

The Ultimate Remote Learning Guide





Remote Learning

From elementary school to college, remote learning can provide benefits for students and educators alike.

Students can learn at a pace that best fits their schedule while educators have the ability to perfect their coursework before presenting it. They can still connect, discuss, and reflect, despite the space between them.

If you're an educator looking to create an exceptional remote learning experience for your students, we hope this in-depth guide filled with tips, tools, and resources can help.

Implement a plan

Remote learning, also known as e-learning or distance learning, has steadily grown in popularity as **technology makes online instruction easier** to conduct and receive.

In Michigan, Layla Kayyod teaches at a 100% online school district. She utilizes several remote learning tools, like video recording and live conferencing. She says her students benefit from the virtual learning environment as they can watch her presentations around their schedule and as often as needed. She provides feedback via personalized video and makes herself available through chat on a regular basis.

Michele Eaton, Director of Virtual and Blended Learning at MSD of Wayne Township in Indianapolis, says video can be powerful for both educators and students alike.

Whether you exclusively utilize e-learning practices or have found yourself suddenly unable to utilize your physical classroom, having a plan in place can be invaluable and ensure students continue to learn and stay engaged.



What is in a remote learning plan?

To help you develop your own plan, Conner Murphy and Lori Peterson of South St. Paul Public Schools have shared what their plans entail, along with these tips.



Course plan and outline

Every class needs their own plan and outline. First, determine how you want to deliver material. Utilizing a Learning Management System (LMS) is the standard route and educators have several to choose from, including Moodle, Canvas, Schoology, and Google Classroom.



Tools and resources

What tools and resources will you need to bring your plan to life? Remote learning can only be as effective as the content it includes. Focusing on content creation tools is crucial.



Communicate clearly with expectations

With more space between educators and students, clear communication is key, and from both sides. As an educator, provide instructions in your plan that include how students can communicate with you and what types of communication they can expect from you.



Ways to collaborate

Collaboration helps students remain engaged and motivated. Educators who add context to assignments using annotation tools or provide video feedback to students tend to see less disengagement.

Benefits of remote learning

The benefits of e-learning are hard to ignore. It allows everyone equal access to course material, no matter their schedule.

Lectures and presentations can be viewed multiple times while educators can consistently improve and upgrade their courses.

There's also the potential to save resources, as e-learning can be more affordable for students and less damaging to the environment.

Now that you know the basics, we'll dive into more specifics so you can be prepared for remote learning, planned or not.



Course Control

Rebooting your course

Maybe you've had a remote plan tucked away for years, just in case. Or you've been updating your plan every year and have even put it into practice several times. Or you've never put a plan together and now realize that your students could suffer if you had to start remote learning tomorrow.

Either way, there's never a better time than the present to evaluate and tweak your current course plan into a winning e-learning endeavor.

Andrew Swan, an elementary Social Studies teacher, admits that making the switch can be daunting.

Swan does offer some great advice. "Don't box yourself into traditional teaching methods, edtech tools, or unrealistic timelines."



Tips to reboot your courses

Teacher Andrew Swan shares a few tips to help you jump online quickly with your students if you find yourself without a physical classroom to utilize.

Survey your students

Swan suggests creating a survey in Google Forms. Ask students, and parents if applicable, what would help the transition.

Here are a few questions to ask:

Does everyone have access to the internet? Does the family have enough devices? Do parents want a mix of printed material and online assignments?

These answers don't have to limit you as you adopt your standard course to an e-learning course. Instead, use them as a guide. Students are sure to appreciate that you listened to their opinions and did the best you could to satisfy the needs of all your students.

Start slow

If you left the physical classroom at a 10, expect e-learning to start out as a 3.

Don't worry about having to play catch-up. Taking the time to let students adjust to these remote circumstances will likely save time in the end.

Swan says to think of this time as the first week of school all over again, even if you're past Spring Break.

Learn the ropes together before trying to get ahead.

Keep it short

School days are long. But they have plenty of buffer time built in. Remote learning doesn't require the same amount of cushioning. Keep classes short. If you planned on covering a chapter in a single school day, break it up into a few lessons in a virtual setting.

Remember, students can often work ahead and at their own pace. It's better to allow them this option rather than leaving them feeling overwhelmed with stretched out videos and jam-packed assignments.

Swan suggests creating videos that are about five minutes in length and only cover one or two topics. When it comes to e-learning, less is typically more.

Provide a syllabus

Now that you've adapted your course plan to a remote learning scenario, it's time to send out a syllabus for students and/or parents. Here are several key elements a syllabus should include.

- **Announcements** - Include basic expectations (such as student access to computers and the internet) and include necessary contact information so students and/or parents can reach you.
- **Commitment** - Include an estimate on time requirements for your online class or course so students can plan ahead and set the appropriate pace.
- **Requirements** - Explain course work requirements (including reading, worksheets, projects, essays, etc.) and the expected timeline for completion, along with how assignments should be turned in.
- **Outside tool instruction** - If you're requiring students to use tools to research or complete projects, include instructions for setting those up and using the technology.
- **Tips for success** - Encourage your students by including specific tips for success. Include tips to avoid distractions or advice to take short breaks to avoid 'virtual' burnout.
- **Honor code** - Cheating becomes a bit hazy with online learning; include a section that explains what's fair game and what's not allowed.

As long as your syllabus is strong and has plenty of opportunities to discuss progress, you'll find a way to make remote learning successful for you and your students.

Set expectations

You can create a simple bullet list of expectations. It's a great and easy way to share the requirements for all involved in the remote learning process. You may want to include the following:

- Teachers are responsible for providing course materials, sharing timely and helpful feedback, and creating a positive online learning environment.
- Students are responsible for reading and completing all requirements, remaining engaged throughout the course, and reaching out for assistance when needed.
- Parents are responsible for providing students with access to required technology and materials, assisting without interfering with the learning process, and being committed to their child's success.
- Course content will remain challenging and in line with district and state learning standards.
- Technology will be used as a tool and not a substitute for learning.

Expectations may vary from teacher to student in a remote setting. But one universal expectation is to be reasonable.

Illinois math teacher Matthew Moore says, "Just lean into what you do best and be patient with yourself. Starting slow and building as you go and as the situation develops."

Tools and resources

You will find a huge marketplace for edtech tools and resources to use when exploring e-learning. But where do you start? Instead of being overwhelmed, turn to the experts for help.

There are many teachers who have already implemented flipped or blended learning within their own classroom. Turning to them for guidance may help you save time from experimenting with every tool in the marketplace. Find out what worked for them and learn from their experience.

Another great resource to lean on is your school's technology department. Almost every school or school district has a designated Technology Integration Specialist to help teachers. They often have a list of recommended tech tools to use and also a list of online classes to learn the tools.

"I am part therapist, part emotional support personnel," says Timothy Marum, a Tech Integration Specialist. Marum explains that while educators having a moment of panic isn't unheard of, there's always support available.

You can also follow educators on Twitter or join groups such as the Flipped Learning Network who have established themselves as experts in edtech tools and learning. They hold a wealth of information and you can gain insight from educators around the world. The great thing to know is that you're not alone.

Video in Remote Learning



Why use video?

There's no doubt that video improves and enhances remote teaching. Without it, communicating and collaborating with colleagues and students would be tedious and potentially less effective.

Video increases participation and comprehension with students. A 2016 Cal Poly study showed that student grades increased by as much as 10% when video was implemented.

Cal Poly Professor Martin Mehl says, "The screen is the closest tool to be able to hold the hand and capture the mind of the person trying to share their feelings and love for learning. It's important to see the passion of the person who wants us to fall in love with their favorite subject, lesson, company or solution."

Video lets you be authentic and build relationships with students, even if you can't be in the same room with them. A reading assignment and accompanying worksheet just can't do the same.

Videos are for much more than simply presenting a course or subject. Our next section will explain the numerous ways you can build video technology into your e-learning adventure.

Ways to use video

If you're not sure taking the time to work a video or two into your e-learning plan is worth it, we invite you to first learn all the ways you can utilize video technology to improve the learning experience.



Flipped or blended learning

Use video to create tutorials and lessons for your students, who can then view them based on their own schedules (and as many times as needed).



Drive student conversations

Video can be used to enhance conversations with students. There's no reason to communicate only through email. Have students ask questions and share thoughts with you and the class via video.



Mentorship and feedback

Feedback scribbled on a paper may go unnoticed. But when you provide constructive feedback and motivation through personalized video mentorship, students are more likely to listen and positively respond.



Student assignments

Video technology isn't just for educators to use. Involve your students by assigning projects that allow them to unleash their creativity through video. From book reports to how-to presentations to group projects, it's easy to incorporate video into projects and assignments.



Lecture capture

If you're using a combined approach and still have the occasional in-person class, consider capturing your lectures. If students want to review, they'll have access to the material, along with students who were unable to make it to class. With Screencast-O-Matic, you can create your own channel to make it easy for students to locate material and follow along.



Professional development

Educators know that education never stops, even for themselves and their colleagues. If you are using new processes or tools, share them through video tutorials.



Build a community

If you're working with younger students, video can help you keep their parents informed and involved. Use video to share updates and announcements while enhancing the parent/teacher relationship.



Video tools

There's no shortage of tools and resources available to learn, implement, and excel with when taking on the challenge of remote learning. Here are tools you can use to succeed.

Screen recorder

A screen recorder allows you to capture any area of your screen, add your webcam, and include voice narration.

When looking for a screen recorder, there are a few features you'll want to make sure your tool offers, including the ability to:

- Capture any part of your screen and start recording.
- Add, adjust and size your webcam for picture in picture effect.
- Narrate as you record.
- Trim the start and end to remove unnecessary parts.
- Pan and zoom to focus on an area of your screen.
- Automated and interactive captioning for accessibility.

Screencast-O-Matic offers all of these features and more with their user-friendly screen recorder.

Easy video editing software

It's rare that a video is recorded perfectly from start to finish. Chances are, you'll need to do some editing. Look for a video editor that has easy editing tools so you can quickly edit and share your videos.

- Dealing with a bit of awkward silence? Cut out unnecessary pauses or bloopers to keep students engaged and focused.
- Being able to insert an existing recording from a separate lecture can help you add further value to your video without additional leg work.
- Incorporate pictures, images, logos, titles, or even Picture in Picture effect with overlay editing options, instantly improving the quality and value of your message.

ScreenCast-O-Matic's Video Editor is available for anyone to try for free with a 30-day trial.

The editing tools are easy to use and will help you create videos that engage with your students and keep communication alive.



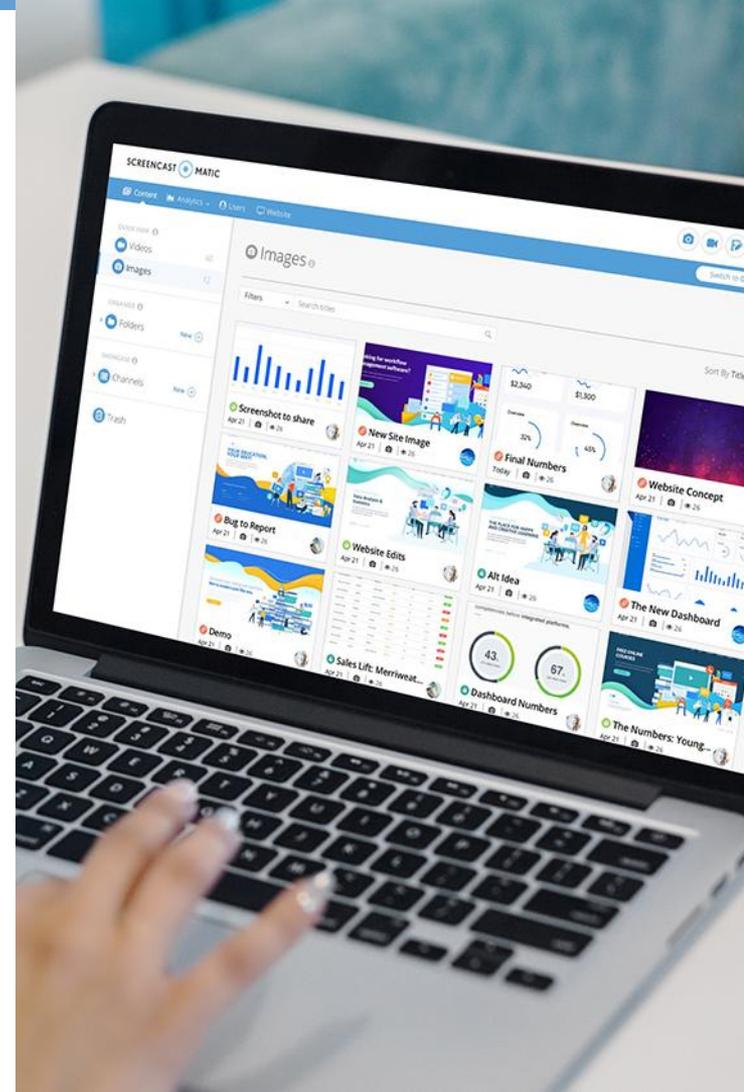
Hosting management

Digital clutter can quickly become overwhelming. But frustration can be avoided with an effective hosting management platform.

Educators appreciate the additional control hosting provides them as they're able to:

- Securely store videos in one place.
- Organize videos by topic or course into their own channels.
- Password protect videos for extra security.
- Share videos or channels to a class or individual students

Educators appreciate the privacy and organization video hosting gives them while students enjoy being able to access course videos with one click.



Effective Ways to Collaborate

Video integrations

It's easier than ever to collaborate and integrate video into your everyday workflow. If you're already using online tools as you migrate to a remote learning scenario, don't worry. Screencast-O-Matic easily integrates with apps and services you are already using.

- Microsoft Teams
- A variety of LMS platforms including Canvas, Schoology, etc.
- Youtube Video Upload
- Social media including Twitter

One of the most common questions we get is if Screencast-O-Matic is compatible with Google. And the answer is YES, you can easily integrate Screencast-O-Matic with anything Google, including Google Classroom and Google Drive. You'll learn more about our Google integrations in the next section.



Google

With approximately 30 million educators and their students using Google Classroom and all of its incredible features, we invite you to take your classes to the next level by incorporating video, whether you want to create tutorials, provide lessons, or give feedback.

ScreenCast-O-Matic is easily integrated with Google. You can create videos and embed them into Google Slides, add a video link in Google Sheets, or quickly upload your videos to a Google Drive folder you share with your class.

Students can also take advantage of video technology by accessing the screen recorder and video editor on any Chromebook device. There is also a Google Chrome extension that you can add to any Chrome browser. The good news is that students aren't required to login or provide any personal information to access our tools.

Having the power to integrate your current platform with our content creation tools will enable you to increase your productivity levels, provide better remote learning experiences for your students, and simplify the learning process.



Working with your LMS

Educators fully understand that an LMS can help them administrate, document, track, report, and deliver educational courses. But they may not realize that integrating video with their LMS can help them maximize its effectiveness.

For example, you can add video links to your LMS. Links are a simple way to add videos.

You can also launch the screen recorder in your LMS (as long as it's integrated with Screencast-O-Matic - check with your tech department).

With just a click of the built-in record button, you'll be able to launch the recorder to start creating videos.

Within a few minutes, you can send out video updates to all your students and/or parents.

Personalize Remote Learning

Maintain valuable connections

The connection between educator and student is unique. It thrives on connection and communication. When switching to a remote learning scenario, both can diminish or be lost entirely.

If students begin to feel left behind, their willingness to participate fully in online lessons and assignments can suffer.

We've put together a few tips to keep your students engaged and to help personalize the remote learning experience.

You can keep connections alive through video.



Keep connections alive with video



Think about your students

Whether you're making a video for an entire class or one student, think about their needs before making a video. What questions might they have? What's the best tone and approach to use?



Keep it short and sweet

Students aren't strangers to video. Teens average over 7 hours of screen time a day (not including homework). Keep your videos short and you'll have a higher chance of connecting with them throughout the entire video.



Be consistent

Whether you check in with students on a daily basis or once a week, make sure it's consistent. Students will come to depend on you and your videos, whether it's for guidance, support, or morale. At the same time, don't overwhelm students with too many check-ins. Use their age as a guide. Younger students will enjoy more opportunities to connect while older students will appreciate a routine.



Give breaks

Just because you can (and should) use video in your e-learning efforts doesn't mean it has to be the only form of communication you use. Give your students break times. Encourage them to take some time outside or at least step away from their desk. You can even build in break times with music in a video.

Remote Learning Success

We're all navigating uncharted waters, either as educators, students, or parents, as we begin to implement remote learning at a rapid pace. At Screencast-O-Matic, we're here to support and encourage you and we're honored to be a small part of the remote learning community.

Keep checking back for more ideas and resources. And as always, if you have any questions, we're here to help.

For more tips, visit our [blog](#)!

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