

Advanced Topics in Online Instruction

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Using Data to Support Instruction

To help students succeed, teachers should regularly collect data about how their students are learning. There are many types of data that are relevant for teachers in an online setting, including:

- **Assessment Data:** This type of data includes the results of student assessments, such as summative assessments, formative assessments, and standardized tests.
- **Attendance Data:** This type of data might include how much time was spent online, whether parents checked in on their child's attendance, whether students completed their lessons on time, and so on. The attendance data you need to collect will vary depending on the laws of the state where you teach.
- **Engagement Data:** In an online learning environment, engagement data show how students interact in the system, such as the number and time of logins and time spent on different tasks in the system.
- **Progress (Growth) Data:** This type of data tracks students' progress on assessments like readiness checks, interim assessments, and summative assessments. This is called **progress** or **growth** data because it can be used to measure how much students advance from the beginning to the end of a learning experience.
- **Observational Data:** This type of data includes anything you personally observe about a student and what they do in the online classroom, such as how they respond to polling, what they write in chat messages, how they participate on whiteboards, and how engaged they are during breakout room activities. This type of data will not only give you insight into their academic work, but also any personal details the student shares, such as interests, hobbies, likes/dislikes, etc.
- **Anecdotal Data:** This type of data is similar to observational data, but it's different in the sense that you aren't the one doing the observing. Instead, this data comes to you indirectly from someone else who's the actual observer, such as a parent, another teacher, or an administrator. This may involve important information about the student's home life and situation, such as illness or changes at home.

The following resources explore how different types of data can be used to inform your teaching and instructional decision making:

Resources



Reading: [3 Ways Student Data Can Inform Your Teaching](#)

This article discusses the importance of using a variety of data to inform how you teach. Looking at data beyond traditional test scores can provide useful context that will help you understand how your students are learning.



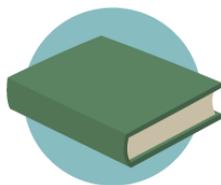
Reading: [Not Just Numbers: How Educators Are Using Data in the Classroom](#)

This article provides a brief overview of how some educators are using data in the classroom. It focuses on using not just quantitative data, but other types of data to inform decisions.



Reading: [Using Classroom Data to Give Systematic Feedback to Students to Improve Learning](#)

This reading explores strategies for using classroom data to inform the feedback you give students. It talks about how you can set clear expectations for your students and provide feedback that clearly identifies what they need to do to progress.



Reading: [Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making](#)

This guide from the Institute of Education Sciences makes five recommendations for how you can use data to monitor your students' progress and see whether your instruction is effective. While all five recommendations apply to the online classroom, focus your reading on the first two:

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.

Laws, Policies, and Standards

Moving your classroom online comes with additional ethical and legal considerations, as students can be exposed to things on the internet that they wouldn't in a traditional classroom. The following resources can help inform how you act in your role as an online educator.

When setting up an online classroom, make sure to ask yourself the following questions:

- How can you educate your students about proper online behavior?
- As an online educator, how can you make reasonable effort to protect students from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety?
- When might it be appropriate to disclose information about students that you've obtained while teaching them?

Resources



Reading: [National Education Association: Code of Ethics](#)

The National Education Association's (NEA) code of ethics lays out the two obligations that all educators have: a commitment to their students and to the profession. This code of ethics forms the basis for state laws that mandate how educators must behave in a professional setting. Knowing the NEA code of ethics can help inform the decisions you make in your classroom.



Video: [Kid, You Posted What?! How to Raise a Digital Citizen](#)

Digital citizenship is about behaving responsibly online. Watch this TED Talk to hear a teacher's thoughts on how to raise good digital citizens. Some of the video is geared toward parents and guardians, but the concepts are equally as relevant to teachers. Parents and guardians need to be involved in all aspects of an online student's education, but particularly those related to digital citizenship.



Reading: [Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#)

This brief guide on the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)—published by the Federal Communications Commission—gives an overview of the requirements of the act. You should understand these requirements, as they may impact the content and internet tools that students in your classes are able to use.