

## *WEBINAR*

# *Remote Instruction for Family Literacy Programs Questions and Answers*

### **Programmatic**

**1. Q: How and why do the learners enroll in your program? Are all the learner's women?**

A: Our program, Family Pathways, is funded by the PA Department of Education's Division of Adult Education. We currently have sites in two counties with different populations. Our Lycoming County site consists mainly of Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners and our Centre County site is comprised of English Language Learners (ELL). Although our classes are open to any custodial adult with a child, birth to third grade, all learners in Centre County are female; in Lycoming one male is enrolled and the other parents are female. The reasons for enrollment vary, however, all of our learners are interested in increasing their skills to enter post-secondary education or increase their employability.

**2. Q: Were these learners pre-registered for this class?**

A: Yes, the learners for the family literacy class we described were all pre-registered.

**3. Q: Can the home-based instruction you are providing to adults be integrated into the home learning that children are engaged in?**

A: Some of our adults work on homework and attend online classes at the same time their children are engaged in home learning but this isn't always the case. In terms of integrating content, we have always and will continue to integrate across the components as much as possible. Our parent education topics align with the activities suggested to do at home and with their children during Parent and Child Together/Interactive Literacy Activity (PACT/ILA) time.

**4. Q: Were these learners doing similar at-home learning with you when they were still attending face-to-face sessions?**

A: Prior to the COVID-19 quarantine, our classes were held face-to-face and learners were not doing much with Khan Academy or supplemental distance learning. Holding remote classes via Zoom, however, is new to our students.

**5. Q: What personal issues (e.g., regarding COVID-19 or other health issues; helping their kids; job lost for themselves or family members, etc.) are your students raising during this COVID-19 time period?**

A: They have raised many issues including: unemployment; paying rent; dealing with children's at-home learning; having difficulty connecting with their families in their home countries; borders in their countries being closed, etc. We try to address these issues through conversation as well as through class reading and writing assignments.

**6. Q: How are the families accessing books listed for class? Are you linking to eBooks in the public library's collection?**

A: Many local libraries are offering access to e-books to those with a library card. There are also many sites that offer free books that can be incorporated into lessons, such as Unite for Literacy (<https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/>) or Epic! (<https://www.getepic.com/>).

7. **Q: Do you have any experience working with learners who have little to no digital experience, particularly ELL adults? Some adults do not know how to open Google on their cell phones. Can you suggest any distance learning strategies for these individuals?**

A: The learners in our program have various levels of comfort using technology. For those with little digital learning experience, we check in with them frequently through phone calls and texts to help them sign into class, access online materials, etc. In Centre County, we also have relationships with the whole family of our learners; therefore, we are able to draw on the knowledge of learners' partners, children, and other family members for extra digital support. Drawing on the expertise of all family members is essential for family literacy and it helps increase participation in interactive literacy activities within families.

8. **Q: Have you found that the backgrounds of learners impact their ability to succeed in this kind of online learning? For example, does the education background/level of learners make a difference? Does the native language of learners make a difference?**

A: Similar to in-person classes, the educational backgrounds and language/literacy skills of learners inevitably impacts their learning, comfort, and success in classes. One thing that is important to realize, however, is that digital literacy skills and English language skills are not synonymous. Thus, learners with lower language and literacy skills can have high digital literacy skills and vice-versa. We are trying to draw on the strengths of all our learners to ensure that they are supported in online learning.

9. **Q: Will you continue to offer this class for a new session of learners, once this session has ended?**

A: Our family literacy class runs year-round and is open enrollment. During this COVID-19 quarantine period we have not been able to enroll new families. We will keep in touch with anyone who contacts us with interest during this period and will enroll them when we are able. The learners currently participating in our online classes are those who were attending our face-to-face classes. When we resume face-to-face classes, we will not likely have a distance learning class only as we are not funded to do that. However, we will likely do more supplemental distance learning with our parents in the future.

10. **Q: If you are still required to conduct class virtually, how will you recruit and manage a new incoming class?**

A: It is too early to answer this question. Our hope is to return to offering face-to-face classes as soon as possible. We continue to communicate with those who are interested in enrolling and provide them with available resources.

11. **Q: How many learners are not joining in the digital classes? How many are joining?**

A: We are fortunate that all our learners have been joining our classes to some degree. We have noticed, however, that those with lower English language or digital literacy skills have not been attending every class. We are devising a plan to better accommodate their needs and perhaps mail them paper lessons and materials.

12. **Q: Are you coordinating your efforts with similar ones emerging in the US?**

A: Yes, we are drawing on resources other organizations in the U.S. have identified and sharing our resources with other programs. We plan to keep updating these resources.

**13. Q: How do you integrate literacy/ESOL with digital literacy and other topics (e.g., health literacy) relevant to learners?**

A: All of our classes, whether face-to-face or online, incorporate contextualized learning strategies and we use authentic materials related to learners' lives to craft our lessons. For example, in one lesson, we integrate issues about the current COVID-19 with grammar on present simple vs. present continuous tense, while also using digital learning tools to expand learners' digital literacy. This ensures that learning continues to expand and learners' motivation to attend class is continually sparked.

**14. Q: What training do instructors need to do this well?**

A: First of all, instructors need to have a comfort level with technology, a positive attitude and a willingness to try it. It is also important to spend time exploring the remote learning sites as both a learner and an instructor to increase comfort level and knowledge about the sites. There are some excellent resources such as WorldEd EdTech Center (<https://edtech.worlded.org/tips-for-distance-learning/>) that offer valuable resources and informative webinars to support instructors digitally.

## Technologies

**15. Q: Are the students using cellphones or computers?**

A: Our learners are using cellphones, tablets, and computers based on their comfort level and access.

**16. Q: Can students access Zoom on their phone?**

A: Zoom always offers a phone option for participants to call in without downloading any software applications. However, if learners want to use video on Zoom with the link provided, they need to download the free app onto their phone first.

**17. Q: Do your adult education students know how to check email?**

A: Yes, although some are more comfortable with checking email than others. For those who are not, we would recommend sending a Zoom, Facetime, Skype, etc. link; sharing your screen with them; and providing a tutorial on how to set up and access use email.

**18. Q: How do you set up the google phone number?**

A: Here is a helpful video for setting up a google voice number:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8fS-RB7FYw>

**19. Q: Do you use your own personal phone numbers?**

A: We use our personal phone numbers, however, here is a helpful article on keeping your number private while doing so: <https://www.techjunkie.com/hide-phone-number-whatsapp/>

**20. Q: Is it possible to access the YouTube tutorial on setting up a Khan Academy account?**

A: Here is a link to the YouTube tutorial Anna Kaiper-Marquez created on setting up a Khan Academy account for learners: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ynRE93F\\_BE&t=102s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ynRE93F_BE&t=102s)

**21. Q: Have you been able to incorporate a document camera using Zoom to allow the instructor to provide live lessons?**

A: By using online communication tools (such as Zoom, Skype, etc.) you have the ability to share your screen and use multiple online/computer tools (e.g., Zoom Whiteboard, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Google Drawings) to share what you are writing in real time. This can be especially helpful for editing, showing math problems, etc.

**22. Q: Are any of the children’s sites timed?**

A: We believe that some of the children’s sites are timed; however, it is best to review each website or app individually.

**23. Q: What minimum technologies are needed to conduct classes?**

A: The minimum technology needed to conduct a distance class is a flip phone, in which you can go over ideas, lessons, assignments, etc. with your learners one-to-one or by group texts. For our classes, however, it is very helpful to have a computer and/or smartphone, access to the internet, and screen-sharing access.

**Resources**

**24. Q: Where do the readings come from for your class? Do you create your own or is there another source?**

A: The readings for our class come from multiple resources. We use authentic materials such as newspaper articles and school websites; we create our own readings, and we also draw from readings on sites mentioned in our resource list.

*WhatsApp Questions*

**25. Q: Do you use private staff numbers for the app?**

A: We do not hide our phone numbers, however, here is a helpful article on doing so:  
<https://www.techjunkie.com/hide-phone-number-whatsapp/>

**26. Q: Is there a fee for the app?**

A: The app is free and can be used for international numbers.

**27. Q: Is it useful to use WhatsApp business?**

A: Yes, you can set up a separate profile with a Google voice number to avoid giving students your personal phone number.

*Khan Academy Questions*

**28. Q: Do you have to create an account and create a class? Does it cost money?**

A: You can set up a class and have students assigned to your class. You will also receive a class code you can give to students. This is the only way that you can personally track the learner’s time spent on the lesson. If tracking time is not necessary for your program, learners do not need to sign into a specific class. You can also send links to individual lessons without an account. Khan Academy is a free resource.

**29. Q: How do you track the time when students are using resources such as Khan Academy?**

A: Khan Academy and USA Learns are both “clock time models” of learning in which they track the amount of time the learner is on the site and what they have learned. There are several other “clock time” models (i.e., Rosetta Stone, Burlington, English, Voxy) though many are not free.

**30. Q: How do you access the Friday World Ed webinars?**

A: Visit WorldEd EdTech Center (<https://edtech.worlded.org/tips-for-distance-learning/>). The site includes ABE distance learning resource, such as webinars, setting up online access, and other educational resources.

**31. Q: Will you provide resources and ideas for parents that have children in middle and high school?**

A: Great resources for parents who have children in middle and high school include Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>), Brainfuse (<http://home.brainfuse.com/>) [there may be a cost associated with this site]; Scholastic Learn At Home (<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html/>)

**32. Q: Are there any ILA websites available in different languages?**

A: Sites may or may not have an option to switch into a different language besides English. For example, ¡Colorín colorado! (<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>) has an option to switch the site to Spanish. However, it is likely that the resources on a site will be available in different languages rather than the entire site itself; it is best if the instructor reviews the material prior to using it with families.

## **Digital Access**

**33. Q: Are there any families who do not have internet access in your class?**

A: In the class we discussed, all learners have access to the internet. In our family literacy class in Lycoming County, there are a few students who do not have internet access. Currently, there are several companies offering free internet:

- Comcast: 2 months free internet to low-income individuals.
- Charter: Free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps.

**34. Q: What other options are available besides apps and texting?**

A: There are many options including calling learners on the phone to discuss lessons and ideas; sending workbooks and lessons through the mail; giving students assignments based on the books and resources they have at home; journal writing; etc. We would recommend, if your program needs to track time, it would be helpful to create a basic template (such as what the learner worked on, for how long, what content was covered, what questions were sparked, etc.) to keep track of instructional activities.