

Success Story No.7 – Creating Pre-recorded Videos

May 2020

I had the pleasure of speaking with Louise from a secondary school in Enfield and she shared the school's success with using Zoom to create screencasts of sixth form lessons.

What is your school context?

We are 7.5 form entry secondary community school with sixth form. I am Head of A-level Psychology, I teach KS3 RE and I am a lead teacher.

What has been the biggest challenge?

For me it's been working from home and finding a routine with two children aged 2 and 6! They take up a lot of my time during the day, plus my husband is working from home and has a heavy workload. This has meant that I have had to juggle my school work with childcare. This was particularly stressful at the start of lockdown but has become easier with time.

Can you share your success with using Zoom to pre-record your lessons?

I learnt how to use Zoom to record my lessons and create screencasts to send to students on the day of their timetabled lesson. Screencasts are digital recordings of a computer screen with audio narration. What I like about screencasting is that it allows me to provide thorough explanations of psychological theories and research and address common misconceptions of course content, as I would usually do in the classroom.

I begin by planning the lesson in the usual way and then I use Zoom to record myself delivering my lesson PowerPoint. For example, I begin with the starter, which is usually a recall quiz, and I ask students to pause the video and answer the questions. I then continue with the lesson, explaining content, modelling answers and asking students at various points to pause the video again and complete tasks. I also use 'check it' tasks after each block of teaching to assess students' learning. This may involve a quick gap fill activity from memory or a set of multiple-choice questions, which I then provide the answers to when students play the video again so that they can self-assess.

Each Zoom video is about 45 minutes long but can be shorter if necessary. If I were to use this with KS3 I would certainly cut this down to 20-30 minutes of content. I have also used

this method to answer students' questions. For example, one student asked for help with essay writing, so I made a quick five minute video modelling the essay structure using the whiteboard feature on Zoom.

The students have responded really well to the Zoom videos. They have told me that they find them useful and much better for home learning than having work set on a sheet. I think they really like the option of pausing and rewinding content and being able to work in their own time, but still with teacher delivery. Once the video is recorded, I attach it as a file on Show My Homework and Google Classroom, along with any additional resources that students need. Students complete the work and submit it to me via Google Classroom for marking. The work students have produced has been of good quality. They have completed the same, and in some cases, more work than in lessons!

Some students asked for some interactive lessons so I delivered a live Zoom lesson once we reached the end of the topic. In this session, I asked students to answer a series of short quiz questions in five minutes and then I selected individual students to unmute themselves and provide answers. I then used the same process with exam questions. This was really helpful as I was able to address any misconceptions in students' learning and students were able to ask me questions about the content they had been learning from home. It was also really nice just to catch-up with students and check that they are OK! This live session was really useful but it is difficult for me to deliver this on a weekly basis with my home situation, so I find that using the pre-recorded videos and a live lesson every couple of weeks is working well. It is also really useful to have a bank of lesson videos within the department, which may be a tool that we continue to use in the future.

I shared my experience and knowledge of screencasting with colleagues on a Zoom staff meeting and I know that some teachers have decided to give it a go. I am also considering using this format for KS3 lessons in RE.

Can you share any Top Tips for creating videos?

I would recommend starting by watching a YouTube video on how to make a screencast using Zoom so that you know how it all works before spending time recording an actual lesson. Secondly, I would suggest practising a few times by making some short clips before recording the actual lesson. This will help you to familiarise yourself with the process and know where the file will be saved once it is complete.

What has engagement been like?

The majority of students are engaging and I have found that this has improved since using the videos. I find that being consistent with the types of tasks I set helps to improve engagement, as well as keeping things simple. I record the work that has been completed

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on a spreadsheet so that when we return to school, I will have a clearer idea of what content might need some additional time given to it.

What are you thinking about next?

We've come to the end of two topics and have one more to complete this term, which we will do using screencast videos. We have scaled down the work quite a lot so that students don't become overwhelmed or get too far behind. When all yr12 topics are complete, we may start introducing yr13 topics using Zoom videos but when we return to school we will need to carry out a formal assessment to check where the gaps are.

Any final thoughts?

Remote teaching has not been as bad as I thought it might be. It has taught me to engage with the technology available to us and find new ways of delivering content. This has provided me with new skills and resources to use in the future.

The students have coped well, and I am really impressed with some of the work they have completed. I am proud of the way they have responded to this situation and the resilience they have shown. However, I know that many of them are missing school and the daily interaction between students and staff. I think we will all appreciate our time in school a little bit more now, than we did before.

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