



Higher Horizons+



# Evaluating Virtual Learning

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- Quick overview of what we're delivering
  - How we've adapted our evaluation strategy
  - Things we're still thinking about and considering!

# The Higher Horizons Approach

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- We've initially focused on downloadable resources rather than 'live' sessions
- 3 – 5 uploaded to the website each week, and sent out to our teaching contacts in one, regular weekly email
- Decided that resources will focus on three key themes (3 of the 5 of our Progression Framework):
  - Information, Advice and Guidance
  - Curriculum support (particularly for key subjects of Maths and English)
  - Wellbeing
- Resources include:
  - Lesson packs, including worksheets or tasks to carry out
  - PDF Information booklets
  - Videos of our team presenting sessions
- Encouraging learners to complete tasks and contact members of our team on The Access Platform (TAP) to talk to them or ask for help (live chat functionality)

# Online Resources Portal



[www.higherhorizons.co.uk/resources](http://www.higherhorizons.co.uk/resources)

The screenshot shows the Higher Horizons website interface. At the top left is the logo 'H: Higher Horizons'. The main navigation bar is green and contains links for 'Students', 'Parents', 'Teachers', 'News', and 'Resources', along with a hamburger menu icon. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with buttons for 'ALL', 'CURRICULUM', 'INFO PACKS', and 'WELLBEING'. The main content area features three resource cards:

- Revision Tips (Y11 - Y13)**: An 'Info Packs' card with an illustration of a student at a desk. The text describes worksheets for young people and their parents/carers on how to get the most from their revision. It includes a 'LET'S GO!' button.
- Student Finance and Budgeting (Y10 - Y13)**: An 'Info Packs' card with an illustration of a student at a desk with a laptop and coffee. The text explains that the video and work pack teach about student finance and budgeting. It includes a 'LET'S GO!' button.
- Learning From Home (Y10 - Y13)**: A 'Wellbeing' card with an illustration of a laptop, smartphone, and mouse. The text offers practical tips on self-care and learning from home. It includes a 'LET'S GO!' button.

# Resource Examples



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## What is university? Introduction to Higher Education

0fs Uni Connect Programme 0:07 / 32:55

A video player interface showing a purple-themed video titled 'What is university? Introduction to Higher Education'. The video is part of the 'Uni Connect Programme' and is 32:55 long. The thumbnail features the Higher Horizons+ logo and several circular images of students in various settings, including a video call and a group of friends.

## Examples of Self-care



Plan your day and give yourself breaks



Get outside when you can, following government guidance



Calling or video-calling your friends to stay in touch



Be creative or practice a hobby



Read a book you've always wanted to read



Re-watch your favourite show on Netflix



## Revision Tips For Parents

Follow the tips below to help your child stay motivated to learn whilst at home!



- **Help your child to maintain a good routine whilst at home**  
Small things like ensuring your child gets 8 hours sleep, a good breakfast and regular breaks with healthy snacks will help them stay focused and give structure to their day.
- **Get outside**  
If possible, during one of your child's revision breaks, encourage them to go outside for at least 10 minutes – just a walk around the block or a kick about in the garden will do.
- **Try and minimise distractions**  
Help your child set up a space that is designated for them to study in and have resources on hand to help them stay organised. Try to ensure this space has little distractions e.g. no tv or gaming consoles. If possible, encourage your child to leave their phone in another room while they work.
- **Take an active role in their revision**  
Ask your child to teach you what they have been learning, this will enable them to recall information and explain their revision in their own words. You can also use your child's mind maps/flash cards/revision notes to help test what they can remember and what they understand.
- **Avoid working too many hours**  
Revision can be quite stressful for students and they need time to relax. Encourage your child to 'switch off' at a certain time each day to unwind by watching tv, reading a book, or having a group video call with friends!
- **Stay positive**  
This is stressful time for students so try and be as encouraging and motivating as possible. Everything will be disrupted this year, whether that is GCSE exams, missing a school leaving do, choosing which A Levels or BTECs to study, or waiting to find out about university places. It's okay not to have all the answers, but staying positive will help your child stay focused on keeping up with their school work while they wait for more information.

Sessions are:

- Video presentation (top left)
- PDF session on wellbeing when studying from home (bottom left)
- Revision or studying at home tips for parents (right)

# Programme Development

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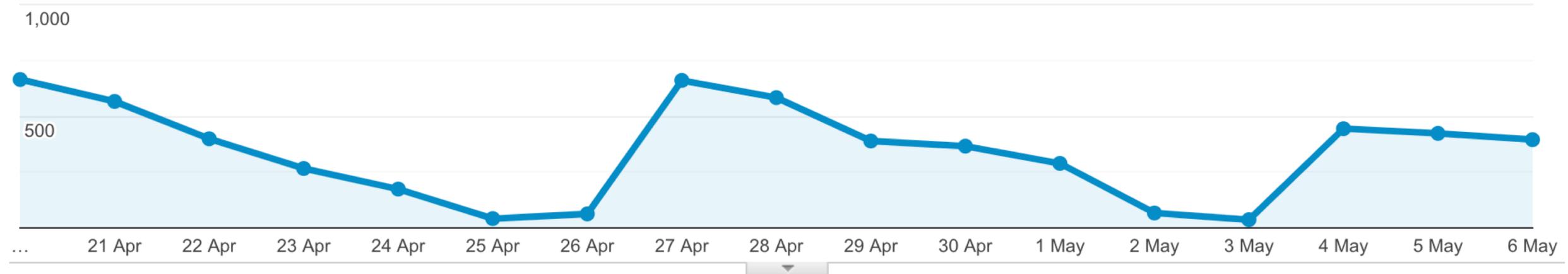


- Moving some programmes online with some tweaks:
  - White Water Writers – now a short story competition
  - Higher Horizons University Challenge (in partnership with Inspirational Learning Group)
  - Saturday Clubs – sent kit home to learners and have a closed group on Facebook for Learners and their parents where we post weekly tasks and video content
- As we move forward, combining resources into themed work packs based around year groups or activity type to provide more ‘structure’ for learners
- UNiFY Residential summer schools – approx. 400 Y10 learners signed up this year. They have been offered:
  - Higher Horizons University Challenge – design their dream university visit day via online platform and small tasks loaded with IAG
  - A ‘timetable’ linking some key resources together targeted at their age group, with dedicated time for live chat on our website

# Can We Evaluate This?

- Can we evaluate this? We know we will have to report on this period in our monitoring returns to the OfS.
- Can we use Google Analytics and page views to make claims about numbers of young people using resources or should we try to do something more?
- How do we know who is accessing them? And are they just viewing the pages or actually using the resources?

● Unique Page Views



# A New Evaluation Strategy

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- We evaluate face-to-face events based on length, type, and intensity. Tried to adapt this model for online provision:
- Category 1: Online resources (low intensity)
  - Devised simple post-resource survey embedded within sessions to try to capture data about learners, and very light-touch feedback on the sessions they've taken part in
  - Main aim is to monitor use and learner demographics with some process evaluation (“was it useful?” / “did you enjoy it?”)
- Category 2: Longer-term programmes organized through schools (higher intensity)
  - Pre- and Post-activity surveys to try to capture learner data and attitudinal change/distance travelled
  - More like how we evaluate face-to-face activities
  - Embedded into online platforms – e.g. have to complete the pre- survey before they access the task
- Teacher surveys asking if they are using our resources and if they think they're useful are sent to teachers along with links to resources, weekly.

# Embedded Links



## Higher Horizons Challenge (Funded by HH+)

Home

Resource Name	
<b>Pre-stage</b> Please note this stage must be completed before starting the Higher Horizons Challenge	
<b>Stage 1</b> Introduction and Project Manager	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Stage 2</b> Target Student	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Stage 3</b> Your Event	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Stage 4</b> Location and Programme	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Stage 5</b> Promotion and Social Media	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Stage 6</b> Presentations	<a href="#">Revisit</a>
<b>Post-stage</b> Please note this stage must be completed the officially complete the Higher Horizons Challenge	



# A New Evaluation Strategy

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- This plan is constantly evolving as we see what is and isn't working
- Current biggest challenge is lack of learners completing surveys
- Resources have been online for three weeks and we've had approx. 2000 unique viewers
- We've had 26 respondents to the survey for these activities
- We have just launched a prize draw incentive for learners who complete the surveys, but it's too soon to say if this has had an impact
- More intense programmes with embedded evaluation seem to be working better – 179 pre-activity survey responses so far, and 9 post-activity survey

- Tracking: online EMWPREP forms launched last week to attempt to capture data
- Depends on some school facilitation – links have to go to parents for pre-16s
- Links from schools may also make the request for data seem more legitimate to parents
- Where we already have learner data we will continue to link them to virtual activities in the database (where we have proof, via survey or from the school, they took part)
- We are desperate to link participants to activities in this period – particularly where they are learners we have engaged with before on face-to-face programmes and hopefully will again
- Could we do some analysis of the outcomes of those we managed to ‘keep hold of’ through the lockdown vs. the outcomes of those we ‘lost’?

# Conclusions

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- Everything has been moving so quickly it has all been a bit ad hoc and quickly adapted based on the current situation
- Do we need to take some time to scale right back and think about evaluation differently for virtual activities? Rewrite our theories of change, rewrite survey questions etc.
- Virtual activities are a very different experience from face-to-face ones, and there is a lot of research emerging about 'disadvantaged' young people's likelihood to take part, and their lack of access to tech etc.
- Are we rebuilding our models of evaluation from the ground up for a new environment or are we trying to make our old models fit the new virtual world?



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Thanks for listening. Any questions?

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