

E-Learning's Role: Learning Continuity

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Learning Continuity by E-learning

- Interest in online learning solutions for continuity of learning is in high demand by school districts, states, and federal government
- The recent outbreaks of swine flu in schools has prompted the need for continuity of learning using online learning.
- Online learning offers solutions for helping prepare schools for pandemic planning as well as for natural disasters caused by weather, hurricanes, fires and other closures.

What can schools do for pandemic planning and preparedness?

- Online learning can provide a short-term solution and a long-term framework for options related to the continuity of learning and preparedness
 - Weather closures
 - School dismissals and closures
 - Natural disasters
 - Flu and other pandemic preparedness (including H1N1)

Continuity of Learning - Trends

- States and district education leaders are reviewing policies for learning continuity and virtual education to help establish new school models:
- Long-term solution: using blended models of online learning every day to help engage students in 21st century classrooms –
- Short-term needs: preparing schools for readiness to use online learning for learning continuity in the event of school closures

Case Study in Action: Singapore

- SARS outbreak in 2005, academic continuity
- e-learning as a key strategy for learning continuity.
- long-term e-learning plan:
 - train every teacher to teach online
 - provide online learning in 100% of secondary schools
 - all instructional materials are provided digitally and online
 - every teacher and secondary school uses a learning management system to deliver course materials and track student progress.
- e-Learning week

Continuity of Learning Chart from Singapore

STATUS	GREEN (no/limited student infection)	YELLOW (significant student infection)	ORANGE – (significant student and staff infection)	RED – School/Campus Closures
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons and exams as normal • Leave of Absence (LOA) Students to access materials from e-learning system (such as a Learning Management System/LMS) if available or in alternative/hard copy formats, if not • Isolate leave of absence (LOA) students for exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures, tutorials and laboratory sessions continue as normal • Home Quarantine Order (HQO) students to access materials from e-learning system if available, or, school provides instructional materials and assignments in alternative/hard copy formats, if not connected • Isolate sick students for exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop mass lectures and activities; replace by e-learning, if possible • Tutorial via online tutors • Laboratory sessions as normal, if possible; via online labs, if possible • HQO students to access materials from e-learning system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-learning only via remote access for students from various locations, including homes • Tutorial via online tutors • Hold exams on e-learning systems, if possible; otherwise postpone exams

Getting Prepared

- *What can the online learning community provide to assist US states, districts, schools and individual students displaced H1N1?*
 - *34 states have state virtual schools*
 - *70% of school districts offer online courses*
- Short and Long -Term frameworks to help schools adopt e-learning for learning continuity
 - Readiness Assessment
 - Preparing people
 - Availability of instructional materials
 - Accessing the technology tools and platforms
 - Partnerships
 - Resources and services

Readiness Assessment

- Learning Continuity Readiness
- Schools, districts and states could benefit by doing a readiness assessment for e-learning in advance and knowing what the student population has in inventory at home: computer and internet access at a minimum.
- If they don't have access, then the formulation of a plan or policy for expanding access in the short- and long- term as well as interim strategies in place.

People: Examples

- **Teachers**
 - Inventory Internet access at home
 - Train teachers in use of the LMS, communication and distance learning tools (low tech and high tech) for short-term and long-term solutions.
- **Training parents and students**
 - Inventory Internet access at home in the case of a school dismissal.
 - Train students and parents to access materials and services (low tech and high tech)
 - Schools use blended environment under normal circumstances to ensure a smooth transition in the case of an emergency.
- **Identify and train gap-fill tutors for online tutoring**

Instructional Materials: Examples

- What instructional materials are available?
 - Textbooks– (online materials? offsite licenses?);
 - Syllabus and materials available via packets or over the Internet;
 - Full online courses
 - Schools with full online courses offer in-depth, systemic approaches to continuity of learning with teacher-student and student-student interaction available.
- Invest in digital content and instructional materials that could be delivered at a distance and used in online learning.
- Accelerate use of proprietary and open educational resources (digital, adaptable, sharable, modifiable, redistributable, i.e., creative commons licensing, MITE, Curriki, etc.)

Technologies: Examples

- **Phone conferencing:**
 - Provide conference-calling solutions; skype; VOIP.
- **Web-conferencing solutions:**
 - Provide synchronous class meeting solutions.
- **Learning Management System solutions:**
 - Provide blended learning throughout the year;
 - Provide synchronous and asynchronous class meetings with teachers and students including live chats with other students.
 - Allow students and parents to track progress using syllabus, digital lessons, simulations, online discussions and interactivity with teachers, with access to grades and completed assignments.
- **Online Courses**
- **Virtual Schools**

E-Learning Innovations That Work

- Research shows that K-12 online learning works:
 - Students perform “as well or better” academically
 - Expand learning opportunities and time
- Federal Stimulus: RTTT and Innovation funding
 - Wise investments in K-12 educational innovation that don’t “fall off” funding cliff
- Schools, districts and states eligible for innovation funding should consider investing in e-learning solutions
 - accelerate adoption of e-learning systems and provide resources for continuity of learning

Thank you!

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- Free online resources on Continuity of Learning:
 - Continuity of Learning Readiness Assessment
 - Continuity of Learning Framework (chart)
 - Reports, documents, and copies of slides
 - Resource Partners