

# Top 10 Teaching Tips for Helping 2e Students with Distance Learning



supports 2e (twice-exceptional) kids by building bridges between their educators and parents. When asked what's most important for teachers to know about distance learning for 2e students, our members recommend these top tips.

**What is 2e?** Children who possess exceptional talents AND experience learning differences such as ASD, ADHD, dyslexia, and anxiety.

- 1. Build trust.** 2e kids rely on a trusted bond with their teacher for motivation, especially in challenge areas. Get to know students with 1:1 online sessions and remote "ice breakers"; find common interests and share personal stories. Consider a driveby "wave" or book/materials "pick up" at school to start a connection.
- 2. Establish strong school/home partnerships.** Parents' ability to support their kids vary with different family circumstances, but there is no way around the fact that parents are now part of the teaching team. Teachers should consider ways to collaborate with parents, who see their child's successes and struggles with distance learning firsthand.
- 3. Leverage strengths and interests.** 2e learners engage best when their passions are woven into their schoolwork - and, during distance learning, teachers and parents can work together to find at-home assignments and tools that play to children's interests.
- 4. Be clear about assignments and meetings.** Provide a one-stop-shop for assignments and online meetings; a daily/weekly schedule is critical. It's important to explicitly teach and model organization and time management skills.
- 5. Check in frequently.** Many 2e kids struggle with planning, execution, and the communication and advocacy skills to proactively seek help when they are stuck; this can be tricky for teachers to detect with remote learning. Frequent check-ins can prevent learners from going down the wrong path with assignments.
- 6. Reduce anxiety.** Flexibility is key. Allow students to show knowledge and growth in different ways (such as making a movie or comic); through fewer, modified or alternative assignments (for example, skipping mastered content); and by accepting late work and corrections.
- 7. Adjust level to asynchronous development.** 2e students experience both exceptional strengths and difficult challenges, often at the same time; distance learning creates the opportunity to individualize some assignments without taking the entire class off-track.
- 8. Provide social support.** Many 2e children struggle with social interactions, while some are missing interactions with peers. Create adult-facilitated small group interactions, projects, and gametime to help kids establish friendships.
- 9. Maximize the benefits of distance learning.** Many of the challenges 2e students face in a classroom (transitions, behavior, attention) are reduced with distance learning. Provide a mix of asynchronous learning (allowing students to work at their own pace, decide the order in which they complete work, and take breaks) and synchronous learning (for structure, social interaction, and teacher support) to optimize the benefits of each.
- 10. Take advantage of the new environment.** 2e students learn through a range of modalities and thrive on variety. Keep them engaged with online resources (interactive simulations, videos, collaboration tools, museum "tours", Padlet, Kahoot, Ted-Ed), "take home" materials kits, home-based projects (getting out in nature, helping the community, baking, "found items" projects), theme weeks, virtual music/drama/art, live PE, and Genius Hour. Find ways to integrate these approaches into your plans and work with your colleagues in your school community to build fun - for everyone!

## Challenges and Strategies

Here are strategies for addressing common challenges 2e learners face with distance learning.

Challenges	Strategies
Scaffolding Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with parents frequently to understand student needs - they'll be your eyes and ears "on the ground"</li> <li>• Provide explicit guidance to parents on how to help their kids most effectively (such as previewing the weekly schedule, checking in on progress, and suggesting their children reach out to the teacher if the student is stuck)</li> </ul>
Assignment Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a "one stop", easy to find method (e.g., Google Docs/ Slides/Calendar) with all assignments, schedules, and online meeting links for your class</li> </ul>
Keeping Up with Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage tools like Google Calendar to "invite" students to meetings, with "Zoom" links included, and set office hours</li> <li>• Encourage parents to set up a "daily check in" with their children and create a visible daily schedule (such as on a whiteboard)</li> </ul>
"Zoom" Distraction, Fatigue, and Visual Overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know the learning needs of the kids in your class as some students may need to turn off their cameras so they aren't visually distracted/overwhelmed while others need the accountability of being "on camera" to stay engaged</li> <li>• Eliminate activities that require 20+ children to "share out"</li> <li>• Aim for short meetings with small groups for younger kids</li> <li>• Integrate movement breaks, worktime, and downtime</li> </ul>
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vary due dates so that students can prioritize and the work doesn't pile up</li> <li>• Connect with parents to understand the student's anxiety and with school support staff to develop strategies</li> <li>• Provide SEL support; teach/model coping tools, self-care, and self-regulation strategies</li> </ul>
Student Disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with students about their strengths and interests and allow for tweaks to assignments to reflect them</li> <li>• Provide options in assignments so children have more choice; be flexible if parents recommend different online activities more suited to their child's interests and need for challenge or engagement</li> <li>• Allow students to show mastery in creative ways</li> </ul>
Social Time for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include group projects as part of the online curriculum</li> <li>• Integrate regular collaboration groups and opportunities for peer review, even for individual assignments</li> <li>• Schedule social time during class and breakout times for small group discussion and games</li> </ul>
Assignment Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide samples of the finished work and steps to get there so children know what to aim for</li> <li>• Allow student to turn in drafts with timely feedback along the way so there are no "gotchas" at the end</li> </ul>
Remote IEP/504 Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with your site or district Special Ed team to help children receive the support they need to be successful, including ideas on how to best connect with these learners</li> </ul>

Now more than ever parents appreciate teachers! Be patient with yourself as we navigate these uncharted waters. We're all learning! Teachers make a huge difference in the lives of their students from both near and far.