



[www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts)

## CPL Podcast: Setting Up Online: Remote Teaching Special Part I

**Host:** Carly Boreland

**With:** Rosemary Henzell

### INTRODUCTION:

**Carly Boreland:** Welcome to the CPL Podcast for the New South Wales Teachers Federation. I'm Carly Boreland and I'm the Assistant Director of the CPL. Today I'm talking with Rosemary Henzell and this is one of a three-part series about what you could try with your online teaching. We are recording these during our remote learning setting here in Sydney and we hope that these are going to be really timely for teachers. Our first episode will be about how to set up a class for teaching online and what you might need to change about your practice or about your planning strategies to make things work well for you. Rosemary, welcome.

**Rosemary Henzell:** Hi, thank you.

**Carly Boreland:** Okay Rosemary, so let's hear a little bit about you and your current situation and we want to keep these fast for teachers because we know that time is of the essence and any precious planning time you have juggling family and other things is going to be very valuable, but I think it's important that we understand who we're talking to and get a bit of context. So, can you tell us about you and how it's going for you?

**Rosemary Henzell:** Yeah, sure. So, I'm currently at a Willoughby Girls High School and I'm an English and Drama teacher. So, one Drama class in year 10, a couple of senior classes, a couple of junior classes. Yeah, I'm also the head teacher of ELA/D and literacy. So that's an added challenge and try to run my teams and support, you know, kind of a whole-school approach there as well. You know, we do a lot of work through *Google Classroom*, things like that. So, managing our usual school timetable as much as possible, but also trying to build in that flexibility, I guess within this kind of remote learning stage.

**Carly Boreland:** And we want to talk first of all about how you set things up and that's about being manageable for you as well as your students. So, can you tell me why you think having something like a weekly structure around your plan for yourself is really important in an online environment?

**Rosemary Henzell:** I mean, absolutely, like we know we try to be organised always, right, but I think we can be a little bit more responsive in the usual teaching environment. I began the weekly planner, I actually began a fortnightly planner, in last year's lockdown to save my own sanity because it was such a



[www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts)

## CPL Podcast: Setting Up Online: Remote Teaching Special Part I

massive undertaking to try to manage this new world that I thought if I don't have everything really set up for myself, I'm going to go crazy. So, I began to use a digital planner for every class. I would set up two weeks-worth of work. I would embed everything in that I would schedule all my Zoom calls. I would set up all my classroom assignments, my questions, and I would just know that it was there and then I could post that to my students, and they would know what was coming. So, I just, I learned last year that it just, it relaxed, everybody, everyone just felt organised and prepared and like they could, they could get through that. They knew what was coming and I think, yeah, mentally for us as teachers, as well as the students, it's really important to have that, that longer term vision and have a really solid plan in place.

**Carly Boreland:** And what kind of planning or how are you structuring those lessons and the workflow so that students can keep going without you, I suppose is the important part here, isn't it? Because they can't so easily pop up to the staff room at lunchtime, or just ask you another quick question or, or maybe they can, depending on how you set it up. Can you tell me some of the things that are working well for you and, and I'm also really interested to know, are you trying to achieve the same amount as usual or how's that working?

**Rosemary Henzell:** Sure, yeah, look, I've taken from the very beginning last year I took the view that we can't just try to do things exactly as normal. I don't think it's fair on us and I don't think it's fair on the students. So, I've really tried to be quite, quite flexible in terms of how much I'm trying to achieve and to really think about what is essential. What do I really need them to do? My main thing has been, I try to balance a little bit of contact through Zoom, where we can see each-other and they can hear my voice. I do a lot of videos. I really like videos because they can watch it at their own pace. They can pause it, they can re-watch it, they can see me. I use Aloom software where I appear. So they can have that contact with me, but take it at their own pace and then I've reworked a number of my digital presentations to be a little bit more self-paced and self-managed so where I have an old presentation that relied on me and my delivery, I've adapted that and added things or changed things so that they can step themselves through in a really clear way and then I have a question and answer document, which with each class. So when, wherever, we're kind of technically in lesson, I'll monitor that, and they can ask me anything and I'll get back to them within about five minutes.

**Carly Boreland:** Okay. So, kind of like the equivalent of hands up or ask a question or come and see me and they just type into that and then you can just type back.

**Rosemary Henzell:** Yeah, yeah. So sometimes it might just be a procedural question, like, you know, Miss which document are we working on? Or when do we need to submit that? And I can quickly let them know and sometimes they're having or, they've got an actual question about some part of the work that they want to double check their understanding or their idea at some point and we can talk



[www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts)

## CPL Podcast: Setting Up Online: Remote Teaching Special Part I

about that. So, it just, again, it lets them know that I'm there and that I'm in contact without that constant Zooming.

**Carly Boreland:** Something I was wondering about in terms of delivery, I suppose and I think this always takes planning is when you're in a classroom setting, there can be too much teacher talk time. And I've always been really keen on just trying to stop talking and let the students do some writing and then make some time to read what they've written or, you know, whatever it is that you want them to be doing and that takes a lot of conscious effort and I think planning because otherwise you just talk until somebody else talks. In an online setting, that could be quite different though. So have you thought about what you're doing there or how you're planning the, the actual time that you have, maybe it's a timetabled session that you have with the students and, and how much you talk and how much they talk?

**Rosemary Henzell:** Yeah, look, I mean, my goal as a teacher generally, is to shut up. I want as little of my own voice in the classroom as possible. I actually do find online teaching more challenging there, cause I'm very good in a classroom at setting up student talk time and student discussion and student engagement. So that has been a big question: how do I try to manage that? I use my Zooms for very particular purposes. So, there are times with year 12 where I need to kind of give a lecture style because that's just what is needed. But often what I'll try to do, if I do have a thing I need to talk to that's when I'll make a video, therefore I'm trying to use the Zoom lessons where we have the ability to talk to each other. I actually try to use breakout rooms as much as possible. I try to put them with their usual table groups. So, they're working with familiar students and familiar voices if that's what they want to do and that encourages them to talk. So, I basically get in, I welcome everybody. We have that chance to connect. I set them up with the activity and then I go over to you, I'm opening breakout rooms off you go. I will either kind of, you know, monitor around and check in or I'll just wait for them to summon me if they need to, depending on the class and how, you know, what I know they need.

**Carly Boreland:** So, it sounds like the resources then that you're recommending to keep it pretty simple. You've got *Zoom*; you've got something called *Loom* where you can make videos. What else are you using?

**Rosemary Henzell:** So, *Google Classroom* and *Google Apps* are really my main platform and they have been for a long time. So, moving into the online environment wasn't as stressful for me as I know it was for some people because I actually had everything available. My biggest learning, I think I had last year when we did this was particularly with my year seven class. They became so overwhelmed by the number of platforms and the number of documents that they were being asked to navigate. So, I think one of my biggest learnings was simplify wherever possible and to build everything into a single document where you can. So, I use interactive digital booklets with Google docs. So, I just built those



[www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts)

## CPL Podcast: Setting Up Online: Remote Teaching Special Part I

when I needed them and they would just be a single document where everything was in there. So, it links to YouTube videos, links to different resources, online links to presentations. I would build everything in there. So particularly my younger years, they only had to go to that document. Everything they needed was there. I laid it out really clearly for them and that worked really well because they weren't trying to navigate too many platforms. I do the same thing with the digital planner that I use, which is an interactive Google slide where I've, I've animated it so they can click to the particular day and everything they need for the lesson is in there. They don't need to be rushing around five different places trying to figure it out and I think that students appreciate it and it's just simpler for everybody. So, they'd been the really big ones for me.

**Carly Boreland:** It's kind of like the digital version of a lot of things that I think have been really good practice in classrooms, kind of old school things. Like I used to always have one-word document with a staple in it which later became available online and that had everything planned out: assessment, date, questions, schedule for when work was due and especially for senior classes, they knew the whole topic straight up front and they could go ahead or backwards. Then the lessons were about getting things done and refining skills and understanding and discussion. But also where you're talking there about not have, it's kind of the, the internet equivalent of not having a 10,000 worksheets that need to be cut out and pasted in and find page 27 and use it to answer the questions on this sheet and then cut this out. Okay. So, it's really just taking those good practices from classroom and moving them into the online and trying not to overwhelm the students. Which also means we might not be overwhelmed as well.

**Rosemary Henzell:** Yeah. I mean, I've got to say, I have a lot of tabs on my computer, but we're getting there.

**Carly Boreland:** So if we're trying to help people get set up with online teaching, it might be the first time they're doing it. They might've tried last year and had a lot of regrets. Your, advice would be to plan for a week, or if things are going longer a fortnight perhaps, and to have a planner which the students are included in as well. So that for each topic and lesson, they have one place to go to, to find the plan and the resources for that lesson and where possible to just have one document that they're working within. Then to use a very limited number of carefully selected platforms, I suppose we would, you're calling them and that might be to cut out the talk time by making videos that can be accessible at other times, making the most of the time we have together through small chat groups and existing class structures that students are already comfortable with so that they can do more talking and working together in a safe, kind of a space and to reduce rather than add the resources but also the requirements. I suppose to think about the kind of cognitive load that you're putting onto the students not only in what you expect them to achieve, but in what you expect them to access. I think that's an



[www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://www.cpl.asn.au/podcasts)

## CPL Podcast: Setting Up Online: Remote Teaching Special Part I

important point because working on a computer screen is a different kind of tiring compared to sitting in a classroom and that's important to remember.

**Rosemary Henzell:** I think the real thing is we've got to find what works for us and experiment with a number of different things until we find what really suits us and something that is working really well for one person won't work perfectly for another. But I think the experimentation is really important because we do find, you know, kind of our sweet spot and that's really what we want to be trying to aim for.

**Carly Boreland:** Rosemary, thanks for sharing your tips about how to get started and set up with teaching online and looking forward to talking to you more about other dimensions of what we need to be doing to support ourselves and our students.

You've been listening to the CPL Podcast for the New South Wales Teachers Federation. I'm Carly Boreland, the Assistant Director of the CPL. I've been speaking with Rosemary Henzell about how to get set up with online teaching and to find out more and to listen to further podcasts, you can visit our website at [cpl.asn.au/podcasts](http://cpl.asn.au/podcasts).

**Rosemary Henzell:** currently teaches English at Willoughby Girls High School. She completed her Master of Teaching in 2013, having spent seven years as an adult ESL teacher and TESOL trainer in Australia and Japan. Her MTeach Action Research Project investigated how to raise student confidence and agency in essay writing.

Rosemary is part of the Professional Learning Team and has presented to both staff and students on Growth Mindset and Habits of Mind.