



# Early Childhood Education Council Alberta Teachers' Association

*A specialist council for ECS and grades 1, 2 and 3 teachers*



## Welcome

In this edition, you will find many links to online learning sites that will help you prepare online lessons and students as learners! We have also included some self-care tips as most of us are now working remotely as parents/family members/teachers/caregivers all at the same time! Also there are some fun activities you can try at your next live chat with your students! Have fun and take care!

- ECEC Calgary Regional

### ECEC COUNCIL 2019-2020

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#### **Tech: Tips and Tricks**

A collection of tips and tricks using online teaching platforms!



#### **Inspiration and Wellness**

What are you doing to take care of yourself?



#### **Try it Online Tomorrow!**

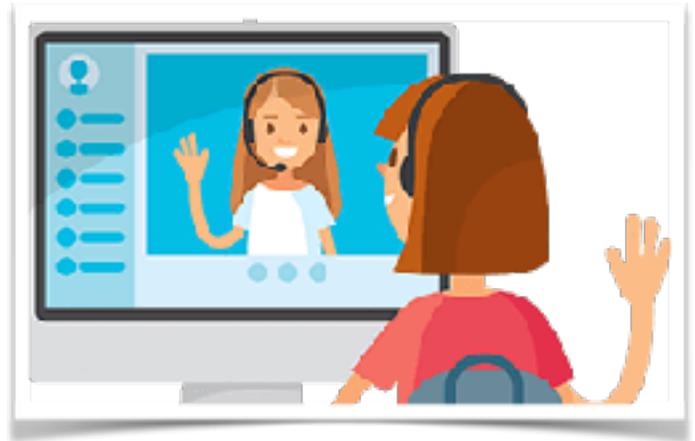
Super fun and easy things to try with your class online.

# President's Message

## A message from our Calgary Regional President

Fellow Warriors,

What a time we find ourselves in as educators! Never in a million years did I think I would be teaching Kindergarten remotely. When COVID19 struck Alberta, and we all found ourselves in this "new normal," I reacted with big emotions. "No way was I going to learn and use an online platform to interact with my kids. It just wouldn't work." Fast forward seven weeks later, my students have amazed me and proven me wrong (and so have their parents). I'm connecting with them twice a week through Google Meets and they are navigating the functions on their own!



This pandemic has made it clear to me what I enjoy most about being an educator, it's the relationships I build and foster in the classroom. It is these connections that I am missing dearly right now. I miss watching the children support each other and problem solve during centres, I miss the precious banter and chit chat of snack time, and I really miss the endearing hugs from the kiddos. Never will I take them for granted again! I'm trying to find the positive in this experience. I am learning so much on the technology side of things. I am doing things I never thought I could do before this.

Moreover, I have really appreciated the professional development and webinars the ATA has offered online. If you haven't checked any of the content out yet I encourage you to do so. I really enjoyed the Flipgrid and Screencastify sessions. As well, ECEC is conducting weekly ConnectEd Chats as a means of professional connection and collaboration. You can find all of this by clicking the following link

[https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/ATA\\_PD/SupportsForOnlineLearning/Webinars](https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/ATA_PD/SupportsForOnlineLearning/Webinars)

Our Calgary Regional had an entirely different newsletter planned to go out to you on April 1st. However, we came together on Zoom and brainstormed content that is meaningful and useful to you **right now** as you are in the trenches of teaching during a pandemic. We hope you find something that can support your class and teaching.

I choose connection over curriculum each day as I sit in front of this laptop screen. I encourage you to do the same.

May you stay healthy and safe in your home,

Meghan Clark  
Calgary Regional President



# Tech Tips, Tricks and Tools for Online Teaching and Learning!

Teaching and learning is the new normal these days in Alberta! With so many programs to use and all the add ons and buys ins what is one to do? We have compiled a list of tools that are easy and mostly free (during this COVID pandemic) that you can use in your online classroom! Check it out!

## Websites for students:

**Toy Theater:** is a collection of interactive educational games for your classroom. These are all free and will work on all devices. <https://toytheater.com/>

**Mystery Science:** offers open and go Science lessons to engage students in learning. There are many connections to our Alberta Curriculum. <https://mysteryscience.com/docs/distance-learning>

**Wonderopolis:** Have a question about something? Type it in the search box and see if you can find the answer! <https://www.wonderopolis.org/>

## Tools for Teachers:

**Screeencastify:** Record yourself and your screen to enhance your teaching! Using code CAST\_COVID you can get unlimited Screeencastify for a year. <https://www.screencastify.com/>

**Math Visuals** -AMAZING resource of math visuals, and resources for teaching foundational number sense concepts <https://mathvisuals.wordpress.com/math-flips/>

**Wheel Decide:** a great little Spin the Wheel type tool <https://wheeldecide.com/>

## Tools for learning:

**FlipGrid:** A great way for students to engage in online learning by creating short videos. Perfect for ALL ages! [www.flipgrid.com](http://www.flipgrid.com)

**Boom Learning Decks:** online decks of cards that cover a multitude of topics from math to science to social! It is a paid account, but there are many free decks you can assign your students to use. [www.boomlearning.com](http://www.boomlearning.com)

**Open Middle Problems:** Engaging critical thinking math tasks <https://www.openmiddle.com/>

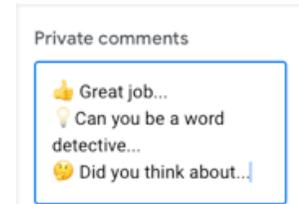
**Which One Doesn't Belong:** Engage in a conversation about which of the four pictures doesn't belong and why! The conversation is endless! <https://wodb.ca/>

**Padlet:** collaboration tool to share learning. [www.padlet.com](http://www.padlet.com)

# Making your Google Classroom User Friendly!

For many of us, we are now using Google Classroom as our online platform to deliver lessons and activities. There are a few things you can do in Google Classroom to make your life easier! Here are some things to consider!

- When providing feedback in Google Classroom, use the emojis (access by either clicking on the mouse track with 2 fingers, as you add the private comment area, or use CONTROL + click) to provide some visual feedback/cues.



- Are you getting inundated with emails in your Google Classroom? Did you know that you can choose which emails you receive?

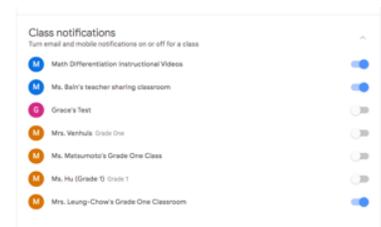
1) Click on the located on the top left-hand side of your Google Classroom



2) Scroll all the way down to the bottom of the menu and click on the settings icon



3) Then toggle on/off the notifications you want.



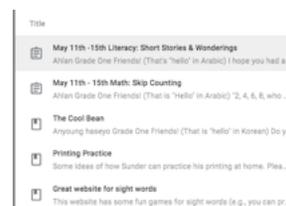
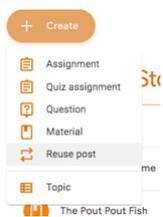
- Did you know that when you add other teachers into your Google Classroom, you can share lessons with all the links and materials added?

1 In the “Classwork” session, click on



4 Select the lesson/assignment you'd like to use

2 Click on “Reuse Post”



3 Select the teacher's class the assignment is located in

5 Click reuse and it will automatically be uploaded on your page



# Who is taking care of YOU?

When the government announced that classes would be cancelled for the rest of the year on March 15, it was a surreal moment for many educators. Many of us returned to the workplace on Monday, March 23 only to see your students' shoes still on their desks, art projects left to dry over the weekend to be completed that Monday, student writing books open at their last thought from the Friday before, forgotten lunch kits and outdoor clothes left on hooks... it was a sad realization that we and our students were somehow short changed for the remainder of the school year. We were immediately thrown into a tizzy of ONLINE learning and teaching! What would it look like? What platform? How? When? Our administrators were still ironing things out, staff didn't know if they were staying or going? The City didn't know the breadth of chaos ensued by closing essentials like daycare! BUT... we are a resilient profession. Within days, we had plans in place, a platform to learn, create and deliver lessons to our students. We figured out our own personal childcare issues, we began to teach. We took care of our school families, our school babes, "our" children and we continue to do so. But... have we been taking care of ourselves? Our own families?

Dr. Jody Carrington in an online webinar held early in May said it best "We have to take care of ourselves before we can take care of others." She talked about self care and the importance of YOU being ok. We are the frontline workers in education. Our physical locations and delivery methods may have changed, but our philosophy, our vision, our pedagogy...US... we have not. We have instead adapted, shown resilience, demonstrated solidarity, confronted feedback (both positive and negative), we have set up home teaching stations and have assured parents that it's ok if you can't do it! We are teachers, our superpower is getting our kiddos back on track when and if we return to the classrooms in the Fall.

So now that you have *mastered* this online teaching thing, are YOU taking care of yourself? Are you taking breaks? Splitting the workload amongst colleagues? Enjoying your own family? Your own littles? Are you setting work hour boundaries? Are you creating and fostering a positive mindset while in lockdown/quarantine? How are you taking care of YOURSELF?



Here are some ideas for you!

- Take lots of breaks! Sitting at your work station too long restricts blood flow and hampers creativity! (not to mention causes lots of aches and pains!) Get up! Stretch! Go for a quick walk! Do a load of laundry! Prep dinner! Have a cup of coffee out in the yard! Send a quick text!
- Eat healthy! Stock your fridge and pantry with healthy food that will sustain you through your workday!
- Drink lots of water! Stay hydrated!
- Take a few minutes to cuddle your littles if they are home with you! Research something with them! Cook with them! Watch a video with them. They learn from your responses!

# Online fun with your students:

## Try some of these at your next online meeting!

We all know that face to face interaction with our students is key to our successful relationships with them. Many of us are using an online platform to communicate with them - Google Meet, Zoom, Skype... Whatever you are using you can still have some fun with your students at your next meet.

**Charades!** Private message one student something to act out and have the rest of the class take a guess. (you can also ask students to turn their backs to the computer and show the acting student a picture or words to act out!)

**Corners!** Have students pick a number between 1-10 and show it with their fingers or number cards. You roll or pick a number and students with the matching number have to put their numbers down! Last number wins!

**Scavenger Hunts!** Think of a number of items that the students may have at home (colours, kitchen items, clothing items, shapes of something) call items out one at a time and have students get up and find them in their house and bring back to their devices to show you! Make sure you ask them to put everything back when you are done!

**Reading Together!** Many authors have released videos of their books being read! You can share your screen and listen to a story together. Or read a book from a chapter book together - have your students get all cozy and listen while you read! A great book to start with is "The Book With No Pictures" by BJ Novak. It is hilarious and will have your kids laughing! They will definitely ask you to read it again.

**Guided Drawing!** YES this can work online! Have students get blank pieces of paper and something to draw with... as you give directions, students will draw along! Share your pictures with each other at the end! Make sure you draw something too!

**"Never Have I Ever":** Read or say statements (never have I ever gone to Disneyland) and students who have NOT done the statement keep their hand up! You can use both hands, fingers, sticks... student(s) with the most hands/fingers/sticks left over wins! You can look online for lots of kid friendly statements

**"Pictionary":** this works best if students have access to drawing boards that can be shared on their screen or in their house...classic pictionary game!

**"Categories:** students have to come up with a list of items starting with a certain letter.

There are many other activities you can play online with your students! Have fun! Change it up! Enjoy your face-to-face time together!