



Kennedy Krieger Institute

Specialized Health Needs Interagency Collaboration

Virtual Learning

There are many types of remote learning. Some are offered in real time while others allow students the flexibility to access their learning in a more flexible. Below is a list of terms that are used to describe these various learning platforms.

Synchronous Learning

- “At the same time”
- Live communication through either chatting online, use of audiovisual platforms (such as ZOOM or Google Meet)

Asynchronous Learning

- “Not at the same time”
- Type of learning that has strict deadlines, but students learn at own pace
- Students communicate with one another and teachers through online “bulletin boards” or “notices”

Hybrid Distance Learning

- Combines both asynchronous and synchronous learning where learners are required to “meet” at a particular time in an internet chat room or “classroom”
- Students complete work at their own pace and then share it when they meet

Electronic Learning

- Learners access course materials through DVDs, CDs or other computer based tools
- Students complete work at their own pace but deadlines are generally at fixed intervals throughout the course; very limited interaction with other students

Fixed Time Online Courses

- Courses that are set at a designated time that students are required to attend via remote access
- Due dates for assignments are usually individualized between the teacher and students

Cyberschool

- Also known as E-learning or Virtual Learning
- Course information is provided to students primarily via the internet
- Students earn public school credit for work done online

Homeschooling

- Often religious based instruction provided by parent or co-op of parents

Advantages and Disadvantages of Virtual Learning

Advantages

- Increased flexibility – Students would be able to manage and adjust their classwork schedule to make it work for their lifestyle
- Reduces missed school days
- Ease of access
- Reduced distractions
- Self-pacing
- May reduce anxiety
- Reduced ambulation – Students with mobility concerns do not have to worry about navigating throughout a school
- Setting – Students would be in a familiar and comfortable setting

Disadvantages

- Limited social interaction
- May have less course options
- Lack of structure
- May be more impersonal and have to wait for teacher feedback
- Limited opportunities for extra-curricular school activities
- Self-motivation and organization required
- Limited class engagement and collaboration
- Increased screen time
- May require additional adult assistance
- Limited access to technology (equipment, internet, bandwidth)

How to Make it Work for You

Why are you choosing virtual learning? Can these issues be ameliorated through virtual learning? There are many issues why people turn to virtual learning (i.e., anxiety, depression, medical needs, distractibility, etc.). This is not the answer to every school problem. If you feel this is the right plan for you, there are several steps to put in place in order for this to be successful.

Establish a routine

Designate specific times each day/week to do your schoolwork and make sure you stick to your schedule.

Either on your own or with the help of family and school, determine what days and times are best for you to concentrate and work. Use an agenda book or calendar app to designate the times and make a reminder or alert of class. Ensure the schedule is developmentally appropriate and is reasonable for the individual student. Ensure established breaks are put in place.

Establish a location

Designate a specific location in your house to complete your work.

Identify a place that is clear from distraction and clutter. This should be your consistent work environment. Make sure you have your school supplies at this location in an organized fashion. Maintain necessary supplies in a bin (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, folders, calculator, etc.).

Establish check-in support

Designate a counselor or school staff designee to monitor my progress and offer support.

Schedule weekly check-in with a school staff designee to make sure you are making appropriate progress. This is also a good time to work out any issues related to instruction and technology.

Establish a support plan

As needed, determine if a 504 Plan or an IEP is warranted. If one is already provided, ensure appropriate accommodations are put in place and are being implemented. Identify how to obtain specific guidance/re-teaching from teachers, as needed. Note if teachers have office hours or provide tutoring services.

Identify virtual options

Identify if virtual options available are in your school system or if you need to enroll in a separate cyber school. Make sure to evaluate the pros and cons of each system to determine the best virtual learning/cyber school program for you.

Establish time management skills

By establishing a routine, schedule and calendar, determine how to prioritize assignments/projects. Use teacher-made rubrics/checklists to ensure you are completing the necessary components of an assignment.

Establish organizational skills

Use a calendar to help keep track of homework, tests, and assignments. Maintain an organized work station. Stick to your schedule and weekly meeting with your case manager to help you stay organized.

Some ways to keep work organized: have an on-line folder for each subject with work for that subject placed in the folder, have a binder or folders for each class with assignments for each class in the binder/folder.