



**Stay connected**

# Tips for adjuncts and new instructors

Whether you're an experienced adjunct professor, new to teaching, or just looking for extra ways to optimize your course, we've gathered some tips for you. Use these resources and recommendations to confidently teach your course no matter how it's offered — in the classroom, online, or HyFlex.



# Getting started

Start with the basics. Check out these strategies to get a head start on the semester.

## Keep it simple

It's tempting to try out all of the cool tricks you've heard about, like using social media or classroom clickers. But, it's better to do a few things well rather than do too much too quickly. Choose one or two tools and strategies to focus on and make notes for the next time around, like new activities to try or additional resources to explore. Only once you've mastered a few, slowly start adding in new tools or techniques.

## Find a mentor

A good mentor or colleague can help you develop your planning, instruction, and content knowledge. They'll be able to guide you through department resources, college requirements, content delivery, classroom management, and more.

## Foster a growth mindset in students (and yourself)

Mindset affects student success, and instructors can help students have a positive one. Every word sends a message, so select phrasing choices to nudge students towards a growth mindset. For example, in your assignments and rubrics include persistence and creativity. [Read our article for more tips.](#)

## Get creative with assignments and readings

Use media resources to help your students learn. Many digital products include student success materials and interactive activities you can assign to your students. And always remember to segment readings and assignments when you can. Help students avoid information overload by breaking learning up into smaller chunks.

## Schedule student work

Make sure your syllabus or other course materials include an outline or calendar of due dates. Students need a pacing guide to help them manage their work and easily check due dates, especially if you're not seeing them regularly in a classroom setting. But remember to remain flexible — things happen. Have an extension policy in place and let students know when and how they can use it.

## Plan your gradebook settings (before the semester starts)

If you're using a Learning Management System (LMS), find out from your mentor, department chair, and/or LMS admin how to set this up. You can also explore the training materials for your digital platform to help you choose the right settings.

## Proactively prevent cheating

Some strategies to prevent student cheating include scrambling and pooling questions on tests, using algorithmic values in quantitative questions, restricting student access to review until after all students complete an assignment, and using proctoring services. Many digital products have assignment settings you can toggle to discourage cheating. Explore our [MyLab™](#) and [Mastering™](#) guides for how to do this or [read our article for more tips.](#)

# Student communication and engagement

Explore our tips for effectively communicating with students and creating an engaging, student-centered course.

## Communicate regularly

Regular communication with students is important, so let students know how and when to reach you. Keep notes and be sure to save your emails. Also, many digital platforms let you tag or filter for students to personalize your messages. For example, you could easily search for students who haven't submitted an assignment yet and reach out to them specifically.

## Give timely feedback

Feedback plays a huge role in promoting successful learning outcomes. Make sure students are getting the feedback they need, when they need it. It's important to make feedback specific and clear so students know which concepts they need to work on. For immediate feedback during lectures, try using interactive response tools such as [Learning Catalytics](#) or [Live Response](#). They'll give both you and your students the real-time analytics to find out where they're succeeding and struggling.

## Use discussion boards

Start an online discussion board to get students thinking critically and interacting with one another. Use debate prompts and encourage students to back up their arguments using primary literature. To mix things up, let students answer with a mix of media, such as PowerPoint® presentations, YouTube™ videos, or concept maps. [Read our article for more tips.](#)

## Leverage online meeting tools

More than ever students need flexibility. They're often juggling competing priorities from school to work to family. Support them with online lectures or office hours through Zoom, Hangouts™, LMS tools, and more.

## Turn your class into a community

Help build a community using affinity groups. At the beginning of your course, have students write a short biography so you can group them based on shared hobbies or interests. Or have students self-enroll in groups of their choice. Small groups can prompt students to engage with each other more effectively and actively. [Read our article for more tips.](#)

# Additional resources



There's a wealth of information out there to help you. Check out resources at your institution and these additional Pearson resources to gear up for a great semester.

## Explore resources at your institution

Check in with your institution to see what additional information they can provide you. Make sure to get information on important contacts and guidelines.

### Contacts to find

- Colleagues/mentors
- Tech support
- LMS administrator
- Registrar

### Guidelines to know

- Textbook options
- Grading policies
- Academic integrity policies

## Explore more Pearson resources

Discover additional insights, advice, and tips from Pearson Faculty Advisors on fostering success in your courses.

- [Mastering the Essentials of Online Teaching](#): Whether you have years of experience or are relatively new to teaching online, we have a variety of resources and expertise to help. Explore this site and find new ways to provide your students with the consistent, portable access to the course materials and support they need to succeed, regardless of your experience or classroom model.
- [Pearson Teaching & Learning Blog](#): Join the conversation on the latest trends, perspectives, and successes in higher education.

