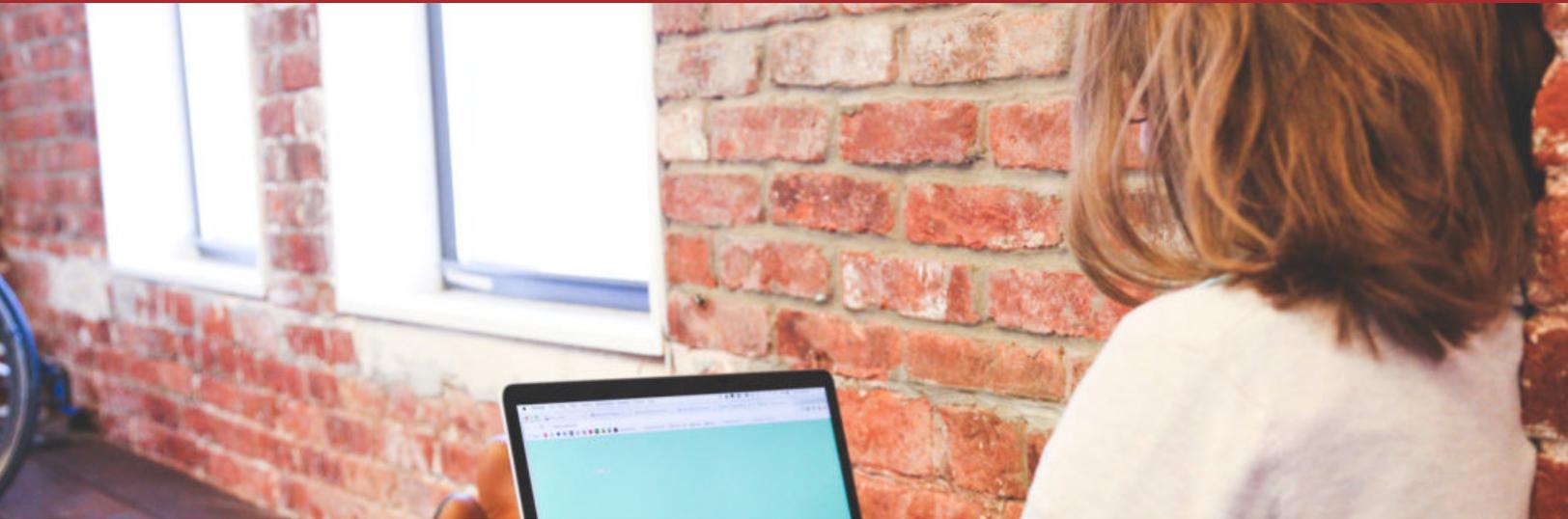




READY, SET, GO:

Steps to Rapidly Start Distance Instruction



Setting up distance education takes planning and some pilot testing with selected students. You might be in a situation right now that makes that impossible, but you absolutely need to support learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance here will help you get some emergency remote teaching underway ([phrase introduced in this EdCause article](#)). Do what you can - even if it's not everything listed below. Then, in time, you can circle back and rethink decisions - aiming for sustainability.

1. Make a communication plan.

Collect all relevant contact information for your learners (e.g., cell phone numbers, email, home addresses) so you know how you will keep in contact with them. Decide on relevant communication channels: phone calls, videoconferences, texting, apps (such as [Whats App](#) or [Remind](#)), or email. Ask what works best for learners and teachers. We've found that most are used to using WhatsApp.

2. Make a list of your program's technology resources (hardware and software) and determine your learners' ability to access online tools.

Figure out what technology access your teachers and students have (e.g., licenses to online products, web-based teacher-created curricula, devices, Internet)? Make a list of these assets and plan how you will communicate them to learners and staff. Consider steps you might take to prevent access-equity gaps from getting wider. What resources can you refer your learners to -- things that leverage the access they have, like mobile phones? Can you lend devices and hotspots? If you know that there is no access, you may consider paper packets with some essential learning materials.

3. Help your learners access free or reduced cost internet and data plans.

If your learners don't have access to wifi, help them find it. [The National Digital Inclusion Alliance continuously updates this list of free offers](#). You might also share the location of free wifi access points where they can connect and maintain social distance (e.g., outside libraries or schools).

4. Look to see what support your state adult education leadership is offering.

Find out how your state's leaders are communicating with adult education programs and monitor that communication. Watch for support and resources they may organize (e.g., more flexibility in how programs spend their existing grants or provide training for teachers in moving to online learning).

5. Get training to key staff and create support materials for learners.

Consider recording a webinar or creating a FAQ that maps out key steps for accessing edtech resources if everyone is working or learning remotely. Make some screencasts with audio instructions to help learners navigate the online resources you hope they will use remotely. You can use free screencasting tools like [Screencast-o-Matic](#) or [Screencastify](#). Many resources have developed tutorials, several in multiple languages, so check first before spending time to create your own and generate inspiration by building off of existing community resources. For example, [St. Paul ABE has posted this site with multilingual how-to videos](#). New York TESOL has created and posted [videos about how to use Google Classroom in this YouTube playlist](#).

6. Set up a remote support system.

You need some way for students to get help with edtech if they cannot meet with a teacher. Consider a dedicated phone line or chat system (you could use What's App). You might have office hours using the [free version of Zoom](#) or [BigBlueButton](#). Have teachers practice with each other and practice using these with as many learners you can while they are still with you in person.

7. Put all learning content in one place.

Your programs might use a learning management system like [Google Classroom](#), [Canvas](#), [Moodle](#), or [Schoology](#). Several of them offer free versions for teachers. Create your 'course' and enroll your learners; make sure they know how to log in. Add the resources you may need to draw on if school shuts down. Such resources could include:

- Links to online curricula to which you have licenses and Open Education Resources -- free and easy to access online media such as instructional activities or videos.
- Onboarding resources that will help learners get started using online content. This might be a [screencast](#) of someone logging into an online course.
- Links to support resources to help learners stay engaged. This might include contact information about where to get help.

If you don't have access to an LMS, use free resources like [Padlet](#), [Wakelet](#), or linked [Google Docs \(hyperdocs\)](#) for online assignments. Create a [Facebook group](#) for your students for collaboration and communication. Perhaps make a website by using [Google Sites](#), [Weebly](#) or [Wix](#).

Example of a quickly set up online class: Use Zoom for real-time classes (you can record these on Zoom) and a free website, Padlet or Google Document as the home base for your class schedule, assignments, recommended online learning resources, and archived links to recorded Zoom classes. Over time, you can add features to that home base, like chat, more supplementary resources (original or OER) and possibly assessments.

8. Locate instructional resources on sites that have curated free content.

ISTE/EdSurge [Learning Keeps Going Resource Directory](#). Comprehensive list of learning resources for adult education, K12, and post-secondary.

[The Literacy List](#). This is a comprehensive list of mostly free resources curated for an ABE audience.

[UNESCO Distance Learning Solutions](#). This is a list of educational applications and platforms.

MORE GUIDANCE

- EdTech Center@ World Education - [**Essential Tips for Starting Distance Learning**](#)
- ISTE's [**Learning Keeps Going**](#) (Guidance and resources for distance instruction)
- Rhode Island Tech Hub [**Online Distance Learning Resources and Tips**](#).
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention - [**Guidance for School Settings**](#)
- LINC Technology Community - [**Curated Resources for Transition to Online Instruction**](#)