



Strode College

Strode College is a further education college in Somerset. They offer a broad range of opportunities ranging from sixth form study, university level courses, apprenticeships and courses for adults. Strode College began their AV1 journey back in 2020 with two AV1s. They have since rented 8 more from Somerset County Council to support students who are unable to be physically present at college.

Amy Pope, Additional Learning Support Manager, explains some of the reasons why AV1 has been used at the college.

“We have used the AV1s with multiple students and most have engaged with it well. One particular student, whose mental health was particularly poor, joined lessons with the AV1 on the days he felt up to it. Other students have used them more continuously to help access their lessons remotely. This included one student, with complex medical needs, who needed to shield during the pandemic. However, for the most part, the AV1s have been used to support students with chronic fatigue syndrome.”

AV1 acts as both a social and educational tool. Amy describes the progress the students have been making academically since joining lessons through AV1;

“For some, the biggest impact has been allowing them to stay caught up with work. AV1 has enabled one of our students to take on another course, that we don’t offer, at a different college. Another student completing one A level with us has now increased to two because of the access she is getting with the AV1. The students have used their AV1s alongside moodle to submit work to their teachers in the same way. I’ve not had any feedback from tutors that these students are falling behind.”





Amy goes on to explain how the AV1s have allowed the students to have experiences at school they previously would have missed out on;

“We had a student who really wanted to attend a science trip and since they weren’t physically able to, the robot went along instead. This gave them the ability to access the whole trip from home. I know this made a real difference to her. We’ve even had students in school bring the AV1 down to the lunch hall so that they can chat to their friend as they normally would”

Managing multiple AV1s in a larger school setting can present initial challenges. Amy comments on the reaction from both staff and students when the AV1s were introduced.

“Our students were very adaptable and weren’t phased by the technology coming into the classroom. However, there was some initial concern coming from teachers around added workload. Once it was explained that it was just a matter of turning the AV1 on at the start of the lesson most concerns were eased. We gave the responsibility to the tutors to transport the AV1s from lesson to lesson. I would suggest a school tries 1 or 2 AV1s before expanding to more”

Amy comments on the freedom and autonomy that AV1 has provided to some of the students;

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The students are able to move the position of the AV1 and put their hand up to contribute. Speaking through the AV1 is also much clearer than speaking through a laptop. If the student wants to be heard they know they will be. This makes a big difference to their sense of control.

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