Twitter Thread by Jonathan Porter



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If we do go back to Zoom teaching, a few little things that helped me with my 6th form classes. A thread…

If you can, have a little chat before the ‘proper learning’ takes place. Goes some way to keeping the good vibes that make teaching so enjoyable.

I tend to use PowerPoint and share slides. Usually, one slide of explanation followed by one slide of practice. Keep it short and simple. Short tasks keep the pace of the lesson and keep kids on their toes.

The big challenge with remote learning is checks for understanding. How do I know they’re focussed? How do I know what they know?

Obviously, you’ve got the chat box, which is particularly good for one-sentence answers or letter answers to multiple choice or true/false statements on your slides.

You’ve also got the ‘cold-call’ using the mic. Just make sure you give students time to think about the answer: it’s quite intimidating when you know you’re being broadcast into people’s kitchens!

In school, I say ‘I should see 100% hands up’ when I ask a question. On Zoom, I’ve changed to ‘I should see a screen of little blue hands!’ Find that in the ‘manage participants’ bit.

Something that can also work quite well (with smallish groups) is a shared Google doc with a table. Put student names in one column. They write their answer in the other.

That way, you can pose questions and see the whole group writing answers in real time. It also puts them under a bit of pressure because they can see others writing.

It also gives you a break. In the first lockdown, I underestimated the intensity of Zoom teaching and started off with too much teacher talk. Make sure you stop for a sip of coffee.

Everyone loves a star chart (even my 6th formers). Very important that you're praising kids for their effort while maintaining high standards. We all like to know our hard work is being noticed.

Important to say – and I can't stress this enough – this is MUCH easier with small groups. When I teach groups of 30 on Zoom, I keep things very simple.

Hope that helps. Whatever you do, you're an absolute hero: Zoom teaching is a lot more difficult than people think it is!