



Acknowledge the challenges of distance learning for yourself.

Teaching in a distance learning format presents many different obstacles than the face-to-face environment. You must understand that you will need to step outside your regular routines and adapt to a new normal. This includes letting go of your own expectations for perfection, recognizing the need for experimentation, and accepting the potential for committing errors along the way.



Understand the obstacles facing students and their families.

Students and families may face limits in their ability to access distance learning formats due to factors such as device availability or internet connectivity. In addition, distractions may abound for students and families who face stressors at home (e.g., job loss, health concerns, juggling childcare and work obligations). You should be flexible to these obstacles and continue to do your best to empathize with and accommodate students and families.



Communicate expectations clearly.

You should establish precisely what the learning objectives are for a given lesson and communicate expectations for distance learning with students and families in writing and “live” reminders (e.g., video chat, phone calls). Learning targets and directions should be simple and easy for students and families to understand without compromising students’ ability to engage in higher-order thinking and rigorous instructional tasks.



Facilitate interactions with and collaboration between students.

Human connections are hard to come by in the wake of school closures and stay-at-home orders. You should try your best to interact with individual students and families (e.g., via email or phone) to provide feedback on progress and to check on wellbeing. Furthermore, you should plan and implement activities that encourage students to collaborate on assignments and provide peer-to-peer feedback.



Engage in continuous improvement efforts.

Like in the regular classroom, you should continue looking for new and innovative ways to support students and improve instructional planning and delivery. Try to reflect on how you plan and implement distance learning to identify techniques that work for you and are effective with your students. You should also explore new tools, resources, and strategies to engage in continuous improvement related to distance learning.



Looking for More Guidance?



[Toolkit: Planning and Delivering Online Instruction During COVID-19 School Closures](#)

In this toolkit, Hanover Research provides guidance for teachers transitioning to distance learning due to COVID-19 school closures. It describes strategies to determine the availability and capabilities of online instructional resources, reviews effective instructional practices, and provides an inventory of open educational resources and guidelines for online instruction.

Works Cited

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