

# Going the Distance: Online Learning Ideas

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 [creativelanguageclass.com/online-learning-ideas](https://www.creativelanguageclass.com/online-learning-ideas)

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The talk about *Online* or *Distance Learning* is buzzing through schools and communities around the world. If you're anxious about the change OR already there and need suggestions, this post is for you! It takes a change of mindset, but there are some great perks to it, too!

- 1.) Some learners (who are quiet in class) really thrive with a little extra time to process and less "on the spot" speaking.
- 2.) Learners can work at their own pace. They can pause a video, rewatch it, or move on when they are ready.
- 3.) They can choose to learn when they are at their best (morning or night, in small or big doses).
- 4.) Planning becomes more about helping students learn – *not* keeping them busy or filling 50 minutes of class time.

Taking curriculum and coming up with something to put online so quickly *feels daunting*, but **I see it as an opportunity.**

Instead of getting through traditionally challenging months with exhausted students...you get to continue the learning at a new pace with more freedom to *try new things*. Most students, parents, and teachers have never done distance learning. No one expects it to look just like it would in a classroom; change is expected. So there's the opportunity... you can try something different.

Option 1: Teach the **same material** with a ***different method***.

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Teach your thematic unit, have proficiency targets, assess skills with a proficiency rubric...but let learners work through more of it on their own. Instead of you being their main source of language input... put your authentic resources to work. I started playing with Google Classroom and here's a snapshot of what you could do to PLAN and ORGANIZE learning.

**Objective: I can...**

### INTERPRETIVE TASK

Read this ( article, listicle, wikipedia article, website, infographic, etc ) and do this ( find vocabulary, react to it, summarize it, etc )

Listen to this ( commercial, interview, song, a video of you talking, etc ) and do this ( find vocabulary, react to it, summarize it, etc )

### example on Google Classroom

*Tip: Don't be afraid to use the target language!  
Students can use google translate to help them if they need it!*

The screenshot shows a Google Classroom post from a class named "Creative Language Class". The post is dated 10:41 AM (Edited 10:44 AM) and contains the following text:

Hola a todos!

Meta de hoy (miércoles, el 11 de marzo)  
Puedo dar mi opinión sobre distintos hogares del mundo.

Actividad:  
Hay 3 videos para ver hoy. Después de verlos, describe y da tu opinion de los hogares.  
(Pista: Usa "dando tu opinion del hogar" para ver un ejemplo)

\*Si tiene alguna pregunta... déjala como comentario abajo.

The post includes three video thumbnails and one image thumbnail:

- Las impresionantes islas fl..** YouTube video 13 minutes
- La Casa Batlló de Gaudí e...** YouTube video 2 minutes
- Un castillo en venta en C...** YouTube video 1 minute
- dando tu opinion sobre u...** Image

At the bottom of the post, there is a comment input field with the placeholder text "Add class comment..." and a send button.

## INTERPERSONAL FOLLOW-UP

Option 1: you post an open-ended question and let students type up and post their response. They can also read and respond to other classmates for the interpersonal interaction.

Option 2: Meet with students virtually and discuss follow-up questions.

Start with questions that tie to interpretive task. Students can show they understand by:

( hand gestures:  
You describe two things... they show thumbs up or down, choose option 1 or 2, then you can "call on" a student to explain their response )

### example on Google Classroom



#### Questions for your conversation:

*Hold up 1, 2, or 3 to respond to a few of my questions: Video 1: Chozza / Video 2: Casa Batlló / Video 3: Castle  
Which was the most interesting home? Which was the most luxurious home? Which one was located in Spain? Etc.*

*Final wrap up: What was the best home and why? (open-ended)*

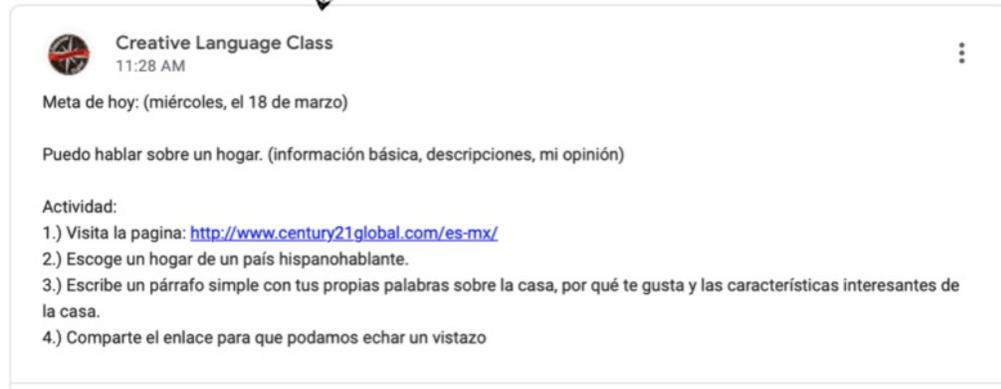
\* This holds them accountable for what you asked them to read/listen to. Face-to-face chats don't need to happen every day, but it's nice to still give learners opportunities to interact with each other in the target language.

\*\*You may need to cycle thru a few days of interpretive + interpersonal BEFORE moving on to a presentational task.

## CHECK FOR LEARNING: PRESENTATIONAL TASK

They show they can do the objective by: (video, audio recording, writing, reflection, etc) on (google classroom, etc)

### example on Google Classroom



The screenshot shows a Google Classroom post from a class named "Creative Language Class". The post is dated "11:28 AM" and has a "Meta de hoy: (miércoles, el 18 de marzo)". The main text of the post is "Puedo hablar sobre un hogar. (información básica, descripciones, mi opinión)". Below this, there is a section titled "Actividad:" followed by four numbered steps: 1.) "Visita la pagina: <http://www.century21global.com/es-mx/>", 2.) "Escoge un hogar de un país hispanohablante.", 3.) "Escribe un párrafo simple con tus propias palabras sobre la casa, por qué te gusta y las características interesantes de la casa.", and 4.) "Comparte el enlace para que podamos echar un vistazo".

## Option 2: Set them free with “20% Time” projects

The big idea is letting learners have a say in what they are learning. During the time away from school, students aren't going to want to be doing random worksheets or rote memorization. There are a million other things students will get into with their new free time. Learning will be competing with TikTok, video games, Netflix, group texts and naps. This is *serious competition*.

Giving students choice and voice with a little structure to keep them focused will get you more buy in, period. Think about planning a “choose your own adventure” type of project that has them reading, writing, DOING/EXPERIENCING something they are passionate about, watching interesting videos, and sharing!

Example:



# Create an URBAN GARDEN

## WATCH

videos in target language from target culture



Recommend 1 or 2 and challenge them to find some on their own. Summarize and share back!

## PLANT

Using household items (cans, egg cartons, cups)



Look up 10 words in the TL that you would need to talk about this project. (example: seed, dirt, flower, pepper, plant)

## READ

About the benefits of green space and see other city gardens around the world



## PHOTO + CAPTION

Your garden's progress!



**Día 1:**  
Acabo de plantar 12 semillas.  
Tengo 6 girasoles, 3 tomates, y 3 herbas.



**Día 8:**  
Veo algo...  
POR FIN!

What if you had options for music/dance, health/science, sports/wellness? Surely this would give learners a chance to learn more about the target culture, recycle vocabulary and structures from the content (yours and other subject areas) and practice language in a new and meaningful way.

Embrace the challenges and changes and GROW with the flow!

(It could be worse... we could be doing make-up days all summer! There's perspective for you!)