Schola Europaea
Office of the Secretary-General
Pedagogical Development Unit

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# Distance learning recommendations for course continuity during temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school

## Mainly addressed to school management and coordinators

- These recommendations cancel and replace the document n° 2020-03-D-11-en-5.
- Modifications: see the final annex.
- Latest updated version of this document: Pedagogical Development SharePoint.

# Contents

# Introduction

The following recommendations are mainly proposed to the management and coordinators of the European Schools in order to ensure pedagogical continuity in the event of a suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school (instructed by the Office of the Secretary-General). This document can also be communicated as such to the teachers since they can find many useful elements to orientate their work.

These recommendations are intended to help schools and teachers develop their own strategies. Except for legal constraints and system-level requirements, each school can, of course, adapt these recommendations to its specific context and needs. It is always recommended that each school decides which strategies it finds the most effective, in order to provide teachers, students and parents with consistent and effective procedures for distance education.

This is a **dynamic document** to be updated whenever necessary. The latest updates can be found on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint:

eursc.sharepoint.com/sites/PedagogicalDevelopment

The aim of the European Schools is to provide students with quality teaching and learning in the public interest, pursuant to the 'Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools' and the 'General Rules of the European Schools'.

## Amendment of the General Rules, Article 26a

It should be noted that the development and further improvement of distance teaching and learning has been at the centre of the activities of the European Schools over recent months (see, for example, 2018-12-D-7-en-4, 'Digital Education Vision for the European Schools system (DEVES)') and will continue to be the focus of their activities in the coming years, irrespective of the question of under which scenario the schools will have to operate. Against this background, concrete proposals have been made to the Board of Governors, to amend the General Rules of the European Schools in order to address the distance teaching requirements[1].

On 31 August 2020 the Board of Governors has approved an amendment of the General Rules adding a new Article concerning distance teaching. The article 26a entered into force on 1 September 2020[2].

The new Article 26a of the General Rules reads as follows:

[1] See Distance Teaching – Amendment of the General Rules, ref. 2020-08-D-8-en-1.
[2] General Rules of the European Schools, ref. 2014-03-D-14-en-9.

"**Article 26a**

**Distance Teaching**

1. In general, teaching shall be provided 'on site'.
   In exceptional cases and based on the decision of the Director, distance teaching may be organised in order to educate children in the public interest, as defined by Article 1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools.
2. In the event of distance teaching, classes may be taught and assessed using an interactive online communication system (audio/video). The choice of the communication system shall be the sole responsibility of the Director, he/she the data controller of the school. The Director shall ensure that the system chosen complies with data security, reliability and confidentiality requirements as laid down by the host Member State's privacy legislation. Any processing of personal data carried out in that context shall be lawful provided that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, in accordance with Article 6.1.(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation.
3. Providing distance teaching through the potential use of an interactive online communication system, as referred to in paragraph 2, shall form part of the duties assigned to teaching staff, in line with Article 10.2 of the Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools and Article 5.3 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools.
4. The rules on regular attendance, as established in Article 30 of the General Rules, shall apply mutatis mutandis in the event of distance teaching."

# The three scenarios

The European Schools envision three potential scenarios[3]:

- Scenario 1: Teaching 'in-situ' in all schools as a rule, but with restrictions for vulnerable staff (including inspectors) and vulnerable pupils and restrictions for infected staff and pupils
- Scenario 2: Temporary continuation of measures of confinement which allow only parts of the school population to participate in teaching 'in-situ'
- Scenario 3: Temporary suspension of teaching 'in-situ' for the complete school or complete cycles

This document provides recommendations for the continuity of learning, especially in a situation of distance learning.

[3] Analysis and Proposals of the Task Force 'Preparation of the 2020/21 school year', ref. 2020-07-D-9-en-2.

# General recommendations

## Distance teaching and learning for pedagogical continuity

### Distance teaching and learning

**Distance teaching and learning is a modality of education when students may not always be physically present at a school, and usually taking place online, synchronously or not**[4].

This document also refers to **blended learning**, as "a hybrid approach that combines learning in school with distance learning, including online learning"[5].

The aim of distance teaching and learning, as an immediate education response during a temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of students at school, is to establish **continuity in the relationship so that learning can continue**.

### Emergency and regular distance teaching and learning

For a proper understanding of contexts and adapted practices, emergency remote teaching and learning should be distinguished from regular remote teaching and learning[6].

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[4] For practical reasons, the following terms can be considered as synonyms: distance or remote teaching, distance or remote learning, distance or remote education, and the variations based on "online": online learning, online teaching, online education.
When explaining the two modalities (synchronous and asynchronous) to students and parents, one could prefer to use "live/together" (synchronous) and "on-demand/not together" (asynchronous). One can also refer to "real-time/face-to-face" (synchronous) and "flex-time/self-paced" (asynchronous).

[5] European Commission, Blended learning in school education: guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21, June 2020.

[6] "Remote Learning has emerged to describe emergency measures to move instruction from physical schools to homes in online and offline modes" (M. Fullan, J. Quinn, M. Drummy, M. Gardner, "Education Reimagined; The Future of Learning". A collaborative position paper between New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and Microsoft Education, 2020). One can make a difference between **emergency** distance learning (as an emergency response) and **regular** distance learning (as a planned optimal delivery of digital distance education). Emergency remote teaching is "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges, et al. "The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning", Educause, 27 March 2020). See also Avgoustos T., "Emergency Remote Teaching: make the most of it", School Education Gateway (23.04.2020): "What is happening worldwide [disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic] in the educational field is known as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) – a temporary shift to an alternate delivery mode due to critical circumstances. ERT should gradually lead to mature distance education, fulfilling educational needs beyond the current crisis". During emergency distance learning generally looks more like traditional teacher centred, content-driven practice. This difference must be kept in mind when formulating expectations for designing, planning and delivery of distance learning. In this perspective, an interesting framework is proposed by M. Fullan *et al.*: **The Unsettled Zone, The Learning Zone and The Growth Zone** (M. Fullan *et al.*, *op. cit.*).

The following table[7] indicates some of the major differences.

| Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning | Optimal Online Teaching and Learning |
|---|---|
| • Less time for planning and course development<br>• Assistance to design and facilitate instruction may be limited<br>• Support systems for faculty and students may be limited or unavailable<br>• Not all faculty will be comfortable teaching in the online format<br>• Time may be limited for ensuring quality measures for design and teaching<br>• Teaching in a one-size-fits-all framework | • Teaching and learning is planned and effective<br>• There is a more developed instructional design and planning process<br>• Community development and engagement is built into the learning<br>• Various support systems are in place for the learner at the start<br>• More time to prepare faculty for online facilitation<br>• Quality assurance for learning is an ongoing part of the process<br>• Ensures equity and provides personalisation |

*Table 1. Major differences between emergency remote teaching and online teaching*

## Main challenges of an impromptu pivoting to distance teaching and learning

The challenging issues when rapidly pivoting to distance teaching and learning are generally the following:

- ensuring the continuity of academic learning for students,
- supporting the students who lack skills for independent study,
- ensuring continuity and integrity of the assessment of student learning,
- ensuring support for parents so they can support student learning, and
- ensuring the well-being of students and of teachers.[8]

Similarly, the most challenging barriers include:

- availability of technological infrastructure,
- addressing student emotional well-being,
- addressing the right balance between digital and screen free activities, and
- managing the technological infrastructure.

[7] Table adapted from L. O'Keefe, J. Rafferty, A. Gunder, K. Vignare, Delivering high-quality instruction online in response to COVID-19: Faculty playbook, Every Learner Everywhere, 2020, May 18. See also Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training, 16 June 2020: "the digital distance teaching and learning experienced in the context of COVID-19, though valuable, should not necessarily be viewed as the general standard for digital distance education".

[8] OECD, A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020, 2020.

# Main pedagogical orientations of distance education

## Student-centred learning

"Teaching at distance is not merely a case of replicating in-school practice"[9]. Teachers should more than ever give priority to **student-centred learning**[10]. This can be attained by developing online communities[11] and designing lessons that take advantage of digital tools and pedagogical models that actively involve students in every part of the learning process.

## Student interactions with content, students and teacher

Teachers should, therefore, focus on creating three forms of interaction for students in the online environment:

- "**Student-content interaction**, where instructors provide active learning experiences for students (meaningful learning activity plus reflection)
- **Student-student interaction**, where instructors structure the learning community and make it clear to students how they should interact with others in the class
- **Student-instructor interaction**, where instructors create a framework for how they will interact with students during the learning experience." [12]

[9] European Commission (Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture), Blended learning in school education: guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21, June 2020.

[10] All forms of teaching using digital technology are more effective when using student-centred learning techniques. See e.g. Sung, Y., K. Chang, and T. Liu, The effects of integrating mobile devices with teaching and learning on students' learning performance: A meta-analysis and research synthesis, *Computers and Education*, n° 94, pp. 252–275, 2016 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.11.008).

[11] "Learning, at its core, is a social endeavour. People learn through their interactions with each other and the world around them. Given the social nature of learning, educators who are moving their classes online must prioritize community building to ensure their students thrive online" (Tucker C., Successfully Taking Offline Classes Online, *Educational Leadership (EL) special report*, ASCD, 15.04.2020).

[12] Riggs S., Student-Centred Remote Teaching: Lessons Learned from Online Education, Educause Review, 15.04.2020. See also: University of California, Davis, Types of Interaction. How Can Interaction Support Active Learning? (easily adaptable to primary and secondary levels). As a matter of fact, research indicates that as teacher peer and parent engagement increase, so does student engagement (Borup, J., West, R. E., Graham, C. R., et Davies, R. S., The adolescent community of engagement framework: A lens for research on K-12 online learning, Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 22(1), 2014.

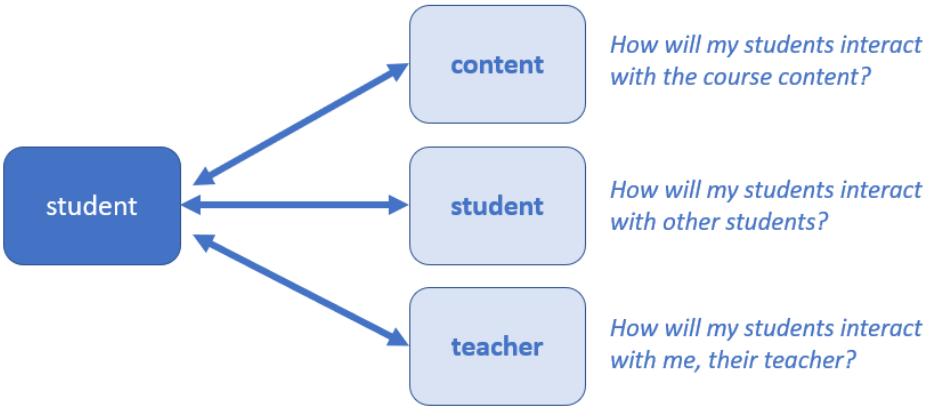


*Figure 1. Designed interactions for students in the online environment*

## Student engagement

Students don't learn if they're not engaged, whether learning occurs *in-situ* or online. Engagement, for in-person and online settings, is built on three primary components: behavioral, cognitive and emotional. We know that "learners are engaged if they exhibit behaviors, thinking processes or emotions that indicate they are connecting with course materials, with the teacher and with each other"[13].

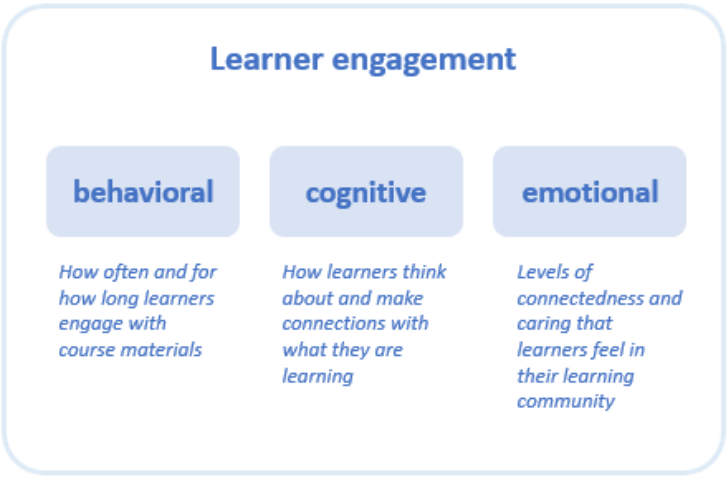


*Figure 2. Learner engagement*

Measuring these types of engagement in distance learning can be facilitated by the following common measurements:

[13] Rice K., Kipp K., How Can Educators Tap Into Research to Increase Engagement During Remote Learning?, Edsurge, 6 May 2020.

| Type of Engagement | Definition | Common Measurement That Teachers Can Use in Virtual Settings |
|---|---|---|
| Behavioral | How often and for how long learners engage with course materials | • Amount of time a student spends on a virtual learning module<br>• Number of logins to a course site<br>• Consistency of interactions with course materials<br>• Assignments completed<br>• Level of participation in online discussion forums |
| Cognitive | How learners think about and make connections with what they are learning | • Performance on assignments<br>• Interactions within threaded discussions<br>• Quality of interactions within a synchronous session<br>• Word usage in online discussion forums |
| Emotional | Level of connectedness and caring that learners feel in their learning community | • Student satisfaction with the course and instructor<br>• How students communicate and interact with the teacher and with peers<br>• The quality and quantity of parental involvement<br>• Emotional reaction to school and whether students feel valued |

*Table 2. Types of engagement with common measurements for online settings (Rice and Kipp, 2020)*

The structuring importance of non-vertical relationships between students should not be overlooked. The teacher, especially in a distance education situation, must encourage and promote these horizontal relations between students through regular interactive sequences.

## Learning objectives

Teachers should also **provide clear, engaging learning objectives**. Distance learning should be at least as engaging as the classroom experience, if not more – especially in extreme circumstances like an impromptu suspension of obligatory attendance at school.

## Teacher-guided learning

Teachers should as well **design instructor-guided learning**[14]. Whilst parental involvement can be critical to the success of students who learn online, many parents may be at work or working at home and may not be able to provide sustained support for their children, teachers need to design learning that does not require a lot of support from adults who may already be overwhelmed.[15]

## Digital competence

The distance learning being, for a large part, online learning, it stands as an opportunity to keep fostering the **digital competence**, amongst all **eight key competences**, as expressed in the Digital Vision for the European Schools:

[14] Online learning has a bigger effect where online instruction is collaborative or instructor-guided compared to where students worked independently: Means B. et al., Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies, US Department of Education (2009).
[15] Adapted from "10 strategies for online learning during a coronavirus outbreak" (ISTE, 16.02.2020).

> "Every pupil and student develops throughout his/her European School education the digital competence to foster confident, critical, responsible and creative use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society."[16]

In both distance and blended learning, education technology is a critical enabler for learning. However, it should be seen not simply as a means of delivery, but as a means of collaboration, social interaction and culture-building.

# Wellbeing of the students

## Essential consideration on wellbeing

The wellbeing of the students is essential and is an essential prerequisite for learning. Acknowledging "well-being as an engine of cognition and learning"[17], the first task of teachers is to create an environment that focuses on the well-being and belonging of all.

The OECD has measured student well-being as part of its Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking since 2015. PISA defines wellbeing as "the psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life," which includes the following elements:

- **psychological**, comprising students' sense of purpose, self-awareness, affective states and emotional strength;
- **social**, or students' quality of social lives, including relationships with family, peers and teachers, as well as a sense of social belonging at school;
- **cognitive**, referring to students' proficiency in using academic knowledge and soft skills to be lifelong learners, effective workers and engaged citizens; and
- **physical**, or the ability to follow a healthy lifestyle based on self-reported measures of physical activity and nutrition.[18]

[16] Guidelines for the pedagogical use of mobile devices in the European Schools (2020-01-D-14-en-2). See also the Framework for the key competences for Lifelong Learning in the European Schools (2018-09-D-69).
[17] The Economist Intelligence Unit, Emotion and cognition in the age of AI. Whyte paper, report commissioned by Microsoft, 2019.
[18] OECD, PISA 2015 Results (volume III): Students' Well-being Volume III, 2017 (p. 60-64). See also the PISA infographic on what contributes to students' wellbeing at schools.

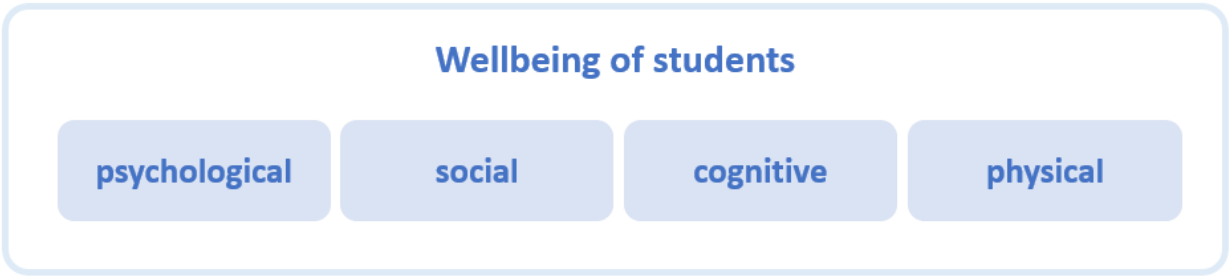


*Figure 3. Elements of student wellbeing to live a happy and fulfilling life*

Children who must stay at home, with limited social interaction, may get bored and lack activity. More importantly, in case of a pandemic-like situation, students may experience anxiety and stress. Therefore, it is "essential to reach out, as well as to provide psychological and emotional support, in order to ensure the wellbeing and physical and mental health of learners, their families [and] teachers"[19].

## Address psychosocial challenges

Schools "are more than just places where people learn, teach and train – they are also safe environments, and provide a sense of structure and of community and opportunities for socialisation."[20]

In a distance learning situation, especially in a crisis, schools should thrive on connecting staff, students and parents with each other. Schools should create online **communities** to ensure regular human interactions, enable social caring measures, and address possible psychosocial challenges that students may face when they are isolated, for what pertains to their competence. Stress and anxiety inhibit cognition, especially for the most demanding learning tasks.

As student care must be a priority, teachers need to check in with their students as regularly as possible, especially in the younger grades. Through online meetings, teachers can offer pedagogical support, as well as care and listening during a challenging situation[21].

Also, while online learning can provide exciting opportunities for students with strong academic skills, it can also be detrimental to weaker students. Therefore, teachers should make a special effort to reach out and connect with these students[22].

[19] Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training, 16 June 2020.
[20] *Ibidem*.
[21] See, for example, Minahan J., Maintaining Connections, Reducing Anxiety While School Is Closed, *Educational Leadership (EL) special report*, ASCD, 15.04.2020.
[22] See for example Dynarski, S, Online Courses Are Harming the Students Who Need the Most Help, *The New York Times*, 19.01.2018)

## Screen time and cameras

The principle of distance learning is not to increase the time of exposure to the screen, but to ensure pedagogical continuity. Moreover, spending an entire school day in front of a screen is certainly neither stimulating nor healthy[23]. The World Health Organization recommends that children aged 3-4 years should not spend more than one hour at a time in front of a screen.

Even when teaching online, teachers should strive to provide their students with a balance between online and offline learning activities.

- In Nursery, Primary and lower Secondary, many non-screen activities can be proposed.
- At secondary school, an online course can include non-screen activities, such as reading and writing without a screen.

Also, it should not be underestimated that scientific evidence suggests that "online instruction can pose a range of challenges for students if they are required to keep their cameras on during class"[24]. For example, the face-only format requires more focus than a face-to-face chat, as participants work harder and consume a lot of energy to interpret non-verbal cues (like facial expressions), especially when there are many faces on the screen (most people try to pay attention to all of them). See also the section on the use of cameras and microphones during online meeting.

## School communication to parents, guardians and students

It is strongly recommended that parents and students be informed about what they can expect from school during distance and online learning. Please refer to the communication sent by each school and by the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools.

A FAQ or a general document giving all the details of how the school operates during the period of suspension should be made available to staff, students and parents, so that everyone has the same updated information.

Also, step-by-step guides on how to access and use online learning tools should be provided. This information should include screenshots and, ideally, video tutorials.

## Procedure in case of parental complaint

If parents are not satisfied with the quality of the instruction provided to their children, whether in-situ or at a distance, mechanisms are already in place within our system to address this. As a reminder, here is an overview of the procedure:

1. Parent makes teacher aware of dissatisfaction.
2. No resolution: parent contacts Deputy Director.

[23] See Kardefelt Winther D., Rethinking screen-time in the time of COVID-19, UNICEF, 07.04.2020.

[24] T. Moses, 5 reasons to let students keep their cameras off during Zoom classes", The Conversation, 17 August 2020.

3. No resolution: Deputy Director organises a classroom observation (Teacher previously informed).
4. No resolution: sanctions to be put in place.

This procedure is proven and trustworthy, and parents should be urged to avail themselves of it.

# Inclusion and distance learning strategies

Schools should implement measures to ensure all students, including those with specific learning needs, have access to distance learning schemes.

The recommendations on distance learning also apply to teaching and learning in the context of Educational Support. Class/subject teachers, support teachers and assistants must keep a constant and meaningful communication with all the pupils, and particularly those benefiting from Educational Support, and their families. The objectives of the learning plans must be kept whereas the activities, methods and assessment must be adapted to the context of distance learning. Pupils and families should be guided and informed on the specificities of educational support provision in the current context of distance learning.

From this perspective, teachers should use and encourage students to use digital tools such as Immersive Reader to help them read messages and understand assignment prompts, enabling them to follow along and contribute. In order to ensure learners of all abilities are included, it is important to understand which tools and technologies improve accessibility and foster an inclusive classroom[25].

# Digital equity (access, skills and equipment)

## Students and Families

N.B.: prior to any suspension of temporary attendance at school, schools should make sure that students bring home the learning material (e.g. books).

Students and family's digital skills and equipment should be considered. For example, regarding families' equipment to access online content and activities: connectivity and number of devices, especially if parents are teleworking as well as in the case of large families.

Similarly, it is worth remembering that many applications (e.g. Microsoft 365 applications) have versions for mobile devices, in case a desktop or laptop is not available.

[25] Watch for example the Microsoft recorded webinar: "Accessibility Learning Webinar Series: Learning Tools for the Inclusive Classroom".

## Teachers and administrative staff

Teachers' digital skills and equipment should be considered, accordingly to specific contexts.

Teachers should be made aware of the usefulness of certain equipment, such as a stylus associated with a touch-screen computer, a document camera (visualiser), etc.

## Provide support to teachers, students and parents on the use of digital tools

It is recommended to organise some brief training or orientation sessions for teachers, as well as for students (and parents if possible).

All concerned should receive help to prepare the basic settings for their digital environment[26].

As part of a pilot phase, the Pedagogical Development Unit has set up a common calendar to make online training and external opportunities for continuing professional development accessible between all schools (Pedagogical Development SharePoint).

## Students' login and passwords

The school should take measures to ensure that all students have received their logins and passwords for O365.

Special attention should be given to make sure all students – especially the youngest learners – know how to log in to the official apps and know their passwords.

# Recommendations for staff collaboration and upskilling

## Consistent collaboration

Teaching staff and management staff should determine a consistent method of collaboration. Teamwork should be closely linked to ensure a smooth rollout. Teachers can share lessons to facilitate the workload.

School management, cycle management and teachers should work out a strategy for each cycle or year level.

Also, schools should develop mechanisms of regularly checking in with teachers and school staff, also to check on well-being.

## Adapted digital means for collaboration

To enhance effective collaboration, the modern digital tools and services are very beneficial.

[26] On Windows 10, the Quick Assist app allows any trusted user to take over someone else's computer and help solve a problem.

While emails allow to send administrative, as well as longer and more in-depth messages, an online collaboration hub such as Microsoft Teams allows for high-velocity interactions (instant messages, video calls with files and screen sharing). To transition from a traditional email-centric workflow, Microsoft Teams is a highly recommended collaborative platform[27].

## System-level support for peer-to-peer online training (pilot phase)

> "Effective schools see themselves as learning organizations in which teachers collaboratively learn together to improve student learning outcomes."- European Commission

In a pilot phase[28], to facilitate the sharing of good practices and the upskilling of the teaching staff, a calendar and a catalogue of peer-to-peer online training is accessible to all schools and staff. This scheme will be regularly improved through iterative and collaborative processes, under the supervision of the Pedagogical Development Unit, with the collaboration of the schools. The calendar is accessible on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint, and gives information on:

- online training and webinars held by the schools and by the OSGES, open to teachers from any school (any teacher can attend any training, within the limit of the number of participants chosen by the trainer);
- online training, webinars and MOOCs[29] held by external renowned institutions and actors (e.g., European Schoolnet Academy, School Education Gateway, e-Twinning…).

# Teachers' online presence and activities – minimum requirements

According to the amended General Rules of the European Schools (see Amendment of the General Rules, Article 26a), distance teaching is assimilated to a regular teaching duty.

Distance learning should meet as much as possible the requirements of teaching *in-situ* and cover all competences in all the syllabuses. In this perspective, teachers must make themselves **available during their regular class hours**, to teach and assess, answer questions, monitor progress and encourage all their students. Because teachers influence the student's learning experience, teachers must be present in the students' digital learning environment. "Being an

[27] For more guidance on Teams, please visit the Pedagogical Developmlent SharePoint.
[28] See System-level support for online training in the European Schools, ref. 2020-08-D-7-en-1.
[29] A MOOC is an online course designed for a large number of participants that can be accessed by anyone anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection. They are open to anyone, need no entry qualifications and offer a full/complete course experience, online, and free of charge. Source: European Commission, Digital education at school in Europe (Eurydice), 2019.

engaged teacher online means being visible in the class, whether that's through discussion posts, announcements or assignment feedback." [30]

## Nursery

Teachers must initiate and organise daily interactions with pupils (individually or in small groups). The daily work plan should be provided to the pupils on a daily basis (before 9 a.m. or the evening before) or communicated at the beginning of the week, with clear learning objectives and a clear ranking of the priorities of the activities (e.g. mandatory, if they have time...).

Communication channels should be preferably Microsoft Teams, supplemented if necessary, by SMS and any digital service authorised by the school. It is important for teachers to follow the directions given by the school, as they are working with a strategy considering the recommendations sent by the OSG.

Teachers must organise **at least one check-in of catch-up time *per week* with every student** (the student needs to be present with the whole-class, or in a group or in individual online meetings).

## Primary

Teachers must initiate and organise daily interactions with pupils (individually or in small groups). The daily work plan should be provided to the pupils daily (before 9 a.m. or the evening before) or communicated at the beginning of the week, with clear learning objectives and time structure.

Communication channels should be preferably Microsoft Teams, supplemented if necessary, by SMS and any digital service authorised by the school. It is important for teachers to follow the directions given by the school, as they are working with a strategy considering the recommendations sent by the OSG.

Teachers must organise **at least one check-in of catch-up time *per day* with every pupil** (whole-class, group or individual online meeting), e.g. a morning session and an afternoon check-in.

## Secondary

Every teacher must provide **at least one complete online course with all students per week**.

When following the regular timetable, teachers must at least meet their students briefly at the beginning of each lesson, as this will allow to outline learning objectives, keep track of participation and answer questions.

[30] Rice K., Kipp K., How Can Educators Tap Into Research to Increase Engagement During Remote Learning?, Edsurge, 6 May 2020. See also Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B. and Osher, D., Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development, Applied Developmental Science, 24(2), 2020.

Communication channels should be preferably Microsoft Teams, supplemented if necessary, by SMS and any digital service authorised by the school. **Live interactions with students are highly recommended**, with Microsoft Teams meeting.

When such interactions are not technically possible for a scheduled period, the teacher should at least provide the students with materials and work instructions as files, and schedule one or several catch-up sessions with the students during the week.

In S1-S3 at least, in order to keep parents informed and enable them to monitor the progress of their children if need be, instructions, homework and assignments may be sent on SMS and/or Teams. Each school may decide whether to send SMS notifications for the years S4-S7, in complement to assignments given on Teams.

# Daily structure options: a diversity of modalities

## General principles

### *Specific learning paces*

In distance learning, the rhythm may be different from that of the in-situ courses and may be slower. Expectations should be adjusted accordingly, especially in Nursery, Primary and lower Secondary.

On the other hand, more self-paced learning can be fostered, as well as projects or collaborative work. It is also an excellent opportunity to promote activities that encourage hands-on activities and experimentation and that let students learn in a trial and error approach.

### *Consistent and concerted decisions in school*

The school and the teachers – especially the coordinators – should plan in consultation the study schedule basis of distance learning programmes. Given the expected duration of suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school, it should be decided by the school, for each cycle, how the distance learning programme can best articulate the improvement of knowledge acquired by students in previous lessons and the teaching of new knowledge.

Similarly, the schedule should be planned according to the situation, level of studies, needs of students, and availability of parents. Schools and teachers must choose the appropriate learning methodologies based on the status of temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school and home-based quarantines.

### *Duration of online sessions*

**The duration of distance learning units should be based on students' self-regulation skills**. A coherent timing should be set according to the level of the students' self-regulation and

metacognitive abilities, especially for live-streaming classes. Preferably, the online unit should be no longer than:

- 20 minutes for primary school students,
- 50 minutes for secondary school students.[31]

**Schools and teachers should bring the distance learning situation as close as possible to the requirements of teaching in-situ**. In this sense, they need to make out the best of the use of the timetables and try to cover all competences in all the syllabuses in as much as possible.

It is therefore advisable for the teacher to meet their students briefly at the beginning of each lesson or at established times during the day, as this will allow to outline learning objectives, keep track of participation and answer questions.

# Student participation in online lessons

## Nursery and Primary

In case of distant teaching, cooperation with parents and guardians in the Nursery and Primary cycles need to be ensured. Parents and guardians should, of course, not be expected to take the teachers' role. However, they should be involved in facilitating their children learning at home.

### *Nursery and primary P1-P3*

Each school distributes accounts to young pupils, via parents and guardians.

The teacher should organise video sessions with the all class, several on individual pupils, on a regular basis.

- As children are not autonomous enough, parents should accompany their children to video meetings.
- The teacher can also invite the parents to join a Teams meeting without a Microsoft account (help).
- Teachers can ask the parents to join the class Teams as temporary guests. Note that any guest in a team can see all public communications and files. See the section on communication tools.

Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents in advance to ensure their availability, not forgetting that parents can be very busy with their professional tasks when teleworking at home and therefore need to agree with them on the desirable level of their involvement.

### *Primary P4-P5*

Teachers should organise online sessions where students can connect more autonomously.

[31] Adapted from https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures.

Parents can help their child to set up devices, but they should not join a teacher-moderated discussion group or class.

## Secondary

Student participation in online sessions as part of a regular and scheduled course period is compulsory if the school requires it (at least by written chat). Of course, if the student is technically unable to participate, he or she must inform the teacher.

## A diversity of modalities

Each of the following modalities should be adapted but the schools accordingly to needs.

| ● possible ●● recommended | Nursery | Primary | | Secondary | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1-2 | 3-5 | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6-7 |
| Distribute a daily "To-Do List" and organise daily check-in times | ●● | ●● | ●● | ● | | |
| Follow the regular timetable | | | | ●● | ●● | ●● |

*Table 3. Diversity of modalities*

## Nursery and Primary: distribute a daily "To-Do List" and organise daily check-in times

In every cycle, strategies that support students to work independently (such as checklists, daily plans and reflecting on their work) are recommended[32].

The work plan can be provided on a daily basis (before 9 a.m. every day or the evening before) or communicated at the beginning of the week with clear learning objectives and structure (this helps students and families set up a schedule at home).

When offering a flexible program, the teacher should provide time suggestions, so students don't spend either all day working, or not enough time on task. It is also recommended that daily lists include priorities to allow families some flexibility to adjust their challenging home lives.

In this setting, it is necessary to organise at least two **check-ins of catch-up times** (e.g. a morning session and an afternoon check-in).

## Secondary: follow the regular timetable

This approach is recommended in Secondary and **highly recommended for the bac cycle S6-S7**.

[32] "Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes" (Education Endowment Foundation, Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely, 2020).

- The regular timetable for students and teaching staff is valid.
- At the beginning of each lesson, teachers and students of the course log in via Microsoft Teams. Each student is required to wait during the first 10 minutes of the lesson for instructions from the teacher.
- The teacher then gives clear instructions to the students on what they need to do. This can be done via written chat or short video conference.

Live interactions (video, audio or chat meetings) with students are highly recommended. When such interactions are not technically possible for a scheduled course, the teacher should at least provide the students with materials and work instructions as files (they can be shared directly in Microsoft Teams). In that case, the teacher should schedule one or several consultation sessions during the week.

## Attendance

According to the amended General Rules of the European Schools (see Amendment of the General Rules, article 26a): "The rules on regular attendance, as established in Article 30 of the General Rules, shall apply mutatis mutandis in the event of distance teaching".

Even when teachers are not required to record attendance during distance learning (depending on the school's policy), it is recommended to monitor student attendance and activity.

Teachers should regularly check-in with struggling or non-participatory students.

If a student is habitually absent, the teacher should send him or her a personal message via the chat in Microsoft Teams (the student will automatically receive a notification).

If a student does not respond, the teacher should inform the parents directly (via SMS) and/or contact the class teacher and/or the educational advisor.

N.B.: Microsoft Teams can provide ways to monitor student activity and engagement online. For more information, please visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint.

## Homework and flexibility

During distance learning more than ever, it is necessary to **follow the general rules of good homework and equity**, especially in younger grades (the school may also decide not to give homework for S1-S3).

**Homework should allow for independent work**. Giving assignments or tasks that allow students to "practice skills and synthesise their learning and not have to learn new content on their own [will] eliminate the need for them to have to constantly get help from their parents."[33]

[33] Flynn M., Restoring Connection: Real-Life Advice on Transitioning to Online Learning, *Educational Leadership (EL) special report*, ASCD, 15.04.2020.

**Homework should not be a substitute for teaching**. Excessive workload for students (and families) should be avoided, bearing in mind that each home learning situation is unique and different. Teachers should, therefore, provide clear guidelines distinguishing between essential and optional work.

**Digital technology can also make it difficult for students to complete their work on time**. In this sense, teachers should consider that deadlines are not as important as the quality of the pedagogical relationship with students. When fixing deadlines, however, it is recommended to be tolerant in case students have trouble meeting them.

# Progression and assessment at distance

## General considerations

Assessment has several roles.

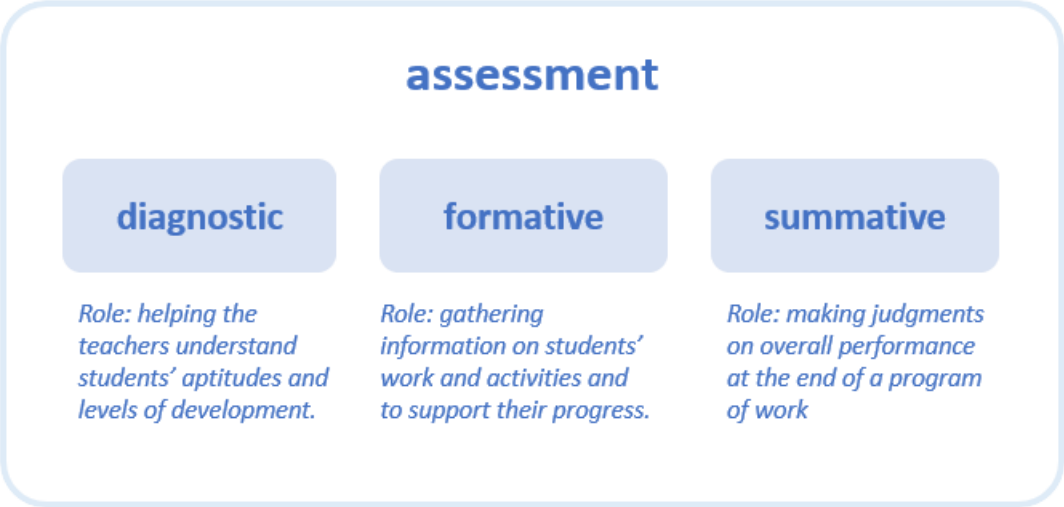


*Figure 4. Roles of assessment*[34]

As learning should be designed to support increasing depth and sophistication of learning over time, assessment should be focused to help learners move to the next steps in their learning. The purpose of assessment – especially formative assessment – is to support each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, ensuring that they are challenged and supported appropriately.

Assessment should help develop a holistic picture of the learner – their strengths, how they learn and areas for development – in order to enable them to be ready to learn and to agree their next steps. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process, with practitioners working with learners to help identify their strengths, areas for development and next steps in learning.

[34] Adapted from Robinson K. and Aronica L., *Creative Schools*, Penguin Books,2016.

Learning across the breadth of the curriculum should draw on a wide range of assessment approaches, building a holistic picture of the learner's development.

When planning their learning approach, teachers will also adapt and develop to ensure that assessment forms a fundamental part of supporting learners when they are not present in the school or setting[35].

## Specific considerations in the context of distance education

Monitoring student performance and recording evidence of student learning remain essential in distance education. Of course, recording student work and achievement may involve collecting different types of evidence or recording it differently during distance learning. In this respect, digital means can facilitate the assessment:

> "Technology has the potential to improve both assessment and feedback, particularly in terms of speed and efficiency. However, as with other aspects of teaching, the degree to which this potential is realised will be determined by pedagogy and implementation. In particular, how teachers use information from assessments, and how pupils act on feedback, matter more than the way in which they are collected and delivered."[36]

## Establishing alphabetical mid-semester grades in years S1-S3 (Scenario 3)

In the case of distance learning, which covers a more or less extended time period, new subjects will be dealt with. It is also a question of emphasising and defining essential contents for each year of study; these are contents whose mastery is indispensable for the transition to the next year' s class.

The General Rules of the European Schools[37] stipulates the following:

- "**In years 1-3**, the term or semester grades and the final grades shall reflect all the observations and results available to the teacher of the subject concerned" (article 59.4).
- "These grades shall be supplemented by teachers' written comments and, if necessary, by a general assessment of all the results, made by the Class Council" (article 60.2.a).

It is a holistic approach to judging a student's performance - an approach that is intended to be comprehensive when awarding a term/semester grade or a final grade.

The assessment contains both formative and summative elements.

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[35] These lines and the paragraphs above are adapted from Welsh Government, Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term, Crown copyright, July 2020.

[36] Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning, Education Endowment Foundation, 28.03.2018 (Full Guidance Report, p. 20).

[37] General Rules of the European Schools, ref. 2014-03-D-14-en-8.

## Assessment and student work modalities

**Formative assessment**, by informing the student of his or her difficulties so that he or she can remedy them and by promoting learning progression, is perfectly compatible with distance education. It requires that students receive timely and personalised feedback from teachers[38].

The assessment should, in all cases, be made according to the different levels listed in the descriptors of the levels achieved; these descriptors are specific to each of the subjects taught. They constitute an essential element of the level attained by a student, whether in classroom or distance learning.

In a scenario of distance teaching, learning and assessment, formative assessment is to be favoured.

As for the learning process, distance education should favour autonomous work: carrying out projects or thematic dossiers related to the essential subjects of the syllabus. Teachers should ensure that the volume of tasks imposed on students is reasonable and can be carried out independently. The tasks to be carried out should be announced well in advance; deadlines for submission, presentation, etc. should be indicated at the outset.

Projects or thematic dossiers should be chosen so that each student can demonstrate and understand his or her progress and future needs.

It is preferable to limit the number of projects and thematic dossiers to be carried out by the student. One project or dossier per subject. Teachers in the same class should work together to adjust the overall volume of work. This approach should be included in the school's homework policy/assessment policy.

Low-volume homework can be submitted on a regular basis to estimate student progress.

If the course is resumed in-situ, students will have the opportunity to complete in class the work started during the distance learning course. When the courses do not resume, the dossiers will be finalized at a distance and given to the teachers. The **projects** and **dossiers** thus completed will lead to a **certification assessment in order to establish the grades on the reports**.

Where appropriate, certification exams can only be organised when the courses are resumed, after a phase of consolidation of the knowledge and skills acquired through distance learning.

It is important that **clear, valid, reliable, fair, familiar and transparent[39]** criteria be established, while also insisting on an assessment of competencies and learning objectives as set out in the syllabuses.

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[38] "Formative assessment plays a key part in supporting student progression during the teaching and learning process. In formative assessment, the emphasis is on assessment for learning. However, feedback plays an important role in all forms of assessment" (Marking system of the European schools: Guidelines for use, ref. 2017-05-D-29-en-2).

[39] See European Commission, Blended learning in school education: guidelines for the start of the academic year 2020/21, June 2020, p. 21-22.

During the different phases of distance learning, the aim is to consolidate the notions acquired. This can then lead to the creation of **digital portfolios**[40] or reports in **different formats** (oral, video). Digital portfolios allow a range of skills to be assessed and with a degree of choice for the learner to construct them in a way that motivates them and builds on their strengths. Such portfolios have to respect data protection requirements, such as the Procedure to approve the use of Digital Learning Resources[41] and the pupils' right to image[42].

**Self-assessment** can round out the learning process. For self-evaluation, precise criteria (such as a checklist) can be established by teachers. Self-assessment by learners of their own progress, as well as peer assessment, can help to increase motivation and a sense of responsibility and action in the learning process. As part of continuous assessment, it can help the teacher understand what has been learned from initial tasks (e.g. distance learning) and the design of next steps. When reflecting on a course, students are encouraged to consider the whole process, both at a distance and in school.

The use of **learning diaries** or **personal development plans** can help track individual student progress. **Digitally enhanced assessment** (quizzes, games, digital portfolios) provides ways to understand and demonstrate learner progress.

When calculating the semester grade, a global approach to the assessment of the student's performance and progress will be chosen.

Consideration of student participation in distance learning activities is recommended, but not to the disadvantage of the student; for a given subject, this may result in an adjustment of the final/overall average.

N.B: Distance learning requires **flexibility** which allows, for example, that the assessment takes place over a certain number of days - open assessment - or integrates a group assessment as well as an individual assessment, in the case of a collaborative project. Schools, teachers and students can choose the most appropriate type of assessment for their subject and context.

## Establishing A and B marks in years S4-S7 (Scenario 3)

For classes S4-S7, two marks are given: an A mark and a B mark.

- "The A mark is a reflection of all the observations and of the pupil's overall performance, both written and oral, not taken into account in the B mark for the subject in question."

[40] Digital portfolio: a digital collection of artefacts (dynamically enriched over time) that documents, showcases and facilitates students' self-reflection on their learning growth, as well as its assessment by teachers. A digital portfolio can include multimedia content and links to other online material (Extended digital Terminology for the European Schools system, ref. 2020-01-D-37-en-fr-de-2). Digital portfolios should respect the GDPR's provisions (see the section on processing personal data).

[41] 2020-01-D-9-en-2 Annex to MEMO 2019-12-M-3/GM

[42] No video recordings are allowed, nor to upload pupils' photographs without the legal representatives' prior consent.

- "The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects."
- "The final mark in a given subject shall reflect all the observations and results available to the teacher. It provides the basis to judge the progress and level of attainment of the pupil."[43]

The assessment carried out to establish the A mark can again be formative (see above) and summative.

N.B.: further guidance on B marks will be established and communicated in due course of time, so that information is available before the organisation of the first semester B tests.

## Remarks on assignments and summative assessment modalities

In a distance learning setting all assignments are of course "open resource" (access to the books, calculators and Internet). Students can also collaborate via social networks or other means and receive support from their relatives.

However, "there are pedagogical and design strategies that make it harder for students to copy and paste from online sources or each other simply.

- One strategy is to **avoid easy-to-cheat formats** such as multiple choice or objective (simple right-or-wrong answer) questions. Instead, ask complex, specific questions […].
- A second strategy is to **diversify assessment formats**, relying less on essays and written exams and instead embracing oral exams using [Teams online meeting], or having students produce […] presentations that can be shared online.
- A third tactic is to **design assignments with process questions**, in which students reflect upon and describe the experience of writing the essay or taking the exam. Not only do these kinds of questions promote metacognition, they may deter cheating."[44]

Of course, rather than trying to set a "cheat-proof" assignment, an alternative strategy would be to design open-book assessments deliberately. In this sense, more energy should be devoted to improving learning rather than reducing cheating. Formative assessment is certainly a key in this context.

## Remarks on examinations and European Baccalaureate

Further guidance will be communicated regarding measures for B tests, Pre-Bac and Baccalaureate measures (S4-S7).

[43] General Rules of the European Schools, ref. 2014-03-D-14-en-8, article 59.
[44] Shea Sanger C., Teaching intelligence: how to take your classes online, The Times Higher Education, 13.03.2020.

## Remarks on effective feedback

A regular feedback policy will need to be put in place. Effective feedback provides the bridge between assessment and learning, especially in distance education. It must be **timely** and **personalised** to the learner. In a distance learning situation, teachers can remotely provide meaningful feedback to students, and easily comment on students' work in progress[45] as well as on assignment that have been submitted. Within the context of blended learning or distance learning, the feedback has several roles:

- Keep in touch during the 'home' element of blended learning or distance learning and maintain positivity.
- Acknowledge and appreciate learners' efforts, to celebrate their work and offer encouragement.
- Support the learners to ensure that they understand the tasks and respond to any misconceptions or misunderstanding that they may have.
- Provide the teacher with as much information as possible of the learners' current knowledge and understanding and the ways in which they can be supported in the next steps of their learning.
- Help parents to support their children's learning.

The feedback should also provide learners with opportunities to keep in touch and communicate with their peers, and to see and celebrate each other's work so that they learn from one another.[46]

## Catalogue of ideas for distant assessment

To have ideas about how to assess the students in a distant assessment, a dynamic online document containing assessment ideas will be established and shared amongst schools. Please visit: eursc.sharepoint.com/sites/PedagogicalDevelopment.

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[45] "Using technology-based assessments for formative assessment purposes should be accompanied by effective feedback and scaffolding mechanisms" (Siarova, H., Sternadel, D., Mašidlauskaitė, R., Assessment practices for 21stcentury learning: review of evidence, NESET II report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2017 – NESET is an international advisory network of experts working on the social dimension of education and training, and NESET is an official knowledge providers of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education).
According to the Endowment Foundation (Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely, 2020), teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered: "Ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present – for example clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback – is more important than how or when they are provided." When such effective elements are present, students can learn just as effectively through remote teaching as they do during face-to-face instruction.
Also, **technology can facilitate the feedback**: "When both teachers and students can edit the work, the valuable drafting and redrafting process that would otherwise take a few lessons to achieve can be accomplished much more rapidly. Giving feedback becomes a kind of collaborative modelling" (Picardo J., How to Do It: Using Digital Technology to Support Effective Assessment and Feedback, Impact: Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching, Sept. 2017).

[46] These lines on the purpose of feedback are adapted from Education Achievement Service (Welsh Government), Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools, June 2020.

# Guidance Note for Teaching and Learning in the Nursery and Primary Cycles

Please read the document Guidance Note for Teaching and Learning in the Nursery and Primary Cycles of the European Schools, ref. 2020-08-D-21-en-1.

# Digital tools and services in the European Schools

## How to use the essential tools

Please visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint (> Digital tools) for detailed and updated information.

## Approved digital tools and services

As distance and blended learning inevitably leads to increased use of digital technology, teachers, students and parents must **only use the digital tools and services approved by the school** for distance learning, primarily SMS, Microsoft 0365 and especially Teams.

- Please also read the section on legal aspects.
- For an updated list of the applications and services activated at system level, please visit the Pedagogical Development Sharepoint.

Exceptionally, if a teacher needs to use another digital tool or resource (including the apps available in the Teams apps library as they are not approved by the school like the usual O365 applications), he or she must contact the **school's Data Protection Officer** (DPO), to launch an authorisation request procedure[47] (pedagogical added value and GDPR compliance assessment).

As always, stakeholders should "pay attention to the appropriateness of digital tools to the age and special needs of learners, as well as to the compliance with data protection rules, privacy, ethical considerations, safety and cybersecurity requirements."[48]

Also, teachers should be **consistent** with the tool chosen and **use only one for the same purpose** (students should be sure to have received all the necessary information). Ideally, the same tool should be used by all teachers for the same purpose and at least in the same cycle. A temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school is not the time for new digital tools. Students need routine and structure during this period.

Digital resources and tools must both **minimise complexity** and **focus on authentic connections that are essential for learning[49].**

[47] 2020-01-D-9-en-2 Annex to MEMO 2019-12-M-3/GM.
[48] Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training, 16 June 2020.
[49] See P. Emerich France, A Framework for Thinking About Tech Integration, Edutopia, 20 August 2020. This article proposes four key questions prior to integrating digital technology: 1) Does the technology minimise complexity? 2) Does the technology maximise individual power and potential? 3) Does the technology reimagine learning? 4) Does the technology preserve or enhance human connection?

More fundamentally, teachers concern must always be firstly **pedagogical** ("*What learning experiences do I want to create for and with my students?*"), and secondly **technical** ("*What applications should I use?*"). Teachers' role is first about designing attractive lessons, and then about choosing the right tools to implement the learning design. Please see the Annex on "ABC Learning Design", as a possible inspiration.

In this perspective, a good approach is to shift the focus on the **type of tools** a teacher needs, rather than on the **title of tools**[50].

# Processing of personal data

In exceptional cases and based on the decision of the Director distance teaching may be organised in order to educate children in the public interest, as defined by Article 1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools.

As stated in the European Schools Privacy Statement, the purpose of the European Schools is to provide children with quality teaching and learning, in the public interest. Therefore, the processing of the pupils' personal data is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, pursuant to the 'Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools' and the 'General Rules of the European Schools'.

# Recommended communication tools: SMS and Teams

## SMS: for administrative communication

SMS[51] announcements are the preferred means for administrative and important communications, toward parents, guardians and students. SMS announcements send e-mails to the selected recipients, with attached files.

Teachers should **communicate reasonably** so as not to overload the recipients' mailboxes. The communication should be as concise and to the point as possible. It is recommended to limit emails to parents to one per week. If possible, email communication should be sent in groups (with other teachers) and organised by subject matter with a bulleted list.

For the same reason, **students should not send work by e-mail, especially in Secondary**. It is challenging to keep track of the work posted by email, as a teacher must manage many students and as students don't consistently name the attached files[52]. It is therefore essential to train

[50] See Mc Corkle S., Technology is a tool, not a learning outcome, Wake Forest University, 23 January 2017.
[51] https://sms.eursc.eu/login.php
[52] Some teachers have 10 classes and 200 students: if they send emails to their classes they could get 200 responses (and the students may also reply to all). It is very difficult to keep track of the work sent by email, as a teacher has

students to submit their work on assignments in Teams (this video may help: "Student view how to submit assignments in teams 0365").

Communication by e-mail (Outlook) should be, therefore, reserved for what cannot be communicated otherwise, or what is personal and should not be shared with the whole class

## Teams: for regular communication

For regular communication, notably **pedagogical**, teachers should use Microsoft Teams[53].

- Students are enrolled by default in the course-based teams (for a facilitated access, students can use the Teams mobile app).
- Parents and guardians can be enrolled as guests (see Add guests to a team in Teams), especially in Nursery and Primary.

### *Note on the communication with parents and guardians as guests in Microsoft Teams (especially in Nursery and Primary)*

It is convenient to invite parents and guardians as guests in a course-based team on Microsoft Teams, especially when young pupils are not autonomous enough to manage themselves the digital interface. Note that any guest in a team can see all public posts and files.

To maintain a conversation channel with parents and guardians, teachers may want to invite them in a **private channel[54]** (not accessible to students).

Teacher can also create a specific channel "useful information", to publish regular organisational announcements and important documents (updated pedagogical calendar, forms, handbooks, etc.).

to manage a large number of students and as students don't consistently name the attached files. Emails are not recommended, therefore, due to potential saturation and confusion.

[53] In Nursery and Primary, you may want to invite parents as guests in the course teams, when children are not autonomous enough to participate themselves in the course teams. As in S1-S3 the children need some support and monitoring from parents, both SMS and Teams can be used.

[54] Private channels in Microsoft Teams create focused spaces for collaboration within a team. See the guidance section on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint.

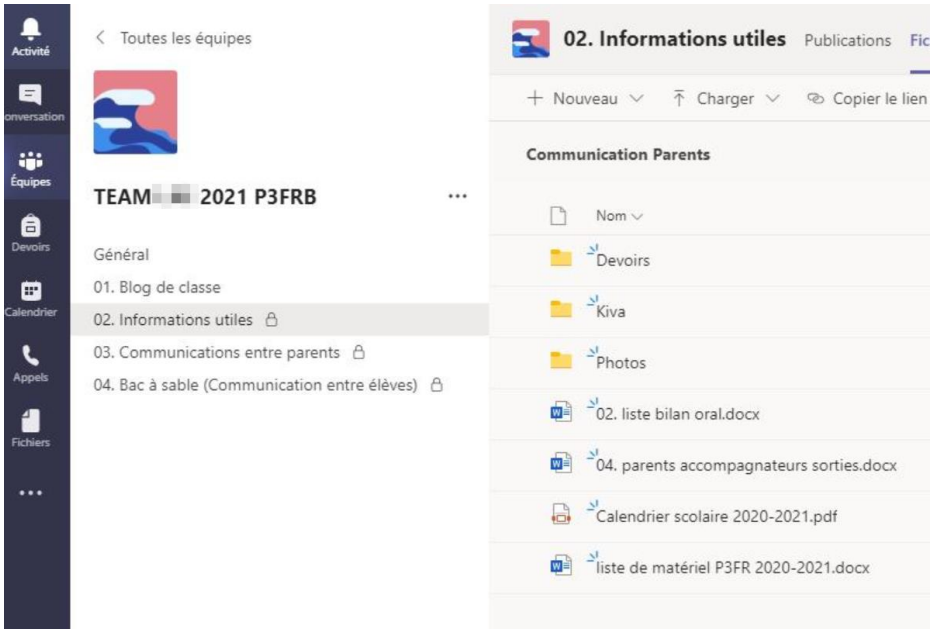


*Figure 5. Example of a class-based team in primary*

# Recommendations for the use of teleconferencing tools (video, audio and chat)

## Background

### *Pedagogical added value of online meetings*

The use of interactive online communication systems (audio/video) including online teleconferencing systems (such as Microsoft Teams) has become an integral part of blended and distance teaching in the European schools.

Online meetings by video, audio and written chat are a useful possibility for all school cycles as a critical element for productive and enriched distance education.

Online live sessions provide effective synchronous learning opportunities and create a space to engage with your students while remote. Live events are optimal for[55]:

- mastering content that requires students' active participation in collaborative problem-solving;

[55] Adapted from Coursera, "Moving online: What you can implement now" (16.03.2020). This article also provides some useful academic references. See also, e.g., Connie Malamed, "Best Resources For Creating Live Virtual Training Right Now".

- fostering peer-to-peer interaction;
- offering step-by-step guidance while responding to students' questions in real-time;
- providing personalised scaffolding in smaller group settings;
- assessing students' knowledge and comprehension.

## *Legal aspects: Article 26a of the General Rules*

As stated in the introduction of the present document, the Board of Governors has approved an amendment to the General Rules adding a new article 26 a concerning distance teaching (entered into force on 1 September 2020), providing a legal basis for the use of interactive online communication systems (audio/video) including online teleconferencing systems. The new Article 26 a of the General Rules, also clarifies that the use of teleconferencing tools has to be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)'s requirements. The new Article 26 a of the General Rules reads as follows[56]:

"**Article 26a**

**Distance Teaching**

1. In general, teaching shall be provided 'on site'.
   In exceptional cases and based on the decision of the Director, distance teaching may be organised in order to educate children in the public interest, as defined by Article 1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools.

2. In the event of distance teaching, classes may be taught and assessed using an interactive online communication system (audio/video). The choice of the communication system shall be the sole responsibility of the Director, he/she the data controller of the school. The Director shall ensure that the system chosen complies with data security, reliability and confidentiality requirements as laid down by the host Member State's privacy legislation. Any processing of personal data carried out in that context shall be lawful provided that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, in accordance with Article 6.1.(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation.

3. Providing distance teaching through the potential use of an interactive online communication system, as referred to in paragraph 2, shall form part of the duties assigned to teaching staff, in line with Article 10.2 of the Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools and Article 5.3 of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools.

4. The rules on regular attendance, as established in Article 30 of the General Rules, shall apply mutatis mutandis in the event of distance teaching."

[56] General Rules of the European Schools, ref. 2014-03-D-14-en-9.

Using interactive online communication tools (including video conferencing systems) implies the processing of staff members' and pupils' personal data.

Anything done with personal data (collection, recording, organization, structuring, storage, alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, restriction, erasure) is a processing of personal data.

Hence, any data processing activity must comply with the GDPR's provisions.

The following recommendations should guide the schools when using video conferencing systems (with video, audio and chat features) to find the necessary balance between what is from a pedagogical viewpoint useful and what is necessary to provide quality teaching from distance.

## Recommendations for the use of video conferencing tools

### *Choice of product*

A video conference is a live discussion between people in remote locations via digital means of communications (video, audio, and chat).

According to Article 26 a of the General Rules, the choice of the communication system shall be the sole responsibility of the Director, being the data controller of the school. The Director shall ensure that the system chosen complies with data security, reliability and confidentiality requirements as laid down by the host Member State's privacy legislation.

The European Schools are currently using Microsoft Teams as an interactive online communication system for distance teaching.

Even though Directors are in principle free to choose other video conferencing tools within their autonomy as data controller, this is not recommended.

In the event a Director would decide to opt for an alternative video conferencing tool, the School's DPO must be consulted and assess such alternative tool beforehand.

### *What is allowed and what is prohibited regarding recordings*

Teachers are invited to run live video, audio or chat conferencing sessions with students, (cameras and microphones enabled).

Nevertheless, not all feature (which from a pedagogical point of view might be useful) are necessary to fulfil the European Schools' mission and to provide quality distance teaching.

Teachers are **allowed to**:

- post a video or audio recording of themselves for their students[57];
- run live sessions where students may appear on the screen.

[57] When the students' microphones and cameras are not switched on and no student name appears on the screen.

Teachers and students are **not allowed to:**

- **record video, audio or screenshot of students[58].**

## *Flexibility regarding the use of cameras and microphones during online sessions*

- During online sessions, and when it is useful from an educational point of view, the use of the camera is strongly recommended.
- However, it cannot be made systematically compulsory for the entire duration of each session. Similarly, a teacher cannot be obliged to stream his/her image. In case of live streaming from a school classroom, the streaming of the images of the students present in-situ shall be avoided as far as possible.
- Teachers and students can set the camera background effects during a video conference with Microsoft Teams[59], to protect their privacy when teaching from home as explained below. Of course, switching off the camera does not in any way prevent the microphone from being activated for oral participation.
- The camera should not be the first means of monitoring student engagement. Many other forms of online interaction and collaboration help to ensure student engagement (see the section on the forms of student engagement).

The European Schools advocate for **flexible approaches** when working with students (as in, e.g., Universal Design for Learning[60]). This means to offer students multiple means of engagement. Therefore, demanding one type of engagement is counter to the flexibility principle. In an online classroom, that means giving students choices about whether to engage with the class on camera, via audio, through polls, collaborative documents, or in the chat. Teachers should, therefore, encourage students to be on camera, but allow them to make that choice. **The guiding principle in each situation must be the added value for learning**.

Especially in Nursery and Primary, teachers can work with families to discuss what is best for their circumstances. Please visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint for detailed and updated guidance and information.

See also the section on screen time and cameras, and visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint for detailed and updated guidance and information, also on managing student behaviour online.

[58] The technical capability to record live videoconference sessions on Microsoft Teams is disabled for teachers and students.

[59] Microsoft Teams allows users to customise backgrounds, either by blurring them or by uploading a fixed image. It is recommended to ask all students to blur or place their backgrounds on an appropriate static image at the beginning of the lesson.

[60] See, e.g. http://udlguidelines.cast.org.

## Student's behaviour in online private conversations

Please refer to the document 'Charter for use of IT resources and devices by pupils of the European School (MEMO 2020-08-M-1-en-1/AB).

Please also visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint for more information.

## Additional Support

- Please consult the ICT coordinator in your school, the O365 and the SMS Super Key Users (SKU) or the ICT technicians.
- Additional Support is available on the **Pedagogical Development Unit SharePoint**.

# ANNEXES

# Annex – Table of general recommendations for teaching and learning online

| | Nurs. | Primary | | Secondary | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1-2 | 3-5 | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6-7 |
| Planning | | | | | | |
| Posting the remote learning methodology in a fixed location (Teams preferably, or SMS). | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Regularly post the material (content and activities) to be covered., it is also possible to email parents a general update (according to modalities and frequencies to be agreed with them). | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Review the course schedule to determine priorities, with flexibility. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Consider the domestic environment: reduce screen time and include physical activity as much as possible. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Reset expectations for students (participation, communication, and deadlines). Be ready to handle requests for extensions or accommodations fairly. | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Monitoring students' activities | | | | | | |
| Track student progress to ensure participation and check-in with struggling or non-participatory students, considering the needs of each situation. | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Send feedback on each assignment, even if it is only a boost. Voice and video feedback are extremely valuable whenever possible. | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Monitor the morale of your class and the workload of the students carefully. Include cycle coordinators. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Foster communication and collaboration among students to build and maintain a sense of community that can help motivation to participate and learn. | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Communication | | | | | | |
| Communicate with the pupils through the parents (using the usual method) | ● | ● | ● | ● | | |
| When online sessions are not possible, send short audio or video messages to maintain contact with the students. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Post one video a day that students can look forward to. This may be a "Good morning!" video or an instructional video. | ● | ● | ● | | | |
| Lesson delivery | | | | | | |

| | Nurs. | Primary | | Secondary | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1-2 | 3-5 | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6-7 |
| Set a time limit for video-conference lessons. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Create a short presentation to teach the students on a subject. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Send links to educational resources on topics that were discussed before the temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school, or on topics will be addressed when the school resumes its normal activities. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Throw simple challenges (e.g. "*who can build a bridge with usual objects from home?*"). Parents can take pictures of the results and send it by email or upload it as a reply to the challenge on the blog (when applicable).[61] | ● | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Worksheets can be sent to the parents: writing skills, spatial orientation... Results can be scanned by the parents or brought back later to school. | ● | ● | ● | | | |
| A selection of online learning platforms can be recommended by the teacher, who could send the parents the links to specific activities. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| The Matific program is available for all Primary. | | ● | ● | | | |

*Table 4. General recommendations for teaching and learning online*

[61] Such activities have a double benefit for children: they give them goals and a minimum sense of normality (especially for Nursery and Primary pupils).

# Annex - Considerations and points of cautions related to the three scenarios

The following table is by no means an exhaustive list, but should begin to scaffold thinking and school level discussions around which mode for learning is best suited to each approach or strategy according to learner age and subject[62].

| **Scenario 1:**<br>**In-situ** | **Scenario 2:**<br>**socially distant classroom + optional streamed lesson** | **Scenario 3:**<br>**Distance learning (online)** |
|---|---|---|
| Sharing information, e.g., board or smartboard. | Sharing information on the board ensuring that learners are well spaced.<br>*Need to make sure the board is visible to remote students.* | Sharing information through digital means (Teams, OneNote Classbook…). Recording of a teacher sharing information on the board or a voiced over presentation.<br>*Need to consider whether all learners have access to the materials.* |
| Discussion through whole group and small group real time conversations. | Discussions through real time conversations ensuring that learners can maintain social distancing.<br>*Need to make sure the remote students are participating.* | Asynchronous or synchronous written discussion in a class or group space (Teams). Audio sharing of discussion contributions (e.g., Teams). |
| Collaboration through small group work at tables. | Collaboration through group work.<br>*Need to consider how materials are not shared and how learners can maintain social distancing*.<br>*Need to make sure the remote students are participating.* | Collaboration in Microsoft 365 apps.<br>*Need to consider groupings of learners for collaborative activities and set clear expectations for levels of participation.*<br>*Primary: collaboration with Parents may be required. Need to consider if this is a viable option for all learners and ensure that it is inclusive of all learners.* |

[62] Adapted from Education Achievement Service (Welsh Government), Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools, June 2020.

| **Scenario 1:**<br>**In-situ** | **Scenario 2:**<br>**socially distant classroom + optional streamed lesson** | **Scenario 3:**<br>**Distance learning (online)** |
|---|---|---|
| Creation using supplies available in the classroom (pens/paper/glue, etc.). | Creation using supplies available in the classroom.<br>*Need to consider how materials are not shared and how learners can maintain social distancing.*<br>*Need to consider what supplies will be available to the remote students.* | Online applications and web tools to create presentations, videos, artwork, storybooks, infographics, websites…<br>Creation using supplies available from home and/or school (some productions can be shared digitally, at least as a picture).<br>*Need to consider what supplies will be available to learners and how effectively they can engage with them independently.* |
| Teacher direct teaching to explain concepts. | Teacher direct teaching to explain concepts.<br>*Need to make sure the remote students are receiving conveniently the information.* | Video and audio explanations from teachers or external sources.<br>*Can be accessed and worked through at own pace. Can also allow teachers to share expertise across classrooms and potentially schools.*<br>*Need to consider if learner can access the instructions. Nursery and primary: need to consider availability and willingness of parent to do this and time along with expertise needed.* |
| Use of shared texts or textbooks in the classroom. | Use of texts or textbooks in the classroom.<br>*Need to consider how materials are safely used by learners in line with operational guidance.*<br>*Need to ensure equity of access to texts for learners.* | Online book, notebook (OneNote) or multimedia resource either made by teacher or from a range of sites.<br>*Need to ensure equity of access to texts for learners.* |
| Use of workbooks in the classroom. | Use of workbooks in the classroom.<br>*Need to consider how materials are safely used by learners in line with operational guidance.*<br>*Need to consider equity of access to workbooks for all learners.* | Online space or website for skill building (e.g., Teams, OneNote ClassNotebook).<br>*Need to consider equity of access to workbooks for all learners.* |
| Meeting, sharing and discussing learning – oral feedback. | Meeting, sharing and discussing learning – oral feedback. Can be feedback to work completed in the classroom or at home. | Oral feedback through voice/video recordings on pieces of work submitted. |

| **Scenario 1:**<br>**In-situ** | **Scenario 2:**<br>**socially distant classroom + optional streamed lesson** | **Scenario 3:**<br>**Distance learning (online)** |
|---|---|---|
| | *Need to maintain social distancing but presents a real opportunity for quality dialogue with small groups of learners or individuals.*<br>*Need to make sure the remote students are participating.* | Nursery and lower primary: part of oral feedback comes from parents/carers. *Need to consider availability and willingness of parent to do this and time along with expertise needed.* |
| Teacher marking as written feedback to work. | Teacher marking as written feedback to work.<br>*Need to maintain social distancing.*<br>*Digital means for remote students.* | Teacher marking as digital feedback to work (e.g., assignments on Teams).<br>Online tests or interactive quizzes to check understanding (e.g., Microsoft Forms).<br>Opportunity to reflect on and respond to any marking comments received from teacher. |
| Self-assessment of work. | Self-assessment of work.<br>*Need to consider whether this offers best use of limited classroom time for learners.* | Online self-assessment in learning spaces using comments or rubrics (e.g., Microsoft Forms).<br>Offline self-assessment of work using set criteria. *Need to consider how shared back to teacher to complete feedback loop.* |
| Peer assessment of work. | Peer assessment of work.<br>*More challenging to maintain operational guidance on sharing of resources, social distancing and participation of remote learners, but can be completed orally (also by digital means).* | Use of online spaces for peer assessment and feedback (e.g. shared word documents).<br>*Need to consider how learners are supported to make relevant comments and needs to be monitored.* |
| Building relationships and a sense of community. | Building relationships and a sense of community whilst adhering to social distancing measures.<br>*Consideration needs to be given to learner well-being as maintaining relationships has been a significant challenge for many learners and this provides an opportunity.* | Blogging and discussions online.<br>Visible teacher/school presence online.<br>Class media accounts.<br>Team competitions.<br>Video assemblies. |

| **Scenario 1:**<br>**In-situ** | **Scenario 2:**<br>**socially distant classroom + optional streamed lesson** | **Scenario 3:**<br>**Distance learning (online)** |
|---|---|---|
| Engaging and motivating learners. | Regular contact opportunities in a safe and supportive environment providing feedback and dialogue about learning.<br>*Need to make sure the remote students are participating.* | Regular contact opportunities in a safe and supportive online environment providing feedback and dialogue about learning.<br>*Nursery and primary: need to consider availability and willingness of parent to do this and time along with expertise needed.* |

*Table 5. Considerations ands points of caution related to the three scenarios*

# Annex – ABC Learning Design framework and tools

The following is adapted from the ABC Learning Design, an Erasmus+ project developed at University College London (UCL)[63]. More information is to be found on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint.

## The six learning types

Although originally designed for higher education, the ABC Learning Design methodology can be easily adapted to secondary, primary and kindergarten levels. It builds on the six learning types concept from Prof Diana Laurillard's model of how students learn[64].

In principle, a good learning design will contain a mix of all these types of learning:

| | |
|---|---|
| **acquisition** (listen, read, watch) | Students listen to a lecture or podcast, read from books or websites, and watch demos or videos. In this way learners acquire new concepts, models, vocabulary, models, and methodologies. Acquisition should be reflective as learners align new ideas to their existing knowledge. The teacher controls most of the learning process. |
| **discussion** | Students articulate their ideas and questions, challenge and respond to the ideas and questions from the teacher, and/or from their peers. |
| **collaboration** | Students work together on a project where they must produce a shared output.<br>Students negotiate their ideas and practice until they agree, they challenge each other and provide peer feedback to develop the best output they can. Learning through collaboration includes elements of discussion, practice, and production. |
| **investigation** | Students explore, compare and criticise the material (texts, documents, and resources) that reflects the concepts and ideas being taught. |
| **practice** | Students adapt their actions to the task goal and use the feedback to improve their next action. Feedback may come from self-reflection, from peers, from the teacher, or from the activity itself, if it shows them how to improve the result of their action in relation to the goal. |
| **production** | Students consolidate what they have learned by articulating their current conceptual understanding and how they used it in practice.<br>Production is usually associated with formative and summative assessment and can cover a wide range of items (essays, reports, designs, performances, articles, models, etc.). |

*Table 6. The six learning types*

[63] https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/abc-ld/. ABC Learning design was developed by Clive Young and Nataša Perović in 2014. All ABC resources are released under Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license. This annex to the Guidelines complies with the same licence.

[64] This is a model of the conditions necessary for learning to take place. See D. Laurillard, Teaching as a Design Science. Building Pedagogical Patterns for Learning and Technology, Routledge, 2012. Watch Diana Laurillard introduces the six learning type (Youtube).

## Ideas for moving the learning online

Although developed to promote blended learning, ABC Learning Design has proved a practical and quick framework to help teachers consider how to move learning activities online. The table below defines the learning types and give ideas to move them online. As always, the priority is to think about what teaching, learning and assessment activities the teacher wants to implement online, and then look at the digital tools available to help do so.

| Learning type | Definition | Conventional *in-situ* methods (examples) | Moving online (examples) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **acquisition** | Students are listening to a lecture or podcast, reading from books or websites, and watching demos or videos. | • reading books or articles<br>• listening to teacher presentations via face-to-face, lectures<br>• watching in-class demonstrations | • reading digital documents, websites, and online resources<br>• listening to podcasts and webcasts<br>• watching animations and videos |
| **collaboration** | Students work together on a project where they must produce a shared output. | • small group project<br>• discussing others' outputs<br>• building joint output | • small group project using online forums, wikis, chat rooms, etc. for discussing others' outputs<br>• Brainstorming using online whiteboard or mind map<br>• building a joint digital output<br>• networking (between classes/schools) |
| **discussion** | Students are articulating their ideas and questions, challenging and responding to the ideas and questions from the teacher, and/or from their peers. | • discussion groups<br>• class discussion | • posting and replying to discussion forums (asynchronous) or text chat (synchronous)<br>• web-conferencing (synchronous audio & video chat)<br>• screen sharing with audio<br>• email discussion<br>• interview an expert<br>• online voting (or polls) |
| **investigation** | Students are exploring, comparing and criticising the texts, documents and resources that reflect the | • using text-based study guides<br>• analysing the ideas and information in a range of materials and resources | • using search engines and evaluate information and idea<br>• analysing the ideas and information in a range of digital resources |

| Learning type | Definition | Conventional *in-situ* methods (examples) | Moving online (examples) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | concepts and ideas being taught. | • using conventional methods to collect and analyse data<br>• comparing texts<br>• searching and evaluating information and ideas | • using digital tools to collect and analyse data, field/lab observations<br>• comparing digital texts |
| **practice** | Students are adapting their actions to the task goal and use the feedback to improve their next action. | • practicing exercises<br>• doing practice-based projects<br>• labs<br>• field trips<br>• face to face role-play activities | • interacting with content and media (animations, 3D models; simulations, microworlds)<br>• interacting with others in a micro world<br>• virtual labs and field trips<br>• online role play activities<br>• quiz/MCQs - formative with automatic feedback |
| **production** | Students are consolidating what they have learned by articulating their current conceptual understanding and how they used it in practice. | • essays, reports<br>• performances, artefacts<br>• images, posters<br>• videos, animations | • digitally produced essays, reports, case studies…<br>• digital portfolios<br>• concept mapping/mind mapping<br>• online performances, artefacts<br>• digitally produced images, videos, animations, audio, slideshows, presentations, models, resources<br>• blogs, wikis, digital portfolios<br>• interviews through video- conference |

*Table 7. The six learning types, and ideas to move them online*

## The Learning Designer online tool

The web-based tool **Learning Designer**[65] can help the teachers with the process of moving their teaching online. It helps in the creation and sharing of learning designs (e.g. lesson plans) and to support the integration of learning technology.

A learning design is displayed as the sequence of activities a teacher has created, like a lesson plan, and shows all its main properties, such as topic, number of students, aims, outcomes, duration of the learning time and the type of learning involved. Since the tool is online, teachers can choose to share their learning designs with theirs colleagues, and view and adapt learning designs that have been shared by others.

The tool provides feedback on each design by showing the amount of learning time designed, and a pie chart of the proportion of each of the six learning types in the design. The teacher can then decide what adjustments to make. In principle, a good learning design will contain a mix of all these types of learning. The Analysis tab also shows the proportions of time learners spend online, with the teacher present, and as a class, group or individual.

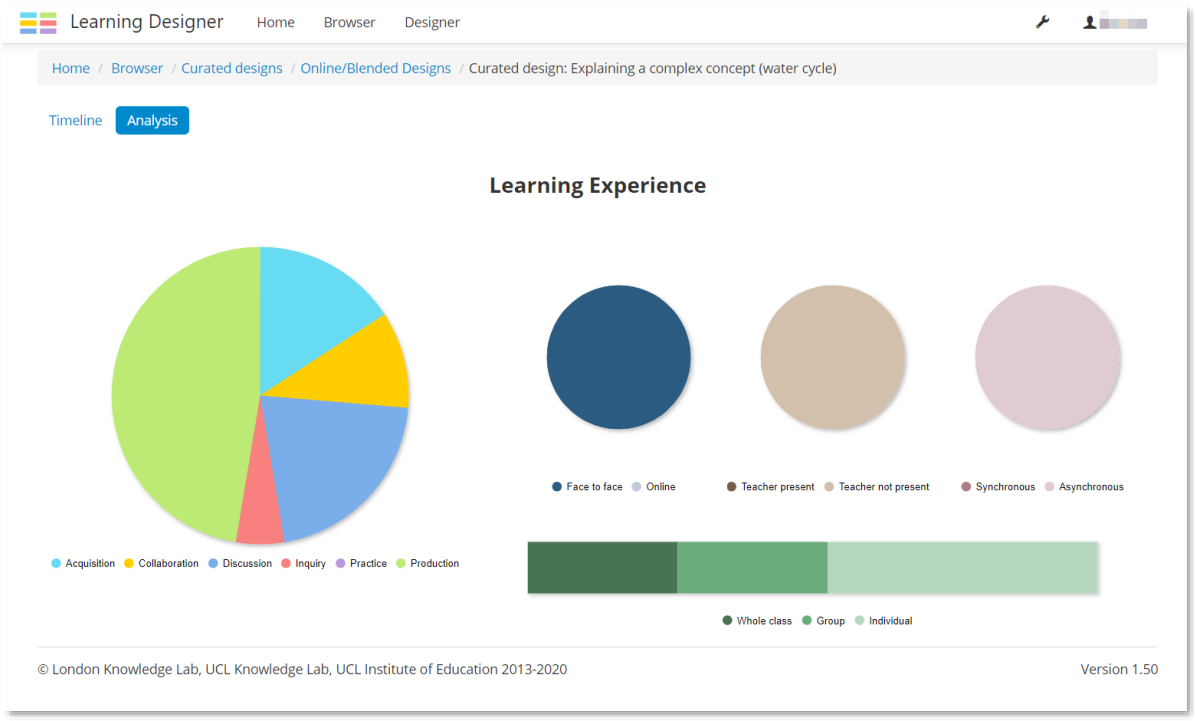


*Figure 6. Example of analysis of a learning scenario*

[65] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/learning-designer/. The Learning Designer was developed by a team led by D. Laurillard at the UCL Knowledge Lab, with ESRC funding, and is free for anyone to use.

# Annex - Tips for synchronous teaching (online classroom)

The following are pedagogical and technical tips to organise and animate online sessions[66].

## Synchronous teaching and asynchronous teaching

Distance education makes it possible to envisage two types of temporalities: **synchronous** teaching and **asynchronous** teaching.

- In **synchronous** mode, teachers and students meet online at the same time and interact in real-time, through a written discussion system or by videoconference - or virtual classroom. The latter is often preferred for bringing learners and teacher together at a distance for an online classroom session. It retains the codes of the classroom while using the advantages of digital technology to boost training.
- In **asynchronous** mode, the teacher proposes teaching resources, exercises or activities to the students who can access them independently. This work can be individual and autonomous, allowing each student to grasp the material at his or her own pace. But this modality also offers possibilities for interaction (through forums or message exchange systems), collaborative content production (through a shared document), etc.

The online classroom format provides the advantage of **engaging students** directly through interaction with their teacher. By seeing others through their webcams and chatting with them, it also creates a greater **sense of community**, which reduces feelings of isolation. When the teacher exposes the material, the students can **ask a question** directly to quickly overcome their difficulties - something that is not possible with text or video.

However, the online classroom requires both teacher and students to be connected at the same time. It also requires some technical specifications - detailed below - as well as animation skills on the part of the teacher.

## Specificities of the online class

The online class is not a simple online transposition of a lecture. In other words, teaching at a distance is not just doing the same thing as before, but in front of a webcam. In the virtual classroom, the role of **animation** is crucial, as students are more likely to lose track alone in front of their screen. Some educational activities are therefore better suited to the use of a virtual classroom:

- Subject teaching session where students may have questions.
- Question and answer session following an asynchronous sequence - for example, material seen through readings and/or videos.

[66] Mainly adapted from Nicolas Roland, « Guide de survie pour enseigner à distance dans un cas de force majeure : la classe virtuelle », (16.03.2020), with the author's permission.

- Discussion session with students on aspects of the content.
- A work session where students work in sub-groups to solve exercises or cases.
- Follow-up session of group work, etc.

## What equipment to use?

The list of materials below applies to both teachers and students.

- **A computer (desktop or laptop) or a tablet**. Note that students may attend the online session with a smartphone if no extended reading is expected.

For the teacher, the ideal choice is to opt for a computer that will offer more facilities in terms of presentation, screen sharing, etc.

A portable computer with a touchscreen and a **stylus** is very convenient for live instruction by the teacher, through **screen-sharing**.

- **Microphone**. Sound is one of the crucial dimensions of a virtual classroom. With reduced sound quality, your session will be challenging to follow. For this reason, it is not recommended to use your computer's microphone. It tends to pick up ambient noise, especially the sound of your machine's fans. To improve the quality of your broadcast, opt for headphones - or earphones - with a microphone (they are generally provided with the purchase of smartphones) or even an external microphone if possible.
- **Headphones or earphones**. These will be essential to avoid an echo produced by your speakers.
- **Camera**. Most laptops and tablets already have a camera that will do the trick. If necessary, a third-party webcam can be used to improve the quality of your image.
- **Internet**. Your virtual classroom requires a reliable Internet network; cable is better than Wi-Fi. If the connection proves to be difficult, it is advisable to disable the video and keep only the audio, or at worst the written chat[67].

## Which applications to use?

Please refer to the tools presented previously.

## What can a teacher offer to his/her students in an online classroom session?

Schematically, three animation techniques can be used during a virtual classroom session:

[67] For official statements regarding the increased traffic load due to the Covid-19 pandemic, visit the BEREC (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications).

- **The presentation (or demonstration)**: this is a structured presentation by the teacher, similar to an ex-cathedra presentation in class. During this presentation, teaches can speak face to face with the camera, share their screen to show a slideshow, demonstrate software or write on a whiteboard.
- **Interaction**: this technique aims to encourage exchange and maintain the students' attention while stimulating their reflection. Teachers can envisage individual interaction - by questioning one of the students directly - or collective interaction - through an online voting tool, or even a simple round table if they don't have too many students.

**Collaborative activity**: this leads students to exchange or collaborate during the virtual classroom session. To do this, the virtual classroom can offer the possibility to put participants in sub-groups or ask them to conduct a sub-group discussion on their own before returning to the main room. With this, teachers can ask students to solve a problem, do an exercise, confront their ideas, etc.

**Teaching at a distance does not mean transferring the same practices from class to home.**

Because videoconferencing lacks many of the parameters of face-to-face interaction in the classroom, it is not always advisable to reproduce a continuous dialogue course in a videoconference. The teacher should not try to replicate all the in-class activities.

**Tip**. Favour a short live video or audio contact of 5 minutes at the beginning of the activity to engage the learners and then let each one carries out the proposed activities, individually or collectively. Keep permanent contact by written chat to answer questions and encourage students.

## How to prepare the session?

- **Define a time frame for your session**: it is more challenging to manage a remote session than a face-to-face session - if only because of potential technical difficulties, the time it takes for discussions, etc. It is, therefore, advisable to develop a timed scenario that details your session step by step (as a solid methodology, see ABC Learning Design). Besides helping the teacher to keep the timing during the session, it allows to prepare different moments composed of various activities to set the rhythm of the virtual classroom.
- **Define a "netiquette"** (rules of conduct and practices, in compliance with the school ICT charter) and a **user guide**. These documents would benefit from being harmonised at school level.
- **Get students to test their material**: a successful virtual class is all about best participation - i.e. without technical problems - for the learners. Open a room where they can test their microphone and webcam before your session.

- If the virtual classroom does not correspond to the students' regular timetable, **send a reminder to the students**.

## How to animate the session?

- **Be present before the start of the session**: this will allow you to check that everything is working technically and to greet students as they arrive.
- **Introduce the virtual class program:** start by introducing the theme of the session, its duration, objectives and the different moments of the program.

If necessary, after a few minutes, you can recall the rules of the virtual class as well as the good practices to experience a best session: turn off the microphone when not in use, turn off your smartphone (or put it in airplane mode), turn off any other windows, etc.

- **Moderate the discussion**: if possible, ask a student, an assistant, or a colleague (Microsoft Teams allows to register several teachers in the same course) to moderate the discussions, i.e. to ensure that important questions and comments are addressed. This person can also help students who have technical problems during the virtual classroom.
- **Have your students take notes**: either individually or in groups - by asking students to write and comment together on a shared Word online document - have the students take notes to behave in a way similar to what they do in the classroom.
- **Use the written chat system**: ask your students to ask questions or make comments through the software's chat - while respecting netiquette. This will allow you to go back and answer these questions.
- **Do 10-minute sequences**: During the session, especially in lecture mode, create interaction with the students after 10 minutes: ask for their feedback on some aspect of the material, ask them questions or read the chat comments and questions[68].

Remember, the real benefit of a virtual classroom compared to a pre-recorded video is the ability to create direct interaction, both between you and the students and among the students themselves.

- **Propose a conclusion with the next steps**: remind the students of the main points discussed during the session, thank the students, and announce the following activities to be carried out in your course.

## How can interactions be regulated?

Netiquette is an excellent guide to the use of electronic tools. Its primary objective is to present a set of behaviours to be respected for proper use of the Internet. It is a charter of politeness and good manners on the Internet with an ethical or deontological purpose.

[68] Reasons for keeping online lectures short are given by the scientific research on attention span and cognitive overload (see, e.g., University of British Columbia's Design Principles for Multimedia).

During a virtual class, here are some rules - to be adapted - that can be important to disseminate to your students**:**

- **Avoid all disruptions during the virtual classroom**, i.e. switch your phone to airplane mode, close the tabs of your Internet browser, shut down software not required for the virtual classroom, etc.
- **Adopt an appropriate posture and environment**. As the virtual classroom can be followed from anywhere - even from bed - it is essential that the student is in an appropriate setting and attitude.

N.B: In a Teams meeting, any participant can blur his or her video background.

- **Use appropriate language**. During the exchanges, suggest to the students to avoid "SMS/ texting" language, spelling mistakes, typos and draft sentences.
- **Use codes to frame messages**. As a teacher, it can be challenging to facilitate the session and monitor the chat exchanges. To help you, you can ask your students to use specific codes to specify the types of messages. For example, you can ask your students to use specific codes to determine the types of messages: [?] for a question, [!] for a misunderstanding, etc. Another idea would be to use coloured cards (e.g. red to signal a problem) or with pictograms (e.g. to ask to mute the microphones: see this handy example in paper or online).

Use the chat system only for exchanges that are specific to the course, both to avoid distracting others with jokes and to allow you to follow the exchanges.

**Tip**. There are always students who are great at participation and extra-responsible. Appoint them as “Discussion Leaders” and give them a chance to exercise leadership in the classroom. Assign this role on a rotational basis.

# Annex – Risk Assessment – Educational Support

Please find the check list as a spreadsheet and more information on the [Pedagogical Development SharePoint].

| Risk Assessment - Educational Support | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Checklist of measures to be put in place in 2020/2021 - Educational Support*<br>Scenario 1 - normal return to school some vulnerable pupils and teachers work from distance<br>Scenario 2- Blended learning Scenario 3 - Distance teaching and learning | | | | | |
| **Measures to be implemented** | **Scenario** | **Under the coordination of** | **Involvement of** | **Shared with** | **Checked** |
| Start-of-Year *diagnostic assessment* including: | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher | | |
| a) Pupils who were not in contact during provision of distance support | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher | | |
| b) Pupils with learning difficulties who were promoted automatically | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher | | |
| *Ongoing Assessment* of pupils' knowledge and competences | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher | | |
| Assessment of the pupil's personal and social development during the school year | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher and support assistant | | |
| *Regular coordination* of teaching and learning activities | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher and assistant | Support Coordinator | |
| *Planning* : Meetings (online/presencial) of all staff involved in schooling pupils with Educational Support to plan | All | Class/subject teacher | Support teacher and assistant | | |
| *SAG* - Clarification of roles and resposibilities of different professionals | All | Support Coordinator | Class/subject and support teachers, assistants | | |
| *SAG* - Meetings in September when the SAG meetings in May/June had not been organised | All | Support Coordinator | Class/subject and support teachers, assistants | | |
| *SAG* - Virtual meetings whenever a pupil experiences important learning difficulties | 2 and 3 | Support Coordinator | Class/subject and support teachers, assistants | | |
| *Weekly planning* of support shared with pupils and parents in advance | 2 and 3 | Support teacher | Support teacher and assistant | Class/subject Teachers Pupils/Parents | |
| Direct support by the Support assistant - *weekly feedback* (who, what, where) | 2 and 3 | Support assistant | | Support Coordinator | |
| Issuing *guidance to parents* on how to support learning activities while pupils are at home | All | Support teacher | Support teacher and assistant | Pupils and parents | |
| *Tripartite Agreements* - Weekly planning (who, with whom, what and where) and feedback | All | Therapists | | Support Coordinators and parents | |
| Feedback from parents on challenges and successes | 2 and 3 | | Parents | Support teacher support assistant | |
| *Coordination IT and Support* | 2 and 3 | Support Coordinator | IT Coordinator | IT Coordinator Management | |
| *Resources for on-line teaching* | 2 and 3 | | | | |
| *Identification of training needs* | 2 and 3 | Support Coordinator | All support staff | IT Coordinator Management | |

# Annex - Modifications to this document

Please visit the Pedagogical Development SharePoint for the latest version of this document.

| Date | Version | Key changes |
|---|---|---|
| 20.03.2020 | 2 | **Modified:** document's title. |
| 27.03.2020 | 3 | **Removed:** section on alternative online videoconference tool (e.g. zoom.us).<br>**Modified:** section on legal aspect on video.<br>**Added:** need to contact the DPOC for authorisation to use any alternative digital tool.<br>**Added:** change log in Annex. |
| 28.04.2020 | 4 | **Main modifications**<br>• **Added**: recommendations on the student-centred approach, learning goals, and instructions.<br>• **Removed and modified:** it is now clearly recommended not to use emails (Outlook) for regular pedagogical communication and work.<br>• **Modified:** teacher compulsory online presence<br>• **Removed:** table on student working hours in Nursery and Primary.<br>• **Added:** section on screen-time.<br>• **Added:** section on assessment.<br>• **Added:** various elements from Brussels IV guidance on Teams and Class NoteBook.<br>• **Added:** table on tools associated with building blocks of lessons.<br>• **Modified and added:** the section "Tool for live videoconference" has been replaced by the content of the document 2020-03-D-27-en-1 ("Pedagogical use of online video, audio and chat sessions: guidelines for the European Schools.<br>• **Removed:** statement that online sessions are not compulsory.<br>• **Moved:** several elements moved into annexes (Tips for synchronous teaching, Examples of flyers for students (Examples of tools suited for the components of online lessons, tips and virtual learning agreements, Examples of Visual Team charter for primary students). |
| | | **Other modifications**<br>• **Added:** reference to the concept of emergency remote teaching.<br>• **Added:** reference to the digital competence and to the Digital Vision for the European Schools.<br>• **Added:** remark on the importance to establish continuity in the relationship so that learning can continue and on the core message of the document, and regarding student-centred learning.<br>• **Added:** recommendation for the school to publish an FAQ.<br>• **Added:** concept of ensuring digital equity. And remark on the use of mobile devices. **Modified:** specific tools for teachers.<br>• **Added:** concept of daily check-in times and caring of students, especially in younger grades.<br>• **Modified:** recommendations for staff collaboration.<br>• **Added:** remark on the importance to provide robust learning and design independent learning.<br>• **Added:** flexibility in daily list activities in Nursery and Primary; **Removed**: whole week approach in Nursery and Primary. |

| Date | Version | Key changes |
|---|---|---|
| | | • **Modified:** recommendations for live interactions with students.<br>• **Added:** recommendation to post the remote learning methodology in a fixed location.<br>• **Modified:** modalities to send emails to parents.<br>• **Removed:** sharing content with OneDrive.<br>• **Modified:** monitor the morale and the workload of the students also in Secondary, and include cycle coordinators.<br>• **Modified:** short audio or video messages should be sent when live online sessions are not possible.<br>• **Removed**: recommendation on the length of video sessions.<br>• **Added:** footnote on the use of SMS and Teams for assignment in S1-S3.<br>• **Added:** videoconferencewith Teams in Nursery and Primary.<br>• **Added:** highly recommended to send assignments to parents via SMS and not via Outlook.<br>• **Added:** important note: communication to secondary school students should be primarily via O365 Teams.<br>• **Added:** "when selecting the proper channel, students are automatically invited".<br>• **Added:** monitoring student attendance in secondary.<br>• **Moved and modified:** section on flexibility regarding homework deadlines.<br>• **Added:** remark on assessment and assistance students can receive at home.<br>• **Modified:** section in sending videos.<br>• **Added:** information on PowerPoint as recommended tool to record screencast, and recommended video storage and sharing solutions.<br>• **Added:** teachers' online presence.<br>• **Modified:** screen-casting tools for teachers (free plans apps). |
| 30.04.2020 | 5 | • **Added:** Audio recording (e.g., music performance, oral training…) is allowed but should only be kept for as long as necessary by the teacher. |
| 01.09.2020 | 6 | **Main modifications**<br>• **Moved online:** all technical sections were moved on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint for detailed and updated guidance and information.<br>• **Added:** Amendment of the General Rules, article 26a.<br>• **Added:** description on the three potential scenarios.<br>• **Added:** most challenging issues and barriers of distance learning, according to OECD.<br>• **Added:** forms of student engagement.<br>• **Added:** definition of the well-being (PISA).<br>• **Added:** complement on inclusion of the distance learning strategies.<br>• **Added:** reminder of the usual procedure in the event of a parental complaint.<br>• **Added:** Considerations and points of cautions related to the scenarios.<br>• **Added:** many important complements on assessment, feedback, grading and reports.<br>• **Modified:** use of SMS and Teams for communications.<br>• **Modified:** recommendations for online video meetings, and GDPR recommendations.<br>• **Added:** System-level support for peer-to-peer online training (pilot phase).<br>• **Modified:** teachers' online presence and activities – minimum requirements, adapted according to Memorandum 2020-05-M-6-en (sent 14.05.2020).<br>• **Moved: '**General recommendations for teaching and learning online' moved in annex.<br>• **Moved: '**Considerations and points of cautions related to the scenarios' moved in annex. |

| Date | Version | Key changes |
|---|---|---|
| | | • **Added:** Annex - Inspiration catalogue with ideas to ensure solid assessment base.<br>• **Added:** Annex – ABC Learning Design.<br>• **Removed:** Annex - Examples of tools suited for the components of online lessons.<br>• **Removed:** Annex - Example of concise guidance communicated to teachers (Laeken). |
| | | **Other minor modifications**<br>• **Added:** recommended browsers (Edge and Chrome).<br>• **Added:** homework should not be a substitute for teaching, and excessive workload should be avoided.<br>• **Added:** "The work plan can be provided on a daily basis or communicated at the beginning of the week with clear learning objectives and structure (this helps students and families set up a schedule at home)."<br>• **Added:** Stream (web-based tool) for screen recording.<br>• **Removed:** screencast tools comparison table.<br>• **Modified**: Annex - Tips for synchronous teaching (online classroom). |