

Center for Teaching and Learning

Student Initiatives

Tips and Tricks for Distance Teaching and Learning

- Develop norms for your virtual classrooms and review frequently with students and uphold them consistently.
- Keep your class size as small as possible so that the instructor can see all faces in one screen.
- Build in age-appropriate social/emotional activities to every session/day (important as kids navigate this pandemic).
- Build in community building activities at the start of week/school year for students to get to know each other/form bonds.
- Provide students an opportunity to share how they are feeling at least once daily (either anonymously or sharing out).
- Provide move breaks for younger grades, at least once every 30 minutes. Can be a quick dance break, some exercise moves, something to get them out of their seats.
- Always orient students in how to use any new tech or apps.
- Keep the Zoom open/monitored by teacher during asynchronous time, so students can pop back on and ask questions as necessary - we have found this to be vital, especially for students in the younger elementary grades.
- Provide detailed goals/tasks for students to accomplish during asynchronous time - keep them posted in the Zoom/virtual classroom.
- Use a timer posted in the Zoom for when students should rejoin/turn cameras back on.
- Change up the teaching mode frequently to keep the environment dynamic - lecture - demo - short videos. Use a second camera or document camera for how-tos and demos, science demos, close-ups.
- Use tools like Flip-grid, Desmos, etc. as a way for students to share-out work and keep them accountable
- Gamify, gamify, gamify: use collaborative online sites to create content-based games - Jeopardy, Kahoot, Solvemoji, Skribbl.io, etc. This allows the opportunity to have students “work as a team” and earn points even while having to do the activities individually, because they are actively trying to score points for their team.
- Change up the “voice” every 10-15 minutes; if you have a primary teacher doing most of the talking, find opportunities for support staff who are also involved with facilitating to speak (such as facilitating a share-out of student work, leading a game, reviewing criteria/goals, reviewing iterative content, etc.). Just another way to keep them engaged by mixing it up.

(Strategies, continued)

- Have a common activity going at the start or just before starting to engage kids who are on time or early while waiting for the rest to join the Zoom.
- Incorporate opportunities for students to annotate on the/your screen as often as possible. Set ground rules (no scribbling randomly, etc.), though. Examples of this are: filling in a KWL table as a group, drawing lines to match structure/function or other matching-type content, stamp their data on a number line, etc.
- Use polls to increase engagement and get student feedback and input.
- Document the training for your teams on how to appropriately use your virtual platform plus the reporting process should an inappropriate activity take place.
- Keep your beginning and ending times consistent and adhere to the schedule shared with parents.

