

COVID-19 Distance Learning Resources



Continuing Instruction from a Distance

These resources, tips, and platforms for your program to use to help your learners continue learning from a distance during a time of health crisis and uncertainty.

Tools and Platforms

Zoom

A web-based software that allows groups to communicate via phone and/or video. A webinar version also allows users to share their screens, allowing programs to show documents needed during instruction. During the pandemic, for the free, basic version of Zoom, the 40-minute time limit has been lifted. Apply online at <https://zoom.us/pricing>.

Free Conference Call

[Free Conference Call](#) is a conference call solution which allows up to 1,000 participants to participate in a phone conference for free. There is a web-based version which allows for screen sharing, which gives instructors the ability to show learners documents needed for instruction.

Backchannel Chat

[Backchannel Chat](#) is a free, online, text-based class discussion tool that is designed to support instructors. Backchannels are great for facilitating participation in classroom discussions.

Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts is an easy-to-join way to conduct video calls between instructors and learners. Google is now rolling out free access to the advanced Hangouts video-conference capabilities for education customers until July 1. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Skype

Similar to Zoom or other software, [Skype](#) is an easy way for instructors and learners to communicate. You can download and access Skype for free.

While this is not an exhaustive list, these are some of the more popular, free tools to explore for helping programs continue communication between administrators, instructors, and learners.

Resources for Helping Learners Access the Internet

[EveryoneOn](#) offers broadband service to income-eligible families (for example, those that qualify for free or reduced school lunch, or who live in public housing) at a cost of around \$10-12 per month (varies from state-to-state). Some states also offer very low-cost laptops or desktops (\$100-200).

Several internet providers are offering discounts or free internet services during the time of the pandemic:

Comcast offers income-eligible families internet access at \$10-12 per month. However, they are now offering this low-cost service for free for the next 60 days. internetessentials.com/

AT&T is waiving data overage fees to all customers so that families and students can stay connected during the pandemic. They will not terminate service of any customer over the next 60 days. All AT&T consumer home internet wireline customers, as well as Fixed Wireless Internet, can use unlimited internet data. Additionally, AT&T will continue to offer internet access for qualifying limited income households at \$10 a month through the Access from [AT&T program](#).

Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free—including non-Xfinity customers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, [click here](#).

Verizon is waiving late fees and committing to no discontinuation of service during the next 60 days. Visit verizon.com/about/news/our-response-coronavirus for information about Verizon's services during the pandemic.

Libraries

Internet access in public libraries is also free. Of course, libraries are closing as well. Learners are able to use portable devices just outside libraries even when they are closed.

Digital Solutions Available for Continuing Instruction from a Distance

From [New Readers Press](#), ProLiteracy's Publishing Division:

[New Readers Press Online Learning](#)—Free 90-day pilots available for online Pre-HSE, GED® test prep, and HiSET® exam prep courses to keep your learners on track to reach their HSE goals.

[Leamos™](#) (Let's Read)—A pre-ESL online literacy course that teaches non-literate Spanish-speaking adults to read and write and to prepare them for English language learning.

[Learning Upgrade](#)—Free 4-month pilots available for an app that provides over 900 English and math CCRS-aligned lessons to help accelerate growth in literacy, ESL, ABE, and HSE classes. Special expansion packages available for providers with a current Learning Upgrade license.

[News for You](#) Online—FREE access to a weekly publication for adult learners that uses current event articles and human interest stories to engage learners' interest while building skills in reading, comprehension, and vocabulary. Use the courtesy password **22667F** through April 30, 2020, to access *News for You* Online at <https://www.newreaderspress.com/news-for-you-online>. *News for You* Online includes a [Tips for Teachers](#) section where instructors can find the video *How to Use News for You Online* and other helpful resources. There are several articles related to COVID-19 with more being added in the coming weeks.

[Voxy®](#)—An ESL mobile learning platform that provides support for grammar, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing. Additional features include navigational text in 14 languages, word banks, grammar guide, flashcards, and pronunciation practice.

For more information on any of the above solutions, please contact your local New Readers Press sales representative or Customer Service at (800) 448-8878.

While the above listed solutions are from New Readers Press, there are many other digital resources that can help facilitate distance learning. Some include:

CrowdED Learning:

[CrowdED Learning](#) provides free learning tools that reduce barriers for adult learners' education and employment while promoting persistence and lifelong learning in the digital age.

LINCS Learner Center:

[The Learner Center](#) links to federally-funded resources for learners. It is organized around goals such as "Learn to Read" or "Learn English." All resources are free, online, and ready for adult learners to engage with at any time.

USA Learns:

[USA Learns](#) is a free website to help adults learn English online.

Tips for Providing Instruction from a Distance

Regardless of what platform or online instruction you provide, some additional tips for conducting learning include:

- Keep in regular contact with learners. This can be done through phone, text, or email. Keeping in contact to remind learners about lessons or to make sure they're engaged is important.
- Using a tool such as Zoom, Skype, etc. so that instructors and learners can meet "face-to-face" is best. Most of these tools also allow you to share documents or curricula you want the learner to focus on.
- Stay on your current lesson plans as much as possible for consistency.

- Use texting for a supplement to instruction
 - Send a short text that the learner can read and respond to
 - Send vocabulary words
- Use supplemental instructional resources (such as those listed in this document) to keep learners engaged and practicing while learning from a distance
- Use teleconference or phone conference systems (or simply phone calls) to practice conversation groups, especially for ESL learners

Additional Articles and Conversations Related to Providing Instruction from a Distance

Below are several articles and web pages that point to best practices and methods for teaching remotely:

- Best Practices: Online Pedagogy: teachremotely.harvard.edu/best-practices
- 7 Tips on How to Prepare for Teaching Online: <https://elearningindustry.com/7-tips-prepare-for-teaching-online>
- Everything You Need to Know about Teaching English to Adults Online: <https://www.teachaway.com/blog/teach-adults-english-online>
- Online Learning Consortium Continuity Planning and Emergency Preparedness: <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/about/continuity-planning-emergency-preparedness-resources/>
- Ten Steps Towards Universal Design of Online Courses: <https://ualr.edu/disability/online-education/>

- **LINCS**
- LINCS has facilitated an excellent discussion around many resources, tools, and tips for helping programs prepare to offer literacy instruction during the pandemic.
- [Click here](#) to read the discussions.