Written evidence submitted by Mr John Phillips

Education Committee: The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services

Evidence Supplied:

A Key Idea for helping young people's educational attainment

This is a substantial idea to help our young people for the covid difficulties and after. *It is both cost effective and easy to implement.*

Most students will have key subjects that are crucial to their education and career progression.

This idea provides a *fantastic opportunity to help students improve their required learning in their key subjects:-*

- Set up a UK wide online learning provision (using standard cloud based servers from companies like AWS or Google Cloud Platform)
- Employ senior education people with excellent, proven, teaching experience, just one or two in each core subject areas for both GCSE and A levels.
- Employ a few high level technical people experienced with online educational production tools, (perhaps from the Open University or MOOC's such as Future Learn), Add three senior project managers, one for content, one for video / text production and one for platform integration.
- Using these people, put together a set of quality 'revision online teaching programs' for each subject at final year level for GCSE and GCE Advanced level.
- If required licence and modify the existing MOOC technology from Future Learn or EDX or similar.
- These should be similar to the best MOOC's, with a login for each student, videos, revision notes, tests and a set of final 'exam' tests at the end.
- These final exam type questions can be selected from a large range of questions and be changed for each student and each time the student attempts them. To allow automatic auditing and scoring, questions can be in the form of selection from multiple answers.
- There should also be individual help provision for each student that can be booked by time slot and accessed to allow specific help and feedback from a qualified teacher using standard video conferencing tools like Zoom or Jitsey. (To create such a resource, these teachers can be selected from those who normally teach these subjects at the respective level and carried out on a fixed fee basis or voluntary basis).
- These 'revision MOOC's' should be open to all students across the UK and work across multiple examination boards allowing for different subject matter where necessary.

- These 'revision MOOC's' should be open to the students for as long as they need them, and they should be repeatable. The final test can be

  changed each week or month to provide an accurate measure of each student's final progress.
- The output from this revision process - all the tests and especially the final exam tests - are automatically assessed by the IT system and the student given a final 'revision grade'.
- This final results will be used to provide an additional 'grade' that can be used against the students written exam board results.
- Each student can enrol for each subject they feel is especially important to them and their future. Not finalising a 'revision MOOC's' course will not make any difference to their standard exam results. Each student will therefore be able to choose if their final result is linked to their standard exam results.

The Content of 'revision MOOC's'

This is crucially important. The 'revision MOOC's' should concentrate on the core learning aspects of each subject. They should highlight the key understanding pathways and especially the understanding of processes and systems rather than straightforward facts. Clearly, some subjects are more fact based, such as history, but most subjects can be set out as a set of learning stages that properly understood, and applied, will give the student command of the subject as a whole.

Whenever possible, these 'revision MOOC's' should test for this 'applied understanding' at each stage and at the final testing stage.

The costs

Provided the implementation id carried out as above, the total costs of creating these core subject based 'revision MOOC's' will be small, in the low millions £ (rather that the billions spent on covid testing et al). As such, these cost would represent a tiny fraction of the education cost of these key years in each students life.

The outcomes:

This new system will provide the following benefits:

- Allow each student to make sure they have the level of understanding they require before they move on to A levels, jobs, or further education.
- This 'revision MOOC's' provision, ensures a cost effective and efficient way for the UK as a whole to limit the damage done by this covid year to all student for their key educational years.
- As the student can retake, multiple times, each course(s), they can, if they wish continue to attempt a higher final grade. As such, this provides a new and significant opportunity for students to revise at their chosen level in their chosen subject without compromise.
- The additional grade from the 'revision MOOC's' (if agreed by each student) will be formally awarded and linked to their standard exam result as a revision grade.
- These revision grades will help Universities, schools, colleges and employers to consider the student's progress during this covid year.

- The success of such a scheme may provide a new way for students to learn and revise in future years and perhaps become a standard system of education provision.

Window of Opportunity

These 'revision MOOC's' should be finalised by May 2021, before the end of the exam period in 2021. This provides a window for the implementation to be achieved given the size of the task. Purchasing / utilising one of the existing MOOC technology platforms will provide an easy path for this implementation. Writing the scripts, creating the videos, writing the revision notes and tests are the most time consuming stages.

Risks

The risks are as follows:

- Collusion; Students may attempt to collude with each other or parents to gain better results. This will occur, but this does not in itself mean that the students who use the platform diligently are compromised, as any grades are only appended to those already attained.
- Successful implementation of the platform; Minimal risk if the current, proven technology is utilised.
- Scaling across the UK; As above, suppliers of cloud services eg Google Cloud Platform can provide almost limitless resource as and when needed.
- Content delivery; Selection of teachers well versed in the core subjects who have both good teaching skills and an understanding of MOOC technologies will mitigate this risk.
- Timing; This is not a difficult project to achieve within a short timescale. Selection of experienced project managers from a commercial background with good understanding of the various technologies and processes will ensure that timescales can be met provided there is little delay in starting the project.

Please feel free to call me at any time to discuss this idea.

Thank you for your interest and time.

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Authors Profile:

This idea is put forward from extensive knowledge of educational MOOC's, many years work within strategic business consultancy, the direct management of several businesses and high level experience of IT & emerging technologies.

Additional Note:

When considering this idea, it was viewed by asking *'what are we attempting to achieve for our students during this difficult covid period'.*

Many observations currently being considered do not seem to start from defining the right question. The proposals being put forward regarding exam results and how to measure them et al, confuse the benefit for the student with what is possible or achievable within the exam administration systems

This idea goes directly at the solution for the student – *to gain the education they need to successfully progress their career paths.*

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