

Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption

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Plymouth State Open

Plymouth State is remaining open and asking those people who need to remain quarantined to do so. Please adjust expectations of students accordingly. To facilitate this, please refer to Option 1 Run Your Class Live with Zoom. Please use your PSU laptop to facilitate this workflow; additional cameras and microphones are available for [check out](#) on a limited basis.

PEDAGOGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Teaching during times of potential disruption requires creative and flexible thinking about how instructors can support students in achieving essential core course learning objectives. This document offers suggestions for instructors at Plymouth State University, looking to continue offering a student-centered learning experience in a remote or online learning environment.

While the process will no doubt feel unfamiliar and at times possibly frustrating, try as much as possible to be patient. There will always be hiccups, but times of disruption are, by their nature, disruptive, and everyone expects that. Be willing to switch tactics if something isn't working. Above all, stay focused on making sure the students are comfortable, and keep a close eye on the course learning goals--while you might not be able to teach something exactly the way you imagined, as long as you're still meeting the learning goals of the course, you're doing fine.

Examples of In-Person Class Sessions Transformed to Online

Use Case	Tools	Description	Support
Communicate with students	Quickmail, Announcements	Use Quickmail or Announcements in Moodle	Quickmail , Announcements
Video Lecture, office hours	Kaltura, Zoom	Kaltura can be used to record short lectures. Zoom is used for live meetings.	Kaltura Zoom
Share Files	Moodle, OneDrive	Use Moodle or OneDrive to share files with students	Moodle OneDrive
Collaborate	Zoom, OneDrive	Zoom can be used for live collaboration, OneDrive for document collaboration	Zoom OneDrive
Assignments & Grades	Moodle	Use Moodle Assignments, Quizzes, and Gradebook features for assessment	Assignments Quizzes Gradebook

How Do I Start

[I have taught online before and feel comfortable revising my class](#)

[I regularly use Moodle, but I have not taught online before](#)

[I use Moodle a little, but don't feel confident about revising my class](#)

[I rarely use technology and will need hands on help to revise my class](#)

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous?

There are two options for instructors to facilitate class sessions remotely:

1. **Synchronous:** instructors and students gather at the same time and interact in “real time” with a very short or “near-real time” exchange between instructors and students.
2. **Asynchronous:** instructors prepare course materials for students in advance of students’ access. Students may access the course materials at a time of their choosing and will interact with each other over a longer period of time.

Instructors may choose to engage their students synchronously or asynchronously depending on the course content or material that needs to be taught. There are many advantages and disadvantages to asynchronous and synchronous teaching options.

Advantages of Synchronous Teaching

1. Immediate personal engagement between students and instructors, which may create greater feelings of community and lessen feelings of isolation
2. More responsive exchanges between students and instructors, which may prevent miscommunication or misunderstanding

Disadvantages of Synchronous Teaching

1. More challenging to schedule shared times for all students and instructors
2. Some students may face technical challenges or difficulties if they do not have fast or powerful Wi-Fi networks accessible

Advantages of Asynchronous Teaching

1. Higher levels of temporal flexibility, which may simultaneously make the learning experiences more accessible to different students and also make an archive of past materials accessible.
2. Increased cognitive engagement since students will have more time to engage with and explore the course material.

Disadvantages of Asynchronous Teaching

1. Students may feel less personally engaged and less satisfied without the social interaction between their peers and instructors.
2. Course material may be misunderstood or have the potential to be misconstrued without the real-time interaction.

Identifying Key Tools and Functions within Moodle

If you are new to using Moodle, you may appreciate some orientation to key Moodle tools and functions.

Assignments: Instructors can create space for students to upload submissions, from informal reflections to formal written assignments and projects. Instructors can select the grading approach within the assignment. Assignments are best for instructors who wish for the students’ work to only be viewed and assessed by the instructor. [\[PSU Knowledgebase\]](#) [\[Moodle Guide\]](#)

Announcements: Instructors can send mass e-mails or messages to the whole class community via the Announcements tool. The benefit to using Announcements over e-mail is that instructors do not need to collect individual student e-mail addresses. [\[PSU Knowledgebase\]](#) [\[Moodle Guide\]](#)

Forums: Instructors can create threaded, written discussion forums for instructors to engage in written (or audio/video) dialogue with each other and respond to written prompts. [[PSU Knowledgebase](#)] [[Moodle Guide](#)]

Page: Instructors can create content for students to read or access that is not already created in a separate website or in a Word Document or other kind of document. . [[PSU Knowledgebase](#)] [[Moodle Guide](#)]

Quiz: Instructors can create assessments with multiple question types to collect student assess student comprehension. [[PSU Knowledgebase](#)] [[Moodle Guide](#)]

What is Zoom?

[Zoom](#) is a video-conferencing platform for which Plymouth owns a license. Zoom allows you to engage in live Web conversations with your students using audio, video, and text-based chat features.

Unlike a video-conferencing program like Skype or Google Hangouts, you do not need a unique username or account to use Zoom. Instead, your PSU ID and password will allow you to generate a link (much like you might for a Google Document) and a phone number that you can share with anyone. Participants can then follow the web link or call the phone number to join in on a live conversation.

SHIFTING YOUR CLASSES ONLINE

Option 1: Run Your Class Live With Zoom

This option works especially well for small discussion-based classes, though it's also effective for large lectures, especially if you have a moderator.

The Tech Side:

Using Moodle with Zoom makes it easier for students to locate the discussions. We've set up a detailed [guide](#) which walks you step-by-step through the process of integrating Zoom into your Moodle site, setting up a recurring meeting, or utilize [your personal Zoom URL meeting room](#). You can use this [guide](#) to upload a recording of the meeting to your Moodle site for anyone to review. Take some time to [familiarize yourself](#) with Zoom experience on both desktop or mobile experience. If you need some help with the tech side, please contact PSU help desk at helpdesk@plymouth.edu or (603) 535-2929.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- *Use slides and screen sharing* within Zoom to make sure discussion questions are visible to students who may have a slow Internet connection or who may struggle to hear the audio for the initial question. (Look for ["Share Screen"](#) at the bottom of your Zoom call.)
 - *On your first slide, display an agenda* at the start of the class session so that students know what to expect of the shared time together.
 - *Use the chat* (bottom of your screen). See [In-Meeting Chat](#).
 - *Moderate discussion*, i.e., "call on" a student with a comment to speak, to help them break into the conversation.
 - *For larger classes, assign a Fellow or TA to moderate the chat* and make sure important questions and comments are addressed. Even for smaller classes, it may be worthwhile to ask a student (or two) to take on special roles as "chat monitors" to voice if there are questions that arise that the instructor has missed.

- *You might use the chat to troubleshoot technical problems.* For example, if a student is having trouble connecting via audio or video, the chat might be a space for you as the instructor or for fellow students to work together to problem-solve. This may, again, be an opportunity to assign a student to a special role, especially if you have students eager to help on the technical aspect of things.
 - If you have a TA or a fellow who can support the class instruction with technical help, this would also be a good person to respond to troubleshooting tips in the chat.
- *Use Zoom Breakout Rooms* to help students talk in smaller groups (just as they would do breakout groups in a larger class environment). See [Managing Video Breakout Rooms](#).
- *Consider making discussion questions available in advance* in Moodle, etc. so that students can access the questions if screen sharing does not work. If sharing slides in advance to Moodle, share as PDFs, as students will be able to access the material on their phones.

Need Help with Pedagogy? Contact the CoLab at psu-open@plymouth.edu for ideas and guidance.

A Few Troubleshooting Tips:

- *If your microphone is not working*, use the phone number listed in the Zoom invitation when you set up a Zoom call. You can use your phone as the microphone and audio source for your call rather than your computer's built-in microphone if necessary.
- *If your Internet connection is slow or lagging*, consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up the Internet's bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency.
- *If you have earbuds or a headphone set, wear them!* Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up during your Zoom call, which will make it easier for your students to hear you. Similarly, you may want to advise your students to wear earbuds or headphones during the call.
- *Advise students to mute their microphones if they are not speaking and unmute the microphones when they wish to speak.* Students may be joining Zoom calls from all kinds of different locations, many of which may create background noise that could be distracting. Encourage students to mute themselves if they're not speaking to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noise. Using the "raise hand" feature or simply seeing the microphone unmuted will give the group a visual cue for when a student wishes to speak.
- *Check the "chat" space for student questions and contributions.* Or designate a student to monitor the chat and bring it to your attention when needed. Some students may not have working microphones and, therefore, may be unable to contribute via voice. The chat room is a good place for students to contribute, ask questions, and be involved.
- **Check the [Zoom Help Center](#)**

[Don't forget to check your video and sound!](#)

[Don't forget to record the meeting!](#)

Option 2: Pre-Record Your Lectures

If you are not comfortable presenting live, another good option is to pre-record any lecture material and upload it to Moodle.

The Tech Side:

You can either use [Zoom](#) to record and [upload](#) a lecture to your Moodle site, use [Kaltura Capture](#) to record and [upload](#) to Moodle, or [create a voice over video in PowerPoint](#) and [upload](#) it to Moodle. [Edit the captions to your video](#) in order to make it more accessible. If you need some help with the tech side, please contact PSU help desk at helpdesk@plymouth.edu or (603) 535-2929.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- *Keep videos short and lively.* It is often harder to focus on a video than on a person! [Check out some tips for creating lively short online videos from online educator Karen Costa.](#)
- *Test your microphone* to make sure that you have good sound quality. Consider using a headset with an external microphone to capture better audio.
- *Integrate interaction with the lecture material.* You might consider using a quiz or setting up a Moodle discussion board with some specific questions as a follow up.
Need Help with Pedagogy? Contact the CoLab at <mailto:psu-open@plymouth.edu> for ideas and guidance.

Option 3: Skip the Video

Many online courses do not have a video component at all. If you are not sure you have the right equipment and are uncomfortable with the tech setup, this might be a good option, at least for the short-term.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Annotate your slideshow with notes** and share this with students using Moodle or email
- **Set up a discussion** for students in Moodle. Use specific, structured questions, and let students know expectations for their responses. See our recommendations on Written Discussions.
- **Share links to outside resources.** Encourage students to watch videos, read articles, etc.

Office Hours

Set up virtual office hours to meet with students using your webcam, share your computer screen or collaborate using Zoom's whiteboard feature.

The Tech Side:

Using Moodle with Zoom makes it easier for students to locate the discussions. We've set up a detailed [guide](#) which walks you step-by-step through the process of integrating Zoom into your Moodle site.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- *Keep the link to the Zoom room you're using for your students in a central place on your course Moodle site.* The main factor to consider when holding office hours or conferences with students via Zoom is your accessibility as an instructor. Make sure they know how to find your "office" (just as you might offer them directions to your office on-campus).
- *Encourage students to share their screen with you.* Screen sharing is possible not just for the instructor in Zoom, but for students too. Help your students navigate towards a screen sharing option so that they can show you their written work on their screen.
Need Help with Pedagogy? Contact the CoLab at <mailto:psu-open@plymouth.edu> for ideas and guidance.

OTHER USE CASES

Student Presentations

- If students are sharing their presentations **asynchronously**:

- **Ask students to record themselves at their screen**, using a web camera, the built-in microphone on their computer, and screen sharing software combined to capture both their faces/persons as well as the slides on the screen.
 - [Zoom](#) or [Kaltura Capture](#) can be used for audio/video recording in this capacity, as can Quicktime (on Mac only).
 - Voiceover narration in slidedeck creation software can also be used via [Keynote](#) (Mac), [PowerPoint](#) (Mac or PC), or [Quicktime](#) (Mac).
 - **Students can save their final recording file and upload it to Moodle via either [Kaltura Media Assignment \[How to set up a Kaltura Media Assignment in Moodle\]](#) OR a [Moodle Discussions](#)**
 - **If students submit the recording via Moodle Media Assignment**, the file will only be visible to the instructor. **If students submit the recording via Moodle Discussions**, the file will be visible to the full class community.
- If students are sharing their presentations **synchronously**:
 - Ask students to use **Zoom to give a live presentation for their peers**. See [Advice for Using Zoom For Synchronous Class Sessions](#) for suggestions and technical tips for using Zoom to this end.

Written Discussions

To remove technical hurdles and to ensure that students are able to engage with peers and each other in a discussion-based class (even without a strong Internet connection), you might choose to move student discussion to an asynchronous format. Create a Moodle Discussion as a forum to facilitate communication, encourage students to interact, ask questions and respond to discussion prompts.

[\[Moodle Guide\]](#) [\[PSU Knowledgebase\]](#)

Individual Students Using Zoom to Attend In-Person Classes (Small, Discussion-Based)

Some students, due to compromised immune systems, etc., may want to Zoom in. The challenge is to make sure that students joining by Zoom feel like full participants in the class. Zoom participants often struggle with poor sound quality and a sense of disconnection.

- **Position your computer** so that students can see and hear as well as possible. If necessary, repeat student points for the Zoom crowd, if only you are close enough to be heard. You might consider bringing or borrowing a microphone to make it easier for students to hear. ITS has Zoom video kits for loan. See the [equipment loan link](#) in myPlymouth.
- **Solicit input from Zoom participants**, as Zoom students may have a harder time breaking into the conversation.
- **Assign a student to moderate** the Zoom chat and to speak up for a Zoom participant with a question or a raised hand.
- **Share handouts and slides** in advance to make sure Zoom participants can look at them. These handouts and slides could be shared via links in the Zoom chat room or by directing the student(s) to the appropriate place in Moodle where the materials may be available.
- **Rethink your classroom activities** to make the class more interactive even if Zoom students don't have ideal connections and aren't able to hear and see everything perfectly.
 - Have students write and comment together on a shared Microsoft Word Document or via GoogleDocs.

Final Note

While this is disrupting our day to day life of teaching here at Plymouth State, it's also disrupting our student's lives. While we strive to make a safe learning environment here, at home, individual learners

will have individual challenges that we will perhaps be less prepared to deal with. We should be ready to respond with flexibility and creativity to a variety of issues that can arise when we move online: students (and faculty) may lack reliable internet, computers and other devices, and/or unlimited cell data plans; some students may have trouble with increased screen time (migraines, for example); some students may suffer with increased challenges with food and housing insecurity when away from campus; some students may have trouble finding quiet places to work at home, or be dealing with ill family members or increased childcare burdens if school is out of session; some students may have trouble paying bills if they have to stay home from work, which could affect their academic progress. The move to remote learning may be less of a pivot than it is a full-scale sea change for some, so keep flexibility and understanding at the core of what we do.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

General Tips for Teaching Online:

[Going Online in a Hurry: What to Do and Where to Start:](#) Michelle D. Miller

[Tips and Tricks for Teaching in the Online Classroom:](#) Jim Harrison and J. Diane Martonis
(*Faculty Focus*)

[Selecting the Appropriate Communication Tools for Your Online Course:](#) Rob Kelly (*Faculty Focus*)

[8 Lessons Learned from Teaching Online:](#) EDUCAUSE Research Library

[How To Be a Better Online Teacher:](#) Flower Darby (*Chronicle of Higher Education*)

Resources for Online Writing Instruction

[Annotated Bibliography of Online Writing Instruction research](#) (compiled by Heidi Harris, 2019)

[Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction](#) (book); edited by Beth Hewett and Kevin DePew, 2015. Here are a few chapter highlights:

[Grounding Principles of OWI:](#) Beth Hewett

[Asynchronous and Synchronous Modalities:](#) Connie Mick and Geoffrey Middlebrook

[Faculty Preparation for OWI:](#) Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch

[Preparing Students for OWI:](#) Lisa Meloncon and Heidi Harris

[Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors](#) (book): Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle, 2019

As always, if you need assistance, reach out to the Help Desk

helpdesk@plymouth.edu

(603) 535-2929