Continuity of Learning:
Technology Considerations for Remote Learning

Purpose

This document serves to support SU/SDs when considering different tools as they assess their current and future technology needs for pivot-ready learning models. Continued assessment of the technology used to meet the needs of varied learning models -- and the response to that assessment -- will help SU/SDs ensure that whichever learning model that a school has chosen will be successful in meeting the needs of their students, staff and school community.

Technology Needs for Different Learning Models

As an SU/SD decides on the types of technological tools to incorporate into its toolbox, it is important to consider the types of learning models the district has adopted to ensure Continuity of Learning. Each learning model has strengths and limitations, with both intended and unintended consequences inherent to each model and the technology chosen to support it.

Below, we have described learning models that have virtual learning components, and provided recommended tools, technology and setup for educators to support that learning model.

Synchronous Fully Remote Classrooms

Synchronous, fully remote classrooms provide live, simultaneous instruction to students virtually.

- Video tools, including laptop-based cameras, attached additional cameras.
- Audio tools, including headphones with microphone, or external microphone and speakers.
- Second monitor display, for managing chat and shared document controls.
- Video tools, including laptop-based cameras, attached additional cameras or camera system with tracking ability.
- Additional camera(s) set up to capture documents, whiteboard, lab experiments, etc.

Synchronous Hybrid Classrooms

Synchronous hybrid classrooms include students learning in-person while classmates remote-in to class live, virtually.

- Remote audio tools, including headphones with microphone, for those students who are participating remotely.

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- External microphone and speakers to capture sound from either a focused individual or the whole room to aid in the interaction between in-person and remote students.
- Smartboard or projector used to display students who are participating remotely and choose or are permitted to be on camera.
- Video tools, including laptop-based cameras, attached additional cameras, or camera system with tracking ability.
- Additional camera(s) set up to capture documents, whiteboard, lab experiments, etc.

Asynchronous Hybrid Classrooms

Asynchronous hybrid classrooms have all students in a cohort receiving instruction at the same time during in-person days and learning asynchronously during remote learning days.

- Audio tools, including headphones with microphone, or external microphone and speakers.
- Second monitor display, for managing chat and shared document controls.
- Additional camera(s) set up to capture documents, whiteboard, lab experiments, etc.
- Video tools to record sections of direct instruction or recorded clips of a whiteboard, or camera recording of a lab or demonstration.

Evaluative Criteria and Questions

Using guided questions and criteria can help SU/SDs organize their technology needs, and carefully consider technology choices that meet current and anticipated needs within budget. Consider revisiting allowable uses of different funds described in [AOE fiscal guidance](#) when reviewing these questions/criteria. The following questions should be considered for each piece of technology needed for the type of learning model implemented at the school or district level:

1. To what extent will this technology meet the needs of today?
2. To what extent will this technology meet the needs for the future?
3. To what extent will this technology work within the budget?
4. To what extent will this technology require the provision of professional learning?
5. To what extent will this technology require updates to student technology?

To help answer these questions, consider using the following criteria:

- **Features** - To what extent do the features meet your current requirements?
- **User-friendliness** - How intuitive is the technology's user-interface and user experience?
- **Security** - Can you trust that your data are safe on the technology?
- **Flexibility** - How easily can you adapt the solution as your organization and requirements evolve?
- **Interoperability** - How well does it integrate with other tools staff use and will continue to day-to-day?
- **Innovation** - How much investment and effort are going into improving the technology and its adoption?

- **Ecosystem** - How strong and connected is the community of users and partners around the technology?
- **Setup Costs** - How much will it cost us- directly and indirectly- to design, configure, and rollout?
- **License Costs** - What do we need to pay each year to license this technology?
- **Maintenance Costs** - What will it take and what will it cost to support and adapt this technology over time?

Retrieved from [10 Criteria to Evaluate When Choosing a New Technology](#) (2020).

From the criteria given above, an SU/SD should consider features, user-friendliness and security when determining if the technology would meet the needs of today (please also revisit AOE guidelines on [student data privacy and safety considerations](#)). As an SU/SD plans for the future, it is optimal to consider flexibility, interoperability, innovation and ecosystem of technology investments. Additionally, a district's budgetary needs must be taken into consideration, including the maintenance, licensing and setup costs of the technology.

Resources

[10 Criteria to Evaluate When Choosing a New Technology](#)

[Evaluating Technology in the Classroom](#)

[How to Evaluate EdTech Tools that Support Teaching & Learning](#)

[Challenges and solutions when using technologies in the classroom](#)

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