Get Ready to Teach Remotely

When courses are designed for an online environment, instructors have time to incorporate all of the design elements necessary for an effective online course. Remote teaching on the other hand, is undertaken for the sake of instructional continuity and instructors have had less time to consider all of the technical, logistical or pedagogical elements of the class. This guide will walk you through some of the major considerations when preparing to teach remotely, and provide you with resources to make the process go as smoothly as possible.

1. **Plan your class sessions out in advance**. Thinking through the flow of each class session – from the lecture materials to the activities to potential discussion questions – is important for all classes, but is especially important for online classes. For example, whereas in a face-to-face class you could ask students to give a show of hands in response to a question, in an online class you may wish to set up a poll, which requires advanced setup.

   • Create a detailed lesson plan (see the last page of this guide for an example) for the class, similar to what you might make for an in-person class. For each component of the class, list the ways in which it could be implemented online. For example, instead of in-person introductions, students could introduce themselves on Canvas. In addition, instead of an in-person, peer review activity where students exchange papers for review, students could exchange Google Docs to get real-time feedback from their classmates.

2. Adapt your lectures for online students. Students generally spend less time attending to PowerPoint given over a virtual medium. Given that online environments tend to be highly visual, lectures need to be broken up into small pieces and combined with other activities. Some ideas of how to break up lectures include:

   • Use the polling feature in Zoom to ask questions about the section you just covered.

   • Use the breakout room feature to split your students into groups for discussions or group activities.

   • Have your students enter any questions they may have into the chat.

3. Think about what participation will look like for your class. Participation in an online class looks very different than in a face-to-face class. In your in-person class, students can raise their hands to participate or you can make eye-contact with a student to call upon them. You can also look out into the audience and see who is engaged and who is drifting off. Fortunately, technological tools offer some ways of simulating the class environment:

   • Students can speak using their microphone, enter questions or thoughts into the chat, or use the Raise Hand feature in Zoom to be called on. Talk to your students about how they should participate, and what your expectations for their participation are.

   • If possible, have students keep their cameras on because this will help you monitor their engagement, and can help recreate the sense of community that you can foster in a face-to-face classroom. If you would like students to keep their cameras on, make sure to establish this as a norm when you begin teaching remotely. Encourage students to change their background if that might increase their comfort with keeping their video cameras on.

4. **Revise your assessment activities.** In a face-to-face class, you can assess student learning by monitoring student participation, checking students' faces for confusion, administering paper-and-pencil quizzes, or through student presentations. Here are some ways in which you can assess student learning in online classes:

   - Track student discussions by asking them discuss a topic over an email thread, and then ask them to forward the thread to you when the discussion has concluded.

   - Administer polls in Zoom or quizzes in Canvas (see Remote Instruction Guide for step-by-step instructions for how to make quizzes in Canvas).

   - Have students record their presentations using BigBlueButton in the Conferences tab in Canvas.

5. **Learn to use the technology.** If you are not very comfortable using Zoom, Canvas or other online tools, there are plenty of resources to help you learn:

   - Refer to the Teacher's Remote Instruction Guide for instructions on how to get started with Zoom and how to use your course site in Canvas.

   - Sign up for workshops on how to use Zoom, Panopto, or any other tools you may wish to implement in your online class sessions.

   - Check out the Technology Guides at cusps.zendesk.com to familiarize yourself with some commonly-used technologies for online instruction.

6. **Prepare for technical difficulties.** Students may not be used to learning online and may face some technical difficulties. Here's what you can do to help:

   - Have students report any difficulties with technology in the online chat. Consider asking your Course Associate or a student volunteer to monitor the chat in order to help troubleshoot.

   - The three biggest difficulties students may run into are: their audio doesn't work, their video doesn't work, or their connectivity is poor. You may need to help students troubleshoot these issues.

   - If you run into issues and need help, submit a ticket for Online Support by going to cusps.zendesk.com and clicking the "Submit a Request" button.

   - Record your sessions so that students with connectivity issues can review them later. Your recordings will be automatically uploaded to your Canvas page when the class session ends. Your students can access them by clicking on Class Sessions on the left hand side of the course site, and then clicking the Cloud Recordings tab.

7. **Communicate all changes to students.** Make sure that students are aware of all the changes that are to occur. These could include, for example, course meeting logistics, technological requirements, changes to assignments or group work, and changes to office hours.

   - Communicate norms about 'netiquette'. For example, should students have their cameras on? Should they 'raise their hands' before speaking?

   - Students may not be on email all the time. A useful and effective way of getting your students' attention is to use the Announcements feature in Canvas to send messages to your class.

8. **Training & Resources**
   - Training: https://calendly.com/cusps-online
   - Consultations with Online Curriculum & Instruction team: https://calendly.com/cusps-id
   - Consultations on pedagogy with Faculty Affair: http://bit.ly/FA_consult

Sample Online Class Agenda[1]

Duration	Segment	Details	Prepare
5 mins	Intro: Whiteboard activity	On entry into Zoom room, have students think about a question and write their contribution on the whiteboard	Launch a whiteboard at the start of class so it's the first thing students see, and add visible instructions
2 mins	Learning outcomes/ agenda	Share screen with document containing learning outcomes/agenda for the day. Give students an overview of the topics of the day's class session, centered around the learning outcomes	Create a document or PowerPoint slide with the day's learning outcomes/topics.
2 mins	Poll	Use the polling tool to ask a question that determines personal relevance for the topic of the class	Set up the poll question in advance
10 mins	Mini-lecture	Share screen, launch Powerpoint, and deliver mini-lecture. Use Annotation features in Zoom to mark up your PowerPoint slides.	Have the PowerPoint file launched already so you can get into it seamlessly. Think through or practice annotating slides in advance.
2 mins	Poll	Ask one or more questions for understanding	Set up poll question in advance.
10 mins	Breakout Room Activity	Assign students to individual breakout rooms, discuss for 10 minutes, and create a collaborative Google doc (which you will then collect on the Canvas site)	Practice hosting breakout rooms. Assign students to breakout rooms during whiteboard activity or poll.
10 mins	Debrief	Ask each group to appoint a representative to summarize the main points of their discussion. Post these in the chat field, which you will read out to the class.	Ask the Course Associate or a student to monitor the chat field for you, and bring the most relevant points to the fore.
2 mins	Chat: Muddiest point	Ask students to contribute to chat where they are still confused	
5 mins	Debrief	Clear up misconceptions that were unearthed in muddiest point chat	
5 mins	Closing	Summarize the activity of the session, set up expectations or follow-up activities.	

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[1] Revised from this guide from the University of Minnesota