

## Lockdown Case Study:

### Emily Stannard, Head Librarian and IBDP Extended Essay Co-ordinator, Bradfield College, Berkshire

Emily is the Head Librarian at Bradfield College, a co-educational independent school for day and boarding pupils in Berkshire. During the first lockdown in the Summer Term 2020, she was asked by the Senior Management Team to create an online course entitled "Introduction to Extended Writing" for the Fifth Form (Year 11) to provide an offering for the year group in lieu of their public examinations. Emily used the school's internal platform, Firefly, to create this module, and also created a OneNote ClassBook where students could keep their work so that she could mark it. To devise the course she used several key items:

- An internal EPQ Powerpoint created by the Head of EPQ;
- The University of Leeds Futurelearn course for the Extended Essay;
- The Study Skills Handbook & Critical Thinking Skills books by Sheila Cottrell;
- Guides and presentations that she devised herself on key skills such as referencing and reflection.

In spite of having a young child at home to look after, Emily managed to stay ahead of the course by two weeks. The theme of the course was 5G technology, and pupils were invited to take notes from key sources, mind map their ideas and devise a research question. All the other key skills were pinned to this theme, such as finding and using sources, referencing and making notes, planning an essay, critical thinking and academic writing.

Each week, about 90-95 pupils would engage with the course and each weekend Emily had to mark their mini-tasks and provide feedback via OneNote and via a video which she created to include a face-to-face element. Each week she would note which pupils engaged with the course by House, and then award merits to the pupils in the Houses (1 girls and

1 boys House) which engaged the most. She also awarded merits to those pupils who had made an outstanding effort each week. It was a huge amount of work and looking back Emily has no idea how she achieved it; she now, however, has a vast bank of resources to draw on for teaching key skills and has already been using revised versions of them for her Year 12 Extended Essay group.

On a practical note, Emily created a series of videos on key skills such as note-taking using Powerpoint and Windows Media where she could overlay narration and music. She also produced quick quizzes and self-assessment multiple choice forms which helped students to understand what sort of learner they were; and each week they had to reflect on their learning. The students enjoyed the practical tasks such as rating and feeding back on a range of the Library's online databases and several referencing tools.

There have been positive outcomes of these initiatives; the majority of pupils entering the Sixth Form and doing the IB who took the extended writing course are much further ahead than their peers who did not. They have a solid understanding of the key components of research, critical thinking and academic writing as well as being able to develop a solid research question.

Feedback at the end of the course was overwhelmingly positive; here are some sound bites from students:

*I feel like a lot of effort was put into this, I know not everyone did all of it, but I know many other appreciated it so thank you!!*

*I wasn't keen about the idea of it but then as I started to get further into the weeks it was not that bad at all and I did enjoy it.*

*I really enjoyed learning new skills to help develop my critical thinking. I also feel more confident when note taking and using highlighters to identify key ideas. Overall, the course will benefit my learning skills as an individual. Despite finding the course helpful, there were a few tasks that were difficult. Because they were all new to me.*

*Was really helpful and I think all other years should do this from now on as well.*

*Thanks for the course, it was good but maybe longer could have been spent looking at the actual style of writing than the first few steps of researching and note taking - but I also know these are important tasks to get a good grounding I really enjoyed the structure of it, lots of little tasks were much more enjoyable and easier to manage.*

*I know that the stuff that I have learnt will help me not only in sixth form but also for later in life whether that will be at uni or later in life when it comes to writing essays, so thank you.*

*I found the exploding terms task in week 2 really helpful, it helped me narrow down my interests and figure out what I possible would like to write about.*

The Director of Teaching and Learning provided this feedback:

*"Many thanks for taking the time to create, collate and send through the response to this survey. Absolutely fantastic and there are a number of really useful insights provided by pupil feedback here. As I said before, it is no surprise that it has been a great success, and those that have engaged wholeheartedly with the programme will have taken a huge amount from it.*

*I fully acknowledge and remain hugely grateful for the significant amount of time and effort that you have poured into this. It has been a curriculum provision of the highest order, and I am confident when I say that few other schools would have been able to offer Fifth Form pupils this quality of experience throughout this term. Amazing work, well done – thank you."*