

SUPPORTING TEACHER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT DURING REMOTE INSTRUCTION

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This guide is designed to support school leaders and instructional leaders as they navigate teacher learning during a time when their teachers are learning to navigate digital learning for students. We hope it is useful as is or with modifications for your individual circumstances. The guide might also serve as a starting point for a school leader Professional Learning Community (PLC) within a district or network as you navigate how to support ongoing professional learning for teachers during this time. If you are a school leader or instructional coach and would like to join a Danielson Group facilitated PLC, please complete this form. We will convene a PLC to discuss professional learning during this time and problems of practice you are encountering. There is no cost to participate but space will be limited based on our capacity to facilitate.

Below is a recommended sequence for the weeks ahead. Within the timeline there are suggested activities and a few protocols and resources that might be helpful. We think it may be useful to focus on some aspects of instruction (from the [Framework for Teaching Clusters](#)) that we think are particularly relevant right now:

- **Presentations & Explanations of Content** from Cluster 1: Clarity & Accuracy
- **Caring & Respect** from Cluster 2: Learning Environment
- **Routines & Procedures** from Cluster 3: Classroom Management
- **Rich Learning Tasks** from Cluster 4: Intellectual Engagement
- **Feedback to Students** from Cluster 5: Successful Learning

We are beginning to [crowdsource examples](#) of practice that make these focus areas come to life in the context of virtual learning. Please share your own and be on the lookout for us to share the suggestions. Ideally, you would choose one of these focus areas after a week or two of gathering data and input from your staff. However, given the strangeness of this time, the urgency to provide high-quality instructional opportunities to students, and the limited amount of time left in the school year, you might select one of these priority areas based on what you have already observed and narrow your focus before you begin. If it is still early in your transition and teachers are struggling to get effective routines in place or are focusing on establishing a caring and respectful online learning environment, start there. If you are confident that most teachers have mastered the basics of remote learning, you might focus on how teachers are presenting content right now or the quantity/quality of the feedback they are giving to students.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Weeks 1-2:

Encourage Reflection & Observe for Excellence

Now that virtual/remote learning has launched and you and your teachers may have a few weeks under your belts, it is a good time to take stock of what is working best and where your teachers need support. Ideally, you should convene your instructional leadership team (including assistant principals, teacher leaders, department chairs, etc.) to discuss what you see. We recommend two approaches you could begin immediately - asking teachers to reflect and conducting your own observations of instruction.

As you begin, it is important to communicate your goals and set expectations with your teachers. Let them know the reflections and observations are being done to take stock of where you are as a team, highlight effective practices that might be shared between teachers and replicated across the school, and identify areas of opportunity for the school or teams of teachers. The focus should not be on individual teacher performance or evaluation but rather on building a collective sense of efficacy to do this new (and very different) way of teaching well.

Encourage Reflection

The following methods of reflection will allow you to get a better sense of what remote instructional practice looks like across your school. Using any or all of them over the course of the next two weeks will help you gather data and initiate a cycle of professional learning that will ensure higher-quality instruction is happening for your students.

- **Teacher Self-Assessment**

Using a simple Google Doc, Google Form, or another approach, have your teachers reflect on their own practice during the first few weeks of remote instruction. Use the language of practice that was already in place at your school. If that language is the Framework Clusters, here is another [set of self-assessments](#) that might be useful and more detailed for the focus areas we've suggested. Once teachers have reflected, compile the data and look for patterns with your instructional leadership team.

- **Focus Groups/Surveys**

Gather teachers in small groups via Zoom, Google Meets, or another video conferencing app. Lead brief (30-45 min) sessions where teachers can share their experiences openly. These could be led by you or by teacher leaders. Create a shared space (a Google Doc may be easiest) to compile notes and observations. Again, work with your leadership team to identify patterns.

Observe for Excellence

At this stage, your observations should be neither evaluative nor focused on providing individual feedback to teachers. The purpose of the observations is to get an overall sense of what is happening across the school. Think of it as a virtual learning walk. What exactly does that look like? It depends, of course, on your circumstances and the platforms that you are using. But here are a few suggestions:

- **Virtual Learning Walk**

Depending on the number of teachers you support, you might gather data from all of your teachers or a random sample. If your setup allows, have your team leads or teacher leaders do a [Virtual Learning Walk](#) and see what's happening in Google Classrooms (or whatever

platform you're using). Think of this as you might think about looking in classrooms during the first week of school - with a heavy focus on the environment and routines/procedures. We suggest starting with some guiding questions and gathering data (qualitative and quantitative) that will help you better understand current practice. For instance,

- What practices support a well organized and easy to navigate virtual classroom space?
- To what extent does the classroom space take into account the social and emotional needs of students as well as their academic development?
- How is student participation being encouraged and supported?

- **Observing Lessons**

Teachers in your school may be leading synchronous class meetings, pre recording material for students to view, or organizing online learning modules. You can observe these as you would in-person lessons or artifacts, either by joining the meeting or watching a recording. Here's an Excellence-Focused Observation protocol you might consider for yourself or a team to use and focus attention on what is working and why.

Weeks 3-4:

Focus Learning & Foster Dialogue and Collaboration

Teachers are leading classroom discussions, becoming more comfortable with online communication, and searching out resources and opportunities for students and their families. Once you choose a focus area and have some sense of what teachers need, you can start providing them resources and opportunities in the same way using many of the same structures or software. Our recommendation is that nothing needs to be perfect or fancy right now. Rather, you should focus on three things:

1. Select a focus area and a particular practice or skill that you want teachers to identify.
2. Establish the time and space for them to discuss the focus together and to learn from one another.
3. Get them started by identifying internal expertise and searching for external resources related to your topic.

Below are some additional suggestions, and we will continue to add resources in the coming weeks.

- **Virtual Professional Learning Communities**

Circumstances are incredibly different right now across schools and districts. You may have already established regular meeting times for teachers or it may be difficult to do so. Our recommendation is that you begin having teachers gather virtually in the same configurations and at the same times that they used to in school - to the extent possible.

- **Teacher-Led & Self-Paced Professional Learning Opportunities**

If you have teachers who are excelling at remote learning, ask them to prepare a demo for your staff and share their screen as they discuss what is working for them. If you observe excellence in multiple places, put together a compilation and share it with your staff. You can also look externally for opportunities for learning and growth. Many online platforms are offering some classes for free. Our friends at 2gno.me are crowdsourcing resources that are a good starting point.