ONLINE TEACHING TIPS TO ENCOURAGE YOU IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES.

With the mass of teachers going online because of COVID-19 restrictions, it can be quite the challenge to move from a physical classroom to online teaching. Many students may be familiar with technology like phones and tablets, but are not familiar with using online technology to learn English. Just getting them signed up to join a Zoom meeting can be quite chaotic. And if you are used to using handouts and realia in your classrooms to teach, going online can be just as difficult for the teacher.

We asked Rick and Patti Love (Foothills Alliance Church) to give us a few tips on meeting the challenges faced when moving to online teaching and learning for both teachers and students.

Here are some tips they suggest when using Zoom:

GETTING STARTED

- We think the Zoom invite should state the start time as 15 minutes before the start of class.
- Students and volunteers can say 'hi.'
- The Tech Host in a Zoom class can 'rename' each participant to the name we're familiar with.
- It's great to have students and volunteers who can help in a first language.
- Students are using many kinds of devices: laptops, iPhones (younger), tablets (older students)
- A challenge is the icons (chat, video, audio) on the control panel may be a bit different on various devices. (For example: **Chat** on the Host control panel will say **more…** on the students' control panel).
- A common simple issue is helping students with 'mute/unmute.'
- Students using mobile phones say the type on screen share is too small. They should print the lesson before class if possible.

LEADING A ZOOM CLASS

- The first thing I say is "It's so good to see your faces!" I wave and smile a lot.
- In our experience, the atmosphere of an online class can differ from that of an on-site class.
- An on-line class can require a bit more teacher 'control' than an on-site class.
- We call on individual students more often in an online class.
- We try to make the intro of the class interesting (fun videos of Easter Bread, hand-washing, interview guest).
- The Tech Host will type or write on the Zoom whiteboard for any lists elicited from students.
- The Tech Host will share screen to show a handout if needed. We use Word documents (not Google slides).
- In Word documents, we can highlight the question for students.
- We don't read in unison. We have various volunteers or students read out loud.

BREAKOUT ROOMS

- We recommend the first time doing an online class, don't do breakout rooms. Stay as one large group.
- In breakout groups, the leader (host) shares the lesson on the host screen.

CONCLUDING A ZOOM CLASS

- We gather back together from breakout rooms.
- We put all announcements (and lesson handouts) on a Word document to make it easier to find them.
- We like to tell everyone "We love you. We miss you. You can email me anytime to ask for a visit or prayer."

Thanks to Patti Love (Foothills Alliance Church) and Rick Love (Love New Canadians) for the great teaching online tips.

They would be happy to talk with you about online teaching. You can contact them at patricia@foothillsalliance.com or rick@lovenewcanadians.ca.