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Teleteaching Tips for Educators: Designing for Success!

Reference: Reichenberger, S., Austin, K., Oakes, W. P., Lane, K. L., & Buckman, M. M. (2020, March). *Teleteaching tips for educators: Designing for Success!* Ci3T Strategic Leadership Team. www.ci3t.org



What is teleteaching?

Teleworking is an arrangement in which some or all work is performed from home or another off-site location. Teleteaching builds on “teleworking,” as we adapt to current circumstances in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many educators have been asked to shift immediately to “teleteaching” as they begin designing and implementing instruction online. Teleteaching may be in the form of preparing information to share with students and families or preparing lessons for delivery synchronously or asynchronously. Even if not directed by your school or district to shift to teleteaching at this time, you may want to prepare materials for and/or connect learning activities with students and families.

Teleteaching Tips for Educators:

Designing for Success

Considerations and guidelines provided by your state and district should be followed. Working remotely requires specific new skills and habits. The following tips will help you prepare to ‘teleteach’ while at home.

Take care of yourself. Educators are caregivers and often put the needs of others before their own. We encourage you to take time to care for yourself so that you can stay healthy to support your own families and friends, as well as your students and their families. In short, just like with air travel, secure your own oxygen mask first so you can continue to support those around you. We have heard from many educators who are providing a respite for families, doing errands, and providing learning activities and emotional support to others. We respectfully offer these tips as a gentle reminder.

- Take scheduled breaks throughout your day. Step away from your workspace, take care of errands, etc.
- Eat lunch at a designated time (even if this is new for you - we know many teachers do not take a lunch break during the school day ☺).

- Schedule time for exercise. Consider standing and sitting work options, stretch, go for a walk, go outside and enjoy the sunshine, rain or snow. You might be surprised at the reduction in steps you achieve in a day when working at home without intentionality to move – pay attention to those prompts on your device to move.
- Take a few minutes at the start and end of your workday to clean the surfaces that are often touched (e.g., keyboard, phone, doorknobs, light switches, doors, faucets). Wash your hands regularly throughout the day.



Set up your workspace. Establishing a defined workspace (e.g., desk or small table) can help you separate work and home. (We know this may be difficult as our students are often on our minds!) While it can be tempting to set up on your couch



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with your laptop, consider separating the place you work from where you typically relax or have family time at home.

Check your tech before you connect. Make the necessary preparations for teleteaching before you connect with your students.

- Check your remote log in access to online communications tools that may be already in use with students and families. Access district, school, or colleague support with passwords or log in credentials as needed.
- Learn how to (a) log in to the online communication platform that your district recommends and (b) access the tools you regularly use.
- Test any video conference technology with a family member, colleague, or friend. Make sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera, microphone, and headset.
- Be prepared to provide your students with tips to troubleshoot potential issues with their camera and microphone.



Set a schedule. Setting a schedule will help to create routines.

- Routines can provide feelings of safety in times of crisis. Consider setting a new and regular schedule for your regular workdays.
- Although you are removing travel time (including the travel needed for care of your own children) from your schedule, allow yourself some additional time to adjust to new technologies and methods to support students.
- Add your teleteaching schedule to your email signature line. This will let students and families know when you are available. It will also help you set some boundaries for your personal or family time.
- Share your plans with your family and friends so they are familiar with your work plans.
- Be certain to incorporate time to move! You might schedule times similar to your college days: start on the hour, end 50 minutes later, and take 10 minutes to transition to the next meeting or task.



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Set daily goals. Goal setting can help provide focus to your day and provides a sense of accomplishment. Start each day of teleteaching by writing down what you want to accomplish and track your progress. If some tasks take longer (or shorter) than expected, adjust your expectations and daily goals. Take a moment to reflect on your new lessons learned in this transition. Communicate with your principal/supervisor if you think your teleteaching plan needs to be adjusted.

Minimize distractions. Teachers are masters of managing their attention and decision making on many things at one time. However, working at home provides some new considerations.

- Consider hanging a “work in progress” sign to let others know when you are online with students or need privacy to complete a time-sensitive task.
- Create a space for your pets. You might need a closed-door policy to keep them from creating (loveable) distractions.
- Use headphones to block distractions and increase privacy.
- Store all the materials you might need for teleteaching at or near your workspace.
- Calendar time (e.g., 30 minutes, twice a day) to respond to email rather than checking email throughout the day. While you want to stay up-to-date with the information coming out from your district, spending too much time on your email could impede on your productive work time.

Prioritize privacy. Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Remember it will be important to continue to respect privacy rules and regulations.

Stay connected. Make sure you are reaching out to administrators, supervisors, colleagues, students, and families. Teleteaching may feel isolating, so be certain to schedule time with others (e.g., professional learning communities).

Dress for work. Just like sitting on the couch can make you feel a little too relaxed, wearing pajamas all day makes it challenging to get into work mode. Dressing casually is a perk of working at home but getting “ready for work” is a daily ritual that many teleworkers swear by.

Resources

- [Teleworking](#) (University of Kansas)
- [Ready for Cyberspace? A special issue on preparing online instruction for students with disabilities.](#) (Teaching Exceptional Children)
- [Educator Resources](#) (Kansas State Department of Education)
- [Teaching Tolerance: What Educators Need Right Now](#) (Teaching Tolerance)