

Introduction

Key themes that should frame continuous learning in your classroom:

- Focus on essential learning
- Emphasize relationships and connectivity in this new learning environment
- Prioritize socio-emotional wellness equally to academic engagement
- Recognize that decisions impact and must support all students
- Be flexible and ready to adapt or pivot as needs arise
- Encourage patience and support and extend grace to all

Student Support*

**From the NMPED Continuous Learning Plan Implementation Guide*

General Recommendations

- 1) Establish office hours for teacher availability/check-ins. Consider platforms for communities with access and conference calls for communities with limited access. Ensure families and students have access to counselors as well as teachers.
- 2) Use common platforms (suggested or already in use) across a district to alleviate any confusion for parents and students.
- 3) Determine whether students are completing work online or traditionally (e.g., submitting photos of work, delivery of completed packets).
- 4) Keep variables in mind when you plan your lessons considering students may have:
 - a. Multiple classes
 - b. Other responsibilities
 - c. Personal or family illness
 - d. Limited access to devices and internet, etc.

Questions to consider for every grade band and content area

- 1) How might the makeup of each family impact the way they engage with continuous learning (culture, race, family structure, location - urban/rural, financial resources, social-emotional support, etc.)?
- 2) How can we provide culturally and linguistically relevant resources and instruction for each particular student and family?
- 3) How can we see this family and their student's learning through a trauma-informed lens, particularly given the health crisis?
- 4) In what ways can we allow families to creatively, individualize continuous learning?

Educator Support*

**From the NMPED Continuous Learning Plan Implementation Guide*

- **Be safe**
 - Follow the public health order when preparing the packets; do not have more than five people congregating.
 - Kits should be consumable, considering the possible transmission of the viral particles if returned.
- **Provide opportunities for voice and choice**
 - Address various learning styles (movement, art, music)
 - Encourage conversation and discussion
 - Honor home/other languages and world views
 - Encourage reading and writing through project-based learning, when applicable
 - Accept student-developed projects that demonstrate competency
- **Empower learners to take charge of their own learning.**
 - Create a daily checklist of exactly what students should do each day, with an estimate of how long it should take. This helps provide structure and organization.
 - It is important to have flexible deadlines for work completion, which means students will need to be tracking their assignments. Use tools to help them accomplish this.
 - Encourage students to share their ideas for learning. You could have them come up with their own way to demonstrate understanding or application of skills related to a specific topic, such as writing a poem about irrational numbers, building a model of an historical event, or developing an interpretive dance to show how atoms behave in a liquid.
- **Keep your sessions short**
 - It is important not to overwhelm our students with work. It is unrealistic to think that students can complete a full day of instructional material and a full day of homework online.
 - NMPED recommended guidelines for maximum student commitment in terms of direct instruction each day are as follows:
 - Pre-K : 30 minutes
 - Grades K-1: 45 minutes
 - Grades 2-3: 60 minutes
 - Grades 4-5: 90 minutes
 - Grades 6-12: 30 minutes per teacher (3 hours max in a day)
 - The guidelines above are meant for any delivery model -- packets, on-line, hybrid, etc. Additional reading time or storytelling is always encouraged. Teachers may find that they have to adjust after their first week.
- **Connect learning to experiences that are meaningful and valuable.**
 - Be open to taking appropriate risks in trying new tasks, activities, and ways to engage students. This unprecedented situation allows you to insert some creativity into your teaching. This is an opportunity to have students collect data from their environment, analyze various aspects, and reflect on what their analysis means.

- These learning experiences offer authentic opportunities to focus on key concepts, knowledge, and skills. They emphasize interaction and creativity and involve a balance of on-screen and off-screen tasks that help connect to previous learning and the current curriculum.
- Process and product learning may be easier to track than traditional assignments.
- **Beware of adding extra writing.**
 - Often, instructors just translate student attendance, participation, and discussion requirements into written response requirements (for example, chapter summaries). This increases both their workload and yours in ways that do not always benefit learning because this type of assignment may not align to your instructional objective and may overload students across the content areas.
 - Allow students to [participate through other formats to deepen their learning](#) and keep them more dynamically engaged with the material. Asking them to post a visual/audio response, lead a discussion thread, or share some extended learning on social media are all ways you can foster deeper interaction with course concepts and create more meaningful student learning.
- **Be ready to give up some control and trust your students.**
 - Give your students choices. When it comes to assignments, projects, readings, and other materials, giving the students options can increase their sense of responsibility and intrinsic motivation.
 - Have the students lead.
 - Ask students to respond to a discussion prompt you create or have them generate their own threads of discussion based on their ideas and questions that have come up as they've explored course materials.
 - Have students evaluate and give feedback on peers' presentations and projects. It inspires the students to be more innovative and thoughtful in their work. We tend to be more motivated to perform well for a group of our peers than for a single instructor.
- **Stay connected. Monitor morale and workload of students, adjust if necessary.**
 - Use quick check-in videos, if possible: 3 to 5 minute videos including reminders, key vocabulary for the week, updates on course materials, shout-outs to specific students who are doing a good job, and highlights of particularly interesting discussion threads help the students know that you are present in the course and following their work.
 - Have real time office hours for students. Each week, specify a time that you will be in your "Office Hour", so they can find you there and ask their questions in real time. When they know they can have immediate access to you for at least an hour a week, students are less likely to ding you with constant messaging for help.
 - Offer video chat/phone calls to your students who need to speak with you privately.
 - Use the same method of communication to parents so they know where to expect information from.
- **Protect your time.**
 - Just because you could be available to your students 24/7, doesn't mean you have to or that you should be. Be clear about your schedule, when you will be available to answer questions and what the students can expect in terms of response time. Then, stick with what you have said!

- It is recommended that you maintain open communication direct to parents so that they don't have to rely on their child to provide information from your class. Communicating consistent "Office Hours" to parents will help them reach you and send a clear message that you are available consistently. Many parents are feeling the day-to-day frustration of learning to participate actively in their child's education, and so, knowing you are there to support will ease familial tension and best support learning for each student.
- **Supporting Special Populations Students**
 - As you plan, what is the goal and what are the barriers students need to overcome?
 - Consider using [the Universal Design Principles](#) to create flexible paths for student learning. Work with support staff prior to lesson to help develop the UDL strategies that address IEP goals, modifications, and accommodations.
 - **Multiple representations:** present information in multiple media with varied supports. (graphics, animation, highlight critical features, active background knowledge, and vocabulary support)
 - **Action and Representation:** provide students choice about how to respond, provide models and give timely feedback
 - **Engagement:** Provide a choice for students who have a wide variety of interests. Be flexible.

Advice from the Field:

[If I Had it to do Over Again/Things I Wish I Knew About Going Online Quickly](#) (crowdsourced advice and tips from overseas teachers affected)

[What Teachers in China Have Learned the Last Month](#) (article)

Additional Resources:

Please, first consult your district-adopted core instructional materials and the vendor for those materials to inquire about the resources they may be able to provide for distance learning. [Here is a list of additional resources \(print and digital\) for distance learning being offered in support of core instructional materials that are on the NM adopted multiple list.](#)

CCSSO runs the High-Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development (IMPD) Network that currently supports eight states, including New Mexico. Its purpose is to significantly increase the number of districts selecting high-quality, standards aligned instructional materials and to increase the number of pre-service and in-service teachers receiving professional development grounded in the use of those materials. Through the work of these network states to identify and leverage high-quality instructional materials, CCSSO is sharing recommendations for high-quality materials to be used for remote learning due to COVID-19 school closures. [Click here to download the list.](#)

[Link to a folder with materials that could be used in a continuous learning kit.](#)

Guidelines for Student Learning Based on Content Areas and Grade Bands*

*Taken from the NMPED Implementation Guide for Your Continuous Learning Plan

Early Childhood

1. Connect with students every week - via video chat, Zoom, or phone calls.
2. Establish “office hours” for communication with families - this will be a consistent time you are available to answer questions and provide guidance. Family communication is also critical to your students’ success.
3. Provide resources/directions for caretaker for all activities (It may be older siblings helping with instruction).
4. Make kits with print materials, hand-on materials or manipulatives, games, to have families pick up or to be delivered (weekly or bi-weekly). Consider that distributing these might require disinfection as well as should likely be consumable.
5. Help families create predictable routines for learning - share recommendations for minutes of each activity that families can easily accomplish.
6. Establish a timeline to complete work with caregivers (Examples: weekly check-ins with each family, open-ended discussion with the child, have parents take pictures of work and submit through app/email, weekly or daily “challenges” to showcase learning, etc.).
7. Emphasize the importance of daily reading with your children.
8. Work with families to create a predictable routine each day for learning and play.

Elementary

1. Focus on student progress and learning, not assignment completion and due dates.
2. Communicate with students first with tools teachers are already using and familiar with.
3. Create cross-curricular work when possible to maximize efficiency.
4. Read a science or history article, use ELA-based questions for comprehension, discussion, and/or writing.
5. Make kits with print materials, learning menus, hand-on materials or manipulatives, games, to have families pick up or to be delivered (weekly or bi-weekly). Consider that distributing these might require disinfection as well as should likely be consumable.

Secondary English Language Arts

1. Select high interest and engaging materials
2. Adjust resources according to different grade levels as needed

3. Provide weekly packets or printouts (of same stories/materials) for students w/o access to technology that mirrors online work
4. Coordinate distribution of packets in a safe manner
5. Collaborate with cross-curricular content areas to maximize efficiency: Read a science or history article, use ELA-based questions for comprehension, discussion, and/or writing
6. Reflect through writing/journals:
 - How are students processing this situation?
 - How are students doing (mental health)?
 - How are students' roles changing at home or work?
 - What are students learning about this pandemic - what questions do they have?
7. Create or share screen video tutorials about how to use resources for students

Secondary Math and Science

1. Make kits with print materials, learning menus, hand-on materials or manipulatives, games, to have families pick up or to be delivered (weekly or bi-weekly). Consider that distributing these might require disinfection as well as should likely be consumable.
2. Focus on no more than one or two essential learning targets a week.
3. Accept student-developed projects that demonstrate competency.
4. Suggest simple hands-on tasks with materials found in or around most homes
5. Setup sessions (regular meeting times or office hours)

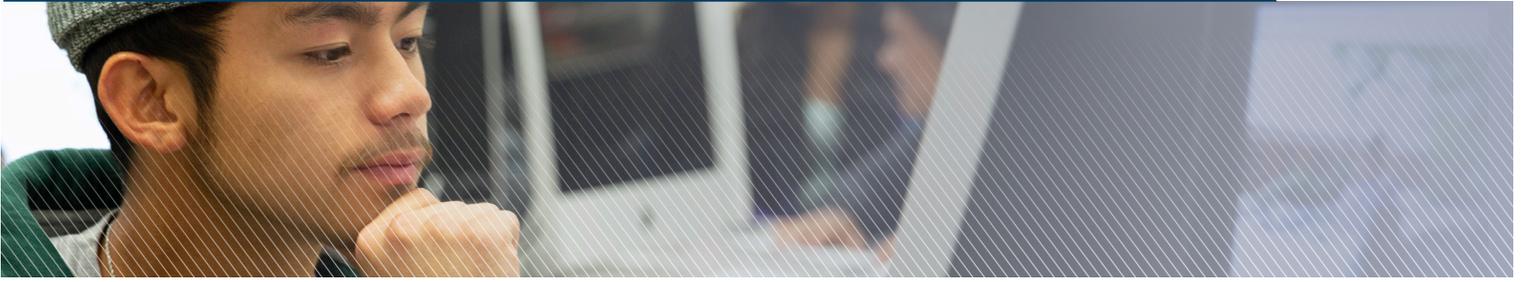
Secondary Social Studies and CTE

1. Make kits with print materials, hand-on materials or manipulatives, games, to have families pick up or to be delivered (weekly or bi-weekly). Consider that distributing these might require disinfection as well as should likely be consumable.
2. Focus on no more than one or two essential learning targets a week.
3. Accept student-developed projects that demonstrate competency.
4. Recommend journaling of the student experience during this time.
5. Tie in the current situation with historical moments.
6. Setup live on-line sessions (regular meeting times or office hours).
7. Develop and work on activities or portfolios, remote conversations with a mentor or job shadow.
8. Provide CTE-work based and/or project based learning projects that will cover competencies needed to complete class requirement.

Specials

1. Make kits with print materials, hand-on materials or manipulatives, games, to have families pick up or to be delivered (weekly or bi-weekly). Consider that distributing these might require disinfection as well as should likely be consumable.
2. Prioritize what needs to be done (essential items) to receive credit or provide enrichment vs. what is usually taught in class.
3. Distribute fitness calendar/art prompts to give a broad “menu” of options using little to no home equipment.
4. Create a document with familiar songs for students to sing/play at home.
5. Create a list of projects/skills that can be completed to meet required competencies.
6. Accept student-developed projects that demonstrate competency.

Distance Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic



A flood of people from pre-school teachers to college professors to workforce trainers are researching best practices for learning at distance in response to the COVID-19 school closings. There is a lot of research in this area and good evidence that high-quality learning can happen in distance learning environments. However, all of that research took place in different context than today's. Distance learning during a global pandemic has no precedent. It is a context with no perfectly-aligned research to guide our way. To support the world's educators and students learning at distance during COVID-19 isolation, here are five principles for educators to consider.

1 Change the learning goals and the learning process

It is unreasonable to expect educators and students today to maintain their old normal, even if they were distance learners before. Student's lives are completely different from how they were just a month ago, and what they can accomplish is different as well. Determine reasonable learning goals for your students to achieve (and for you to facilitate) in the current situation and then design a process in which students can meet those goals and you can assess their progress.

2 Design learning activities for the distance learning environment

Avoid the all-too-common and time-consuming pitfall of trying to recreate every in-person learning activity in the distance learning environment. The distance learning environment has its own unique benefits that can't be leveraged if we see in-person learning as the best choice and distance learning as a poor second. Focus on providing distance learning experiences that maximize learner engagement and minimize roadblocks.

3 Prepare for students' upcoming challenges

Learners are likely to experience stress, if not trauma, in the upcoming months — from food insecurity to housing loss to family deaths. It is essential that educators connect with students, respond with empathy, and have a list of community resources for students at the ready.

4 Investigate institutional policies

Learners and their families are also likely to be confused about what their educational institutions are expecting of them. They are asking, "Do my courses count toward graduation?" and "Does my child *have* to join the group conference calls?" and "Where can I pick up assignments?" If you're passionate about any of these organizational policies, get involved in helping those decisions get made (and revised, as the case may be).

5 Model a growth mindset

When your distance learning plans don't work out (and, in all likelihood, at least some of them won't), it is an opportunity to show students how a successful adult responds to failure. The example of how one can productively respond to challenge and disappointment is a valuable gift you can give your students.

And most importantly, when you or your students fail to live up to expectations, generously dole out all the extra grace you can find, because right now, everyone needs it.

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