

Leveraging *Wit & Wisdom* Materials during the COVID-19 Shutdown

March 2020

As districts and schools take the difficult but necessary step of closing schools while the country works to slow the spread of COVID-19, supporting student learning at home is a top priority. Below are suggestions to consider as you determine how to continue your literacy implementation work while students are out of school. We have outlined three scenarios, but know you may have a hybrid of these scenarios; if you'd like to brainstorm around your options, please reach out to TNTP!

General Guidance

Set reasonable expectations for home literacy learning. Our goal is to help students retain the knowledge they've already gained and to prevent as much learning loss as possible. It's likely not reasonable to expect families to teach new skills and topics; rather, focus on reviewing content that has already been taught or introducing content you will teach once students come back to school.

Identify current curricular materials (sets of student texts, workbooks, etc.) to make available. Once teachers and leaders have identified modules and lessons to study at home, assess current materials and identify how you might be able to get materials to students at home, either digitally or in hard-copy. This should be content that is reviewing past or previewing future instruction. As you approach shifting instruction, consider your goals and context. Equity of access is a major consideration as are federal and state guidelines and regulations on students with IEPs and 504 plans. Many districts can only make distance or online learning optional so are choosing carefully whether to push forward with new content via the methods described below or aiming to keep children engaged with previously learned content.

Strategically plan to maximize the impact of your strongest instructional staff members. Consider teachers, school leaders, coaches, or central office staff: who has the time and strengths to take on tasks such as recording lessons, creating packets, or providing students with virtual feedback. You may want to prioritize available instructional staff who are best able to support students with diverse learning needs (students who are learning English and/or have learning and thinking differences that might impact their literacy skills).

Consider what students can do independently and what requires an adult. Many families are attempting to juggle working from home for the first time with keeping their child occupied and engaged in educational activities. When possible, prioritize guidance and activities that children can work on relatively independently while providing family-friendly guidance for how to best support students, especially those with diverse learning needs that affects their literacy skills.

Where possible, send home supplemental texts and materials. This is a great time to clear out old texts and book rooms that teachers no longer use. Allow parents to pick up books or send some home with students who may not have any books at home to read.

Defer to district and state guidelines for providing accommodations and modifications for students with IEPs. Any guidance coming from your district should adhere to state guidance for students with IEPs. [This article](#) also provides useful information.

Wit & Wisdom-Specific Guidance

Scenario One: "Live" Teaching: Teachers are working and can teach virtually or create pre-recorded lessons AND students have internet access on a smartphone, computer, or TV.

Technology Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Live Teaching: Zoom is currently offering free accounts for educators and students. Go to https://zoom.us/docs/ent/school-verification.html?zcid=1231&_ga=2.228851412.995105639.1583699918-735451631.1546545079 to learn how to set up this service for your district.● Recording Lessons: It is easy to record lessons via Zoom and post them to a Google drive for students to access. If you have questions about how to do this, reach out to TNTP.

- **Managing Assignments:** To create common, daily tasks, have teachers consider using [Google Classroom](#) to create daily writing prompts for students or Google Forms with quick response questions for students to answer from each lesson.

Teaching Guidance

Option 1: Use teachers and other instructional staff in the district to divide and conquer teaching live lessons in real-time and ask families and students to log in at the pre-appointed time each day.

Option 2: Use teachers and other instructional staff in the district to divide and conquer recording the lessons for each grade-level.

For either option:

- Consider where students are in the scope and sequence of modules and lessons and decide if you can reasonably provide access to new content for all students or whether providing review content would be better for your context.
- Asking staff to teach the entire 90-minute lesson might not be feasible or make the most sense without their students with them, so prioritize the key parts of the lessons:
 - Ask teachers to share the Focusing Question and Content-Framing Question at the start of the lesson to ground the instruction.
 - Have teachers read the lesson text aloud.
 - Have teachers prioritize 1-4 key questions from the materials for students to think about after engaging with the text. Invite students to respond to the question by telling someone at home about it or writing their response down. This could be an option where older students use the Google tools mentioned above or email to share their responses with their teacher.
 - Give teachers guidance to ask students to complete some of the key tasks in the lessons. For example, students could write t-charts to notice and wonder about the text, first grade students can identify story elements from *Cendrillon* and retell the story to someone at home (including a pet or stuffed animal!), or fifth grade students could write paragraphs to compare and contrast multiple texts.
 - Have teachers ask students to complete the Focusing Question Tasks. While they won't be as supported as they would through daily in-person instruction, this will provide students some opportunities to build meaning of the text, think, and write.

Considerations:

- Do you have central office and/or school leadership staff with skill and capacity who can support recording of lessons?
- What is your teachers' capacity and technological expertise and who can offer support in recording of lessons?
- How can you store and share recorded lessons to be used across schools?
- What additional and ongoing support and communication can you provide to families/caregivers to answer their questions and troubleshoot challenges?

Scenario Two: Home Internet and Tech: Most students have access to technology and internet at home, but teachers are not working.

Guidance

- Utilize Great Minds' Knowledge on the Go Lessons available here: <https://gm.greatminds.org/en-us/knowledgeonthego>
- Starting 3/18/2020, Great Minds is providing pre-recorded virtual lessons for *Wit & Wisdom* materials in grades K-8. All virtual lessons can be accessed by a smartphone or computer.
- Each grade level starts with a Welcome Module of five lessons designed to introduce students and caregivers to the materials and format of the lessons. These virtual lessons are 5-10 minutes long.
- Each grade level will have virtual lessons for the materials starting with Module 4.
- All virtual lessons are 30 minutes or less.

- Students, especially younger students, will likely need the support of an adult to complete these virtual lessons, so make sure to provide guidance to caregivers about spending time with students during or after the virtual lessons.
- During the virtual lessons, the instructor will read aloud the text for students. Great Minds provides suggestions for accessing the texts independently via apps and websites such as Audible, Libby, and Overdrive (see the resources section below for links).
- The lessons will also have links to access supplemental online texts in addition to the core module texts that the instructors will read aloud.
- Students will be expected to write as a part of these lessons, so direct families to help students write in journals or digitally or consider setting up Google Classrooms and/or Google Forms for the lessons (see guidance above).

Considerations:

- Do you have central office staff with skill and capacity who can support in setting up Google Classroom and/or Google Forms for each lesson?
- How can you provide parents with a day-by-day breakdown of lessons with where to access information, helpful links, and step-by-step directions on how to support their child?

Scenario Three: Hard Copy Materials: You need to provide print materials for families to pick up

Guidance

- Choose one module per grade level and make copies available to pick up at a central location that follow social distancing guidelines.

Materials:

- If you have access to the digital materials, print student handouts such as Focusing Question Tasks, New Read Assessments, and graphic organizers.
- If you have student workbooks and/or assessment packs, send those home for students to use.
- Depending on the format of the journals used in each classroom, teachers could send home notebooks/journals for students to continue using.
- If you have class sets of texts and are confident they will mostly be returned, send home copies of the text. Otherwise, you can provide guidance to families to obtain copies of the text from libraries or on websites such as audible.

Information for Families:

- Provide guidance for parents/caregivers focus on the read aloud and the comprehension questions.
- Include guidance to read one lesson/text per day.
- You may want to consider building a list of printable articles that align to your selected topics that students can complete to continue building knowledge of topics. These could be pulled from sites such as ReadWorks, NewsELA, and CommonLit, among others. Articles could be printed from these sites and included in the packets you are printing to send home.

Considerations:

- Does central office, school leadership, and/or teachers have capacity to help plan out a day-by-day guide to send home with parents/caregivers with step-by-step directions for how to support their child?

Resources

- Great Minds Knowledge On the Go lessons are available on their website:
<https://gm.greatminds.org/en-us/knowledgeonthego>

- **Parental Support for Struggling Readers:** This is simple, yet robust parent-friendly guide for helping children who are struggling readers.
- Access to e-books:
 - o You can get free access to books through the end of the school year at Epic: <https://www.getepic.com/learn/freeremotestudentaccess/>
 - o You can currently access three free book titles at www.audible.com
 - o If your school has an account with myON you can access their books here: <https://www.myon.com/index.html>
 - o You can access free eBooks or audiobooks through local and school libraries using:
 - Overdrive: <https://www.overdrive.com/>
 - Libby: <https://www.overdrive.com/apps/libby/>
 - Kanopy Kids: <https://www.kanopy.com/kids>
 - Hoopla: <https://www.hoopladigital.com/my/hoopla>
 - Tumble: <https://www.tumblebooklibrary.com/Register.aspx>
- Nearpod is an instructional platform that districts and teachers can use to set up collaborative learning experiences: www.nearpod.com