

Online Lesson Working Party

Final Report – July 2018

Prepared for Education Committee

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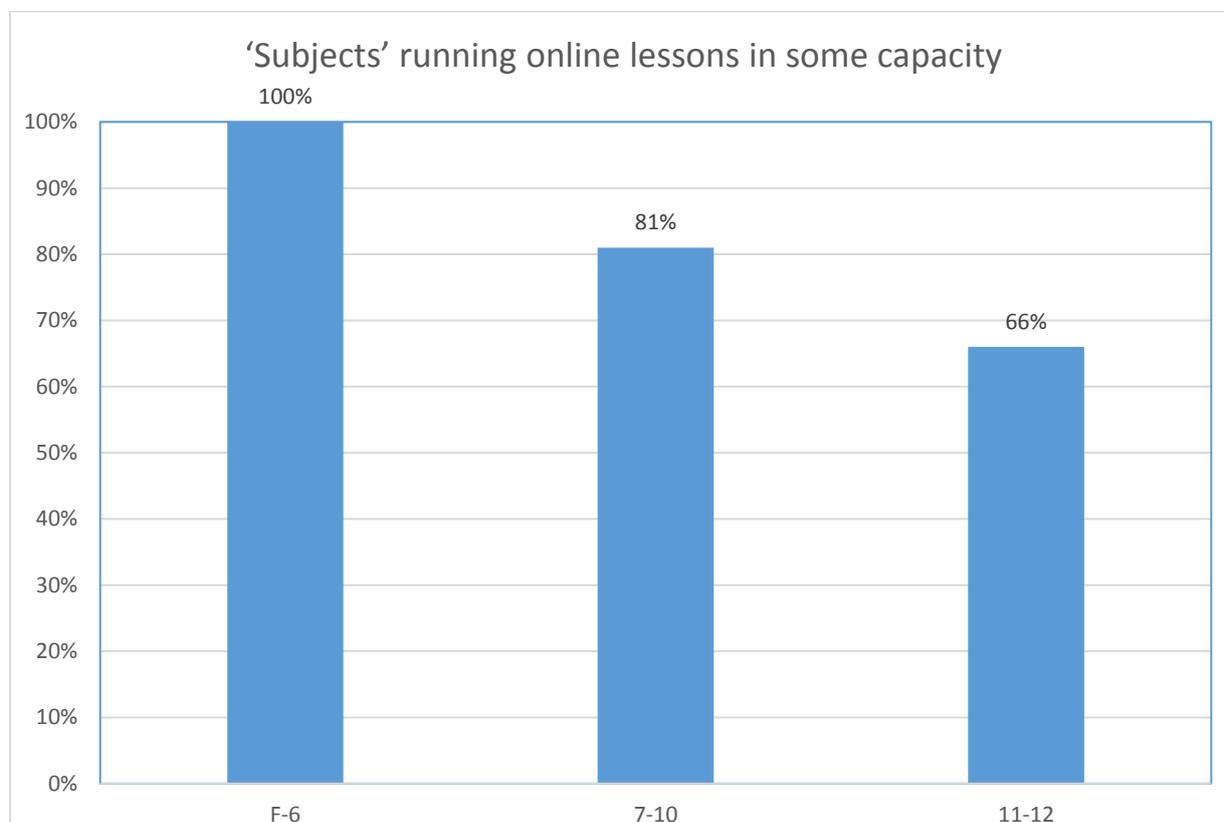
Participants in the working party

Nick Irvine (chair), Brett New, Mal McIver, Fiona Webster, Jordan Anderson, John Bartley, Melissa King, Ken McDougall, Katrin Pierce, Jess Roberts (for first meeting), Allira Scott, Melissa Stansfield, Brooke Summers and Sally Trotter.

Context

'Online lesson' is the main term used at DECV to describe synchronous online classes, currently provided using Adobe Connect.

Online lesson usage has increased significantly over recent years. In 2015, 54% of subjects ran at least one online lesson. In 2016 and 2017, this had increase to around 75%. In February 2018, online lessons were being used in some capacity by 73% of subjects (if considering each F-6 year level as one 'subject'), although this varied between Sub Schools. 100% of F-6 year levels (7/7) were running online lessons, 81% of 7-10 subjects (22/27) and 66% of 11-12 subjects (40/61).



Frequency of lessons has also increased in recent years. In 2015, 42% of subjects running online lessons did so regularly (weekly or fortnightly). By 2017, this had increased to approximately 58%. In February 2018, it was 67%. If considering this in the context of all subjects running in Semester 1 2018, 48% offered regular online lessons. However, there was / is significant variation between Sub Schools. 100% of F-6 year levels run regular online lessons. Among 7-10 subjects that were running online lessons in February 2018, 73% did so regularly. This equated to 59% of all year 7-10 subjects offering regular lessons. Among 11-12 subjects that were running online lessons in February 2018, 58% did so regularly. This equated to 38% of all 11-12 subjects offering regular lessons.

Online lessons have traditionally been seen as additional or supplementary activities, outside of the 'core' learning program for subjects. This has started to shift to some extent, with a number of

subjects incorporating online lessons into their learning sequences as part of Maximum course development cycles, supported by the implementation of the Moodle-based DECV Online. For example, a majority of the Maximum courses written in 2017 and taught in Semester 1, 2018, had online lessons written into their courses (at least in some weeks).

Despite increasing adoption of online lessons, there has not been a clear 'school-wide' approach or vision for online lessons. Teachers informally collaborate within teaching teams, and sometimes discuss practice with other colleagues on an ad hoc basis.

Scope of work

This working party examined the current practice of online lessons at DECV in order to make recommendations about the future direction of online lesson use at the school. Although a number of synchronous tools are available to teachers at DECV, this working party specifically examined online lesson usage, with consideration of its place within broader learning programs and engagement initiatives.

Although online lessons currently run using Adobe Connect, it is possible that alternative technologies will be investigated in future. This is beyond the scope of this working party.

The working party met four times over the course of Term 2, 2018, and agreed upon recommendations (outlined later in the document) at the final meeting on 26 June.

Areas of investigation and findings

Current practice at DECV

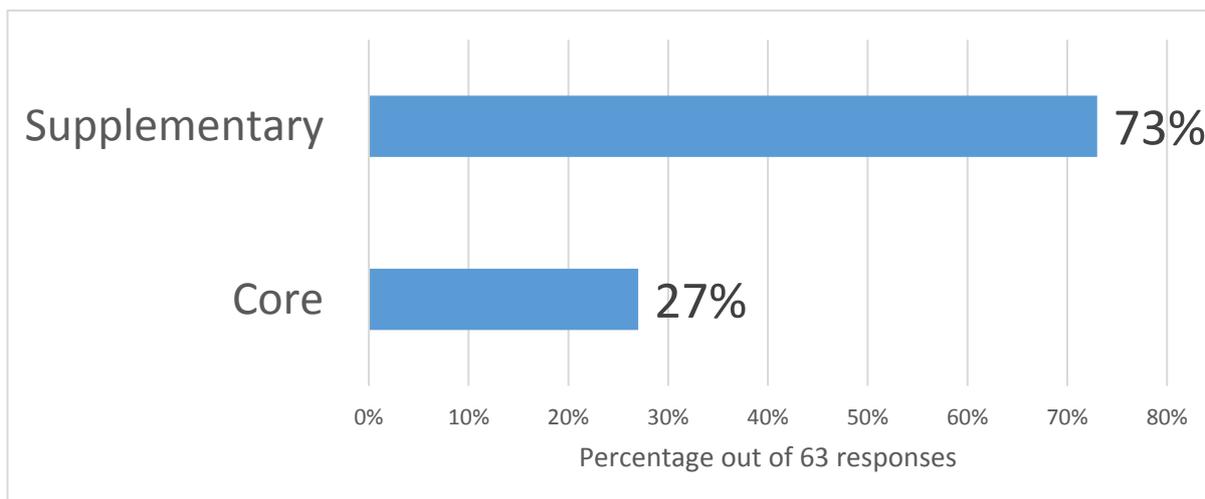
At the end of Term 1 and beginning of Term 2, subjects (or primary year levels) that run online lessons were surveyed about their usage.

- One teacher was asked to complete survey on behalf of each subject's or primary year level's teaching team.
 - Exception: If teachers ran separate lessons within a teaching team they were asked to each complete the survey as they might have different approaches.
- There were a total of 63 valid responses to the survey, representing 61 different subjects (or primary year levels) across F-12, out of a total of 69 running online lessons.
 - This included a response from each of the 7 year levels in F-6, 22 7-10 responses (representing 20 subjects) and 34 11-12 responses (representing 34 subjects).

Core or supplementary?

When asked if lessons were a core or supplementary part of learning programs, 73% indicated that they were supplementary, 27% core.

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



100% of F-6 (7/7), 59% of 7-10 (13/22) and 74% of 11-12 (25/34) respondents chose 'supplementary'.

Purpose of online lessons

When asked about the reason for running online lessons, there were clear differences between F-6, 7-10 and 11-12. Note: Respondents were able to select all three options if applicable.

	F-6	7-10	11-12
Teaching and Learning	71%	81%	100%
Student Engagement	100%	86%	53%
Student Wellbeing	71%	27%	12%

Note: this survey was about lessons run for subject/class groups. Some 7-10 and 11-12 Learning Advisors run separate Adobe Connect sessions with their LAd groups, which would likely have greater emphasis on engagement and wellbeing. In F-6, students do not have separate subject and LAd teachers.

When asked how *engagement* is reflected in online lessons, a number of teachers' comments suggested that online lessons give students the ability to feel connected with their school, peers and teacher(s), with a greater sense of belonging.

A number of teachers commented on using online lessons to facilitate student collaboration, the ability to use topical, real-life contemporary examples and examples related to students' lives.

A number of teachers also commented on the *wellbeing* benefits of greater connectedness with school, including peers and teachers. Some indicated that their subjects take specific steps to create a safe, non-threatening learning environment that caters for a range of social/emotional needs. For example, by accepting different levels and forms of participation – not all students are expected to use microphones or answer questions from teachers. Some subjects involve students in discussions relating to wellbeing. This ranges from simply asking students how they feel to the class discussing and establishing a shared vision for a respectful classroom.

What happens in lessons

Staff were asked “Which of the following are part of a typical lesson in your subject?” with three options and a space for further comment. 63 valid responses were received, resulting in the following percentages for the main options:

- “Teacher(s) present course content (key knowledge, topics) to students.” – **87%**
- “Activity(ies) are included which focus student SKILL development.” – **75%**
- “Students are given the opportunity to *collaborate* (not just interact).” – **56%**

Software utilisation and skills

The survey found that many subjects only use a limited number of tools available in Adobe Connect. For example, out of 61 respondents to this question:

- **95%** presented files such as PowerPoint in lessons.
- **67%** played video in lessons, **64%** used the whiteboard tool and teacher’s webcam, **60%** screenshared.
- Other tools were less utilised, such as *breakout rooms* at **18%**.
- 5 respondents (**8%**) used third-party apps with Adobe Connect. These including Google docs, OneNote, Stile, green screen software, Quizlet, Kahootz, Padlet, GeoGebra and Survey Monkey.

12 suggestions or requests were made in the ‘further comments’ section at the end of the survey (in addition to other comments about benefits and challenges). 6 of these indicated that staff wish for more training to improve their skills in the use of Adobe Connect.

Note: Targeted training and one-on-one support have been provided during Semester 1, 2018, focussing on improving core technical skills within online lessons and to best utilise tools available. Much of this took place after the survey was conducted.

Classroom management considerations

46 respondents representing teams (subjects with more than one teacher) answered a question about classroom management. **65%** indicated that their team had discussed online lesson classroom management. **35%** had not.

Teachers who were the only teacher of their subject were asked whether they had discussed online lesson classroom management with teachers of other subjects. Out of 27 respondents:

- **37%** had spoken with colleagues in other subjects.
- **15%** had not spoken with others, but had reflected on their own practice.
- **48%** indicated that classroom management was not a primary concern when planning and running online lessons.

Students who do not attend lessons

Teams were asked about their approach to catering for students who do not attend lessons. Respondents were given three multiple choice options plus ‘other’ (allowing further comment). Out of 61 valid responses, these were the results:

- “Students are provided with a recording of the lesson.” – **82%**

- “Students are provided with specific tasks or activities to complete, which incorporate the lesson recording.” – **11%**
- “Students are provided with specific tasks or activities to complete as an alternative to the lesson WITHOUT using a recording of the lesson.” – **2%** (one respondent)
- Other. – **5%** (three respondents):
 - Two respondents provided additional activities or materials as well as provided the recording.
 - One offered further small group or individual lessons as a substitute.
 - One sent an email summary, links to websites and follow up phone calls as needed.
 - One respondent uploaded the PowerPoint slides from the lesson without the recording.

Team organisation and planning of lessons

When asked about planning online lessons, respondents were given three multiple choice options plus ‘other’ (allowing further comment). Out of 60 valid responses, these were the results:

- “I/we consider what I/we want to achieve over a period of time (eg. A module, outcome or semester) and coordinate content and activities across lessons.” – **45%**
- “Each lesson is planned and delivered individually.” – **23%**
- “Lessons are planned and delivered in response to observed needs. Eg. A lesson focussing on a topic or skill that has been found to need attention among students.” – **30%**
- Other – 1 respondent stated “While lessons are planned and delivered, they also include topics and skills that have been identified as requiring more attention.”

Note: One further comment under ‘other’ was categorised as “Lessons are planned and delivered in response to observed needs.” above.

Subjects with more than two teachers were asked how they determine who runs each lesson. Out of 30 valid responses, the results were:

- “We have a specific roster of teachers assigned to run particular lessons.” – **40%**
- “We take turns running lessons, but don't have a specific roster.” – **20%**
- “All teachers are involved in running every lesson.” – **30%**
- Other. – **10%** (3 respondents):
 - In 2 cases, a particular teacher mainly ran the lessons despite being part of a team.
 - 1 respondent indicated that their team was still working out their approach.

Current practice at other distance education schools in Australia

A survey was provided to AADES schools in June 2018, with the intent of gaining a better understanding of how teaching and learning takes place at each school. This information will support a more informed comparison of the place of synchronous online learning within learning programs.

At the time of writing, responses to the survey had not yet been completed for all schools surveyed. Those completed included Capricornia School of Distance Education (Qld), Katherine School of the Air (NT), Northern Territory School of Distance Education (NT), Open Access College (SA), School of Isolated and Distance Education (WA) and Tasmanian eSchool (Tas). At all of these schools, **every subject / year level provides synchronous online classes.**

Below are two specific examples:

Open Access College - South Australia (R - 12)

- Attendance at timetabled online lessons is compulsory – requirement is policy driven and stipulated in enrolment handbooks.
- Student who can't attend are supported through the provision of laptops – access to internet services is provided through a families in need social justice program.
- Attendance expectations vary across year levels:
 - Primary students attend 1 or 2 x 30 minute lessons per day.
 - 7 – 10 students attend 1 x 50 – 60 minute lesson per day.
 - 11/12 students attend 1 x 50 – 60 minute lesson per subject per week.
 - Social / emotional students have a negotiated learning plan.
- Initially there was a lot of angst from teachers but it is the reality now and they have really embraced it – transition was difficult for teachers and they needed a lot of support.
 - Improves connectivity and engagement; provides immediate feedback; “no brainer really”; teachers would say they are not really teaching if they were to revert to previous asynchronous only.

Tasmanian eSchool (K - 10)

- Expectations are that students attend lessons according to their timetable and participate as fully as possible – outlined clearly at enrolment.
- Primary have 3 x 45 minute “live” lessons.
- Each lesson has attendance – attendance alerts are sent to parents via SMS.

What should online lessons be like at DECV? Staff consultation

In addition to the survey, staff were consulted about the future direction of online lessons at DECV at a staff meeting 30 May 2018. Unlike the survey, this meeting involved both staff who do and **do not** currently run online lessons. Furthermore, relevant teams were consulted – the Teaching and Learning Team, Student Coordination, Health Promoting Schools and DECV Online.

The working party agreed to focus on these questions:

- Should all subjects (or primary year levels) provide online lessons?
- Should student attendance be required?

Staff meeting – 30 May 2018

At the meeting, staff were provided with key findings from the staff survey and then discussed the above questions. Discussion primarily took place within tables, but there was also some whole-room discussion. Staff noted their thoughts on paper. These were collated and circulated to staff after the meeting. *See Appendix 1.*

Summary of findings:

- There is significant support among staff for the proposal that every subject (or primary year level) should provide online lessons.
- Staff were divided about what this should involve.
 - Tables were evenly split about whether lessons should be provided regularly (weekly or fortnightly) in every subject.
 - Tables were also split when asked whether student attendance should be required.

- Even those who support an attendance requirement indicated that there would be students who could not attend for legitimate reasons, that these students must be catered for and not disadvantaged.
- *See further details in Appendix 1.*

Team consultation

Teaching and Learning Team, Student Coordination, Health Promoting Schools and DECV Online were consulted, with positions mirroring those at the staff meeting. There was consistent support for the provision of synchronous online learning opportunities in all subjects / year levels. However, the teams were not unanimous on the form this should take and in particular the question of whether there should be a requirement for students to attend. There was consistent agreement about the need for students to have *asynchronous* alternatives that allow full participation in learning programs.

The Health Promoting Schools group had a particularly in-depth discussion around wellbeing and the social / emotional needs of students in the context of synchronous online learning. The group agreed that online lessons present particular challenges for a significant proportion of DECV students, particularly those enrolled under the social / emotional category. This point had also been made at the staff meeting in the context of a discussion around low student attendance at online lessons. Many staff were understanding of the challenges student might face in attending online lessons, particularly students experiencing social anxiety.

Despite accepting that some students would be unable to attend online lessons for these reasons, the HPS group agreed that it should be an aim to have these students attend online lessons because of potential benefits. They reasoned that:

- It is in the long-term interest of students to develop capabilities to interact with peers and teachers synchronously.
- That greater connectedness to school and a sense of belonging can be fostered through synchronous opportunities, supporting student wellbeing.
- That synchronous participation has positive implications for Pathways and Transitions, potentially improving prospects of students returning to a face-to-face setting.
- That steps can be taken to create a safe synchronous environment for students. Eg:
 - Explicit social / emotional learning activities.
 - Involving students in decisions about what form and level of participation they are comfortable with.

Student and parent consultation

The working party recognised the importance of the perspectives of students and parents in deciding how best to approach online lessons.

Student coordinators and leadership report an increasing number of inquiries from parents and students about online lessons. Specifically, it has become more common for parents to inquire as to why some subjects provide online lessons and others don't. Furthermore, the 2017 Parent Opinion Survey contained a number of specific comments relating to positive views on online lessons. Here is a sample:

- *"I would really like some more online classes to be conducted, which would help in my child feeling connected to the school."*

- “There needs to be a chat room that engages teachers and students [student interaction is neglected]”
- “For my child, being part of a interactive lesson without the intimidation of a classroom was a perfect mix.”

Under the ‘School Connectedness’ section of the survey, parents responded to the statement “My child feels accepted by other students at school”. Only 44% gave a positive response, with 51% neutral and 4% negative. This was in contrast to many other statements with higher positive response rates. This high neutral response rate could possibly be interpreted as there being a lack of connectedness between students at DECV, or at least that parents perceive this to be the case.

There is a need for further consultation, involving students and parents. The working party has agreed that:

- As there will be other consultation taking place as part of the review processes this year, that this needs to be coordinated. Eg. That sending parents and students many separate surveys should be avoided.
- However, certain forms of consultation should still take place that target online lessons specifically. For example:
 - A session has been allocated to discussing online lessons at the Student Roundtable day being coordinated by Luke Jackson on 31 July.
 - A session involving parent consultation is planned for Connect With Distance Day on 1 August.
 - It’s important that a range of perspectives are heard. Students and/or parents of students who were involved in the SMAPs process in Semester 1 will be consulted to ensure not only the perspectives of engaged students are considered. The exact format of this consultation is yet to be determined.

A note on research

There is limited research available *specifically about online / virtual schooling in K-12 settings* – that available is typically from North America, often at tertiary level.

Martin Jorgensen, John Bartley, Bill Simmalavong and Katrin Pierce have recently undertaken a literature review of research into virtual / online learning (including synchronous and asynchronous).

Available information suggests that a ‘blended’ model of learning is most effective as opposed to synchronous online, asynchronous online or face-to-face learning alone. However, each approach has its own advantages.

Here is small excerpt from the review:

Synchronous technologies are seen to add a human feel or real-life experience to the online experience... Literature on synchronous instruction indicates this modality has a positive impact on online student learning because of the similarity in the interactions found in face-to-face instruction such as text messaging, chat, and real-time audio or video conferencing (Murphy and Laferrière 2007; Park and Bonk 2007; Teng, Chen, and Leo 2012). Online synchronous discussion builds a sense of social presence and a heightened sense of involvement and participation while providing immediate ongoing feedback (Chen et al. 2005). Ideally, online courses should include both asynchronous and synchronous learning

opportunities based on the instructional goals of the course (Lowenthal, Dunlap, & Snelson, C. 2017).

At the time of writing, the literature review was being finalised. John Bartley or Martin Jorgensen can be contacted regarding the final copy of this review.

Further to the above review, a 2013 study by Luke Jackson, involving DECV teachers and students, provides evidence of the benefits of greater “social presence” (together with “teaching” and “cognitive” presence) in courses at DECV, with students together forming a productive learning community. The study observed that increased student connectedness was fostered through opportunities for student interaction. Teachers reported that students’ learning and ideas had improved as a result of interacting with their peers.

It was observed that synchronous online communication was one valid way of achieving a sense of social presence, the others being asynchronous communications (forums, blogs, email, and other collaborative tools) and face-to-face sessions, with the most successful classes incorporating a mixture of these.

A copy of Luke Jackson’s paper can be found at: S:\Admin\Teaching and Learning Team\Online Lesson Working Party\Misc documents.

Challenges

A number of challenges to the provision of online lessons were identified through the survey, staff meeting and other consultation.

These will be discussed under the recommendations section below.

Recommendations

The working party recommends the following:

- All courses will provide online synchronous learning opportunities using approved software.
 - Exactly what form this takes should be catered to subject, year level and student cohort.
 - Although the working party focussed on the current use of Adobe Connect to run online lessons, it’s possible the technology being used will change in future and alternatives should be considered by the school as appropriate.
 - It is recommended that a timeframe for all courses to provide online synchronous opportunities be considered as part of the School Review this year.
- Online lessons should be planned as part of a learning sequence and not be a supplementary “add-on” or treated in isolation.
 - This should be considered as part of course development processes.
 - *Incentives* for students to attend online lessons should be considered. I.e. Participation in online lessons can replace (not add to) certain submission tasks / asynchronous work.
 - Online lessons need to be considered towards student participation at DECV, rather than relying solely on submissions.
 - To achieve the above, Learning Specialist – Synchronous Online Learning should work with developers and teaching teams in coordination with TLCs and Learning Specialist – Asynchronous.

- Asynchronous equivalents to online lessons must be available – there will always be some students who cannot attend synchronously.
 - These need to be more than just providing students with the recording of the lesson.
 - Possible strategies were discussed at the 30 May staff meeting. **See Appendix 2.**
- It is recommended that a trial be conducted in 2019 involving timetabled online lessons across a particular group of students.
 - 7-10 students most appropriate for timetabling reasons.
 - Clear measures of outcomes would need to be established at the beginning of the trial.
 - Results of this trial would provide evidence towards whether a ‘timetabled’ approach to online lessons should be considered more broadly going forward.
- A consistent process should be established for recording online lesson attendance.
- Parent and student consultation is needed relating to our approach to online lessons.
 - To take place through various means.
 - Needs to be coordinated with other consultation taking place as part of School Review. B. New to take to Education Committee.
 - Learning Specialist – Synchronous to pursue specific consultation in Semester 2, 2018, as outlined under ‘*Student and parent consultation*’.
- Learning Specialist – Synchronous will continue to provide targeted one-on-one support and work with teaching teams over the course of Semester 2.
 - This will involve working with colleagues at various stages of synchronous technology use – from introducing online lessons into their courses for the first time to targeted work in line with P&D process. Eg. Differentiation in online lessons and improvements in pedagogy.
 - Clear goals and outcomes to be established, which will provide greater ‘internal’ evidence of the benefits of synchronous online learning.
- Greater opportunities should be provided for staff to observe effective use of synchronous online learning – leading by example.
 - Learning Specialist – Synchronous to coordinate, including own practice as well as other advanced users of synchronous technology around the school.
- Greater use of synchronous online learning will likely have implications for school policies, such as the *Student Engagement Policy*, *Student Wellbeing Policy* and the *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy*, and should be considered when these policies are reviewed.
- Consideration should be given to whether ‘online lesson’ is the most suitable term to use and whether there needs to be consistency. F-6 currently use the term ‘online class’.

Recommendations relating to specific challenges raised

Affecting Staff

- Online lessons being (or being perceived to be) additional to regular work allotment / “marking”.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - Build online lessons (or other synchronous online opportunities) into courses. It is recommended that there is a more consistent approach to doing this as part of course development processes.

- Learning Specialist – Synchronous Online Learning to work with course developers and teaching teams to achieve this, in coordination with TLCs and Learning Specialist – *Asynchronous*.
 - There is potential for a reduction in marking by more students participating in synchronous learning. I.e. By negating the need to students to complete particular tasks if they *participate* in online lessons.
- Low attendance meaning that running lessons is not an effective use of teacher time.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - A range of strategies were identified in the staff meeting. **See Appendix 2.**
 - Learning Specialist – Synchronous to work with teams to introduce strategies to improve attendance (already occurring with some teams).
- Concerns about workload issues if greater adoption of and student participation in online lessons. Eg:
 - What is the maximum staff to student ratio?
 - Workload differences depending if only one teacher per subject or many.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - This should be considered by leadership as part of School Review process.
 - Information from other AADES schools indicates a variety of staff-to-student ratios. Further discussion should take place around this, including consideration of the context of each school.
- Noise level concerns.
 - Concerns raised both in terms of those running lessons being noisy and those surrounding them being noisy while they are trying to present.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - In the short term, there is room for practical measures such staff discussion on the topic, to raise awareness and consideration of noise levels while colleagues are running lessons nearby.
 - Staff should be encouraged to use Comms rooms (two in corridor to East Wing, one in VCE) to run online lessons where possible.
 - Having “one ear uncovered” when using headsets has been suggested to improve awareness of voice loudness when presenting lessons.
 - As part of planned redevelopment of DECV work spaces, soundproof spaces for synchronous teaching and learning should be incorporated.

Affecting Students

- Technical challenges facing students. These include:
 - Access to reliable internet, devices, microphones.
 - Technical difficulties faced by students.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - Practical measures can be taken, such as putting a simple, affordable headset on the Resource List.
 - Some other distance education schools provide students with or subsidise the hire of equipment and internet connections. Longer term, DECV should consider possibilities of doing so.
 - There needs to be a clear process for who supports students with technical difficulties related to synchronous online learning. Eg. Should teachers troubleshoot basic technical difficulties? Should there be an IT ‘helpdesk’?

- Potential implications for students who experience anxiety.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - All students should be encouraged to attend online lessons (or other synchronous online learning opportunities). Rather than excluding students due to anxiety, efforts should focus on strategies to develop a safe and inclusive classrooms and to accept a variety of forms and levels of participation in online lessons, as suited to individual students.
 - As noted earlier, synchronous online learning has the potential to have positive effects on prospects of greater face-to-face participation at DECV or if transitioning to another educational setting.
 - Nevertheless, there will be students who simply cannot attend online lessons (or other synchronous online learning opportunities). As already noted, there needs to be equivalent asynchronous opportunities.

Affecting both staff and students

- Lesson scheduling/timetabling.
 - School-based students (*mainly* an issue at 11-12) – difficulty finding time when all students are available.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - To best cater for this cohort, options to run lessons before school hours or in the afternoon / evening should be investigated. A small proportion of teachers, mainly at VCE, currently run lessons in the afternoon / evening.
 - If the wider adoption of this was to be considered, industrial options should be explored as part of School Review. For example, the opportunity for immediate time in lieu. One such scenario could be a teacher providing a lesson in the evening and then having the equivalent time in lieu available during following mornings.
- Students living in different timezones.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - With increasing adoption of online lessons, there is potential to run lessons at different times of the day / week, particularly where a subject has numerous teachers.
 - Nevertheless, there will always be some students who cannot participate due to timezone differences. As with other students who cannot participate, these students need access to equivalent asynchronous opportunities.
- Students working in different levels to chronological age – implications for scheduling.
 - Particularly likely in Maths.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - These students need to be considered when scheduling online lessons – to not only consider possible clashes with subjects in same year level, but between levels.
 - A more coordinated timetable across the school could assist with this.
- Concerns that a ‘one size fits all’ model will not allow for the unique challenges/needs in different subjects, year levels and cohorts to be met.
 - **Recommendation:**
 - Although there should be broadly consistent pedagogical practices across the school, the precise approach to synchronous online learning should be

determined by that subject or year level. I.e. In terms of the content and structure or synchronous online learning within the subject.

- Concerns that DECV's internet connection will not have sufficient bandwidth to cater for increased adoption of online lessons.
 - **Recommendation:**
 - Technical team to monitor and provide advice to Executive as appropriate.

Appendix 1: Staff meeting 30 May 2018 – synthesised table notes on key questions

There were 15 tables at the staff meeting. Each table was asked to complete one sheet of paper as a group. 18 sheets were handed up after the meeting. 1 individual completed a sheet and submitted after meeting.

Staff were asked to discuss the following three questions.

1. Should online lessons be part of every course at DECV? Yes or No?

If no, please explain why. If yes, what would be needed to facilitate this?

19 sheets answered this question.

12 sheets said 'Yes'.

4 sheets said 'No'.

3 were divided or said it 'depends'.

Points made by 'Yes' sheets:

- Need more info about best way to implement to attract numbers.
 - o After hours lessons work well for senior/school-based students.
- Need to make sure lessons are designed to 'value add' enough to warrant teacher time.
 - o Room to reduce other tasks in course (save time), but likely still needs to be asynchronous alternatives for those who can't attend – this will still take time to prepare/monitor.
 - o Need to avoid 'double up' – no net impact on time.
- Need for consistent approach, although appropriate to vary between sub schools.
 - o One primary comment indicated that they should be provided but not embedded in courses – need to be flexible.
 - o Shift in way lessons are viewed – are they supplementary or core part of course? Likely to get better attendance if attendance is expected.
- Suggestion to incorporate into course development processes – standardised.
 - o Provisions for existing courses.
 - o Consideration of subjects with single teacher or few.
- Staff need to be supported with training – pedagogical and technical.
- Practical improvements like noise-mitigation at DECV and spaces for running lessons are necessary.
- Technical considerations? Student hardware adequate? Are we using the best software?

Points made by 'No' sheets:

- Should depend on requirements of subject, year level, cohort, etc. Not always most suitable activity.
- Benefits of online lessons can be achieved through asynchronous tasks – online lessons are just one tool. We should be focussing on pedagogy, not tools. Need for flexibility.
- One group commented that only teachers who intrinsically want to run lessons should have to.

Points made by divided sheets:

- Possibility for time allocation to run online lessons.

- One group commented that school-based students don't require engagement, whereas DECV-based students might.
- Not *all* students learn best from synchronous lessons (some prefer written or other asynchronous).

2. Should all subjects that run online lessons do so regularly? I.e. Weekly or fortnightly? **Yes or No?**

If no, please explain why. If yes, what would be needed to facilitate this?

18 sheets answered this question.

8 answered 'Yes'.

8 answered 'No'.

1 'depends'.

1 unclear position.

Points made by 'Yes' sheets:

- Helps build confidence and connectedness.
 - o Consider options for social/emotional, anxious students. Eg. Small group work in breakout rooms, being allowed to just 'observe', etc.
- Could improve attendance.
- To facilitate, need consistency within sub school and within teams, but potentially different between sub schools.
 - o One table felt that all courses should offer regular lessons, but exactly how regular should be up to teaching team.
- Need for long-term, 'big picture' plan and targets. Eg. One-year commitment – have a purpose.

Points made by 'No' sheets:

- Most 'No' responses indicated the frequency should depend on needs of particular subject/year level/cohort and reasons for running lesson.
- One group focussed on challenges such as lack of time, low attendance, etc.

Other:

"Attendance accountability. In "Mainstream" attendance recorded and parental/medical excuses accepted for non attendance. What processes here at DECV?"

3. Should all students be required to attend online lessons (if they're provided)? **Yes or No?**

If no, please explain why. If yes, what would be needed to facilitate this?

14 sheets answered this question.

5 'Yes'.

5 'No'.

2 divided groups.

2 papers listed challenges/questions, but took no position.

Points made by 'Yes' sheets:

- **All indicated the need for some students to be exempt (need to opt out).**

- Eg. Social/emotional, medical, sport students, students in different timezones, etc.
- Need to discuss with teacher, complete alternative tasks.
- Require attendance could possibly help improve student phobias.

Points made by 'No' sheets:

- Potentially disadvantage students who are unable to attend.
- Lessons/online interaction can be threatening to social/emotional students.
- Can achieve same results with asynchronous tasks.
- Not flexible learning – lack of student choice, differentiation.
- Lack of data about impacts of online lessons on learning and engagement.
- One group said that if students could attend lessons regularly they should be in a mainstream school!

Challenges/questions included:

- What would attendance requirements be exactly? Eg. How many lessons need to be attended, how much, etc.
- What are the consequences of no attendance?

Appendix 2: Staff meeting 30 May 2018 – synthesised table notes for online lesson participation strategies

Online lesson challenge 1: Low attendance

Approximately half of the tables at the staff meeting were asked to discuss the issue of low attendance at online lessons. Some staff had previously identified this (through the staff survey and other communication) as a reason they did not run lessons, or a concern even if they did. Groups discussed reasons for low attendance (left column) and strategies to address this (right column).

Note: Numbers in brackets indicate how many sheets of paper made that point.

Reasons	Strategies
<p>9 sheets of paper filled in giving reasons for this challenge.</p> <p><i>Mainly affecting 11-12</i></p> <p>Timetable clashes/scheduling difficulties (8):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based students – difficulty finding times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>One comment specifically pointed out that afternoon meetings have made this more of a challenge.</i> • Sport, part-time jobs, other commitments. <p><i>Affecting students of all levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student anxiety, “social/emotional” issues. (5) • Time zone differences. (4) • Technical difficulties. (5) Eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inadequate internet connection (students). (3) ○ Flaws with Adobe Connect. (1) ○ Lack of confidence with technology in live environment. (1) ○ School firewalls. (1) • Notion that it’s supplementary, therefore don’t have to attend. (3) • Flaws in teacher communication with students. (3) Eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unclear announcements. (1) ○ Poor communication of expectations. (1) ○ “Students unaware” – reason not specified. (1) • Students who are behind think they can’t participate/not worthwhile. (3) 	<p>9 sheets of paper filled in giving strategies for this challenge.</p> <p>Incentives to attend (4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eg. Replace written work, get ‘credit’. <p>Improve communication about online lessons (4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy parents into communication about upcoming lessons. (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tech improvement to allow easy mass emailing of parents/supervisors as well as students. (1) • Use of SMS as well as emails/announcements. (1) • Give parents LMS access. (1) • Examine student utilisation of different communication methods. Eg. How students access (or don’t access) announcements. (1) <p>Need for optimal lesson timing. Eg. Before or after school for VCE. (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer lessons more than once / at different times. (2) • Obtain consensus on most appropriate time for most students. (1) <p>Lesson design/delivery (3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are interactive and engaging. (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>More doing</u> by students. (1) • Preparatory activities. Eg. Students bring something to lesson. (1) • Use breakout rooms. (1) • Vary lesson focus/activities.(1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery/content of lessons not engaging. (2) Eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Length. (1) ○ “Boring”. (1) • Students possibly don’t see attending as worthwhile. (2) • Different teachers present lessons – don’t always have relationship with teacher presenting. (1) • Young mums – time clashes/commitments. (1) • “Disengaged” supervisors. (1) 	<p>Formalise recognition of participation – need for consistency. (2)</p> <p>Make online lessons mandatory. (2)</p> <p>Make lessons a core part of learning program. (1)</p> <p>Stricter enrolment guidelines. (1)</p> <p>Assess the challenges for students who do not want to attend lessons. (1)</p> <p>Investigate alternative software to Adobe Connect. (1)</p> <p>More collaboration with schools. Eg. School-based students excused from classes. (1)</p> <p>Students receive timetable with online lesson times. (1)</p>
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Online lesson challenge 2: Participation of students who don’t attend lessons

One issue raised in the staff survey was that although students are provided with recordings of online lessons, many don’t access these. Approximately half of the tables at the meeting were asked to discuss this. Staff were asked to identify reasons for students not accessing the recordings in the left column. In the right column, staff were asked to note strategies to address this, or alternatively, to explain why they believe it does not need to be addressed. All tables chose to comment on strategies.

Note: Numbers in brackets indicate how many sheets of paper made that point.

Reasons	Strategies
<p>7 sheets of paper filled in giving reasons for this challenge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recordings of lessons are too long for students to engage with. (3) • Students not aware of lesson recording (3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don’t read announcements. (1) ○ Too many emails – don’t open. (1) ○ Location of recording link not optimal. (1) • Technical issues (3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet speed. (1) ○ Internet access/data limitations. (1) ○ Students lacking technical skills. (1) • Watching recordings is passive – no participation. (2) 	<p>7 sheets of paper filled in giving strategies for this challenge.</p> <p>Specifically about recordings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have required questions/tasks to do using recording. (3) • Provide incentives. (2) • Better and more consistent approach to how online lesson recordings are shared with students. (2) • Use screencasts instead. (2) • Edit recordings? – reduced time/targeted. (1) • Take recording into account when running lesson. (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eg. Pause at appropriate times or directly address students watching recording. • Need for closer look at data. Eg. Students who watch recordings once or twice then stop. (1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether recording is useful depends on purpose of lesson. (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eg. If for Teaching and Learning it could be useful as recording, if main purpose of lesson is Social, not useful. • Students don't see the benefit of watching recording. Not seen as necessary. (2) • Currently most courses don't log views so we don't know how many students are viewing. (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify expectations / intentions around viewing recordings. (1) <p>Relating to online lessons more broadly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better pedagogy in lessons – need to be more engaging. (4) Eg. GANAG, student-centred. • More consistency in delivery of lessons across school. (2) • Make lessons shorter. (1) • Share best practice lessons in teaching teams/across LAs. (1) • Address technical issues (1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eg. Instructions for students about browser updates. • Reduce total number of emails sent to students (so they're more likely to read emails). (1) • Involve/support parents. (1)
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