

Thinking about Pedagogy in an Unfolding Pandemic

An Independent Report on Approaches
to Distance Learning During COVID19 School Closures

Independent Report written to inform the work
of Education International and UNESCO



Armand Doucet, Dr. Deborah Netolicky,
Koen Timmers and Francis Jim Tuscano

15 March 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is causing various levels of disruption in education globally. As we write (March 15th), UNESCO has 61 countries announcing school closures in an attempt to slow the spread of the disease, impacting more than 400 million students. This number is likely to rise dramatically as more countries detect COVID19 cases. The purpose of these school closures is to try to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 through self-isolation and social distancing. The purpose of this report is to inform practice and policy from the people on the educational frontlines of an unfolding pandemic.

This report has been written by amassing, via crowdsourcing, research and discussions, good practices of teachers around the world in relation to online, distance and remote learning platforms. The teachers who have answered our call are examples of the millions of highly regarded educators the world over. We appreciate of the time they took to contribute to this rapid assessment of available good practice and principles.

While schools are closed, we are faced with two profound questions: Should we continue student learning? And if so, how?

As declared by all stakeholders at the World Education 2015 Forum in Incheon, South Korea, hosted by UNESCO, “We all agree that every student has the right to quality, free, public education.” As authors of this report, we concur. The rights expressed and ambition advanced frame the ambitions of education systems the world over. However, during these extreme times of school closures due to global pandemic, we are putting into context what this means for students facing potentially long disruptions in their education. As such we assert that ‘Maslow before Bloom’ should be our mission going forward for distance learning in this time.

UNHCR's Emergency Handbook gives us a solid starting point to think about the first question. Although a refugee crisis is vastly different, comparison still has merit as we consider how to approach education when our students are thrust into a vastly different world than the one they knew. Firstly, education in emergencies provides immediate physical and psychosocial protection (normalcy by schooling, schedule, procedures etc.). Secondly, a safe and quality education during and after an emergency, which we recommend following the work done by The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency (INEE), means students will be exposed less frequently to activities that put them at risk (this case physical distancing for COVID19). Thirdly, education provides a sense of continuity when everything else is in flux, providing a stable, safe and supervised routine that is attentive to academic and psychosocial needs.

So, to answer the first question, yes, when it is possible and when we as teachers have a say in the way it happens, we should offer some form of distance learning for our students.

However, an ethical question still remains in-terms of continuing student distance learning should online learning be part of the distance learning package, considering all the implications that come into play. Many elements need to be pondered. Inequity is first. This refers to some not having access to infrastructure for the online part of distance learning including software, hardware, bandwidth, cost, training of staff and students. Information from International Telecommunications Union (ITU) the UN Agency that tracks and supports the expansion of internet access (<https://news.itu.int/itu-statistics-leaving-no-one-offline/>), shows approximately half the world's population has access to internet and in the poorest countries that access is often happening via phone and not laptops. Inequity can show itself in many ways, for example, parents needing access to the one device in the house to work remotely, high school students needing to babysit as parents must go to work. Some students will have parents who are frontline emergency personnel who will be working overtime. The list goes on. Schools will vary by demographic, existing technology resources and practices.

Another challenge to think about is that distance education, particularly online learning, may not be appropriate for young students, especially those with minimal or irregular adult supervision at home. They may be distracted/worried, lose track of their schedules if not followed well, or may be negatively impacted by limited social interactions or delayed feedback from teachers.

Thirdly, we educators must concern ourselves with protecting students' privacy and data while we scramble to find the silver bullet of the online learning part of distance learning. Meaningful conversations need to be had with key educational technology stakeholders in keeping with Education International's Protocol on the Use of Information and Communications Technology in Education. Many of them are now offering their platforms for free. These platforms take millions of dollars to create and we understand the cost to developers who offer the services for free. However, we believe it would be unethical to use this crisis to data mine those who subscribed and keep information on students, teachers and schools utilizing these tools.

Considering all these elements, we are in complete agreement with the UNHCR's Emergency Handbook's first phase that "to establish child friendly spaces in association with the refugee community is key and that this space should be inclusive, physically safe, participatory and supportive environment." We should be doing distance learning in some form to give continuity to our students and support them in their learning and health, but this may not include online learning platforms. Furthermore, that context matters greatly in the decisions being made by each jurisdiction, as it should be.

HOW?

Now on to the second question, how do we do it? We will be speaking about distance learning rather than online learning. Learning away from school can be effective and meaningful, take on many forms as teaching and learning. The pedagogy, diverse and age appropriate, will vary depending on environment and technology access. It does not need to be only online and, in looking at the question of inequity, can't be carried out by just any teacher. Plenty of studies support the belief that we don't want students staring at screens for hours on end, which means that we really need to look at this through a distance-learning lens. We also do not want teachers who have not had the opportunity for professional development in this area to think they must become overnight experts. (That is after all why they belong to unions that, among other supports, work collectively to make sure governments and employers provide the necessary conditions and environment for effective practice.)

Firstly, there is no one-size-fits-all in distance learning. There are a great variety of subjects with varying needs. Some are easily translated into online or at-home environments. Others, such as those subjects with a large practical component (e.g. Physical Education, the Arts or Home Economics) or that require specialised equipment (such as Woodwork, Media or Science practicals), are not so easily replicated outside of the physical grounds of the school. Different subjects and age groups require different approaches to distance learning.

Distance learning can involve a combination of synchronous (live learning in which students learn with the teacher at the same time) and asynchronous (students learning independently at different times) approaches.

Distance learning doesn't have to mirror learning as it normally does in school. In fact, trying to replicate the pace and type of work that would be done at school is unrealistic. Trusting teachers must be the starting point. Trusting teachers to plan appropriate work for their classes allows them to select how students might best use the home environment and available tools to maintain the continuity of learning during a school closure, with realistic expectations.

Likely our situation will get worse before it gets better. Much worse. So, we need to be flexible. A stop in schooling for two weeks is vastly different than no school for eight to ten weeks. During this pandemic, what will be important is having consistent messaging that adapts to the circumstances as they unfold. This will help our students, parents, teachers, staff and communities stay dedicated to social distancing, while maintaining hope and resilience in the face of uncertainty.

TEACHER INPUT

Teacher voice is a critical element in any successful approach. Firstly, the teachers know their students and have been with them as the approach to school closure unfolded, shared the experience as students digested and analysed these fast-moving events in the news, and have calibrated their responses as individuals from a social-emotional and mental health perspective. In plain English, they know their students.

Teachers will know their students' capacities for technologies and are able to best design the learning experiences that harness

those tools with which students are familiar and make most sense for their learning. Context here will be key; systems, districts and schools differ with what technological tools they use. It could be the same across the system or vary by classes in the same school. Teachers need to be trusted and empowered to deploy appropriate delivery of the distance learning, utilising tools that are fit for purpose and relevant to the subject, content and skills being learned, as well as to the age and stage of students.

While listening to teachers is key, we also do not want to overwhelm students with inappropriate workload and expectations as teachers also feel the pressures of meeting curriculum learning outcomes. As mentioned, distance learning can involve a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Identical timetables can be one way to go, but could lead to giving lessons in didactic, one-dimensional way with kids staring at screens which would not be good for their mental health and might not be realistic within certain demographics. Distance learning doesn't have to mirror learning as it normally does in school. In fact, it shouldn't.

A unified approach to the online component and expectations is a necessity that puts the student in the middle. As stated, we do not want our students staring at screens all day. Public health experts are urging everyone to be aggressive in their efforts to “flatten the curve” and this needs to be the priority. Everyone needs to take these actions seriously and stay safe”. So, while designing the learning, we must take into account that it might have been for nothing if learning is not possible with the rising of cases.

What would a unified approach look like? An example for a high school student might be to reduce each class to thirty minutes each in the morning. With “office hours” in the afternoon.

Period 1	08:30 - 09:00
Period 2	09:00 - 09:30
Period 3	09:30 - 10:00
Period 4	10:30 - 11:00
Period 5	11:00 - 11:30

Another for elementary students (who often have the same teacher throughout the day apart for specialities), would be to check-in on-line, get the checklist for the day and get-off within a 30 minutes period with teachers staying in touch with parents for questions that may arise through varying means such as texting, apps, emails and phone calls.

Educators and administrators must be empathetic, assign a reasonable workload; encourage students to balance online with offline and connect with one another, understand that they have other classes and other responsibilities when planning the learning. We are trying to be a steady constant source of comfort with a reliable place at a moment when students are anxious, stress and worrying, doing this without overwhelming them with the learning.

CROWDSOURCED INFORMATION

While crowdsourcing this information from the teachers we contacted for this report, some main points came through in no specific order:

- We are in uncharted territory and teachers will try to do what's best for students.
- This will evolve every day as the crisis grows and educators/administrators will need to re-evaluate every day on a case by case what is best for students.
- Communication is key – proactive regular communication is key in uncertain times with the teacher being able to give comfort and stability to students.

- Parents are to be trusted and that health comes first, students should not be punished for online learning they can't attend or distance learning they cannot do because of the crisis.
- Educators/administrators will have to have procedures/systems in-place to get students caught up in a reasonable matter.
- This will not be a one size fits all and we must trust teachers as well as administrators
- A need to consider all stakeholders while designing, having a plan in-place for inequities. Parents and caregivers will be important at the younger ages and teachers will need to plan with them in mind.
- Teachers can and should continue to provide appropriate communication, materials, learning activities, teaching resources and feedback to students when capable as this will provide some continuity for students in a time of turmoil
- That prolonged school closures may result in students struggling to maintain motivation and complete set work. Students should be incorporating physical activity and mindfulness into their day.
- Parents can help their children establish a routine for instance by using the normal school day as a guide for younger ages. They can help to establish an appropriate space where children can do their learning at home (quiet, comfortable, resources and without distractions). The age and independence of the child will determine how much checking in or assistance they need with their learning from parents and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Acknowledge that every system/district is different, and each should have a unified approach to activities during school closures for student learning.
2. Communicate consistently, clearly and coherently what the expectations are during school closures. One unified voice approaching this for parents, students, teachers and staff is key.
3. Distance learning is suggested; however, it again depends on each context during this pandemic. Our recommendations for distance learning are below.
4. Online learning can be beneficial but should not be the only learning suggested for distance learning based off the reasons above. If systems/districts allow for online learning, they should decentralise the decision-making for this component to individual schools. Schools should put a plan together with their staff that makes sense based on the tools, timetables, availability, demographics etc. District/systems should be key supports throughout this process but should rely on the expertise of their professionals to make the right call.
5. You cannot just put a class online. It is unrealistic to believe that all teachers across grade levels are going to be able to accomplish online learning. Depending on the style of pedagogy chosen, it might be counterproductive. Design the learning experience will take time. Teacher experts in designing online learning experience that support distance learning should be collaborating with colleagues to help them strategise the design process.
6. Evolution over the period of school closure will be necessary. As you see from this document from the Beijing City International School for elementary students, which

showcases the plan and its evolution and how they are trying to keep kids connected: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tv617U90Oy0W0ejuvmoCv1ofy8vQkVIY/view?fbclid=IwAR39JSb_SYOzUjV6M1vmzfisxQo9Dn5kyPJn3LIHh9RG1Fu2ODnUPRBrf6E

7. Recommendations

for schools/teachers for distance learning:

- Distance learning can involve a combination of synchronous (live learning in which students learn with the teacher at the same time) and asynchronous (students learning independently at different times) approaches. However, concentrating on asynchronous is probably best at this time. Teachers can create experiences for students to work at their own pace and take time to absorb content. Assignment likely will take twice as long to complete at home because of different factors; prioritize and be realistic. Age appropriate. An example would be flipping the classroom or being live with your class through video content which is an option for synchronous learning, but for younger ages spelling words, handwriting, arts and craft, mathematics games, exercises, physical activity challenges, inquiry projects, learning apps can be communicated at home with recommendations for how the day should be spent instead of having online video content throughout the day which would be much more asynchronous.
- Give explicit instructions outline deliberate instructions and be specific the length of time to complete the session of learning – also keep the same schedule if possible but be cognoscente of inequities, recording key video for the one's who can't be online at the same time.
- Specify task requirements and length clearly (e.g. 2min audio recording with a bulleted checklist)
- Be empathetic – assign a reasonable workload; encourage students to balance online with offline and connect with one another – understand that they have other classes and other responsibilities – The key is being steady, constant and reliable at the moment without overwhelming them. Consider well-being while in isolation, that their normal routine is gone and that this will add pressure to parents. Communicate consistently – all instructions and

assignments must be communicated via one source – consistency is key, particularly at young ages.

- Checklist for self-regulation, to-do list and/or outcome list to make planning easier for parents and students as well as keep reality in-check.
 - Students need a space to talk. For some, the teacher is the person they open up to in times of crisis. They need to share feelings that can vary vastly. Some will feel excitement, some will have major anxiety not just about the school closure, but also needing to navigate learning on their own.
 - Build in time for them to become familiar with the online platform if you are using one as you design the learning experience.
8. Discussion needs to be had with education technology companies to make sure that data and privacy of students are protected during this time. Especially considering that many are offering their services for free.

FOR EDUCATORS – SCHOOLS - SYSTEMS

We have mentioned above, elements to think about and ethical questions to ponder when designing distance learning. Many online collective help groups, threads and hashtags for teachers have been created such as these:

- Facebook – Educator Temporary School Closure for Online Learning Facebook page
- The Spring 2020 Online Learning Collective
- Hashtags - [#distancelearning](#) [#onlinelearning](#)

Teacher are doing a great job gathering resources to try and make the online component of distance learning work.

A few examples how students can learn via online instruction for distance learning:

- Individual, online, synchronous learning: students attend a webinar at home

Technology: video conferencing tools, etc.

- online, asynchronous learning in group: a few students collaborate by working together in a shared online document by adding in content, commenting and offering feedback to each other's work.

Technology: Word Online, Google drive, chat, OneNote, discussion forum, etc.

- individual, online, asynchronous learning: independent learning by reading, watching instructional videos, making assessments

Technology: instructional videos

- online, synchronous learning in group:

Technology: chat groups

Here are the tools recommended through the crowdsourcing of information and the tools our authors have working knowledge about:

- *Learning Management Systems* (LMS) for communication, creation of online or virtual learning environments or classes, uploading and share materials, posting assessments, and providing feedback: **Office 365, Schoology, Google Classroom, Fresh Grade, Canvas, Blackboard, Edmodo, Moodle, Seesaw, Go Bubble** (for young learners)
- Video and communication tools for conferencing – **Zoom, Microsoft Teams/Skype for Business** (part of O365), **Skype, Cisco Webex, Whereby** (free), **Collaborate** (blackboard), **Facetime, Youtube Live, WhatsApp**, and **Google Hangouts**
- Students prefer videos from their teachers, age related for length maximum 15-20 minutes for older age groups. If you don't have the tools, there are many online resources to create your own videos – **Screencast-o-Matic, Screencastify** (free Chrome), **Microsoft power point recorder, Camtasia, Flipgrid** (free), **Screenflow** (Mac), **Quicktime** (Mac), **Clips** (apple devices)
- Collaboration tools – **Google** docs, slides, sheets, **Microsoft Office 365, iCloud Pages, Keynote Numbers, Book Creator** for Chrome, **Canva, Padlet, Onenote, Piktochart, Flipgrid**.
- Formative assessment – **Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, Socrative, Mentimeter, Pear Deck, EdPuzzle, Quizlet** and all the tools mentioned in collaboration.
- Content or instructional material – **Numberbender** Youtube channel, **Khan Academy, BrainPop** (free for schools affected by Covid19), **Buncey, Explain Everything** – KEY POINT HERE – Parents and educators should watch video before or/at the same time with students to make sure they are appropriate. Don't recommend something you haven't watched.
- **LOCAL TV & Radio** could and should be used for transmitting information to student/parents/caregivers if needed.

OTHER RESOURCES ONLINE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED FOR FREE

Many options and resources have been circulating for teachers, schools and districts to use. Here are the key ones at the moment. Obviously, many other resources are out there on personal teacher websites, YouTube channel and through the platforms mentioned above. It is up to each jurisdiction to realise what works best for them together with teachers' organizations in finding a way forward.

Free edtech

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1t3r618pd8MAi6V87dG2D66PtIKoHdHusBpjPKXgm36w/htmlview#gid=0>

https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html?promo_code=6293&eml=CM/smd/20200312//txtl/sm/ed&linkId=84269747

<https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/135609/list-of-education-companies-offering-free-subscriptions/>

http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com/?fbclid=IwAR0EW_vlxGIHuHqJxQYUk0KVOtFWJxwLsjBe5M2sVv-8pj-Vssyai-iFUrQ

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UYhVO0vH84Nfv2NZuAFttvK6x8lCI3dl-7x-jqUiR_E/edit#gid=0

Pre-K

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MX2SE6VH31wSmuBkEBnNKabHhIMTMdmCc1XAoMf6nTA/edit#gid=2015456289>

4-8

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kDKiYpMkYljpcF366kyH3nu-byx4JU5MIMcF7jLQzLw/edit#gid=710393283>

9-12

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-alvbcZGH_e241DwGs-99XZSLZ1Uc7-oPfHuX0mXzHM/edit#gid=1989279191

Math

<https://www.mathycathy.com/blog/>

<http://www.pathstomath.com> (grades 7,8,9)

Museums

12 famous museums offering virtual for free – https://hellogiggles.com/news/museums-with-virtual-tours/?utm_term=A36AA812-655E-11Ea-97D8-7D87C28169F1&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_content=link&utm_campaign=hellogiggles_hellogiggles&fbclid=IwAR03QTUCSiLhLB9aC3tXDDvHmvqn7ntgzBaB0Ze8dz-TOZRI8CX94vRI5Hs

Free concerts

<https://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/titelgeschichten/20192020/digital-concert-hall/>
www.scholastic.com/learnathome

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/ CAREGIVERS

Parents are also experiencing anxiety as they try to balance many different stressors at this time. A glance at social media and you can see parents sharing tips on scheduling, routine and online learning sources. They are trying to minimize the disruption of learning in this unusual time. During school closures, parents/guardians/caregivers will need support for their child's learning if a system or school decide to implement distance learning or not.

This should be age appropriate and sent with the routine/schedule that is suggested to follow during this time, specifying when online learning will be available.

Acknowledging that every context is different, a teacher, school, district and department should try and communicate with parents/guardians/caregivers using all available tools such as mail, email, text and phone call. This should be with no pressure to deliver the learning if they are not capable for any reason. Children should not be punished for having to do distance learning within a context of a pandemic.

A checklist of outcomes with resources that the parents/guardians/caregivers can access as well as times they can reach the teacher for clarification should be provided. Also, an explanation of what they are doing and why, would definitely be useful for parents. For elementary school parents, this will definitely be important, for older students this is a good time to become more autonomous learners. This is a great example of a plan sent by a District in the US to parents shared by Paul Solarz that could be put together

by each district to fit their curriculum: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-0RLGt32itlq5sMDvaDIVPj5hYAVJinGdp_jDy9qMUs/edit?fbclid=IwAR2m_teo3Cz6gBeN34u5w4gjGWsZTE4XldmUpcHURBdDhzsutwa3J5TL5Q

Here is an example of list of things to do for parents if distance learning will not be supported by the schools due to their context. The list was submitted by one of the authors of this report on social media for parents asking what they can do with their children during the school closure:

These are incredible times. I know as a parent, I'm quite anxious, as many of you are. Trying to figure out how to help my students while balancing my three kids under the age of five at home and making sure they get what they need. While keeping everyone healthy and doing social distancing properly.

mindset is key - social distancing a.k.a. Physical distancing for me, means family time. See it as an opportunity to learn with your kids, family bonding etc. While you are distancing yourself physically, keep contact through social media, phone call, video calling with your family and friends. You don't have to do this alone

Remember that teachers are professionals, we have our specialties. Early childhood and elementary are not mine. If I have teacher friends with ideas who want to elaborate feel free to do so in the comments. So, first and foremost, listen to what your teacher has sent home, set-up or suggested, they know your child best from a school setting and have their best interest at heart.

Many online websites need to be set-up by (structure, procedures etc) a teacher originally, pedagogy of the teacher drives what tools they use to help their students. So you won't get any recommendations for educational online learning systems here.

Remember that it's alright to have time for self-reflection, relaxation and relationships some of these kids are nervous, anxious, worried and some don't understand what's happening and probably shouldn't be fully explained. Let them explore these feelings. It's alright to pause, take a deep breath and let them be kids. Play board games together, have a movie/pj day, build a #lego etc. Great advice I got from my sister/teacher Lillie Doucet

This being said I'll point out a few things you can do.

Daily routine is key for any of the tips below. Routine and structure are dependable elements for kids. If you can get the routine from daycare/kindergarten/school and roughly stick to it great.

Which means you will need to be proactive and plan.

Educators use social media to share their experience and useful information. The next two pages are an example of such a social media post.

Here are my TOP 10 TIPS to try and help continue learning during the hiatus

- 1) **Health** is number one. Whenever in doubt go back to this one, that includes mental health. It will probably get worse before it gets better, so formal learning might go by the wayside and that's alright. Take care of yourself and your family/friends. Respecting what the experts are telling us. You can get outside and still isolate yourself, breathing some fresh air in the backyard will do wonders for your mental health.
- 2) **Read, read and read some more.** Low tech, I know. But still so important. Let them explore when reading, let them see you read, make them read aloud and talk to you about what they are reading and how they interpret it.
- 3) Khan academy have a lot of **videos**, they are good tools for quick lectures on pretty much anything that was sent home to comprehend. Many other sites do the same and I would add crash course videos on YouTube by John Green (for example a great series on digital literacy). And a sidebar here- many of the major museums offer virtual visits, for example the British National Museum.
- 4) **"Explain everything"** is an app for creation, and great tool for doing projects or recording your work. For example if you have maths to do at home, the child can click Record while doing the problem and record his explanation of what he is doing as well. That video can be shared with teachers.
- 5) Many **online learning management systems** such as Seesaw, Schoology, Flip Grid, Microsoft Teams, Google Education, Freshgrade etc. are driven by teachers to manage classroom, work, assignments, speaking with kids — think virtual classrooms. If the teacher has it set up, you will have access to what they are sharing.
- 6) **For the sciences**, Bill Nye has many videos, you can check the curriculum and roughly do what they might have been

doing at this time of year. Also, mini experiments that you can do at home with what you have in the house getting them to get used to the scientific method. That can be as simple as cooking cookies together and asking the right questions, creating a hypothesis etc. I would explore and explore some more by asking as many questions as possible about something happening within the house (for example, paper planes and the Bernoulli principle: explain everything and try to design a better one, then repeat).

- 7) **For social studies** you could have discussions about culture, how are we all connected through what's happening, identity etc... Prepare questions to ask your relatives, family friends etc.
- 8) **We still have access to the outside while keeping social distances.** There are plenty of games related to math, literacy, science that you can play in your driveway as well as get some fresh air. Or just go out and play. You can do physical exercises with younger kids as simple as hopscotch, skipping rope etc.
- 9) **For second language learning**, watch age-related shows, music and discussions depending on what courses they are taking. Let them teach you what they know!
- 10) **This is a good time to explore other interests apart from school curricula** that are key going forward such as graphic design for presentations (if they have one to do, try using Piktochart), photography with the phone (letting them take 10 picture of what fascinated them today and discuss), cooking (extremely handy once they leave the house) -and of course: laundry and chores!

Don't worry, you got this!
Lean on each other,
you are not alone!

CONCLUSION

“Maslow before Bloom” must be our mission. First and foremost, we must ensure that our students are safe and have their basic needs met. This will not be the case in many settings around the world. Second, that parents and teachers are safe, needs are met and capable to help in their learning.

We must do our best to alleviate their worries and have at our disposal the most updated information from our governments to help get the messaging across to parents of what’s expected and where they can go for help. Learning will not happen without this being done first and foremost. The relationships the teachers have built with their students over the year or semester are key to help them navigate this difficult time as well as build upon to start the distance learning process.

Platforms that allow teachers to see their students faces, enable teachers to look for anxiety or fatigue giving them a better understanding of how to personalize the distance learning. Then, we must ensure that as the on-line part of distance education proceeds, that our students’ data is safe. The rest is up to the district and teachers to decide what platforms to use (or not use), looking to our colleagues around the globe who have already endured what we are now facing as suggested in the recommendations above. Finally, we must allow our educators to do what they know is best for their particular group of students as long as it stays within the unified messaging. One voice is key for direction, once this is established and the parameters given let the teacher identify what works best for them as a school and for their own individual students.

Considering how social media has brought us closer to people globally, but in many ways isolated us from our neighbors in our own community, it is ironic that in this time of social distancing,

social media has brought us together like never before to find solutions that work for education during this pandemic. We will get through this together. In the meantime we can use this opportunity to learn from each other, prioritize the most vulnerable and make pedagogical decisions based on our unique educational context keeping children firmly at the center of our decisions.



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Thinking about Pedagogy in an Unfolding Pandemic

An Independent Report on Approaches
to Distance Learning During COVID19
School Closures



Independent Report written to inform the work
of Education International and UNESCO

Armand Doucet, Dr. Deborah Netolicky,
Koen Timmers and Francis Jim Tuscano

15 March 2020



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