Considerations When Implementing Distance Learning PY 2025-26

Distance Learning Overview Revisited

- OCTAE Guidelines for Distance Learning (*Memorandums 20-3, 20-4, 20-5 – developed in 2020 during COVID-19*)
- Strategies for Creating Distance Learning Classes
- Assigning Instructional Hours to Distance Learners
- Implementing Pre-/Post-testing and other Assessments
- Suggestions for remote data collection

Distance Learning - OCTAE

On March 27, OCTAE disseminated Memorandum 20-3

Updated memos on April 17, 2020 and May 29, 2020

- OCTAE will continue to collect data and establish performance measures with states.

- To get a MSG the participant still needs to complete a pretest and a post-test, like usual.

- Allowed agencies to test students remotely

- Memo 20-5 allows for self reported placement in one of the 12 federal EFL's

Distance Learning - NRS

- Individuals in Distance Learning programs have the same data collection requirements as other adult learners.

- For these learners, agencies should mark Special Programs = Distance Learning

- If more than 50 percent of the instruction is in distance learning, mark Distance Learning.

- If distance instruction equals 50 percent or less, do NOT mark Distance Learning.

Distance Learning – NRS

Three models of measuring distance learning instruction (NRS):

1. **Clock Time**. Assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a participant is connected to, or engaged in, an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

2. **Teacher Verification**. Assigns a fixed number of hours for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a participant engaged in the assignment.

3. **Learner Mastery**. Assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the participant completing content of each lesson.

Distance Learning – NRS

- California has historically used the "Proxy – Learner Mastery" model to document hours in distance learning programs.

- The student is credited hours of instruction for completing an assignment (such as an instructional video or educational software lesson) rather than a set block of clock time.

- Agencies can vary their approach to hours based on specific delivery model.

Distance Learning – Hours of Instruction

- Facilitated online instruction (using platforms such as Teams or Zoom) can be recorded the same as "regular" instruction. (*Clock time*)

- For educational software applications, the recommendation is to pre-assign a number of hours to each lesson or module. (*Learner mastery*)

- There are three general approaches useful for determining "proxy" hours from educational software.

Hours of Instruction for Facilitated Online Learning

How do we record hours for facilitated instruction received online?

- This approach uses the *Clock Time* model.

- An hour of online facilitated instruction = an hour of "regular" instruction.

- If this constitutes more than 50% of the instruction in that class, then mark "Distance Learning" at the student or class level in TE.

Hours of Instruction for Recorded Online Learning

What if the facilitated instruction received online is recorded – and a student watches the recording instead of the "live" presentation?

- Agencies can decide this as a team whether or not to allow this as hours of instruction.

- If allowed – then assign the time that equates with the time assigned to the "live" presentation. Mark "Distance Learning" in TE for those over 50% DL.

- Whatever the agency decision - record this policy in detail in the Local Assessment Policy.

Hours of Instruction for Educational Software

How do we record hours of instruction when students complete lessons using educational software (such as Essential Education, Aztec, Ellii, and Burlington English).

- The most common technique to document instructional hours is to tabulate "proxy" hours assigned for learner completion of each module. (Using *Learner Mastery*)

- Contact your software publisher for recommendations and best practices.

Distance Learning – Three Approaches to "Proxy" Hours

1. With software applications that include a time pre-programmed for each lesson or module, use the hours recorded from the software.

2. For applications not linked to a pre-programmed time – but provide a recommended time for student completion – follow the educational software publisher's recommendation.

3. If the software publisher does not provide recommended times for completion – then meet as an instructional management team, determine the amount of time students spend on each module, and document that in your agency's Local Assessment Policy.

Educational Software – Example #1

If the educational software records the correct number of hours in its system, use the total provided by the software.

- *Example: if a student completes Module 1 of a 12-module software course, and the publisher has programmed and recorded one hour of instruction for Module 1 – then the application will record that amount of time for that student, and you can then record that total as hours in TE.*

Educational Software– Example #2

If the software does not program hours into the application – but does provide recommended hours for each lesson or module – then use the time allotments (or limits) provided and record those totals in TE.

- ***Example****: if a student completes Module 2 of a 12-module software course, and the publisher recommends two hours to complete Module 2, document two hours for that student in TE once s/he completes that module.*

Educational Software– Example #3

If the software does not provide recommended times for completion, you should meet as an instructional management team locally, determine the amount of time (on average) students spend on each module, and document that in your agency's Local Assessment Policy.

(*Learner Mastery*)

Educational Software– Example #3

***Example** – Module 1 of a self-paced software course:*

- Observe students who complete the module and identify an "average" amount of time for a student to finish the module.

- If the "average" student takes two hours to complete Module 1, then assign two hours to that module, and record that equally for all students who complete it.

- **Document your agency's specific policy and approach in your agency's Local Assessment Policy**.

Educational Software– Example #3

Example: 12-module educational software program. (12 modules – 20 hours total)

Module 1 – Intro to Work (1 hour)
Module 2 – Career Exploration (2.5 hours)
Module 3 – Making Career Choices (1.5 hours)
Module 4 - …

- Follow the same process for all 12 modules as with module 1 in the previous example.

- List the number of hours assigned to each module.

- Record hours in TE at the class or the student level.

General Guidelines for Learner Mastery Hours

- Contact your instructional software publisher for guidance on hours. If the application does not embed hours-related information into the software, the vendor may have information that may guide you in determining these totals.

- The recommended hours you record for each student should reflect an "average" number of hours that the instructional team agrees on – and should NOT be determined by only one person.

General Guidelines for Learner Mastery Hours

- If your agency prefers to assign hours on an individual student basis ("Teacher Verification") rather than the "proxy" hours method, that is permissible.

- Explicitly state that your agency is using this method in your Local Assessment Policy, and provide a detailed description of this process at your agency.

- To assign hours by student, more vigilant observation from instructional staff is needed to ensure the amount of instruction recorded reflects the student's level of effort during each instructional session.

Distance Learning Examples

Learner Mastery Process Example

Example – A 12 Module self-paced software course

- Observe students who complete the modules, and identify an "average" amount of time for a student to finish each module.

- If the "average" student takes two hours to complete Module 1, for example -- assign two hours to that module, and record that equally for all students who complete it.

- **Document your agency's specific policy and approach in your agency's Local Assessment Policy**.

Clock Time Model– Example #1

20 students are enrolled in an online ESL class and all attend for one hour, Tuesday/Thursday via Zoom.

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example****:*

The classes listed below meet two hours a week online via Zoom. Agency uses Clock Time model record hours- all instructional hours are accrued via Zoom. Students are required to enter name in chat upon arrival to document participation. All Zoom sessions are recorded for teacher to verify hours and participation for each student.

Clock Time Model– Example #2

20 students are using educational software that automatically records the correct number of hours for each student.

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example***:

Students in classes listed below complete lessons in [Software App X] for up to six hours a week. Agency uses Clock Time model - hours are automatically recorded in the software. Recorded time for each module is listed below. Students are required to login using unique username and password to document participation. Student completes all exercises as required by the software to demonstrate mastery.

Teacher Verification– Example #1

20 students are using educational software that does not record hours and does not include additional exercises at the end of each lesson.

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example**:*
  The classes listed below complete lessons in [Software App X] for up to six hours a week. Students are required to login using unique username and password to document participation. Agency uses Teacher Verification model. Student completes all activities as required by the software for each lesson. Teacher notes the progress for each student and assigns 0, 1, or 2 hours of instruction for each lesson.

Learner Mastery – Example #1

20 students are using educational software that does not record hours but does include required exercises at the end of each lesson.

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example:***
  The classes listed below complete lessons in [Software App X] for up to six hours a week. Students are required to login using unique username and password to document participation. Agency uses Learner Mastery model. Agency has determined hours for each module in [App X]. Once the student completes all exercises as required by the software for each lesson, the student is credited with contact hours according the list below.

Learner Mastery – Example #2

20 students are enrolled in an online ESL class for one hour, Tuesday/Thursday via Zoom. Most attend as scheduled, but some students who cannot attend access the recorded session.

Local Assessment Policy Example*:*
The classes listed below meet two hours a week online via Zoom… sessions are recorded for teacher to verify hours and participation for each student.   Students that miss the "live" session can access the recording anytime before the next scheduled class. Learners login to the recording just as they do the live session, and must complete a short quiz at the end of the session to get credited with instructional hours.

32

Learner Mastery – Example #3

10 students are enrolled in independent study classes and watching assigned YouTube videos as part of the required instruction.

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example:***
  The classes listed below meet two hours a week online via Zoom... and also complete three lessons in [Video Series Y], one hour per video. Agency uses Learner Mastery model for the online videos. Once the student completes all three videos, the student must achieve a score of at least 80% on a quiz that incorporates all video content to achieve mastery and receive the three hours of instruction.

Example #1 Using Mixed Delivery Methods

20 students are using educational software that does not record hours or include additional exercises at the end of each lesson. Most participate in a "live" session with the teacher, but some who miss the live session complete activities on their own.

Students meet two hours a week online via Zoom... sessions are recorded for teacher to verify hours and participation for each student. Students that miss the "live" session can access the recording anytime before the next scheduled class. Learners login to the recording just as they do the live session, and must complete a short quiz at the end of the session to get credited with instructional hours.

Example #2 Using Mixed Delivery Methods

- ***Local Assessment Policy Example****:*
Students complete lessons in [Software App X] for up to six hours a week. Students to login using unique username and password to document participation.
  - *For students who participate during schedule sessions, use Teacher Verification model by facilitating online activities and prompting participants with questions.*
  - *For students who complete activities on their own use Learner Mastery, and must pass a quiz with at least 80% to be credited with the instructional hours.*

Example Describing Learner Mastery Process

Example: 12-module educational software program X.

(12 modules – 24 hours total)

Module 1 – Intro to Work (1 hour)
Module 2 – Career Exploration (2.5 hours)
Module 3 – Making Career Choices (1.5 hours)
Module 4 - …

- Follow the same process listing all 12 modules

- List the number of hours assigned to each module.

- Record hours in TE according to these specifications.

Thanks for your participation!