



SPARK!

Igniting digital learning through shared experience

Leader Edition

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING

● Jeff Simmons is the Superintendent of Idaho Digital Learning Alliance (IDLA),

The post-COVID world of online learning presents online educators with a new challenge. Before the pandemic, not all students had online learning experiences. Online schools had the opportunity to define “online learning” by presenting online coursework to first-time online learners.

During the pandemic, all learners became online learners. The experience each student had during mandatory lockdowns is now how they and their families define online learning. Many of these learners did not experience quality online education, but a lesser form termed “Emergency Remote Teaching” (ERT).

Hodges et al. (2020) define ERT as “a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances.” This temporary experience for most students now defines their online learning concept today. As online educators, how do we combat the potential misunderstandings about online learning caused by the implementation of ERT?

TRADE SECRETS

Tips to help students and families redefine their concept of online learning

- **Check me out.** Look, we all did the best we could during the pandemic, but the significant difference between what is present in online learning and what is absent in ERT is course design (Hodges et al., 2020). Find ways to demonstrate what a course experience looks like for students in your program that shows intentional, standards-based course design.
- **Have the students do the talking.** I can tell you how excellent our program is all day long, but I’m a little biased, right? Feature students sharing their experiences in your online program. Student testimonies carry more weight to those who may still be skeptical.
- **My data don’t lie.** Wherever possible, use data from your program that is the same as data utilized in the field. “Apples to apples” comparisons help demonstrate value to those investigating the program.
- **Can you see me now?** Transparency... that can be a scary word. Providing opportunities for parents to “visit” their student’s virtual classroom can reassure them. Parents in today’s educational environment are more empowered than ever. Leverage that so they can see the great things happening in your classrooms (and so they change their concept of what online learning is).

RESOURCES

[The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning.](#)

[National Standards for Quality: Quality Online Courses standards](#)

[Digital Learning Annual Snapshot 2022, page 5](#)

CONTRASTING REMOTE LEARNING

EMERGENCY REMOTE LEARNING	VS	ONLINE LEARNING
Implemented with little planning by necessity		Planned for months if not years
Temporary		Short- or long-term, based on the student
For all classes		For any number of classes, from one to all
For most if not all students in a district		For a small subset of students
For most if not all teachers in a district		For a small subset of teachers
Little teacher PD in most cases because of time		Extensive teacher PD and support
Mostly synchronous, group classes		Mostly asynch and/or one on one
Limited onboarding processes for students		Extensive and often standardized onboarding for new students
Coursework delivered to full class		Teachers often personalize learning for each student
Inconsistent communication with families		Communication with families/learning coaches often part of instruction

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