



## PEDAGOGY IN A PANDEMIC – 9 Key Considerations

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### *Being Present*

**Instructor presence is a critical factor** in the success of online learning. A weekly video posted by the teacher allows students to connect with the teacher's image and voice. The video can be short, 3 minutes or less. In that amount of time, the teacher can review highlights of the previous week, and do a quick introduction of what is coming in the current week.

**Instructors should also be present by engaging students** through asking questions and responding to questions. There are many online tools that can help teachers such as discussion boards, replying to

questions, and asking probing questions of the whole class, groups, and individual students.

**Use frequent formative assessments.** While present with students, it can be much easier to determine which students may be struggling with new learning. When teaching online, use free and "freemium" tools such as [Google Forms](#), [Microsoft Forms](#), [Poll Everywhere](#), [Mentimeter](#) and your learning management system to gauge student learning and plan instructional moves and personalization that helps to keep all students on track. Here is a list of more formative [assessment tools](#).

### *Focusing on Active Learning*

Over the last decade, K-12 education has been slowly moving away from the lecture model. All of the reasons that make **movement toward active learning** in the face-to-face classroom a good idea also apply to the virtual classroom. To **engage students** who are not in the room during a lesson, teachers should consider creating a mix of:

- Robust discussions
- Collaborative work
- Video and audio clips
- Hands-on exercises
- Individual work time

A caution, however, as **not all students work well in these situations** – particularly students with disabling conditions. Give independent options among assignment choices even though you're working to draw them into a more active role. Work with your special education leaders to consider limitations of this and other instructional practices for our students with disabilities.

### *Chunking Content*

**Learning online can be more taxing physically and intellectually** than learning in a face-to-face environment. Teachers should avoid frequently assigning long text passages or even long videos.

- [4 Tips for Content Chunking](#)
- [Content Chunking for Engagement](#)
- [Content Chunking for Instructional Design](#)

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## ***Holding “Office Hours” or “Class Chats”***

**Consider setting specific times during the day that you would be available via a web-conferencing tool.**

Students could check in if they have questions about assignments - or if they just need to see and hear their teacher.

Here are a few free or low-cost tools:

- [Zoom](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)

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## ***Creating Smaller Groups***

**Students who are learning virtually still need to make connections with others.** When teachers create some of their assignments as group work, students are able to experience the continuity of their relationships. It can be more meaningful to

assign students to smaller groups to review and comment upon each other’s work. Smaller groups are also more effective at ensuring that **all students participate equitably.**

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## ***Being Careful with Your Time***

As mentioned previously, **teaching online can be very time-consuming for teachers.** In a face-to-face classroom, when a question is asked by the instructor, one or two students might answer. When a teacher uses a discussion board online, the expectation is that all students will respond. At that point, a teacher can get lost in trying to respond to

each student's response. A better strategy is to respond directly to some of the student responses. Some online teachers keep a tally to make sure that they respond to each student at least weekly, but not for every discussion assignment. **Grade levels and specific needs of students will help drive how frequently to respond to each student.**

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## ***Giving Multimedia Options for Assignments***

While it can be expedient for teachers to grade quizzes and short papers, **many students will be more highly engaged by assignments that allow them to create.** Engagement and learning can be enhanced when students are encouraged to create content through the use of slides, videos, podcasts, blogs, [data visualizations](#), websites, [infographics](#), etc.

Here are some tools that students can use to create:

- [Best Tech Creation Tools](#) from Common Sense Education
- [20 Best Online Creation Tools for Students](#)

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## ***Staying Flexible with Pacing***

In the face-to-face classroom it is relatively easy to keep students working at the same pace. The teacher can assign a task and collect the work at the end of the period. Individual learning styles, particularly when it comes to pace, will be evident in the remote learning environment. Consider these strategies:

- **Have all work for the week posted** by the start of the week and due at the end of the week (or even over the weekend).
- **Try working with “windows of time”** instead of specific due dates for some assignments.
- **Be prepared to differentiate due dates** for students who struggle with the rigor or style of remote learning.

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## ***Working as a Group***

Setting up an effective online learning environment can be overwhelming. It can also be isolating.

**Teachers should remember that they can work together to create engaging lessons and activities for students.** Sharing with colleagues will reduce stress and the workload. When working with

colleagues, remember you can share classes and resources through your LMS or [Google Classroom](#).

This could enable teachers to assign activities in one class from other shared classes.

For further information:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/dl/lessonsfrfld.asp>.