Distance Learning Best Practices Checklist

Adapted from:
- [CDE - Lessons from the Field: Remote Learning Guidance](#)
- [CDE - Designing a High-Quality Online Course](#) (National Standards for Quality Online Learning)
- [BetterLesson - Guide To Starting With Distance Learning](#)
- [Katie Novak - UDL Flowchart](#) (Universal Design for Learning)

1. Expectations and Norms

	Facilitator prepares resources for sharing via **LMS** (e.g., Google Classroom and Canvas)
	Facilitator informs students of **technology needs** and offers technical supports
	Facilitator obtains signed **release forms** for tech tools as needed
	Facilitator provides **expected timeline/schedule** for student participation
	Facilitator provides clear, concise, and frequent **directions** through multiple channels, modeling and using explicit instruction as needed
	Related Article: [Using Explicit Instruction: A Teacher's Guide](#)
	Facilitator **introduces self** and welcomes students
	Related Article: [Thresholding to Greet Students at the Door](#) (see distance learning use case)
	Facilitator establishes **norms** (participation, respect, confidentiality, etc.)

2. Goals and Self-Reflection

	Facilitator provides a live, written or video **introduction** to the lesson NSQOL
	Related Tools: [Loom](#), [Screencastify](#), [Apple Clips](#)
	Lesson includes clearly-stated, standards-aligned **learning goals** UDL NSQOL
	Related Article: [Revised Bloom's Taxonomy](#)
	Students have opportunities for **goal setting, formative assessment, and reflection** to promote ownership of their learning and self-monitoring. UDL NSQOL
	Related Tools: [Google Classroom](#), [Padlet](#), [Kahoot](#), [Canvas](#)
	Related Articles: [Goal Setting and Reflection](#), [Make Formative Assessment More Student-Centered](#), [7 Smart, Fast Ways to Do Formative Assessment](#)

3. Active Learning Strategies

	Lengthy content is **chunked** into smaller pieces

Lesson incorporates both **individual and group** work `NSQOL`	
Lesson blends **synchronous and asynchronous** learning `NSQOL`	
Lesson includes a **variety of activities** with scaffolds (i.e., exemplars and rubrics) `UDL` `NSQOL`	
Text and images (e.g., slide presentations and articles)	
Discussions (e.g., breakouts, text chat, and discussion boards)	
Video and audio clips	
Hands-on exercises	
Related Tools: [Edpuzzle](#), [Playposit](#), [Canvas Studio](#), [Nearpod](#), [Peardeck](#)	

4. Assessment, Progress and Feedback

Students can **demonstrate their learning** in multiple ways: quizzes, papers, slides, videos, podcasts, blogs, data visualizations, infographics, etc. `UDL`
Related Tools: [Kahoot](#), [Quizlet Live](#), [Flipgrid](#), [Padlet](#), [Canva](#), [Adobe Spark](#)
Students have opportunities for **regular feedback** about their progress `NSQOL`
Facilitator **clarifies**: 1. Who will provide feedback on student responses and questions 2. How they will do so 3. Expected turnaround time
Facilitator communicates with students via **asynchronous** (e.g., Google Docs comments, email) **and synchronous** (e.g., Zoom office hours) channels
Facilitator implements a **realistic plan** for responding to students in an inclusive and timely manner

5. Content Considerations

Materials have a **friendly and supportive tone**
Written materials are appropriate to the **reading level** of the intended learners `NSQOL`
Materials reflect a **culturally diverse perspective** that is free from bias `NSQOL`
Materials meet **copyright and fair use guidelines**. `NSQOL`
Materials are **free of adult content** and avoid **unnecessary advertisements**. `NSQOL`

6. Technical Accessibility Considerations

	Video/audio clips have **closed captioning or transcripts** available
	Related Tools: [Otter.ai](#), [Apple Clips](#), [YouTube](#), [Canvas Studio](#)
	Related Articles: [Apple Support - Add animated titles to a Clips video](#), [YouTube Help - Use automatic captioning](#), [Canvas - How do I add captions to Canvas Studio media in a course?](#)
	Images are **optimized** for speedy display and include **alternative text**
	Enable **tooltips** so that descriptions appear when users hover over images, graphs, and charts.
	PDF and Word **documents** are in readable text format and not scanned images
	Related Article: [How to edit scanned PDFs](#)
	Use **descriptive titles, headers and subtitles** to provide added context and allow screen reader software to navigate.
	Use **meaningful text in links** to make it easier for users to predict where navigation will take them. For example, avoid "click here" or "read more."
	Use **font, size, and text formatting** to distinguish between items or to navigate. Ensure no information is conveyed solely by color or sound.
	Related Article: [Why every design needs three levels of typographic hierarchy](#)
	Alternative formats of materials are provided, when possible (e.g., optional print packet of extensive reading materials, etc.)
	Use of color adds interest but does not disadvantage those with **color blindness**
	Related Tools: [Colorblindly](#)
	Related Article: [Resources for Designing for the Colorblind](#)
	Sufficient **contrast between text and background** makes information easy to read
	Related Tools: [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) and [WebAIM Link Contrast Checker](#)