

# Teaching with Technology during COVID-19

## Best Practices to Take Care of Ourselves and Our Students

We're living and working in difficult times, it's hard to know what to do and what not to do regarding distance learning, how to keep it all straight while in a steep learning curve. Here are some helpful tips to keep yourself not only informed, but also healthy and in good standing with your students, parents, and your District.

Ten ways to take care of ourselves, each other, and our students as we engage on online platforms during learning:

**1 Know your employer's rules for online engagement and follow them at all times.** Most school districts have policies in place to define what is allowable on work computers and networks. In addition, many have policies that describe appropriate and inappropriate online interactions with students and families. Re-familiarize yourself with these policies and follow them at all times. If you are concerned that your employer does not have policies to provide you with enough guidance to work with technology under these evolving circumstances, please contact your Administrator for specific guidance.

**2 Be aware of the professional online presence you project.** Whichever online learning platform you are using, give yourself time to learn it, be present at all times when you're on it, and minimize distractions and personal interruptions. Being professional in an online learning platform means not eating, drinking, or multitasking. Place yourself in a neutral, professional space; dress in professional clothing; minimize personal interruptions to the best of your ability.

**3 Ensure student privacy.** This includes making sure that you are engaged in online instruction in a private space and also making sure that no application you use is set to 'record' while you are using it (many applications such as ZOOM may automatically record your session unless you specifically tell it not to record). *Do not send your students to websites or social media apps that are not approved by your District, as unapproved websites may gather personally identifiable information about students.* Check with your District if you have questions about maintaining student privacy or if they have a list of allowable Apps and websites.

**4 Maintain your own online privacy in your interactions with students.** Make all of your private accounts private and establish professional accounts on all platforms and applications that you need for work. Ensure your students are not being recorded in online formats, seek the same for yourself. Recognize, however, that when using a District-provided network or computer an employee does not have a right to privacy.

**5 When selecting materials to use in online instruction, adhere to all copyright laws.** Members should consider copyright issues in online instruction just as they would in face-to-face instruction. While a 'fair use exception' allows copyrighted materials to be used without permission in many educational circumstances, this allowance is not absolute. Good information for public school teachers, including examples of what qualifies as fair use, is available from the [Library of Congress](#).

**6 Commit to creating a positive community online.** It is important for your students to feel connected to you and each other during this time. Stay positive about all your students and be patient with their progress. They're learning as they go, just as you are.

**7 Communicate patience and encouragement.** Be encouraging of colleagues who have had to learn online options quickly, sometimes without a lot of tutorials. Be patient with parents who are dealing with stressors professionally and personally as well as with the added pressure of helping their students with online assignments.

**8 As much as is reasonable, focus on instruction.** Students may need reassurance from us now, and some acknowledgment of the changes that all of us are experiencing may be very valuable. However, too much conversation might upset students with anxiety disorders or students who are seeking stability during unstable times. Reach out to your administration and/or pupil services colleagues if you feel you could benefit from additional guidance on educating during a time of uncertainty. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also provides helpful tips to [communicate with children about COVID-19](#).

**9 Don't forget to put your own oxygen mask on first.** This means to, first and foremost, stay home and follow guidelines from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [Arizona Department of Health](#). Then, create a daily schedule for yourself that includes downtime. Intentionally seek out socialization by calling old friends, facetimeing people to express gratitude, or taking a walk to greet neighbors (from a distance) who are outdoors. Ensure you are getting sufficient exercise, eating well, and avoiding excessive media exposure. And if you have any free time, try something new! Necessity is the mother of invention, after all! Download some free books, practice online yoga, watch online tutorials to learn a new hobby, create the ultimate playlist, or take an online museum tour in some far-flung city!

**10 Check [arizonaea.org](#) for up-to-date information and professional support related to the COVID-19 pandemic.** Learn what is happening in Arizona related to public schools. Join with your colleagues from across Arizona to help us advocate for important reforms and sensible relief to help you and you're your students during this time. And don't forget to utilize the professional development site [aeapd.works](#) that AEA staff has designed for you; they have put together resources for online learning during school building closures. For additional information visit [NEA Today!](#)



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