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.