Beth Caldwell and Neenaz Ichaporia

Supporting and mentoring teachers remotely

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Aims

• explore the challenges of managing a remote teaching team
• consider practical strategies for maintaining cohesion, motivation and quality assurance
• identify ways of promoting remote teacher development
Challenges
Challenges

What are the top challenges of managing a remote teaching team?

1. Lower productivity, as a result of distractions at home.
2. Teachers feeling cut-off / isolated from the team.
3. Coordinating with colleagues with different working hours.
4. Replacing the face-to-face communication with electronic means.
5. Teachers have difficulty ‘switching off’, blurring of work and time off, due to flexible hours.
6. Teachers feel a lack of career opportunities or growth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Challenging</th>
<th>Not Challenging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty 'switching off'</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of isolation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating with colleagues with different shifts</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of growth</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distractions at home</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating electronically</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Solutions: Building a ‘remote first’ culture
Communicate frequently, using multiple channels

Schedule regular ‘catch-ups’ to avoid calling only when something goes wrong.

Use video-conferencing, social media, phone calls and other tools, in addition to email.

Try out various technological tools and monitor their effectiveness for your team.
Communication and collaboration tools used

- Video conference:
  - Zoom
  - Adobe Connect

- File sharing:
  - SharePoint
  - OneDrive
  - Dropbox

- Social:
  - WhatsApp
  - Facebook

- Surveys and quizzes:
  - SurveyMonkey
  - Forms
  - Kahoot!

- Email:
  - Outlook

- Screencasting:
  - ScreenCast-O-Matic
  - Loom

- Scheduling:
  - Doodle
  - Calendar

- Newsletters:
  - Canva

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How useful have you found the following resources?

- **ZOOM VIDEO-CONFERENCE**: 19
- **WHATSAPP TEACHERS’ GROUP**: 17
- **WEEKLY PROJECT ROUND-UP EMAILS**: 16
- **TEACHERS’ CAFÉ (FACEBOOK GROUP)**: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Not so useful</th>
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<td>ZOOM VIDEO-CONFERENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHATSAPP TEACHERS’ GROUP</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEACHERS’ CAFÉ (FACEBOOK GROUP)</td>
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For organizations, the single biggest difference between remote and physical teams is the greater dependence on writing to establish the permanence and portability of organizational culture, norms and habits.

- Inventiva, 2018
Invest in relationship building and create a community for your team

‘Try to connect with colleagues often even if it is virtually or a phone call.’

‘Look for other interests outside work and connect with colleagues 1-to-1 e.g. films, books etc.’

‘Build rapport with and stay in touch with colleagues. Now with WhatsApp it's much easier.’

‘Consciously "hang out" with colleagues even if only over video calls.’
Provide training and guidelines on remote working

- Remote working guidelines
tips on work environment, equipment, workstation layout, health and safety, time management, remote teaching

- Help videos (via screencasting)
for logging into systems remotely, website access and accessing technical support

- Easy Step Guides
for key areas like using new systems, completing reimbursement claims etc.

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Remember...

- Communicate frequently, using multiple channels.
- Write down, or record, most information.
- Invest in relationship building and create a community for your team.
- Provide training and guidelines on remote teaching and working from home.
- Actively promote remote teacher development.

‘I dress like I would to an office.’

‘Use opportunities available to build a connection with different team members.’

‘Set up a home-office to focus and avoid distractions. I keep my family informed about when I’m available and when I’m not.’

‘Switch off notifications on phone/computer so you don’t get pulled back after hours.’

‘Though working remotely gives flexibility, structure the day with a regular routine in order to maximise productivity.’
Teacher development
“I have discovered you need to be accountable and responsible, pro-active about learning more about the technology, and following up with everyone involved. You need to collaborate and you have to be prepared for the new dimensions that will be added as a result of the difference in the teaching medium.”

Teaching Skills + Soft Skills
Actively promote remote teacher development

• Design a remotely-delivered In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT) programme, synchronous and asynchronous

• Conduct remote teacher induction and training
  o Blended Learning Teacher Training Scheme: 10-week intensive training included e-moderating course, live INSETT sessions, peer observation of online classes, teaching practice, remote working support, and mentoring

• Regularly highlight professional development opportunities

• Agree on remote teacher observation procedures

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What are specific classroom challenges?

**Perceived**
- Dealing with tech. issues
- Motivating learners
- Managing interaction
- Rapport with learners

**Actual**
- Dealing with tech. issues
- Motivating learners
- Managing interaction
- Dealing with poor performance
- Speaking/pronunciation activities
What resources did our teachers find most useful to help them develop? (highest rated first)

- Formal Course
- People
- Videos
- Articles / Blogs
- Social Networking
- Resource books
- MOOCs
CPD: Some useful resources

Books
- ‘Teaching Online’ (Hockly/Clandfield)
- ‘Teaching Online: A Practical Guide’ (Ko)
- ‘Digital Tools for Teachers’ (Peachey)

Articles/Blogs
- teachingenglish.org.uk
- http://www.emoderationskills.com
- https://nikpeachey.blogspot.co.uk
- http://www.designingforlearning.info

Videos
- Conference & webinar recordings (e.g. Teaching English, OLLREN, IATEFL)
- Recordings of others’ classes
- INSETT recordings
- Zoom help guides
CPD: Soft skills

What soft skills did our teachers need to develop in order to work online successfully?

- technical skills
- adaptability
- interpersonal skills
- self-motivation
- time management
CPD: Soft skills

- technical skills
- adaptability
- interpersonal skills
- self-motivation
- time management
Advice from our teachers

“Start your journey as a learner to truly appreciate the challenges your learners will face.”

“Be focused, organised, flexible and professional.”

“Try and find parallels with your current teaching style and online modes... There is a counterpart or equivalent to almost every aspect of classroom teaching online as well. Occasionally better.”

“Manage time well”

“Watch as many lesson recordings as possible (yours or another teachers) to understand ways to make your teaching more effective.”
Professional growth through teaching online

More opportunities and choice

• “...can shape education for the future.”
• “...better access to a lot more students.”
• “...better/ diverse working opportunities.”

Better work skills

• “...become more organised, time-management has improved.”
• “...built rapport with the people I work despite living in a different city.”
• “...I am adaptable and prepared to learn in different ways anywhere.”

Deeper understanding of learners

• “...helped me understand the concept of being in a community as a teacher as well as a learner and how important it is.”
CPD Toolkit

Classroom Skills Toolkit
- Managing Technology
- Motivating learners
- Managing online interaction
- Dealing with poor performance
- Speaking/pronunciation activities

Soft Skills Toolkit
- Time management
- Adaptability
- Self-motivation
- Technical skills
- Interpersonal skills

Formal (Paid) Courses
- People
- Videos
- Articles / Blogs
- Social Networking
- Books
- MOOCs
Thank you