

# NWTTA NEWS

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## Teaching and Learning at Home COVID-19 Global Pandemic

On **December 31, 2019** a cluster of cases of pneumonia was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. A novel coronavirus was eventually identified as the cause. On **January 1, 2020**, the World Health Organization set up an Incident Management Support Team putting the organization on an emergency footing for dealing with a possible outbreak for a virus that would later be named Coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19 in its abbreviated form.

**Friday, March 13, 2020**, NWT Premier Caroline Cochrane delivered her first media briefing on the COVID-19 pandemic that was starting to take shape across the planet.

**Monday, March 16, 2020**, the NWTTA was informed that all NWT schools would be closed until April 14, 2020. Many schools were already on spring break with members scattered across the globe on vacation, and many other schools were on the cusp of starting their spring breaks.

**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**, a Public Health Emergency was declared in the Northwest Territories in response to COVID-19.

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**, it was announced that all NWT schools will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year with teaching and learning being done from home.

**Monday, March 30, 2020**, the GNWT Department of Education, Culture & Employment issued an [NWT Education Bulletin](#) to the general public to provide guidance on what teaching and learning from home would look like and what the adjusted teaching outcomes would be for the school year.

**Tuesday, May 12, 2020**, GNWT Public Health issued the document "[Emerging Wisely - Continued Public Health Response to COVID-19 in the Northwest Territories](#)" where it was revealed that schools were permitted to open during Phase One of recovery, which could have started as early as May 15, three days later.

**Thursday, May 14, 2020**, it was confirmed that all DEC/DEAs had voted to keep schools closed for the remainder of the school year, continuing the teaching and learning at home processes that had been established and were being implemented.

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The President's Account  
of the Pandemic

Fraser Oliver, President



On Friday March 13, I was invited by the Education Deputy Minister to attend a meeting on COVID-19 and make plans on the potential impact that it might have on the NWT schools. There were about 20 people who attended the meeting from Superintendents, Education, Culture & Employment (ECE) personnel and we were all squeezed into a small boardroom at the Department of Education. This was just before we all knew what social distancing was or before we had to practice this procedure. The world as we knew it soon was to quickly change. I was in my last few months of being the President of the NWTTA, getting ready to host my last Annual Meeting of Central Council (AMCC), and had only my reports to complete. Except for collective agreement negotiations, I was thinking the last few months of my presidency were going to be pretty uneventful. I was thinking I could coast my way to my last day on June 30. Boy, was I wrong!

The past few months have been the busiest of my four years as NWTTA President. Many daily meetings with ECE, Superintendents as well as keeping Central Executive and Regional Presidents informed. On March 16, schools were shut down and teachers were asked to leave the schools and work from home. While some schools were still in session, many schools were closed for their spring break. This meant that many teachers were outside the territory and even the country. There were daily warnings from the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of the Northwest Territories to have all Canadians who were outside the country to return immediately back to Canada.

As our members made their way back to Canada and the Northwest Territories, many of the members experienced a tremendous amount of stress from fear for their families or themselves catching this virus. Many Canadians were being infected as they traveled through airports and many of our members with families had to travel through these same airports. It took about two weeks for this fear of COVID-19 to start to settle down in the minds of NWTTA members after they had returned to their homes or found a safe place with family outside the NWT. Almost all emails, phone calls to the Executive Director and myself were members asking questions/ concerns about their personal or family safety.

It was soon after that School Boards decided to close the schools for the remainder of the school year until the end of June. Teachers would have to learn to teach from home. The stress levels for teachers once again reached a very high level. How do you teach from home, how do we engage students, how do we offer lessons through the Internet when not all students don't have a computer at home or Internet? Another way to deliver lessons was by sending physical packages home, many questions about safety, how long could COVID-19 live on paper? Could this be a way of spreading the virus? What about all my resource materials that are at the school? As you can image, the stress levels of our members was extremely

high and the types of questions Central Office was now answering were not about safety; now they were about the challenges of "teaching from home".

Early on in the pandemic I made it a priority to send a fact-based account of what decisions were being made at the Superintendents and Department of Education meetings to our members. My goal was to keep the membership informed of decisions that were affecting their lives and teaching duties. My goal also was to reach out to members who were still struggling through this pandemic and give supports and assistance.

These emails became a daily lifeline for information and it was not uncommon to have 25% of the membership read the email within the first two minutes that the email was sent and over 75% of the members read these emails on a daily-basis. I was also receiving daily on average up to 20 to 25 "thank you" emails from members who were sharing with me how much of a lifeline these emails were to them during this period of uncertainty.

COVID-19 had made us close the NWTTA office as a place of work with all staff having to learn to work from home. The office staff connected through email or video conferences. I also had daily meetings with the Executive Director, David Murphy, through video conferences, but it has been many weeks now since I last saw David in person. As mentioned earlier, with only a few months left in my term as President, I included the President-Elect, Matthew Miller into all meetings and conference calls to make the transition much smoother to better serve our members. COVID-19 was going to be here much longer than my term and Matthew was going to have to deal with it once he started.

There was also a concern early in the pandemic of what would happen if a teacher was to test positive for COVID-19. Well that happened. One of the members returning to the NWT from spring break picked up the virus in their travels. They had returned to their teaching community before any travel or mandatory isolations were in effect, where they showed symptoms of the virus and tested positive. They were medivaced to Yellowknife and had a lengthy stay in the hospital. Once they had fully recovered, the community backlash against the member was quite strong to the point where the member could not even return to their teaching community, not even to pack up their personal belongings.

Although COVID-19 caused a tremendous increase in workload for the office staff, it was very gratifying to work for the membership during this unique once in a life time event.

Fraser Oliver  
President, 2016-2020

From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

Fraser Oliver, NWTTA President <membership@nwtta.nt.ca>  
Thursday, March 19, 2020 18:29  
[NWTTA] COVID-19 Update March 19, 2020

Hello Members,

It has been a very busy week here at the NWTTA office and I want to let you know that David Murphy and I have been here answering phone calls, attending meetings, protecting member rights and will continue to work on behalf of the membership during this unique time. We encourage the members to email or call us, if you have any questions, concerns or difficulties during the upcoming weeks. When concerns or difficulties are raised with us, we are able to work with GNWT HR, ECE, and Superintendents to find positive solutions for our members.

**School Closures**

As of today all schools in the NWT will be closed until April 14. There are some schools in Hay River that will be closed to students until April 20.

**Your Location During Extended Closures**

Teachers who have not yet returned to the NWT or their teaching communities, are encouraged to stay put and be safe. If you are self-isolating or just self-monitoring, the GWNT and both Yellowknife Superintendents are encouraging members to just stay where you are.

If you have travel plans to return to your teaching communities in the near future, you are permitted to, but it is not necessary. You can "work at home" from there. The NWTTA and Superintendents have been told that there will be plenty of notification time given for teachers to return to their teaching communities.

**Emails**

Members should have access to their school email, and should check it on a regular basis for updates or direction from their supervisor (Principal or Superintendent). If you do not have access to your work email please contact your supervisor and let them know the best method of contacting you.

**NWTTA Office**

Our office will continue to be open, we encourage members to email or call if they have any concerns or questions. Office Number: 867-873-8501, Fraser's Cell 867-447-3636, David's cell 867- 444-0253.

**Community Added Travel Restrictions**

We have been hearing from some of our members that when they have returned to their teaching communities they have been asked to self-isolate even though they have not left the country or territory. Some who have already have gone through a 14 day self-isolation period for leaving the country are being asked to do another 14 day self-isolation period again once they land in their teaching communities. We have brought this to the attention of the GNWT and which went right to the Premier's office. Text posted following the Premier's involvement: "Today there was a meeting between the Premier and ministers of the GNWT and the Mayors and Chiefs. Currently, under law, municipalities do NOT have the authority to stop, detain or remove people coming to the communities. This authority rests with the GNWT Chief Medical Officer of Health and M.A.C.A. The Municipalities have asked them to deal with this situation."

# Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

March 2020 started out like any other month for us at the NWTTA Central Office. There was lots to do assisting members with questions about the collective agreements, lots of pay issues, transfer questions, resignations, grievances to focus on, assisting members with Notice to Attend meetings, assisting principals with calendar scheduling issues and requests for assistance with teacher certification.

The NWTTA, as the employer, was engaged in an interview process for a new Assistant Executive Director. Face-to-face interviews were scheduled for the later part of March for the selected applicants and the interview team was all set to go.

We had negotiation dates scheduled for the GNWT bargaining unit for May and June, we had presented the asking packages to all three employers, GNWT, YCS and YK1, we had presented the asking packages to our members, our teams were in place and we and the GNWT were ready to go. We were optimistic that we could reach a settlement with the GNWT before the end of the school year.

All NWTTA members were looking forward to March break, enjoying our vacations, relaxing and having some time off work. There were cruises planned a year in advance, trips to warm destinations, a trip to Vancouver and even the Fantasyland Hotel to do some shopping at the West Edmonton Mall for a few days. Many would go on vacation to similar destinations or take this time to visit with family and friends.

Then it happened. On March 13, 2020 President Oliver and I were invited to a meeting in a small boardroom at ECE to meet with the Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, ECE Directors and Superintendents for an update of COVID-19. We were in the room, shoulder-to-shoulder, mostly less than a foot apart. The topic was school closures and how it would affect our teachers.

While it was evident that there were many questions, answers were few. The meeting focused more on some techniques from the Chief Public Health Officer to help prevent the spread on the coronavirus (COVID-19). These included washing your hands often, avoid close contact with others if you are sick, turn and cover your

nose and mouth with a tissue and stay home if you are sick. Up to this point schools were open, restaurants were open and you could still go to a movie. We could not shake hands, but could nudge each other with our elbows or play footsie.

Shortly after this meeting the Chief Public Health Officer recommended that schools be closed. Each District Education Authority met to consider this recommendation and they decided to close schools until April 14, 2020. Around this time many schools were closed for March break and many members had left the NWT to go on vacation and to visit friends. Members who went to international destinations were told to come back to Canada by the Prime Minister and teachers who visited Canadian destinations were to stay away from the NWT until it was safe to come back. Most of these members ended up remaining away and working remotely from communities outside the NWT.

President Oliver and I began weekly meetings with ECE and Superintendents to discuss how teachers and students could keep safe. Later as schools were closed for the remainder of the school year the meetings continued with the safety focus, but also discussions on how to support students' learning at home.

After the weekly meetings with ECE and the Superintendents, President Oliver met with Central Executive and Regional Presidents to update them on the information from the meetings, answer their questions and seek advice. President Oliver invited President-Elect Matthew Miller to attend all the meetings with ECE and the Superintendents as he realized that COVID-19 would extend beyond his term of office. This would ensure that President-Elect Miller would be well versed in the COVID-19 concerns and be well positioned to continue the support to our members as President Oliver had done.


Today all schools are closed to students and many teachers are still working remotely outside the NWT. Teachers are unsure of what the future holds and are asking, Will I have to self-isolate for 14 days when I return in August and when do I have to return? What will school look like in September? Is it safe for me to return to work? Will my workday be longer? What happens if I get sick and don't have many sick days? Still lots of questions, with few answers!

# Tips from Teachers

Starting in mid-April and running until mid-June, the NWTTA published "Tips from Teachers" on Facebook, on the Cabin Radio website and Monday News/North and Friday Yellowknifer newspaper publications. The messages were provided by our members.

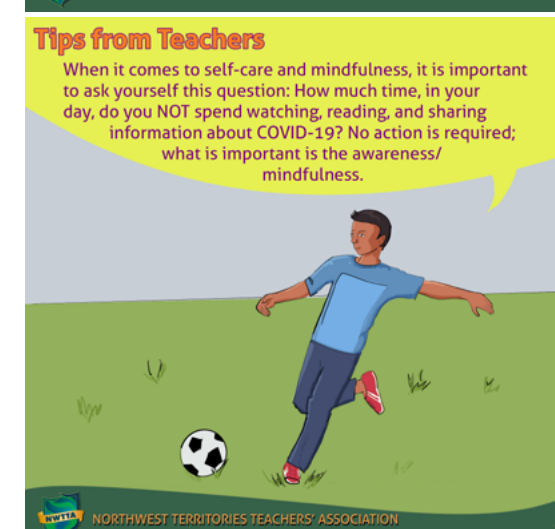
**Tips from Teachers**

Create a workspace in your home so family members know when you are working on school work. This space may let people in your home know when you are doing work and to give you some peace and quiet when you are there.




**Tips from Teachers**

When it comes to self-care and mindfulness, it is important to ask yourself this question: How much time, in your day, do you NOT spend watching, reading, and sharing information about COVID-19? No action is required; what is important is the awareness/mindfulness.



**Tips from Teachers**

Remember, some days are going to be better than others. It's okay to stop and take a break from a lesson or activity that you are struggling with and to save it for another day...us teachers have good and bad days also, and sometimes we have to stop and take a break from a lesson or activity with our classes and save it for another day.



# Teaching from Home

Sam Paquet  
from École St. Joseph School, Yellowknife (YCS region)

My name is Sam Paquet. I teach a grade 6/7 French Immersion class at École St. Joseph School in Yellowknife, but am currently working from my living room in Ottawa. I came home for the March break and had to cancel a trip to Punta Cana. What I thought was going to be spending March break in the Caribbean sun became a time of isolation at home as the number of COVID-19 cases in the city has been growing at a steady pace and is currently at 1,885 cases with 220 deaths. Having had a heart attack four years ago, this disease would be the end of me, so I take every precaution I can.

With 32 years in the classroom, mostly in the Maritimes and Ottawa, I can say that I never thought I would in my life time come to experience having to teach my class from 5,000 km away. My class is one of the best classes I've ever taught and I miss them dearly. All lessons and some assessment is being done online. We connect through Google Meet and even celebrate student birthdays with virtual birthday cakes that have singing and dancing candles. I must say that I have learned more about using computer technology in the last six weeks than I have in the past 20 years. We could say that there is some fallout from this pandemic that is beneficial.

My days are busy preparing lessons and providing feedback to my students on a daily basis, keeping track of all assignments that have been submitted, doing online workshops to become better equipped for remote teaching and also taking care of myself. I am benefiting from the warmer southern weather. It was 28 degrees today. Everything is blooming in my backyard. The birds are happy with their filled bird feeder and freshly refilled birdbath. I count my blessings everyday for still having a job, a wonderful class and remote school community to continue to work with. Every horizon offers a glimpse of hope. I used to say the rosary regularly in my youth. Over time, it got forgotten in it's box in my night table drawer. It now sits on my coffee table and is being used regularly for strength and hope. I purchased that rosary in Padua, Italy, 31 years ago and it still smells of roses. It reminds me that I can still smell the roses in these difficult times which God willing, will come to pass. We just need to keep the faith and remember to lookout for one another's well being.



# President-Elect Transition During a Pandemic

**Matthew Miller, President-Elect**

Just a few short months ago, I was planning the remainder of the school year and my transition to Yellowknife to become the NWTTA President on July 1. COVID-19 was emerging, and I remember the heartbreak for students who just found out that Arctic Winter Games would be canceled. I questioned whether or not it was an overreaction to cancel the games. I remember thinking it was better to be safe than sorry. At the same time, my spring break travel was about to begin. My family and I were off to Disney World to make some memories after a year of planning. On the third day of our trip, I started receiving texts asking how we were doing and getting updates on closures and restrictions for travel. Disneyland had announced earlier that day that it was closing due to COVID-19. We were in our own little bubble focusing on the moment and not necessarily monitoring the news. It was not long before an update came on the Disney app that the parks were closing. It set off days of canceling portions of our trip and attempting to re-book travel back to Inuvik. Although we could get out of the United States, we would need to wait in Edmonton for four days before getting back to Inuvik and the subsequent 14 days of self-isolation.

It was during this time on our way home to Inuvik, while in Edmonton, that Fraser Oliver contacted me saying he felt it would be a good idea for me to start joining teleconference calls with ECE and Superintendents. The feeling was at this point, COVID-19 would stretch past Fraser's tenure and into mine. At that time, we were in discussions to

close schools until after the Easter Holidays to get a sense of what was happening and allow time for planning. Teleconference calls with the current and newly elected Central Executive as well as Regional Presidents also began at this time. Fraser started his emails keeping members informed with the ever-changing information we were receiving. It was a stressful time as many members were still out of the territory and following the advice not to travel.

Months later, schools are still closed, although our members are working as hard as ever. We have quickly adapted to a new reality. Zoom meetings and Google classrooms became a replacement for face-to-face interactions with many families still opting for paper copies of assignments. Many educators never did make it back to the NWT, but offered lessons from across the country to their students while administrators and colleagues provided the boots on the ground. Fraser, David Murphy, and I have continued meeting with ECE and Education Leaders to plan the 2020-2021 school year in consultation with the Chief Public Health Officer.

It is a stressful time, and we still have many questions. At times the only answer for these questions is we do not know. What members can be assured of is we will continue to work on your behalf and keep you informed. We have an excellent staff at the Central Office and a great Central Executive who will be providing support during these unparalleled times. Next year may be challenging, but I am confident the members of the NWTTA will meet this challenge head-on.



(l-r) Megan, Molly, Mia and Matthew Miller

# Teaching from Home

**Chelsea Nolan**

from Chief Julius School, Fort McPherson (Beaufort-Delta region)

**Teaching from:** Havelock, New Brunswick

**Number of years as an educator:** 2

**Grade(s)/subject(s) taught:** 7/8 split, all courses except Science; High School Art

## Q. What has "teaching/working from home" looked like for you?

My community does not have wide spread Internet access, so we're creating take home work packages in 3 week sections. I create the packages and email them to the principal. At the school my SAs work with me and the principal to print, photocopy, sort, and assemble the work I've created at the varying levels of differentiation in the class. I've been trying to create work similar in ELA and math to what I'd send if students were going on the land, but as most aren't on the land I've had to adapt and create assignments that don't always reflect a hands on experience. Hopefully the second package that goes out May 8th is better than the first! It's also been a challenge communicating with families and students, when I am unable to see the work the students are completing. With these grades, especially in math, parents are unable to help, and students of this age don't feel comfortable talking to their teacher, or SA, on the phone. When possible we are trying to communicate through text, but that brings in other problems, like speed, literacy, and maintaining a 9-3 workday.

Working at home was not something that I was at all prepared to do. I came to my home to Havelock over spring break, and my husband and I are renovating. Not being able to return to Fort McPherson has forced me to start working in what will one day be our joint office, but is currently storage for the kitchen, which was gutted, and is slowly being built and assembled; storage for the basement, which has been converted into a workshop; as well as a painting space, to paint the cabinet doors. We also didn't have a desk, or even a table in our house the first week I was teaching and planning, so a lot of time was spent on Kijiji looking for something that would work for me until we are ready to fix up this room. The set I found is very comfortable and just the right height to type on a laptop and write at! Most of my clothes were also still in the NWT, so this hoodie, that my mom really didn't want me to buy when I was in 7th grade, has become a favourite again! Long lives the cartoon cat.

## Q. What do you want those in the future to know about the experience of living and teaching through COVID-19?

For the teachers in the future you need to remember that kids and families are resilient. There is also going to be a new appreciation for those in the communities that completed most of the high school work through mail in packages. While I've spoken to some people like that I have a newfound respect for them and their teachers. Distance learning isn't new in the north, and while nothing can replace an instructor in the classroom, the students who are willing to work in school, are likely doing their best at home as well. We need to be accepting that "doing our best" will look a little different for all students, and the staff, but that everyone is working hard to learn and help others learn.



# PD Corner

## The Pandemic Files

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator

The GNWT-NWTTA Professional Development fund has had to make a few adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the usual programs that the PD fund supports have been canceled (Educational Leadership Program, Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute, summer face-to-face courses, and many of our supports to Indigenous Language classes). At the same time the PD fund has seen an increased demand for distant credit programming. We have approved classes for over \$100,000 this year with a large influx of applications for spring and summer courses. The year before we approved courses for \$76,000, so a large increase in members taking courses.

This summer many Universities are canceling all face-to-face courses, and switching to entirely online content. This will be a disappointment to some, as attending school in the summer was looked forward to, but in light of the pandemic, many teachers will be able to continue their studies over the summer from home.

About 120 teachers took advantage of the enrollment to the Teaching Channel. This online Professional Development tool was offered to teachers to help them continue to develop and share ideas in an online environment. Teachers continue to be challenged to develop meaningful online and tangible paper-based

home-schooling tools.

The Canadian Teachers Federation is surveying teachers across Canada in order to gauge how distance learning has worked over the past few months. The survey data will help us to look at the delivery of distance education for the point of view of teachers, looking to rate its effectiveness.

The PD fund will likely have a lot of interest in supporting members to take online classes in the fall. It looks like travel will be restricted, which make sit hard to attend professional development events. Distance Education has always been a popular way for NWT teachers to study. It looks like it will continue for the near future.

A word of caution to members that are from Ontario. Many teachers that are from Ontario want to take Additional Qualification (AQ) courses. These courses are great professional development, and are also a requirement to teach in certain situations in Ontario. That being said, they are not always offered for credit, or if they are there is usually a limit to the number of AQ courses that can be used for credit towards a degree program. They are often not eligible to be used towards a license raise in the NWT. If one of your objectives in taking distance credit courses is to raise your license, then I would suggest enrolling in a Masters program, or working towards a specific degree. These are more likely to be accepted for this purpose.

## Teaching from Home

**Jerome Rondeau**

from École Sir John Franklin High School, Yellowknife (YK1 region)

**Number of years as an educator:** 20+

**Grade(s)/subject(s) taught:** Alternative Program Math Science

**Q. What has "teaching/working from home" looked like for you?**

A great deal of using the computer and cell phone to keep in touch with the students. Also, setting aside part of my living space for a pile of marking guides and marked work from the students.

**Q. What do you want those in the future to know about the experience of living and teaching through COVID-19?**

That though there was a massive disruption in the way we did our jobs, we were able to adapt, and improvise our way to being able to deliver a program for the students for the remainder of the school year.



## Teaching from Home

**Maureen Hans**

from N.J. Macpherson School, Yellowknife (YK1 region)

Hi, my name is Maureen Hans and I have been teaching with YK1 for 28 years. My current position is a grade 4 classroom teacher at NJ Macpherson School in Yellowknife, but I have taught Physical Education K-8, as well as many various grade 4-8 classes over the years. The staff at NJ like to have fun, so this picture was from Crazy Hair Day for our Google Meet staff meeting during COVID-19.

I'd like to share my pandemic experience in a poem that I wrote.



Both staff and students had wrapped up Term 2  
Excitement was building for what we would do,  
As we all headed off to enjoy our March break  
With many of us having flights to take.

But plans were interrupted the very next day  
When PM Trudeau came on the news to say,  
The virus is showing up in Canada now  
We have to take action and this is how:  
No going beyond our own country's border,  
At first a suggestion, which turned into an order.  
No Mexico, Hawaii, Disneyland, or cruise,  
To frozen Northerners came as crushing news!

Locked in our homes for a 'stay-cation'  
Maybe not as bad as the rest of the nation,  
Which was hit very hard with COVID-19  
One of the worst pandemics this country has seen.

As the days turned to weeks a decision was made  
The Chief Public Health Officer's guidelines obeyed,  
Schooling will look different now 'til the end of the year  
This created some stress, anxiety, and fear,  
For educators, parents and students as well  
And where this was going, no one could tell.

On a steep learning curve, I was sent out to gain  
All the technological knowledge that I could obtain,  
Google Classroom, hangouts, and Google Meet  
As an older teacher, this was no small feat!

Raz-kids, IXL, online programs galore  
Navigating the Internet; a daily chore.  
And just as we began to get into routine  
The CPHO came on the TV to be seen,  
And announced that a school could now open the door  
We educators gasped and fell to the floor!

"How will we manage to keep kids 6 feet apart?  
And get everyone masks before we can start?"  
Thank goodness the NWTTA had our backs,  
And revived us from the initial heart attacks!  
The school boards and Supe's will work hard on a plan  
To go back in the fall as safely as we can.

So from now until then we continue to teach  
In as many ways as we can to try to reach  
All the young ones we miss seeing each day  
And to send them a message, we would like to say,  
We will get through this, we are sure it is true  
Until then, stay safe, and know we love you!

By Maureen Hans, May 2020

# Teaching from Home

**Sean Daly**

from N.J. Macpherson School, Yellowknife (YK1 region)

Over several weeks my online teaching has evolved. I had a significant breakthrough when I discovered I could Zoom into a meeting twice with two vantage points. Front facing computer to see all the students and a camera on a stand to focus in on the drawing I was doing for them to observe and learn. This seems like a eureka moment in the 2020 homeschooling months.



# Teaching from Home

**Stephen Richardson**

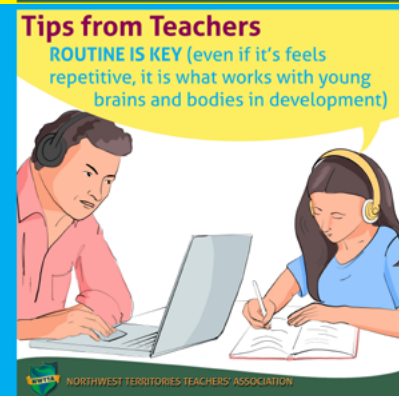
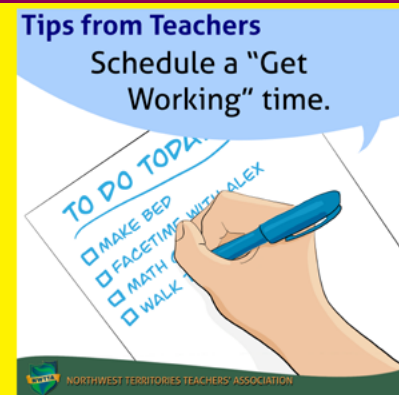
from École St. Joseph School, Yellowknife (YCS region)

Here is a picture of a "ratios/chemistry" lesson I did with my son at home on making hand sanitizer. It turned out perfect. I've started giving them haircuts too...might open a barber shop upon our return. Haaaa.



## Teaching from Home

Anne Payne from Chief Julius School, Fort McPherson (Beaufort-Delta region)



# Teaching from Home

**Sharon Allen**

from Łı́ıdlı́ Kúę Regional High School, Fort Simpson (Dehcho region)

**Teaching from:** Łı́ıdlı́ Kúę/ Fort Simpson

**Number of years as an educator:** 8

**Grade(s)/subject(s) taught:** Indigenous Language, Traditional Arts, and Aboriginal Studies

**Q. What has "teaching/working from home" looked like for you?**

Teaching/working from home has been quite an adjustment. Especially at the beginning of the stay at home advisory from the Chief Medical Officer of the NWT. We had gone on spring break in early March, and then this came into effect. I did not know for sure when I would or not be working. Once I knew I would continue working I was happy that I could continue. It took some maneuvering of our house and get used to the idea of working from home.

I am creating bi-weekly packages for my students and creative when making up packages. For one assignment I had the idea that students can make masks for their own family members.

I've been able to move my language classes onto social Media and activate an already created site: Denę Zhatje on Facebook and upload videos and instructions to my students by creating a school Facebook page as well. I was also interviewed by Cabin Radio and CBC on teaching during COVID-19.

On a weekly basis I can communicate with parents, students by phone and email. Sometimes I see my students out and about and it's been wonderful.

**Q. What do you want those in the future to know about the experience of living and teaching through COVID-19?**

To keep sane during the COVID-19, I've been able to stay active, spend more time with my family, communicate with friends online, volunteer and continue to work on my other projects. One thing that happened is the threat of rising waters near our home. We were given one hour to evacuate, not long after we found out the water levels had dropped.

Some things have not been an easy adjustment in my hometown is we did not have adequate internet access for all our students. We also did not have enough supply of laptops for students to complete their assignments.



# 2018-2020 Central Executive

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## Tips from Teachers

If you feel overwhelmed,  
remember that you're doing the  
best you can.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

**Cover Photo:** Mildred Hall School (YK1 region) staff meeting on Zoom early on during the pandemic.

**Allison McArthur** from Joseph Burr Tyrrell in Fort Smith (Fort Smith region) won the March 2020 Newsletter Trivia!

## Central Office Contact

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### OFFICE HOURS

CLOSED during the pandemic.

All staff working from home, accessible through email and mobile phone.

### NWTTA PERSONNEL

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