K-8 eLearning Guide

Note from the Higher-Powered Learning Team

All of us have found lives upended. As we face the threat of the global COVID-19 outbreak, educators, parents, and school leaders were forced to move instruction out of our classrooms and into our homes in a matter of days. We face uncharted territory, which can be frightening but as with any moment of tragedy and uncertainty in human history, people rise to the occasion and take a heroic attitude as they forge ahead into the unknown frontier. We are inspired by the Catholic school leaders who are working overtime to ensure teachers have the necessary tools to transition to online learning. We are inspired by the teachers who are sacrificing their free-time to compile resources for their students. We are inspired by the parents who are creating intricate schedules and routines to keep as much consistency as possible for children. We dedicate this guide to the Catholic school leaders, teachers, and parents who inspire our work. We hope this guide will help inform the task each of you has gallantly assumed.

This guide is organized by the "big questions" we have heard from school leaders, teachers, and parents. We hope the research we have done will help individuals early in the eLearning journey, as well as individuals who have been dabbling in eLearning for years. This guide will be housed on Google docs because eLearning is an ever-changing landscape, and we want to continue to modify this resource to respond to your needs. If you have questions or a resource to share, please reach out to our team at hpl@nd.edu.

In Christ,

The Higher-Powered Learning Team
Alliance for Catholic Education, The University of Notre Dame

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Where do I start?

"Ancora imparo" (trans: "still, I am learning")
— **Michelangelo** in his personal journal at 87 years old

Most of you reading this will likely have *already begun* eLearning, so it might seem like a strange question to ask, "Where do I start?" We firmly believe that it is never too late to start again or to adapt and improve your practice if you have found that something's not working.

If you have already begun eLearning, you may want to skip the Hardware section and jump right to Software. So many different providers offer services that it may seem intimidating to know which one to choose. We offer our criteria for choosing software and then give suggestions as to which software we have found to be most helpful in K-8 schools.

Also, while this guide was created for K-8 schools, those of you teaching in high school contexts may find some of these insights portable and transferable to secondary education. If so, great!

If you have specific questions about getting started with eLearning, please refer to the questions below. All the questions are hyperlinked to a section of this guide that answers the question. If you have a question that is not addressed in this guide, please email our team at hpl@nd.edu.

Making a Plan

Hardware
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What is your plan for students without devices?
Do you have a plan in place to support students without devices?
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Making a Plan

[Adapted from "When There's No Plan for That: Moving School Online in a Hurry." Chelsea Waite, Christensen Institute, March 2020.](#)

"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."
— **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Despite the fact that very few (if any) people planned for schools to move all of their instruction online, it is essential for learning to continue. Educators and parents want to ensure that students are learning and growing while staying connected to the community of their Catholic school. Most urgently, we want to care for those who might be struggling and find themselves behind their peers so that their academic gaps do not worsen during this time. So, in order to maximize the effectiveness of this time, we must make a plan.

Most people are very used to making plans and having those plans change. However by making a plan, you become more prepared for the unexpected. Here are some simple guidelines to follow for making a plan during this unprecedented time:

Step one, make a goal.

As a teacher, you are well aware of SMART goals: specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time sensitive. During this time, when things are changing rapidly, specificity means making a specific goal to address the needs of your students and parents. By making this goal measurable, you can determine if the goal is working. Actionable goals are ones where actions can be taken to achieve the goal. Realistic goals are ones that can be reasonably achieved in your timeframe. Finally, by making this goal time-sensitive, we recommend making a goal that will expire in a week so you can quickly assess the goal and realign it if necessary.

> **Example**: *By the end of week one, 100% of my students will complete the introductory lesson on Google slides.*

Step two, ask yourself, "Who do I need and what do I need to accomplish this goal?"

When asking yourself this question, you must consider the tangible and intangible things you need to complete your goal. Tangible things to complete your goal are the people who are involved with helping you achieve this goal, as well as the technology and resources you need to accomplish your goal.

Intangible things are equally important when considering your goal. Consider the emotions and mindsets that are important to accomplishing your goals.

By the end of week one, 100% of my students will complete the introductory lesson on Google slides.	
Tangible Needs	Intangible Needs
- Parents - Students - My computer - Student access to Google slides - Regular communication with parents and students	- Knowledge of Google slides (me, parents, students) - Time to support students/ families - Patience to support students/ families - Parents' patience with me, the teacher - Parents understanding of their role in the goal

Step three, consider how important each person and item are to your goal.

After making your list of tangible and intangible needs to meet your goal, rate the items as
- Indispensable
- Important
- Inconsequential

For the items you rank as "indispensable," consider how you will address these items. For example, if *parents* are indispensable to your goal, how will you communicate your goal to parents and check-in with them to ensure they are making progress toward the goal? For items ranked as important consider contingency plans if something were to interfere with your goal. For example, if "parents' understanding of their role in the goal" is marked as "important," what can you say or do for parents who may not see the important role they play in the goal? Finally, for items you mark as inconsequential, you do not need to make a plan for them-but keep them in mind as potential factors in the future.

Step four, make a plan to incorporate important people and items for your goal.

Now is time to make a physical plan. Consider breaking your plan into chunks of time. At this time, making goals on a week-to-week basis will be the most beneficial. As a result, chunk your goal into daily tasks that engage people and items that are indispensable. For example, for the goal, "*By the end of week one, 100% of my students will complete the introductory lesson on Google slides,*" consider a weekly plan similar to this:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Email parents and students directions to log into google slides using a computer, tablet, or phone	Track the number of students who have accessed Google slides. Reach out to families who have accessed Google slides to see if they encountered any issues.	Track number of students who have not accessed Google slides. Reach out to families who have not accessed Google slides and ask about roadblocks they encountered.	Track number of students who have completed lesson. Send reminder email to families to complete intro lesson.	Track number of students who have completed intro lesson. Consider roadblocks to implementation and create new goal.

Step five, assess your goal and realign if necessary.

Finally, after implementing your goal, it is time to assess it.
- Did you achieve your goal?
- What roadblocks hindered your progress toward your goal? What items helped progress toward your goal?
- What will you do differently? What will you keep the same?

During this time when it feels like something radical changes each day, it is important to have a goal and a plan to maintain that goal. In the following chapters we will help you determine some of the "indispensable" tangible and intangible items to consider when making your plan for eLearning.

Hardware

Do you have a plan in place for students needing to borrow devices?

Since students are going to be learning electronically for the foreseeable future, it is crucial that every student has access to a device. Are your devices tagged or numbered for students to check out? Make sure you include a brief, specific explanation of student responsibilities for the borrowed device when checked out. Parents should sign this waiver before the device is checked-out.

Do all students have access to wi-fi at home?

It is a good idea to include an informational sheet that lists wi-fi options for students who may not have access to wi-fi or high-quality wi-fi. Also, consider ways of doing attendance and try to be flexible with due dates, particularly for younger students who may not be able to login to eLearning during the day due to childcare.

What is your plan for students without devices?

It is crucial to remember that not all of your students will have devices. Even if students can check out devices from school, a small group of students will not have consistent access to a device.

Do you have a plan in place to support these students?

Look for apps or platforms that are accessible to families via smartphone. Although iPad or laptop access is best, students can access videos, reading materials, and some content through a smartphone.

What is your contingency plan for students who do not have a device, did not check out a device from school, and/or do not have access to wi-fi?

Consider creating work packets for students without consistent access to a device. Make sure you include a detailed plan and timeline for the work expected. It is also a good idea to schedule regular (once a week or so) check-ins by phone with your students to ensure their work is getting done and they feel supported as well. Apps like Google Voice are free and provide a phone number to use via voice or text to communicate with families. Finally, make yourself aware of your school's policy for student safety/ privacy when using communication platforms.

Are students ready to complete eLearning tasks?

To ensure student success with eLearning, it is important to give *clear, simple* instructions and expectations before and throughout the eLearning process. Consider creating a short, how-to video to share with students walking them through the log-in process, where to find their assignments, and how to properly log off. Some programs require a multi-step log off process to properly save student progress.

Consider sending out weekly encouragement to students. Your students miss you, and they need your affirmation throughout this process more than ever. Any little personalized additions for students are not just welcome, but much appreciated.

Do students have an established routine for eLearning?

It is important to keep in mind that all students will have different routines at home. Some students may have clear routines and schedules, and others may only have evening hours to work. Some students may have device and wi-fi access readily available, and others may need to plan for specific tech time.

Encourage families to keep a routine for their students as much as possible. This not only supports students and encourages productivity, but it makes the transition back to school much easier when the time comes.

Be patient and supportive to your students and families during this time. Grace and patience are especially needed the first couple of weeks as families are establishing new routines and learning to live this "new normal."

Do students know how to login to your Learning Management System (LMS), or have the information to log in to the apps you will be using?

A good idea for younger students who may have a hard time remembering their login information is to transfer their information to a QR code. You can then include the QR code in the information you send home with students or [communicate the steps to parents.](#) For more information about learning management systems, refer to the section on [learning management systems](#).

Software

Thousands of educational software providers claim to have the best programs available to parents and teachers. Some are incredibly powerful and have a wonderful track record of helping students learn. Other programs, simply put, are lacking. Part of our job at Higher-Powered Learning is to sift the wheat from the chaff. In our own research, we have identified four software characteristics that are critically important in deciding which programs schools should implement. Using programs that are **adaptive, rigorous, engaging,** and give teachers **actionable data** ensures that the time students spend online will be worth it. Often, the challenge with some of these programs is that they come with a significant price tag for software licenses. Fortunately, many providers have chosen to offer their premium content for free during this COVID-19 crisis. Following our software criteria list, we have curated a small selection of (now free) software programs.

For more information on selecting software programs, refer to this [Khan Academy video series](#).

What is important in a software program?

Adaptive
An adaptive software program changes as the student inputs data into the program. For example, as the student learns more about a particular phonics sound, the program will adjust to give the student more challenging content. However, if the student is not mastering a particular phonics sound, an adaptive program will give the student different practice opportunities to learn the skill they are missing.

Rigorous
Programs that are highly rigorous give students opportunities to practice critical thinking skills. For example, a rigorous program will ask students to complete a math problem using different strategies or engage student knowledge across multiple skill domains.

Student Engagement
Student engagement is often measured by the students! To assess how engaging a program is, ask students to share their opinion of the program. Student engagement can also be measured by how often students use the program. Do students spend extra time on the program without prompting?

Actionable Data
When a program has actionable data, the teacher can easily use the data to inform instruction for the student. For example, when a program tells teachers that students are struggling to

meet a particular standard AND the program gives the teacher action steps to support the struggling student, this program is considered actionable.

Ideal programs have all four criteria of great software programs but very few programs meet all the requirements. In the pages below we will share some of our favorite programs that meet the criteria for adaptable, rigorous, engaging and actionable software.

How Many Software Programs Should I Use?

When it comes to software programs, remember that **less is more!** Choose software programs that serve more than one purpose if possible. Use programs that sync with a common SIS (Student Information System), and/or programs that can be easily linked to a common platform for students.

Software Recommendations

Program Name	Grades Served	Subjects	Mobile App	Overview
Lexia Core 5	K-2, 3-5	Phonics and Fundamental Reading Skills	No	Lexia Core5 is an adaptive game-based program which provides targeted reading instruction for students.
Epic	K-2, 3-5	Reading Comprehension	Yes	Epic is a free resource with over 35,000 books, videos, and quizzes.
Lexia Power Up	6-8	Reading Intervention	No	Lexia PowerUp is a series of personalized activities focused on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.
LightSail	6-8	Reading Comprehension	No	LightSail is a library of over 8,000 books in English and Spanish for varying reading levels. Each text has multiple-choice, short-answer and vocabulary questions.
Newsela	6-8	Reading Comprehension (Non-fiction)	Yes	Newsela is a free program that provides thousands of differentiated and common-core aligned current-event articles and nonfiction informational texts.
Dreambox	K-2	Math	No	DreamBox teaches K-8 mathematics standards in an adaptive game format.
ST Math	3-5	Math	No	ST Math builds a deep conceptual understanding of math through puzzles and games.
Khan Academy	3-5	Math	Yes	Khan Academy is based on the popular instructional videos by Sal Khan. Students work through a series of practice problems and earn tokens for correct answers.
Manga High	6-8	Math	No	MangaHigh is a game-based math program that is adaptable and assignable. It provides resources and support for remediation and enrichment (challenge) while encouraging student engagement through competitions.

English Language Arts: Kindergarten - 5th Grade

Lexia Core5
Lexia Core5 provides targeted reading instruction for Pre-K through fifth grade. After an initial game-based, adaptive assessment, students choose and work through a bundle of personalized activities. Student content begins with lessons, and adaptive assessments are incorporated throughout the program. Reports are available for administrators and teachers and track usage, performance, individual skills and standards, and students who are struggling.
Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Epic
Epic is a free resource with over 35,000 books, videos, and quizzes. Epic provides Spanish texts and resources for ELL students, as well as teacher access to a library of lesson plans. Students can create their own collection of books or teachers can assign specific books and activities to students. Teachers can also create book quizzes on the program.
Video Overview
Quick Start Guide

English Language Arts: 6th - 8th Grade
Lexia PowerUp
Lexia PowerUp is a reading remediation program for students grades 6-12. Students work through a bundle of personalized activities focused on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension in the order of their choosing. Student content begins with lessons, and adaptive assessments are incorporated throughout the program. Reports are available for administrators and teachers and track usage, performance, individual skills and standards, and students who are struggling.
Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Newsela
Newsela is a free program that provides thousands of current-event articles and nonfiction informational texts. All articles are aligned with state and common core standards. Each article is differentiated to five Lexile (reading levels), making it possible for students of varying reading abilities to have access to the same information. Teachers have the ability to assign articles and activities to students.
Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

LightSail

LightSail provides a library of over 6,000 English books and 2,000 Spanish books for varying reading levels. Each text is embedded with a variety of multiple-choice, short-answer and vocabulary questions. Student Lexile levels are adjusted every two weeks based on their performance. Teachers also have the ability to upload articles and embed their own content alongside, or in place of, the questions already there. Student content is interactive and has the ability to be personalized by the student.

Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Math: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Dreambox

DreamBox teaches K-8 mathematics standards in an adaptive game format. Students play math games while the game system sources data points to adjust instruction instantly and provide reports for teachers. The program does not use a diagnostic test. Rather, the system uses on-the-spot data to create a personalized learning plan that monitors each students' strengths and weaknesses, pace, and problem-solving strategies. The time allotment and scaffolding adjust during the lesson in response to student performance.

Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Math: 3rd - 5th Grade

ST Math

ST Math builds a deep conceptual understanding of math through puzzles and games. This program promotes creative problem solving and critical-thinking skills. It consists of over 200 visual games that create a unique pathway for each student. Games start very visually, but slowly transition to looking more traditional, like what they are used to seeing in the classroom already. Teachers are able to reorder the curriculum based on classroom and student needs.

Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Khan Academy

Khan Academy is based on the popular instructional videos by Sal Khan. Students work through a series of practice problems and earn tokens for correct answers. If students are struggling with a concept, they receive prompts to see step-by-step demonstrations for math concepts or prompts to watch one of Sal Khan's videos. Khan Academy has content for second grade through college-level mathematics. Khan Academy also offers content in science, engineering, computing and test preparation.

Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Math: 6th - 8th Grade

MangaHigh

MangaHigh is a game-based math program that is adaptable and assignable. It provides resources and support for remediation and enrichment while encouraging student engagement through competitions. Students complete a formative assessment followed by game-based practice on the skill. MangaHigh is aligned to most math curriculums, common core, and most state standards.

Video Overview
Quick Start Guide
Detailed Software Guide

Content Management

How will you manage your programs and student data?

One of the keys to the ease of your eLearning experience is having a platform (**ideally one place**) to manage all assignments, communication, and programs students will need to access. A good Learning Management System (LMS) serves two important purposes.

One, it provides organization and a place for the teacher to house all student and family contact information, assignments (completed and missing), and communication. And two, it provides a common platform for students to access everything they need in one place.

What are the benefits of your school's learning management system?

Think for a moment about your school's learning management system. Does it provide a common platform for a successful virtual classroom to run? Is it user- friendly? A great LMS should make your life *easier* and work to support student learning. Is it easy to access? Ideally, your LMS should be both web-based and app-based to reach as many of your students as possible.

What are free and seamless options for Learning Management Systems (LMS)?

Our team's pick for LMS is [Google Classroom](#). Here are a few reasons why we love it:

One, it is completely free, web-based, and app-based. If students have a Gmail account, Google Classroom is included with Google Suite, so they do not need to remember another login and password.

Two, Google Classroom feels like a social media (ex. Facebook or Twitter) feed where you can post announcements, assignments and any other communication to students. You have the option to communicate/assign individual students, small groups, or your entire class. Classroom also links in parent contact information and provides easy, user-friendly ways to communicate with parents.

Three, you can easily link in other apps, articles, resources, etc. to your posts. You can also choose to assign a document or slides to each student. This feature allows each student to get their own copy they can edit, write on, etc. We love this feature because it takes the need for a pdf creator out.

If you are new to google classroom, please check out this [webinar](#), from Kasey Webb, Blended-Learning coordinator at the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

What are some important things to consider regarding student and teacher privacy?

It is more important than ever to prioritize student (and teacher) privacy and have a plan in place. Please familiarize yourself with your school's policies about interacting with students online and how families should be involved. Here are a few important things to consider:

One, if possible, use a Single-Sign On (SSO) program such as Clever or Google for students to access all their apps and assignments. SSOs have built in security features that encrypt student data and ensure their personal information is kept safe. SSOs also allow for ease of login because students do not have to sign in to multiple programs and remember various passwords and usernames.

Two, video conferencing with students is a great way to connect with them, show your support and bridge the distance. Remember to **always record your conversations with students,** especially if it is a one-on-one conversation and/or the student is alone. Most programs such as Zoom and Google Hangouts have a way to easily record and save meetings.

When using Zoom or Google, make time to familiarize yourself with the platform. Make sure your meetings are private and your settings allow you to create "waiting rooms" or registration for participants. By controlling who is able to access your meeting room, you are able to control for "Zoombombers," or people who "hack" into public zoom links by guessing the meeting room link.

Finally, distance learning has presented new scenarios such as calling home that have not been an issue before. To protect your private phone number, and maintain healthy professional boundaries, use a program like Google Voice. This free program gives out a number to use for voice calls and text messaging and has unlimited use.

Daily Data Management

What is your procedure for managing your student data while you are away from school?

In previous sections, we mention using a learning management system like Google Classroom. The grades you keep in Google Classroom can easily be downloaded as a csv file and uploaded to your school's gradebook platform at a later date. Check out this [article](#) as an example.

Do you have relevant data to make decisions about student needs?

When considering differentiating assignments for students, you should have recent formative data points to give students personalized feedback. Most formative assessment platforms (NWEA MAP, STAR, etc) have online portals where you can access students' most recent assessment data. If you do not have access to this data, reach out to an administrator to get an electronic copy for your records.

When making decisions about student data, you should consider
- What your data is measuring
- If students are mastering the target
- What can you do to ensure student success toward the target?

To read more about analyzing student data in a purposeful way, check out [this](#) article.

Do you have time set aside during your "school days" to manage student data and communicate student data with parents?

Consider how much time you can reasonably set aside each day to look over student data and respond to the data. Plan to review student data for 15-20 minutes per day as you would during the regular school day. You should also expect to connect with students and their families at least twice a week to communicate successes and areas of growth related to student data. You can make these connections through texts, emails, or brief phone calls.

Lesson Planning

What will your daily schedule look like during this time?

These are, without a doubt, uncertain times and a big change for everyone. In the midst of adjusting to this new normal, remember to take care of yourself! It is important not just for students and families, but also for you to establish a daily schedule.

Establishing daily office hours that you share with students and families may help you and your students' families to plan more effectively. During "office hours," you can answer questions, jump on a call, or respond to email. Use this block of time to give instant feedback to students who need it, reach out to students who seem to be falling behind or not completing assignments, and sending short emails of encouragement to students who may need the extra love.

What does lesson planning look like now?

Learning probably looks very different right now, but the principles of good lesson planning are still the same. While you are adjusting to this new format of teaching and learning, planning will still be crucial for success. The first few weeks of transition will be challenging. Just like at the beginning of a school year, the first week, at least, should focus on establishing routines and norms for students and families. Questions to consider include:

- How often will I expect students to complete assignments?
- How long will students need to complete assignments?
- What tools will students need to complete tasks?
- How many assignments will be synchronous and how many will be non-synchronous?

During the first week, clearly emphasize your non-negotiable expectations with students and families. However, rather than focusing on academics during the first week, focus on the routines of logging onto technology and problem solving technology issues. **Just like in the classroom, if routines and procedures are not well-defined, learning is limited.**

When considering academic planning there are three planning routes a teacher can take:

- Synchronous
- Asynchronous
- Blended Sync-Learning

Based on the age range and technology availability each planning route has its drawbacks and benefits.

Synchronous

Synchronous learning happens when teachers and students are working online together. Synchronous learning can happen via Zoom or Google Hangouts. Planning a synchronous lesson is similar to planning a face-to-face lesson because you can plan for checks-for-understanding and respond to student needs in real time. However, with synchronous learning, the teacher must consider:

- Student access to hardware
- Student/family understanding of the synchronous platform (Zoom or Google Hangouts)
- Student maturity-level to engage with their peers appropriately on the platform.
- Security measures to protect students and teachers from internet hackers

Please read this article about [Zoombombers](#) who are disrupting video chats.

- The number of students who can meet synchronously for a given time period.

We recommend keeping groups of students small so you can interact with students on a more personal level.

Take a look at this [template](#) for planning a synchronous lesson.

Asynchronous

Asynchronous learning happens when teachers record lessons or assign activities that students complete independently. Most recommended software programs can easily adapt to asynchronous learning. Planning for asynchronous lessons is drastically different from planning for synchronous lessons. Some things to consider are:

- What lessons and activities are appropriate for a group of students?
- How will I differentiate activities for student needs?
- How will I check for student understanding and respond to student needs?
- How often can I check in with students to ensure they are successfully completing assignments?

Take a look at this [blank template](#) for lesson planning asynchronous lessons.
Take a look at this asynchronous [lesson plan](#) for kindergarten students.
Templates provided by [The iDEAL Institute at Loyola Marymount University](#).

Blended-Sync Learning

When students and teachers are using blended-sync learning, some aspects of the eLearning are happening in small groups with the teacher. Other aspects of the learning are happening independently. While we believe this form of eLearning is best, it requires tremendous planning from the teacher. Teachers will need to consider the questions for synchronous and asynchronous learning as well as:

- Which assignments will be synchronous?
- Which assignments will be asynchronous?

Take a look at this [template](#) for a second-grade blended-sync classroom.
Templates adapted from [The iDEAL Institute at Loyola Marymount University](#).

Unit Planning

Try to unit plan and create a cohesive connection between assignments and days. Doing so keeps students learning, tackling the skills they need, and filling in gaps. Simply assigning work each day does not serve a productive purpose.

Start with your learning goals and work backward from there. One of the significant choices you will make is what tasks and instruction you would like to record asynchronously so that a student can watch them on their own time, and what tasks are best performed synchronously. As a general rule, record short videos of whole-group instruction content. This will give students the opportunity to review this on their own time (and to potentially re-watch videos as necessary). Use synchronous time to refine your students' grasp of concepts, allow them to ask questions, and probe more deeply into their understanding. Remember, your students may be sharing a device and a connection with other family members, so the more asynchronous learning you can offer, the more this will ease the burden.

How will you check-in with kids and their progress on a regular basis?

Come up with a plan to manage student check-ins on a regular basis. This could be done via email, phone call, or virtual meeting (or a combination of ways). Students need communication with you and checkpoints regarding their progress and learning.

Aim for checking in with each student at least twice a week. These meetings do not need to be long. Aim for 5-10 minutes on average, and if you need more time with some students, allow for that.

Are you planning to check in with small groups of students? If yes, how often, and how?

Meeting with small groups of students via Zoom, Google Hangouts, or some other platform not only keeps the teaching and learning somewhat familiar to their school routine, but it also allows for students to communicate and collaborate with their peers.

If not all students are available to meet at the same time, record your small-group session and post the link on your learning management system. Giving students access to the recording also allows them to rewatch the lesson if needed.

Parent Communication

What are your expectations of parents during eLearning?

It is important to communicate clear expectations for your parents during eLearning. Remember, parents want their child to be successful but need your support to understand your expectations. Keep your lesson format simple and the number of apps you assign minimal. Not all parents are technologically savvy, and new, unfamiliar technology can be overwhelming.

Sending quick video tutorials to parents that walk them through the app/s you are going to be using is helpful. The more clear and simple log-in and program functions are, the less stressful it is for parents to support their child's learning from home.

How will you communicate with parents during this time?

It is a good idea to be in regular communication with all of your parents. This could be an email update at the beginning of the week detailing the assignments due for the week. It might be a good idea to designate an FAQ section at the bottom of your email that covers parent questions you have received over the week/few days.

If you don't have a platform to communicate with parents, now is the time to consider one. Apps like Class Dojo and platforms such as Google Classroom make it easy to streamline communication to parents. These apps are also available for download on smartphones making it easy to communicate with parents.

If you have a few students who have not completed eLearning assignments or reported for attendance, it is a good idea to contact parents. At this point, if parents have not signed up for your communication app or responded to emails, reach out via phone to connect with parents. Apps like Google Voice are free and provide a phone number to use via voice or text to communicate with families.

Are you holding virtual office hours? Do you have a set time frame during the week where you are available to students and parents to answer any questions or troubleshoot potential issues that may arise?

Blocking out time in your schedule during the week for immediate feedback not only encourages students and parents to communicate with you, but also eases anxiety and frustrations that come with a new way of teaching and learning.

One Final Word of Thanks

I want to say a huge word of thanks to the two incredible women I am privileged to work with. Right on the heels of planning our Blended Learning in Catholic Schools Symposium... and then gracefully changing it to an online event, **Kourtney Bradshaw-Clay** and **Francesca Varga** worked tirelessly to create this eLearning Guide for one simple reason: they saw a need from our Catholic schools and, characteristically of them both, they rolled up their sleeves.

This document reflects their hard work and expertise.

Kourtney's direct and thoughtful advice stemming from her experience both coaching our blended learning teachers as well as her own teaching experience really shines through (especially in creating her beloved *tables*!). The incredible expertise Francesca has built in coming to know educational software inside and out makes the software guides she created an invaluable resource for teachers and administrators alike. I'd also like to give a shout-out to our former colleague Liz Anthony who started some of these software guides long ago.

On behalf of all of us, I wish you all the best as you bravely step into eLearning and we welcome your feedback on this guide and suggestions: hpl@nd.edu . Thank you for all that you do to make Catholic schools transformative educational experiences where students grow in knowledge and in the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Blessings to you all,

-Fr. Nate Wills, CSC
Director, Higher-Powered Learning

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