How to Facilitate eLearning

FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

One of the very real challenges to eLearning is equity and access. For many students and teachers, access to high-speed internet and devices is difficult (if not non-existent). How do we reach and teach all students if we don't all have the same tools?

In this guide, we're offering 4 creative ways to communicate and teach these students which have worked for other schools and districts in the United States. This is not an exhaustive list, but does go beyond simple take-home packets. Indeed, when we humans encounter barriers, that is when we become most creative in envisioning new solutions. So always be on the lookout for the new possibilities that are emerging. But if you are stuck and need a few ideas, these may prove useful.

Connect with TV Stations

In **Anne Arundel County Public Schools** (Annapolis, MD), central office and teaching staff created videos of lessons in K-12 math and reading curriculum. They then partnered with the local cable TV station to broadcast the lessons each weekday.

The district created a broadcast schedule that showed each lesson twice each day on the cable channel so students could have multiple opportunities for viewing. Parents were sent the schedule via email and social media, as well as mailed a copy to keep at home. Students could tune in during their grade level lesson time to watch the lesson and work on the activity at home.

Leverage Public/Private Partnerships

Try looking for local businesses that provide refurbished computers and create a public/private partnership. **Comp-U-Dopt** in **Houston, Texas** is working with schools to help eliminate limited access to computers by providing their refurbished machines to students in need.

In Philadelphia, Comcast CEO Brian Roberts and his family donated $5 million to help pay for 50,000 Chromebooks for students in the Philadelphia School District to use for online lessons in April.

Consider "Checking Out" WiFi HotSpots

At **Grain Valley Schools in Missouri**, Kyle Pace, director of technology, shares that students can check out mobile hotspot devices from the school's libraries--just as they'd check out books.

Don't have your own mobile hotspot devices? Try connecting with your local public library. Many libraries have these items and will partner with schools to distribute them to students on a check-out system.

Another idea is to add mobile hotspot devices to your buses and drive to neighborhoods in your district. Provide a schedule to parents and students for when the hotspot buses will be in their neighborhood.

Establish a Device Loaning System

In **Montgomery County Public Schools** (Maryland), the school district has set up a Chromebook distribution schedule. These are reserved for students who do not have access to a device at home. It's coordinated by a pickup schedule, and parents/ students must present the student ID or student ID number to get the laptop. Additionally, the county connected parents and students without internet access to Comcast's Internet Essentials program which provides free internet access to families.

Other ideas to consider:

- Send physical mail - no licking the envelopes.
- Set up a phone call tree to call your students at home.
- If you need packets, try these.
- How to use Chromebooks offline.
- Use a Choice Board to help keep students learning.
- Try these ideas to Unplug Your Home Learning.