

The Remote Teaching Mindset



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As you establish and sustain remote learning, it can be overwhelming to decide what to prioritize. Establishing remote learning during a pandemic is new for us all, so being intentional about your mindset as you make decisions and engage in teaching remotely has a significant impact on what you choose to do and how it impacts students. No two educational settings are exactly alike. This tool is intended to support thinking about mindset and is not a cookie cutter template for all situations. Teachers and school leaders should modify and adapt this for their needs.

8 essential mindset components (order of importance varies depending on your context):

Access and Equity
Asset-oriented
Stability
Relationships
Simplicity
Organization
Communication
Joy

The Remote Teaching Mindset: Reflection Questions

“Being responsive to diverse students’ needs asks teachers to be mindful and present. That requires reflection... This means we each must do the ‘inside-out’ work required: developing the right mindset, engaging in self-reflection, checking our implicit biases, practicing social-emotional awareness, and holding an inquiry stance regarding the impact of our interactions on students.”

- Zaretta Hammond

ACCESS & EQUITY

How do I make sure that remote learning is **accessible and equitable** for all students and their families?

ASSET-ORIENTED

How can I discover and leverage the **assets** that students, families and their communities already have? What deficit-oriented language am I hearing or using that I need to intentionally address?

STABILITY

How does this create a sense of **stability** for students and their families?

RELATIONSHIPS

How do I work to **build relationships** with students and their families? How do I support students in building relationships with each other? How can I build rapport and make space for emotional check-ins during remote teaching?

SIMPLICITY

Is there a way to do this more **simply** while still maintaining the level of effectiveness?

ORGANIZATION

How can I keep my students, their families, and myself **organized**? How do I monitor student progress and assess student learning?

COMMUNICATION

What, how and with whom do I need to **communicate** about remote learning? How can I gather regular feedback from students and their families to inform my remote teaching practices? Do I assume that because I’ve communicated to families that I am building relationships *with* them?

JOY

What do my students enjoy? How can I build remote learning experiences that are fun, engaging, rigorous and thought-provoking? How can I support families in **enjoying** learning with their students and avoid creating conflict around school work?

The Remote Teaching Mindset: We Believe

ACCESS & EQUITY

We believe all students, regardless of zip code, ability level, previous school performance, race, gender, home language or any other social identifier, should have access to high-quality, rigorous, and enjoyable learning opportunities while learning remotely. We unite with other educators to pursue educational equity in terms of access to resources, funding, and culturally sustaining practices on a personal, school and systemic level.

ASSET-ORIENTED

We believe that students, their families and their communities show up to this crisis and remote learning with a plethora of skills and assets that schools often don't effectively leverage. We seek to leverage these assets through authentic relationships with and by listening to students and their families. We address deficit-oriented thinking that unfairly blames students for failure or lack of engagement because of their own deficiencies or their families lack of value on education, and instead correctly scrutinize unfair policies and school systems, and even ourselves.

STABILITY

We seek to support stable learning and home situations for all students. In the midst of a crisis that utterly changed students' daily lives overnight, we believe that we are change agents in creating stability and normality for our students.

RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that building meaningful relationships with students and their families is central to successful remote learning. We seek to know and understand students and their families on their own terms and share honestly about ourselves. We work to build relationships through multiple meaningful touch points, including creatively finding ways to support students connecting to one another.

SIMPLICITY

We seek the simplest solution to any challenge with remote learning that will yield equally effective results in order to avoid burnout for students, families and ourselves.

ORGANIZATION

We believe that good organization of remote learning supports student engagement and reduces student and teacher stress.

COMMUNICATION

We carefully consider what, how, and with whom we communicate information around remote learning. We seek feedback from students and their families. We do not assume that because we have communicated to families that we have built relationships *with* them.

JOY

We seek to create learning experiences that make students excited to join in each day. We believe that creating joyful experiences aids in student engagement in learning and lessens family and student stress.

The Remote Teaching Mindset: From & Towards

From	Towards
Exclusion & inequity	⇒ Access & equity
Deficit-oriented, blame students & their families	⇒ Asset-oriented
Instability, chaos, stress	⇒ Stability
Disconnection, being unknown	⇒ Relationships
Overwhelmed, burned out	⇒ Simplicity
Disorganized,	⇒ Organized
Lack of clarity and communication	⇒ Communication
Forced, reluctant, packets	⇒ Joy

The Remote Teaching Mindset: In Action

As you reflect on your mindset about remote teaching, consider using these practices:

JOURNALING

Spend a few minutes at the beginning and end of the week reflecting on your mindset. Consider picking one of the 8 essential mindsets to focus your reflection on.

REFLECTING WITH A COACH

In your meetings with your coach, tell some stories about your week. What story captures what is going well in your teaching this week? What story captures a particular challenge or frustration in your teaching this week. Then, spend some time with your coach engaging in self-reflection, checking your biases, exploring alternative explanations and holding an inquiry stance towards remote learning.

MESSAGING TO STUDENTS

Take some time to plan exactly what you want to communicate to students about learning remotely during a crisis. Consider students' social-emotional needs while learning from home. What is most important for you to say to help students feel safe, valued and excited to learn?

REFLECTIVE ROUTINE BEFORE CLASS

Before you begin each class session, whether recorded or live, take 5 minutes to allow yourself time to breathe and focus. You might play music or you may prefer silence. Taking a few minutes to be aware of your own emotional state will help you make sure you're sending the intended message to students with your body language and facial expressions.