TEACHERS' COMPLETE GUIDE TO TAKING THE PHYSICAL CLASSROOM ONLINE IN GOOGLE WORKSPACE

An e-Guide by
GAT Labs & Kim Mattina
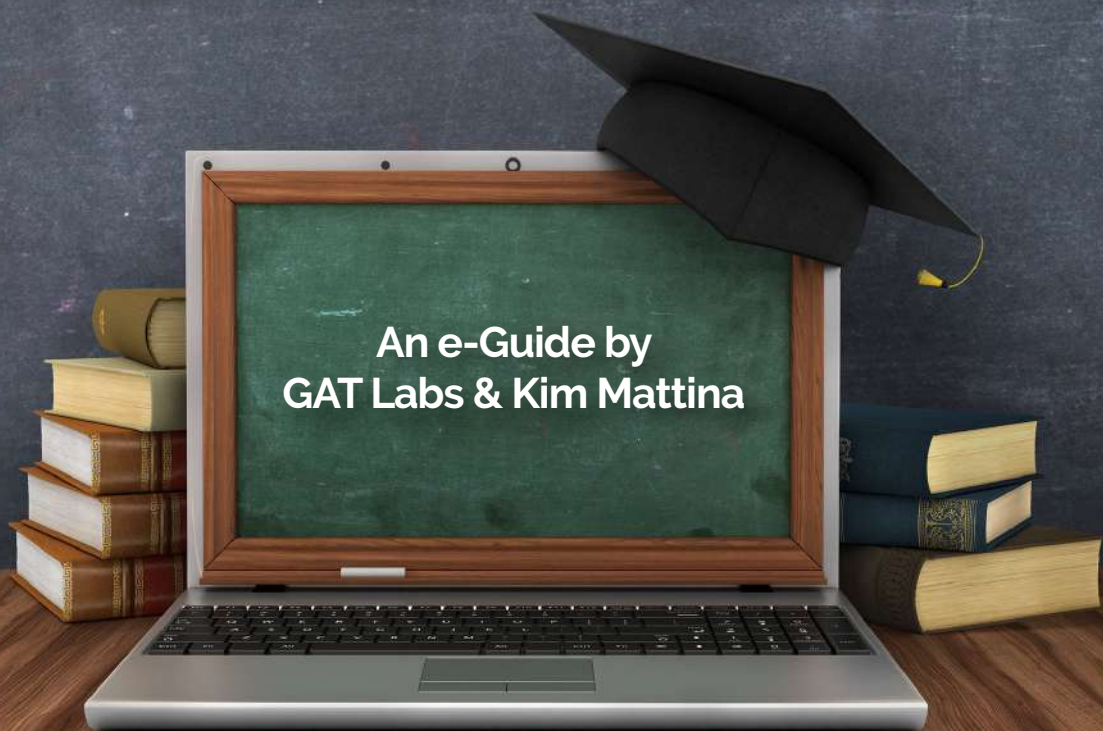
Welcome to your Online Teaching Journey!

> **How to pack the traditional classroom and move it online?**

Let's face it, most of us don't like abrupt change. Especially when it comes to the way we've been doing our jobs for so long. You know how things work. Everything's familiar. There's very little room for surprises.

Then comes that unexpected wave of change, shaking up this familiar setting. And even if that change is a step forward towards learning new skills or kickstarting a more agile workflow, it usually feels 'heavy' at first.

Going from the physical to the digital classroom is similar moving houses…

You first need to identify what to pack. Then set up your digital classroom right. Understand how things work there. And finally explore any needed add-ons or 3rd party tools to customise your classroom.

An e-Guide by GAT Labs & Kim Mattina

This e-Guide is developed by Google Workspace Partner and global leader in Google Workspace management, audit & security — **GAT Labs,** and Renowned Author, GoogleEDU Gold Product Expert, Google Certified Trainer and Educator and Technology Teacher — **Kim Mattina.**

It provides K-12 teachers with easy-to-follow steps, best practices and tips on taking the physical classroom online in Google Workspace for 2021 - 2022.

From packing your physical classroom the right way, to understanding the digital tools you have there and how to best use them to **Maximise and Secure** your digital teaching environment in Google Workspace.

'Let's take the stress of change out and make our Digital Classroom more efficient & fun for the new school year.'

e-Guide Route

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About the Authors
a. Kim Mattina
b. GAT Labs

The Physical VS. Digital Classroom: Identify Key Components

Let's roll up our sleeves and pack...

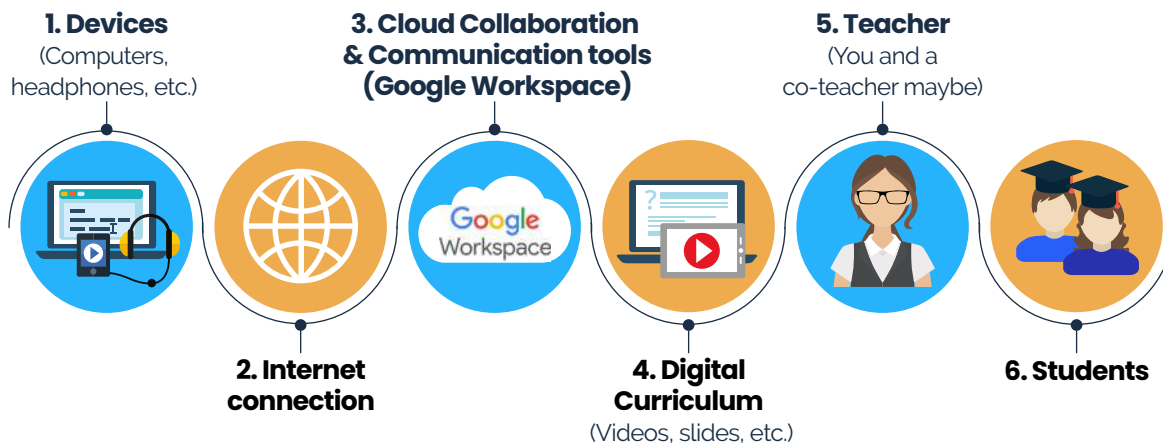### So what does your traditional K-12 classroom look like?

What are its main components? A teacher, students, desks, book shelves and an interactive board? Maybe some creative wall hangings? Well, you get the gist...

Imagine having a box and throwing in ONLY the main tools you'll need to pack... Make a list of it.
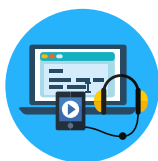

Now let's go over your digital classroom. What are its main components?

There are **six main components** for any digital classroom:

1. Devices
(Computers, headphones, etc.)

2. Internet connection

3. Cloud Collaboration & Communication tools (Google Workspace)

4. Digital Curriculum
(Videos, slides, etc.)

5. Teacher
(You and a co-teacher maybe)

6. Students

Now let's take a brief look at each of these six components:

1. Devices

a. Desktop, Laptop, Tablet, etc.

Whether your K-12 school or district provides staff and students with 1:1 devices or follows a 'Bring your Own Device' (BYOD) policy, the device you use plays an important role. Why?—Because not all devices are built equal.

Since Google Workspace for Education is a set of cloud-based tools, **any computer with internet connection** would practically work for remote teaching there.

However, choosing a device that 'boosts' the tools you use can go a long way. To that, **1:1 Chromebooks** would definitely be our pick. Why?

Let's put it this way, **Google Workspace + Chrome** = *a match made in heaven.*

Cost efficient.

Intuitive, easy to use.

Tailored around the digital learning experience in Google Workspace.

Multi-layered security & automatic updates = less IT hassle.

Highly durable, yet light to carry.

Chromebooks are simple, secure, and shareable for teachers and students. They also make it much easier to manage and secure students remotely. Checkout our list of 10 most popular Chromebooks among schools in 2020 here.

> **Remember:** That's just our recommendation. If you're already using another device that's working great for you, keep going by all means.

b. Accessories

• **Headsets & Mic:** You can never invest 'too much' in your headset and mic— Think of them as your digital 'ears and mouth'. If one fails, major disruption follows.

> **Remember**: you'll be wearing your headset for quite some time everyday, so make sure you choose a comfortable and maybe <u>wireless</u> set.

OPTIONAL

• **Printer**: Even if your classroom is fully digital, throwing in a basic printer always comes in handy. Especially when it comes to mapping out workloads or complicated tasks.

• **Additional Monitor:** An additional monitor connected to your main device helps you see all or most of your students during virtual meetings, while using your primary monitor for your content.

• **Chromecast:** You can also use a Chromecast to cast Google Meet to your TV and take the live classroom to the 'bigger screen' at your home.

• **Additional Devices:** While an additional monitor will give you the option in Meet to see your student's faces (very important) and present your material, it would be ideal if you also had an additional device that lets you monitor students' desktops.With GAT Lab's Teacher Assist, every teacher can see their student's desktops in real-time. This allows for meaningful intervention and helps keep the student 'on-focus'.
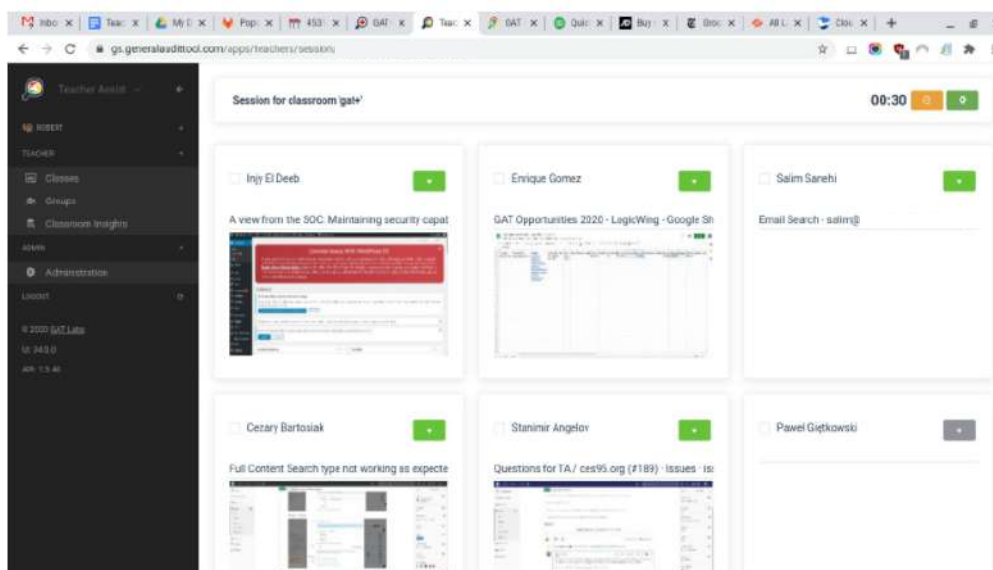

Ex. The student's desktop view.

• **Video conferencing light:** Adding video conferencing light brightens up your surroundings while conferencing with your students or peers.

> ***Bonus:** Lume Cube makes great portable light that is compatible with mobile devices, laptops, Chromebooks or computers. This little light has a lot of power! - To receive a discount, use Kim's Lume Cube referral code link.

• **Blue light blocking glasses:** These glasses help reduce eye strain, headaches and may improve sleep after spending long hours in front of the screen.
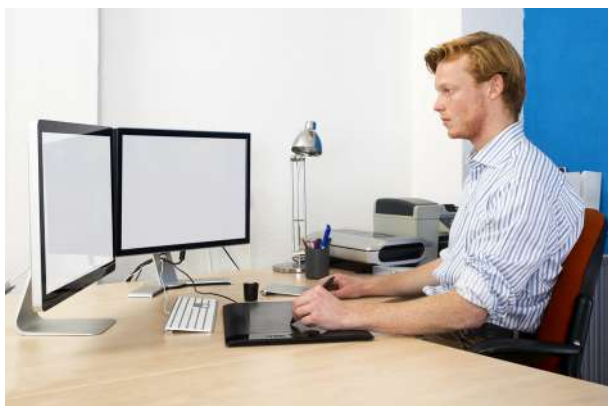
2. Reliable Internet Connection

You'll want to make sure that your broadband connection is **strong and reliable**. There's nothing worse than being cut off amid a live classroom session or not being able to log-in on time for class.

> 🔒 **Security Tip**: Make sure your Wi-Fi network is **Private and Secure** to protect you from hackers piggybacking on your session to gain control of your device.

Six Easy Steps to Improve Network Security:

1 Change the name of your router from the default.

2 Replace your router's pre-set password with a Strong one.

3 Hide your network from view.

4 Keep your router software up to date.

5 Disable Remote Administration.

6 Use a VPN (Virtual Private Network).

FUN FACT
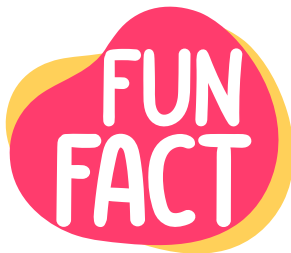
Did you know that you can use some Google Workspace tools offline when you don't have internet access?

Yes, you can use Gmail, Drive, and Calendar offline.

Check with your Google Workspace admin to have Google Workspace set up for offline work.

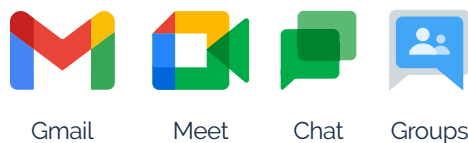# 3. Cloud Collaboration and Communication tools - (Google Workspace)

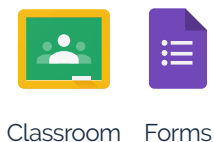**Google Workspace for Education** covers your **FIVE** main online teaching needs.
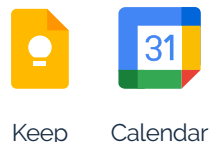
1. Collaboration

Docs   Slides   Sheets   Sites   Drive   Jamboard

2. Communication

Gmail   Meet   Chat   Groups

3. Management

Classroom   Forms

4. Organization

Keep   Calendar

5. Administration

Admin Console   GAT for Education

Let's briefly go through what you can do with each tool *(Skip this part if you're already familiar with the Google Workspace for Edu tools):*

1. COLLABORATION

Docs

Google Docs is your online document processor, where you and/or multiple users can work on one document together, in real-time.

The person who creates the document becomes its Owner and can grant edit, comment, or view access to the documents.

Slides

Use Google Slides to create engaging virtual slides. It's also great for collaborating with students on multimedia presentations in real-time.

Sheets

Use Google Sheets to create spreadsheets to track important data, trends, as well as gather information.

Sites

Use Google Sites to create a simple website to host materials, curriculum, or projects — No web design or coding skills required.

For example, you can create a **Class website**, use it to include course materials and rich content including videos, images, slides, and audio recordings.

Drive

Google Drive is your school's Cloud Storage space. It's where all your created Docs, Sheets, Slides, Sites, etc. are stored.

From there you can create and share documents, slides, folders, etc. and access them remotely from anywhere. You can also create personal and shared drives as needed.

Jamboard

Jamboard; the simple interactive whiteboard app loved by most teachers!

Use Jamboard with your students to share ideas, brainstorm and collaborate on a cool interactive board.

2. COMMUNICATION

Gmail

Gmail is your school's main cloud-based email service. Your school will create individual email accounts for students and staff under its domain name. Every school has its own unique domain name (ex:person@schoolename.edu).

Use Gmail to communicate using simple email. Create archives in your Inbox, as well as monitor and control students' email.

Meet

Google Meet is your core video conferencing tool to virtually meet up with students and peers.

Meet also integrates with Gmail to seamlessly manage schedules, appointments, meetings, and tasks.

🟩 Chat

Chat is Google Workspace's messaging app. You can use it for 1:1 messaging or create a Room or Group to communicate with more than one person.

a. Rooms: Central location for teams to communicate and work together on an ongoing basis. A Room's members can share files, assign tasks, and stay connected in one place.

b. Group messages: Chat directly with a few people on an ad-hoc basis.

🟦 Groups

Departments, teams or classmates can communicate and collaborate using Google Groups in a more organized and efficient way.

Use Google Groups to email a group, invite a group to a Calendar event or share important Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms with relevant members.

3. MANAGEMENT

🟩 Google Classroom

Google Classroom is your learning management system (LMS). From there you can set **assignments, communicate** with students, and **grade** work — all in one collaborative digital space. How?

a. Student & Teacher Collaboration: Classroom offers teachers and students a digital workflow that supports posting resources, announcements, assignments, grades, feedback and rubrics. It also helps keep students and teachers stay organized by populating a class calendar, and a to-do list.

You can also use tools like **GAT for Teachers** to dig deeper into your Classroom efforts, student engagement and gain granular insight into things like assignments and grades.

b. Multiple Teachers: We know that, at times, there are multiple teachers in a classroom. Classroom allows for a primary teacher to have a co-teacher(s) to help manage and post information and differentiate instruction to specific students.

c. Parents: Google Classroom also allows parents and guardians to receive daily or weekly summaries of their child's assignment status. Parents can opt in to receive these email notifications, stay in the know and be involved in their child's remote learning process.

🟪 Forms

Use Google Forms as a survey tool to collect information, set quizzes, and analyze results in real-time.

4. ORGANISATION

Keep

Love using post-its? — Then you'll find Keep super handy!

Keep is a note-taking service in Google Workspace to add quick color coded notes, lists, photos and even audio of what's on your mind as you go.

Calendar

Your virtual agenda. Use Google Calendar to schedule meetings, share events, and send reminders to colleagues and students.

You can also create multiple calendars. For example: personal calendar, staff calendar and classroom calendar

5. ADMINISTRATION & SECURITY

Admin Console

The Admin Console is where Google Workspace administrators manage settings, users and devices for all users.

GAT for Education (Tools)

GAT for Education offers a family of Google Workspace Security, Audit and Management tools every school needs with essential insights and capabilities beyond those available in the admin Console.

Ask your school administrator to investigate this toolset to see if it's a good fit for your needs.

4. Digital Curriculum

When transitioning from the physical to the virtual classroom, keep in mind that you won't be able to cover as much material as before. You also won't be teaching the same.
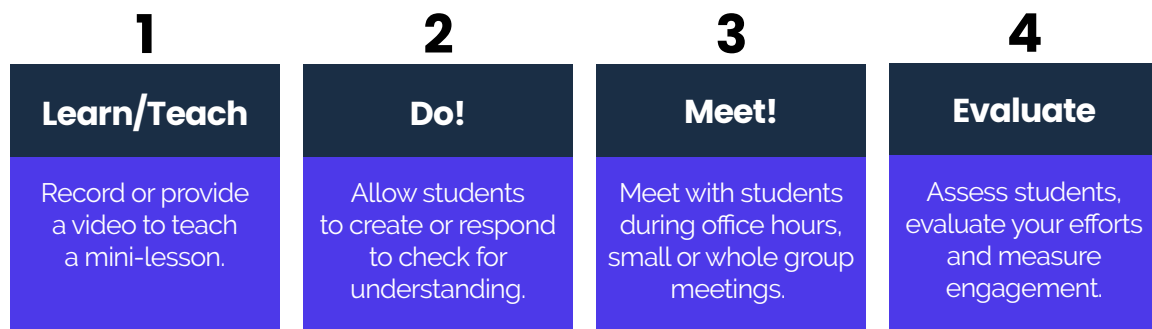
First, you need to take your face to face lessons and activities, and refresh them for remote learning. This can be challenging at first, especially if you're not tech savvy, but don't worry! — You'll soon get a handle on it.

To that, one thing we highly recommend is **Keep it Simple** so that you don't get overwhelmed. How?

Below is a **4-Step Keep it Simple** model that'll guide you while preparing your lessons:

Keep it Simple
a 4-Step Model

1	2	3	4
Learn/Teach	**Do!**	**Meet!**	**Evaluate**
Record or provide a video to teach a mini-lesson.	Allow students to create or respond to check for understanding.	Meet with students during office hours, small or whole group meetings.	Assess students, evaluate your efforts and measure engagement.

SOME SUCCESS TIPS

a. Record YOUR own Videos

When developing your digital curriculum we highly recommend using your **own video recordings** in instruction and feedback. This makes your teaching more meaningful and helps your students form a 'connection' with you.

It also allows your students to **learn at their own pace** by watching them asynchronously — a super important aspect to consider when teaching remotely.

b. Use Google Workspace to Build your Digital Curriculum

There are several G Suite tools that can help you develop your digital curriculum. For example:

1 Use **Google Sites** as a wiki page and let your students collaboratively work on their assignments there.

2 Develop **Fun Slides** to support your lessons and keep students engaged.

3 Record your class in **Google Meet** and send it to students to make it available for 24-48 hours.

You can also create a video, without the students, for an assignment with directions, feedback and expectations. That way your message will get across more directly.

4 Use **Spreadsheets** as whiteboards or a place to collect information.

5 Prepare digital **Polls** and **Assessments** using Classroom resources like Assignment, Quiz, Questions to check for understanding.

> **Remember:** just like in the physical classroom, developing your digital curriculum the right way and tailoring it around every individual subject/class is crucial to the success of your Classroom.

5. Teacher

Are you working alone or with a co-teacher (or teacher assistant)? That's one of the very first things to consider.

a. Teaching alone?

If you're teaching alone then you can tailor your digital curriculum, classroom etiquette, tools, etc. based on your own teaching preferences.

Need Help? — Don't be afraid to ask.

You'll also need to identify any areas you may **need help** with and talk them up with your supervisor or principle beforehand. This is very important to avoid burnout.

You can also use tools like Teacher Assist as your virtual assistant to take care of challenging Classroom management tasks like real-time screen monitoring, tab blocking and more.

b. Working with a co-teacher?

Make sure to align your teaching strategy, preferences and digital classroom expectations with your co-teacher beforehand.

Schedule regular 'Catch up' Meet meetings. Explore trickier lesson plans together and always test your tools before class.

It's great having a co-teacher, but you'll need to make sure you're on the same page at all times.

6. Students

Now on to your students — the center of all your efforts.

There are **SIX questions** to constantly ask yourself as you prepare and lead through your digital classroom:

What will they see?		**Classroom etiquette?**		**Are they following up?**	
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
	What do you expect from them?		**Individual digital learning needs?**		**Are you having enough 1:1 time with each student?**
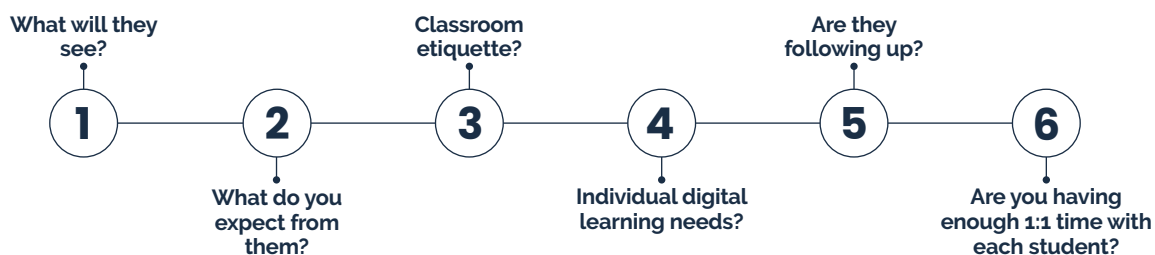
Stop reading!

Now write them down on a post-it (or use Google Keep) to revisit them as you go.

Constantly asking yourself these questions will help you keep important things in check at all times.

Build your Digital Classroom — Ultimate EdTech Toolbelt

Let's get you unpacked and settled...

Now that you've identified the things you need to pack (refer to the list in Step One), you'll find that for almost every 'physical' component there there's a digital equivalent in Google Workspace.

You can also explore 3rd party tool options.

1. Your Ultimate EdTech Toolbelt
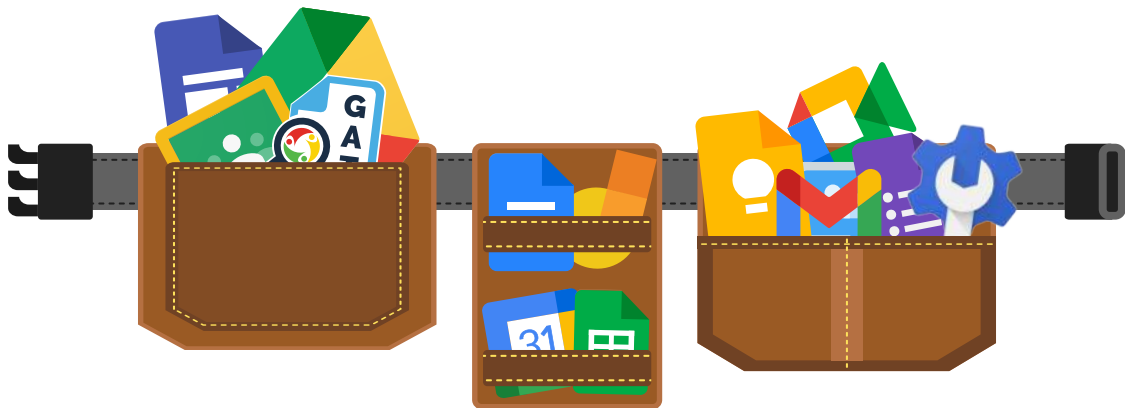
The first thing you need to assess is your 'tech savviness'.

Review your existing Edtech tool belt and your comfort level to see if what you know now will help you during remote teaching.

If it does, then you're halfway there. If it doesn't, then you'll need to train your tech muscles a bit more.

No matter what your list looks like, the first and most important Edtech tool you need to identify with immediately is your learning management system (LMS); **Google Classroom.**

You can then adjust your Edtech toolbelt to accommodate other remote teaching needs.

Google Workspace tools + 3rd party options.

There are plenty of tools that can help support your digital classroom.

While Google Workspace supports the **4 C's** of education — **Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical thinking,** don't feel like you need to limit yourself to it. There are also 3rd party tools that can help you in different ways and even compliment the core Google Workspace tools you have.

Key factors of remote learning	EdTech tool		
Collaboration and Communication	**Google Workspace:**	Meet Gmail Classroom Jamboard	
	3rd party options:	Padlet, Remind, Zoom.	
Creativity and Critical Thinking	**Google Workspace:**	Sites Jamboard	
	3rd party options:	WeVideo, Flipgrid, SeeSaw, Wakelet, CoSpaces, Tinkercad, Merge Cube, Book Creator, Adobe Spark.	
Classroom Management	**Google Workspace:**	Classroom	You may couple it with: Teacher Assist
	3rd party options:	Class Dojo	
Measuring Student Engagement	**Google Workspace Add-on:**	Classroom Insights	
	3rd party options:	Edpuzzle, Quizziz, Nearpod, Pear Deck, Boom Cards, Padlet, Flipgrid	
Keeping students focused	**Google Workspace Add-on:**	Teacher Assist	
	3rd party options:	EdPuzzle, Nearpod, Pear Deck, Gimkit, Kahoot	
Protecting students Online	**Google Workspace Add-on:**	GAT+	(Protect, Report and Manage your Google Edu Environment from A-Z)

Now Let's revisit the **Keep it Simple 4-step model** for teaching in a virtual learning environment.

Steps	Activity	EdTech
1. Learn/Teach Record or provide a video to teach a mini-lesson.	Allow students to watch a video or read an article, blog, or book. Allow students to watch a video asynchronous.	▶ **YouTube** Other options: Newsela, Brainpop, Discovery Education, Khan Academy, Screencastify, Screencast-o-matic
2. Do! Allow students to create or respond to check for understanding.	Allow students to complete an activity or 'create to show' what they learned.	🟨 **Google Slides** Other options: EdPuzzle, WeVideo, Flipgrid, Wakelet, Book Creator, CoSpaces, Merge Cube
3. Meet! Meet with students during office hours, small or whole group meetings.	Conference with students for feedback and complete the loop. This should continue throughout the entire assignment.	**Google Meet** Other options: Zoom
4. Evaluate Assess students, evaluate your efforts and measure engagement.	Evaluate and assess students on their work.	📋 **Google Forms Quiz** Other Options: EdPuzzle, Quizizz, Flipgrid, Exit tickets and polling, Kahoot, Gimkit

P.S: These edtech tools are not limited to the ones mentioned.

Keep in mind that all activities, questions, and assignments should be posted in **Google Classroom.** This allows students to find and complete tasks, ask questions, and revise assignments.

Remember: Cast Google Meet to your TV
You can use Meet and Cast together to turn any room in your house into a bigger remote Classroom.

2. Sketch up your own Digital Classroom (Activity)

Every teacher's list will vary based on the school subject he/she teaches and his/her Classroom vision.

This fun activity will help you Sketch up your personalized digital classroom accordingly:

Take every item on your "Packing List" and identify it's digital equivalent in **Google Workspace** or a 3rd party tech tool (explore choices from the **Ultimate EdTech Toolbelt** above).

Here's an example of how your sketch should be structured:

Packed Item	Purpose	Digital Equivalent/Tool	Where to find it?
Ex: White Board	Interactive demonstration and collaboration	Jamboard	Google Workspace
Ex: ClassWork Management Area	Managing assignments, handing out grades, etc.	Classroom Classroom Insights	Google Workspace 3rd Party Tool
Ex: Video Conferencing	Meeting up with students for live sessions. Meeting peers, etc.	Meet Drive	Google Workspace
Ex: Shelves, Cupboards and storage areas	Storing materials, resources, workbooks, etc	Drive	Google Workspace

You can keep revisiting and modifying this sketch as you go based on your favourite tools, ease-to-use, emerging needs, etc.

Manage your Digital Classroom & Measure Engagement

The key to managing your digital classroom and measuring engagement is **Monitoring and Consistency.** Let's explore that further shall we?

1. Classroom Management

a. Set your Digital Expectations and Classroom Etiquette

In the beginning of the school year, teachers usually go over procedures and expectations for their physical classroom. An example of this may be to have students sign out of the classroom when leaving the room. Now, take those expectations and refresh them so that they align with the digital classroom.

Start by writing down your **digital expectations and classroom etiquette** — That would be a set of guidelines on how you want students to behave in your digital classroom. It should be completed at the beginning of the school year and re-visited throughout as well.

Make sure you're clear with students on things like:

1 How to behave in a virtual meeting or in Google Classroom.

2 How you expect them to complete assignments.

3 Inappropriate behavior or comments.

4 Screen Time and browsing activity.

5 Side talks or Meetings in Google Chat or Meet.

Breaches should not be tolerated. However, instead of punishing the student and revoking digital permissions, use this as a teachable moment. For example, allow the student to delete the comments posted and reflect on their behavior by creating a video to improve their online interactions.

It's also always nice to include your students in these expectations from the start, that way they'll become a lot more meaningful for them. Here's how:

> **Brainstorm a list of digital expectations and classroom etiquette guidelines with your students using Jamboard:**
>
> Allow them to collaborate in the Jam. Work together on common goals for your virtual classroom. Once completed, post the Jam in your Google Classroom as a material post and remind them to re-visit if necessary.

A few things to note:

• Maintain a POSITIVE tone

We recommend writing your digital expectations using a positive tone. Use words like "please', "yes", and "and". Stay away from negative words such as "no", "but", and "do not". This helps students feel more comfortable in your class and connect with you better.

• Managing Virtual Meetings

Once you have Google Meet setup for remote learning, develop a set of separate guidelines for virtual meetings. Mention your goals for every virtual meeting and how the flow of the meeting will be handled.

For example: students should be on time, dress appropriately, raise their hand, or mute their microphone when not speaking — Have these posted in your virtual classroom environment, or provide each student with a copy.

You'll also want to track Meet Usage to understand how your students are actually using it and how much time you're virtually engaging with them.

You can use tools like GAT+ to get extensive Meet activity reports and stats as you go.

• A few controls to check beforehand

1. Control mic settings to make sure students can't mute each other.

2. Control Participants to prevent unwanted users from joining or knocking (requesting to rejoin).

3. Manage who can share their screen and who can send chat messages within a meeting.

Virtual Meeting Expectations for Students			
Be on time to class	Be in a quiet place and comfortable space.	Be prepared	Be respectful
Be presentable and dress appropriately	Be focused and attentive	Do participate! Post questions and comments in the chat	Keep the class discussions and on topic
Mute your microphone when you are not speaking	Turn on your video (optional)	Raise your hand virtually or physically	Check your spelling and grammar before porsting your comment

b. Monitor your Digital Classroom from A-Z

As we mentioned before, the key to Classroom management is **Monitoring** and **Consistency.**

Once you've established your digital expectations and etiquette, you'll need insights into how well things are going. You'll also need tools to enforce your etiquette rules and establish classroom order.

Unlike the physical classroom where you can actually spot bad behaviour, side talks and anything tampering with your classroom's order in a face to face sense, the digital classroom is less straightforward.

However, if you seize the best part about using technology — Data — it becomes a LOT simpler.

Using monitoring tools like GAT Shield, teachers can plant virtual eyes into vital areas of their digital Classroom and get alerted in real-time on bad language, specific keywords, downloads and search queries in all locations, at all times, in the Chrome Browser.

You can also align your monitoring tool to your **digital expectations** by creating your own list of inappropriate words and phrases.

Block student access to unapproved websites. Monitor Chat usage per user and get precise reports on where students are spending their time online.

> **P.S:** GAT Shield also offers Chromebook management, Chromebook tracking and Chromebook monitoring if your school deploys 1:1 Chromebooks.

2. Measuring Classroom Engagement

A common challenge to remote teaching is measuring classroom engagement.

Again, this can be tricky when you're not face to face in a traditional classroom environment. So, the essential question is, how can we engage our students, then check for understanding and assess things remotely?

a. How to Keep Students Engaged? — The Golden Question

Here are a few ideas to build on:

> • **Let them too lead the way in Google Classroom**
>
> One thing you may consider is providing choice for students —allow them to be creators. To do this, you may need to look at the lesson activities and "refresh" them to incorporate **choice boards.**

CHOICE BOARDS

A choice board is similar to a menu, where you create different tasks or choices for students to pick from. They can demonstrate their learning the way they choose and create accordingly.

Here's an example of what a choice board would look like:

Choice Board Created by Kim Mattina		
Add activity here	Add activity here	Add activity here
Add activity here	Add activity here	Add activity here
Add activity here	Add activity here	Add activity here
Add activity here	Add activity here	Add activity here

Another leading method is allowing students to choose which Google app file to create within an assignment.

This allows them to include additional materials such as photos, files, links and videos to demonstrate their knowledge of the learning.

By giving students choice, they'll learn, become the creator and gain more confidence, in which they may take ownership of the task and ultimately **"stay engaged"**.

• Make sure the lessons are actually engaging in the digital context

An engaging lesson is designed around creativity, choice and interaction.

Your Google tools and apps can help you provide engaging content for lessons, so as third party tools. For example:

Google tools	Using Third-party Tools
Use Google Slides to create interactive presentations. The Q&A feature will also give students a back channel to the lesson.	Use EdPuzzle to check for understanding.
Use Google Drawings to create memes or illustrations from a story.	Flipgrid for video prompts and responses.
Use Google Forms for exit tickets and quizzes. Using a branched Google Form will also give students a choice to choose their own adventures.	Wakelet to curate information.
Use Google Arts and Culture to explore museums and historic artifacts.	Pear Deck to allow students to interact with the content.

These are just a few examples — the possibilities are endless!

Once comfortable with your digital classroom, you may consider refreshing your edtech toolbelt every few weeks to keep the students engaged.

Remember: using the same tool all the time may cause students to become bored. It's also important to keep refreshing your lessons to prevent this from happening.

Kim's Golden Rule to Engaging Students:

Always think about the end result of your lesson goals — Ask yourself, *'What is it that I want the students to achieve?'.* Then backtrack to deliver your content using your toolbelt. We don't want to get too hung up on EduTech and take our eyes off student learning.

b. Measuring Student Engagement from Google Workspace Data

One of the best things about teaching in Google Workspace is that you can get data on almost every important interaction. From there you can measure things like engagement even better than you would in the physical classroom.

'The trick is choosing the right tools to dig deeper into the right data for the right insights'

How?

• Google Classroom Attendance

Attendance is the first thing you want to monitor. However, REAL Attendance is not just about logging in and off. It's making sure students are actively following up, engaged and contributing.

Google Sheets is ideal for recording which students turn up to class and sharing that data with school administrators.

Meanwhile, GAT Shield allows teachers to track times where students were connected to their designated Classrooms, monitor how long they stayed in the Classroom, how much time they spent on every site while browsing on Google Chrome sessions.

That way you get a complete sense of real attendance.

• Screen Time Supervision

How do you ensure that students are paying attention and not distracted by side activities during Class?

In the physical Classroom teachers would usually go behind the student's desk to check if they're distracted by side tasks. However, that has never been easy and is not really feasible for the digital classroom.

The good news is, in the digital Classroom, teachers can use tools for that. GAT's Teacher Assist, for instance, can be used to monitor what's happening during class on any student's screen in REAL-TIME.

Teachers can also use it to perform prompt actions to refocus student's attention, such as page blocking and page deployment.

View things from your Students' Perspective

1. What will Students see when they open the Classroom?

Understanding what your students can (and can't) access in each of Google Classroom's streams is very important. Think of it like setting up your traditional classroom and viewing it from the students' position back at their desks.

This helps you spot any Classroom gaps, as well as eliminate any distractions or disruptions that may occur while delivering your lessons.

Here's a brief glimpse on what the student's experience looks like:

Students enter the Classroom using one of the following:

1 — A **code** you've shared with them

3 — An **invitation** you've sent them

2 — An **invite link** you've shared with them

What students see when they enter the Classroom:

1 — **Stream page**

3 — **Classwork page**

2 — **People**

a. Stream page

A collection of all of the posting activities - it's not organized. Think of this as the class wall.

On the stream page they can view announcements and/or post class comments, depending on their posting permissions.

b. Classwork Page

On the classwork page, students will see an organized view of all the assignments, questions, and materials posted to the class. Additionally, they'll be able to open assignments and view their grade and the feedback that was provided by their teacher.

• Assignments

Students can open their assignments and create a Google app file within the assignment. They can also support their learning by uploading a file from Drive or their local device, attach a link or a YouTube video.

Additionally, students can leave private comments for their teacher on an assignment. This is only visible between the teacher and student. **It's also a crucial part of remote learning** because it opens up dialog and conversation with students.

Providing quick and quality feedback to your students is essential to helping them learn and be successful.

• Questions

Teachers have two options for posting questions: multiple choice or short answer.

Posting questions to the class is a great way to poll the students to check for understanding. The responses can be seen for the entire class and students have the option to reply to one another.

• Materials

Students can view the materials the teacher posts that pertain to their class or assignment. An example of this is posting digital expectations as a material post so that students can refer back to it at any time.

c. People

On the People page students will see a list of classmates and a list of their teachers.

2. A few recommendations to consider:

a. Test Student

Many teachers are aware of or familiar with Google Classroom, but have a hard time organizing the information. That's because teachers do not see the student's perspective of the Classwork page.

To help with these challenges, teachers can have a "test student" account in their school domain and be a student in their own class to see things from the student's view. This will help you understand how to organize and post information to the Classwork page.

b. Topics

Having topics in your Classwork page allows students to find your assignments easier. You can create topics for the day, week, or unit. For example, create a topic that reads "Wk of 02/11/2020". Then you can post your assignments to that topic using a numbering scheme, such as "#123". This will direct students to find the current information faster and it will be displayed in an organized list.

In Kim's new book co-authored with Alice Keeler, *Stepping up to Google Classroom,* you'll find methods on how to get started using Google Classroom, as well as tips and tricks to help you and your students stay organized.

b. Close the feedback loop

Finally, make sure to 'close the feedback loop'. Because we're working through our screens, it's more crucial to provide quality and actionable feedback on student assignments in an effective manner. This can be done in the private comments of an assignment or within the comment tool of the file.

Keep your Students safe online

As we prepare and lead through the digital classroom, let's not forget about our students' online safety.

From cyberbullying to hacking schemes and profane content, as our students spend more time learning online, Student Protection becomes a major concern for everyone. That's why there are Acts like the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) — and schools need to stay compliant.

As teachers, there's a lot you can do to help— by both teaching them about staying safe online and blocking access to inappropriate content.

1. Help them Stay Safe and Secure Online

One way to teach students about staying safe online is to have them complete Google's Be Internet Awesome. It teaches them about digital citizenship and internet safety in a gamified environment.

The five pillars of the curriculum are:

1 Be Internet Smart - share with care

2 Be Internet Alert - don't fall for fake

3 Be Internet Strong - secure your secrets

4 Be Internet Kind - it's cool to be kind

5 Be Internet Brave - when it doubt, talk it out

> **Remember:** raising your students' cyber awareness is their first line of defence against online danger; the new 'Stranger Danger'.

2. Enforce Security Rules

The GAT family of tools offers a layered set of security solutions to help schools stay CIPA compliant with G Suite for Education, as well as protect students in every site, at all times while connected to their Google Workspace school account in the Chrome browser.

Such powerful Security & Monitoring capabilities include:

- Alerts about bad language
- Blocking Unapproved websites
- Keyword Alerts
- Risky app download alerts: set up a policy to ban or trust identified apps for students.
- Alerts about certain search queries
- Bulk removal of phishing emails
- Complete content searches of all user's Drive, Email and Calendars.

And much more...

Check for the Right Insights

Speaking of challenges, many teachers will find that a bulk of the challenges they face in the virtual classroom can be linked to **visibility**, or rather the limitation of it due to loss of direct oversight.

While developing 'Classroom Insights', the GAT Labs team identified some pillar insights teachers need to gain optimum visibility over the things that matter the most.

Below is your Digital Classroom Insights Checklist to comprehensively audit your remote teaching efforts:

1. Grades, Assignments and Classwork

Any gaps in Student submissions and grades are your first whisperer of trouble. Such insight is key to measuring engagement and understanding your overall efforts.

Run comprehensive Classroom Audits with Classroom Insights. *Dig deeper into a selected Google Classroom when needed for insights on things like class information, class state, classworks, student classwork submissions , class average grades, which student has the best grades, chrome browsing activity etc. in Google Classroom.*

2. Track REAL attendance, beyond login and logout

As we mentioned before, attendance and 'REAL attendance' are two different things. To measure real attendance you need insights into students' online activity and screen monitoring during class to make sure they're on the same page as you.

3. Third Party Apps

View third party apps and set up a policy to ban or trust identified apps for students. This helps you improve their online safety, security and prevent unwanted distractions.

4. Student's Online Activity

Student's overall online activity can tell you a lot about engagement, collaboration and signs of trouble or struggle.

5. Google Meet and Chat Usage

Review Google Meet and Chat Usage to get insights into individual collaboration between students, as well as spot digital 'side talks'.

That's it — Now you're all set and your digital classroom is ready for you and your students!

Our 10 Favourite Google Classroom Hacks by Kim Mattina

Google Classroom is great to use with your students because it works seamlessly with other Google Workspace Tools. It can be used in any subject area, for any purpose.

Here are 10 Google Classroom hacks to use with your students:

1. Google Classroom has the ability to **distribute files** to your students. This can be handy when you want all of your students to edit on a file to collaborate on a topic.

> Attach a Google Slides file to an assignment and set the file to edit access so students can collaborate together and complete a slide about themselves; All About Me.

2. Google Meet integration makes it easier to connect with your students for a synchronous meeting. Simply generate a Meet link and post an announcement of when you will be meeting.

> Break out into small groups by creating multiple Google Meet links and post them into a Google Slide. Assign students into groups and create an assignment specifically for each group.

3. Pin posts to the topic of the classwork page by not assigning a topic to it. This can be used for "on the fly" conversations. Afterwards you can move it into a topic.

4. Organize your Classwork page by Topics so that it is easier for students to find your posts. You can create a topic for the day, week, feedback, or unit.

> Create a 'feedback' topic and post when you leave feedback on an assignment.

5. Use a numbering scheme plus a title for your posts. This will help you and your students identify the most recent post and/or assignment. We recommend using the hashtag, a three digit number and a title, and do not repeat the numbers. Create an assignment titled "#001 All About Me".

> If you're an elementary teacher, you can organize your number scheme by subject. For example, #100 for math, #200 for ELA, #300 for Science, #400 for History.

6. When applicable, include due dates on your assignments so that the **Google Calendar** gets populated.

> Direct students to their class calendar to view events that are upcoming.

7. Providing feedback is so important especially during virtual learning.

Build up a comment bank so that you can easily re-use the comments by simply copying and pasting them.

Try using voice typing, audio comments, or your webcam to leave meaningful comments to your students.

8. Post to specific students - this allows you to differentiate your assignments. Only the specific students you selected for that particular assignment will see that post.

9. Reuse a post from another class. Instead of re-creating the post, simply re-use it. This will save you time by not having to retype the entire post again.

10. Allow students to create a file within an assignment. You don't always have to provide students with a copy of the file that you want them to complete. Allow them to choose the file type they want to use to complete the assignment. They may surprise you and show off their creativity!

> **Remember:** Google Classroom can be used with teachers during professional development. Teachers can be students in a class too. This is a great way for teachers to learn and see a student perspective of the platform.

About the Authors

A bit about Kim Mattina

Kim has been in education for nearly 15 years and is currently a full time middle school technology teacher and robotics club advisor in New Jersey.

Her new book, Stepping up to Google Classroom, **50 steps to getting started**, co-authored with Alice Keeler is available on Amazon. It offers best practices, tips, and pedagogy to using Google Classroom. The book is available in Kindle and paperback. If you're looking for bulk copies, visit Dave Burgess Publishing website.

Additionally, her passion is her show, **The Suite Talk,** where her mission is to *#PayitForward* to others by providing educators with best practices and guidance implementing Google for Education and other technology tools into the classroom.

In order for educators to teach today's learners in future ready schools, they need to equip themselves with crucial digital skills to provide the best digital learning environment for their students.

Visit The Suite Talk to watch or listen to any current or past episode. Subscribe on YouTube, Podbean, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. You can also join the Facebook group.

For links and more information on the latest episodes checkout the Wakelet collection for The Suite Talk.

Follow Kim's blog, The Tech Lady and on Twitter @The_Tech_Lady.

About the Authors

A bit about GAT

Schools admins and teachers need more advanced monitoring and security controls beyond those available in the Google Workspace admin console.

That's because they need to keep students safe online 24/7, manage and monitor students' online activity remotely, establish Classroom order, as well as gain visibility into insights that are harder to reach in the digital classroom.

GAT Labs is the global leader in Google Workspace and Chrome audit and security. With 15M+ audited users and thousands of school districts worldwide. GAT+ for Education offers a powerful set of tools to help schools cover the 3 essentials of digital learning: **Monitoring, Management and Security.**

From managing the digital classroom better, to staying CIPA compliant, monitoring and protecting students online, and securing school accounts against cyber attacks — GAT is now an essential part of every school's digital learning plan in Google Workspace and Chrome.

GAT also specialises in Chromebook management, tracking and monitoring with GAT Shield for Education.

Feature requests built inside the Lab: GAT also welcomes new feature requests - taking these suggestions to be explored in the 'Lab' and produced, if possible.

For more resources on digital learning in Google Workspace and Chrome, as well as keeping your school cybersecure, checkout GAT's blog — Don't forget to subscribe!

You can also follow GAT Labs on Twitter @AuditGSuite, Facebook, LinkedIn and subscribe to GAT's YouTube Channel to stay up to date on new features release, resources and join the conversation with other fellow educators!