Considerations for Online Instruction

This resource provides guidance to educators regarding evidence-based practices, considerations for centering equity, and establishing reciprocal communication with students and families, when planning and delivering instruction in an online setting.

Description and Rationale

Online Instruction is an alternative mode of teaching to the traditional classroom of in-person instruction. With online instruction, students are together with the teacher in a virtual classroom (i.e., Google Meet, Zoom) where live/real-time interactions occur.

The same best practices for teaching and learning apply in an online setting as a traditional classroom, but with some modifications. Now, more than ever, it is important to focus instruction on critical content and use instructional delivery that maximizes student learning. In the following sections, several guidelines will be presented to help the teacher and student effectively use this mode of interaction.

Instructional Planning and Delivery

Content

- Select skills critical to students advancing into next school year
- When teaching new content or skills, break down the new material into smaller steps to facilitate learning
- Select content and materials that are an asset-based representation of culture, race, and intersecting identities across content areas

Design of Instruction

- Use a consistent format and routine that allows the student to focus on the new learning, rather than extraneous components:
    - o **Opening**: a brief review of previous learning and skills relevant to the new learning, a stated goal for the lesson
    - o **Body**: a step-by-step demonstration or introduction of the knowledge or concepts (I do), guided practice (We do), and independent practice (You do)
    - o **Closing**: review of critical content in the lesson, preview of next lesson, and independent work assignment

Delivery of Instruction

- Engage students with frequent responses and active participation:
    - o **Verbal responses** can include choral responses, individual turns with random selection, discussion in small groups (breakout rooms).

- o **Written responses** can include short answers (yes/no, agree/disagree), brief sentences/sentence frames on whiteboards or paper that are held up to the camera, or short answers written in chatbox.
  - o **Action responses** such as gestures, facial expressions, hand signals, and response cards.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for students to process and practice new concepts (i.e., think about it, talk about it, write about it).
- Provide clear and concise directions both orally and in writing (displayed on screen in a simple format).
- Check in frequently with students on the pacing of instruction by using the chat box or polling features available within the online platform.
- Monitor student performance closely and use that information to adjust in the lesson-additional modeling, more guided practice, or independent practice based on how students are responding to instruction.
- Consider pre-learning activities, tutorials and individual/small group virtual meetings that scaffolds instruction for students.
- Provide immediate feedback that is affirmative, or corrective in a variety of ways (i.e., verbal during whole group, written in the chatbox during whole group, private message after the online session is completed).
- Connect concepts across content for efficiency and expanding on learning.

Connecting with Students

- Value and use student feedback to inform the planning and delivery of instruction, while honoring the student's home environment. Some examples include:
  - o Sending a google survey seeking feedback on how students are doing with the pace of instruction, the methods you are using, comfort with break out rooms, any other suggestions for improvements.
  - o Conducting a phone call or individual virtual meeting to gather feedback from the student and/or support student's academic needs.

Connecting with Families

- Connect with families to maintain an authentic partnership, center on student strengths, and gather parent/caregiver voice.
- Use a platform for communication that provides an equitable way to connect with parents (i.e., Class Dojo, Seesaw, Google Classroom).
- Work with families to establish expectations and routines including limiting distractions, making space for learning, maintaining breaks for snacks or physical activity, and creating a daily and weekly schedule.

Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center

Additional Resources

[MiMTSS TA Center Covid-19 Resources for Educators and Teams](https://miblsi.org/covid-19-resources) provides briefs on Distance Learning and Instructional Packets (https://miblsi.org/covid-19-resources)

[4 Resources to Support Students During the Pandemic](https://www.pbis.org/announcements/4-resources-to-support-students-during-the-pandemic) from the OSEP Center on PBIS (https://www.pbis.org/announcements/4-resources-to-support-students-during-the-pandemic)

[Parent Guides to School Success](https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Parents-Guides-to-Student-Success) from National PTA (https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Parents-Guides-to-Student-Success)

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