

Tips for Teaching Live Online

- **Check in with Students:** Take the time to check in with all students to find out more about what they will have access to during this time and what they are comfortable with. You can do this through a survey that you send to students, or if you have a smaller class, you may just email students individually. This will help you make good decisions about how to proceed with your class meetings. (Example: https://wustl.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_1GIsIGDJ7ZUDya9?Q_SurveyVersionID=current&Q_CHL=preview)
- **Develop Clear Community Guidelines for Participation:** Talk to students about whether they have microphones (or headphones they can plug in with) or cameras (e.g. web cameras on a laptop) that are comfortable using. Discuss with students what active participation looks like in this new virtual space and what your expectations are for them.
- **Develop Clear Community Guidelines for Asking Questions:** Provide students with specific directions about how to ask a question (hand raising through alt+y/turn microphone on/write that you have a question in the chat window).
- **Keep Microphones on Mute Unless Someone is Speaking:** This will cut down on background noise that can make focusing in these conversations difficult. Note that as a host you can set it so that participants are on mute by default when they enter the meeting. You can also mute a participant.
- **Plan Breaks & Shorter Sessions:** Being in virtual meetings can be more taxing for some than being there in person. Aim for shorter class sessions than usual, when reasonable to do so. Break up meetings into smaller units of activity (15-minute lecture w/ screen share ppt, 10-minute breakout small groups, 15-minute large group discussion, etc.). Schedule breaks where students can move away from their screens, stretch, and reset.
- **Make the First Meeting Low Pressure:** Think about having a first meeting where the only new thing is technology. Give them a chance to try out features that you plan to use (e.g. breakout rooms), but think about waiting until the second meeting to introduce new content.
- **Be Flexible:** Be thoughtful about allowing students to join via whatever means that they have available and note that calling in might be a substitute for poor internet connection. Have a plan B for if Zoom doesn't work as planned. It's good to remember that students didn't sign up for an online course where video might have been an expected way to participate.
- **Think about Accessibility Concerns:** A number of factors might make online virtual meeting challenging for students to participate in: being in different time zones, having unreliable internet, having various conditions or disorders that might make an online environment overwhelming, general trauma/anxiety caused by this situation. Think about how you can support students who can't participate in a virtual session. Be ready to provide accommodations for those who may need them, be aware that students who did not initially require accommodations for your course may reach out about needing new ones in this online environment.
- **Help Counter Student Anxiety:** Provide "crisis-free" conversation time, have a brief pet show-and-tell, or plan a few minutes of some other fun activity. If having synchronous meetings, plan in short breaks where everyone moves away from their computer for a few minutes to stretch and reset. Give students the chance to practice new exam or assessment structures in a low-stakes setting.
- **Simplify:** Students with processing challenges or students who had conditions like ADHD may struggle with having multiple due dates, different times at which things are available. Complex online schedules using lots and lots of tools may be particularly hard for them to navigate. Simplify to the degree that you can.