

Exploring online learning and how our learners can adapt and still make progress

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Executive summary

In this case study I will be exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and how one of our learners accessed their academic lessons via Teams. I will focus on how the learner's attention was maintained, the learning that took place and discuss if progress was made. I will then also discuss the affects that his long-term shielding had on his return to school and my own classroom teaching.

Introduction

The subject of this case study is a male student who is 18 years old. He has been attending BeyondAutism schools since he was 9 years old. He has a diagnosis of autism. He is in Sixth Form, and he is based at our South Thames college provision in Wandsworth. He is one of our advanced learners and accesses group regularly throughout his school days. He is also very sociable. During the lockdown this pupil was shielding and therefore was not able to access school in person. Upon speaking with his parents and supervisor, it was important that he did not miss out on his academic learning as well as wanting to give him structure to his day whilst he was at home. In this case study I will answer if online learning was successful and if this could be an option in the future if our learners.

Method

Upon discussions with the pupil's team, we decided to offer him access to academic lessons via Teams. This would also facilitate his AQA certification outcomes being met as he could still access the content of the lesson. Resources would be sent the week before, so he had everything he needed for the lesson. Due to online safety and the school's safeguarding policy, the pupil's parent(s) would also attend the lessons.

The lesson would run as normal, and it would run as if he was sat in the lesson with his peers. He attended English and PSHE groups and had 1:1 maths lessons online. To keep enable him to maintain his focus and ensure that his learning was active, I would ask him more questions than normal. I also allowed him extra time at the beginning to talk to me about any topic of his choice, and time at the end as this is a skill that he is also working on at school. This technique helped support his focus in the lesson and gave him access to demonstrate his social skills.

I found that keeping the lesson structure and timings as close to his routine as possible was beneficial. He was able to access the screen and all resources and could hear me clearly. Having his parent next to him enabled him to keep on task. Having a clear workspace was also something that needed to be put in place, so he was unable to get distracted. The group was a maximum of 25 minutes, in contrast to his usual 60 minute lessons.

Results

During the latest lockdown the Department of Education set guidance for compulsory remote learning to all students that could access it. The guidance stated that 'Remote education that schools provide should be equivalent in length to the teaching your child would normally get in school'. The guidance also said that this should include recorded or live teaching time, with time for students to complete activities independently.

For learners with special educational needs (SEN) the guidance was set as a minimum of five hours a day with the mixture of online and home learning if this is accessible to the learner. The pupil discussed in this case study would attend live registration, a live academic lesson and a live end of day group. This would make up of 90 minutes live learning and then he would follow his timetable of work set for him for the rest of the day. The work would be checked in the end of day group, and this supported government guidance as he was able to access his home learning in this way.

During home learning he made steady progress. This was measured by him achieving IEP targets and him achieving his AQA certifications for the term. He also overcame a huge barrier by accessing the lesson online without being able to speak or socialise with his peers. This was a big break in routine and an uneasy time for him as there was no certain return date to school. Overall, the pupil did an amazing job and overcame huge barriers and successfully completed all

targets set out for him during this period at home. He has shown great resilience and has proved that online learning can be successful for some learners with SEN. This is useful information that we can take forward if for any reason a learner needs to stay at home, we can provide an online service to their learning if applicable.

Discussion

Teaching through Microsoft Teams was very new to me as a teacher and as a school. It proved to be successful at this time and was easy to organise and run. Focus within lessons was a barrier at the beginning but once classroom rules were continuously enforced this soon stopped and full focus throughout the lesson was demonstrated. This has been a very challenging time for all learners and staff but being able to give one of our learners a routine whilst at home really supported his learning and supported his smooth transition back to school. This meant he lost minimal skills and could continue straight back into school life and routine.

References

www.gov.uk 15.02.2021 – Date accessed
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