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GTA Commentary on GUSD-published
[“Best Practices Research for Synchronous Remote Learning”](#)

[Below are all of the hyperlinks to the seven documents which GUSD uses to justify their proposed learning plan for summer school. **Not one of these documents is based upon studies of remote learning / teaching in a K-12 setting.** Commentary on each document is in **bold** and all documents are hyperlinked to the source material that GUSD cites.]

[Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online](#) (This document of “best practices” is entirely based on a book that is written by college professors and is solely intended for college instruction, especially graduate and post-graduate courses. Included are the “about the author” portions of the book and a couple of Amazon reviews.)

Judith V. Boettcher is a nationally known consultant and author on online distance learning. She has led faculty support organizations at Penn State University, Florida State University, worked with faculty at the University of Florida and Duquesne University and is the founder and principal of Designing for Learning. She is a frequent keynoter at teaching and learning conferences, conducts faculty workshops on best practices in online learning, consults on program designs, and coaches individual faculty. Judith is the coauthor with Rita-Marie Conrad of two editions of the *Faculty Guide for Moving Teaching and Learning to the Web* (1999, 2004) published by the League for Innovation and the first edition of *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips* (Jossey-Bass, 2010).

Rita-Marie Conrad is an online educator, award-winning author, and digital learning strategist in the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of California, Berkeley. She works with hundreds of faculty nationally as an online workshop facilitator on the topic of designing online instruction for the Learning Resources Network (LERN). Rita-Marie developed and taught online courses at Florida State University as well as several other universities. She also served as the instructional strategist for Duke University's Institute for Educational Excellence. Rita-Marie co-authored *The Faculty Guide for Moving Teaching and Learning to the Web* (1999, 2004), *Engaging the Online Learner* (2004, 2011) which received the 2012 IAP Distance Education Book award, *Assessing Learners Online* (2008), *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips* (2010), and *Continuing to Engage the Online Learner* (2012).

From a few Amazon reviews:

“Reading a handful of books as I prepare to teach online (38 years of teaching old school). **This book, like the others I've read, is primarily about teaching upper division and grad students.** I'm looking at teaching basic stat to freshmen. There's good help with course structure here. There's good links to research.”

"This is **an excellent book for the prof** or teacher wanting to expand into the online teaching community. Details out how to create online teaching communities in contrast to mere delivery of content. The tech is a bit dated, but concepts are very helpful. Some chapters a bit repetitive in terms of tech, but again, concepts define start, early mid, late mid and class closure concepts for improving learners experience. I found this book very helpful in improving my insight in online teaching processes. Fabulous for new online teachers, and good overview/update for those already in the field. Will be keeping this book on shelf for a while."

"I'm writing a course to help **faculty** transition from the face-to-face environment to the online environment. This is one of the two textbooks that I chose. Rather than being organized by topic, this book is organized by flow through the course, from beginning to early middle to late middle to closing. This allows the authors to share best practices that are unique to where one is in a course. This is especially important for those who follow the Constructivist tradition in which faculty support is gradually withdrawn as learners take on increased responsibility for constructing their own knowledge and meaning."

[Supporting Online Learning in a Time of Pandemic](#) (This document of "best practices" is a **PDF created by the USC Rossier School of Education, which is based upon the recommendations from professors who have used remote learning / teaching in their own practice with graduate students; it is not based upon K-12 research on remote learning / teaching. While many of the "recommendations" in this document may be helpful, they are based on supposition and graduate-student level participant experience, not in application in a K-12 setting. The summary of the document is below, along with a few other excerpts.)**

SUMMARY

For more than a century, USC Rossier has prepared leaders who are passionate about improving educational equity through practice, research and policy. The new realities due to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused school districts to adapt rapidly, producing new challenges and pressing questions. When we reached out to our alumni community, we learned of the equity concerns that are now top of mind; the pandemic has further exposed the ways in which class, race, ability and other identity-related inequities affect schooling.

We are pleased to provide this resource which seeks to address many of the major concerns of K-12 teachers and administrators. Bringing together the expertise of faculty who have decades of experience teaching in virtual learning environments, as well as deep knowledge of teacher education pedagogy and educational psychology, this report provides practical recommendations that we hope will serve as a guide during this difficult and complex time.

This document is meant to be a "guide," and indeed there are helpful suggestions about how to deal with "Zoombombing," but again, this is not a document that makes these suggestions based upon recent K-12 research showing that these are "effective practices" in a K-12 learning environment. Nowhere in this document is there any citation

of recent K-12 research that shows that synchronous learning via videoconferencing is a proven, effective method of instruction for K-12.

That's not to say that it isn't a helpful document. This page has helpful tips:

The following guidelines have been developed by USC Rossier faculty who have been teaching graduate students in synchronous online learning environments for the past 10 years. This perspective on teaching and learning is primarily grounded in sociocultural and constructivist learning theory, where active student participation is central to learning.

Preparing for your online class sessions:

1. Share PowerPoints and other class materials before/after class on the course website.
2. Establish a set of class norms—it's important to have a set of norms for the online learning environment; examples of norms could be:
 - Attend class in a private and quiet space.
 - Camera capability should be functioning.
 - Use headsets or earbuds for better audio quality.
 - Mute your audio unless you want to speak, this reduces background noise.
 - Explain how to indicate you want to speak (raise real hand, raise virtual hand, use chatbox, etc.)
 - Have good lighting on your desk/table in order to be seen on camera.
 - Limit distractions such as movement, pets, background activity.
 - Have appropriate dress for the camera.

Communicate with your students about holding class online:

1. Request that everyone has video and audio capabilities in advance.
2. Request that everyone tests their equipment before the scheduled live session.
3. Create a short video using screen capture to show students how to access the live session.
4. Provide contact information for technical support.

One tip also indicates that having two monitors to do video conferencing instruction is helpful: "Consider getting a second monitor/screen, especially if you plan to teach from home and you will be teaching on a laptop." [Maybe the GUSD is working on that now so that we all have the ideal home office so that we can monitor well our classes online.]

[9 Strategies for Effective Online Teaching](#) (This is a blog post from the text publisher, Pearson. There is no research listed in this document on which these recommendations are made.)

[Quality Matters K-12 Rubric, Fifth Edition for K-12 Reviews](#) (This is a one-page rubric for evaluating online courses.)



[Distance Education Models and Best Practices](#) (This is a dated document focused on higher education, using terms and phrases such as “CD-ROM,” “a recent study, published in 2005,” and “videotapes and DVDs are perhaps the most accessible and common formats for video delivery”)

[Creating effective student engagement in online courses: What do students find engaging?](#) (This article from 2010 is based upon research from surveys from students at two large midwestern universities. Nothing in this article is based on K-12 research.)

[Lessons from the CDE](#) (This is the document from the California Department of Education. Even this document contains links to research on “effective teaching online” that takes the user to [research](#) done in a higher education setting, not in a K-12 setting. This document is a list of suggestions, but it does not purport to be research-based. Nowhere in this document is the term “research-based” even used.)