# Distance Learning (DL) Readiness Considerations
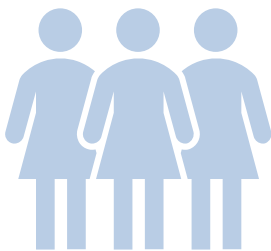## for the Pacific Region

The term **Distance Learning (DL)** includes various forms and formats for teaching and learning. Distance learning can include learning that occurs in (a) fully online formats, (b) blended and hybrid formats (e.g., various combinations of online and face-to-face) and (c) independent learning, offline formats (e.g., sending packets home).

Due to the remote, rural, and geographically dispersed nature of the Pacific region, there can be many variations on DL formats. Teachers and students and their families have varying access to tools and technology. As we prepare for a new normal after this pandemic, we can take some key considerations into account as we prepare for the range of scenarios that exist now and might be our reality in the future.

At a minimum, teachers should be prepared to put together instructional experiences for their students to work on at a distance, with no access to online tools. In scenarios where teachers and students have access to internet and/or laptops and mobile devices, teachers can also incorporate "synchronous" connections (meeting online at the same time). In scenarios where regular or reliable internet is not available to teachers or students, teachers can prepare "asynchronous" experiences that allow students to work at their own time online or offline. The options vary greatly, however we can begin to prepare for these scenarios by considering some essential knowledge and skills needed for DL.

This document provides an overview of DL readiness considerations in three key areas:

| People | Tools, Resources, and Design | The Big Picture (Structures & Services) |

The tables on pages 2-4 provide an overview of DL readiness considerations in these three areas. Please note that these are not intended to be a comprehensive list, but a starting point to prepare for DL scenarios.

Citation for this document: Rao, K. (2020). *Distance learning readiness considerations for the Pacific Region*. Adapted from School Virtually website (schoolvirtually.org).

# People

| | Readiness Considerations: Knowledge and Skills Needed |
|---|---|
| **Teachers/Faculty** | <ul><li>Knowledge and skills related to:<ul><li>instructional strategies for various type of DL (offline, online, blended/hybrid)</li><li>how to design instruction for distance delivery</li><li>how to support varied learners with DL (e.g., students with disabilities)</li><li>Using resources and digital tools for DL</li><li>Formats for DL</li></ul></li><li>Opportunities to practice teaching via DL</li><li>Access to resources and tools</li><li>Time to plan</li><li>Support from administrators</li><li>Support from parents/families</li></ul> |
| **Students** | <ul><li>Familiarity with expectations related to DL</li><li>Practice with DL instructional strategies</li><li>Self-regulation strategies (how to engage and persist in DL)</li><li>Organizational skills (how to structure your own learning in DL; how to ask for support)</li><li>Access to resources and tools</li><li>Familiarity with digital tools (if relevant)</li></ul> |
| **Parents/Family** (for K-12 students) | <ul><li>How to support their learners at home</li><li>How and when to communicate with teachers</li><li>How to use resources and tools</li><li>How to create structures for learning at home</li><li>How to support children with special needs (as relevant)</li></ul> |
| **Administrators** | <ul><li>How to support teachers with DL</li><li>Setting up the big picture for DL and blended scenarios (no tech, low tech, online, hybrid)</li><li>Understanding variations on DL formats</li><li>Understanding which tools and resources can be helpful; providing teachers with access to tools</li><li>Providing training and sustained support</li></ul> |

# Tools, Resources, and Design

| | Readiness Considerations: Knowledge and Skills Needed |
|---|---|
| **Digital Tools for Teaching** (for faculty and teachers) | <ul><li>How to access digital tools that can be used for instruction and interaction</li><li>How to use digital tools in a meaningful way aligned to instructional goals</li><li>How to use digital tools to create engaging learning environments</li><li>How to use digital tools to assess learning</li><li>How to use digital tools to interact/connect and communicate</li><li>Finding free or low-cost tools</li></ul> |
| Digital Tools for Learning (for students) | <ul><li>How to access digital tools that are used for instruction</li><li>How to use digital tools for the learning process</li><li>How to use course management systems</li><li>How to find and organize information</li><li>How to use digital tools ethically</li></ul> |
| **Learning Resources** | <ul><li>Where to find high quality resources</li><li>How to assess credibility of resources</li><li>How to access resources</li><li>How to incorporate resources into instruction</li></ul> |
| **Design Knowledge** (how to design instruction for DL formats) | <ul><li>How to chunk lessons for online delivery</li><li>Knowledge of design principles for DL, blended and hybrid environments</li><li>Knowledge of formats (asynchronous/synchronous)</li><li>Access to tools for design (multimedia creation, course management systems, etc.)</li><li>Time to plan and design iteratively</li><li>How to design inclusive instruction and support students with disabilities</li></ul> |

# The Big Picture (Structures and Services)

| | Readiness Considerations: |
|---|---|
| **Distance Learning Plan** | <ul><li>Thinking ahead about potential scenarios (rapid shift, planned shift, hybrid)</li><li>Defining expectations of teachers/faculty/staff</li><li>Setting up a schedule for DL</li><li>Considerations variations for access and formats for the learners/families and teachers at your school(s)</li></ul> |
| **Communication Plan** | <ul><li>Ways to reach and communicate with students, parents/families in DL situations</li><li>Ways to follow up on students</li><li>Tools to use for communication</li><li>Methods to use for regular and ongoing interaction</li><li>Processes to track communication</li></ul> |
| **Supporting Students with Disabilities in DL environments** | <ul><li>How to implement IEPs in DL formats</li><li>How to provide supports for students to access and meaningfully engage in DL</li><li>How to provide specially designed instruction</li><li>How to provide access to tools and services</li><li>How to engage parents/families</li><li>Progress monitoring online</li></ul> |
| **Culturally Responsive Instruction for Distance Learning** | How to incorporate culturally relevant instructional principles into DL formats including<ul><li>providing peer support and interaction</li><li>Strategies to support language and literacy development in DL</li><li>contextualizing learning, take advantage of home environment</li><li>fostering problem solving</li><li>providing scaffolding and instructional modeling</li><li>helping students to use their strengths, prior knowledge, and skills to access academic content and tasks</li></ul> |

## Sources of information for the DL Readiness Considerations

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