



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR STUDENTS WHILE TEACHING REMOTELY

December 17, 2021

Purpose

Communication is always an important aspect of teaching; however it is even more important in online, blended, or remote learning. This job aid highlights three important tips for communicate with students in your course.

Background

Whether online, blended, or face-to-face it is important that students are able to see their instructor as a person (*Communicating with Students*, 2020). One study found that interpersonal interaction (between instructor and student and student to student) was predictive of students final grades while course design and technology implementation were not (Jaggars & Xu, 2016).

How To

The following tips are important to consider in your interactions with students to help support positive learning relationships.

Be kind.

Remember that students come from a diversity of situations and backgrounds, and we don't always know what's happening behind the scenes. Some of your students might be managing childcare at home while trying to work and study, others might be dealing with unreliable internet access. Students could be stuck in unsafe living situations, or be afraid of losing a loved one.

Some ways of showing kindness to students could look like getting to know your students to build rapport, checking in after a student has missed a class or assignment, being careful not to make assumptions, and being flexible.

Be consistent.

Indicate to students ahead of time (if possible) how you intend to communicate. Giving students weekly updates using e-mail or Moodle Announcements can help to keep them on track and know that you are also engaged in the course. Explain how you expect students to contact you, the time frame when they can expect responses, and the availability and preferred format for office hours and individual student support requests. It can be helpful to have set

times that you are available to your students, such as with a consistent office hours where students can drop in on Zoom or Teams video with their questions.

Be clear.

Students may have never taken an online course before; you may need to be more explicit with your expectations than you think you need to be. For example, “There will be two synchronous classes a week, you will be expected to attend if possible, just like an in-person class” is better than “There are two zoom classes a week”.

With your communication and direction about learning activities and assignments, be as transparent as you can about your expectations. If there is a mark attached to an assessment, include the learning objective(s) and rubric or marking guide in the assessment instructions.

References

Communicating with Students. (2020, June 9). Centre for Teaching Excellence.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-creating-positive-learning-environment/communicating-students>

Jaggars, S. S., & Xu, D. (2016). How do online course design features influence student performance? *Computers & Education*, 95, 270–284. <https://doi.org/10/f8gdrc>