Pedagogical Guidance for Remote and Hybrid Instruction

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The Chicago Center for Teaching

In Partnership with the Office of the Provost and Office of Academic Technology Solutions

The University of Chicago
The Chicago Center for Teaching

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Introduction

For Autumn Quarter 2020, courses at the University of Chicago will be taught in a variety of modes, at the instructor's discretion. Whether you are designing a course that is in person/hybrid or remote, it is important to remember that for all undergraduate courses:

Week 1: All courses begin remotely

Week 2 - 8: In-person and hybrid courses can meet on campus

Thanksgiving Break: No classes will be convened during the week of Thanksgiving.

Weeks 9 -10: All courses taught remotely

Undergraduate Reading Week and Exams: Final exams will be completely remote.

The University's Teaching Remotely website provides guidance on setting up tools such as Canvas and Zoom to enable online instruction. Additionally, the Chicago Center for Teaching, along with the Office of Academic Technology Solutions and the University Library will be offering a workshop program on the essential aspects of remote and hybrid teaching.

The workshops fall under five categories represented below. Together, they represent the complementary areas instructors should think about when they design and teach their courses.
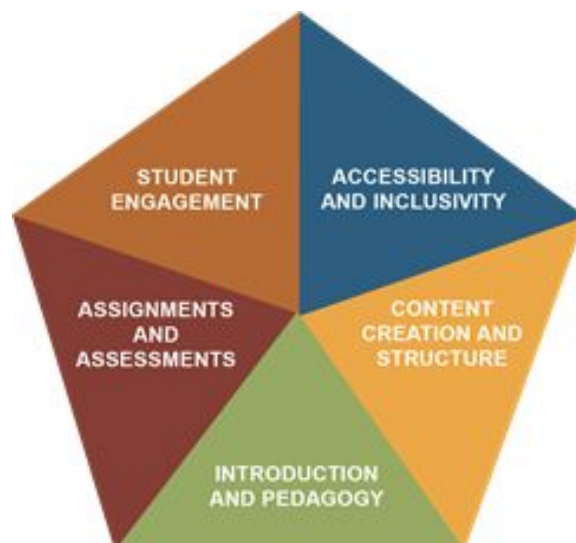
To supplement these resources, this guide:

1. Summarizes several good pedagogical practices for the transition to remote and hybrid teaching.

2. Provides suggestions for how you might translate common face-to-face teaching practices to remote practices.

3. Highlights insights from University instructors and students who taught and learned remotely during the Spring Quarter.

4. Provides a curated list of additional resources.

General Approach

Articulate learning goals.

Think about what you want your students to be able to do as a result of the course learning objectives, and what modes of teaching and learning will help achieve those objectives.

Articulate those modes at a goal-oriented level (think of "presenting content," rather than "lecturing") and then think about how you can translate those goals into multiple modalities online. For example, presenting content via text and images on a page in Canvas; holding a synchronous video lecture in Zoom; an asynchronous video presentation using Panopto, etc.).

Identify a mix of asynchronous and synchronous tools.

The advantage of synchronous tools like Zoom is that it more closely approximates a face-to-face learning experience than students consuming content on Canvas or watching a pre-recorded video from Panopto. But synchronous tools have limits, including:

- Internet bandwidth requirements for video.

- Students are more likely to get distracted in long Zoom sessions.

- Viewing a screen for long periods of time is physically and mentally taxing.

- Some students may have challenges making it to a live session due to being in different time zones.

- Other students may have varying access to high speed connection or quiet spaces.

When you do go synchronous, consider limiting it and intentionally supplementing with an asynchronous follow-up. For example, you might do a 20-minute Zoom lecture during your canonical class time, and then ask students to complete an activity on their own which they upload to Canvas. Be sure to record the session and make it available to students who could not attend at that time.

Balance structure and adaptability.

Structuring courses clearly in the remote environment allows students to navigate and access the resources they need to learn and manage their time and workflow. Instructors in the spring quarter found the following approaches useful:

- Organize resources, tools, tasks, and assignments for each week or unit into Canvas modules.

- Include written or recorded video guidelines and explanations of how, when, and why students will use each part of the module.

- During Zoom sessions or in class, talk with students about the module and the plan for the week.

Instructors in the Spring Quarter cited adaptability as a key element in their success, and students mentioned their instructor's adaptability and flexibility when talking about their positive experiences in remote learning. Given that structures and plans don't always help students learn as expected, it is helpful to approach courses with clear plans and openness to change. To facilitate adaptability, consider the following:

- Build in opportunities to talk with students about how things are going .

- Structure regular surveys or polls of students. Ask them how the course is going, if they understand goals and expectations, and if they are able to access resources, engage with you and other students, and do the work that is expected of them.

- Talk with students about what you are hearing from them, any changes you are thinking about, and suggestions for success going forward.

Communicate expectations.

Transparent expectations are even more important in unusual circumstances. Class policies and expectations should be listed in the syllabus and posted on Canvas. Identify the regular expectations you establish for students and think through how to adapt those to an online context. Some areas to consider:

- What are the various ways that students may participate in class, such as, verbal discussion and/or text chat during a Zoom session, posting reflections in Canvas, etc.?

  - Good practice is to identify more than one option for students to engage with you and their peers and to practice and demonstrate their understanding.

- If you are teaching an in-person class with remote aspects, what are the aims and expectations for the in-person time as it relates to the online time?

  - How will remote students be integrated into class participation and discussion?

- How might you adjust your deadlines and policy on late work?

- How can you allow for flexibility if students are in different time zones, are having difficulty accessing technology or the internet, or are otherwise facing challenging circumstances?

- What are the materials you expect for students to have access to?

    - How can you provide these materials or different options for accessing them?

Build accessible courses.

The University of Chicago is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive environment. Digital accessibility is the ability of a website, mobile application or electronic document to be easily navigated and understood by a wide range of users, including those users who have visual, auditory, motor or cognitive disabilities.

Here are some initial ways instructors can create more accessible courses, for additional information and resources, please visit Student Disability Services or the Center for Digital Accessibility for specific guidelines and standards.

- Create accessible course content:

    - Create accessible PDFs by Microsoft.

    - Create and verify PDF accessibility using Acrobat Pro by Adobe.

- Use sufficient color contrast. For hyperlinks, keep in mind that the color must have sufficient color contrast not only with the background, but with the surrounding text.

- Use meaningful link text. Eradicate ambiguous link text such as "click here" and "learn more." Link text should be specific, clear, and ideally should match the title of the page to which you're linking.

- For multimedia content, provide appropriate captions and transcripts.

- Additional UChicago Resources:

    - Planning Accessible Course Materials.

    - Creating Accessible Courses.

- ○ [Zoom Considerations for Teaching Students with Disabilities](#).

Focus on inclusivity

Inclusion is a way of viewing our teaching through a particular lens, of keeping in mind the distinct and diverse needs of all of our students. First and foremost, inclusion is a mindset. It is a way of reminding us to be intentional as we think about the needs of our students asking, "Who is being left out of the learning process due to the decisions I am making?"

- Take time to explore and identify your own prejudices by taking an [implicit association test](#) or through other means of self-analysis.

- Set norms for discussion. Remind students to treat classmates with respect, to post with care, and to ask clarifying questions when necessary.

- Help students create study groups, understanding that learning from each other helps with inclusion and connection. Facilitating the creation of study groups will help students in different time zones as well as those who find it difficult to connect with peers in a virtual space.

- Encourage students to come to you regarding inappropriate comments that may be happening in breakout rooms or among students in your class.

  - ○ If made aware of micro or macroaggressions, use the resources available through [Equal Opportunity Programs](#) to address the issue in the appropriate manner.

- Include and discuss examples, analogies, and scholars of various social identities and backgrounds.

For more information on inclusive pedagogy, please visit [Teaching Remotely](#) and review the Chicago Center for Teaching's *Considerations for Inclusive Teaching in Remote Environments*.

Design for community

Building social time into your course allows you to stay in touch with students and allows students to more fully engage in their learning. Consider strategies similar to those used successfully by University of Chicago instructors during the Spring Quarter:

Give students ample opportunity to get to know you by:

- Talk about yourself and your situation in Zoom sessions.

- Post Panopto videos of introduction or reflections on a reading, concept, or Zoom discussion.

Give students ample opportunity to get to know each other by:

- Have students interview and introduce each other at the start of the course.

- When using breakout rooms for problem solving or discussion, remind students to introduce each other or include a question that allows them to learn about each other.

- Leave Zoom sessions open before or after sessions for students to chat, replicating the social process of coming to and leaving class.

Adapt Assessment Plan

Rethink the number and weight of assignments, distributing them more evenly over the quarter. This promotes better learning by giving students more opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and improve their understanding, while also allowing for more flexibility in the event of challenges posed by the pandemic.

Some considerations for adapting assessments:

- Creative assignments more in line with the remote teaching environment.

  - Group projects promote peer engagement, which is critical even in a remote course.

  - Video presentations, podcast assignments, class blogs, and the like provide engaging ways for students to share their work with their peers.

- Establish clear, transparent, and flexible expectations for assessing participation, including what "counts."

  - Provide more than one way for students to participate in class discussion (e.g. synchronously during Zoom sessions and asynchronously via Canvas discussion threads).

- Design low-stakes, formative assessment into your course plan.

  - Plan to use Canvas Quizzes, Zoom polls, Zoom reactions, Google surveys, and other tools to take the temperature of your class and see how well they are understanding the material.

- Essays or projects in lieu of exams.

- ○ Allow for more engagement and better evaluation of the student's understanding of specific subject areas.

- ○ Fewer issues around administering and proctoring high-stakes exams.

Major Takeaways from Spring Quarter

Through surveys, faculty panels, and student focus groups, we learned a lot about practices that allow UChicago students to engage and learn while taking classes remotely. To hear what UChicago faculty had to say about their remote teaching, click here.

Empathy.

This is an extraordinary time for teaching and learning and for life in general. Conveying that you care about your students, their health and well-being, and their learning helps to cultivate a sense of community and belonging. Acknowledge the challenges of the current time and, if you are comfortable doing so, check-in on how they are doing and share a bit about your own current experiences.

Communication.

Even if you don't yet have a plan for how you will adapt, be in touch with your students as soon as possible to:

- Introduce yourself.

- Let them know how you will be communicating so they know where to regularly check for updates.

- Set the tone. Aim for a positive tone, conveying the idea that "we're in this together" and that you are excited to engage with their ideas this quarter.

Tone.

Remote teaching means more written communication to students in emails, on Canvas, and so forth. To help foster a productive, learning-focused environment, aim for a tone that is positive, respectful, inviting, and perhaps even fun. You want to articulate clear, high expectations for students, and to do so in a way that conveys enthusiasm about the material and students' engagement with it, and that fosters an atmosphere of trust, intellectual encounter, and scholarly inquiry. Overall, aim to convey that you care about your students and their learning.

Community.

"Social presence" is one of the central challenges of remote teaching, so devote time and space to having your students connect with each other (and you) at the outset. For example, you might ask students to post brief reflections and/or videos introducing themselves, describing where they are, and explaining how they plan to study while learning remotely.

Access.

Consider circulating a brief survey to determine your students' access to relevant books, computers/devices, broadband internet, and other relevant resources. Be up front with what tools a student will need to take your class - a laptop, a camera for their computer, Google Drive, etc., and make information available on the syllabus.

Feedback.

As you try out new strategies, debrief with students on how it goes. What are you doing that is most helpful for their learning? What are some things you might do differently? You can do this with an informal conversation at the end of a session, with a Google survey, etc.

Simplicity.

Focus on a limited number of digital tools like Canvas and Zoom, at least to begin with, and think about how you can use them to provide a few structured learning experiences. If there are other tools you are used to using, then you should continue using those.

If you organize all aspects of the course in a Canvas module, and explain that organization to students, it makes it much easier for students to find the resources they need, to

prepare for live class sessions and Zoom sessions, and to complete assignments and asynchronous activities.

Creativity.

Once you have the foundational structure set up using Canvas and Zoom, think about innovative ways to engage students in an online format. For example, rather than assessing students using a conventional essay or exam, can you have students record a short video of themselves explaining a key concept using Panopto? Are there opportunities to invite guest speakers to "Zoom in" to talk with your students?

Models for Remote and Hybrid Teaching

This section presents models for how you might translate common face-to-face teaching practices to remote or hybrid courses. Find what works for your course, and pull out elements that compliment your teaching style in order to adapt your class for a different modality.

Before the first class.

In the fall quarter, all courses will begin online. Even before the quarter gets underway in a face-to-face class, you might get in touch with students to introduce yourself, send the syllabus, or ask them to complete a small assignment for the first class.

Instructors should be prepared for students who need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, and should lay out the process for students who may need to shift from in person to remote, as well as where students who may require additional accommodations should go.

Communicate with your students as early as possible.
- Even if you don't yet have a plan for how you will adapt, be in touch with your students as soon as possible to:
  - Introduce yourself.

- ○ Let them know how you will be communicating information with them (through Canvas Announcements, email, etc.).

- ○ Set the tone, by conveying excitement and the expectation of forming a classroom community.

Assess prior knowledge.

- ● Have students complete an ungraded pre-assessment task— such as an ungraded writing assignment, quiz, survey, or another form of background knowledge probe— to get a sense of what they know coming into the class or how they think about the key concepts of the course.

  - ○ The quiz function on Canvas or a Google survey are good options for this.

Discussions.

Whether in Core, upper-level major courses, or in graduate seminars, one common mode of teaching and learning is to have students interact with the course materials, and then discuss their ideas and perspectives with their peers, with an instructor providing additional context and scholarly perspectives. The following are recommendations for how to adapt the typical classroom experience:

Remote Courses

- ● Create a module in Canvas that contains the reading materials and any activities you'd like students to complete before the class meeting.

  - ○ Name the module so it is clear to students what it is, perhaps with the topic and date of the course meeting.

  - ○ Add readings:

    - ■ Add an accessible PDF or other documents by adding a File.

    - ■ Link to online materials by adding External URL.

  - ○ Provide guidance with discussion questions, contextualizing remarks, or other content with:

    - ■ Text, images, and other sources by adding a page.

    - ■ A short, captioned video you record using Panopto.

- Add the video to your Module by adding an External Tool, selecting Panopto Video, and then selecting the appropriate video.
- Prompt students to reflect on the readings or problem sets before class, by adding a discussion or assignment to the Module.
    - Be sure to provide clear instructions and expectations for these postings. Questions to consider:
        - How do you want students to engage with the readings?
        - Should you ask students to reply to their peers' posts in Canvas or prepare to engage in a live Zoom discussion?
        - Will these be graded or merely used as a learning tool?
- Hold a synchronous class meeting using Zoom:
    - Think about how you can establish a welcoming environment in the video conference setting.
    - Articulate the goals and plan for each class at the beginning.
    - Share a Google doc via Zoom to use as a virtual chalkboard.
    - Using the Zoom breakout rooms function, assign students to small discussion groups to work on a specific question or task.
    - Record the class session to make it available to students unable to attend.
    - Supplement discussions with asynchronous assignments.

Hybrid Courses

- In certain classes, some students will be in class while others will be viewing remotely.
    - Consult with your departmental IT to make sure you are familiar with the technology needed for a hybrid class.
    - Take specific technology and pedagogical training recommended for teaching in this mode.
    - Make expectations and guidelines for both in-person and remote students explicit.

- ○ Check-in with both groups of students to make sure they are able to actively engage with ease.

Interactive Lectures.

In larger courses, instructors might give lectures, often with slides. To make a lecture an active learning experience, instructors will often incorporate activities and discussions for students, followed by assessments to determine where students are with the material. To replicate this in a remote environment consider the following:

Asynchronous Lectures

- Pre-recording using Panopto:
    - ○ Each video should have a clear learning objective.
    - ○ Talk over slides or use visual elements to keep students engaged.
    - ○ Break lectures into shorter 10 - 20-minute segments that students can easily access and revisit.
    - ○ Add short quizzes to your recording to allow students to reflect on the material.
- Use Canvas models to create active learning sections for each objective.
    - ○ Upload one objective-driven Panopto video.
    - ○ Build several smaller assignments or activities using Canvas assignments to allow students to practice or apply what they have learned.

Synchronous Lectures

- ○ Live lectures via Zoom:
    - ■ Use slides or another visual aid for the lecture.
    - ■ Be clear on what the class will look like that day and attempt to break up the lecture if possible.
        - ● Lecture and several breakout sessions, lecture with one breakout session and a few activities, etc.
    - ■ Build in opportunities to ask questions.

- Be specific about how you would like questions to be asked - in the Zoom chat, in a class Google doc, or should students use the "raise hand" feature in Zoom?

- If you have a TA, you may have them collect the questions and determine if questions will be answered periodically throughout the class or at the end of the lecture.

    - Limit the length and consider asynchronous follow-up activities.

Teaching Remote Lab Classes

Lab classes are designed to reinforce scientific principles and practices through hands-on experience and critical reflection. In order to translate this model to a remote application, you would have students engage in the experimental process on their own time and use class time for questions and further analysis.

- Create a Module in Canvas that contains reading materials and the virtual lab you would like for students to complete before the class meeting.

    - To find simulations, click on any of the following: PhET / Chem Collective / HHMI Biointeractive/ iLabs / NANSLO / LiLa / Molecular Workbench/ LabXchange

    - Clearly name the module with the topic and date of the lab meeting

- Add readings:

    - Add a PDF or other documents to the module.

    - Link to online materials, including simulations.

- Provide guidance with discussion questions, contextualizing remarks, or other content with:

    - Text, images, and other sources by adding a page.

    - A short pre-lab video you record using Panopto.

- Prompt students to reflect on their lab work with other students by adding to a discussion thread about the topic.

- Have students turn their lab assignment by adding an assignment to the module.

- Be sure to provide clear instructions and expectations for these postings:

    - What do students need to complete in each stage of the module?

- What questions should students answer in the virtual demonstration?

  - What should they observe or manipulate?

  - What data do they need to collect?

  - How should they format and submit their work?

  - If there will be a class discussion, what questions should they be prepared to answer?

  - How will they be graded?

    - For a quality grade or for completion?

- Hold your live video lab class meeting using Zoom

  - Establish a welcoming environment

  - Start the class by articulating the plan for the day and ultimate goal

  - Share your screen and use Word or Google doc as a virtual chalkboard

    - Consider posting this to the appropriate Canvas Module after the class is over

  - Break students into small discussion groups using Zoom's [breakout room function](#).

  - Record the class session to make it available to students who face challenges due to technology or internet issues, scheduling difficulties, or obstacles posed by sickness and other circumstances.

Assessing Student Learning

Assessment of student learning means thinking about the work we ask students to complete so they can practice and get feedback on their learning, and so that instructors can evaluate their understanding.

- Reading reflections, posts, short essays, or project work allow for students to exhibit their comprehension of a subject over a period of time, rather than a single in-person exam

- If it is necessary to mimic the set-up of an in-person exam for testing, the University is currently piloting the proctoring tool Proctorio

- - ○ Zoom can also be used to monitor students taking an exam
- Use tools for grading and providing feedback like SpeedGrader or Canvas Rubrics
- Move beyond basic facts, and ask students to apply their knowledge with new scenarios
- Be prepared to adapt expectations for student work
- Consider alternate exams
  - ○ Delivering a secure exam online can be difficult without a good deal of preparation and support, so consider giving open-book exams or other types of exams
- Consider alternative methods of assessment, such as multimedia assessments that require students to make a video or a podcast
  - ○ Group assignments can be collaborative blog posts

Additional Resources

Remote Teaching Scenarios; Cornell University.

Keep Teaching; Indiana University.

Inclusion, Equity, and Access While Teaching Remotely; Rice University.

Putting Some of Your Course Content Online in a Hurry?; Vanderbilt University.

Flower Darby, "How to Be a Better Online Teacher," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Michelle D. Miller, "Going Online in a Hurry," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Michelle D. Miller, *Minds Online: Teaching Effectively with Technology*