



Best Practices: Supporting Students with Disabilities in the Online Classroom

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~ Dr. Rebekah Dyer ~



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- 20 years in the field of special education
- Doctoral degree in organizational leadership w/emphasis in Special Education
- International Presenter on Autism
- Research interests include special education, inclusion of individuals with disabilities, dyslexia, differentiated instruction and disability ministry.
- Strengths in teaching include building relationships with students, communication, and classroom engagement.



Session Outcomes:

- Understand the specific needs of students with disabilities in the online classroom.
- Implement effective teaching strategies to set all students up for success, regardless of any differences.
- Design virtual experiences that will meet the needs of all learners.



**What are you
currently doing to
support students
with disabilities
in your virtual
classroom?**

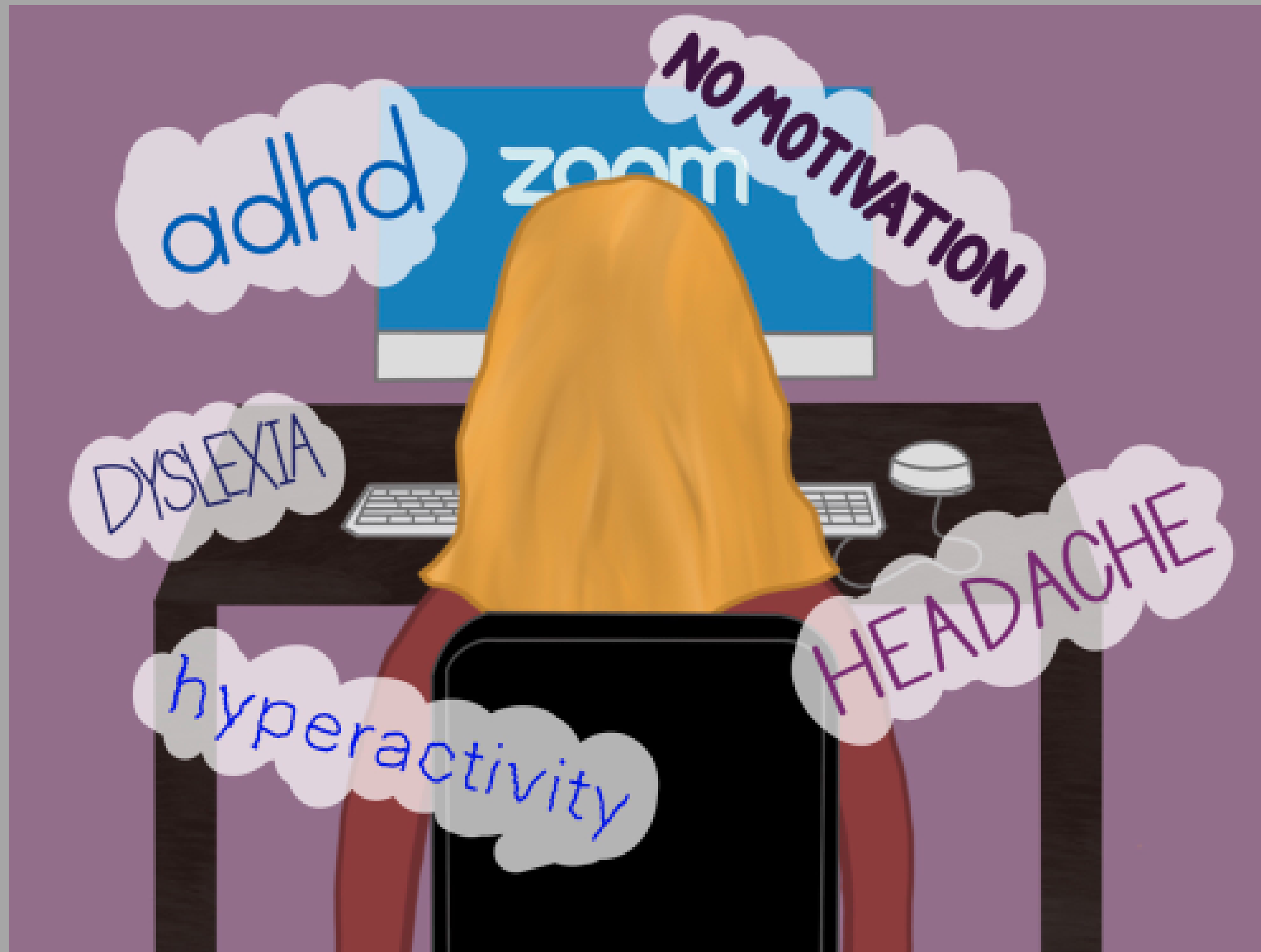




WHY???



"In a sea of happy little faces in a Brady Bunch-style gallery, I saw a white board with a message on it, propped up on a desk. I strained my eyes to see it, and it read: "I can't learn like this. I have special needs." The kid was nowhere in sight. A parent had given up trying to get their child to engage on Zoom. On day four (Branstetter, 2020)."



WHY???

DIFFERENTIATION



Does it count as differentiated instruction if I print their worksheets on different colored paper?



Differentiated Instruction

Quantity

Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.

For example:

Reduce the number of social studies terms a learner must learn at any one time. Add more activities or worksheets.

Time

Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.

For example:

Individualize a timeline for completing a task; pace learning differently (increase or decrease) for some learners.

Level of Support

Increase the amount of personal assistance to keep the student on task or to reinforce or prompt use of specific skills. Enhance adult-student relationships; use physical space and environmental structure.

For example:

Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross age tutors.

Input

Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.

For example:

Use different visual aids, enlarge text, plan more concrete examples, provide hands-on activities, place students in cooperative groups, pre-teach key concepts or terms before the lesson

Difficulty

Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.

For example:

Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs.

Output

Adapt how the student can respond to instruction.

For example:

Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book for some students, allow students to show knowledge with hands on materials.

Participation

Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.

For example:

In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations. Ask the student to lead a group. Have the student turn the pages while you are reading to the group.

Alternate Goals

Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials. When routinely utilized, this is only for students with moderate to severe disabilities.

For example:

In social studies, expect a student to be able to locate the colors of the states on a map, while other students learn to locate each state and name each capital.

Substitute Curriculum

Provide different instruction and materials to meet a learner's individual goals. When routinely utilized, this is only for students with moderate to severe disabilities.

For example:

During a language test a student is learning toileting skills with an aide.

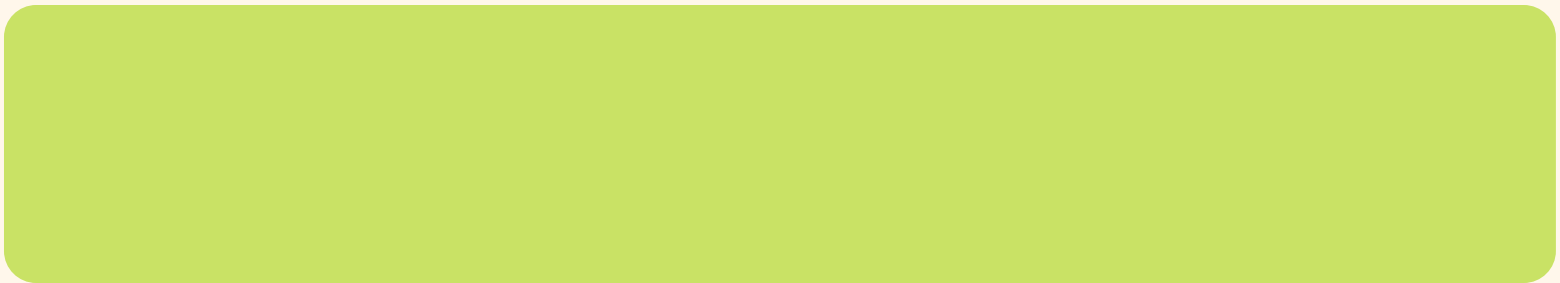


Understanding Needs





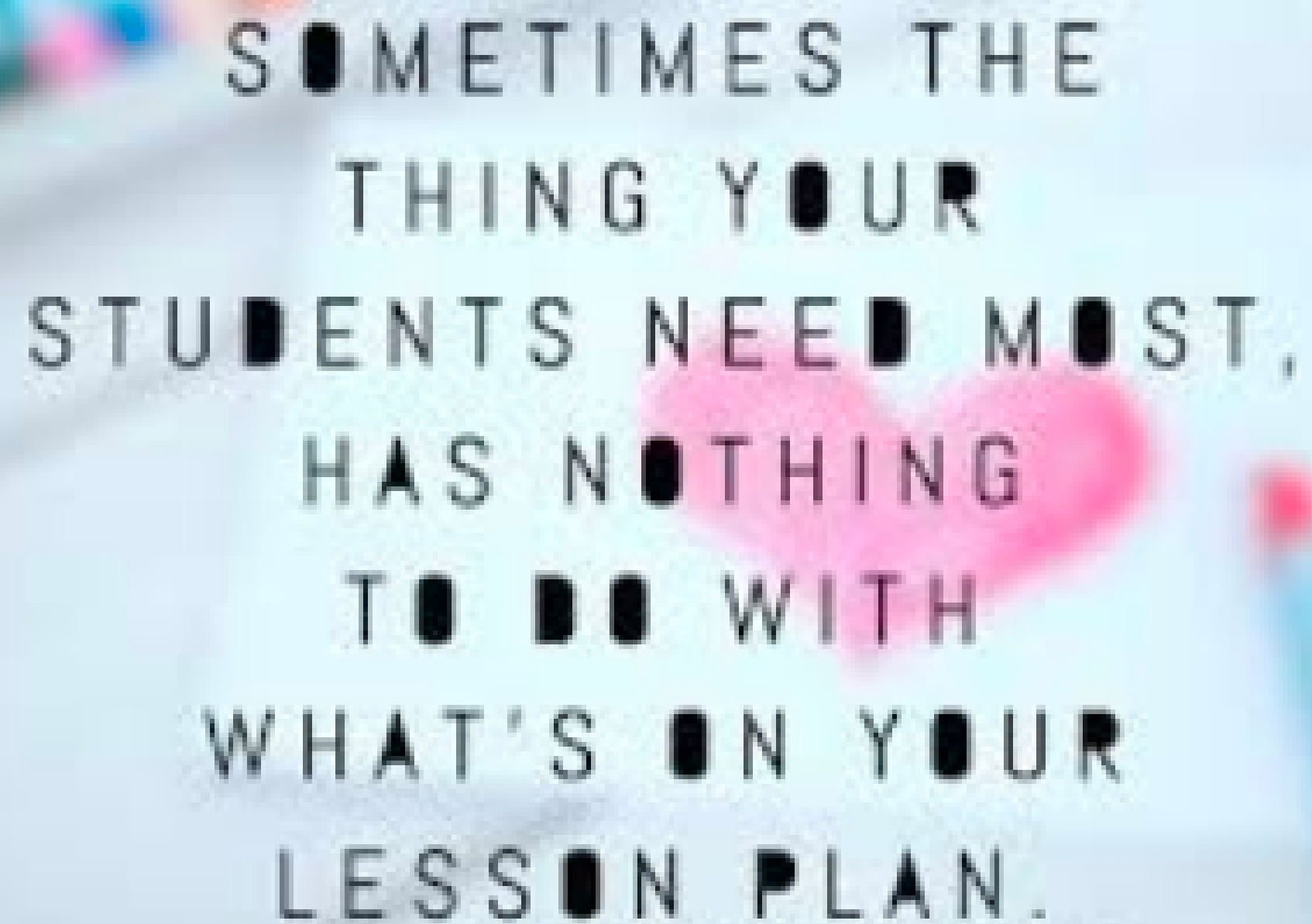
Is this different than the traditional classroom?



- **Survey your students**
- **1:1 support**
- **Review data!!!**
- **Use parents as a resource**
- **Preferred mode of communication**
- **Reflect and modify**

Put the relationship **before**
academic rigor



The image features a motivational quote centered on a light blue background. The background is a blurred photograph of school supplies, including several blue and white striped pens or pencils in the upper left and a pink heart-shaped eraser in the center. The quote is written in a black, sans-serif, all-caps font. The text reads: "SOMETIMES THE THING YOUR STUDENTS NEED MOST, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT'S ON YOUR LESSON PLAN." Below the main text, there is a small, faint watermark that says "RELATIONSHIPGOALS.LIFE".

SOMETIMES THE
THING YOUR
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HAS NOTHING
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RELATIONSHIPGOALS.LIFE

What can you do to establish and foster relationships with students online?



**MY FACE WHEN MY STUDENTS
SAY SOMETHING FUNNY**

**BUT I'M A TEACHER SO I TRY
TO KEEP MY COMPOSURE**

Focus

The primary focus is on Social Emotional Needs of students.

Impact

Schools that focus on SEL can see an average of 11% improvement in academics

Students w/disabilities

One of the key factors for academic success is having support systems, like caring adults who help them navigate the challenges they face.

Non-Academic Convos

Learn about your students, share about yourself, assess their emotional state

Brain Breaks

Provide opportunities for brain and physical breaks.

Mindfulness

Incorporate strategies for students to learn to regulate their emotions.



Social & Emotional Strategies

- Build community
- Bridge school to home
- Engage the whole child
- Teach growth mindset



Learning Competencies



1. **Self-awareness**
2. **Self-management**
3. **Social awareness**
4. **Relationship skills**
5. **Responsible decision-making**





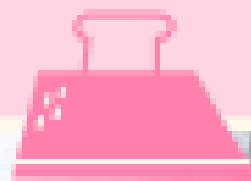
What to look for...

- Lack of engagement (peers or adults)
- Decrease in achievement
- Unresponsive
- Changes in behavior





ENGAGE THE WHOLE CHILD



STUDENTS MUST
BE...
HEALTHY



STUDENTS MUST
BE...
SAFE



STUDENTS MUST
BE...
ENGAGED &
CHALLENGED



STUDENTS MUST
BE...
SUPPORTED

GROWTH MINDSET

Is Freedom



FIXED MINDSET

Is Limiting



@BigLifeJournal

Effective Teaching Strategies

CLASSROOM REMINDERS

Best practices for
maximizing learning

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Observing good
behavior
in our virtual
classroom



Tips for Remote Learning Success

Craft a Digital Roadmap.

Policies and guidance at the state, district, and school levels can help prevent a lot of frustration and disappointment with online learning tools.

Help Students Learn Around the Clock.

Many students and families will need the flexibility to do classwork on nights and weekends.

Prioritize Sustained Online Engagement.

Engagement with online tools dropped towards the end of this spring; schools will have to focus on sustaining long-term engagement this fall.

Simplify. Simplify. Simplify.

Students need tools without a steep learning curve that they can navigate on their own or that parents can learn quickly.

Icons: Getty

SOURCE: Education Week reporting

Be Clear

Communication must be clear & consistent.



SCHEDULE

EXPECTATIONS

SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES?



OBJECTIVES



Explain course/lesson objectives.

Make connections between activities/assignments and the objectives.

Have students reflect on their learning with the objectives.

Questioning Strategies



- Seeking out evidence: "What makes you think that _____?"
- Explaining: "What are some of the causes that led to _____?"
- Relating concepts, ideas and opinions: "How does that compare to _____?"
- Predicting: "What will do next?"
- Describing: "What did you observe happening?"



Zoom meeting,
with video



Zoom meeting,
audio only





Cameras Off or On???

- You can teach self-conscious students to turn off the self-view mode.
- If possible, don't require students to turn on their cameras – encourage them instead.



Engaging Students Virtually

- Waiting Rooms
- Brief Office Hours
- Embedded Feedback
- Personal Videos
- Phone Calls
- Texts



**SO YOU LET YOUR STUDENTS
CHOOSE THEIR OWN PARTNERS?**

I, TOO, LIKE TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY



Provide Choices!!!





JUST BECAUSE YOU
COVERED IT, THAT DOESN'T
MEAN THEY LEARNED IT.



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