

A Guide to Distance Learning



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This toolkit provides a guide to support your community as you consider virtual instruction, asynchronous learning experiences, and remote learning options.

We have compiled a list of common considerations and resources that communities of educators and leaders are using as they navigate distance learning.

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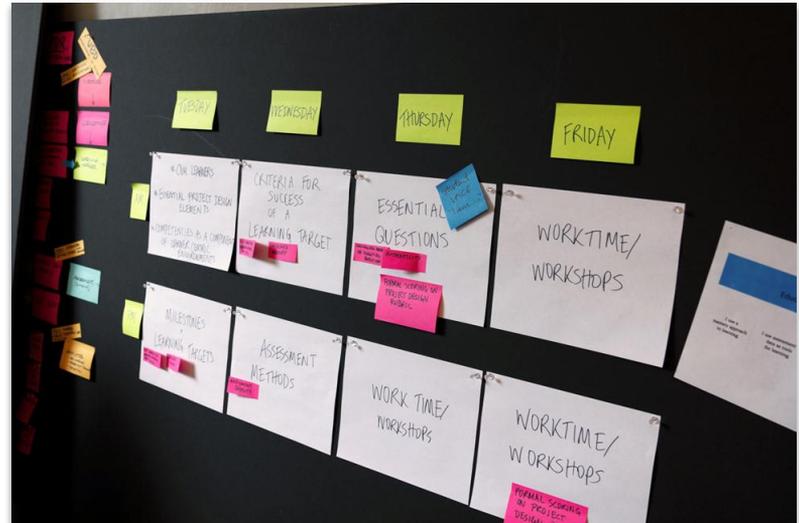
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Create a Learning Plan

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Before determining the details of what distance learning will look like in your school, there are key questions that should be discussed and communicated to create alignment across all of the educators at your site.

1. What are the principles of learning that you are carrying into the distance program?
2. What are the primary goals of learning during this period of time?
3. What are the new opportunities that may arise from learning at home?
4. What are the practical considerations and restraints of your school community?
5. What are the new responsibilities and expectations for educators?



How might we continue to live our school values?

Gather Information with a Caretaker Survey

- a. Do you have devices (laptop/desktop/tablet) and wifi access at home?
- b. Do you have a device for every person in your home or will devices be shared?
- c. Which devices are available for your child/ren to use?
- d. Will you be available to guide your not-yet-reading learner?
- e. Will your child/ren have a designated learning space?
- f. Will your child/ren have access to: pencils, crayons, markers, paper, scissors, glue?
- g. Do you have a printer at home?
- h. Do you have headphones?
- i. Is there anything else we should know about your child/ren's ability to engage in distance learning?

ALIGNING ON PRACTICE

Questions	Considerations
How often will learners be in synchronous virtual meetings?	Sitting in a virtual meeting for long periods of time is challenging. Ideally, learners are in virtual groups for 20-60 minutes at a time depending on their age. Some schools may choose to go entirely asynchronous, but while this may be the only option in some instances, maintaining a semblance of community is important.
What will synchronous meetings look like?	Synchronous times are best used for connecting the community. Morning meeting routines are great choices for these times, as are mini-lessons and overviews of the day's expectations.
What work will be completed asynchronously?	Try to move as many activities as possible to asynchronous. Think about what students will be able to do independently. What might they do together with a family member? What are the opportunities for students to become teachers and exert agency over their learning?
How often will teachers check in with learners in small groups and/or 1:1?	Small group lessons and teacher-student conferences are excellent ways for educators to support continued learner progress without excessive screen time. However, the challenge is in helping learners know when to join a virtual break-out session. For younger learners, this will be near to impossible without a lot of support and is therefore not encouraged.
How will educators communicate daily expectations to learners?	Choose a maximum of two modes of communication - such as daily Cards and a Calendar. Every morning, spend a few minutes at the end of your meeting to review the routines and expectations of the day.
How will educators communicate with parents or caretakers?	Clarifying learning goals and communicating learning activities are of heightened importance in a distance scenario. Limit confusion by choosing a maximum of two modes of communication. In advance of learning, share the planned schedule and details of anything requiring family support. Remind caretakers where and how often they can find assessment data.
How will learners be assessed?	Now is the perfect opportunity to flex your authentic assessment muscles. Design projects that will help learners demonstrate mastery. When learners are engaging asynchronously, craft daily targeted feedback.

Choose a Daily Structure

CONSTRUCTING ROUTINES

Disruptions in routine can lead to heightened anxiety, so it is critical to swiftly create new routines.

In crafting a schedule, think about the amount of time children will join for synchronous learning and what they may be able to work on asynchronously.

Consider

- The age and attention span of students
- The continued need for social connection
- The learning goals
- The parts of the learning goals that require direct instruction
- Needs of caregivers

For each section of the schedule, identify the new processes and routines that will be required. Plan how you will introduce and practice those routines so that learners can become increasingly independent. Aim for daily schedule regularity to avoid confusion, while recognizing that new routines will likely require iteration. Invite learners to share what is working for them and what is not.

A strong distance learning schedule is a balancing act. We want to help learners continue to progress on identified goals, while being aware of screen time recommendations. We want learners to be free to explore their own interests, but large swaths of unstructured time may strain caregivers. The Altitude Learning platform is designed to support this balance, so lean in!

SAMPLE SCHEDULES

K - 2nd

9:00 Community Meeting
 9:20 Playlist Time
 12:00 Lunch and Break
 1:00 Community Meeting*
 1:20 Afternoon Activity*

Some
Family
Support
Required

*Alternatives:

1. Shorten the day
2. Extend the morning playlist time through the afternoon

3rd - 5th

9:00 Community Meeting
 9:20 Expectations for Morning Work
 9:30 Playlist Time + Small Groups
 12:00 Lunch and Break
 1:00 Community Meeting
 1:20 Expectations for Afternoon Work
 1:30 Playlist Time + Teacher Office Hours

MS and HS Schedule Ideas

9:00 Choose your own Fitness Activity
 10:00 Community Meeting*
 9:20 Mini-Lesson
 9:30 Playlist + Small Group Lessons
 12:00 Lunch and Break
 1:00 Community Meeting
 1:20 Mini-Lesson
 1:30 Playlist + Teacher Office Hours
 2:15 Passion Project

By Period/Block

10-20 minutes: Mini-Lesson
 30-60 minutes: Ind/Collab Work
 5-10 minutes: Closing/Exit ticket

Learner Determined Scheduling

9:00 Community Meeting
 9:30 Lesson Sign Up
 9:40 Independent Study + Lessons
 1:00 Community Refresh
 1:20 Independent Study + Lessons

*a later start will help families with children of varied ages and follows adolescent learning recommendations

If...



Then...



Or...

families have multiple children, limited devices, and/or limited bandwidth



create school-wide schedules that stagger activities requiring devices



think about how learners might write directions in a notebook at the end of a meeting, or receive printed playlists through the mail

you want to design a light or optional daily schedule



Stream/email a list of activity ideas



create a few optional Cards each week

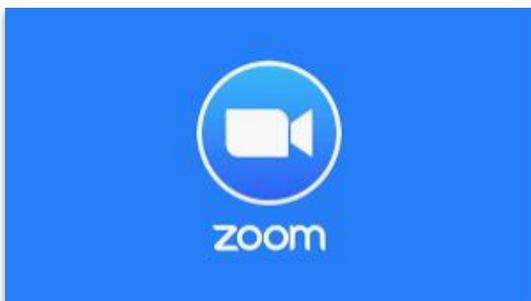
Establish Your Virtual Home Base

SYNCHRONOUS RESOURCES

Students will likely be unaccustomed to logging into a virtual meeting space. Plan how you might make this process as easy as possible. Choose one platform - such as Zoom or Google Hangout - that you will use consistently and think about how students will access the meeting links.

How to Incorporate Synchronous Learning in the Altitude Learning Platform:

1. Add the video link to a step in a Card. Don't forget to include the time. You can also Stream this link to guardians and students as a reminder.
2. Create questions in a Card that can act as an exit ticket from the synchronous lesson and gives you feedback about what students learned during the lesson.
3. Assign video lesson follow-up cards from Scorebook for students that need extra help.



To get started, download [Zoom](#) onto your computer.

- Watch this [video](#) on how to create a meeting and invite participants.
- Use Zoom to screencast and chat with learners
- Additional Features: Breakout Rooms and Whiteboard with annotation



To get started, go to [Google Hangouts](#)

- At the top, click New conversation
- Enter name, email or phone
- Type your message
- Press Enter

To launch a Google Hangouts from Google Calendar click [here](#)

Note: Bullying and unkind behavior can occur during distance learning just as easily as on a school bus; be sure to review digital citizenship expectations and clarify how learners might get help if they need it.

ASYNCHRONOUS RESOURCES

Altitude Learning has you covered! Use the Steps feature to give clear directions and links to video clips and other digital resources.

Attach images and videos and materials that may be printed. Create activities that enable learners to engage offline, but still document evidence of learning that can be reviewed and assessed.

Consider creating a “Distance Learning” unit. Share your creative ideas with colleagues by publishing the unit to the library.



March 20 Daily Card

This card has ideas for daily activities for Ms. Griffin's 1st grade class on March 20. Please choose at least 1 math, 1 ELA and 1 extra activity!

✓ Steps

- ✓ [15 min] Watch this math [video](#) and have your child participate!
- ✓ [15 min] Complete this [online](#) ELA activity.
- ✓ [60 min] Complete this science experiment and take a video in the student work section below of your child with the finished product!



- ✓ [30 min] Play this math [game](#) with your child
- ✓ [30 min] Read to your child
- ✓ [30 min] Play this sight words [game!](#)

Create Recorded Lessons:

Use [Loom](#), [Screencastify](#), Quicktime or [EdPuzzle](#) to screencast a slide presentation and add the link to a Card.

- Use for mini-lessons and introduction to new content
- Ask students to complete a note-catcher (linked via Google Drive) or add comments “in-line” with the Loom video.

A Few Online Resources:

- **ELA:** IXL, Quizlet, NoRedInk, Newsela
- **Math:** Khan Academy, IXL, Prodigy, Math Playground
- **Science:** BrainPOP, Mystery Science, PBS Kids
- **Social Studies:** PebbleGo, iCivics, Teaching Tolerance, Crash Course World History
- **World Languages:** Quizlet, SeñorWooly (Spanish), This Is Language, Duolingo

Tips & Tricks

INSPIRATION

What additional content/curriculum resources might support my lessons? Explore some of the tools and ideas that you can include within your daily activities and lessons with learners.

K-2

Create work plans (also known as Bingo Boards) that can be printed.

During community meetings, help learners set goals for the day and write/draw their own plans.

Have parents or caretakers log into Altitude as students to get more detailed directions (and for an easier way for students to Capture evidence of learning at home).

Collect audio recordings of stories and record yourself giving activity directions. Add the audio links to Cards. Create audio versions of reading practice that learners can use to self-correct.

Children can demonstrate their learning to an authentic audience (ie family members) by writing books and reading them to others, creating and performing plays and songs, and constructing structures and art for home gallery experiences.

Send home additional resources such as links to [live storytimes](#), digital fitness for kids, craft ideas, cooking shows, etc.

Share class phone numbers and encourage learners to check in with each other.

Schedule weekly/bi-monthly conferences with parent, student, and teacher to review goals and progress.

Click [here](#) for more ideas.

3rd - 12th Tips and Tricks

To shorten prep time, create Card templates, then copy, switch out links, and assign.

Encourage student collaboration with group projects/activities. Create a Card and assign it to a small group. Link a Google Doc/Sheet/Slide for the collaborative product. Groups can sync through the Card Message Board.

BREATHE!

Check out Amazing Educational Resources' [list](#) of free edtech tools to change up your Card activities.

Use what would have been instructional time to instead review student work and provide formative feedback.

Create a Passion Project Card or series of Cards connected by Next Steps to guide learners in exploring areas of interest - from a research project on contagion to learning how to play piano.

Create a collaborative space where students can share music playlists, apps that are helping them cope, etc. Streamline your tools by using the Card Message Board or try some others (Google Doc/Padlet).

Places you would visit on a field trip - museums, zoos, landmarks - have resources on their websites. Send learners on virtual field trips or have them create travel guides.

Earn parental goodwill by adding a laundry folding or lunch preparing Card.

Invite learners to lead small group meetings for peers.