

# **Centering Social Justice and Equity in Online Synchronous Learning**

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# Policy Enactment:

“Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create the circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must be put together, constructed in context, offset against other expectations. All this involves social action, not robotic reactivity.”  
(Stephen Ball 1994, pg. 19)

“Policy enactment involves creative processes of interpretation and translation, that is, the recontextualisation through reading, writing and talking of the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices.” (Annette Braun, Stephen J. Ball, Meg Maguire, and Kate Hoskins 2011, p. 586)

**CENTRE social justice and  
equity in your purpose and  
planning**

**Education is a right.**

# 8 PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY LITERACY

3. **The Equity Ideology Principle:** Equity is more than a list of practical strategies. It is a lens and an ideological commitment.

4. **The Prioritization Principle:** Each policy and practice decision should be examined through the question, "How will this impact the most marginalized members of our community?" Equity is about prioritizing their interests.

by Paul Gorski for EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute. Revised December 9, 2017

**What is synchronous learning?** same time, same place

Does not have to be live video.

# RESEARCH

- Focus on higher education ([Finkelstein, 2006](#)) and ‘blended’ or ‘hybrid’ models ([Yamagata-Lynch, 2014](#))
  - There is little research that discusses how to effectively support learners ([Asterhan and Schwarz, 2010](#))
- During COVID-19 mass delivered synchronous learning concentrated in [private schools](#) and academic programs
  - Presumes obligation to participate and encourages video

## **CONTEXT MATTERS:**

**Private school is not public school**

**Elementary classrooms are not**

**Secondary classrooms are not**

**Postsecondary classrooms**

# Memorandum to Chairs of School Boards and Directors of Education:

- Ministry expected educators to “embrace the use of synchronous learning during the school closure period”
- Inconsistent “uptake” by educators
- Parents want “as normal a learning environment as possible”



**PROVINCIAL POLITICS**

## Ontario teachers told to ‘embrace’ live video conferencing as school shutdown continues



By **Kristin Rushowy** Queen's Park Bureau  
Fri., May 8, 2020 | 3 min. read

# BENEFITS OF SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION

WHEN there is access to a reliable connection, a computer, and space to work AT THE SAME TIME as the teacher AND students are ready to engage:

- Promote feelings of belonging and connection
- Motivate students who need face-to-face instruction, including some students with disabilities, the individual needs for whom must be prioritized in our planning
- Engage reluctant learners with caregivers to coach attendance
- Allow students to ask questions real-time and share ideas and concerns

# LIMITATIONS OF SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION

- “Maslow before Bloom”
- Coordinating time with dozens of students (+ who arrive late)
- Access to reliable connection and space to work; managing broadband strain
- Relies on caregiver to ‘coach’
- Privacy concerns re: circulation of student data and informed consent
- Surveillance and interference with professional autonomy

# Ontario College of Teachers' Guidelines

## 4. Use professional judgment to ensure that protocols are in place for the safety and privacy of participants.

- Be aware of content ownership, student information and privacy settings.
- Let students and parents know that video sessions may be recorded – by you or other participants.
- Keep in mind that video sessions could be recorded and shared broadly. While some platforms will not allow students and parents to record a session, other devices could be used to record it.
- Record one-on-one sessions.
- Be aware that chat features are not private and should not be used for side conversations.
- Keep notes as you normally would.

“It might contradict our intuition, but accessible and **equitable mass delivered remote instruction** must be asynchronous, reproducible physically, and supplemented by optional recorded audio conferences (for low bandwidth) or phone calls. We can not compel students online, if online learning doesn’t work for everyone.” ([Farhadi, 2020](#))

**You know your  
students**

# CAUTION

- Select board-approved software with (when able) teacher control for chat, audio, and video
- Solicit formal/informed consent for recording student video
- Explicitly state boundaries and expected behaviour to caregivers and students
- HONOUR your professional judgement re: risk tolerance
- Remember: comfort online comes at the cost of security
- Be proactive! SHARE with and LEARN from colleagues