EAB

Fact vs. Myth: What All Districts Should Know and Do to Improve Virtual Instruction

We will begin at 2:02 p.m. Eastern Time once everyone has joined!

K-12

Today's Facilitators

Maria Wahlstrom
Associate Director, Research

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Senior Analyst, Research

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Senior Analyst, Research

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Please Use the Chat Feature Today!

We Would Love to Crowdsource Questions and Ideas

Specific Questions

What questions are you tackling that would benefit from additional research?

Data, Resources, Best Practice Leads

Share your successes to help other districts better serve their students and communities

Request to Speak With an EAB Expert

Partners: Schedule a consultative conversation through your dedicated advisor

Find the Chat Button at the bottom of your screen

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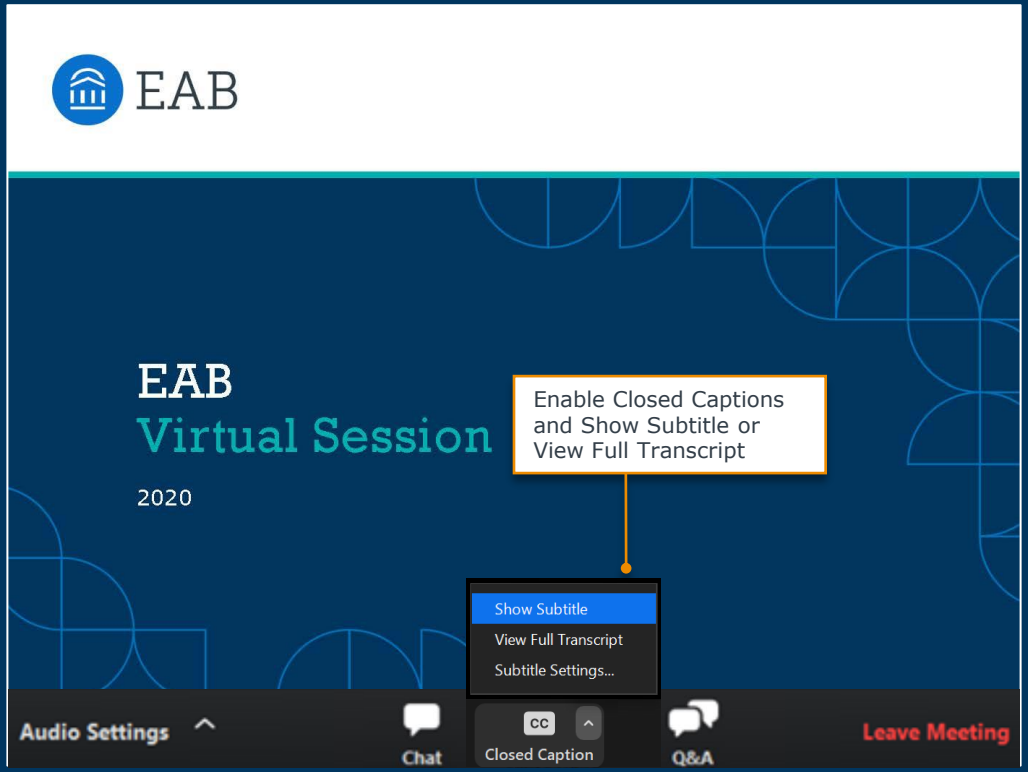
Closed Captioning



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The District Leadership Forum

Comprehensive Support for Superintendents and District Leadership Teams

National Best Practice Research

Tailored On-Demand Research

Diagnostics and Benchmarking

Dedicated Implementation Support

Consultative Decision Support and Guidance

Executive Roundtables and Workshops

P.D. Tools and Implementation Guides

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Five Pillars of Success for K-12 Through COVID-19

1

Ensure Academic Progress Regardless of Modality

2

Maximize Opportunities for Safe Face-to-Face Education

3

Promoting Just and Equitable Schools

4

Protect the Mental Health of Teachers and Staff

5

Support and Retain Teachers and Principals

"Leadership is the ability to turn vision into reality."
~Warren Bennis

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Objectives for Today

Identify **What Went Wrong** with Virtual Instruction in the Spring

Learn How to **Improve Student Access** to Virtual Instruction

Correct **Virtual Instruction Myths** to Boost Engagement and Increase Student Learning

Plan Next Steps for **Facilitating Continued Innovation** in Virtual Teaching

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Not a Myth: Virtual Instruction in the Spring Wasn't Great

Students Disengaged and Teachers Increasingly Burnt Out

76%

of teachers reported a **significant decline in student engagement** during online learning

82%

of teachers describe feeling **"a lot more stressed"** compared to pre-COVID teaching

Student Learning Outcomes Regressed

Learning Loss March – Sept 2020

34%

Decline in 4th grade Reading RIT[1] scores; equivalent to **6 months** of learning loss

81%

Decline in 6th grade Math RIT scores; equivalent to **14 months** of learning loss

> *There have been more critics toward our school district than ever before. Parents are threatening to homeschool, teachers are considering leaving, and I'm really feeling the pressure to fix everything.* ***We've been in crisis-mode, but we can't keep this up."***
>
> - Superintendent, Public K-12 District

1) NWEA's student MAP testing results are reported in RIT scores (short for Rasch UnIT). A RIT score is an estimation of a student's instructional level.

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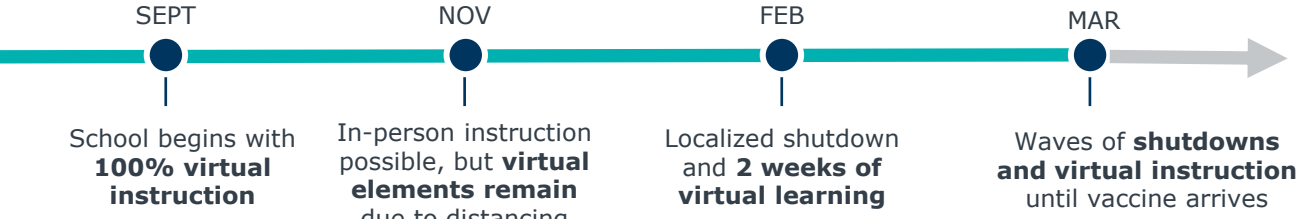
Sources: Bushweller & Kurtz, *Most Educators Want Schools to Stay Closed to Slow Spread of COVID-19*, EdWeek, June 2020. EdWeek Research Center, *Crisis of Confidence: Results of National Surveys on Educator Morale During a Pandemic*, 2020; Kuhfeld, Megan, James Soland, Beth Tarasawa, Angela Johnson, Erik Ruzek, and Jing Liu. Projecting the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on academic achievement, 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

Crisis-Mode Instruction Won't Cut It This Year

Virtual Instruction Will Likely Play a Role All Year



20 states reported rising COVID cases in K-12 school districts, causing some to **close doors two weeks after opening**

Source: Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, *COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime*, 2020; Avila, Y. et Al, What We Know About Corona Virus Cases in K-12 Schools So Far, NYTimes; EAB interviews and analysis.

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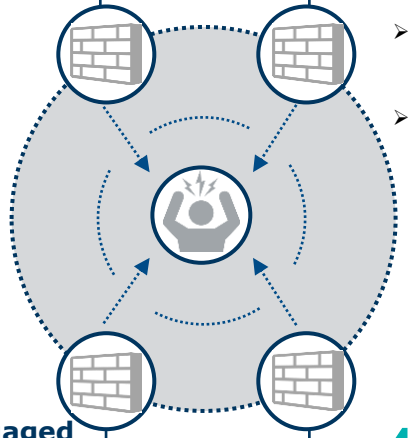
Districts Faced 4 Major Barriers When Moving Online

1 Students Unable to Participate in Online Learning

- Students had **inconsistent WiFi access**
- Home environments were full of **distractions**
- Students had **obligations that competed for their attention**

2 Students Were Disengaged and Rarely Learned

- Educators felt like **first-time teachers** again
- Teachers **were unsure how to translate good instruction** to online environment
- **Students felt isolated and disconnected** from teachers and peers



3 Personalized Support Was Inconsistent or Nonexistent

- Teachers were **unsure how and when to offer personalized academic support** virtually
- Students and staff faced significant **mental health challenges** that required personal attention at scale

4 Innovation Occurred Sporadically and in Isolation

- Teachers had **few opportunities to share what was and wasn't working** with peers
- Districts **had no method** for tracking and gathering ideas

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Transform Virtual Instruction in Your District

I

Improve Access to Virtual Learning

1. Repurposed School Space
2. Home Learning Success Tips
3. Flexible Learning Offerings

II

Apply the Science of Learning to Virtual Teaching Strategy

4. Cognitive Science-Based Teaching Techniques
   - Relationship-Building
   - Curriculum Prioritization
   - Student Processing Time Strategies
   - Engagement Ideas
   - Redesigned Feedback
5. Crowdsourced Asynchronous Library

III

Formalize Personalized Support

6. Schoolwide Support Structures
7. Call-a-Teacher Function

IV

Enable and Scale Ongoing Virtual Teaching Innovation

8. Monthly Teacher Innovation Blasts
9. School Innovation Campaign

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Ensure Digital Access by Opening Unused School Space

Digital Access Strategy	Cost	Efficacy	Time and Complexity	K-12 Leader Insights
Open Buildings for High-Risk Students	**B+**	**A-**	**B-**	Best option for schools to ensure **digital access** and a **conducive learning environment**
Parking Lot Hotspots	**A-**	**C**	**B+**	Could pose **equity issues** and may not be ideal for long-term use in harsh climates
Bus Wi-Fi Hotspots	**C+**	**B-**	**B-**	Only effective for districts with **low populations of students** needing internet access
Broadband or Wi-Fi Partnerships	**A**	**B-**	**D**	Cost effective, yet **not replicable** for many districts
Mailing/Delivering Paper Packets	**C-**	**C**	**D**	More conducive for **older students and self-motivated learners**; least cost-effective and most complex

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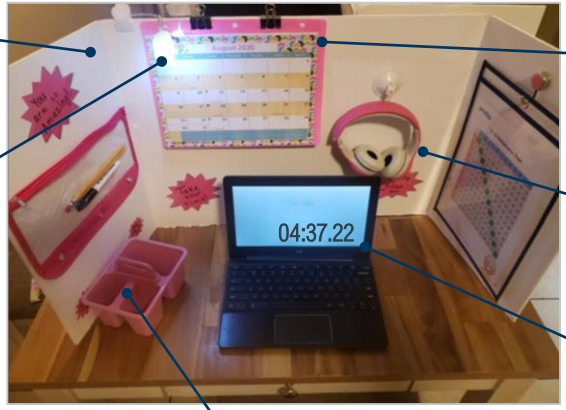
Source: EAB interview and analysis.

Teach Parents Tips for Improved Concentration at Home

Designated learning space signals separation of work & play

Soft lighting reduces stress in the brain

Controlled temperature of 74-77 degrees improves focus



Personal touches make students feel comfortable

Noise cancelation reduces distractions

A timer or stopwatch signals breaks and focus hours

In-reach supplies are easy to find

Tips for Communicating These Strategies to All Parents

- Circulate tips in **weekly parent newsletters**
- Store advice in a **designated parent portal** on your school webpage
- Provide relevant contact info (i.e., email address) for **on-demand support** to answer parent questions

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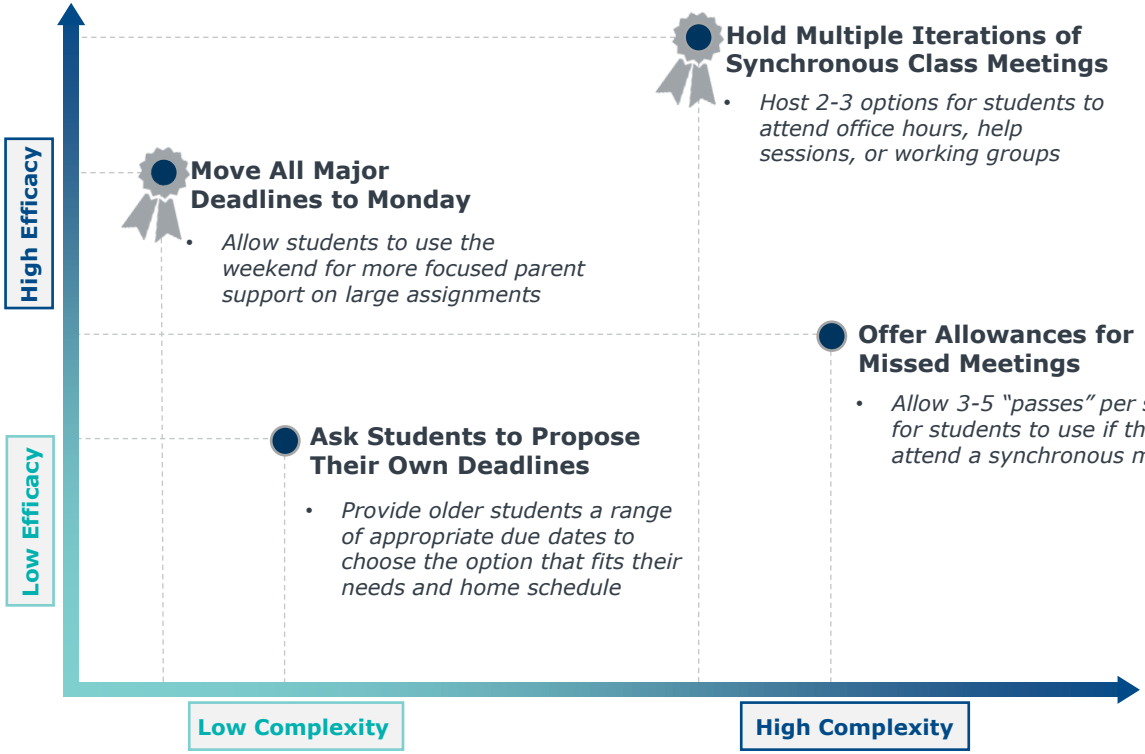
Tariq, Aimee, *Science-Backed Tricks to Help Improve Home-Office Productivity*, 2019; EAB interviews and analysis.

Add Flexibility for Students with Competing Demands



Hold Multiple Iterations of Synchronous Class Meetings

- *Host 2-3 options for students to attend office hours, help sessions, or working groups*

Move All Major Deadlines to Monday

- *Allow students to use the weekend for more focused parent support on large assignments*

Offer Allowances for Missed Meetings

- *Allow 3-5 "passes" per semester for students to use if they can't attend a synchronous meeting*

Ask Students to Propose Their Own Deadlines

- *Provide older students a range of appropriate due dates to choose the option that fits their needs and home schedule*

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Next Steps for Increasing Student Access to Learning

To Do: Increase Student Access to Learning

- ❑ Repurpose unused rooms in your school buildings to host students with limited digital access
- ❑ Explicitly teach parents cost-effective techniques for supporting student learning at home within parent newsletters or online parent portal
- ❑ Select at least one opportunity for flexibility to accommodate students with competing at-home demands. Make this option a school-wide expectation.

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Focus Less on "Online" and More on "Instruction"

Shift from a Focus on Tech...

SPRING 2020

- ❑ Emailing long lists of web tools that *might* help in online teaching
- ❑ Spending hours teaching how to use complex tech platforms
- ❑ Circulating YouTube videos demonstrating online teaching "hacks"

70% of training focused on **tech support**

30% of training focused on **teaching strategy**

...to a Focus on the Foundations of Successful Teaching

FALL 2020

- ❑ Teaching how to translate relationship-building techniques online
- ❑ Prioritizing high-value skills within the curricula to accelerate instruction
- ❑ Refining online engagement techniques to get students excited and motivated

30% of training focused on **tech support**

70% of training focused on **teaching strategy**

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Reduce the Emphasis on Tech Tools

Select 2-3 Tech Platforms to Simplify Teacher & Student Learning

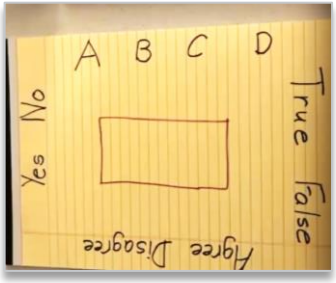
Benchmark tech tools against the following student needs:

- Class materials are centralized and easy to find **in 1-2 clicks from the homepage**
- Students can communicate with peers and teachers through **chat or forum conversations**
- The platform offers **synchronous video meetings** with options for small group breakouts
- Students can **view past assignments and teacher feedback**

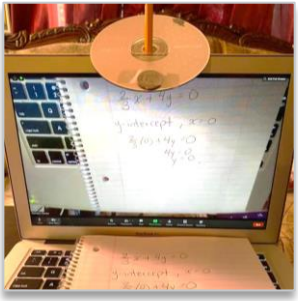
Promote Free Low-Tech Alternatives for Teachers and Students

Whiteboards from Household Materials

Quick-View Answer Sheets



Low-Tech Document Camera



Source: Archer, Dr. Anita, Zoom to Boom: Embracing the Science of Instruction in the New School Year, 2020; Castrejon, Carmen, Low-Tech Doc Cam, 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Best Online Teachers Rely on Basics of Great Teaching

"My best online teachers were already strong educators – they doubled-down on the fundamentals of good teaching instead of scrapping everything they knew and starting over. "

- Superintendent

Public K-12 School District

"My struggling teachers continued to have challenges online with the same engagement and planning problems they had during in-person learning."

- Superintendent

Public K-12 School District

~85% **of strong in-person teachers** reported having an easier time with online instruction in the spring

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Online or Not, Great Teaching Starts with the Student Brain

Decades of Cognitive Research Provide Insight on Best-Practice Online Instruction

Relationship Building

- ✓ Trigger feelings of safety and trust in the brain
- ✓ Lower risk for learning new concepts

Meaningful Assessment and Feedback

- ✓ Promote long-term memory and metacognition
- ✓ Turn new skills into habits

Student Engagement

- ✓ Use cognitive-based techniques to increase motivation

Skill & Content Prioritization

- ✓ Maintain appropriate cognitive load
- ✓ Accelerate deeper learning

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Use Relationship-Building Tips Based on Cognitive Science

Essential Foundations

Create Friendly Virtual Environments

- Use i**ce-breakers** or brief "morning meetings" to begin synchronous sessions
- **Mention every student by name** at least once for positive reinforcement

Personalize Content and Interactions

- Administer **student interest surveys** to quickly get to know students
- Use survey results to **inform lesson components** and examples

Recommended Strategies from Cognitive Science

Establish Trust and Validation

- Use cues such as **pausing, paraphrasing, and attentive facial expressions** to help students feel validated
- **Respond to students with "yes/and" statements instead of "no/but"** to suggest openness to their ideas
- **Avoid "why" questions when giving feedback** to prevent feelings of defensiveness
- **Make eye contact and avoid fidgeting** when giving feedback to establish trust and reduce fear
- **Use a relaxed, friendly tone of voice** to convey warmth and empathy

Source: Encompass Communications and Learning, "6 Tips for Building Trust in Virtual Meetings," 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Strive for a 1:2 Ratio of Instruction to Processing Time

4 Activities to Increase Metacognition

1

Spaced Learning

Provide at least 3 opportunities for students to recall important content to build long-term memory

2

Metacognitive Reflection Questions

Ask explicit metacognitive reflection questions throughout instruction either verbally or in writing

3

Yearlong Peer Learning Partners

Assign each student one learning partner with whom to meet once a week to reflect on learning

4

Student-to-Student Communication

Encourage peer-to-peer questions, clarifications, & comments via chat or online forums

Sample Metacognitive Questions

Before Lesson: How is this similar to what I already know?

During Lesson: What am I feeling confused about?

After Lesson: What are the top 1-2 things I just learned?

66% of learning outcomes can be attributed to **informal learner-to-learner interactions**

Source: Association for Talent Development, "Spaced Learning: An Approach to Minimize the Forgetting Curve," 2015; Oxford Learning, "How to Study Using the Spaced Practice Method," 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Focus Student Attention on High-Value Content

Do

Identify and prioritize high-value content **using EAB's Curriculum Prioritization Tool**

Reuse the same 3-5 instructional activity templates to create consistency and reduce time explaining directions

Share the most effective activity templates so all students and teachers can benefit

Don't

Attempt to **cover every lesson or standard** at a prescribed pace

Introduce new, complex activities or assignments that require more than 5 minutes of directions

Find or create effective online instructional materials **without sharing them with other teachers**

Visit EAB's Curricula Prioritization Resource Center

Access step-by-step tools for identifying high-value content within existing curricula

Sources: Smith, B., *It's About Time: Opportunities to Learn in Chicago's Elementary Schools*, 1998; TNTP, The Weight of Wasted Time in School, 2019;; Hanushek, E. 2010., RAND, 2012, Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement; Rubin, R. 2019. "Less is More: Four Strategies for Streamlining Your Curriculum"; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Use Asynchronous Time to Introduce New Content

Asynchronous Learning

- Provide direct instruction on essential content with ~10 min videos
- Require students write down or record what they've learned in journal or video responses
- Encourage students to keep a log of questions and thoughts to discuss with their learning partner and teacher

Synchronous Learning

- Review new content, check for understanding, and target support
- Foster positive relationships by checking in on students' wellbeing
- Facilitate deeper learning by helping students apply and reflect upon content

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Crowdsource Teacher-Made Asynchronous Videos

Rather than Spend Time and Money Sourcing Asynchronous Videos…

$2,200

Average cost of annual district subscription to instructional video collection

7 hrs/wk

Average time teachers spend searching for asynchronous resources

Build an Asynchronous Video Library

Divide responsibility of skills or standards amongst all grade level teachers

Have teachers record a **10-minute video** of direct instruction for each prioritized skill/standard

Post videos in a centralized database accessible by all teachers in the district

Benefits of Building an Asynchronous Video Library

- All videos are district standards-aligned
- Saves teachers time searching for standards-aligned content
- Saves districts money otherwise spent on additional resources

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Source: Education World, "Survey Finds Teachers Spend 7 Hours Per Week Searching for Instructional Materials," 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

Engage Students Using Psychology of Entertainment

Entertainment Industry Techniques	*How to Apply to Virtual Instruction*
End with a Cliffhanger	Use the **last few minutes** of synchronous meetings to tee up excitement for the next lesson
"Plus 1" Strategy	Provide students at least **one extra option** or submission method for each assignment
Build Your Final Grade	Allow students to **build their final grade** by choosing the series of activities/assignments they'll complete to demonstrate learning
Maximize Social Interaction	**Integrate communication channels into asynchronous instruction** by utilizing chats, forums, and short video responses in as many assignments as possible

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Redesign Feedback to Promote Active Learning

✗ Don't give feedback and grades simultaneously	✗ Don't give feedback on *every* area where students need improvement	✗ Don't limit assessments to only recently-taught content or skills
✓ **Give students at least 1-2 opportunities to reflect on formative assessments** and make corrections before giving a grade	✓ **Reserve feedback for the 2 most important skills/content** that students must master in that assignment	✓ **Repeatedly reassess the 3-4 most critical skills** every student must master by the next grade level in assessments throughout the year

Two Requirements for Highly-Effective Feedback

- Given repeatedly for students to **revisit, reassess, and recall** essential content
- Administered in a **low-risk, non-punitive environment**

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Science of Virtual Instruction Video Trainings This October

Save Time– Don't Develop Teacher Trainings From Scratch

Evidence-Based Practices

Provide **cognitive-based instruction techniques** that improve virtual and in-person learning outcomes

Quick Implementation

10-minute videos and supplemental materials **easily plug into existing teacher PD and PLCs**

Clear Guidance

Straightforward guidance on how to **overcome common challenges** in virtual instruction

Sample Training Videos

- *What the science of learning can teach virtual instructors*
- *Classroom management techniques in a virtual classroom*
- *How to motivate disengaged students in online learning*
- *Delivering feedback and assessments in a virtual setting*

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Next Steps for Improving Virtual Instruction

To Do: Apply the Science of Learning to Virtual Teaching

- ❑ Allocate 70% of professional development to the core brain-based techniques for relationships and good teaching; focus the remaining 30% on the tools
- ❑ Plug EAB's PD videos into existing PD or PLC time
- ❑ Limit technology tools to the 2-3 most user-friendly tools, and ensure 1 LMS is used consistently across the district
- ❑ Use EAB's curriculum prioritization tool to prioritize high-value instructional content
- ❑ Divide district standards amongst grade-level teachers, and assign teachers with recording 10-minute videos for their respective standards. Centralize these videos in an asynchronous video library.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

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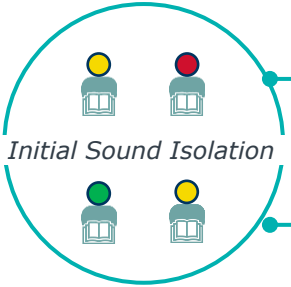
Personalize Academic Support with Skills-Based Grouping

Group Students by Skill Deficit, Not Achievement Level

Sample Kindergarten Skills-Based Reading Group



Skills-Based Grouping Characteristics

- Diagnostics identify each student's discrete skill gaps
- Small groups share same skill needs but may contain students with different composite scores

82%

Increase in share of students who moved from tier 2 to tier 1 between K-3rd after skills-based remediation

Download the Skills-Based Grouping Toolkit and Other Resources

To implement skills-based grouping and other science-based reading reforms at your district, visit eab.com/ReadingResourceCenter.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Formalize Districtwide Skills-Based Small Group Support

Embedded Within School Structures

Designate Small Group Days

- Reserve 1-2 small group days/week across the school
- Assign asynchronous videos & assignments for students not meeting with small groups

Reserve Afternoons for Small Groups

- Keep 2-3 hours of designated days reserved for small group remediation
- Target student needs while helping students establish routines

Supplementary Support

Recruit Skills-Based Tutors

- Ask teachers to record skills-based lessons & share with volunteer tutors who reinforce skills
- Use teacher-tutor communication to share observations

How to Recruit Virtual Tutoring Volunteers to Your District

1. Staff submit 5 potential volunteer contacts from their network (e.g., recent college graduates)
2. One staff member emails all contacts and assigns tutoring groups
3. Schools reserve 30 minutes of PD to introduce teacher/tutor collaboration expectations

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Pair Staff with Student Groups to Provide Timely Support

Process Steps	Critical Goals	Recommendations
1 **Pair All Staff with Students**	*Determine the Staff to Student Ratio* • Utilize all teachers and non-instruction personnel • Determine the number of students in each group	**Total # of Staff / Total # of Students**
2 **Set "Call a Teacher" Expectations**	*Standardize Requirements* • Staff and students exchange contact information for ongoing communication • Staff proactively check in • Students reach out with any immediate needs and questions	**Encourage Scheduled Check-Ins Weekly**

"Call-a-Teacher" Ensures Just-in-Time Support Across Many Student Needs

Quick responses to urgent questions

Support in academic, wellness, logistical, and technology-related issues

Reduction in student, family, & teacher stress

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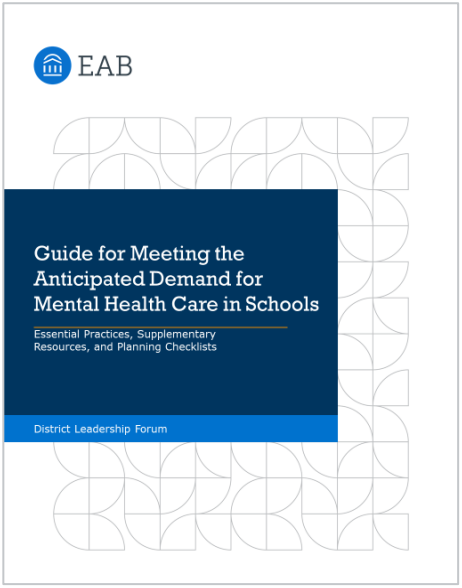
Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, "Restart & Recovery: Considerations For Teaching and Learning: Systems Conditions"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Identify and Eliminate Gaps in Mental Health Supports

Use EAB's Implementation Tools to Improve Mental Health Support Systems

- 10+ Expert Insights and Webinars
- Dozens of Implementation Resources
- Step by Step Guidance



Schedule an Expert Call

Discuss and apply these resources to your district's current approach to mental health

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

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Next Steps to Formalize Personalized Support

To Do: Scale Personalized Student Support

- ❑ Ensure all teachers know and can implement skills-based grouping using EAB's Skills-Based Grouping Toolkit
- ❑ Create a formal structure to scale skills-based grouping across the district
- ❑ Pair every staff member with a small group of students to provide ongoing personalized support
- ❑ Identify gaps in your district's mental health strategy by using EAB's suite of mental health resources

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

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Two Ways to Encourage Ongoing Virtual Innovation

Monthly Teacher Innovation Blasts

Suggested Next Steps

1. Task each school to create a centralized idea submission form (*i.e., Google Form*)
2. Instruct teachers to submit innovative strategies used in their own classrooms
3. Spotlight teacher submissions two ways:
   - **Start every staff meeting** or PD day with a 5-min share-out of promising ideas
   - **Post innovative ideas** on a teacher portal or weekly faculty newsletter

School Innovation Campaign

Suggested Next Steps

1. Propose a school-wide problem in need of a solution to entire staff
2. Instruct teachers to submit innovative strategies used in their classrooms
3. Have teachers evaluate most promising solutions and determine the winner(s)
4. Award prizes to winners (*i.e., covering recess/class time or upgrading office supplies*)

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Launching EAB Innovation Labs this Winter

Reimagine the Future of K-12 Beyond COVID-19

Use this unique "Sputnik" opportunity in education to **reexamine the status quo and design a bold vision for the future of K-12** with other forward-thinking district leaders from across the nation

More details to come later this year

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Next Steps for Scaling Ongoing District Innovation

To Do: Enable and Scale Innovation

- ❑ Create a centralized idea submission form for teachers to submit innovative practices. Task principals with sharing practices during staff meeting or newsletters
- ❑ Use a district-made survey to surface innovative virtual instruction solutions from educators
- ❑ Request priority registration for EAB's Innovation Labs launching in January 2021

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

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EAB's Comprehensive Virtual Instruction Supports

Transform Virtual Instruction Using EAB's Year-Round Offerings

Step 1

Schedule a Virtual Education Strategy Consultation

- **Pressure test your district's strategy** for virtual instructional
- **Receive tailored solutions** for your unique virtual teaching and learning needs
- **Discuss details about best practices** shared in this webinar

Step 2

Integrate EAB Video into Teacher Trainings

- Access **6 best practice training videos** that you can plug directly into existing PD and PLCs
- Sign up for **EAB's PD Video Information Webinar** to learn details

Step 3

Request to Join EAB's Innovation Labs

- **Design your district's future** with nationwide forward-thinking leaders
- **Request priority registration** on this sputnik series that will launch in January 2021

eab.com/k12covid19response

Interested in participating in these offerings?

Complete the survey and we will get you signed up and connected

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Final Thoughts

Please take a moment to answer this final poll question to provide your overall experience on today's session.

We have also shared a link to a short online evaluation in the **Chat** and we would appreciate if you could take 2-3 minutes to give us additional feedback on your experience today.

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