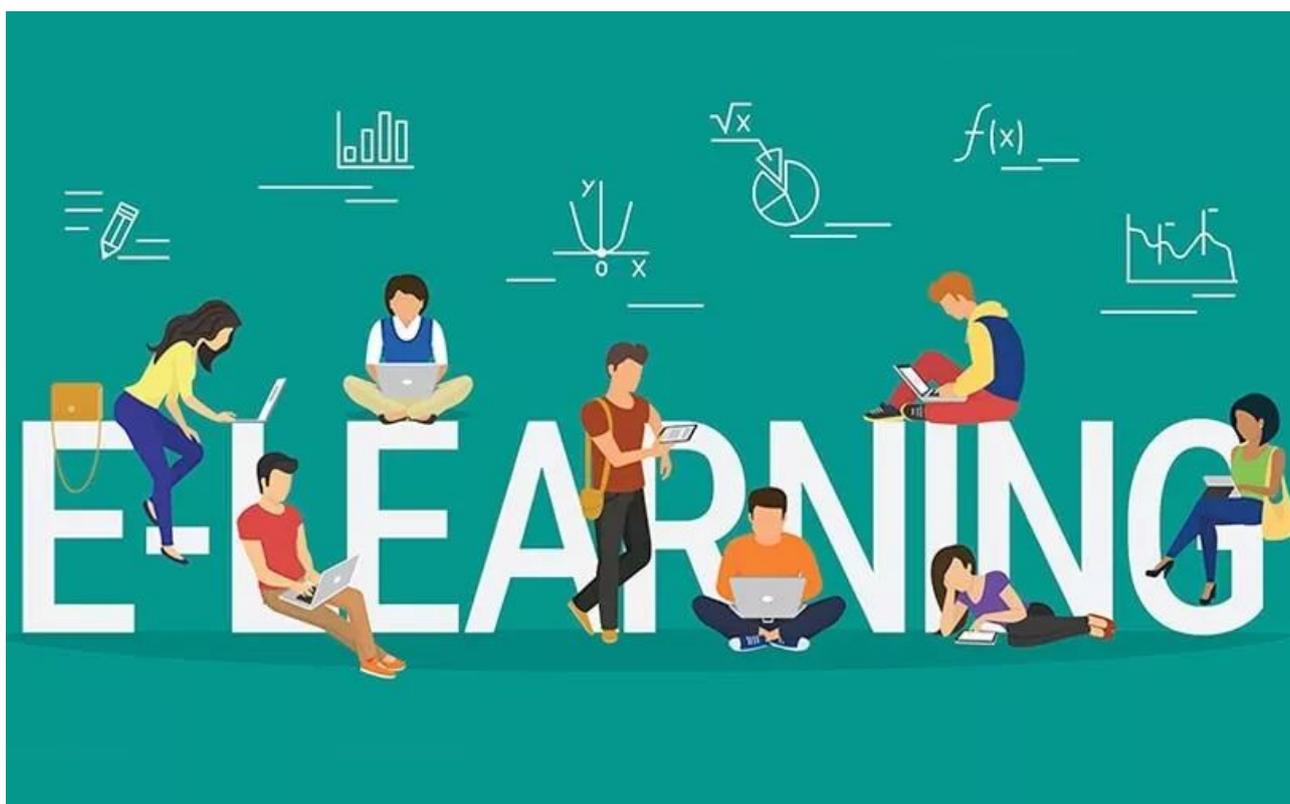# All You Need for Effective and Engaging Online Learning

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With many schools closed until at least the end of the month, it can be difficult for teachers, parents, and students to find creative ways to continue learning from home. Thankfully, there are many online resources and tools available that can help support schools and families during this time. Below are some great tips for teachers, parents, and students on how to make use of these tools to make online learning effective, interesting, and engaging.

1. Tips for Teachers to Manage Online Learning

Online learning can be opportunity for students to develop their ability to self-regulate and take responsibility for their learning. To make the most of online lessons, here are a few tips to keep in mind.

- *Make use of tools students already know*

Many schools already make use of online learning platforms to help students keep track of their work and progress. Build upon tools students already know to facilitate their understanding, and make use of the varied features they offer. *For example, class forums can be used to integrate group work, while planning tools can be used to help students set goals and a learning schedule for themselves.*

- *Make it interactive*

Learning is most effective when students get a chance to engage. To avoid students getting distracted or bored, encourage them to participate by providing opportunities for them to **ask questions, encouraging virtual group work and use of student forums**, and using varied learning formats (e.g., videos, interactive learning games, online resources).

For example, assigning students to online study teams, in which they need to divide work amongst themselves and consult with their teammates to complete tasks, can help students to feel engaged and connected with their peers.

- ### *Make it flexible*

To ensure that all students are able to learn effectively, make sure students have the opportunity to review and access course materials on their own schedule, by making lectures available to listen to more than once, and allowing them to easily access texts and exercises as well practice questions. Additionally, balancing online content between group learning time (e.g., lectures), and individual learning time (e.g., assigned individual reading, research tasks, or practice exercises) can help students to take control of their learning.

- ### *Make it relevant*

Online instruction is most effective when it is linked to things students are learning in class or experiencing in their own lives. Connecting online learning with content focused work can help students to build necessary background knowledge for future learning, as well as remain engaged. *For example, link learning units that you are working with in class or will be working on once classes resume with activities that can be done online, such as researching a topic of interest, assigning relevant texts and questions, or asking students to prepare a short flyer or presentation to present to their classmates.*

2. Advice for Parents on Supporting Your Child's Online Learning

Parents can also support students in making the most of online learning, by helping them structure their time and learning. Below are a few things parents can do at home to support their child's learning.

- *Help your child make a study plan and stick to it*

Without the structure of school, it can sometimes be difficult for children to stick to their learning. Taking some time to outline a study plan with your child can help them maintain a routine. For example, this can mean helping them plan blocks of time they will use for learning, break down the tasks they need

to work on in different steps, and create an outline of tasks they need to do and timeline for completing them.

- ***Set up a dedicated learning space***

Helping your child create a space dedicated for their learning, where they can work quietly and without distractions, can help them concentrate more easily and learn more effectively.

- ***Balance online time and offline time***

In helping your child through this period, it's also important to help them balance the time spent online with time spent offline, to allow them to recharge and refocus. Encourage them to take frequent breaks to stretch, move around a bit, and drink some water, and encourage them to let you know when they are feeling overwhelmed and need a break.
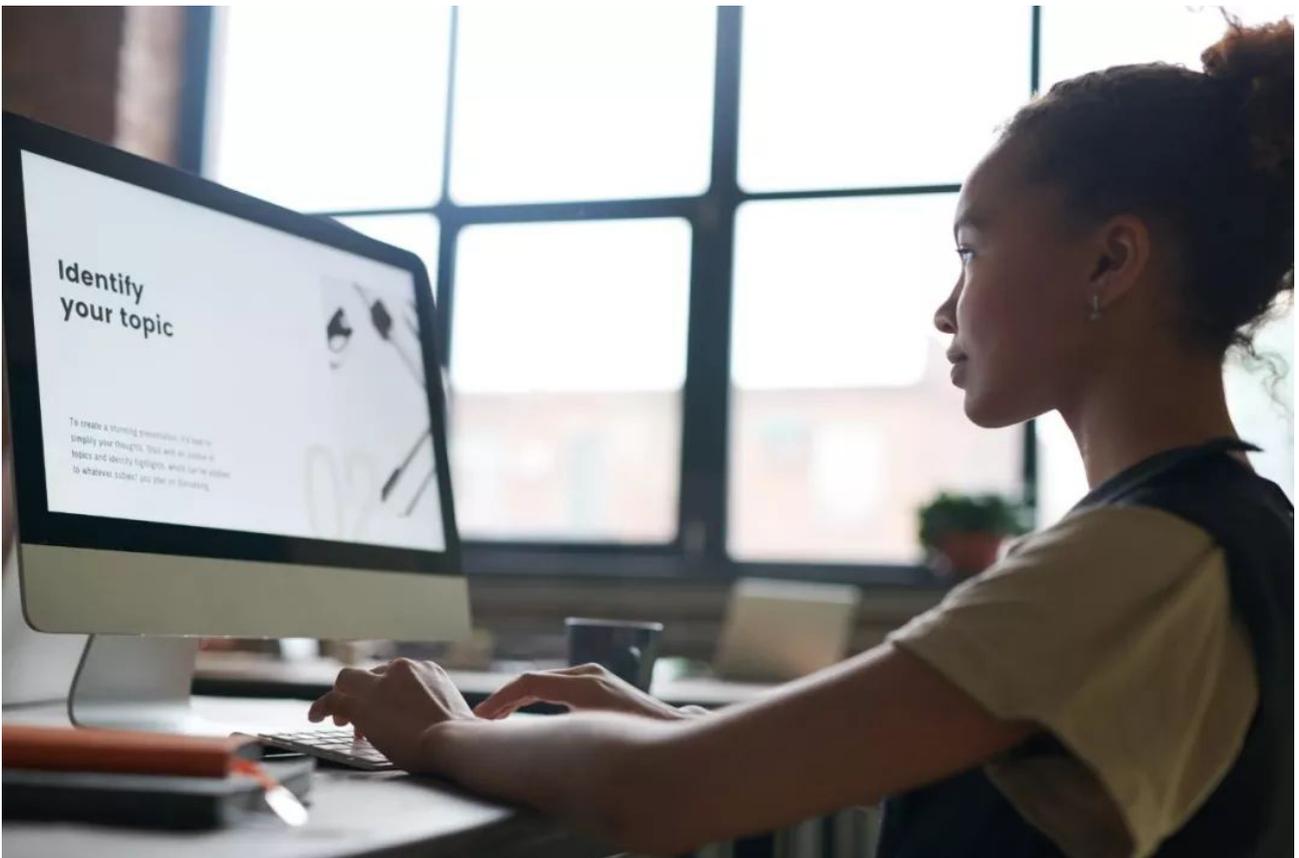
3. Resources for Students and Teachers

While many schools may already have online learning platforms, several online resources may be helpful to further support teachers, parents, and students in finding the most effective ways to learn from home.

- **Online conferencing platforms**, such as *Zoom (zoom.us), CCtalk (cctalk.com) or Microsoft Teams (teams.microsoft.com)*, can be used to

set up group or individual video call sessions. Teachers can use them for group or individual lessons, while students can use them to meet up with their class groups to discuss projects.

- **E-portfolios and virtual learning platforms**, such as *ePEARL (epearl.co.uk)*, can be used to help students set goals, plans, and track their progress. They can also help teachers keep track of the work their students are doing, and provide feedback to help them progress.
- **Several online learning platforms** in different content areas can enable students to practice key skills at their own pace. For example, in reading the following platforms can be helpful to **support students' reading**: *Epic! Books (getepic.com), Readworks (readworks.org), Starfall (starfall.com), Read Naturally (readnaturally.com)*.
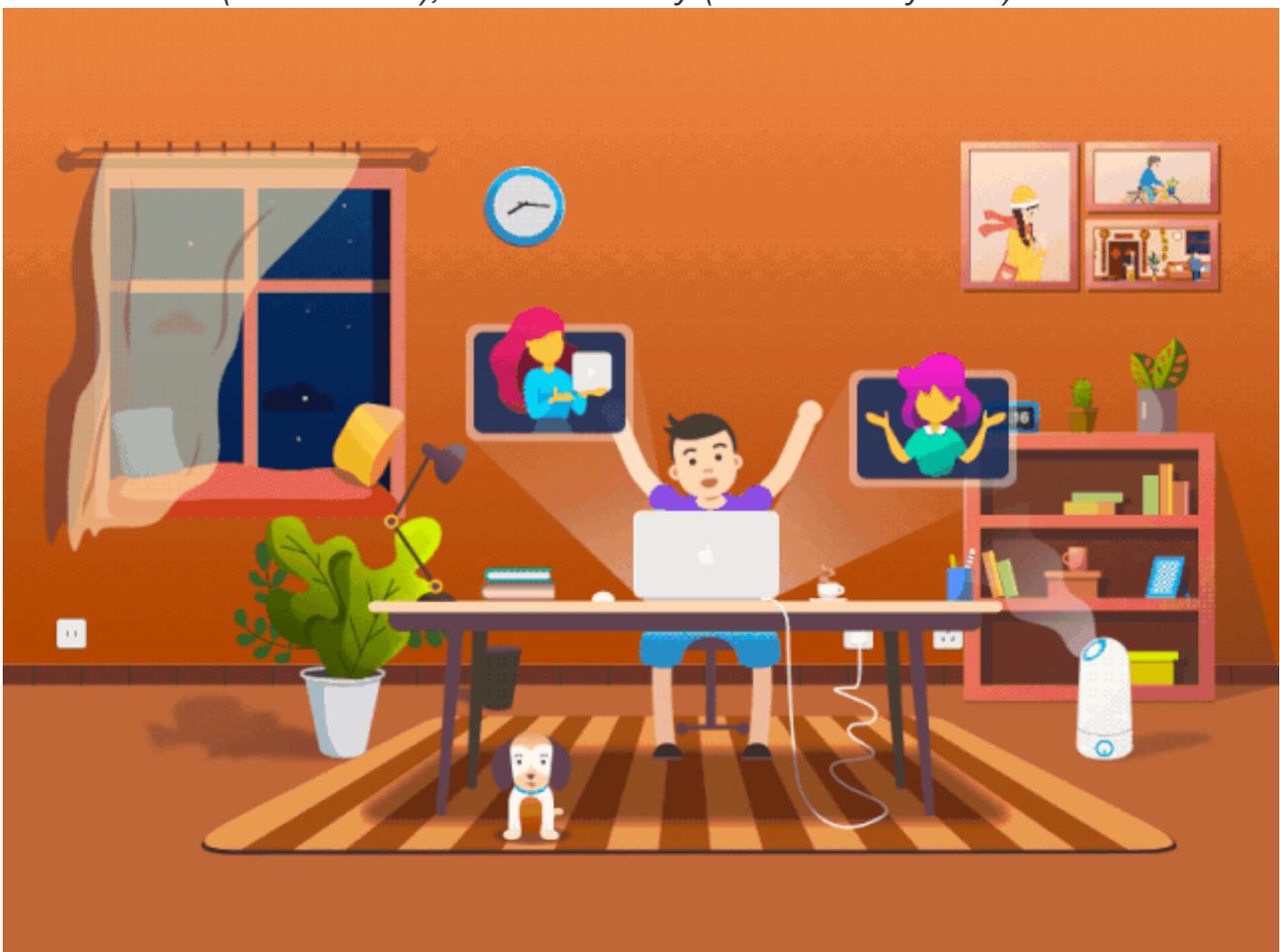
Now you are equipped to make the best of this time of online learning – *all the best!* Stay tuned with us for more educational advice and suggestions.
__About Miriam McBreen__

Miriam McBreen is a Reading Specialist at ELG.
She holds a B.A.Sc and M.A. in cognitive science from McGill University in
Canada and Copenhagen University in Denmark respectively. After her M.A.,

she returned to McGill to pursue a Ph.D. in educational and counseling psychology, currently in progress. Her Ph.D. research focuses on reading and motivation, with the goal of creating more effective ways of teaching children with reading difficulties.

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