A Teacher's Guide to a
**Smooth Transition from
Onsite to Online Learning**

**A hybrid synchronous and
asynchronous model**

This guide was compiled by teachers at King's Academy for the purpose of supporting our transition from onsite to online learning. King's Academy has a wealth of teachers with experience in online teaching and learning — in online college consortia, with Global Online Academy, for education technology companies, and more. These teachers convened for a series of meetings to distill principles and practices that would be most useful for teachers when transitioning in-person classes to an online setting. Some of these practices and recommendations come from research, others come from experience, and others still come from best practices in every day teaching. This last point is perhaps most important as you explore this document: good teaching online has, at its heart, the same principles as good teaching in person.

1. WHAT MAKES GOOD TEACHING, IN ANY SETTING?

Planning well for teaching means asking three questions, and these questions apply equally to the teaching we have all known in the classroom and to the teaching we are moving towards online.

Student Experience	Teacher Planning
What will students learn?	What are my objectives?
What will be the evidence of learning?	How will I assess learning?
How will they learn it?	How will I design learning experiences?

These are the questions around which the next section is organized.

2. WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE ONLINE?

Reimagining our classes for an online setting asks us to rethink the way that we answer the three questions above. Included below are suggestions for how to calibrate your thinking for online teaching and learning.

What will students learn? What are your objectives?

- As in classroom teaching, start by making clear and concise course, unit, and lesson objectives.
- To further promote an inquiry approach, consider including essential questions.
- Whenever possible, narrow your focus and reduce objectives to the essence of what you seek to do.

What will be the evidence of learning? How will you assess learning?

- Review your objectives and consider what would demonstrate mastery.
- Choose format. How can an essay, video essay, infographic, or other format show mastery?
- Refrain from using summative tests or quizzes. Focus on formative experiences.
- Give students choice in how they demonstrate and document mastery in content or format.

How will students learn it? How will you design learning experiences?

The online setting may be unfamiliar to students; therefore, build a consistent, predictable unit structure to help students orient to their new environment.

Clearly state unit objectives and criteria for success

- Identify the objectives for your unit.
- Establish clear criteria for success – like a single point rubric.
- Communicate objectives and criteria clearly and in multiple formats at the start of your unit.

Curate resources for students to explore

- You are not the conveyor of information or understanding. You are a curator.
- Choose materials for students to engage: readings, online simulations, videos, texts, etc.
- Less is more. Content coverage happens differently than in your in-person class.
- Publish the material at the unit's start, so students know the scope of each unit's work.

Create opportunities for individual work

- Design for students to learn independently. Focus on the process of learning, not the product.
- Read, watch, write, consume, make, experience. Ground student learning in individual work.
- Provide choice. Select 1-2 essential resources, then others that students may choose from.

Create opportunities for collaboration in and outside of class

- Build in collaboration. It fosters engagement and feelings of connection.
- Student interaction can happen via 1:1 video, discussion threads, Google documents, etc.
- Use the outside world: interviewing parents, working with objects around their homes, etc.

Create opportunities for reflection

- Allocate time at the end of each unit for students to reflect. What went well? What didn't?
- Meaningful reflections can help guide the design of your next unit.

Simple frameworks can help you design your learning experiences. For example, ask students to:

- Watch an instructor video, do independent work, join collaborative pair work, join a whole class experience, and have a 1:1 interaction with the teacher (through zoom or in writing)
- Read something, watch something, write something, create something – and collaborate.

3. WHAT ARE SOME HELPFUL GENERAL PRINCIPLES?

Reframe your thinking

There is less distinction between homework and classwork in online learning.

- Both class time and homework serve the focused objectives of the course.

Online learning requires a number of shifts that students need our support to make.

- They must schedule their time and work independently.
- They must build connections across distance and time.
- They must leverage online and offline resources to show their learning.
- They must take responsibility for their classmates' learning, too, not only their own.

We can still have high expectations, rigorous standards, and intellectual vitality when learning online.

- Clear communication of criteria for success can still include high expectations.
- Well-designed questions can propel students to think critically and creatively.

Foster engagement through relationships

Be accessible

- Choose a method of availability that works for you: office hours, video calls, etc.
- Use tools like Calendly, youcanbook.me and Google Calendar to schedule time with kids.

Use video

- Students must see your face. And each other's faces, too, if possible. It builds connection.
- Use videos that are four minutes or shorter. Avoid longer videos as students' attention may wander.
- Tone matters. Be yourself. Show your personality.
- To save time, script videos in advance and practice, but they don't have to be perfect.

Create some early wins

- Student success in the first two days will foster confidence and engagement.
- Start with simple teaching tools. Don't compete with the technology in your first ask of students.

Offer feedback early and often

- Offer precise feedback at the beginning to show you are paying attention.
- This will help students focus and feel connected.
- Consistency and timeliness with students helps both your students and you.
- Design lessons that require students to use your feedback to improve future assignments.

Gather feedback on the teaching and learning itself

- It won't be perfect. Invite feedback for improvement: for students and teachers alike.

Support student success

Allow for flexible pacing

- Plan that everything will take two or three times as long for students. Reduce content.
- Some students will go fast, others will go slow. Providing varied learning materials will allow different kinds (and speeds) of students to learn in their own way.
- Know that it takes time for you, too, to consume and provide feedback on student work.

Provide tutorials and scaffolding as much as possible

- Students may be working in a new mode and may need to see how it is done before they do it.
- You don't have to create tutorials. They exist online. Ask IT for help finding them.
- It's ok to limit the number of online tools you use. Use only what advances your objectives.

Report challenges/develop follow-up structures for accountability

- Keep attendance and report it for every class.
- Build in checkpoints so you know when students are struggling to keep up.
- When students struggle or fall behind, check in with advisors and counselors.
- Approach students who don't typically ask for help.