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Unexpected e-learning journey

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The global COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a number of sudden changes in how we live and exist. One notable shift is the use of e-learning by local public schools. Made possible by the digital revolution, e-learning has enabled remarkable changes in how educational materials are accessed, consumed, discussed and shared. While not intended to duplicate the face-to-face daily experience of interacting with caring and talented instructors, e-learning enables our students to continue their educational journey during this precarious and uncertain time.

Communication and Collaboration

At Glenbard, e-learning focuses on moving the curriculum forward with technology tools that we have been using for years. Our Learning Management System connects all teachers and students in every class. Teachers post assignments, tests, and discussion boards so that students can turn in all of their work digitally, complete assessments and communicate and collaborate with their peers. Teachers provide links to reading material, videos, and PDFs for a wide variety of learning materials.

Students can still collaborate with each other through discussion boards, video boards, and collaborative productivity tools like Google Docs. They are sharing photos and videos and working together on their learning.

Empathy and Flexibility

In these uncertain times, it's important for teachers to provide empathy and flexibility for students. E-learning allows students to learn at the time of day that is best for them. This is especially important during the pandemic because they may be dealing with circumstances at home that are not always conducive to learning, like caring for other family members.

Making Connections

Nothing replaces the value of face-to-face interactions, but many of our teachers are posting short videos each morning to welcome students to class and set the expectations for the day. Teachers provide optional "office hours" videoconferencing for students to drop in to say hello or get help with a problem. Teachers experience this too -- our instructional coaches provide office hours for other teachers to ask questions about e-learning.

Continuity of Learning

While the recent school closings were unexpected and not ideal, instructors in DuPage County are leveraging technology and other strategies to ensure students continue their educational journey. Through increased use of technology, students are building skills in the areas of:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity and
- Critical thinking

The skills that students are developing during these challenging times will serve them well for years to come.