**Teaching in the Time of Quarantine**

We’re living and working in uncertain times, and it’s hard to know what to do and what not to do in regard to distance learning and posting on social media during the extended school break. Here are some helpful tips from your colleagues at ISTA, who are working during this time to provide you with helpful information and tips to keep yourself not only informed, but in good standing with your school corporation and students during this time.

Do you have additional suggestions? Send them to us at amiller@ista-in.org

**Top 10 (+1) suggestions for using social media and online platforms during the work from home/distance learning period:**

1. Whichever platform you choose, give yourself time to learn it. Be present when you’re on it. Minimize distractions.
2. Commit to creating community online. It’ll be important for your students to feel connected to you and each other during this time.
3. Stay positive about the students and patient with their progress. They’re learning as they go just as you are.
4. Avoid complaining about having to work during the hiatus. Just like quarantining is for the greater good, refraining from complaining will help your local association make a case that you should be paid your full salary because you’re still working even though not physically in the building.
5. Even though it’s tempting, do not book a trip to a different location during this time. Not only will that look like you’re using this as a paid vacation, you may also get exposed to the virus by others looking to escape, and—worst case scenario—you could get grounded many miles away from family and friends if states close their borders.
6. Be encouraging of colleagues who have had to learn online options quickly, sometimes without a lot of tutorials.
7. Be patient with parents who are dealing with stressors professionally and personally as well as with the added pressure of helping their students with online assignments.
8. Steer conversation online away from all COVID-19 all the time. A little reassurance for your students will help those who need it, but too much conversation might upset those with anxiety disorders.
9. Create a daily schedule for yourself that allows for some downtime.
10. Take online articles and posts with a grain of salt. The only verified reports are coming out of reliable organizations such as the CDC, WHO, and Dept. of Public Health.
11. Follow ISTA online for more articles and blog posts to help you during this time. Visit [ista-in.org/COVID19](https://www.ista-in.org/our-association/indiana-schools-and-the-coronavirus-outbreak) for more information.

**And if you have the time and ability to get creative, or to explore new things:**

1. Questions to ask yourself for daily self-care:
	1. What am I grateful for today?
	2. Who am I checking in or connecting with today?
	3. What expectations of “normal” am I letting go of today?
	4. How am I getting outside today?
	5. How am I moving my body today?
	6. What beauty am I creating, cultivating, or inviting in today?
2. Spend some time laughing by watching Gerry Brooks – <https://www.facebook.com/gerrybrooksprin/>
3. Download some free books, crafts, art, and activities from the New York Public Library – <https://nypl.org>
4. Discover resources to support autistic individuals – <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>
5. Enjoy remote PE instruction from PE teacher Joe Wicks – <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz0go1pTda8>
6. Practice online yoga to help cope with stress
7. Download workout videos from YouTube
8. Journal or document your quarantine experience, either for yourself or to share with your online community
9. Explore the Chrome Music Lab – <https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/>
10. Play some math games using cards – <https://www.weareteachers.com/math-card-games/>
11. Take up a new hobby that you can teach yourself or learn from online tutorials—you’ll be surprised at how much stress that alleviates!
12. Stay connected with colleagues and friends online by using video chat apps and sites like Facebook messenger, Marco Polo, etc. There are even games you can play online and movies you can watch with friends through Netflix.
13. Encourage your students to write to you or each other to keep in touch. Remember how cool it was to get letters from pen pals? They can also write letters or e-mails to family members they are not able to see currently.
14. Check out social media where several celebrities and educators are reading books aloud
15. Consider what Scholastic has to offer with classroom magazines – <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html?promo_code=6249&eml=CM%2Fsmd%2F20200312%2F%2Ftxtl%2Ffacebook%2Fed&linkId=84223338>
16. Take an online museum or aquarium tour with students or friends. Or heck, even by yourself! No lines, no waiting!
	1. Georgia Aquarium – <https://www.ajc.com/lifestyles/this-live-video-penguins-the-georgia-aquarium-will-just-the-distraction-you-need-today/2HcVUeFp3gPdmNQ64zOeCM/>
	2. Cincinnati Zoo – <http://cincinnatizoo.org/home-safari-resources/>
17. Break out that coloring book from 2017 (when it was all the rage) and some cool markers or colored pencils
18. Share resources for students to try online art lessons – <https://www.youtube.com/c/WildFreeandCrafty?fbclid=IwAR2DR82a7f54WzB7csnZGxjAreLp5fOMR7TFqSx32d4x-LXGK9hMxSY4vf0>
19. Ask students to use sidewalk chalk to create art or do assignments in the fresh air away from others if possible
20. Create the ultimate quarantine playlist. “Don’t Stand So Close to Me” and “Can’t Touch This” should make the cut. 😊

Above all, to keep yourself mentally healthy and strong, stay away from excessive consumption of media. Too much of anything isn’t good for us!