

What to Expect from Your Students When Transitioning to Remote Teaching

1. Class Times

Even if you are shooting for synchronous remote instruction, meaning everybody goes to class together at the usual time, every instructor should have a plan for students to review class meetings asynchronously. That's because students may not have access to the internet or to a computer during your set class time, and also because some students may get sick and be unable to attend class.

2. Evaluations

By attempting to replicate in-person assessments in online settings, we fail to recognize that a change of medium may require a change of design. Especially if your instruction is interrupted close to the time of finals, as for many of us on the quarter system, don't immediately jump to the conclusion that you can or should just "put the final exam online." Sorting students and rigorously determining what deserves an A as opposed to a B may not be the most urgent business in the face of a global pandemic. Give yourself permission to think outside the parameters of your original assessments and ask the question, what can we do here that keeps learning happening? What if our first priority in an emergency is not completing testing but giving an opportunity for students to integrate and demonstrate their learning?

Remember that when you make any of these modifications, students with academic accommodations will still need those accommodations if you switch up the style of teaching or assessment. Consult your campus disability resource center to make sure you maintain accessibility and equity.

3. Academic Integrity

Research and experience suggest that developing elaborate plans to stop cheating -- especially to stop cheating in digital environments -- is a losing game.

As naïve as it may seem, you may get better results by promoting academic integrity than by trying to stop cheating. You can find out more information about this approach on websites developed by [MIT](#) and [UCSD](#), among others. Perhaps the most that you, as an instructor, can do under the present pressures is to present students with a strong argument for the benefits of maintaining their integrity, while developing minimally cheat-proof assignments.

Other points you might touch on include: when you cheat, you circumvent an opportunity to solidify your learning. While this may benefit you in the short run, it will catch up with you eventually; once you have engaged in cheating, you will likely enter your next course unprepared and this will lead to the likelihood of further cheating in the future; the stress and anxiety that come from cheating on a test will almost certainly outweigh the stress of preparing to the best of your ability. Moreover, the stress and anxiety that come from cheating remain with you after you take the exam. Nearly all people who have cheated on a test remember having done so for the rest of their lives. Please see the ACC website for [more resources on academic integrity online](#).

4. Partners in Learning

During unplanned events that affect instruction, one of the simplest and most effective ways to keep learning happening in your classes is to speak openly with students about being good partners in learning. Ask your students to reflect and perhaps talk with each other or you about why they are in school, what their goals are in the course and how they see their own agency in the teaching-learning dynamic. Giving them a sense that taking control of their learning can be a way to help them feel less powerless in a situation that is beyond their control. Then link that reflection to a concrete plan for how they will go about accomplishing their goals in the event of unusual or even suspended teaching.

Provide students in advance with research-based learning support such as the fantastic free tools, videos, blogs and other materials provided by [the Learning Scientists](#). These can help students learn how to study and take notes, prepare for examinations, and establish overall good learning practices, especially for those who have not taken remote or online classes before.

Consider including student input at some level in difficult decisions you are making about the course. Poll them about options for demonstrating their learning (they may surprise you by how great their ideas are), about changing the due dates for assignments and about other hard choices you are making. You can collect this information and then tell students how you have used it to inform your decision making. You are still making the decisions, but you are allowing students to be partners in responding to unplanned events. This builds trust between instructors and students and allows students to practice using their agency to respond in difficult situations -- a transferable skill if ever there was one.

Adapted from "Keep Calm and Keep Teaching" by Jody Greene:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/17/shifting-unexpectedly-remote-instruction-requires-many-human-solutions-tech>