Use assessment for several reasons: for placement before instruction begins, to gauge learner progress, and to measure how well instruction is working. Determining placement and measures of program effectiveness are often accomplished using standardized tests (e.g. TABE, CASAS, and BEST Plus), many of which are now piloting the means to provide virtual testing options. For now, if you are working completely remotely, you may need to rely on the assessments included in an online curriculum. After placement, gauge learner progress using a combination of formative and summative assessment strategies.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Assessing student work regularly provides both the teacher and the student with a sense of the student's progress, indicates strengths and areas for improvement, and helps the teacher know how to adjust instruction. To conduct assessment in distance education, teachers need to use different tools and technologies than they might in a classroom.

REVIEWING STUDENT ONLINE WORK. The easiest way to monitor progress is to regularly review the work the student completes and provide feedback. Another option would be teacher-made quizzes created using online survey tools (SurveyMonkey or Google Forms), quiz makers (Quizlet or VocabTest), or even something like Mentimeter or Kahoot if you are meeting as a group. These quizzes could be completed using online websites, posted in a learning management system, texted, or emailed to the student.

Herr, N., Rivas, M., Chang, T., Reveles, J., Tippens, M., Vandergon, V., … Nguyen-Graff, D. (2015). Continuous formative assessment during blended and online instruction using cloud-based collaborative documents. In S. Koc, X. Liu, & P. Wachira (Eds.), Assessment in Online and Blended Learning Environments (pp. 187–214). Information Age Publishing.

https://edtech.worlded.org/

CULMINATING ACTIVITY. Use culminating activities, like participation in online discussion, writing assignments, presentations, or projects. Use video conferencing ([Google Hangout](), [Skype](), [Zoom]() or [Big Blue Button]()) and shared Google Docs or Slides. These tools can support group or collaborative activities where it will also be possible to assess interactional skills, verbal communication, and participation. You could use recorded, threaded video discussions using the free tool [FlipGrid]().

PORTFOLIOS. Students and teachers can maintain a portfolio of student work to track and demonstrate progress. Portfolios include samples of student work, self-reflection tools (e.g., inventories, checklists, or logs), or performance-based products (e.g., a resume). You can integrate digital badges to mark progress. The simplest way to organize a portfolio is to create a Google Folder for each of your students. There are also free portfolio websites that offer structure for displaying work ([SeeSaw](), [Fresh Grade]() or [Live Binders]()**)**

INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS. Distance teachers often meet with distance students using the telephone or video conferencing for consultations where they review work and ask students questions to assess their understanding of concepts. Also try asynchronous threaded video discussions on [FlipGrid]().

PROGRESS CHECKLISTS. Skills checklists may be part of a goal plan or a standalone tool used by teachers and students to document skills attainment. Documenting student progress can support persistence by changing a student's beliefs about their capabilities and achievements. [SurveyMonkey]() (or any survey tool) can be used for self-assessment; teachers can provide a weekly checklist for students to assess their engagement and progress. A Google Form would work for this, too. Again, digital badges can be a motivating tool.

A WORD ABOUT NRS TESTING AND REPORTING

The U.S. The Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's (OCTAE) 2018 National Reporting System (NRS) implementation guidelines state that distance learners can be included in the NRS, as long as states have an approved distance learning policy in their state's adult education plan. In order to be included in the NRS, distance learners must be assessed according to the same policy that is in place for all adult learners in the state. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all standardized assessments reported in the NRS were administered in a face-to-face, proctored setting. Now, however, common test providers (**CASAS**, **Best Plus 2.0**, **TABE**) are implementing remote testing options. Look to your state for guidance on testing to see if your state is part of a pilot or has formalized remote NRS testing.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
- EdTech Center@ World Education - *Essential Tips for Starting Distance Learning*
- EdTech Center@World Education - *Instruction and Assessment Blog post*
- EdTech Center@World Education - *IDEAL Distance Education and Blended Learning Handbook (6th ed.)*