

# CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM WITH NETSUPPORT

Published by Teaching Times

**Al Kingsley, MD at NetSupport, reflects on the impact of class management technologies.**



I have been a school governor for the last 15 years and am currently chair of Hampton Academies Trust in Peterborough. I was appointed the Chair of the Cambridge & Peterborough county SEND panel in December 18 and one of my responsibilities is to steer focused improvements across the Local Authorities Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

In my various roles I have been able to gain an insight into the obstacles schoolteachers and students faced during lockdown. Many schools had little experience of an EdTech powered classroom environment and the change in format proved a steep learning curve for students – and for many teachers too.

By adopting class management technologies that are as relevant and useful in the classroom as they are in the home-learning environment, schools can achieve seamless integration in between the two. This goes far beyond simply delivering live lessons via simple video platforms, a solution many schools turned to in lockdown.

As the National Foundation for Educational Research recently recommended, in preparing their remote learning plans, schools should give consideration to:

“...making sure that the school has an effective platform for sharing work with pupils and receiving submitted work, such as a virtual learning environment (VLE); making provision for online lessons, and for interactions between pupils and teachers and between pupils and other pupils; providing activities that involve consolidating learning; using strategies that focus on helping pupils to become independent learners.”

Cloud-powered, blended learning makes it possible for teachers to create a virtual classroom that is able to function efficiently no matter where you and your students are located. Of course, in order for this to be a smooth experience, you'll need the right kind of platform, featuring a variety of tools that assist in behaviour management, feedback and communication, making online learning as engaging as the ideal in-class environment.

## Four must-have features for EdTech-empowered classrooms

### 1. Screen Locks and monitoring

All teachers know how difficult it can be to get your students' attention. When you've got a class of 25-30 students, it's essential to be able to get everyone engaged to get every lesson off to a good start.

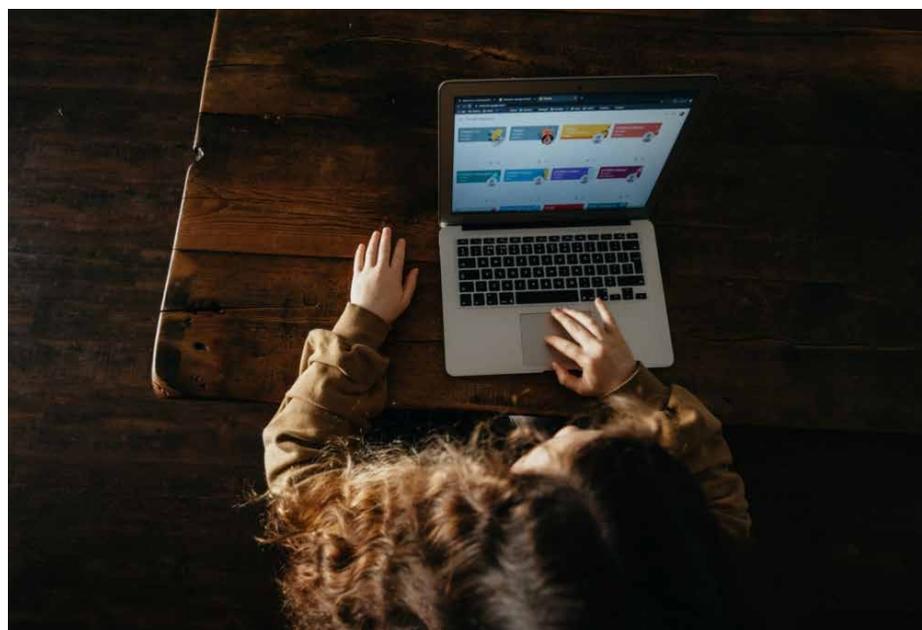
Being able to lock your students' screens minimises disruptions and enables teachers to get everyone's attention quickly and efficiently.

If you need to explain a concept, set learning goals or simply convey important information, having the ability to lock screens in an instant is invaluable.

Similarly, by selecting EdTech platforms that allow easy monitoring, you'll find it easier than ever to ensure your students remain on task throughout lessons. With real-time monitoring tools, you can check what a student is doing, watching or listening to at any time. This gives teachers the tools and authority they need to keep pupils on track and manage their lessons with ease.

### 2. Multi-Platform Functionality

When you're choosing which virtual classroom solution to use, be sure to consider the wide range of platforms that students will be using. If pupils are learning from home, for example, they might be trying to access the platform on desktops, laptops, tablets or even phones. With so many manufacturers and operating systems, it's vital that your EdTech functions optimally across a wide range of platforms.



### 3. Student Interaction

Interaction is at the heart of learning, so it should be the priority when it comes to classroom and remote learning EdTech tools. Without effective interaction functionality, lessons delivered by EdTech become a passive experience for students. When your platform facilitates interaction, however, students can play an active role in the learning experience and gain more from your lessons.

Help requests enable students to resolve queries, for example, while group chats ensure that students can work collaboratively, even if they're physically distanced. Additionally, student surveys and feedback forms give you the opportunity to determine which areas students may be struggling with and what virtual learning techniques they're gaining the most from.

### 4. Increased Permissions

No matter the age of your students, it's essential to have control over their internet usage on school time.

Being able to set permissions ensures that you can restrict the websites and applications that are available to your

students via the school network.

As well as shielding pupils from inappropriate content, this feature helps to keep students focused and minimises class disruptions. By restricting access to social media, for example, you can remove the temptation to log on to recreational websites. When you're choosing EdTech platforms, software or tools, be sure to factor this into your decision-making process.

### Continuity and consistency in times of change

The benefits of classroom management tools that enable remote learning to extend far beyond the immediate need for home-learning. The ability to take greater control, communicate with students and monitor their online activity not to mention benefits of shared access to files, class surveys and other resources are as useful in the classroom as they are at a distance. Schools that acclimatise their community to these tools now will reap the rewards in respect of seamless continuity and consistency

in the face of change – both key qualities that have been greatly missed in recent times.

**AI is the Chair of the Peterborough Governors Leadership group and an RSC board member, and works closely with the local authority and all schools across the city to help improve standards of governance, foster collaboration and develop greater levels of challenge and accountability in our schools.**

