

Apple offers free consultations to help teachers make the best of online learning

27 March 2020, by Josh Rivera



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Teachers across the nation have been expected to flip the switch to online learning when schools started closing their doors in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus in the U.S.

"We have really great resources at school, but we don't get to take those home," said Sammy Brandt, a fourth grade [teacher](#) in Jackson County, Michigan.

It has been a massive change for Brandt and other teachers, accustomed to interacting with students in a shared physical classroom setting. "A lot of teachers need patience and understanding," she said. "They don't even know what kind of things they need or what kind of things are available to them" when it comes to [online learning](#).

To ease that transition, Apple is making its learning specialists available to all educators who wish to schedule free, one-on-one virtual coaching sessions. Apple confirmed to U.S. TODAY that its more than 100 educators on staff are available to help teachers—from K-12 through higher-education—hone their approach to online [student learning](#) and workflows.

Brandt, who has also started a pen-pal relationship with her students, said that one of the [important factors](#) both teachers and students have had to deal with has been access, an issue school districts have been dealing with in different ways including some providing students devices and internet access through partnerships.

"(The) direction from our district has been not to require any type of specific learning but to offer resources."

From Buncee, a creative presentation tool, to Flocabulary, an app that makes lessons into songs, to Flipgrid, a lesson-planning platform, Brandt has been slowly introducing new learning avenues—while keeping in mind that not all students are working with the same amount of technical resources.

"Some are on computers, others have tablets or phones," Brandt explained. So when it comes to providing a resource to her students, Brandt tries to make sure that it works through a web-based platform as smoothly as it does through mobile apps.

But not all teachers are vanguards on the tech front. To help, educators can email Apple Professional Learning to request a virtual coaching session or call their support line and ask to be routed there. The specialists take into account that students may not have access to the same platforms and work with teachers on workarounds.

On Tuesday, Apple released a growing collection of videos designed to help educators make the most of remote learning centered around the most common themes and questions their team is getting. However, there's still a gap between individual educators and directives from school districts.

"There needs to be somebody in the forefront in

every district providing examples and tutorials.
(Approaches are) not going to look the same for every kid," added Brandt, who also started connecting with students over Zoom conferencing.

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