

Strategies for teaching to remote students in traditional classrooms

There will be many factors that will impact how instructors adapt their courses for students who may be unable to attend class for various reasons. In planning, instructors should consider class size, pedagogical approaches, teaching style, activities, and course goals as well instructor and students' concerns with synchronous and asynchronous participation. Below are some options to consider as instructors create a contingency plan for handling student absences in their classes when teaching in traditional classrooms.

First consider whether absent students will be best supported by synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities.

- Students absent because of illness may not be best supported by synchronous activities while those absent for travel related to athletic events or non-medical reasons may benefit from opportunities to remain synchronously involved with their courses.
- Synchronous and asynchronous learning provide different affordances. Synchronous learning experiences offer direct social engagement and instructor feedback while asynchronous experiences provide more flexibility for engagement.

For asynchronous instruction:

- Transition any activities which can be done asynchronously in the class into Moodle/Blackboard course site. This can include submitting assignments in digital form, adding quizzes, etc...
- Consider adding asynchronous discussion and participation opportunities using [Moodle Forums](#) or [Blackboard Discussion boards](#). This could include responding to discussion prompts, reflecting on content and students' learning processes, and giving students a structured place to collaborate on projects.
- Instructors should [request an Echo360 course](#) to hold media.
 - To record a live class, instructors can record a class lecture using [Zoom \(cloud recording\)](#) and [have the cloud recording copy over into Echo360 automatically](#). Instructors will need to remain in front of their computers/webcams to be seen and heard. When answering questions, it is important to repeat questions asked by students as they are unlikely to be picked up by a laptop microphone.
 - Instructors can also use Zoom or [Echo360 Universal Capture](#) to record supplemental materials (pre-recorded lectures, post-lecture follow-ups, etc...) for students.

For synchronous instruction:

- Instructors may run a Zoom session that absent students join during class.
 - Instructors will need to create a Zoom link to share with students ([in Moodle](#) or [Blackboard](#)) before class.
 - Instructors will need to remain in front of the computer/webcam to be visible and be heard.

- Instructors should communicate clearly with students who are participating synchronously online how they will be included, e.g., students should use the chat to ask questions, students will be called on to speak, and/or students should use the raise hand feature to indicate they have questions.
- Instructors should be intentional and dedicate time to soliciting interaction from students online during the synchronous session.
- Instructors should remind students in class not to login into Zoom.

Collaboration and group work:

- Instructors may want to explore adding collaborative tools found in [Google Workspace at UMass](#) into their class to facilitate collaboration. IT maintains a [Google Apps Quick Guide](#) for the most common apps. All Google applications update live, so they can be used synchronously or asynchronously by students.
 - Google Docs offers collaborative options for students to share ideas synchronously and asynchronously. Students can use Suggesting mode to offer peer feedback and workshop papers,
 - Use [Google's Jamboard app](#), a collaborative digital whiteboard, to do think-pair-share activities, mind-mapping, and other media-rich activities.
 - Google Drive allows instructors and students to share documents or collections of files to make them available to peers.
- Additional collaborative opportunities include Moodle Forums, Workshops, and Chat or Blackboard Discussions, Wikis, and Collaborate.

Additional technology:

For increased participation or increased quality of recordings, instructors may want to include additional recording technologies to enable cross-student interaction. These recommendations are generalized based on small and medium sized classrooms.

- Instructors can purchase (or attempt to borrow from the Digital Media Lab dml@library.umass.edu) an external microphone and/or external webcam with a tripod to use during their class. Even with the addition of these peripheral devices, the quality of the experience will not be the same as if the equipment was integrated into the room.
 - Microphones should be devices which include a conference or group mode. Examples include [Snowball microphones by Blue](#), or [Jabra Speak 750 series microphones](#) (links for example purposes only).
 - Webcams do not need to be the highest quality possible as streaming and recording compress video quality to 1080p or in some cases 720p. Examples include the [Logitech C920 series](#). (links for example purposes only).

[Request a consult](#) with an instructional designer for assistance in finding the best solution that works for your course.