

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

Lessons from Lockdown: What we learned about Education Technology in 2020

Lessons for periods of school disruption:

Lesson 1

Schools should not just seek to replicate classroom teaching online but should embrace the pedagogic advances that EdTech allows. A timetable of live lessons is not necessarily a gold standard; there is a role for teacher-led video lessons, both live and pre-recorded, as well as for content produced by the educational supplies sector, and peer and collaborative study. Of course, remote learning should also encourage and incorporate non-screen-based activities, including reading books, putting pen to paper, arts and crafts and physical exercise.

Lesson 2

In addition to schools delivering devices, the efforts to provide internet access to those without, and educational suppliers making content available, there needs to be a far greater mobilisation of existing, widely-available technologies to help pupils continue learning throughout periods of school closure. During the pandemic, Public Service Broadcasters such as the BBC have taken some welcome steps by increasing the volume of televised educational content, but the APPG would like to see this go much further, for example with the repurposing of entire channels (like BBC 3 and BBC 4) to deliver formal educational content during any future periods of disruption to the school term. There is clearly potential too in what streaming and podcasts services could offer.

Lesson 3

There is early evidence that certain technologies and remote learning practices can prove effective in supporting pupils' wellbeing during periods of emergency school closure, and four overarching design themes appear to underpin these. Those four themes are: teacher presence; facilitation of peer-caring; activities that supported pupils' self-regulation, self-esteem and self-influence; and the interlinking of support services. Of course, the use of platforms encompassing these features need not be exclusive to periods of disruption going forward.

Lessons for ongoing education:

Lesson 4

As schools reopen, they should ensure traditional classroom teaching is coupled with the use of EdTech as a matter of routine, to enrich the variety of pedagogic approaches. This more blended style of learning would be on campus, within the school setting, but not necessarily always in the classroom.

Lesson 5

In addition to direct one-to-one tutoring, the National Tutoring Programme should utilise a more diverse range of EdTech solutions to help pupils catch up on lost learning and to maximise its reach.

Lesson 6

The use of EdTech in schools should not be limited to curriculum delivery. It should be holistic, covering all key areas of pupil development. Innovative solutions that have supported pupil wellbeing during lockdown should continue to be used to strengthen the provision of pastoral care. Additionally, tools that help pupils organise themselves and self-regulate should also be made widely available, as should those which allow for continued communication with parents and guardians.

Lesson 7

Early evidence submitted to the APPG, along with the findings of other recent work, suggests certain EdTech design features resonated. This includes features which engage pupils' attention; allow pupils to 'get help' with their work securely; provide motivational structures; and interlink resources in one place.

Lesson 8

The Department for Education's laptop and tablet procurement programme should not end with the reopening of schools. It should morph into a longer-term programme that works towards the ambition of ensuring that all pupils can access secure devices and the appropriate learning software. Procurement of these devices should be a shared and sustainable endeavour between government, schools, business and industry.

Lesson 9

Closing the digital divide also means ensuring the best possible provision of broadband connectivity across the country. This includes making sure that education settings and other community spaces where learning takes place are prioritised for infrastructural upgrades to broadband. It also means ensuring that all education platforms benefit from being zero-rated by data providers.

Lesson 10

Initial Teacher Training and the Early Career Framework must equip teachers with the knowledge and confidence to source and deploy effective EdTech solutions to support both the teaching and learning process and to drive efficiencies across school management. Schools should also provide inset or equivalent training and guidance for teachers as part of regular CPD. At the same time, the technology must be made considerably easier to find, procure and integrate too.

Lesson 11

EdTech has great potential to significantly ease the workloads of school leaders and teachers. Schools should not revert back to more traditional paper-trail methods of administration, but should continue (or take up) using systems that support teachers with lesson planning, marking and data analysis.

Lesson 12

It is vital that we nurture the individual talents that all children with SEND possess and ensure they get the most out of their time at school. There is a strong appetite across the Assistive Technology and education sector to work together to improve the quality of provision across the UK and this should be harnessed. The APPG would like to see deeper consideration given to the impact EdTech can have and how it can be used to help realise and nurture the diverse talents of children with SEND. It is important that we get these interventions right, but at the same time we need to proceed with a sense of urgency, given the difficulties that we know many children with SEND have experienced over the past year.

Central to this mission will also be a) ensuring that all future EdTech solutions include necessary features for children with SEND and b) helping teachers to fully utilise the EdTech solutions available to them.



Lesson 13

The APPG's Call for Evidence exercise, which provided the evidence underpinning much of this report, was UK-focused. However, as the APPG heard during its panel discussion on international comparisons in November 2020, the challenge of delivering remote education at speed was addressed in a variety of different ways around the world. There is value in keeping abreast of other nations' experiences of using EdTech, as it can help to inform our own decision-making, where appropriate. Of course, we should also advance opportunities for our own world leading EdTech sector, which has much to offer pupils in this country and around the world.

Likewise, International EdTech trade associations, incubators and accelerators benefit from strong relations with their counterparts in the UK, in order to foster the sharing of best practice and opportunities in each of their respective territories. For example, the European EdTech Alliance (EEA), which represents over 10 national trade associations and clusters working with EdTech providers across Europe, meets regularly to discuss regional policy updates, share insights into what is working well and to discuss common challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

Lesson 14

Deploying EdTech during the unprecedented period of remote learning has not been without challenge, but the use of technology in education will not revert back to the status quo ante. Given the changed context, the Department for Education should build on its 2019 EdTech Strategy by developing an EdTech sector deal to improve the functioning of the industry's ecosystem and ensure it better serves all stakeholders. The key aim of such a sector deal must be to bring industry, schools and policymakers much closer together, as only by doing so will we see the step-change in user and product research and innovation, communication and ease of procurement that is required to fulfil the conclusions of this report.

EdTech's role in accelerating education after the pandemic 

Join the debate on Wednesday, 26th May, 2pm-3pm, Online

About this Event

With pupils now back in the classroom, this meeting will look at the role EdTech could play in helping to accelerate learning post-pandemic. The discussion will cover curriculum delivery and embracing the pedagogic advances that EdTech allows, as well as how EdTech can support catch-up initiatives.



Schedule of meetings:

- **How EdTech can best support children with SEND**
Wednesday, 7th July, 2pm-3pm
- **EdTech's role in delivering adult learning (+ AGM)**
Wednesday, 15th September, 2pm-3pm

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