importance of learning from these experiences to inform the creation of an e-Hub Pilot Project for post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht. This International Review Report examines the provision of supplementary online distance education in a number of countries. The report highlights examples of good practice that provides guidance on how best to extend the range of subject choices at post-primary school level.

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Policy-on-Gaeltacht-Education-2017-2022/irish-medium-e-hub-pilot-project-international-review-and-advisory-report.pdf>

9. The 6 Learning Types

ABC is based on the pedagogic theory of Professor Diana Laurillard's Conversational Framework. The six learning types have proved to be a very effective method to helping teachers describe and discuss the student learning process. Students and non-teaching staff also find the learning types intuitive and easy to use and can produce innovative and creative storyboards with no prior experience of learning design. In this six minute video Diana Laurillard introduces the six learning types used in the ABC Learning Design workshop.

<https://abc-ld.org/6-learning-types/>

10. Building Community in Your Online Course

The Harvard Graduate School of Education have created a number of resources and advice sheets to assist teachers transitioning to online / blended learning.

<https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/72996/pages/build-community-in-your-online-course#section10>

11. Moving Lectures and Assessment Online

Advice about online teaching for September, including guides to teaching and assessment, a simple guide for students about online exams, and some advice on creating rubrics from Damian T Gordon, Computer Science Lecturer, and Educational & Disability advocate at DIT.

<http://www.damiantgordon.com/MovingOnline.html>



Appendix 1

Context: ACCS and the wider system

1. The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020 clearly identifies three key strategies for development. The plan which was reviewed in December 2019 sets out two objectives in Strategy 1: **Shaping the Future by Influencing and Managing Change**

- a. Support Boards of Management to manage change.
- b. Continue to support progress and influence developments within the education sector.

In achieving these objectives, ACCS identifies a number of actions and tasks. It seeks to keep Boards of Management well informed about the changes which are happening in the education system and it fosters networking and sharing of ideas and issues amongst member schools.

This Framework is developed by the ACCS Executive ICT subcommittee in this context and includes guidelines,

templates and examples of best practice from member schools. The ACCS acknowledges the support given by Tom Lonergan and Deirdre Redmond of PDST TIE who are members of the ICT Subcommittee and the external expertise of Michael Hallissy of H2 Learning in compiling this report.

(Ref: www.accs.ie publications)

2. The *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment Competency Framework for the Irish context* and the development and implementation by each school of the ***Digital Learning Framework*** which meets its needs and priorities provides both clarity for teachers in terms of how they can effectively embed digital technologies into their practice and guides school leaders in creating a shared vision for how technology can best meet the needs of all learners.

*“The **Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools** supports and complements the **School Self Evaluation process** in relation to embedding digital technologies into teaching and learning. Its structure is directly aligned to the domains and standards of **Looking at our School 2016 - A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools** and, as a result, articulates effective and highly effective practice for the use of digital technologies in the same two key dimensions, Teaching and Learning and Leadership and Management. These are the two key areas of the work of a school that directly impacts on students’ learning outcomes and experiences.”*

Page 2, Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools

Ref: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/digital-learning-framework-post-primary.pdf>

3. School Self Evaluation Six Step Process

Figure 2: The Digital Learning Planning Cycle



The Framework is accompanied by digital learning planning guidelines – a resource designed to support schools in **the embedding of digital technologies in teaching and learning and in the development of a Digital Learning Plan**. The DL Planning Cycle consists of six steps and these are identical to the process used by schools when engaging with the SSE process.

Ref: <https://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Framework-and-Planning-Resources-Post-Primary/>

4. Looking at our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools

The structure of the Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools is directly aligned to the domains and standards of Looking at our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools and, as a result, articulates effective and highly effective practice for the use of digital technologies in the same two key dimensions, Teaching and Learning and Leadership and Management.

These are the two key areas of the work of a school that directly impacts on students' learning outcomes and experiences. These two dimensions are divided into the same four domains which represent the distinct, although interrelated, aspects of each dimension. Standards are then provided for each of the domains. The Standards are stated as the behaviours and attributes characteristic of practices in an effective, well-functioning school and are mirrored to the 32 Standards contained in the Looking at Our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools.

Ref: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/Looking-at-Our-School-2016-A-Quality-Framework-for-Post-Primary-schools.pdf>

The Digital Learning Planning Guidelines (DL Planning Guidelines) provide guidance on how the DL Framework can support the creation of a Digital Learning Plan (DL Plan) for each school. Schools are expected to prepare and implement a Digital Learning Plan (formally e-Learning Plan) as part of the Whole School Plan. The guidelines can also be used to support subject department and individual teacher planning and to promote digital learning at programme and cross-curricular levels. The ultimate goal for the DL Planning Guidelines is to guide schools in embedding digital technologies into all areas of school activity.

Page 1, Digital Learning Planning GUIDELINES

Ref: <https://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Planning-Guidelines.pdf>

5. Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in Further Education and Training 2016-2019

(Technology Enhanced Learning = using Technology to facilitate and support innovative Teaching and Learning Practices).

Ref: http://www1.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/TEL_Strategy.pdf

The Strategy identifies three themes:

a. Building on existing capacity and good practice

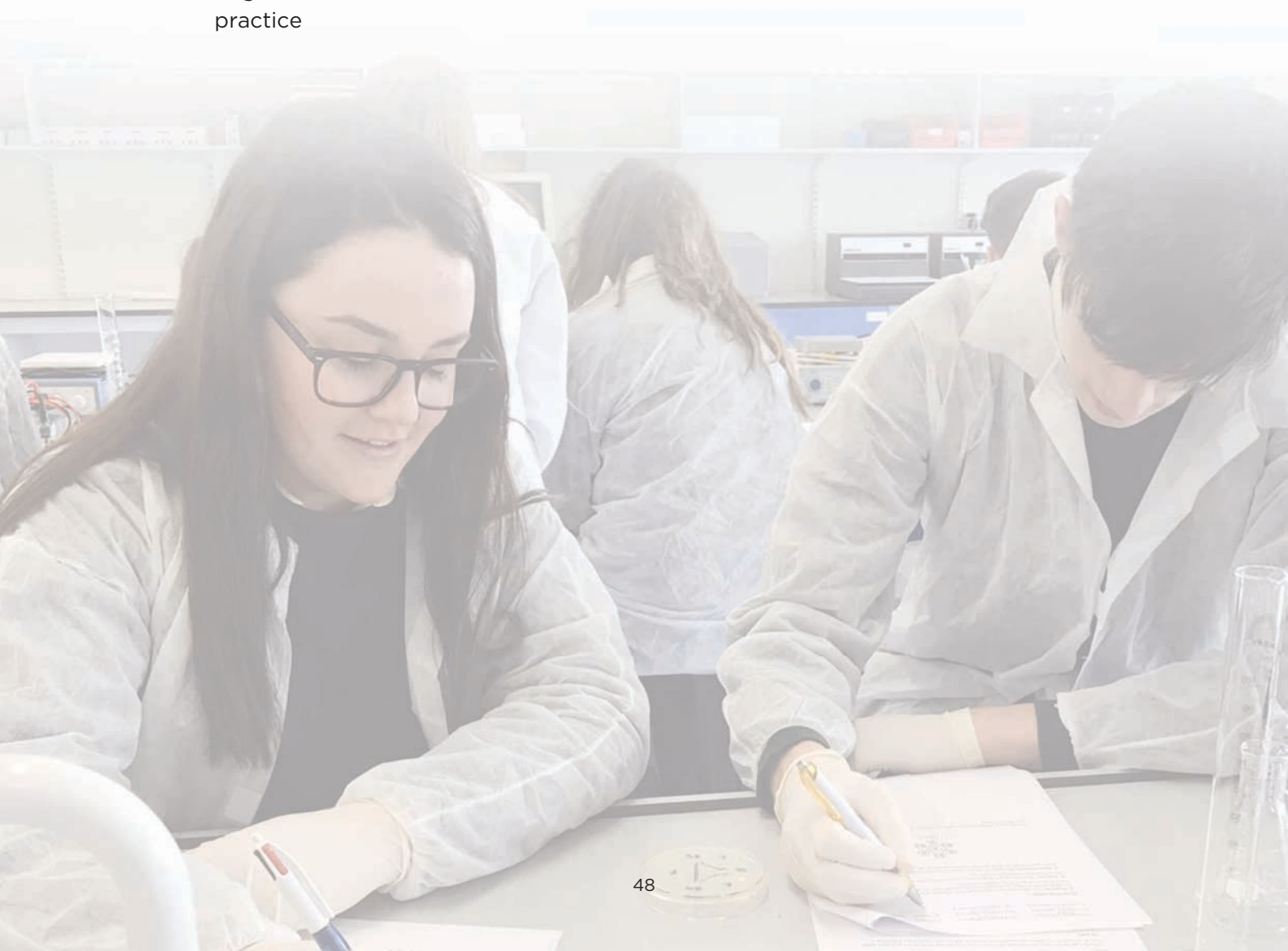
- Develop an Action Plan for TEL to include:
 - Infrastructure, including ICT
 - Pedagogy and ongoing CPD
 - Content creation, (access and sharing)
 - Organisational structures and practice

b. Expanding Access

- Develop and implement guidelines for technology enhanced learning

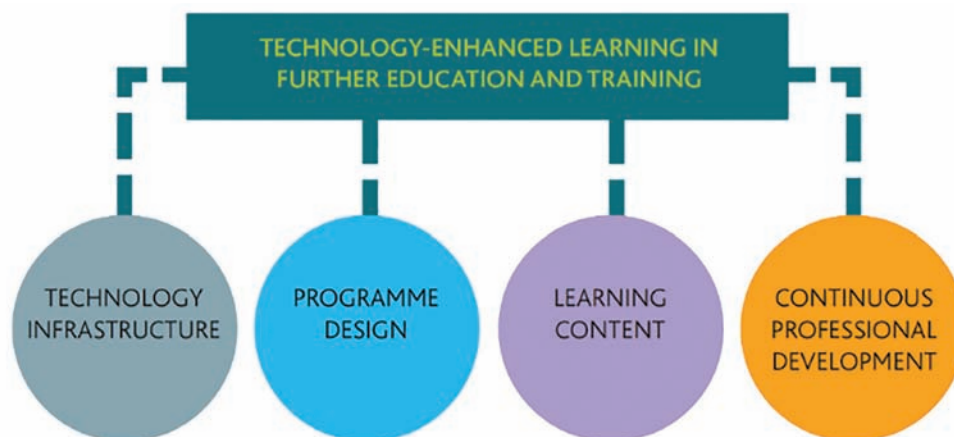
c. Continuous Improvement and Innovation

- Use technology to enhance communities of learning and practice (COP) among teachers and learners.
- Share good models of practice on technology enhanced learning regionally, nationally
- Monitor and evaluate progress locally and nationally to learn from what works and continuously improve policy and practice.



Technology Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training 2016-2019

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING



I. Technology infrastructure – broadband and wireless internet and network access; virtual learning environments; collaborative online communities of learning and practice, internal content management systems.

II. Programme design – building innovative approaches such as the flipped classroom; ‘bring your own device’; blended learning; social media; interactive, individualised learning plans; feedback mechanisms and assessments into FET programmes as appropriate.

III. Learning content – eBooks; video; virtual animations; simulations and eLearning resources supporting the course learning outcomes as appropriate for the subject area or client group across the full spectrum of FET provision.

IV. Continuous professional development building expertise and confidence in using technology to teach and to enhance learning for existing staff and as part of initial teacher training.

Technology enhances learning by enabling:

- 24/7 access to learning resources and assessment instruments
- learning content sharing and co-authoring
- greater choice over the time, pace and place of study
- increased access through variety in modes of delivery: online and combinations of blended learning,
- including various mixes of work-based, online, and centre-based learning
- opportunities for reflection and planning and increased personalisation of learning
- rapid feedback on formative assessments
- more active learning by means of interactive technologies and multimedia resources
- participation in communities of knowledge, inquiry and learning
- learning by discovery in virtual environments
- development of skills for living and working in a digital age.

Appendix 2

ACCS Survey June 2020 – Digital Technologies in Community and Comprehensive Schools

Synchronous and asynchronous activities

- All 3rd and 6th Year students had live Zoom classes from 9am Monday to 3pm on Friday. Some teachers did live classes with all of their year groups while others used Google classroom / Edmodo / Loom etc... as an alternative.
- We introduced MS Office 365 two years ago and this proved a *godsend* during the lockdown as it provided a structure and enabled teams/ classes which had already been established to function.
- We used a combination of live classes, pre-recorded voice overs and assignments.
- Home Economics teachers reported much higher quality research among 5th years during closure.
- Students only received their emails the week of lockdown. All students were sent work every day. A handful of teachers delivered online classes.
- Not all teachers engaged in live classes. Teachers developed their skills as we went along. Many are at different stages. Many have progressed to video tutorials which suited students as they could watch these when they wanted or could repeatedly watch it if needed.
- We developed a system that enabled all classes to have 3-4 live classes each day. Work was uploaded to MS Teams for days that there were not live classes in a subject. Teachers used a mix of methods to compliment the live classes including pre-recorded voice messages, voice over recordings on PowerPoint and videos.
- The most difficult aspect for me as principal was to ensure consistency with

all staff and students. As I indicated earlier, almost half the staff engaged with online classes and students enjoyed this and engaged with it. Parents were also very appreciative of this

- The answer to Q.11 reflects invitations to participate in live classes to some extent.
- Q 11: Not all the groups marked had live classes from all subjects. We don't have LCA this year. TY had input but not live classes.

The importance of social interaction

- School initially prioritised 6th & 3rd Years but then rolled it out to everyone. Pupil feedback clearly reports that pupils want the interpersonal engagement with the teacher and need help and encouragement to sustain engagement.
- Students benefited socially from the live lessons (Google Meet). They loved to see each other and their teacher. Reluctance of many students to speak noticeable - circle time for greetings at the start of lesson/meet helped.
- Overall, we found that students, especially 6th Years craved the structure of a digital timetable and we received very positive feedback once this was in place for senior students as it provided focus and clarity during a very difficult time
- Students liked attending classes online and liked the interaction with both their teachers and fellow classmates.
- Subject Departments reported much increased levels of collaboration and trust. I noticed that teams who meet

regularly are used to assigning roles. E.g. the Care Team adapted quickly and worked very effectively online.

Staff Confidence/Efficacy/ Skill & CPD

- There is a realisation among staff (from staff feedback) that “every teacher is a teacher of digital skills” and a commitment to this on return to school.
- Teachers maintained an online record of content, methodologies and student engagement.
- Teachers reported pacing and differentiation to be more easily achieved online. Google forms useful for some kinds of assessment.
- Teachers enjoyed and were surprised by the capacity for and effectiveness of individual feedback online - also to be continued on return.
- Difficult for bigger departments to discuss ideas and make decisions during VC e.g. deciding on modes of assessment. Need for very structured agenda for online meetings and a capable moderator.
- Not all staff partook in live classes. In school we have mobile computer on wheels that we use to distribute chrome books.
- The level of support provided by our teaching staff was superb during the closure, but I don't think that effort is sustainable long term. Many of our teachers were working anywhere between 3-6 hours preparing classes after a full day's online teaching.
- There was a clear demand for live classes from students (probably for a variety of reasons!) some teachers rose to the challenge and delivered daily live classes, but others were reluctant to hear the demands being made.
- Some teachers were more expert than others.
- It very much depended on the individual teacher and his/her confidence and competence in delivering online classes.

- Only some teachers were comfortable delivering live classes. It depended on the teacher comfort level. Most of our classes were delivered on Google Suite.
- Different teachers are at different stages with the technology. We found that teachers were just getting used to delivering online classes when the summer break arrived but nearly all teachers gave the live lessons a go! We had great feedback from the parents and students...thankfully!
- Most teachers/students have improved on their ICT skills.
- Some teachers asked students to engage in Google Meets and on the Zoom platform.
- Guidelines around 1:1 online interaction - live calls are difficult as those involved in such calls are the most vulnerable; many teachers involved in SEN/Resource were nervous/reluctant to get involved in such situations.
- From the start two APs worked with me to lead T and L. Teachers said that they found having a *go to person* very supportive and helped alleviate the high levels of stress and frustration.
- Challenging task but I have to thank the teaching staff for the great effort they made to continue the teaching and learning.
- We are at the decision stage regarding purchase of teacher devices - now identified as a priority.

Engagement

- As was the case worldwide, exceptional engagement from unexpected groups of students (we are breaking this down).
- Evidence of lack of engagement/poor engagement not due to lack of device.
- As expected, some students engaged better with online learning than others for a variety of reasons. SEN students need to be in school if at all possible.
- There was very poor engagement throughout lockdown. Teachers rang

- families weekly to encourage engagement.
- Many students did not want to be seen or heard in their home due to challenging family circumstances, poverty etc
 - There were some periods where we had average 90% attendance during closure but in general it would have averaged at 70%.
 - A smallish % of students did not engage, and we are currently analysing this - Summer Programme intervention may help. Teachers using live or recorded lessons/input reported the highest level of success/satisfaction. Their video clips while very time consuming to record are viewed as an excellent resource going forward (ideas for use by SET etc).
 - Engagement ranged from 10 - 90% for different classes
 - It was extremely difficult to get students to engage. While live classes were offered to all year groups, it would have been by certain teachers/certain subjects. So, while all above were ticked, it is a very small number who actually engaged.
 - We were concerned about engagement with online T. & L. which was between 60 & 70% in most classes, believing that poor internet coverage and lack of access to a proper device may have inhibited students. However, when it came to the online end of year assessments, we had 96% participation and submission from all year groups. We will push harder for engagement from all in August/September.
 - Career Guidance included above (Q11), too.
 - Lack of engagement from 5th Year students in particular was a big issue. I didn't survey staff for exact results - online delivery I am taking as live or video not posting work on Google classroom and is somewhere between 75 - 90%.
 - Attendance for online classes could vary greatly.
 - Very difficult getting students to engage. At one stage teachers turning up for live classes and nobody there!
 - In spite of extensive interventions, 10% of our student cohort did not engage in remote teaching and learning.
- Devices/Wi-Fi/Digital Divide**
- Staff access to technology/devices was an issue for some. School provided staff with a loan of chromebooks for the duration of school closure.
 - There is the issue of digital divide. Students that don't have good broadband need some help, some hubs they could work from etc.
 - Our school has conducted surveys with parents and students re online learning and teaching during the school closure. Two key issues emerged: a high number of students accessing schoolwork via mobile phone (28%); a high number of students do not have unlimited data (35%).
 - For many of our students they had to share a device or use their phones.
 - Teachers varied on the level of online classes taught. This was because of level of ICT knowledge and/or Broadband issues. As a school in a rural area, broadband is the biggest issue.
 - Majority of students had no Wi-Fi.
 - Students lack of devices and teachers lack of training was a huge obstacle.
 - There were problems with broadband that would not be able to facilitate a live Zoom call.
 - The school organised to deliver devices to students during school closure.
 - All staff will have own device from next September.
 - We did give out some devices to students where there was increased demand on the household, and this again was appreciated by parents/guardians. Access to devices

and suitable broadband was the biggest obstacle to successful online teaching and learning for both staff and students.

- Another issue seems to be Wi-Fi/broadband for a limited number of staff and a larger number of students. The digital divide continues to be an issue for us.
- Depending on a phone was a very difficult experience for many pupils. All pupils need to get consistent instruction on how to manage remote T & L and need access to reliable devices.
- The issues with lack of technology at home, no space etc. have all been acknowledged. Unbelievably there needs to be time spent on addressing the reality that some failed to engage because they were too embarrassed to “be seen” by peers/teachers.
- Connectivity in rural areas was our biggest issue re ICT during school closures.
- Access to technology an issue with many students. 1st, 2nd and 6th were the best engaged groups. (The 6th Years, because of their particular priorities. The 1st and 2nd Years because we have had a First Year 365 programmes in place for incoming 1st Year students for the past two years).
- Wi-Fi proved to be a serious problem with both teachers and students reporting poor coverage.
- Broadband connectivity in rural areas remains a stumbling block for delivery of online. Poor broadband in many areas for both students and teachers. 15% of students do not have access to a laptop.
- Limits to mobile data on students’ phones was also an issue.
- Our online learning worked well as we were ready to go with iPads. Rural broadband is an issue.
- Both staff and students had issues with connectivity and poor internet coverage, some more than others, in some instances, making it impossible for them to engage.
- During closure students without easy

- access to a device (laptop, desktop, tablet) were given the loan of a school device. We received donations of 10 devices from TCD Access Programme (with 55 to follow) and 10 from Dennis O’Brien - *Communicorp* is our School Business partner. We are in the process of buying 3 trolleys of Chrome Books which can be lent out if necessary. We are also buying a trolley of staff devices.
- Many students sharing devices at home. A large number of students using their phone so some of the interface on MS Teams app didn’t show or feature. This led to confusion. Many teachers in rural areas with poor Wi-Fi and being unfairly compared to other staff members who had time/excellent Wi-Fi/resources/ict capabilities, etc.
 - Very hard to know exactly how many teachers gave online classes. All teachers were involved in online learning but not necessarily live. One of the biggest difficulties we experienced with online learning was broadband in the homes, in particular upload speeds.
 - Many students would only have use of mobile phone. The school distributed around 30 Laptops which are now returned.
 - Poor Internet / Broadband in the West of Ireland makes online teaching extremely difficult.
 - The internet connection is so bad this evening I’m even having difficulty submitting this form.
 - Broadband coverage is also an issue - often for the teacher for live classes.

Additional Supports

- DPs checked and made supportive calls to teachers (assigned by subject department) in the early weeks.
- For staff meetings and student assemblies we found the use of a teacher not directly involved / contributing to act as MC really helpful.

They know the agenda and can focus on maintaining flow and also deal with technical issues.

- Year heads made tremendous efforts to encourage parents and students to stay engaged.
- SNA emails circulated for support during closure.
- AEN had contact home via phone but not live classes.
- We also used the online fora for pastoral meetings.
- The use of emails to connect with all stakeholders through WebEx was also incredibly useful and we would like to thank ACCS for facilitating this partnership as it really was appreciated by all staff and management.

Looking ahead

- We are working on a requirement of, at a minimum, one live session in perhaps every 4 hours of timetable subject.
- We need to work with students' skills uploading work and need to upskill students on digital etiquette.
- The forced closure was done without much time to plan. If it were to happen again, we would definitely need a clear plan on how we are going to disseminate work and receive it back as well as clear guidelines on live classes.
- Delighted that there is going to be a uniform approach as at the moment it's very difficult to plan for September.
- Intend to provide a school device to all staff for the next academic year. DEIS students received a device from the school.
- Teachers will be upskilled further in use of Microsoft teams when we come back in August.
- We just about had time to train staff as we moved to Microsoft in the Summer of 2019. We didn't have the time to train students, so this is a priority for the new school year. Staff have indicated that they want to continue to upskill in the use of the Microsoft 365 Suite whatever the circumstances of next academic year.
- As a team we will have to continue to develop the ICT skills of our teachers.
- I would advise looking at the Schoolwise App as we found it excellent.
- "*Blended learning/teaching*" will be impossible to deliver equitably.... if social distancing is still in place it will be impossible to ensure. Qualified H&S experts (not HSA forms) need to be hired to support school Principals.
- The biggest challenge moving forward is going to be bringing the other staff (teachers who didn't engage with online classes) on board. Training and resources are key, and this is the area that I plan to focus on prior to returning in September.
- Bespoke CPD in the area of ICT and teaching and learning will be one of our whole staff priorities next year. Any guidance suggestions are very welcome.
- I would envisage that the return to school with *blended learning* as a focus needs to be carefully considered to ensure full engagement by students with a need for investment to improve infrastructure within the education system being a priority. The broadband lines within school currently 100MB lines should be upgraded to 1000MB lines immediately through the NCTE to cater for the increased data flow that will be required, otherwise this has the potential to cause significant difficulties to the effective functioning of blended learning platforms and staff engagement in this form of teaching and learning.
- We would encourage ACCS to work on behalf of these students with the DES re accessing unlimited data and the provision of suitable devices.
- ACCS were brilliant on the help they offered schools.

Appendix 3

Gathering Evidence using survey tools

John the Baptist Community School

Teachers

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=JxdCUOu4zEyrH3URytgRE_SraQicMldDteY88PV2mBFUMTBITIBaMVNOT1dQQUxW

Students

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=JxdCUOu4zEyrH3URytgRE5zEPKI3nYZlRt9BI2Pk93IUNjQwTkINQ1hQUjRQVktITDINMVVDQjE2TC4u&sharetoken=vX1p3FvhnYoVpylxgMMi>

Parents/Guardians

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=JxdCUOu4zEyrH3URytgRE5zEPKI3nYZlRt9BI2Pk93IUNzBURjFCNjIIS1dVUIEyRO05MEJBTVPQi4u&sharetoken=y1RpwRCNSOUBSUBJ3IP9>

Gort Community School

Students

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=6uZNX-JPQEOwf2wygKv6sGtuvqdavARGuM5dKDxfeBhUNjhNQTdKOTZPN1JYRkdCUFg2TTJIS0FLQi4u&sharetoken=ekSPKTqv1VAtiwKS7X0z>

Teachers

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=6uZNX-JPQEOwf2wygKv6sFSEIKjloHVPsrSmEhEcA_xUNUFOTkk2SVU2UEtOT1pBQUdaQIJIT1RKRI4u&sharetoken=P74Pk1mvgYp2eIMme5nv

Parents/Guardians

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=6uZNX-JPQEOwf2wygKv6sFSEIKjloHVPsrSmEhEcA_xUQzdTME9ZSEQ4QjlxVz

Appendix 4

Digital Learning Planning Guidelines

<https://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Planning/Digital-Learning-Planning-Guidelines.pdf>

Extract from pages 30 & 31, Digital Learning Planning Guidelines

School Leadership

Leadership is key to the successful implementation of the DL Plan and this is reflected in the statements of practice within the DL Framework, specifically in Domain 4, Developing Leadership Capacity (Leadership and Management).

DOMAIN 4: DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Standards	Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
Critique their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership.	<p>The principal and other leaders in the school ensure that technology systems are in place to support the digital pedagogical practices within the school.</p> <p>They question their own practice in relation to the use of digital technologies through processes of personal reflection and identify areas of their practice that require improvement.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders in the school reflect on, critically assess and actively develop the digital pedagogical practices within the school.</p> <p>They develop self-awareness by regularly questioning their own practice in relation to the use of digital technologies through personal and collaborative reflection. They identify and work on areas of their practice that require improvement.</p>

Figure 4: Excerpt from the Digital Learning Framework.

The principal and other leaders should:

- Support all staff to embed digital technologies in their teaching practice.
- Support staff development by facilitating sharing of practice amongst teachers and encouraging participation in relevant CPD programmes.
- Ensure all staff have a copy of the DL Plan and are provided with the necessary support, towards implementation.
- Monitor how the plan is progressing and consult regularly with staff members, both formally and informally, in relation to the plan.
- Regularly include Digital Learning on the agenda for staff meetings.
- Facilitate an annual review of the DL Plan.
- Ensure the involvement and support of the Board of Management, and other stakeholders, in implementing the plan.

Teaching Staff

The implementation of the Digital Learning Plan will differ between primary and post-primary schools. At primary level, where teachers teach all subjects, there is an opportunity for each class teacher to embed digital learning within her/his class. At post-primary level, each subject department will play a key role in ensuring the plan is successfully implemented.

Each teacher can contribute to the successful implementation of the DL Plan by:

- Being aware of and by being committed to the DL Plan.
- Sharing good practice with colleagues in relation to digital learning (both formally and informally).
- Using the DL Framework to reflect on their own DL practices (using six step process)
- Reviewing the exemplars of good digital learning practice on the PDST Technology in Education website.
- Identifying and engaging in professional learning activities that support the enhancement of DL practices in schools.

The Digital Learning Team

The DL Team can play a role in ensuring that the plan is owned by teachers, parents and students. Facilitation is essential in ensuring that the plan is successfully implemented.

The DL Team can support staff by:

- Discussing the DL Plan regularly at staff meetings and/or subject department meetings at post-primary.
- Holding formal/informal discussions with staff members.
- Facilitating events where teachers share their digital practices, and where more confident teachers work with other teachers on a one to-one basis and small group basis (mentoring approach).
- Sharing ideas, resources, and/or classroom management approaches that support effective and highly effective DL practices.
- Supporting staff to identify relevant external professional learning opportunities.

Professional Learning

Teachers, along with principals, will be instrumental in ensuring that digital technologies are embedded in learning, teaching and assessment practices in each school. There is a need to ensure that all teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to embed digital technologies into their practice. The DL Framework can support staff to reflect on their current DL practices and to identify areas where they would like to enhance their practice through engaging in professional learning activities.

The school can support staff to:

- Review their current digital practice on their own or with a group of colleagues.
- Identify gaps in their knowledge, skills or confidence in relation to embedding digital technologies into their practice.

- Identify and engage with appropriate professional learning activities, such as sharing practice with peers, participating in communities of practice or enrolling in accredited/unaccredited professional learning programmes.
- Share relevant articles, podcasts or videos on effective and highly effective DL practices with colleagues.

Digital Infrastructure

“There is an ever-expanding array of digital technologies that can support learning in schools. Many of these technologies have not been developed for education but with careful consideration and thoughtful planning they can transform learning, teaching and assessment practices. In selecting such technologies, schools must consider the security of the infrastructure with end to end encryption being a standard requirement; what learning practices they wish to promote and select the appropriate technologies for the task. Schools should review how other schools are using various technologies by viewing exemplar case-studies online, by attending conferences or by visiting other schools. The PDST Technology in Education website provides a range of video exemplars to enable schools to review a wide range of digital infrastructure being used to support the DL Framework.”

Page 32, Digital Learning Planning GUIDELINES

Appendix 5

Students with AEN – useful websites

The National Council for Special Education (www.ncse.ie) have compiled fantastic resources for teachers and parents during these changed times:

Parents: <https://ncse.ie/online-resources-for-parents>

Teachers: <https://ncse.ie/online-resources-for-teachers>

NCSE (NBSS) Publications & Resources: Developed to support schools in addressing students' social, emotional, wellbeing, academic and behavioural needs:

<https://www.nbss.ie/publications-resources>



Working to deliver a better
special education service

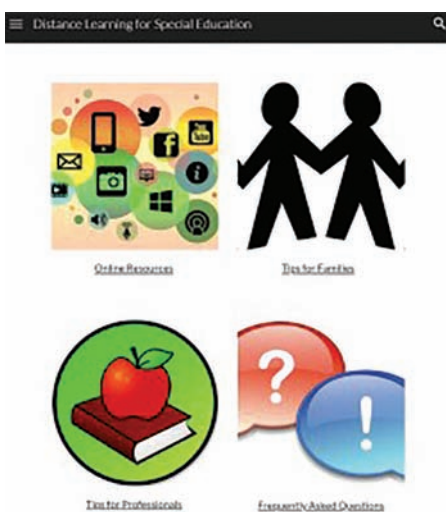
NCCA – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

<https://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/supporting-the-curriculum>

Click on 'Supporting Special Needs Education' link. See 'Curricular Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild General Learning Disabilities'. In the case of all subject areas go to lesson 'Exemplars' section of relevant PDF.



https://sites.google.com/view/distance-learning-specialied/home?fbclid=IwAR01F5F6MVoh0dZZUR4pwDcmlo5cUUtYIADtwHfAYQNXgH_bcYiHfhf9XBw



<https://education.microsoft.com/en-us/resource/Oc6e9c42>

Appendix 6

Digital Safety Checklist

Digital Safety Checklist (Source: teachersupport.ie)

Question / Statement	Yes / No / Action Required
Is information regarding data privacy clearly stated by the platform tool or app used by the school?	
Is it clear what data on your device and those of your students will be accessed by the platform, tool or app?	
The Website: Terms of Service: Didn't Read provides a quick-read ratings for the terms of service of some popular platforms.	
Informing students about the importance of their digital footprint is a valuable instructional opportunity in itself, so consider sharing websites like these with your students to enhance their understanding of digital citizenship.	
If you are hosting virtual classrooms via web conference software such as Zoom or Teams, be very cautious about taking screenshots for sharing on social media or via other channels. Remember that students' faces and names may be visible, and telephone numbers are usually visible on apps such as WhatsApp. As always, be guided by your school's policies and safeguarding principles.	
Maintaining your own privacy is also important. Instead of using your personal e-mail for communicating with students, use one that is provided or approved by the school. The same principle should apply to any web-based communication services you might use.	

Appendix 7

Glossary of Terms

Distance Learning

Distance learning is when students don't attend classroom lessons in person. Instead, they receive instruction, and learn and study from home. Classes are usually conducted over the internet and students can submit assignments remotely. As distance learning offers students the flexibility and convenience of not having to be physically present in the learning institution, the advantages are numerous. Students can access class resources from a single location.

Blended or Hybrid Learning

This is where the traditional form of face-to-face learning converges with the newer methods of remote and online instruction. Blended learning uses technology to improve the learning process and is the model most likely to be adopted by third-level institutions as ongoing social distancing requirements limit the possibility of traditional in-person lectures taking place. Blended learning is customisable and, as a result, a wide range of approaches to the method means the balance between in-class teaching and the use of technology varies from programme to programme. Advocates say it offers the best of both worlds. The curriculum is usually delivered through a combination of classroom-based lectures, online lectures and the use of other online resources. Ideally, these course components complement each other to strengthen the overall outcome. Blended learning also offers students the benefits of in-class engagement with instructors with the flexibility of online learning. The degree to which the

course is blended depends on the course programme and the institution in question.

E-Learning

Short for electronic learning, eLearning is a term that essentially means *learning with the aid of digital tools*. It has its roots in distance learning. The internet has contributed greatly to a marked growth in the use of technology for the delivery of education over the past decade and has helped the development of new models of teaching, improved instruction methods and the possibility of better student outcomes.

As colleges and universities shut their doors, in came video conferencing, online quizzes, virtual learning platforms, specialised simulations, asynchronous and synchronous teaching.

Technology is at the centre of eLearning and without it the programme could not be delivered. Students use computer and internet technology to access the curriculum from outside the traditional classroom.

It is widely seen as a flexible and efficient way of delivering the curriculum as most people with a stable internet connection can access these tools and participate in some form of online learning. It is also efficient. Students no longer have to worry about attending a lecture or class at a set time, they can review lecture videos as often as they like, there is no commute time and it can help develop time-management skills. Unsurprisingly, it is often the preferred option for students who are working or who have other constraints on their time.

Critics sometimes cite poor student engagement as one of the greatest

drawbacks of eLearning. In traditional classroom settings, students can raise their hand and engage in face-to-face interaction with their instructor but it is not as easy to raise the hand digitally in an eLearning environment.

The very nature of the approach means students will invariably spend a lot of time on their own in front of the computer screen and the lack of social interaction can lead to a sense of isolation.

Emergency Remote Teaching

Not to be confused with distance learning or online learning, emergency remote teaching is a measure that is adopted in response to a crisis where the curriculum has to be rapidly moved to a virtual online setting.

The unintended consequences of emergency remote teaching can include a failure to meet the expectations that students had at the outset of the course. Simply broadcasting a lecture with the aid of a video conferencing tool or uploading a presentation to a virtual learning environment is not the same as presenting course content that has been planned, developed and designed for delivery via a framework that best enables learning to take place. The sudden change in delivery model can mean a change to how course material is absorbed by students and it can also mean a change to the assessment model which can be disruptive for those students who had prepared for another format entirely over a lengthy period of time.

The needs of all students might not be met by sudden change, and unexpected barriers such as the digital divide and other inequities can arise. There is also the danger that in the absence of a coherent emergency plan that teaching objectives can shift from the achievement of pre-defined learning goals to enacting a crisis management approach instead.

While the process of moving from an

established teaching method to an unfamiliar new platform can be difficult, emergency remote teaching can be a useful learning experience as instructors quickly learn to apply what works and discard what doesn't.

Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is a term used to describe a method where students engage in learning at the same time but not in the same place. Synchronous learning usually involves the use of online tools such as chat and videoconferencing where students and teachers can interact in real-time during class. Class activities typically take place through the use of dedicated virtual learning environments (also known as learning management systems) such as Brightspace, Moodle or Canvas.

Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning is a term used to describe a method where students engage in learning at different times and locations. Asynchronous learning often utilises elements such as email, pre-recorded video and other tools such as online discussion forums that facilitate the sharing of information.

Learning Management System

Sometimes referred to as virtual learning environment or virtual learning platforms, learning management systems are web-based software platforms which facilitate the delivery of course content. Platforms provide teaching tools and supports but also allow course instructors to track student performance over time.

Multiple formats such as video, audio and text are catered for and students can be assessed through tools such as online quizzes and questionnaires. They are in widespread use at third level and can be used to deliver asynchronous or synchronous-based courses. Systems such as Brightspace, Canvas, Moodle and

Blackboard have built-in tools that allow instructors to deliver lectures by video or audio, facilitate discussions and even track student performance.

Virtual Classroom

A virtual classroom is an online learning environment where students interact in real time with the instructor and with each other. Usually delivered via videoconferencing tools, virtual classrooms are also a feature of learning management systems. Students can also usually interact and ask or answer questions by using a chat window. Presentation tools such as PowerPoint or whiteboard tools can usually be utilised by the teacher during class. It is also possible during a class or lecture to operate break-out rooms where students can work together or where the instructor can interact directly with an individual student.

Webinar

A webinar is a class in which participants view the same screen at the same time. Very useful in a classroom setting, the instructor controls proceedings and

participants can communicate through the use of interactive features such as chatrooms, polls and quizzes.

Collaborative Tools

This is usually a reference to materials such as PDFs, slideshow, spreadsheets, presentations, images or text documents. These tools are usually found as a feature within the learning management systems.

Flipped Classes

A feature of some blended learning approaches where lectures are replaced by classes or tutorial-type settings. Students consume content – perhaps by viewing a lecture video or completing an assignment – at home before engaging in analysis and discussion in the live class setting. The practice results in more face-to-face time and affords the instructor greater flexibility in being able to engage directly with students during class, and it can help increase student engagement as they are required to prepare material ahead of the class.

(Source Irish Times Article, June 2020)

Appendix 8

Useful Websites

Web Address	Description
General	
https://www.toptools4learning.com/	Top 200 Tools for Learning 2019.
https://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning	PDST Distance learning resources to support schools.
https://www.dlplanning.ie/post-primary/	A range of resources to support schools in effectively embedding digital technologies in learning, teaching and assessment.
https://teachersupport.ie/resources/	Support Resources for teaching online - Hibernia College.
https://www.webwise.ie/welcome-to-webwise/us/	Webwise promotes the autonomous, effective, and safer use of the internet by young people through a sustained information and awareness strategy targeting stakeholders with relevant messages.
Teaching Resources	
www.scoilnet.ie	Scoilnet is the Department of Education and Skills (DES) official portal for Irish education.
https://www.senteacher.org/	Free Special Needs Teaching Resources.
https://www.pdst.ie/postprimary	View Resources by Subject.
http://www.teachnet.ie/resources/	Resources created by teachers for teachers.
www.khanacademy.org	Online tools for students.
https://alison.com/	Free online courses on: Technology, Science, Health, Language, Maths and much more.
CPD	
PDST https://teachercpd.ie/	The learning platform for <i>PDST Technology in Education</i> online courses on digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.
https://www.cpdlearnonline.ie/	CPD Learn Online is managed by GMIT Teaching and Learning Office and is hosted by HEANet Ireland.
https://vimeo.com/wrigglelearning	52 Webinar Videos - Remote Teaching & Learning (Wriggle).
https://teachfromhome.google/intl/en/	Teach from Home is a Google-led initiative that gives you everything you need to get started.
https://www.education.microsoft.com/en-us	Microsoft Educator Centre - Getting Started with Remote Learning.
https://www.apple.com/education/k12/apple-teacher	Apple Teacher Learning Centre.
TTV https://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/	Russell Stannard, from Teacher Training Videos provides a range of free videos to assist teachers in moving their teaching online, including useful videos on using Zoom, Padlet, Edmodo, Adobe Connect and Screencast-o-matic. It also includes useful information on assessing students using online quizzes for formative assessment, getting learners to create videos and the use of e-portfolios.
Further Education https://www.ecollege.ie/course	eCollege is the national online learning service for the Further Education and Training sector, funded by SOLAS.



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha

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