

TEALS Program

This guide provides guidance and suggestions for instructor-led remote learning programs. It is based on 8 years of TEALS remote instruction learnings.

A Brief Guide to Remote Teaching Best Practices

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Remote vs. In Person Teaching

Remote teaching may seem quite different from In Person teaching. However, a better comparison would be different varieties of the same thing. Instead of thinking of Remote and In Person teaching as an Apple/Orange comparison, think of them more like a Red Apple/Green Apple comparison. Red apples and green apples may be used for different purposes, but they are both still apples.

Remote teaching is simply another way to deliver instruction to students. While students may interact, complete assignments, and take assessments in different ways the design behind Remote classroom tools is meant to mimic In Person interaction in the classroom.

Similarities: Remote and In Person Teaching

The fundamentals of teaching are still the same in a Remote classroom. Some of these similarities include:

- **Course Content** - Learners will cover the same content with the same rigor and with the same performance expectations
- **Pedagogy** - The instructional methods and questioning techniques used during In Person instruction are still used in a Remote classroom
- **Lesson Design** - Remote lessons are still designed with a beginning, middle, and an end. Lessons should still provide a balance between teacher-centered instruction and student-centered instruction. A good example of this balance is the 'I Do – We Do – You Do' lesson structure. Learners are still required to show what they know through assignments and assessments that are given feedback by the instructor
- **Student Engagement** - Learners are still required to be active participants in the course. They will interact with the instructor and other learners in the course, collaborate through small group discussion and group assignments, and present information to the class.

Differences: Remote and In Person Teaching

While there are many similarities between Remote and In Person teaching, it would be unfair to say there are no differences. Remote instructors must be prepared to help their learners with:

- **Additional Processes** - Learners will likely be new to the Remote learning model. They may be unfamiliar with logging in to the learning system, finding and turning in assignments, communicating with the instructor and other learners, and joining live classes. Instructors must be prepared to teach students each of these processes. Additionally, instructors must model patience, tenacity, and a growth mindset along the way. Instructors should plan for their first weeks of instruction to be slowed while their learners get up to speed on how to function in a Remote learning environment.
- **Additional Steps** – A well designed Remote learning model allows instructors and learners to have the same experiences they would have in an In Person classroom. Creating that experience involves additional steps for both the instructor and the learner. For example,

instructors may need to click extra buttons to give students permission to write on the class whiteboard, spend extra time organizing and moving students to breakout rooms, or teaching students how to use tools or programs to complete their work. Learners may find that it takes more time to submit handwritten work because they first have to take an image of it, that it takes more time to write out equations or formulas, or that they need to have additional equipment available and ready for use.

Virtual Learning Definitions

- **Asynchronous Learning** - Asynchronous virtual learning occurs when students work independently on learning activities and assignments. Teachers provide lesson content through written materials and video presentations. Students show what they know by completing interactive learning activities, self-grading and teacher graded assessments, and teacher graded written work and projects.
- **Synchronous Learning** - Synchronous virtual learning occurs when students join an audio/video enabled meeting space at the same time. This space is greatly enhanced when the meeting space includes an interactive whiteboard, chat, and breakout rooms. This synchronous session may include whole group instruction led by the instructor and small group work amongst the learners. The structure of this session is much like an In Person learning experience.
- **Learning Management System** – A Remote learning classroom is often made up of two pieces – 1) a Learning Management Systems and 2) an audio/video enabled meeting space. A Learning Management System (LMS) is used to plan, deliver, and manage the learning content for your Remote classroom. Content is created in other applications and uploaded and organized within the LMS. Learning content may include documents, videos, learning activities, and assessments.

Key Principles of Online Pedagogy

Presence

While there are many best practices in effective online teaching, the most important practice is “being there”. Being there is the core of presence. Your presence lets your learners know that they are not alone in their education journey. You are there to direct, guide, listen, and share your expertise with them in both synchronous and asynchronous ways.

Here are some suggested ways to develop a complex physical presence in your Remote classroom. Each of these suggestions should reflect the instructor’s personality and teaching style as well as making both personal and social connections.

	Suggested Best Practice
Commit to a response time for emails, discussion board posts, and submitted work	Emails (24 hours), Discussion Boards (48 hours), and Submitted Work (72 hours)
	Suggested Best Practice
Post announcements regularly in your class	Minimum of one post/week with a plan for the week
Host regular class meetings for whole group instruction	Two sessions each week, opposite days of office hours
Host regular office hours for individual student questions	Two sessions each week, opposite days of class meetings

Community

Community is established in a classroom when there is a feeling of fellowship with other learners and the instructor through the sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Everyone benefits from what each person brings to a course when the instructor creates a learning environment that supports and encourages all contributions.

An instructor can build community in their Remote learning course by:

- Arriving early or staying late to speak with students during class meetings
- Playing music before class starts
- Giving learners an opportunity to share personally through introduce yourself discussion board posts and other ‘getting to know you’ activities
- Creating opportunities for students to share with their voice and image during synchronous class meetings

Engagement

Engagement in the Remote classroom should be active, not passive. Learners process more deeply and retain more information when they are actively working with information in their lessons, not just reading texts or listening to a lecture. Remember - the one who does the work does the learning!

An instructor can build engagement in their Remote learning course by:

- Requiring learners to complete different types of learning activities – posting to discussion boards, taking assessments, turning in assignments for teacher feedback
- Creating active lessons for class meetings. Students should not just ‘sit and get’ during instruction. Build in opportunities for student engagement by:
 - Breaking up your lesson into short mini-lessons with activities and opportunities to practice. Give students something to do every 2-3 slides.
 - Asking questions that learners must respond to in the chat or on the whiteboard
 - Using polls or quizzes
 - Giving students opportunities to work in small groups
 - Using Guided Notes - a notetaking guide with strategically placed blanks. Students fill in the missing information as the instructor leads the lesson.

Tool: Interactive Whiteboard

During class meetings, instructors can use the whiteboard to keep learners engaged in the material. Design activities that learners must respond to using the whiteboard tools by typing or drawing. Remember that using the whiteboard will be new for most learners. Offer a practice activity to give them the time and opportunity to figure out how the tools work.

Be sure to set expectations on how to use the whiteboard during class. Be prepared to promptly erase items that don't meet these expectations. As an instructor, you will need to know how to quickly disable whiteboard privileges for learners who don't follow the expectations. This is essential so that a safe learning environment is not compromised.

Tool: Chat

One way to keep students engaged in the learning process during the lesson is to pose questions that they must respond to. Students who may not raise their hand in a face-face classroom may feel more comfortable sharing a response in chat. Students can also ask questions and provide insights during the lesson.

Wait time is important when asking questions in the classroom. This gives students time to prepare a response. Wait time is especially important in the virtual classroom. Students may have delays in video and audio feed due to equipment, network, or bandwidth limitations. Students may type or click at different speeds.

Here are two chat techniques to use in your synchronous virtual classroom lessons.

<p>Technique: Waterfall Chat</p>	<p>Ask a question and tell your students to type in their answer but wait before hitting send until you tell them to. This allows for students to not see each other’s answers until all are shared. It will show common answers and keep your students from being influenced by other’s perspective.</p>
<p>Technique: Think Pair Share</p> <p>If you’re using a virtual classroom tool that allows students to send private messages to each other, Think Pair Share can easily be replicated in the virtual classroom.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pose a question for students. Give them time to think about and prepare a response. Silent wait time is best. Give the students 30sec-2min. 2. Have students share their response with a partner. Students should send a private chat to the person below them. If a student is at the bottom of the participant list, they will send their chat to the person at the top of the participant list. 3. Students will be managing two chat conversations – the person they are sending a chat to and the person that is sending a chat to them. Give students 2-3minutes to complete their conversations.

Tool: Breakout Rooms

Small group work is a great way for students to collaborate with and learn from each other. Breakout Rooms allow you to easily move learners to small groups and then return them back to the main room for whole class instruction.

Breakout Rooms are full featured self-contained classrooms. Learners can see and talk with one another, use a shared whiteboard, send chat messages, and share documents and screens. Instructors can work with learners in each Breakout Room privately making it the ideal setup for providing one-one or differentiated instruction.

Feedback

An essential part of any classroom learning experience is specific and thoughtful feedback from the instructor to the learner. In Remote learning classes, feedback offers a double advantage. Not only does it give your students the information they need about their learning progress, but it also sustains their engagement in the course and classroom learning community.

There are two types of feedback that are often found in Remote learning classrooms. Acknowledgement feedback confirms or assures the student that some event has taken place. For example, a time stamp on an assignment submission through the LMS. Informative feedback is evaluative and given in response to a student question or submission. This feedback may be in response to an email message, a discussion board post, or an assignment turned in for grading.

Many LMSs offer the ability for the instructor to create self-grading assessments. While this saves time and offers learners immediate feedback, it shouldn’t be the only way learners receive feedback. Coursework should offer a balance of self-graded assessments along with assignments and activities that require specific and thoughtful instructor feedback.

Accessibility & Universal Design for Learning

In Remote learning classes, accessibility refers not only to each learner's ability to easily and effectively participate in the course but also to learners of all abilities to participate in the learning activities. For Remote learning to be effective, learners must have access to the hardware, software, and internet of sufficient speed and bandwidth to run the systems of the Remote learning course. If it cannot be ensured

Systems and materials in the Remote learning course must also be accessible for all students, including those with impairments and learning challenges. Rigorous and thoughtful review of the features of the course LMS and audio/video enabled meeting space is required before beginning work on creating a Remote learning course to ensure it will meet the needs of learner populations with unique needs.

Additionally, Remote learning courses must offer a variety of activities that serve all types of learning styles. Instructors must consider Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when planning their synchronous and asynchronous instruction. They should work to increase access to learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers to learning whenever possible. For example, many Remote learning courses rely heavily on text-based presentations of information. Not all learners take in information well just by reading. Consider multiple means of representation, expression, engagement in both your learning and assessment activities in your course.

Student PII and FERPA

Remote learning offers exciting opportunities for students to learn outside of the brick and mortar classroom environment. While these opportunities are exciting, carefully choosing systems to run a Remote learning course that protect the learner's privacy and personal data is essential. Schools considering a Remote learning program must ensure that the systems they use protect personal data in accordance with best local policies as well as state and national laws.

Class Recordings

Recordings of classes held in the audio/video enabled meeting space are popular in the Remote learning model. Fully understanding what is captured in these recordings will help the instructor to know what precautions to take or permissions to obtain to use recordings as part of the course materials. Instructors will need to pay special attention to recordings that capture learner names, images, or voices.

Login Names

Under FERPA guidelines, students are to be publicly identified using their First Name/Last Initial (or First Initial/Last Name). First names create a greater sense of community in the classroom. Students who have a choice of login name should enter your virtual classroom using their First Name and Last Initial (ex: Michelle Lawson would login as Michelle L).

Classroom Procedure and Routine

When using technology to connect with your students getting them used to the procedure will increase the time spent learning and less time logging on, pulling up resources, and other steps. Once practiced, these become second nature. Keep the procedure consistent, reinforce and remind for the first few weeks until the time students spend going through these steps are reduced significantly.

In your first weeks of Remote classes, take time to teach learners how to:

- Login to all systems that are a part of the course
- Contact the instructor
- Get logistical and technical help with the course
- Turn in assignments and take assessments
- Expectations for participation in the course
- Setup, test, and troubleshoot hardware in the audio/video enabled meeting space