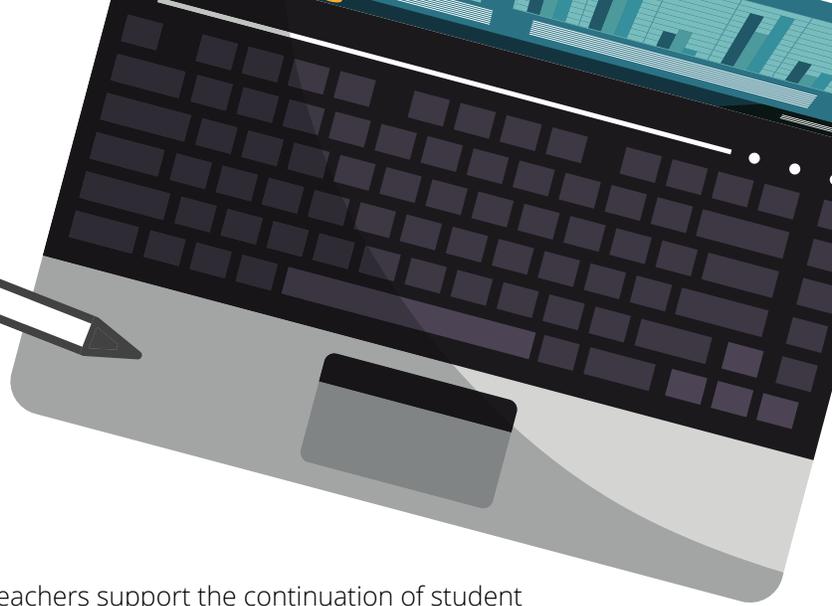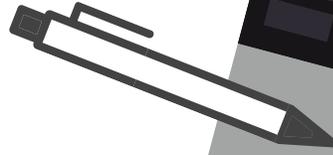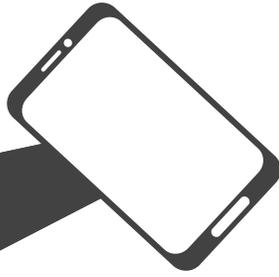# DISTANCE LEARNING BEST PRACTICES, TIPS, AND TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

Distance learning is a great way to help teachers support the continuation of student learning when circumstances prevent one or both from being physically at school. In order to help you successfully facilitate your online courses, here are a few tips.

1 MAKE SURE THAT YOU, YOUR ENVIRONMENT, AND YOUR STUDENTS ARE CAMERA READY

Despite instructing your students from the comfort of your own home, you will be on camera. Make sure that you are dressed appropriately (would you wear it to work?) and that your background surroundings are reflective of your image as a professional educator. It's important that you set the tone for your online sessions because your students (and their parents) will be watching. It is also important that you have "norming" conversations with your students. By providing suggestions regarding appropriate dress, you will help to decrease distractions that will impact your instructional time.

2 PRACTICE Flexibility

Even seasoned online instructors have occasional technical glitches and unanticipated challenges. The reality is, you are doing the very best that you can and flexibility is key. Arm yourself with handy "FAQs" and "Common Issues" type resources associated with the tools that you are using and if something goes awry, be flexible and forgiving of yourself and others.

3 Make Guidelines CLEAR

Promote success in your online environment by clearly defining what your idea of participation is, what your expectations are for online behavior, etc. and make sure that you share this with your students. This again goes back to the "norming" conversations that were mentioned above. Just as you set clear expectations in your brick and mortar classroom, it is critical that you also set them in your virtual classroom.

1. Be respectful of others. Everyone's opinion matters online just as it does in our regular class.
2. Monitor your online "tone". Typing in all caps is equal to yelling at someone. Avoid all caps, excessive exclamation marks, and strong language. Don't write anything that sounds mean, angry, or sarcastic.
3. Think before you type. The words and symbols that you type are a part of a permanent digital record.
4. Grammar and spelling matter. Avoid typing online for class the way that you text your friends. Spell words out because this is a classroom environment.
5. Do not share or post things that are not appropriate (even privately). Nothing is private online.
6. Use "please" and "thank you" when interacting with others online.

NEED MORE SUPPORT?

To support instructional continuity, Region 4 has located the following external resources that can provide additional help. Please click the titles to access the resources.   We are also available to help you to navigate your online environment. Contact us using the information below.

The Global Online Academy

A collection of resources to support effective and efficient remote learning. The organization shares support that they have fine-tuned over the past nine years. Strategies, design tips, instructional methodologies for the remote learning environment, and various downloads are available.

"Preparing to Take School Online? Here Are 10 Tips to Make It Work"

Reshan Richards and Stephanie J. Valentine of EdSurge share 10 tips to support the success of online instruction.

We Are Here to Help!

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