

Expansive Notes: Our best reads for teachers (remote and homeschooling!)

At a time when teachers are working remotely from their pupils, and maybe even having to homeschool their own children simultaneously, many will be wondering how best to use this time and maximise its opportunities. With exams cancelled and much uncertainty, teachers can guide children and young people in ways that will make a real difference to their lives. Here are our thoughts on some ideas we have collated from around the web:

- 1) Rather than ticking over with subject-based worksheets, why not use this chance to focus on a weekly topic to spark an appetite for ‘finding out’ in pupils of all ages. [Alex Quigley](#) has suggestions on his home-school page that will build each week. This week he has been supplementing the school’s work with art-themed homeschool. In my house we’ve taken on a ‘travel’ theme for our daily homeschool, and learn about aspects of each country we visit that speak to parts of the curriculum we want to explore.
- 2) From experience this week, web chat meetings can be chaos. I’ve witnessed this as a parent and a student. This may improve as hosts learn to find the mute button (!) but, until then, [safeguardingschools](#) consultant Andrew Hall suggests pre-recorded webinars would serve the purpose better. He also raises the question of which pupils may be left behind, if access to broadband technology, a spare computer, and undisturbed tech space becomes a requirement for learning.
- 3) Don’t forget the practical subjects! The [Design&Technology Association](#) has a series of helpful lesson plan resources – free at the moment to members, and available to non-members for a fee. You will need access to some materials, but some will be everyday objects found in the home. With online retailers still fulfilling orders, and technology that allows school to take online payments from parents, can your school or community of teachers find ways of bulk-purchasing and mailing out to pupils any unusual small bits of equipment they might need? Here are some [D&T activities](#) one school in Essex is suggesting for its K21 and KS2 children.
- 4) For educational technology, [EdTech](#) is a one-stop resource curating online learning resources on a daily basis.
- 5) Many teachers will be thinking about how they can help mitigate the detrimental effects of confinement upon children, particularly those who are vulnerable or do not have access to the outdoors at this time. For many young people, it might be that focusing on a healthy lifestyle is most important right now. An article published this month in The Lancet on [mitigating the effects of home confinement](#) is worth a read.
- 6) The National Gallery are using multiple social media platforms to make their collection of European art accessible at this time. My children were ‘visiting’ Venice yesterday for our day of homeschooling, and the [National Gallery’s Twitter thread](#) on painter Titian was timely. Titian painted the Virgin Mary with the Angel Gabriel in *Annunciation*, a painting displayed in Venice. We dropped by on what happened to be the church’s annual celebration of this event, which definitely brought our learning to life! The Gallery’s clever use of photos on a Twitter thread allows learners to take a virtual tour of the *Titian: Love, Desire, Death* exhibition. Check out the hashtag #MuseumFromHome

- 7) The [Chartered College of Teaching](#) is a site to bookmark for live updates on news, teaching resources, and wellbeing.
- 8) One of our favourite resources for bringing the outdoors in comes from the Scouts. See [#TheGreatIndoors](#) on social media. Activity *Dear Future Me* is a great idea for getting children of all ages to use their imaginations and empathise with their future selves. ‘Imagine your dream job ... write about what you did to get there’ is one idea that helps children to think through the steps that might be needed for success in any sphere of life. We can imagine how this might spark conversation and research about possibilities. How about taking this one step further and challenging children to set themselves a realistic timed goal that they can achieve from home?
- 9) UKEdChat has a ‘[CPD Bookcase](#)’ of suggested books for your teacher development. Its 8pm #UKEdChat Twitter chat can be useful for staying in touch with other professionals. Article [10 things that teachers can do when forced to work from home](#) is worth a read.
- 10) Finally, in all that you’re planning to teach, whether remotely or as a homeschool teacher, consider how you can infuse your plans with opportunities for children to develop their learning dispositions. At a time when mental and physical wellbeing is paramount, a lesson needs to deliver more than worksheets. Pick a learning habit and think about how your lesson will help learners grow in creative thinking, grit, or empathy. What about attention to detail, zest for learning, or collaboration (that will surely need some creative thinking at this time!). How can you incorporate the use of drafts and a goal of excellence in work that you set for pupils? My book with Bill Lucas [Zest for Learning](#) reminds teachers to think about good learning habits like ‘building relationships’, ‘embracing novel experiences’, and having a chance to ‘perform’ what you’ve learned. At home I’m trying to develop lifelong learners who want to find things out, do what they can’t yet do, and take pride in what they produce. When I’m planning late at night, thinking about how I can build in learning habits helps me remember why I’m doing this.

We plan to curate ideas like this regularly. To stay in touch, please follow @Pedagogy4Change on Twitter.

Stay well!