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FAQ: How can districts conduct teacher evaluations during remote learning?

Strategies for districts serving students in grades K-12

A Publication from Regional Educational Laboratory Central at IES

To access the RELs' evidence-based COVID-19 response resources, visit https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/covid-19.

Primary Audiences: School leaders and principals   **Secondary Audience:** Superintendents

As many school districts start the school year using remote learning, school leaders are concerned about conducting teacher evaluations when teachers are teaching remotely. The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central has compiled resources that leaders can use to modify evaluation procedures during periods of remote learning.

Potential approaches for conducting teacher evaluations remotely:

- **Use your district's evaluation instrument.** Although this instrument is not optimized for an online environment, it describes the expectations for instruction in the district. In addition, using a familiar instrument encourages professional growth. Evaluators should consider working with teachers to determine how the expectations look different in an online environment. The Colorado Department of Education has developed considerations for observing elements of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers in a virtual or hybrid environment.

- **Conduct asynchronous evaluations.** Remote learning provides an opportunity for an administrator to examine teaching practice over time and at any time rather than rely on specific, scheduled classroom visits.

- **Use multiple sources of data.** Archived data available through an online platform include online interactions between the student and teacher, discussion boards, feedback, student performance data, lesson pages, and recorded lessons. The iSucceed Virtual High School in Idaho has developed a crosswalk to the Danielson rubric highlighting possible data sources from an online course.

- **Use virtual classroom walk-throughs.** Online classrooms, just like in-person classrooms, allow administrators to do quick "walk-throughs" to check in on teachers and learning.

- **Conduct observations.** Observations can be conducted in an online environment. They can be informal, like the virtual walk-throughs above, or formal, with the same rubrics or instruments used for in-person teaching. Observations can be conducted synchronously, by viewing live classes, or asynchronously, by observing recorded lessons.

- **Focus on teacher–student communication.** Robust interaction in an online environment is critical. A focus on the communication between student and teacher, including responses on message boards, feedback on work, and individual conversations, can be a rich source of information about teaching practice.

Potential standards to review for evaluating online teaching:

- **Quality Matters and the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance:** The National Standards for Quality Online Courses, Online Teaching, and Online Programs

- **Aurora Institute:** National Standards for Quality Online Teaching

Example online teaching evaluation instruments:

- **Florida Virtual School:** Instructional Personnel Evaluation System

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education:** Rubric Assessment: Online Educators

- **Southern Regional Education Board:** Online Teaching Evaluation for State Virtual Schools

- **Colorado State University:** Evaluation of Online Courses/Teaching in the Department of Clinical Sciences