



BLOG

Reimagine learning: How Open Sky International engages students in-class & remotely

1st July 2020

We talked to Open Sky International about how they are reimagining learning and engaging with students.



Open Sky International is a leading bilingual day school located in Paris, France. It offers Nursery to High School education in both French and English to a diverse group of students from over 35 different countries.

We recently caught up with their Head Teacher- Emmanuel Fayad, who shared how they reopened their school back in May and are using the latest in technology to engage students based in-class and remotely.

What was the biggest challenge for your school during the lockdown period?

Our school was already experienced in using technology for teaching and learning. This meant that when the announcement of school closures was made we were able to adapt quickly - and within two days after the physical closure, our school had gone fully virtual.

We mainly used a combination of different digital tools such as Zoom, OneDrive, Mozabook and Firefly to centralise all our curriculum resources and to set home tasks. We also ensured that we communicated with parents on a regular basis and shared homework tasks as well as the learning progress with them.

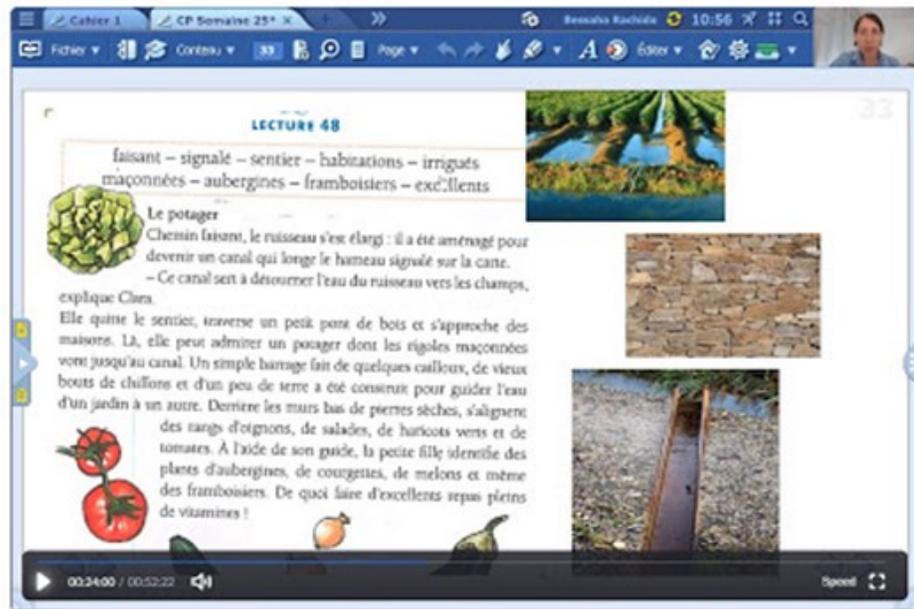


How did you provide teaching and learning during lockdown?

Open Sky International switched from a “physical” school to a “virtual” school with courses being provided through videoconferencing. Teachers lead around 2 - 5 live lessons per day depending on the class and age of the students.

Date et heure	Professeur	Durée	Lien de la vidéo
7 mai 2020 - 10h30	Rachida Bessaha	52 minutes	Voir la vidéo
7 mai 2020 - 8h30	Rachida Bessaha	45 minutes	Voir la vidéo
6 mai 2020 - 10h30	Rachida Bessaha	33 minutes	Voir la vidéo
5 mai 2020 - 16h00	Rachida Bessaha	14 minutes	Voir la vidéo
5 mai 2020 - 13h30	Rachida Bessaha	47 minutes	Voir la vidéo
5 mai 2020 - 10h30	Rachida Bessaha	46 minutes	Voir la vidéo
5 mai 2020 - 8h30	Rachida Bessaha	44 minutes	Voir la vidéo
4 mai 2020 - 16h00	Renata Rubio	21 minutes	Voir la vidéo
4 mai 2020 - 13h30	Renata Rubio	45 minutes	Voir la vidéo
4 mai 2020 - 10h30	Renata Rubio	49 minutes	Voir la vidéo
4 mai 2020 - 8h30	Renata Rubio	47 minutes	Voir la vidéo
30 avril 2020 - 16h00	Renata Rubio	30 minutes	Voir la vidéo

In between sessions children were provided with exercises to be completed with the support of their parents. We are extremely proud that our team of teachers and school leaders were able to provide an online teaching environment so quickly which meant that the children lost absolutely nothing from the initial curriculum.



How has teaching and learning changed since reopening?

On May 18th, the school reopened physically with about 35% of the students back in class and 65% online. Those who remained online did so either because the parents preferred to keep their children at home and benefit from the remote learning, or because families had been confined in their country of origin (more than 10 countries in this case) and are stuck abroad due to the many border closures worldwide.

Every week since, new students have been coming back and we now have 80% of the children back at school, the only school in France with a high ratio of students physically present in the campus.

Open Sky International, therefore, continues to innovate by offering mixed courses at school and online. Extremely few schools in the world are able to pull this off the way our school has.. This makes it possible to have a single "global classroom", with students present at school or at home in various countries around the world.

They all follow the same class, see the same screen, listen to the same lesson and complete the same home tasks with corrections and grades provided virtually by the teacher. All classes, even music, capoeira, art, chess and drama classes, are taught this way.

The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for 'Capoeira' dated 2020-04-27. On the left is a navigation menu with categories like 'Cours en ligne', 'TPS', 'PS', 'MS', 'GS1', 'GS2', 'CP-1', 'CP-2', 'CE1-1', 'CE1-2', 'CE2', 'CM1', 'CM2', '6ème / 5ème', and 'Capoeira'. The 'Capoeira' category is expanded to show dates: 2020-04-27 (HIDDEN), 2020-04-20 (HIDDEN), 2020-04-13 (HIDDEN), and 2020-03-30 (HIDDEN). The main content area shows a post by Priscilla Wolff from Monday 4 May 2020 08:14, titled 'Cours et ressources pour enfant de 3 à 6 ans :'. Below the title is a PDF link 'Materiel 3 a 6 ans Semaine 5.pdf' and a video player showing a man and a child in a Capoeira studio. On the right, there are sections for 'Recent Articles' and 'Monthly Archives'.

We provide a mixed face-to-face and online experience through:

- Interactive whiteboard screens from each class guided by the teacher.
- The screen used is, as during the confinement, shared in real-time via Zoom and seen by both online and classroom students.
- A camera broadcasts in real-time what is happening in the classroom, allowing online students to see the classroom, their classmates at school and the teacher.
- The teacher is equipped with a microphone which broadcasts the sound via Zoom to the online students, allowing the children to interact with the teacher and their classmates, whether they are at school in Boulogne, in the South-West of France, in India or in Estonia.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting window. At the top, it says 'Hywel White 09:06'. The main content is a whiteboard titled 'Exercise 7 :'. Below the title is a task box: 'TASK 1 The child was asked to use the multiplication number facts given to help solve the related division fact.' There are five sub-tasks: (a) $4 \times 6 = 24$, therefore $24 \div 6 = 4$; (b) $9 \times 8 = 72$, therefore $72 \div 9 = 8$; (c) $5 \times 6 = 30$, therefore $30 \div 5 = 6$; (d) $3 \times 7 = 21$, therefore $21 \div 7 = \square$; (e) $2 \times 11 = 22$, therefore $\square \div \square = \square$. A cartoon character wearing a cap with a question mark is at the bottom right. A small video thumbnail of a person is visible in the top right corner of the whiteboard area.



What have you learnt most about this experience?

Although the students were able to continue learning remotely, what they have missed most is the social interaction with other students and their teachers. Students who have been able to return to school have really enjoyed seeing their classmates - whether in person or virtually on screen using the in-class video conferencing facilities.

For the students who are based remotely - we feel the use of a camera and broadcasting what is happening in the classroom in real-time has really helped to reduce the feeling of loneliness.

How do you want to apply this model of learning in the future?

The feedback from students and parents has been so positive that we can see great potential for the model we have been using. As Open Sky International prepares to open more schools internationally over the next few years, we are planning to introduce the same technology and tools into each school as it opens. This will provide innovative learning options that will benefit our students, families and teachers wherever the school may be located.



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