

# Strategies For Teaching Students With Learning Differences In An Online Classroom

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3:00PM - 4:00PM



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## Presenters

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## Supporting the Social & Emotional Needs of Students *in an Online Environment*

***“Educators are at the heart of our approach:***

- *Because education is incredibly challenging work.*
- *Because apps can’t model the power of presence.*
- *Because curriculum alone doesn’t change culture.*
- *Because we’re in this for the long game.”*

-- Mindful Schools ([www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org))

***“Relationships are to education what location is to real estate.”***

--Murray Banks

***“When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.”***

--L.R. Knost

## Supporting Students by Supporting Parents

*True partnership between Home & School*

- Open lines of communication
- Weekly “Coffee & Conversation”
- Reflective listening (the message beneath the message)
- Acknowledgement of the unique experiences of each family system
- Streamlined email updates (highlighted/bolded text and bullet points)
- Digital Learning Visual Schedule Templates
- Central location for meeting links and announcements
- Encouragement of constructive feedback

## **Social, Emotional, & Academic Supports**

### **Include familiar practices and routines in online schedules**

- Morning Meetings & Mindfulness
- Allow time for sharing and for laughter
- Lunchtime Gatherings (chaperoned, of course!)
- Move Your Body Breaks & Physical Activity Logs

### **One-on-one Zoom Sessions**

- Utilize school counselors and teaching assistants
- Offer office hours and extra tutoring sessions with teachers
- Online games (Prodigy; Kahoot; GimKit)
- Other online tools (ReadWorks - leveled passages; Quizlet)

**Lighten Up and Have Fun!**

## Structural Strategies

*The following strategies benefit all neurodiverse students including Executive Functioning difficulties, ADHD, and mild learning differences.*

### Consistent Routines and Procedures

- Schedules, morning routines, and transition activities help create clear expectations.
- All teachers post materials in the same way using the same tools.
- Help families come up with morning routines for your students AND help them create plans for students who have conflicting schedules.

### Connecting Time

- **Curriculum matters but relationships matter more! Cultivate relationships!**
- Using synchronous class time either at the beginning or end of class to provide time for students to share about their day, their struggles, and their successes.
- Daily synchronous time with teachers and peers has been helpful in supporting the whole child.

## Classroom Strategies

*The following strategies benefit all neurodiverse students including Executive Functioning difficulties, ADHD, and mild learning differences.*

### Learning Box

- Have a shoebox or basket or drawer with necessary or frequently used materials available at the chosen workplace.
- Have families create the boxes together and engage in discussions about school and tools.

### Week-at-a-Glance

- Teachers post on their Google Classroom a brief week-at-a-glance overview for students and parents to view.
- Provides consistency and expectations for the week.
- Enables parents to be in the loop and support as needed.
- The overviews include objectives, an agenda for each day, and any assignments that are due.

### TAB (Take-a-Break)

- Breaks between live sessions are critical (at least 20 minutes if possible)
- Breaks inside the class behind the chair on camera → body or finger stretches, jumping jacks, a tense-and-release, etc.

# Engagement and Executive Function

## *in Distance Learning*

### Daily Virtual Study Hall

- Offer a daily virtual study hall, students check-in, and write in chat box what they want to accomplish in the hour
- Know what assignments are, provides an activation point and end point, and helps them prioritize order of work

### Work One-on-One in Breakout Rooms

- Work one-on-one in break out room to help each student to match strength with weakness
- Use guiding questions to help student ensure they are responding to assignment, how to begin or persevere through, or reduce distractions to accomplish comprehension or complete practice.
- [Video](#)

## Tools for Engagement and Support

### Record a voice memo

- Useful for providing quick audio support
- Students can record a response as an alternative to written work



### Narrated Presentations

- Teachers or students can use audio recordings in Keynote or PowerPoint
- Provide quick direct instruction or an alternative assessment



### GoFormative.com (all services are currently free)

- Useful tool to quickly assess formative understanding of students
- Assess through a variety of questions

## Simplification Strategies

*Simplification is a strategy that is applicable to students with ANY learning difference. It will be the umbrella under which other strategies can exist.*

### Simplify Lesson Design

- A short lesson with one point of impact will have more effect than lots of fun activities just to fill the time
- Spread out the fun over multiple sessions

### Simplify Content

- Have one concept per session
- Provide plenty of opportunity for review and assessment

### Simplify Expectations

- Do not lessen quality of expectations, just simplify.
- Ex: “Plan and write a solid one-paragraph explanation of ....” instead of, “Write a five-paragraph essay on....”

## **Simplify Slides:** Monochromatic, Few words, No jumbled slides

Instead of too many words, colors, and fonts on a slide for over-stimulation, make more slides that are simplified.



### **Nouns**

Names of People, **Places**, Things, or Ideas

#### **Places**

- state
- Virginia

### **Nouns**

Names of People, Places, **Things**, or Ideas

#### **Things**

- fish
- tree
- spoon

## Teacher Strategies



### Block Schedule

- We went from a traditional schedule format and converted to block scheduling
- Created a simplified but comprehensive schedule.

### Instruction: Mixture of Review and Essential Content

- Classlink
- Google Classroom
- Zoom Classes
- Social Touch

### Documentation of Communication: Clear and School-Wide Expectations

- School-wide contact log for each student
- County specific Contact log
- Google Form Attendance
- Internet Access Survey
- Parent Feedback Survey

## Student Strategies

*Use these strategies for students with Autism, Learning Disabilities, Executive Functioning Challenges, Emotional Disabilities*

### Numbering Assignments

- Prioritizing (assignment names to reflect number system - example 1 Food Pyramid)
- Limiting amount of assignments per week to 4 per class and no homework (typical classroom accommodation - Chunking of Assignments or Materials) Numbering System used by all teachers - 1 - Most Important, Do First; 2 - Important, Do Second; 3 - Do only if you have time

### Consistency of Assignment Locations

- Across all teachers and all Google Classrooms (e.g. where teachers post zoom links)

### Routine and Schedule

- Provide a routine and schedule as well as clear classroom expectations- teachers posting weekly schedule for each class on homepage of Google Classroom (typical classroom accommodation - Visual Schedule)



## Student Strategies (cont.)

### Pre-recording steps or activities

- Students can rewatch as they are completing assignments (typical classroom accommodation - teacher modeling or presents information visually and verbally)

### 1:1 Meetings

- 1:1 meetings with teachers available per request

### Check for Understanding

- Zoom check-ins,
- Have students submit Google forms as a quick check-in on no meeting days

## Student Strategies (cont.)

### Editable Assignments

- When uploading assignments, ensure that they are editable, and students can type directly on the document.
- This helps with accessibility, and limits the need to navigate between two windows which can be a challenge for students with learning differences.

### Social Opportunities

- Continue to provide social opportunities (e.g. Advisory class, and chorus)
- Social coaching for new virtual social interactions and appropriate ways to use technology

### Creative Start of School Day

- We are using our robocall to do “morning announcements” at the start of the class each morning.
- Each day has a theme - Move it Monday, or Work of Art Wednesday - with fun activities or videos.
- It’s also been opened up to allow students or staff to do “Guest Announcements”

## School Leaders

### Give Teachers Permission

- To try out some new things/different approaches with their students who learn differently
- My teachers expressed appreciation that they have been given the autonomy to try out some different apps and to try out different classroom configurations (giving one-on-one or small group time to kids who need it)

### Find the Familiar

- Help teachers find ways to lean in to the familiar with their students who learn differently
- At Riverside that has looked like providing teachers document cameras and providing teachers and students identical paper copies of materials (with the same pagination) that both the teacher and the student can use (instead of looking at a shared screen all of the time)