

Tips for Online Teaching and Learning

Note: Ensure that your faculty supervisor approves any approaches that you implement as part of your online teaching.

Timing and Workload Issues for Students

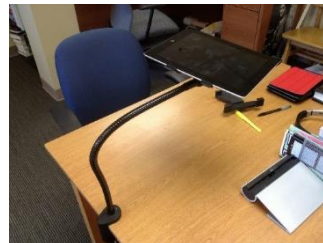
- Make reasonable concessions in course coverage, depth, and/or delivery; you may not be able to do everything you normally do during a regular session or even during a regular semester.
- Be careful not to assign extra work to students just because you were not able to cover it in class; this work can pile up for students.
- During live meetings, stick to the official class schedule: start and finish on time. Students with back-to-back classes need a short break to reset and refocus.

Live vs. Recorded Sessions

- While live sessions are generally more effective and engaging, you should record your session for students who have hardships or who wish to watch the session again later for review.
- Be upfront with students about the benefits of a live, regularly scheduled class
 - opportunities for interactions between instructor and students
 - opportunities for interactions among students
 - reduces feelings of isolation
 - ability to ask questions real-time
 - following a regular meeting schedule/routine

Technology

- Most TAs will likely need to have access to either a tablet computer (with writing interface), a pen tablet (as shown), or a document camera.
- A cost effective approach is to create a document camera using a smartphone or tablet connected to a holder, as shown. Use the Zoom mobile app to connect the smartphone/iPad as an additional “participant” in a Zoom session.



- Zoom tutorials and related resources, provided by Faculty Innovation Center, may be found at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/using-zoom-to-teach>

Breaking up the Monotony of an Online Session

- Online sessions can quickly become boring and disengaging. Try one or more of the following to keep students engaged and active.
- Show your face as much as possible during the session – don't be a faceless voice.
- Occasionally address students directly in a non-instructional tone. Use such instructional breaks to mention an important point, briefly discuss connections to an assignment, etc.
- Seek full-class feedback using a free online polling tool, such as PollEverywhere, Socratic, etc.
 - conceptual question: multiple choice
 - conceptual question: true or false
 - short problem solution: multiple choice
- Take a “Zoom break”; have students work on something individually – away from the computer. Even 10 minutes away from the computer screen can provide a refreshing break and refocus student attention.
- Use breakout rooms in Zoom and have students work on or discuss a problem in groups of 2-4 people.

Suggestions for Zoom Break Activities

- Have students do one of the following
 - work on a practice problem, or a portion of a problem, not necessarily to the end
 - read a problem and outline a solution procedure
 - read over a lab procedure, problem solution, etc. and write down one or two questions that come up
 - read over an introduction to a new concept (from textbook or a handout)
- Take a break with no activity, especially for long sessions (> 1 ½ hours)

Using Break-Out Rooms in Zoom

- Zoom breakout rooms can be used effectively for part of a recitation and laboratory session.
- Activities can be similar to those used for Zoom breaks, but in a small-group setting.
- Be upfront with students about benefits of breakout rooms
 - increased interactions between students
 - reduced feelings of isolation
 - benefits of active learning
 - benefits of peer instruction
- Not all students will like breakout rooms – provide alternative arrangements for those students who don't wish to participate.
- Don't force students into breakout room participation – it will likely backfire and create problems for other students.

Office Hours and Other Student Meetings

- Consider holding office hours “on demand” in addition to or in place of regularly scheduled office hours.
- Provide more flexibility with scheduling, e.g., in the evenings, since it is not necessary to be on campus.
- Include more than one student in regularly scheduled meetings to combat isolation and increase interactivity, particularly in labs and project-based courses.

Academic Dishonesty

- Remind students about and/or review University policies regarding academic dishonesty.
- Avoid using Proctorio in Canvas, due to privacy and technical issues.
- Administer exam during a Zoom session. Require students to be on camera on at all times until the quiz/exam paper is submitted electronically (e.g., on Canvas.)
- Create new quiz/exam materials and avoid using problems from various textbooks – there are a lot of solutions manuals floating around online.
- Include an Academic Integrity Statement at the top of a quiz/exam which students are required to sign electronically. The following is an example of such a statement:

I attest that I have not been in contact with anyone about the content of this quiz and that I will not divulge the content of the quiz to anyone else. I also attest that all of the work that I am submitting here constitutes solely my original work.

I understand that not abiding by these conditions constitutes a violation of University policies regarding academic integrity and the Student Code of Conduct. I understand that all parties involved will be subject to disciplinary action that could range from a grade of zero to academic dismissal from the University.