Distance Teaching Survival Kit

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In March 2020 many countries have decided to close their higher education institutions because of the Coronavirus (Covid-19). Most of these institutions try to keep up to the normal schedule by switching to online teaching.

Apart from using the institution's Learning Management System (eg. Moodle, Blackboard, etc.), there are many other tools you can use for teaching from home. The following list does not contain everything that is out there. We have collected just a few ideas, tools and articles to make it easier to teach in these challenging times.

If you need help from Pearson, please contact the representative of your country.

Useful links and tips

Collections of tools recommended for online teaching
•   https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures/solutions
•   https://techagainstcoronavirus.com/

How to move your course online and be successful - article
•   https://medium.com/@contact.josecc/how-to-move-your-course-online-and-be-successful-6098b4a0823d

Conducting Distance Education Effectively - article
•   https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/teacher-resources/resources-for-distance-education/

Characteristics of Successful Distance Learning Programs - article
•   https://www.sutori.com/story/characteristics-of-successful-distance-learning-programs--Aw7yxYFMjDqUHGKMeAZ2yPMb

The flipped classroom

A flipped classroom is an instructional strategy and a type of blended learning that reverses the traditional learning environment by delivering instructional content, often online, outside of the classroom.

A short description with links:
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/flipped-learning-0

Portal with ideas, with how-to videos and many more from the educator community:
https://flippedlearning.org/

Synchronous or Asynchronous?

Synchronous learning involves online studies that are conducted with the aid of chat rooms. This kind of learning can only happen online. Online communication helps your learners stay in touch with their teacher and fellow students. It's called synchronous learning because the system allows students to ask their teacher or fellow students questions instantly through instant messaging.

On the other hand, we have ***asynchronous learning***. This method can be carried out online and offline. Asynchronous learning involves coursework delivered by web, email, and message boards that are posted in online forums. Students do not have access to instant messaging through this online forum. A benefit of asynchronous learning is that you're able to be self-paced.

Examples in distance teaching
Synchronous – using videoconferencing, screen sharing, live chat and voting systems to discuss problems/questions students have after reading the learning material before the session.

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Asynchronous – students are given reading materials/videos and they are tested on their understanding through online tests or voting systems capable of asynchronous activities.

Tools you can use

1 E-books

VitalSource - https://www.vitalsource.com/en-uk/
Get instant access to your eTextbooks and a full suite of study tools on any device. As an instructor, you can apply for a free sample copy of the textbook you are using (or would like to review considering adoption).

To get an instructor access please contact your local Pearson representative.

2 Videoconferencing

MS Teams - https://teams.microsoft.com/
Skype - https://www.skype.com/en/
Google Hangouts - https://hangouts.google.com/
Zoom - https://www.zoom.us/
Join.me - https://www.join.me/

All of these have screen sharing, chat and mute functions to enable live class interaction. (Some of these tools accept limited participants or have a time limit, so read the descriptions for free use carefully.)

3   Video recording

Windows Camera

Windows Camera is an image and video capture utility included with the most recent versions of Windows and its mobile counterpart.

How to use it

Start the software from the Start menu and simply hit the Record button. When you are done, click on the Stop button. Your video will appear in the bottom right corner. By clicking on it, you will be able to open it, watch it again and decide what to do with it – delete, share or open the folder it is saved into (all these functions are in the top row of the screen).

4   Free/free trial video recording software (for screen capture, etc.) collections

https://www.getcloudapp.com/blog/best-video-recording-software
https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-screen-recorder
https://www.movavi.com/learning-portal/best-free-video-captures.html

5   Voting systems and other tools for quizzes and interaction

LearningCatalytic

https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/products-services-teaching/learning-engagement-tools/learning-catalytics.html

Learning Catalytics is an interactive student response tool that encourages learning by using students' smartphones, tablets, or laptops to engage them in interactive tasks and working in and outside the classroom (flexibly allowing both synchronous and asynchronous teaching).

With 18 different types of questions (created by you or chosen from the question library) Learning Catalytics also lets you manage student interactions by automatically grouping students for discussion, team-based learning, and peer-to-peer learning, and save all answers in its gradebook. There is a small fee per student for this tool. If you are interested in using it, please contact your local Pearson representative.

Kahoot - https://kahoot.com/

Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform, used as educational technology in schools and other educational institutions. Its learning games, „Kahoots", are multiple-choice quizzes that allow user generation and can be accessed via a web browser or the Kahoot app.

PollEverywhere - https://www.polleverywhere.com/

Poll Everywhere is and easy way to gather live responses in any venue… conferences, concerts, classrooms, and company off-sites — anywhere with internet.

Quizlet - https://quizlet.com/

Quizlet is a mobile and web-based study application that allows students to study information via learning tools and games.

Hot Potatoes - https://hotpot.uvic.ca/
The Hot Potatoes suite includes six applications, enabling you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises for the World Wide Web. Hot Potatoes is freeware, and you may use it for any purpose or project you like.

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6 Learning Management Systems

MyLab and Mastering - MyLab and Mastering is the world's leading collection of online homework, tutorial, and assessment products designed with a single purpose in mind: to improve the results of all higher education students, one student at a time. It is designed to help self-study by providing reading and multimedia content together with guided practice tests and exercises.

If you are teaching from a Pearson title which is accompanied by this LMS, please contact your local Pearson representative for more information.

7 Other tools

Google Classroom - https://classroom.google.com/h
Google Classroom is a free web service, developed by Google for schools, that aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments in a paperless way. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students.

WordPress
https://wordpress.com/
WordPress is a free and open-source content management system written in PHP and paired with a MySQL or MariaDB database. Features include a plugin architecture and a template system, referred to within WordPress as Themes.

Social media
Engage your students using social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. Create study groups where you can share files, multimedia content, have discussions and many more.

How to plan and organize teaching from distance?

Useful tips

Improving Planning and Organization

Suggestions for planning and organizing a distance delivered course include:

• Begin the course planning process by reviewing the literature on distance education research.

• Before developing something new, check and review existing materials for content and presentation ideas.

• Make sure you understand the strengths and weaknesses of various delivery systems (audio, video, data, print, etc.) not only in terms of how they are delivered (satellite, microwave, fiber optic cable, etc.) but in terms of learning styles and course requirements.

• Hands-on training is critical for both teacher and students. Consider a pre-class session in which the class meets informally using the delivery technology and learns about the roles and responsibilities of technical support staff.

• At the start of class, hold a straightforward discussion to set rules, guidelines, and standards. Once procedures have been established, consistently uphold them.

• Make sure each site is properly equipped with functional and accessible equipment. Provide a toll-free "hotline" for reporting and addressing problems.

• If course materials are sent by mail, make sure they are received well before class begins. To help students keep materials organized, consider binding the syllabus, handouts, and other readings prior to distribution.

• Start off slowly with a manageable number of sites and students. The logistical difficulties of distant teaching increase with each additional site.

Meeting Student Needs

Consider the following strategies for meeting students' needs:

•   Assist students in becoming both familiar and comfortable with the delivery technology, and prepare them to resolve the technical problems that might arise. Focus on joint problem solving, not placing blame for the occasional technical difficulty.

•   Make students are aware of and comfortable with new patterns of communication to be used in the course.

•   Learn about students' backgrounds and experiences. Discussing the instructor's background and interests is equally important.

•   Be sensitive to different communication styles and varied cultural backgrounds. Remember, for example, that students may have different language skills, and that humor is culturally specific and won't be perceived the same way by all.

•   Remember that students must take an active role in the distance delivered course by independently taking responsibility for their learning.

•   Be aware of students' needs in meeting standard university deadlines, despite the lag time often involved in rural mail delivery.

Use Effective Teaching Skills

To maximize your teaching skills at a distance, pay special attention to the following:

•   Realistically assess the amount of content that can be effectively delivered in the course. Because of the logistics involved, presenting content at a distance is usually more time consuming than presenting the same content in a traditional classroom.

- Be aware that student participants will have different learning styles. Some will learn easily in group settings, while others will excel when working independently.
- Diversify and pace course activities and avoid long lectures. Intersperse content presentations with discussions and student-centered exercises.
- Humanize the course by focusing on the students, not the delivery system.
- Consider using a print component to supplement non-print materials.
- Use locally relevant case studies and examples as often as possible to assist students in understanding and applying course content. Typically, the earlier in the course this is done, the better.
- Be concise. Use short, cohesive statements and ask direct questions, realizing that technical linkages might increase the time it takes for students to respond.
- Develop strategies for student reinforcement, review, repetition, and remediation. Towards this end, one-on-one phone discussions and electronic mail communication can be especially effective.
- And finally…relax. Participants will quickly grow comfortable with the process of distance education and the natural rhythm of effective teaching will return.

Improving Interaction and Feedback

Using effective interaction and feedback strategies will enable the instructor to identify and meet individual student needs while providing a forum for suggesting course improvements.

Research findings on the need for interaction have produced some important guidelines for instructors organizing courses for distant students:

• Learners value timely feedback regarding course assignments, exams, and projects.

• Learners benefit significantly from their involvement in small learning groups. These groups provide support and encouragement along with extra feedback on course assignments. Most importantly, the groups foster the feeling that if help is needed it is readily available.

• Learners are more motivated if they are in frequent contact with the instructor. More structured contact might be utilized as a motivational tool.

• Utilization of on-site facilitators who develop a personal rapport with students and who are familiar with equipment and other course materials increases student satisfaction with courses.

• The use of technologies such as […] computers, and telephones can also provide learner support and interaction opportunities.

To improve interaction and feedback, consider the following:

• Use pre-class study questions and advance organizers to encourage critical thinking and informed participation on the part of all learners. Realize that it will take time to improve poor communication patterns.

• Early in the course, require students to contact you and interact among themselves via electronic mail, so they become comfortable with the process. Maintaining and sharing electronic journal entries can be very effective toward this end.

• Arrange telephone office hours using a toll-free number. Set evening office hours if most of your students work during the day.

• Integrate a variety of delivery systems for interaction and feedback, including one-on-one and conference calls, fax, e-mail, video, and computer conferencing. When feasible, consider personal visits as well.

• Contact each site (or student) every week if possible, especially early in the course. Take note of students who don't participate during the first session, and contact them individually after class.

• Use pre-stamped and addressed postcards, out-of-class phone conferences, and e-mail for feedback regarding course content, relevancy, pace, delivery problems, and instructional concerns.

- Have students keep a journal of their thoughts and ideas regarding the course content, as well as their individual progress and other concerns. Have students submit journal entries frequently.
- Use an on-site facilitator to stimulate interaction when distant students are hesitant to ask questions or participate. In addition, the facilitator can act as your on-site "eyes and ears."
- Call on individual students to ensure that all participants have ample opportunity to interact. At the same time, politely but firmly discourage individual students or sites from monopolizing class time.
- Make detailed comments on written assignments, referring to additional sources for supplementary information. Return assignments without delay, using fax or electronic mail, if practical.

Evaluation Tips

- Check out and adapt already published questionnaires; there's no need to re-invent the wheel.
- Draft and revise questions; change if necessary.
- Make use of follow-up probes.
- Alternate between instruction and interaction.
- Sequence your questions for best effect – go ahead and ask for suggestions for improvement before asking for what is good. This will help convey sincerity for seeking improvements.
- Place open ended questions after quick answer questions. This gives students built-in thinking time.
- On summative evaluation, assure anonymity. This can be accomplished by having all questionnaires sent to a neutral site where they would be removed from their envelopes and forwarded to the instructor without a postmark.
- Establish rapport by being interested and supportive. Withhold judgmental responses.
- Adapt to the student in degree of formality and pace of communication.

- Use evaluation as a method for understanding teaching and learning.
- Try to get both positive and negative feedback. It is important not only to know what is not working, but also what is working.

Source: https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/teacher-resources/resources-for-distance-education/#HowtoConductCorrespondenceCoursesEffectively