

Parents, Technology, and School Problems and Solutions

BCNC Level 1 ESOL Classes

BEFORE YOU READ: Why is it important for parents to know how to use computers? If you are a parent, what is the role of technology in your life and in your children's life?

Introduction

Parents should be part of their children's education. Parents are children's first teachers in life. Sometimes children do not do their homework. Sometimes they forget their homework at school. Sometimes the homework is hard, so parents ask the teacher how to help the children do homework. It is important to have good communication with your children's teachers. Digital communication (like Zoom, TalkingPoints, email, or WeChat) is excellent because it is fast and efficient.

But there are also problems when you use digital communication. We are students from two Level 1 ESOL classes at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC). We will share some of the problems with using technology for communication, and some solutions.

Problem 1: No Computer

Some parents don't have computers or tablets. They just have phones. Phones are small and hard to use.

Solution:

The government, a community organization, or school can give you or loan you a computer or tablet. Or you can buy one. At BCNC, there are computers that we can borrow.

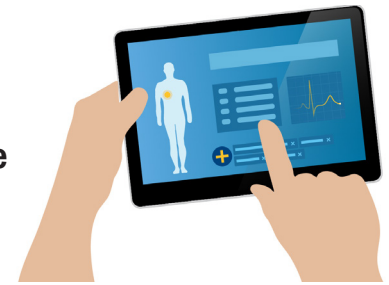


Problem 2: Hardware and Software Are Difficult to Use

For some older people, apps and computers are difficult. We learn slowly. We need more time to study. If we don't understand the app, we don't use it.

Solution:

Schools can give technology classes in many languages to parents. They can teach parents how to use computers, apps, and how to connect to WiFi. Schools can teach parents online or face to face. Schools can communicate with apps that parents already know, like WeChat and WhatsApp. Parents can use YouTube videos to learn. (BCNC makes videos in Chinese language.)



Problem 3: Internet Problems

Sometimes, the WiFi connection is not good. We can't connect to Zoom. We can't hear the teacher because of bad WiFi.



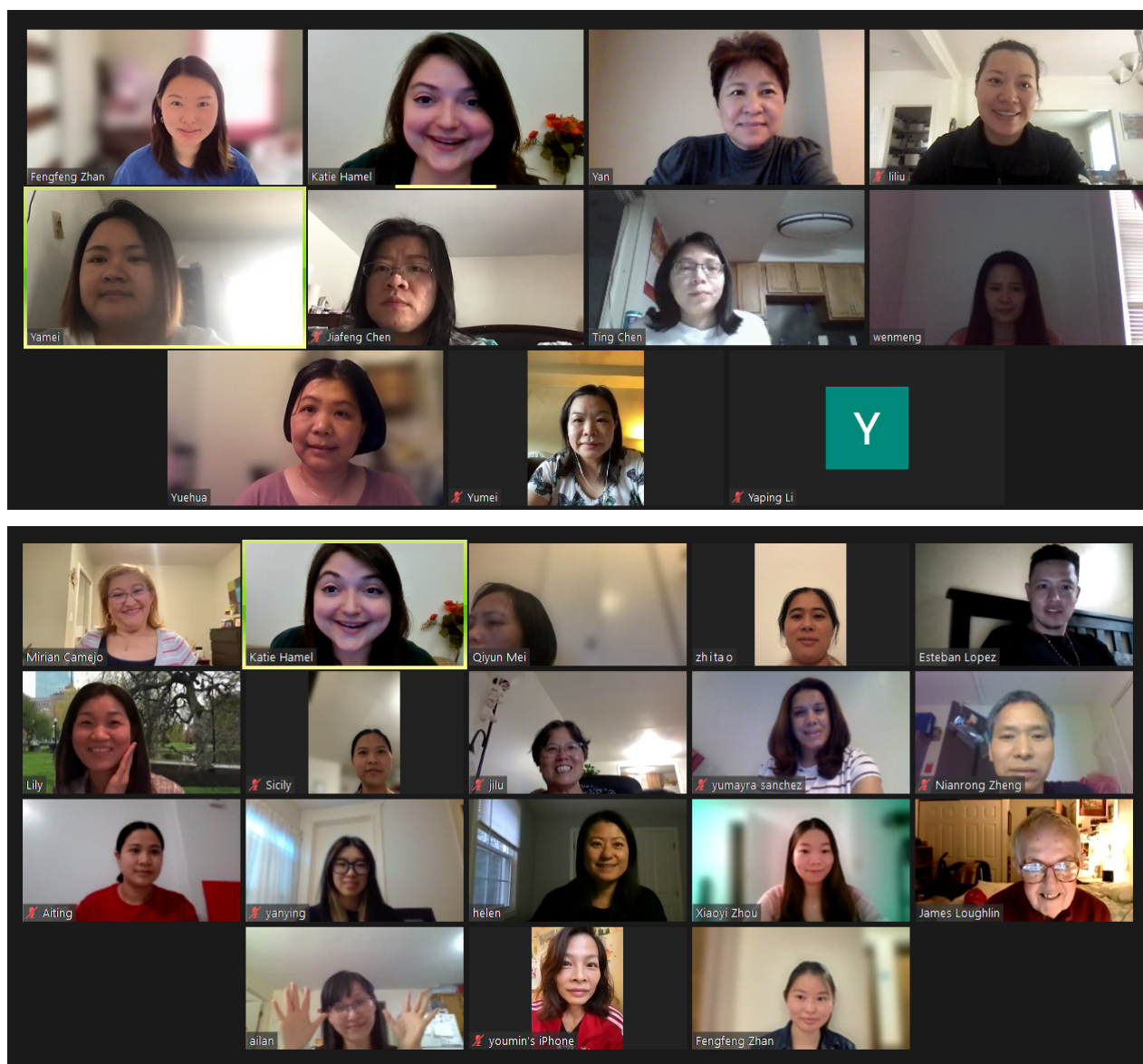
Solution:

Sometimes, you can borrow a hot spot from your library. The government can help you pay for the internet and make sure the signal is strong. There is a new government program that helps you get good internet access for \$30 per month. Click on <https://www.fcc.gov/acp> for help.

Problem 4: Language Problems

Language translation apps are sometimes bad. They don't give clear translations. They don't say what you want to say.





Solution:

Schools can ask parents or students to volunteer to help with translations, or it can be a paid job.

English class for parents is a good idea. We need to have a chance to practice listening and speaking English. The government can give more free English classes for parents.

Family Services can help with translations. They can help with other things too, like helping parents fill out a housing form, go to a government office, or go to the hospital.

This article was written collectively by the morning and afternoon ESOL classes at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center in Boston.

AFTER YOU READ: Choose a few of the problems listed in this article and explore the solutions. For example, where in your community can you borrow a computer or other device, or buy one at a reduced price? How do you apply for reduced-price internet at <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>? Collect the information and share it on a poster or in a presentation with other students in your program.