Quick Tips for Mid-Semester Transfer of Offline Classes to Online
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Communicate Early, Often, and Repeatedly

1. Tell your students your plan for adapting the course and how things will change or remain the same.

2. Be sure students know what you expect, when you expect it, in what format, and how to send it to you.

3. Tell them how to reach you, as office hours will likely not be an option (email, online office hours, etc.). Let them know if you need a certain amount of time to respond to emails (say, 24 hours, next business day, etc.). Encourage them to contact you early with any questions.

4. Send students reminders before each course item is due, as well as the day it's due. Send those out via email <u>and</u> post them as announcements in your LMS (Blackboard, Moodle, etc.). Repeat your expectations and availability in each of those reminders.

5. Set up your course's LMS page to support your assignments, course content, and goals. This may require adding or modifying elements of your current setup.

Plan for Accessibility & Engagement

1. Shift to asynchronous communication and learning as much as possible. Asynchronous will create fewer technical issues and will be easier for students to access if their internet connection or available technology has trouble supporting live video. Use synchronous where essential for course outcomes and learning experiences, of course, but only where essential.

2. Opt for platforms with mobile apps. Computer access may be harder for some students when off-campus, but they may have a smartphone. LMS mobile apps may not be great, but in many cases they work better than the mobile version of their website. Some video platforms have excellent mobile apps. (I prefer YouTube and Zoom for this reason.)

3. Use familiar and easy tools as much as possible. Students probably are comfortable with your LMS, they likely use YouTube, and they probably have existing strategies for accessibility and accommodation with those platforms. Zoom is easy to learn and use (compared to Microsoft Teams or some other tools).

4. Include closed captioning with any videos you produce. Closed captioning improves learning for many students, regardless of their hearing. Some schools provide closed captioning for instructor videos (your center for teaching excellence, distance ed office, or tech services should be able to help). Otherwise, you can use the reasonably decent automated closed captioning in YouTube.

5. Ask students to communicate their needs to you early. As soon as you have a plan for adapting the course, communicate it to your students and ask them to let you know if they foresee any needed accommodations or difficulty accessing technology. Be proactive with them and with the campus disability services, technology services, and student success offices. Likewise, some faculty (especially contingent faculty and graduate teaching assistants) may not have robust technology at home (or even in their offices). If you are an administrator, be sure you reach out to them and help them access what they need.

6. Get yourself on camera. Regardless of your assignments, teaching style, or strategies, being on camera at least a little for your students can dramatically enhance their engagement with you and the course. Even just a 5-minute pre-recorded video each week can make a big difference. It can be just a quick agenda & tips for the week video, but do something to be visible to them every week.

Adapt Offline Course Instruction to Online Learning

1. Adapting course activities is better than just transferring them. Effective online communication and learning is different than effective communication and learning offline. Try to be flexible in your teaching style, assignment design, and assumptions. Focus on the remaining objectives for the course, how to help students learn, and what they need to be able to demonstrate competency. Project-based, inquiry-based, and independent learning are well-suited to online contexts.

2. Lectures should be pre-recorded video. Whether you lecture for long periods or have mini-lectures as part of an offline class, the best solution will be to record video lectures for asynchronous viewing. These can be you on screen, voice over slides, or even you at a whiteboard. You can record theses inside a video conferencing platform like Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate (even just by yourself) or directly in PowerPoint. **Keep lectures short**. Long lectures in any format produce poor learning outcomes, but online they are even worse. Break lectures into videos of no more than 10 minutes, even if that means 4 videos for one class period. Anything past that and student engagement drops to zero.

3. Discussions and group work can be done via text forums or live video. Consider breaking classes into smaller discussion groups to increase peer-to-peer engagement. You can make smaller group discussion forums in your LMS or use breakout groups in

your video platform. If you are using text forums, be aware that students are unlikely to log in more than once a day, and even then only if you tell them you expect it and remind them. Text forums will also need more concrete questions, direction, and prompting from the instructor to be successful. In video platforms, consider using the "raise hand" functions to manage participant contributions with large groups.

4. Student presentations can be asynchronous or synchronous video. If you don't need a live presentation, then encourage students to record themselves with their computers or their phones. The YouTube mobile app will record right into their YouTube accounts for them. They can send you the link and/or post it to the LMS forums. Encourage your students to set their YouTube videos to "Unlisted" so they can control who views them. (If they set their videos to "Private," neither their instructors nor their classmates will be able to view them.) If student presentations need to be live, use a video conference tool like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard Collaborate. If you want students to watch each other present, require them to post recordings in the LMS forums and give them specific questions for peer feedback. Smaller groups in the LMS forums help with this.

5. Quizzes & exams are well supported in every LMS. If you need help, university tech services should be a good resource. As far as I know, every LMS supports multiple choice, fill in the blank, essay, and all the other standard paper test formats. Most support common mathematical and scientific symbols.

Tutorials & Additional Resources

Basic tips for recording video & Zoom video conferencing tutorial (for student or faculty use): http://patgehrke.com/index.php/tutorials/

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Bpqla3Bxok

Canvas video conference instructions: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12687-415241306

D2L / Brightspace video classrooms tutorial: https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/integrations/youseeu/admin/setting_up_virtual_classroom_or_video_assignments.htm

Inside Higher Ed essay on abruptly moving classes online: https://insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/11/practical-advice-instructors-faced-abrupt-move-online-teaching-opinion