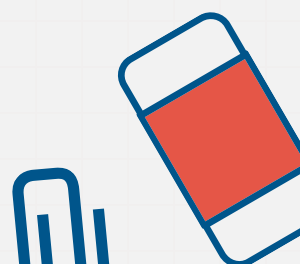
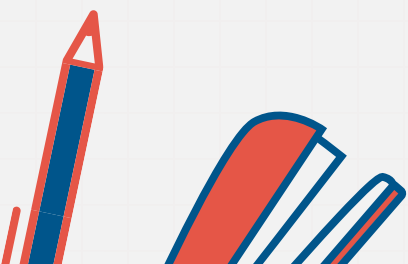




HOW TO TEACH AT THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS?

Recommendations for teachers



HOW TO TEACH DURING THE EMERGENCY MEASURES

Don't focus on performance

We find ourselves in really extraordinary times, and we must adjust not only the way we teach but also the curriculum. Children should keep a study routine; the main reason for that should be to achieve a regular daily routine and to use a part of their free time efficiently. However, You shouldn't demand the same level of performance as under regular circumstances. It is not the parents' duty to fully substitute a teacher.

"Good enough" is sufficient; you don't have to be perfect

It should not be the teacher's duty to prove that they are perfect during an extremely difficult time. There is no need to come up with new activities at all costs, it is completely all right to recommend videos which you find suitable and which have been already created by someone else for the children to watch.

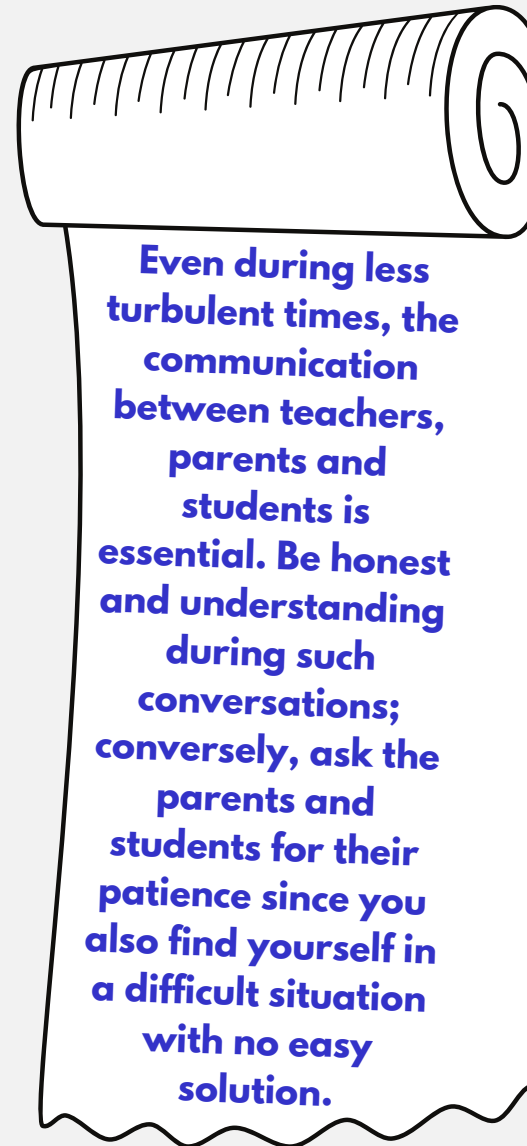
Speak with your students

It is a good idea to give children space to express their fears in the current situation. The students' families may be finding themselves in various situations; that's why you should remember that sticking strictly to the curriculum should not be your priority. According to psychologists, it is especially important not to be too demanding of your students at this time but rather to focus on their fears and interests. What is the student afraid of concerning school, grades or further studies? In which subjects do they feel they need more support from the teacher? In which areas do they fear it will be hard for them to catch up later? Which parts of the curriculum are they interested in, what would they like to learn? Could their interest be matched with the curriculum?



Together you can do it

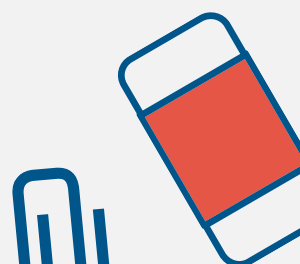
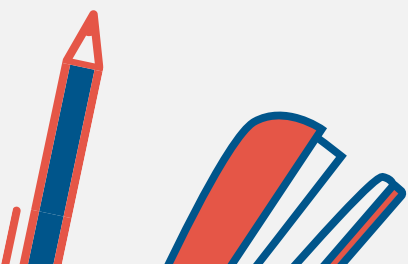
Don't be afraid to change your decisions or to admit that you went over the top with the curriculum. Change your plans if you feel that your current approach to distance education isn't working. However, you must explain to the parents that the situation is difficult for you as well and you are still learning to work with many of the things that you must use. We therefore recommend to set up consultation hours for the parents (possibly also for the children). You can for example send an invitation to an online parent-teacher conference taking place during a certain time window; one possible tool for this is Zoom (you can have a group phone conversation for up to 40 minutes for free there) or Skype. It is important to ask the parents how they are coping with teaching at home, whether they manage to deal with the assignments, whether the amount of schoolwork is sufficient or whether their children have all the means necessary for the type of teaching you have introduced. Together, you can then come up with possible solutions and adjust your teaching style.



Even during less turbulent times, the communication between teachers, parents and students is essential. Be honest and understanding during such conversations; conversely, ask the parents and students for their patience since you also find yourself in a difficult situation with no easy solution.

Share you experience

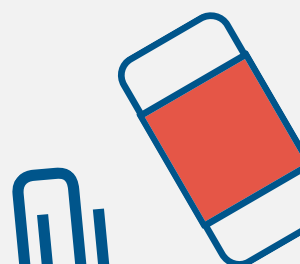
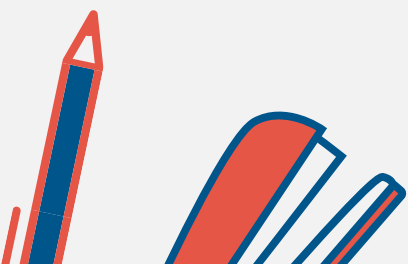
It may be helpful to you to share your experience with distance teaching in various Facebook support groups.





KINDERGARTEN

At the beginning of each week, you can send something to the parents to amuse their children with - cut outs, coloring books etc., depending on the child's age. Include the necessary instructions – for example how the child should hold the pencil correctly to learn grasp step by step. If the parent works in the gardenhas a garden to work in, they can help the child create a herbarium. Alternately, the parent can include the child in household chores – the child can help with cooking for example by handing the ingredients to the parent or sweeping with a children's broom. If there is a pet in the family, the child could partly take over caring for it.





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Studying at home can be very stressful for children. They lack the teacher's explanation before working on their assignments. Their parents, who often work full-time and take care of the household, don't always understand the material, they must look up the information and study further; and then, under such pressure, they relay something they don't fully understand to their children. Further, the children lack the support of their fellow students. If there is too much schoolwork, it can make the situation of a family that is already under pressure due to current events even worse.

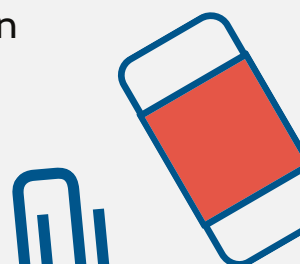
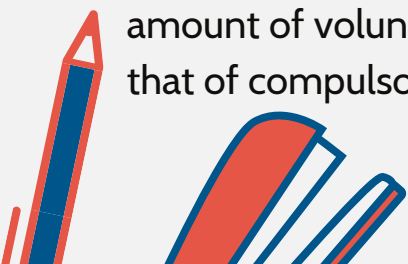
If psychologists designed distance education, they would propose the following:

What is essential?

Decide which subjects are really essential and what knowledge is going to be absolutely necessary for the children in the next grade. Mathematics and their native language, maybe also a foreign language, could be among the essential subjects. Children can fill in the gaps in their knowledge in science, history, local history and similar subjects with the help of documentaries, educational series for children or interesting websites. Try to think about which parts of the whole curriculum of these subjects are essential, then you can prepare a short summary of things your students should try to remember.

Voluntary > compulsory

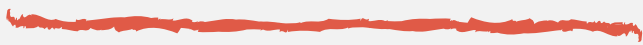
Be clear with the parents and children which materials they absolutely must read and which assignments they must complete. There shouldn't be more of such materials than strictly necessary. The rest of the assignments, which you should mark as voluntary, can help the students better understand the topic, spark their interest, and be available in case the parents and children have time and energy. The amount of voluntary materials and assignments should be higher than that of compulsory ones.





Teaching > assignments

As teachers, you should teach in the first place, and only use compulsory assignments scarcely. You can send your lesson written out on the computer, record it as a video or do an online lesson for your students for example over Skype. However, you must remember that not all children have the chance to be by the computer at one particular time. You should therefore also record this lesson and send it to them so that they can watch it later. Remember that in many families, the child will not have the possibility to prepare for school longer than, say, 2 hours a day, so you should adjust the length of learning materials and especially assignments accordingly. Let the parents decide whether their children will work on the recommended materials as well. Ask them during the consultation hours whether they find the additional voluntary assignments helpful and whether they have used them. If need be, ask them to propose changes.



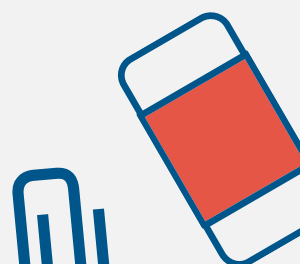
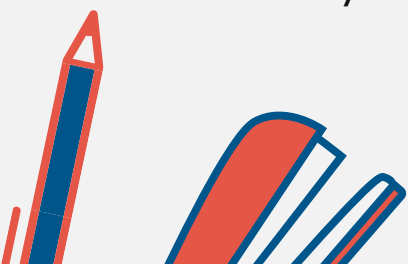
Correct answers for the assignments

Don't forget that it is important to provide your students with the correct answers for the assignments, and the reasoning behind those answers. Your students can learn a lot from your description of the solution. It will also be a great help for the parents who will not have to look for the solution elsewhere. As a specialist in the field, you might find it easy, but many of the parents could have forgotten the elementary-school knowledge which they don't actively use.



What about the arts?

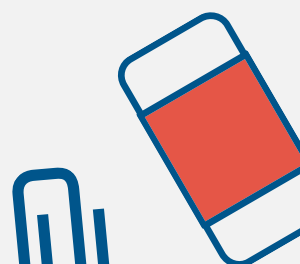
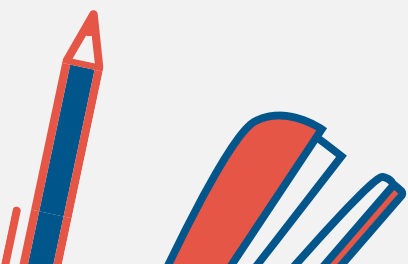
Subjects such as the arts or PE should be completely voluntary at this time and only serve to make the leisure time of the kid more diverse.





Working with apps

First of all, you have to learn how to work with every app and tool for distant education yourself. If there is an app that you prefer, check what it offers and give the parents clear instructions on what their child should check out and how it will be helpful (what the child will learn). If the app is a bit more difficult to use and you feel that some time is necessary to learn how to navigate it, help the parents by providing them with a short manual. Again, remember that you may find the apps easy to use but some parents may not be used to working with them – so spare them the time they would spend learning how to use the app when they could be studying with their child instead.





SPECIFIC TIPS

Elementary school

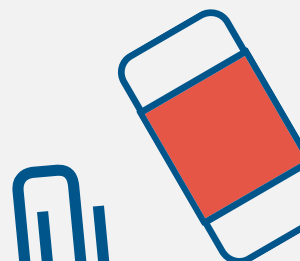
Children can write a one letter to the teacher, for example one page long, and send it by post or scan and email it. By scanning it, the older ones can learn an IT skill. If there is no scanner in the family, the parents can take a picture of the letter on mobile phones and show the child how to send it by email.

Middle school

Try to think about what the children told you about their interests, and whether those interests could be incorporated into the curriculum in some way. To give an example: is the child interested in sports? They can try to create statistics of the victories of their favorite sportsperson or team including the percentage of victories and losses, they may also incorporate a comparison to others sportspeople or team in the country. In a history or language class, they may also write a short report about the development of this sport in history. The children can thus learn to look up the information they need - which is a crucial skill for their further studies as well as for life in general. What is more, many of them can learn that the internet does not only exist for fun but can also become a useful work tool – and that should be its primary use.

Connecting the subjects

Don't be afraid to connect the subjects to lower the number of assignments. It's possible to connect a foreign language with another subject (science, history, geography...). You can send your students a video for example about nature in a foreign language and tell them to write three most important things they learned from it in that language.





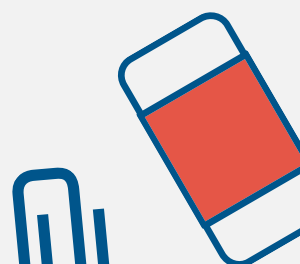
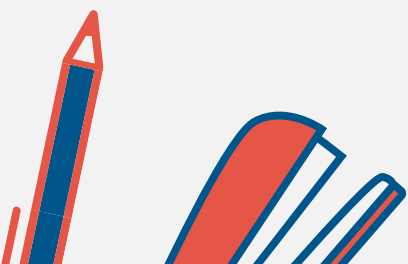
Student participation

If you know that one of the students knows something that could be useful for the others as well, ask them whether they would like to teach it to the others. If they have the time and technology, they could record a video for example about creating a good Power Point presentation. They could also translate and explain a short part of a funny sitcom from a foreign language etc. Children often watch youtubers, and they would like to experience what it is like to be one of them. This could be their chance.

UNEQUAL CONDITIONS

Personalize your teaching

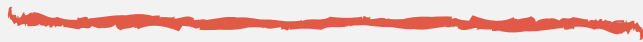
Try to tailor your teaching for each child while the emergency measures still last. You may have to take care of many children; your job will therefore be easier if you concentrate on the really important things. Tony was not really good at multiplication before the school was closed, but he had no issues with spelling? Focus on math with him, give him less grammar assignments, and tell his parents that if the workload is not manageable, they should skip some of the Czech language rather than math.





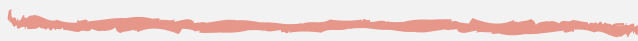
What if the child doesn't have a computer?

You have to keep in mind that not all children have a computer at their disposal. Especially if there are more school children in the family, all of them are not able to spend part of the day with online education at a single computer. What is more, the internet network is often overloaded, so the connection fails, which makes working much more difficult and as a result, children get more nervous. This is why it is recommended to design at least part of the curriculum in a way which can be completed offline.



A volunteer can help

If the student has a very restricted or none access to the internet, it will be necessary to come up with an individual plan for them. If you teach in a small village, it could be a good idea to print out the materials and put them into their letter box. If you teach in a big city, try to seek out some volunteer organization which could help with this.



This leaflet was created by postgraduate students as part of the curriculum at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, under the supervision of Zuzana Masopustová, Ph.D., and it is meant to be widely distributed free of charge.

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