



Office 365 Education in the Classroom

Power and flexibility for
students and teachers.




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Introduction.

According to an e-learning consultant with a major Microsoft partner, 'Office 365 ticks all the boxes.'

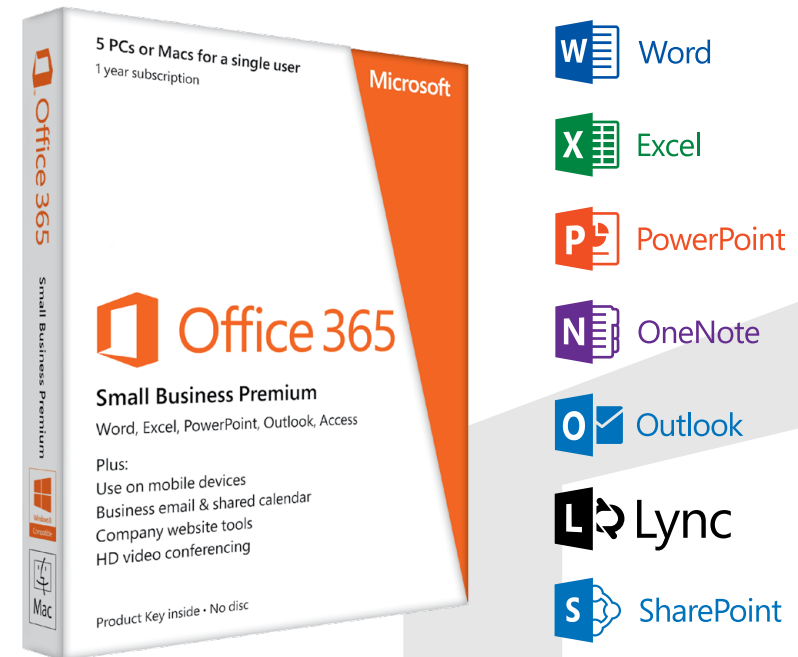
Of those ticked boxes, the most important is the classroom, the place where teacher and student meet and where learning takes place.

Hence this eBook, which concentrates almost exclusively on how Office 365 can help the teacher and the student in their day to day work. We look at a whole list of teaching and learning scenarios, describing some of the ways in which hard-working teachers might be dealing with them now and going on to show how one or more of the functions of Office 365 can make things easier and better.

Along the way, we tell many recognisable stories – the child at home with a long term illness, the student anxious about an exam, the one who falls ill in class, or is placed in isolation but needs to keep up with the work, and many more.

All, though, are covered by the words '**communication**' and '**collaboration**' – twin concepts which lie at the heart of any school's core mission. Learning, at its best, involves collaboration – student to teacher, teacher to student, student to student and, ideally, it's not confined within the walls of the classroom. Good collaboration, in turn, requires effective communication.

So if Office 365 can be said to do one thing, it is that it promotes collaboration and communication, freeing teachers and students to concentrate on learning in a way which can transform their achievement and their enjoyment of what is a shared mission.





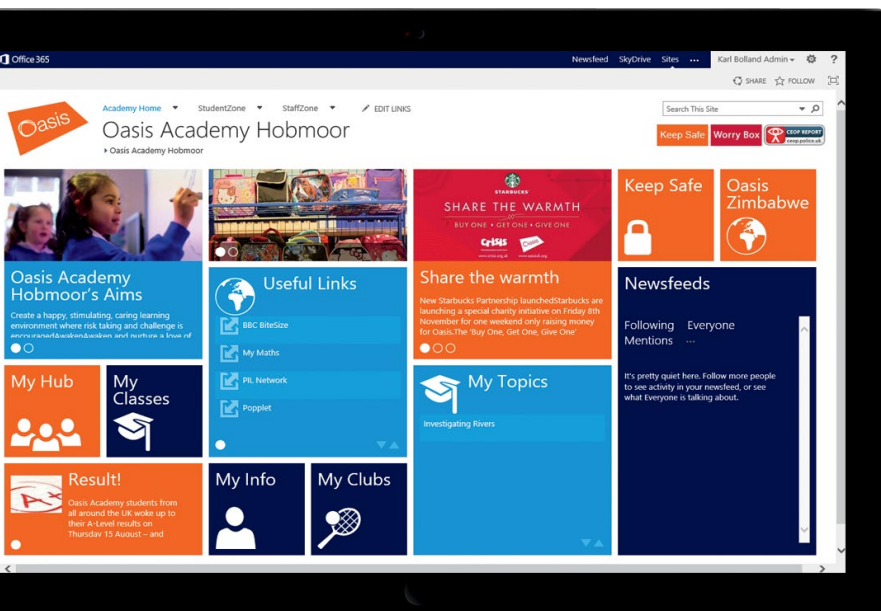
Chapter 1: SharePoint Online

Seamless sharing.
SharePoint in the classroom.

With Office 365, SharePoint 2013 becomes available to a much wider range of schools as 'SharePoint Online'. It gives them the means to push back the limits on learning, provide seamless home-school working and remove barriers between teacher and learner.

1.1 Opening the portal.

Schools make use of the key features of SharePoint Online in various ways. Often they choose to make a range of operations and facilities available through an easily navigated, attractively branded single sign-on front page – a 'portal' or 'gateway'. Where one school might want this to be a simple means of access to basic information for example on holidays, homework tasks and access to staff, another will develop their SharePoint Online portal to take on some of the attributes of a VLE or Learning Management System. SharePoint Online has the power and flexibility to respond to all these needs and more.



Crucially, because it's in the cloud, users can reach the portal at their permitted level with their own password with any device that will get them online – computer, tablet, or phone. For example there may be separate staff and student portals. All of that is for the school to decide.

Students love their SharePoint Online portal because it is cool and very 21st Century.

Leaders and administrators appreciate their SharePoint Online portal because it provides a valuable flow of data and information, making for more rapid and effective decision-making.

The impact at classroom level, however, which is what we're concerned with in this eBook, is less often highlighted. Here are some real examples, of SharePoint Online in action in the classroom.



1.2 Interactive spaces.

At the implementation stage, developers and teachers will work together to configure SharePoint Online according to the school's needs and preferences. They will deploy a hierarchy of bespoke sites, subsites and apps so that the least technologically minded teacher can teach smartly and creatively and with the freedom to add his or her own level of personalisation.

So, for example, the screenshot below shows that teacher Jo has used his class site to create a 'topic site' site – 'Rivers' – to support the work of his Year 6 class.

The screenshot shows a SharePoint Online site for 'Investigating Rivers' at Oasis Academy Hobmoor. The site features a navigation menu with 'Academy Home', 'StudentZone', and 'StaffZone'. A search bar is located at the top right. The main content area includes a large illustration of a person fishing in a river, with the word 'RIVERS' written in large blue letters. Below the illustration, there is a section titled 'In this project you will learn:' followed by a list of learning objectives:

- To use a range of geographical skills to investigate the physical features of rivers, including the water cycle, and to consider the impact these features might have on the landscape over time and in specific locations;
- To develop investigative fieldwork skills;
- To use ICT and other sources to find, record and present information;
- To respond to a stimulus in a creative way, developing skills in the expressive arts;
- To write poetry on a theme using descriptive and expressive vocabulary;
- To present a balanced argument, based on factual information.

Below the learning objectives, there is a 'Teacher Announcement - Look here to get started!!' section with a table of announcements:

✓ Title	Modified
Water Cycle Resources for today's lesson	19 November, 2013

There is also a section titled 'Our class work on rivers...' with a table of work items:

✓ Name	Modified	Modified By
Group work	04 November, 2013	Test Teacher1
Individual work	04 November, 2013	Test Teacher1
Teacher Resources	05 November, 2013	Test Teacher1

At the bottom right, there is a 'Rivers' gallery with a table of images:

Name	Picture Size	File Size	Modified
IMAG0282			
IMAG0284			
IMAG0285			

In his work on this topic, he has used several SharePoint Online apps to help encourage peer assessment, collaboration and sharing of work. He's also been able to track homework and set classroom work such as starter activities.

There are more details in these scenarios of how sites, subsites and SharePoint Online apps are used in the classroom.

Starter activities

The first few minutes of a lesson are important for setting a sense of purpose and engaging children straight away without fuss. It's far too easy for a teacher to become distracted at this point, when there may be administration to do, such as registration (in many secondary schools, a register is taken every lesson).

The current solution

Teacher has a worksheet ready on each desk, or a task on the whiteboard, which directs students to a textbook.

With SharePoint Online

Our teacher Jo uses the discussions app for starter activities which is labelled 'Express corner.' While Jo attends to 'housekeeping' tasks such as the register, students work and collaborate on topical questions posed in the app. Jo finds that by asking students to formulate their ideas online before a class discussion encourages whole-class engagement and develops critical thinking skills. It also ensures that less confident students are involved. Students are then asked to go back to their responses at the end of the lesson to see if opinions have changed.

1.3 No more forgotten homework.

Achieving a 100 percent on-time response to a homework task is somewhere between difficult and impossible. As a result hearing excuses and chasing up homework becomes a major distraction for teachers, eating into lesson time, affecting behaviour, damaging teacher/student relationships, and slowing the pace of learning.

Current solution

Homework diaries, paper or digital, with parental signatures and regular checks by SLT all help. All such measures are time-consuming in themselves, and some students still fall through the net.

With SharePoint Online

Students forgetting homework or missing deadlines is a thing of the past with the Task App. Labelled as the 'Homework Tracker,' it is used to set homework and remind students of when homework is due. Here's how one teacher uses it,

'As I walk round the class handing out homework sheets I have my laptop open, as the student records the due date, I do the same, but I record it in Office 365, Task App, with the dates the works was set and when it becomes due. To remove any problem of lost or forgotten sheets, I attach the file to the app, which is then promoted to my class site homepage so it's the first thing they see when they log in. Now when I collect the homework, no one tries to give me an excuse other than the straightforward 'Sorry, I didn't do it, I'll see you at lunch!'



1.4 Personalised guidance from the teacher.

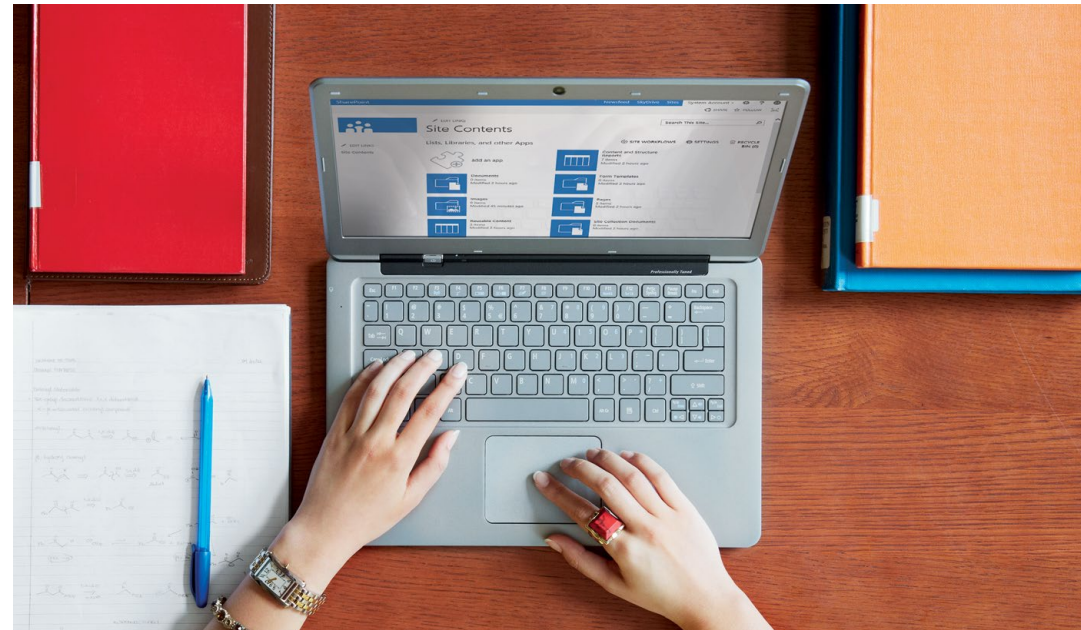
Keeping a class of up to thirty students moving forward, each at their best pace requires a very high degree of skill and a lot of hard work. The pressure becomes greater as a school uses technology to move towards seamless home-school learning.

Current solution

The teacher tries to keep a good overview of the class. She makes a stream of on-the-spot judgments, working with groups and individuals, setting new work, dealing with problems. She chooses resources appropriate to a range of abilities and tries not to leave any child struggling or with nothing to do. Keeping in touch with work at home, though, is difficult if not impossible.

With SharePoint Online

Jo uses the announcement app to provide a site called 'Teacher Guidance.' This is the place where Jo provides a student friendly lesson plan, attaching differentiated learning resources to cater for the different abilities in the class. Students can move onto different activities as and when they are finished without having to wait for the teacher to move the lesson forward.



1.5 Helping students with revision.

Your Year 11's have left for study leave. They are still arranging to come back and see you for revision, but their needs are all different, and with the best will in the world you don't have enough time to cover everything with everyone.

The traditional solution

You run as many sessions as you can, before, during and after school. You print out past papers, provide worksheets, send links to YouTube guides, recommend revision guides. But you know that what's missing is your personal guidance.

With SharePoint Online

With Office 365 and SharePoint Online you can create customised and personalised exam revision sites, so that your students are as fully supported as possible right up to the door of the exam room. This can be done by adding your lesson notes and any support material, including a PowerPoint if there is one, to your class site at the end of each lesson. Using the site calendar you can then make it easy for each student to be able to locate the lesson and support materials that covered the topic in question. They can look back over your notes and make a good attempt to follow your working.

Apps most popular for this type of site are:

Links – This lets you hyperlink any icon/picture to a recommended site or video.

Newsfeed – This app lets teachers post relevant videos, resources, and advice. If students follow the newsfeed they will be alerted every time the teacher updates the site with new content.

Discussions app – This is often referred to as 'Ask the Teacher' - this is an opportunity for students to ask questions to their teacher's outside of school hours. We are finding that students tend to respond to each others questions and help one another when they are stuck.

Calendars – Teachers can use calendars to organise after school revision sessions and attach course material.



1.6 Peer support.

You're collecting in homework, a student comes to you looking worried. She has a note from her Dad which says,

'I'm afraid Sophie has not done her homework. She tried all evening, and I tried to help her, but neither of us was able to do it. I think she tried to ask you for help at the end of school but she says you were busy with older pupils. That's a pity don't you think?'

You blush a bit at the mild rebuke, but you do recall being surrounded by anxious Year Elevens at the time when Sophie would be trying to see you.



Current solution

You apologise and explain that you have been so busy with all the other exams and revision at the moment. The best you can do is set up a lunchtime session and also set a time when you will be available to help. Even then you know you might not be able to make it. Then you find that three others, who have not brought notes, were really struggling with the work. On the other hand there are others who have done very well with the task. This is a real dilemma. Are the others all genuinely in trouble, like Sophie? Should you let her off and not the others? What you need is some way of encouraging the ones who are good at it to help the others.

Using Sites

In your class site you add a group discussion app. You make sure permissions are correct so that every student can start a discussion. You tell the class when setting homework that if they are stuck, the first thing they need to do is go on to this app, and ask for help on the topic they are stuck on. You also explain that you will monitor the area regularly and anyone who helps another student out will get a reward. After a week you check, and see the discussion is indeed being used. Occasionally someone just gives the answer to the question, rather than explaining how to answer it, so you carefully confirm that is not the idea behind it. Not every question gets an answer, so you still pick up the occasional students to work with, but the culture of helping each other is working well in your classes, with different key stages and abilities working together. You are now free to give more time to people who really need your help.

1.7 Project diaries.



Your Year 6 children really enjoy project work, on topics, which they have chosen in consultation with you. You allocate both some classwork and homework time to their projects, and the children have a good deal of freedom in how they do them. You aren't so much looking for the end result of the projects, as how they get there, and their journeys to the finish line. You want to be able to see their progress in terms of learning and of the softer skills of teamwork, collaboration and tenacity.

You can keep track of what they have done each day without having to collect anything in...

Current solution

You begin by getting students to keep a Word diary on the class computers to keep track of their progress. As most of them begin to start working on the project at home you realise that they now have two different diaries going on which will be in different orders and difficult to combine. Worse still, some aren't able to keep the diary at home as they don't have Word, or have a device that uses this software. You try paper diaries, but they get lost or become unreadable, and the main point of the project is in danger of being lost. It's really important that you keep a constant, tight overview of what they are recording.

Using Sites

The predefined 'blogs' template is exactly what you need to add a blog site to your class site. After giving students permission to access it, each begins to write a diary. Those without Word at home have no problems as it can be accessed from any device. Some do a better job at keeping the diary than others, and some leave much better responses. You can keep track of what they have done each day without having to collect anything in or ask them to send anything to you, this means you can give them daily feedback on what they need to improve, and also add comments to their blog with your feedback (marking) on it. Not everyone gives you the result you want, but at least you know you have made the activity as fully inclusive as possible and everyone has had equal chances.

1.8 Preserving 3D artwork.

You have been working hard on creating some sculpture work with the class in art. They have made an amazing version of themselves with clay depicting how they feel when at their worst, to how they are at their best. This is some of the best work you have ever had, and quite honestly the entire class have produced something special. You suddenly realise, with horror, that there is only space to keep small amount of this work, and know that other teachers are similarly pressed for space.

Current solution

You go around clearing as much space as you can. You have now found space for 10 out of the 30 pieces, but how do you pick which 10 to keep when you know how hard everyone has worked. You ask colleagues from across the school if they would like to house the work, but as you expect, they have little to no room to keep it, and after all this time and effort you still can't keep at least 6 pieces. Ultimately, you need to ask students to take the work home with them. You give out constant reminders but several forget to take the work, and finally, with a heavy heart you throw the remaining pieces away.

“...their work is so amazing, and whilst you want them to take it home you want a record of it...”

Using Sites

You explain to the class that you will never have enough room to house all the pieces, so you won't be able to keep them all – at best you can display 5 and would like people to nominate which ones out of the whole class they think deserve the spot. You tell them however their work is so amazing, and whilst you want them to take it home you want a record of it, that both you and they can keep. In your class site you add a picture gallery, called 'class self sculptures'. Each student takes a huge amount of images of their piece from every angle and uploads it into their own folder in the gallery. When they are all done, some students take their pieces home. You also tell students how amazing their work really is, and show them that you have shared the guest link via Twitter and other social media, and show them all the fantastic praise being given from colleagues and practitioners.



1.9 Flipped classroom.

You can see the sense of 'flipped classroom'. Giving students something to look at to prepare them for the next lesson should set them up well for learning. Some will be keen to show off what they have learned, and others will have found things that they know they still haven't understood. All of that makes for good and productive discussion.

Current solution

You give all students a chapter in the textbook to read and, if you can find it, a piece of video which covers the topic. (The originators of 'flipped learning' posted a video of themselves lecturing, but you want to go beyond that). They are under instructions to do the reading and viewing and come back with a list of definite questions which will provide you with the content of the lesson and also be evidence that they have actually done the work.

With SharePoint Online

Teachers use their class sites to provide students with material to work on at home, from the school's extensive resource bank, or from an external source such as YouTube. Along with the resources are questions and invitations for students to respond online both individually and in collaboration with others. The students need to internalise and act upon the questions, while the teacher looks at their responses and is able to see their learning needs. In this way, class sites are used collaboratively and seamlessly between home and school. Students comment on how much they like being able to see lesson material in advance of the lesson, feeling that when the lesson does happen, the teacher's presentation is that much easier to enjoy and understand.

1.10 Tutor time activities.

Most secondary schools will have form/tutorial time. This generally lasts 20 minutes and it's when the register is taken for main roll call. It's also a time where teachers will carry out the general admin for their group and talking to individuals. Finding something positive and engaging for the group to do while this happens is a constant headache.

Current solution

The school has resources for tutor time, but they are in heavy demand and not always suitable for your particular group. Sometimes you really need to concentrate on helping individuals and others end up doing very little. This is a constant source of worry for you.

With SharePoint Online

The rich resources of your SharePoint Online learning environment really come into their own here. Students can use news feed, for example, to create both questions and answers. Your tutor group can run their own blog, perhaps in friendly competition with other tutor groups. They can use the site to ensure that they are up to date with school events, deadlines, timetable changes, and of course, there may be specific tasks set yourself or leader designed to test initiative or general knowledge.

1.11 Keeping staff informed.

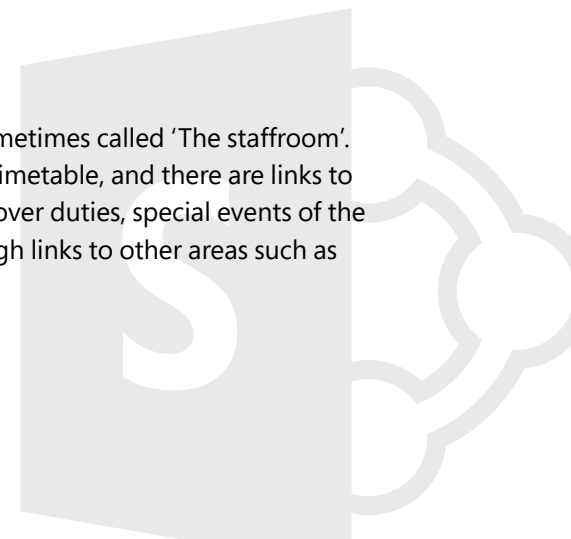
Teachers spend most of their time in classrooms, cut off, in a sense from each other and from the administrators and leaders. Unless they work at keeping themselves informed, they can feel left out of developments. They can also spend a lot of precious teaching time chasing up administrative matter or simply finding out about what needs to be done.

Current solution

The standard method of keeping everyone informed is to have a morning briefing. A few minutes before the start of school, all staff gather in convenient large space where a senior member of staff – often the head, addresses them. Other colleagues will also probably make announcements. Although there's often strong pressure to attend, some colleagues inevitably miss the briefing, which, in any case, is sometimes too short to be really useful.

With SharePoint Online

The school portal has a staff front page, sometimes called 'The staffroom'. This is personalised to the user, showing a timetable, and there are links to current issues such as timetable changes, cover duties, special events of the day or week. There may well be click-through links to other areas such as department or class sites, CPD IT support.





Chapter 2: Outlook Web App

More than email.

Outlook Web App in the classroom.

Outlook Web App is much more than just email. Here are some examples of how some of its other features can help the classroom teacher to be more efficient and responsive.





“compare your calendars online,
book your meeting and Office 365
sends you a reminder.”

2.1 Using Calendar to book a meeting.

Your colleague passes you in the corridor and reminds you there's an SEN annual review coming up and it's crucially important the two of you meet the day before to get paperwork in order. You can't remember your timetable off hand, but think it sounds like the day you have a PPA so agree. You then forget what you've arranged and at the time you've promised to meet your colleague you are busy teaching. She comes to your room to find you, but you cannot leave your class.

Current solution

You feel embarrassed as you apologise to Selvin in front of the class. You say you will miss your lunch and meet with her then instead, but she has another meeting at that time. The SEN review is the next day. You briefly exchange emails that evening and sort out your paperwork independently. You are generally well prepared, but at the review there are one or two moments of confusion between the two of you which a meeting would have avoided. Although the review itself went well you still feel you have let yourself down and appeared disorganised.

With Outlook Web App

When Selvin approaches you in the corridor you say you don't think it's a problem but to make the appointment with you via Calendar on Office 365. When she goes on to try to do this it automatically tells her there is a clash with another event – the class you are meant to be teaching. Selvin now has the chance to compare your calendars online and find an appropriate time when you're both available. You don't need to remember the meeting as 20 minutes before Office 365 sends you a reminder and plays an audible alarm to remind you who and where you are meeting.

2.2 Using Calendar to arrange revision.

Study leave can pose problems for students who want, or need, to keep in touch with their teachers. You simply cannot be available all the time and so you may hear colleagues say, for example,

'Sonja Smith was looking for you this morning. We couldn't find you and I didn't have your timetable. She was keen to ask you something that had come up in her revision. I think she was quite worried.'

Current solution

You leave messages with reception about your availability. You try to call students back, but there are still those who go away disappointed, or who wait patiently until you are free. You are determined to find a better solution for next year. The technology will surely be able to help.



With Outlook Web App

The following year, you realised that if you put Office 365 to work, and did some forward planning, you might make study leave into a productive and enjoyable experience.

The secret, you realised, lies with Outlook Calendar, which you can share in whole or part with anyone you choose. So before study leave starts you said to your groups,

'I'm going to share my calendar with you all, showing when I'm available – sometimes before school, sometimes after, some of my free periods, some of my PPA time, some lunchtimes. I know you're on your phones all the time, so keep checking because some of the availability might change – things can come up as you know. So if you want to see me, book into my calendar with a brief message saying what it's about. The rest of you keep an eye on all that, because you might find you want to come along to the same meeting. The key thing is – keep in touch. Keep checking the calendar.'

It worked well. The students appreciated being able to book specific slots. There were times when so many people joined a meeting booked by one person that it was almost like a lesson – except more relaxed.

The students did well in their exams. It would be too much to claim that they did better as a result of Office 365 and calendar sharing, but in some cases it wouldn't be an unreasonable assumption. The whole exercise certainly did wonders for morale.

2.3 Checking team work out of school.

You set your class a project in which they need to work as a team. Some of the project involves working from home putting together a presentation and collaborating on a document. You give them a week to do this, and after this time ask for the work to be handed in. Whilst pretty much all the work comes in, you have a horrible feeling that not all of them were involved, and that some of them are getting credit for the others work.



Current solution

You ask the groups to be honest about who has been involved in the work and who didn't do anything. In one group, someone admits they didn't help because they couldn't make the meeting. In another group, they all say they were involved and you have no reason to doubt them. One group says they were all involved although it looks from the work like only one person did it, as it's completely written in Jonathan's usual writing style. The other two groups argue between them about who did what, and who did nothing. They are groups of six and there are three on each side of the argument so it's difficult to see who is not being honest. You use your professional judgement to work out who to believe, but you know you can't be 100% sure.

“you know who and when your students are online, so you can see if they are working together.”

With Outlook Web App

You log in at different points in the evening and visit the people area of the site. When you set the project you made sure you had added all of the class to your contact list and this is what you are now looking at. Next to each person in the class you can see a colour rectangle. When it is green you know they are online, and can see if the whole group are online and therefore working together. You can clearly spot imbalances and ask the team members about them in class, armed with good evidence.

2.4 Instant response to an emergency.

You are teaching in a temporary building across the playground from the main site. A student who has no medical history suddenly collapses in the middle of the room. You rush over to them, but have no medical experience other than the very basics. You are the only adult in the small building. You cannot leave the child or the class, and you need immediate support.

Current solution

You quickly send one of your class to main reception and another to the staffroom in search of a first aider to come to your room. You support the student as best you can whilst you wait for someone to assist. After 2 minutes one student comes back, not with a first aider but a concerned colleague he met on the way who can do little to help. A further interminable minute after that a first aider from reception arrives. In this instance the pupil begins to come around and although paramedics are called as a precaution, all ends well. It's clear, though, that the potential is there for a serious incident, and you suggest a review of staffing in the detached buildings.



With Outlook Web App

The school has a rehearsed routine for just this kind of event. When the student first collapses as you rush over to them you instruct one of your students to IM ('Instant Message') reception, which you can do when you have Lync Online, though without opening it. As you are always logged in to Office 365 the student simply gets to your laptop and accesses the People area. Within 20 seconds they have sent an IM to reception with the simple code **'MEDICAL EMERGENCY, ROOM 6'**. Reception, who are always logged in, get the message immediately and a first aider is with you within a minute to look after the student. Reception stay on the case taking updates and handling any further requests for medical help, for other staff to attend, or for parental contact.



Chapter 3: Lync Online

Close contact from a distance.
Lync Online in the classroom.

The finishing touch to Office 365's rich mixture of collaboration and communication features is supplied by Lync Online, which adds sophisticated features such as video calls and online meetings. Using Lync Online adds quality to existing collaboration, removing misunderstanding and ensuring all views are considered. Not only that, when it's handled creatively, it opens up new and previously unconsidered communication pathways.

All of these characteristics of Lync Online are seen in the scenarios which we have gathered together in this section.

3.1 Long term absence from school.



Ramandeep has been off school for five weeks following a road accident and she more and more cut off, socially as well from her work. As she tells her mum,

'I just don't feel I go to that school any more. I sometimes think they've forgotten me. When I first had the accident it was all fuss, and visits, and flowers and chocolates. Now I hardly ever see any of them.'

Next day, Ramandeep's mum went into school and spoke to Ramandeep's year leader.

'She's really down I hate seeing her like this. It can affect her recovery, and her work is going to suffer.'

Have you ever had a student away for an extended period of time? It is not only emotional for the student, but made all the worse by the feeling of alienation. Then, when they do return, with the best will in the world, they will have fallen behind their class mates.

Current solution

At present, when a student's away from school for a long time, we deal with it mainly by sending classwork home. We do that knowing full well that it's not possible to do much more than send the material that we use normally in class. But in the absence of a teacher, it's going to be difficult for them to engage with the work, or fully understand it. And it doesn't help with the emotional problem of feeling detached from friends and the life of the class.



With Lync Online

Lync Online makes it possible, in effect, to push the classroom walls back far enough to include the absent student. At the beginning of every lesson, we can make a call to the student on our laptop/tablet and be instantly connected. And then, as the lesson goes on, even if we are using our laptop to project we can share our desktop or slidedeck with the student and keep them connected.

They can then be part of the lesson, hearing and watching everything we are saying to deliver information to our young people. More than this, they can use the chat features to ask questions, talk to fellow classmates, and remove the feeling of isolation. This is not just a great tool for their learning, but also for their health and well-being.

3.2 Continuing at home with group work from school.

Teacher Simon is keen to encourage his students to work collaboratively. He sets them problem-solving tasks, in groups of four, and coaches them as they learn how to accept and develop each others' ideas. In class, Simon can achieve this relatively easily. But he also wants to see them developing their ideas together from home in the evenings and at weekends, bringing their completed work back in a form which they can then present to the rest of the class.

Current solution

When the school's SharePoint Online learning platform was developed, he was quick to exploit its possibilities for collaborative work, with students using their own class sub-sites. Students have really taken to this, and excellent work is coming back. But Simon is a perfectionist, and he can see that there are still some students who find it difficult to get their contributions and ideas across. They get frustrated, the others are impatient to get on, and Simon's seen really excellent possibilities dropped because of that.

With Lync Online

With the school's adoption of Office 365 comes the ability to use Lync Online, a feature that Simon knows will make all the difference. So now, students will continue to develop ideas using sub-sites in SharePoint Online 2013, but this time when one suggests something that the others don't understand, they will not just be sidelined.

log in to Lync Online and talk the idea through in a virtual 'face-to-face' session.



Instead, all the group members will log in to Lync Online, and the ability to talk the idea through in a virtual 'face-to-face' session will mean everyone in the group can see the point that's being made. Simon's already seen some projects totally transformed by this extra, vital, level of interaction.

That's not the end either, because when the project is completed, they will use Lync Online again, and practise talking through their PowerPoint presentation, giving each other feedback and ideas where they can improve. Now, as the use of Lync Online becomes embedded, the class is showing the rest of the school just how to make a polished, creative, and meticulously prepared presentation.

3.3 Being in two places at once.

Teacher Daljit, a member of SLT, has an important meeting 200 miles away from school, which means she will miss a key revision group. They only have a handful of lessons left before their first exam, and it's time she cannot afford to miss. It's even more frustrating that Daljit's meeting doesn't even start until 10am, and the class, starting at 9.10am would have finished at 9.50am.

Current solution

Daljit sets the best possible cover work, but it's most unlikely that a subject specialist will cover the class, so there are tight limits on what she can prepare.

On the day, the cover teacher does his best with Daljit's material, answering questions as best he can. But hand on heart she knows the class would have achieved more if she had been there to do the job, and she ends up feeling guilty.

With Lync Online

Now, though, Daljit's school has Lync Online. She and the class are accustomed to using it. So she arrives at her meeting venue at 8.50am and gets out her device. There is wi-fi available, so she connects up and logs in to Lync Online. She sees that the school device which is connected to her projector is also available and so she puts in a call.



As the students walk in, there is Daljit on the screen, able to see the class, watching as the cover teacher settles them down. She then greets them with the familiar words, 'Good morning. Settle down please and pay attention.'

As the lesson goes on, Daljit uses PowerPoint, under full control from her laptop, and she also uses Lync Online Whiteboard to work through some other examples. After the main presentation, she disconnects from the projector but remains available for questions using the laptop on the teachers' desk.

At 9.40am, Daljit says 'goodbye and well done' and leaves it to the cover teacher to wrap things up. She is in good time for her meeting, and heads off to it feeling satisfied that she's done her best by the class.



3.4 Isolated experience.

You are about to cover a really important topic, something everyone really needs to grasp. Then you find that Diane, one of your students, has been placed in an internal suspension area for poor behaviour. The last thing you want is for her to miss this crucial lesson. She really needs to be kept on board, and coming back to class to face frustration and lack of understanding is not going to help her behaviour.

Current solution

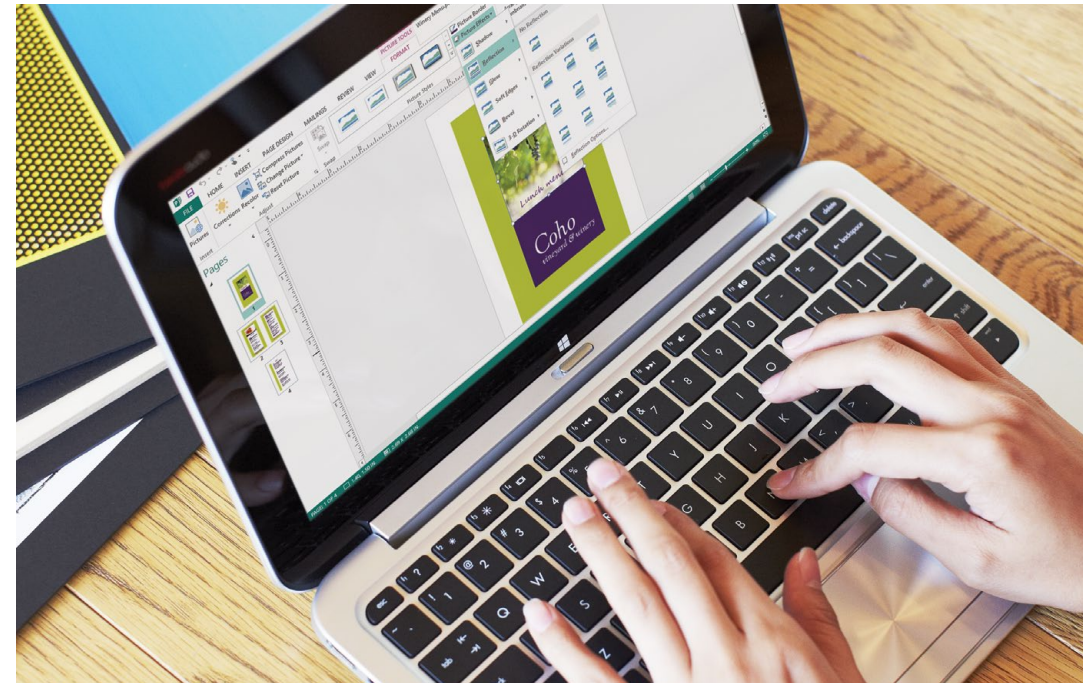
You do your best to provide work for Diane that makes up for the absence of direct teaching. You try to write a few lines of explanation, and provide a textbook which covers the subject. But you know that by the end of the lesson, even if Diane has really tried to grasp the topic and do the work, it will be obvious that she would have done much better if she'd been in class.

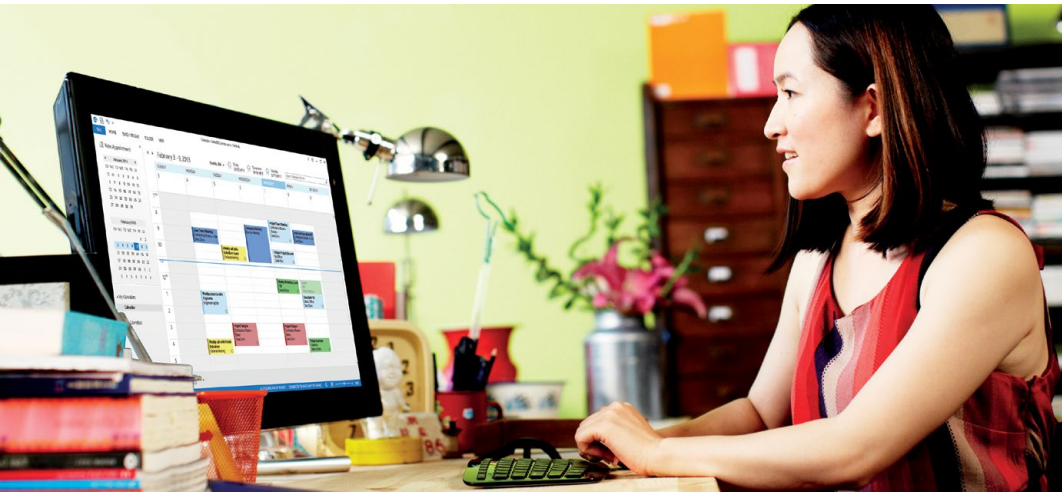
You can try to keep her on board with a lunchtime session, but at the end you may well feel that this has been a real setback for Diane, who has the potential to do well.

“experience the same delivery as the rest of the class, while in a separate room.”

With Lync Online

When asked for the cover work you give Diane a device and some headphones and the same lesson materials as the rest of the class. You ask her to log in to Lync Online and put in a call to you. You accept the call, mute your speakers, and aim the camera towards the board or where you will be working. You understand Diane is in internal suspension for breaking school rules, so there are limits on the contact – she cannot talk for example. You do know however that she experiences the same delivery as the class with you in your room, and she should have every opportunity to be able to digest the content, and attempt the work, whilst still completing the sanction.





3.5 School revision.

The exams draw nearer. Work is on schedule, students are trying hard, and you have a real sense they will do well. One of them, Robbie, is so keen to excel that he asks for extra revision on a topic he can't understand.

'OK, let's find a slot,' you say.

But that's easier said than done. You go through the calendar together, and, sure enough, when you're free, Robbie isn't. Even sessions straight after school can't be made to fit – Robbie has to pick up his brother from primary school.

Current solution

You're really determined to match Robbie's enthusiasm, but it looks as if lunchtimes and break times are the only real possibility. Unfortunately with such a short break, and lessons running over, realistically you're looking at a 10 minute break session. Lunchtimes are longer, and a 30 minute session seems possible.

But you need to think carefully about putting so much time and effort into one student. Then what about your marking and planning? Nobody gains if that's neglected. And in any case you need a lunch break. Accept too much pressure and your teaching will suffer, which, again, benefits nobody.

With Lync Online

Lync Online doesn't close when the school bell rings, it's a 24/7 tool that allows you to connect to any students who might need help. Robbie can use your calendar to book in an evening revision session, maybe at about 5.00pm when he's safely delivered his brother home and it's convenient for you both.

Very importantly, though, this doesn't have to be a private session for Robbie. Others who need help with the same topic can join the Lync Online revision session.

So off you go. You use the Lync Online virtual whiteboard to post images of questions, and then you use the drawing tools to work through model solutions, allowing students to add to it with their own pen colour if necessary. You use the built in PowerPoint presentation tool to guide through some key slides, and send the group a worksheet using the file send feature. What you've actually done is run a paperless revision session that was possibly even more collaborative and productive than it might have been in a classroom.

3.6 Missing parents evening appointments.

Your students' parents have good routine access to the school, both in person if they can manage it, and also via the parent portal giving them access to behaviour and performance data. Even so, face-to-face parents' evenings are important, much valued by parents and the school.

In any school, however, a proportion of individual parent-teacher meetings will be missed. A teacher may be ill or called away for urgent career or personal reasons. A parent may be sick, housebound or at work. Sometimes, by a sequence of unfortunate events, a particular set of parents who would like to attend can miss a whole series of parents' evenings.

Current solution

The school has a system for picking up missed parents' evening appointments. The parents affected are identified and offered telephone contact, or a limited choice of daytime alternatives. Everyone does their best, but even so, a significant number of parents are still missed.

With Lync Online

Lync Online offers another, very effective alternative to the face-to-face teacher-parent meeting – not a complete substitute, but an excellent way of maintaining contact and securing the relationship. It can be used in several ways. For example, a parent who is permanently unable to attend at school could have a regular Lync Online appointment to match the school parents' evening. Or if a teacher has to miss parents' evening, he or she can catch up with all the necessary interviews through Lync Online appointments over a period of time. Parents are extremely grateful for this kind of arrangement, and the resulting discussions are as good, if not better, than a hurried one-to-one in a crowded room.



3.7 Pulled in two directions.

You are about to dash off to a meeting when Jake comes to you extremely distressed. He has an exam tomorrow, there's a topic that he still hasn't grasped and he's sure there will be a question on it. You cannot miss the meeting, it's to do with a new addition to the scheme of work you are delivering. You also cannot just walk away from Jake. He's an impulsive lad, a worrier, organisationally all over the place, but he's looking to you for help.

Current solution

You tell Jake he shouldn't have left things to the last minute, but you also reassure him of your help. However, you also tell him you must go to your meeting because it's important. You give him a different revision book that might help, and refer him to a YouTube clip that should cover it. You also give him your email address and remind him you're available anytime in the evening.

'Look, Jake, It's going to be fine. If you're really stuck, come into school at half past seven in the morning. I'll be here and we'll have an hour then. OK?'

With Lync Online

You say.

'Oh Jake. Wait here a minute. Fear not, I will help you.'

You grab a device and head to the room your meeting is about to be in. You explain the situation to whoever is leading the meeting, and ask one of those attending to log in to Lync Online and call you, you then rush back.

On your return to the classroom, you accept the call, and begin helping Jake. In the background, you can hear the meeting taking place and what is being said. Your microphone is on mute, so you can talk freely to the student you are helping, but when a question is directed at you, or you want to add to the conversation, you know you can just unmute yourself and be heard by everyone. After 30 minutes the student understands what they needed and leaves. You head off to the meeting, having not missed anything, and been actively involved in everything that has been discussed.



be in a meeting and help your student at the same time, the perfect tool for multitasking.

3.8 Monitoring out-of-school group work.

A primary school is keen for children to be able to support each other in their numeracy work. They can do this in class well enough, but ideally they would be able to help each other with homework, too, and that's not so easy. These are young children, and teachers want to keep an eye on how they are helping each other, spotting which pupils have the most problems.



Current solution

The school has set up an after-school self-help numeracy club, for as many children as are able to attend. There's encouragement, too, for parents to allow children to meet and work together in each other's homes wherever that's possible. The staff know, however, that many children cannot manage either of these schemes, and so it's not possible to plan work which depends entirely on collaboration. Neither is it easy to see which children need the most help.

“by monitoring the group, teachers gain a clear picture of the progress of individuals.”

With Lync Online

The teacher in charge realises that the pupils can use Lync Online to help each other out of school. Importantly, he also realises that the Lync Online feature 'Presence' can be adapted to make sure that contact between pupils is organised so as to help staff to keep track on pupil progress. It indicates, with a colour code, a person's status – whether they are available to be called. So in their out-of-school collaborative work pupils are expected to set their presence status to red if they want help, green if they know the answer, and amber if they are still working on the problem. By monitoring this across the group, teachers gain a clear picture of the progress of individuals. In effect, in this school, Lync Online is being deployed as an aid to assessment for learning (AfL).



3.9 Keeping track of students.

Students have been working in groups on a project which will finish with each group making a short film to show to the rest of the class. Each group has chosen more than one location in and around the school and its grounds, and they will move from place to place to achieve the effects they want. So they will be working out of sight, moving around. You feel uneasy about this and need to make sure the plan is as secure and safe as you can make it.

Current solution

You brief the students firmly and seriously about safety and behaviour. They have told you the locations they will be using, and you check through these carefully with them. Then you tell them you will be in your room ready to respond to any problem.

With Lync Online

As groups leave you give them each a device which they use to sign in to Lync Online. You tell them as they are filming, they can change their status to busy, but they must change it back every time they break from filming, and that you will still call them in an emergency. You are no longer confined to the classroom as groups know if they need you they now only need to click call and can find out where you are. You can continue to circulate round the different locations, whilst at the same time calling groups on a break to check how they are doing and where they are. So when a message comes in for one of the students to come to reception, within thirty seconds you have messaged their group and the student in question is already on the way.



Chapter 4: Web Apps

Ticking all the boxes.
Working with Office 365 Web Apps.

You can pick anything you need to do in school and there'll be a way that Office 365 can make it easier. Let's just pick one or two examples of how the Office web apps, for example, can help.

4.1 Working together – Collaboration and document sharing.

Schools are increasingly expecting and encouraging students to work collaboratively on projects and individual assignments.

Without technology, that can mean people sitting round a table with notebooks, each making suggestions. That can be good and productive, but it has some severe limitations such as:

- If the team meeting simply hands out tasks, then the work remains largely individual.
- If it's agreed that one person writes up the decisions, then there's an obvious imbalance in the learning.
- The collaboration begins and ends in the classroom unless the students make considerable efforts to continue out of class.

Teachers and students can also work on the same document at the same time, enabling new styles of teaching and learning.

So what's really needed?

Ideally, all notes and drafts should be shared – that's to say visible on demand by each participant, and also capable of being contributed to, or edited by each participant. That way, the collaboration comes to life. Only through technology can genuine document sharing be achieved.

BUT

Access to documents needs to be equally achievable by all participants, making no special demands on technical skills or equipment. Office 365 makes that possible.

Using just the Office Web Apps, teams of students can work on a single version of an online Word, Excel or PowerPoint document, viewing and making edits simultaneously with all changes synchronised. Teachers and students can also work on the same document at the same time, enabling new styles of teaching and learning.

Among the many reasons why students and teachers may wish to work together on a single document are:

- For peer assessment – evaluating and supporting each others' work.
- For collaborative project work continuing seamlessly between home and school.
- For after-school clubs such as newspapers, planning school productions, school radio scripts.



4.2 Presenting work creatively and professionally.

Teachers are increasingly encouraging students to present their work in a range of ways, not always using a straightforward story or essay.

Inevitably, PowerPoint comes to mind as a way of presenting work to classmates, influential adults, parents, and even examiners where appropriate. And with Office 365, Microsoft PowerPoint becomes increasingly available and affordable as a Web App.



Like all technology, though, it has to be applied appropriately.

So, imagine that your students are becoming excited by the possibilities of Office 365 and the opportunity to use PowerPoint presentations as an alternative to writing essays. You begin to feel though, that they are in danger of overpowering their audiences with all the features of PowerPoint. So you prepare for them a list of guidelines in the form of a friendly letter that goes like this:

Dear Students,

It's great that you have something important to say, and that you are trying hard to find attention-grabbing ways of saying it.

Naturally, you want to use PowerPoint. It's easy to use, very visual and can be a real winner for you when you want to impress.

Be sure, though that PowerPoint is the right choice. Why are you going to use it? Is it because it's the very best way of helping your audience to understand and be drawn into your message?

Or is it just because you're pretty good with PowerPoint and you want to show off how many of its features you can pack into twenty minutes?

Are you sure nothing else will be better? A piece of video for example, either with animation or live action? Or an online portfolio of written work and pictures? Or maybe you do not need technology at all – why not a drama presentation, perhaps with music, if that's the kind of talent you have? And, call me old-fashioned, a well-written essay for people to read still has its place.

The point is if you use PowerPoint every time, it can lose its impact. Worst of all, the people watching might feel that you are using PowerPoint just because you know you can.



With all that cleared away then, and you're sure that, yes, it really is PowerPoint for you this time, here are some thoughts that might help you to make a punchy, memorable and interesting presentation.



1. Imagine you're in class, or the audience, looking at the screen. What draws your eye, and your attention first? Is it words or is it pictures?

PowerPoint is a visual tool. The best slides have bold, easy-to-understand pictures or diagrams.

2. Do you want your audience to read a screen full of sentences, or bullet points? Really?

What's that? You don't expect them to read the words because you're going to sort of half turn round and read them out loud off the screen? Will that make you popular do you think?

3. Who is the star of this show, is it you or the PowerPoint presentation?

Answer, neither. The star of the show is the audience. They need to feel good, intrigued, interested, and amused. They need to go away feeling they've learned something.

4. PowerPoint gives you many special effects – different kinds of entrances and exits, animations, objects or words growing and shrinking, spinning round and changing colour. Are you going to use as many of them as you can in a ten minute presentation just to show off?

Of course not, choose effects that add meaning and emphasis in the places where they matter.

5. You find it easy to make a PowerPoint presentation, so you want to make a really good one?

Just remember that 'really good' is not the same as 'really long'. Why not try 'Pecha Kucha' – 20 slides, 20 seconds each slide, making a punchy and memorable 6 minute 40 second presentation – just right for your classroom report back.

4.3 Keeping organised with OneNote 2013



Very many students would do better at school, gaining higher marks along the way if they were better organised. Too many of them lose or misplace papers, find their notes are at school when they need them at home – we could go on and make a long list.

Without technology, keeping organised means having neat files and folders, notebooks and, most important, a diary, all stowed in a bag that goes everywhere.

With technology, everything becomes more manageable. Even then, it would be so much easier if you could have everything on hand in one place, without moving to different applications. And that's where OneNote comes in, available as a Web App in Office 365. With OneNote, a student can keep a list of tasks, deadlines, and also all class notes, handouts, worksheets, with everything linked together so they're easy to find. It will also read handwriting and convert it to searchable text.



And, did you know that OneNote will do maths? Type an arithmetic equation with an equals sign at the end, then press the space bar and it will do the maths for you. It will even do quite advanced equations, and has some already stored.

Here are some quotes from a student who is a real OneNote enthusiast:

*(from the Microsoft UK Schools blog:
<http://blogs.msdn.com/b/ukschools/archive/2013/09/13/back-to-school-with-onenote.aspx>)*

One of the features that makes OneNote so useful for keeping all of your class notes is that you can search through them, even if they are handwritten. I loved that I could write down due dates and assignments right in my class notes, and then easily find them when it was time to complete the assignment.

One of my favourite things about OneNote is that I can access my notes anywhere. When I was waiting in line for a coffee or at a bus stop, it was easy to access my daily task list using OneNote on my phone. If I wanted to work in a computer lab, I could access my notes on SkyDrive. I love that I never have to worry about forgetting my notes somewhere, because they are with me wherever I go!

OneNote 2013 reads your handwritten page title and converts it to text automatically, even if, like mine, your handwriting isn't beautiful. It also can read all of your ink notes to search them or convert them to text.



4.4 Achieving 'One-to-One' with BYOD

If you could equip each of your students with an internet enabled device you could plan lessons and set assignments in the knowledge that each student has anytime/anywhere access to the school's portal or to the internet beyond. To do that entirely from the school's resources is prohibitive not only financially but also logistically.

Allowing students to bring their own devices, however, looks financially attractive, and offers students the advantage of using familiar technology. Office 365, cloud-based, accessible to any web-enabled device makes BYOD a viable possibility. There are obvious challenges, but the flexibility and accessibility of Office 365 help to make BYOD very achievable.

There are obvious challenges, but the flexibility and accessibility of Office 365 help to make BYOD very achievable.

Conclusion.

We've told a lot of stories, described many scenarios, and described a number of creative ideas. Two final, and vital points remain to be made, however.

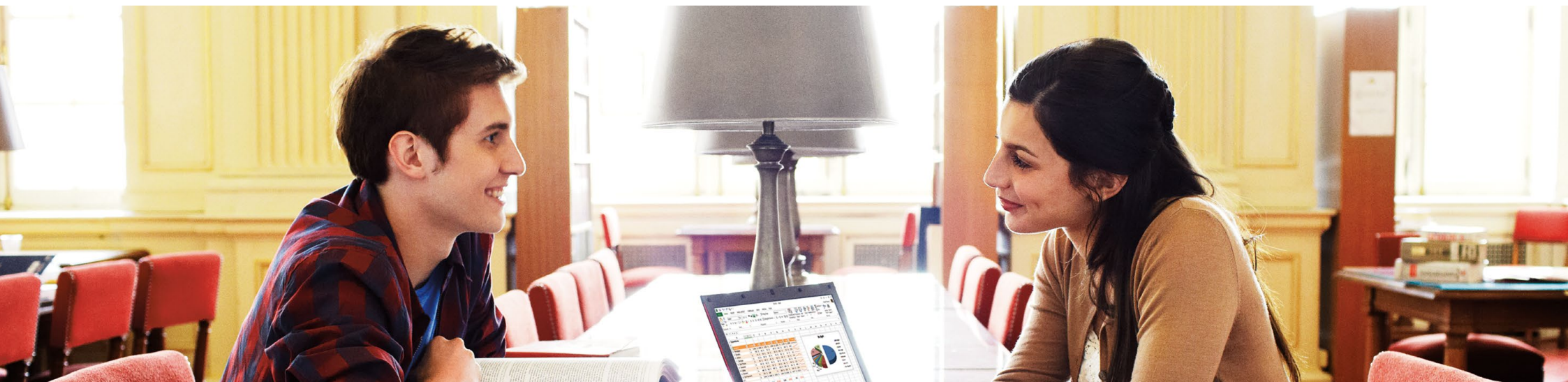
1

Although we have described individual events and solutions, each of them, far from being an isolated example, has to be seen as a facet of a whole-school implementation. You would not, for example, regard Lync Online purely as a way of keeping in touch with a student who's away from school, or Outlook Web App as just a room-booking tool. That much ought to be obvious. What might be less clear, is that once Office 365 is up and running not only will all users – not least the students themselves – find new ways of using it, but you will discover just how possible it is to tailor it to your emerging needs.

2

Office 365, though it offers huge benefits to a school, is like all other technologies in that it is not a 'bolt-on' solution to all of a school's problems. The decision to adopt Office 365, the planning of its implementation, the way it is deployed across the school, all have to be in response to need, tailored to the learning culture of the school. Learning and the life chances of students will always be at the heart of the process.

Quite simply – learning first, then technology.



Further Resources:

The ITHeadsUP Youtube Channel has bite-size chunks of information about IT in schools, for Headteachers and Educators. You need never look confused in a meeting again...

The screenshot shows the YouTube channel for ITHeadsUP. The channel name is 'ITHeadsUP' with a 'Subscribe' button and a subscriber count of 30. Below the channel name, there are navigation options for 'Videos' and 'About'. A dropdown menu for 'Uploads' is set to 'Date added (newest - oldest)'. The video list includes:

- How to Arrange a Meeting in Office 365** (3:41) - 1 week ago • 24 views
- How to Cancel a Meeting in Office 365** (3:41) - 1 week ago • 18 views

Get a Heads Up. Act like you know

Access over 40 'How To' Office 365 tutorials created by educators for educators on our ITHeadsUP Youtube Channel.

www.youtube.com/ITheadsUp

The tutorials supplement the teaching and learning ideas.

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