



The purpose of this document is to guide your teaching decisions for rapid move to online instruction. Keep in mind that teaching during times of significant disruption is, well, disruptive! Perfection is not expected. Aim to provide students with the support they need to meet your essential course learning outcomes during the disruption. More information about how to use UGA's basic tools to create online content, assessments, and activities can be found in the eLC course "USG Rapid Guide to Online Teaching," into which all UGA instructors have been enrolled (contact us to request access: <https://ctl.uga.edu/contact/>).

### Before you Start

- **Check with your department** to make sure you are aware of their expectations and guidelines for classes.
- **Consider realistic goals** for yourself and your students. Can you realistically maintain your original syllabus and schedule, or do you need to make adjustments?
- **Review your course learning goals** to determine your priorities for student learning and assessment.
- **Identify pain points** for your move to the virtual classroom. For example, labs or performances may be your pain point so focus on identifying solutions for those specific challenges. Otherwise, rely on tools and procedures that are familiar to you and your students as much as is possible.
- **Identify your new expectations for students and** prepare to communicate those clearly to your students and any course TAs.

### Communication with Students and TAs

- Provide an initial communication to students as quickly as possible after things change, even if all the details are not in place yet. Let them know when they can expect more specific information, and where they can find it.
- Ask students to reach out if/when they need additional support/accommodation to engage in the revised format (e.g., technology access, learning accommodations, illness, etc.).
- Incorporate the [newly-passed syllabus statement on mental health and wellness](#) on your revised syllabus. Students may also be under additional stress during a teaching disruption.
- Be consistent with your chosen method of communication (eLC email, announcements, etc.), and make sure students know where they will find the most up-to-date version of information about the course, including any newly posted materials.
- Set expectations for how students should engage in communication with you and/or each other, including how they should contact you. Let students know how frequently you expect to respond to online communication from students.
- Consider using virtual office hours with a dedicated Zoom link.
- Make sure your teaching assistants know your plan, know what about the course has changed, and what you need from them as things shift to the virtual classroom.

### Delivering Content

There are multiple ways to deliver content online, with no single format or approach that will work best

for everyone. Consider your own preferences, the nature of your content, and your specific learning goals – and be sure to share your choices, goals, and expectations with students. Consider also the following:

- You may decide to deliver course content in a “live” fashion (a.k.a. *synchronously*), or by giving students choice about when to engage (a.k.a. *asynchronously*).
  - Synchronous delivery provides opportunities for direct exchanges between students and with you as the instructor (though less so in large classes). On the other hand, students facing technology- or internet- related challenges will have more trouble accessing synchronous video content, and limited bandwidth may make synchronous delivery impossible in a significant disruption. If you decide to offer any synchronous content, it is a good practice to record your synchronous sessions for posting later to your eLC course.
  - Asynchronous delivery (via video, audio, PowerPoint, readings, web resources, etc.) is preferable in a significant disruption because it is more accessible and flexible. However, asynchronous delivery may allow students to harbor misconceptions about course materials that go unchecked. Read on for tips to regularly engage students with each other, the content, and you.
- If you choose to create videos of you lecturing (or otherwise sharing information with students), consider the following:
  - Create shorter videos (maximum 10 minutes) that focus on a specific topic, concept, or skill. This will help students maintain attention.
  - Add captions to your video by adding a captions file or requesting machine captioning (you will find instructions for free captioning in Kaltura [HERE](#)).
  - Give students an action-item at the conclusion of each video (akin to an interaction that might happen in class). For example, they might solve a practice problem or post to a discussion board.
- If you create videos of your own or post things from around the internet, be sure to provide context with information about what you expect students to take away from these materials, and/or links to supplementary materials or documents.
- Create space for thinking and reflection with a private discussion forum group for each student (or for a group of students) or create an assignment where students can submit their answers to prompts about course content before they engage in a live or class-wide asynchronous discussion.

## Discussions

Facilitating discussions in the online space can be done through use of a discussion board in eLC, or via Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate. Discussion boards can be made available to the entire class or assigned to small groups of students. Some units also have access to the breakout feature in Zoom, which would allow you to divide students into breakout groups during a live online class session.

Here are some additional tips for facilitating discussions using an online discussion board:

- Communicate clear guidelines in your prompt, establishing expectations for your students’ contributions to the discussion (e.g., writing style, length, number of interactions, frequency, tone, and content).
- Create questions and prompts that require complex thinking and application of ideas, to avoid

repetitive student responses.

- Use threaded discussion responses to allow students to respond to one another multiple times in an organized way.
- Be present by providing feedback and coaching to student responses. In some classes this might also be a place where your TAs can contribute.
- Encourage students to participate in a variety of ways that work for the individual student, including text, audio, or video. Consider that certain necessary student accommodations could limit the possible response methods available.

## Assignments

In the case of upcoming assignments, consider the resources students will need to complete them, the manner in which they are typically completed, and how you will assess them. Will these resources be available in the virtual classroom? Will students be able to submit their work, in a format conducive to your assessment, in the virtual classroom?

If you need to change an assignment to work in the virtual classroom, focus on the key goals of that assignment. What can students do that will meet these goals, even if the result is different from the original plan?

Here are some additional tips about specific types of assignments:

- For **writing assignments**, provide opportunities for peer feedback. This can be done by putting students into groups in eLC and directing them to upload or share documents (within eLC, or in OneDrive<sup>1</sup>). For successful peer feedback, provide students with clear structure and prompts, asking students to respond to specific criteria related to your grading of the work, and/or responding to questions like “What is the main thing you think should be revised in this draft?”
- For **presentations**, you might ask students to create a recording using simple technology (e.g., smart phone or computer), and send it to the instructor or full class. For a lower tech option, students might be asked to submit a written script of their presentation, along with support materials (e.g., slide deck, images, etc.).
- For **homework assignments** that are best turned in via hard copy (e.g., math problem set), you could give students a worksheet to complete or ask them to upload photographs of their work to the assignment submission folder.
- For **field trips**, create an internet scavenger hunt or provide other online materials or videos to expose students to what they’re missing out on with the face to face visit.

## Labs & Studios

There is no perfect way to conduct traditional lab or studio work virtually, but there are options. For example:

- If the key objective for your class is data or item analysis, provide students with artifacts or raw data sets and ask them to complete their analysis.
- If students can understand some key aspects of a lab by watching it, rather than doing it, look

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<sup>1</sup> To maintain FERPA compliance, use either eLC or Microsoft OneDrive to share student work.

for some online examples. For example, [MERLOT](#) serves as a repository housing 90+ virtual labs, while other discipline-specific repositories provide additional resources ([Stanford Virtual Labs](#), [HHMI BioInteractive](#), [ACS Simulations](#), [Colorado PhET](#), [iBiology](#), [National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science](#), etc.)

- Find additional ways to increase student interaction with content and with each other. For example, you might pose questions about potential lab results to students and ask them to discuss their thoughts on how to interpret these results.
- Consider reserving a distilled portion of face-to-face activities for later in the semester if in-person classes can be resumed. During the disruption, focus on any techniques or practices that can be completed or performed at home. Students might then engage in a structured reflection about their process, the rationale behind choices, and any revisions they made.

## Tests

If you have a planned face-to-face test, it may or may not translate well to the virtual classroom. Consider options such as a take-home exam, an assignment where students submit revised written work from earlier in the semester, and/or creation of a series of smaller assignments that can be completed remotely in lieu of a larger test.

If you choose to administer a test online using the quiz tool in eLC, consider the following tips:

- Allow students more than one submission attempt, in order to accommodate possible problems with internet connectivity.
- The [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) is available in eLC and functions as a moderate deterrent to cheating on tests. However, Lockdown Browser can cause technical glitches that require IT support intervention - please only use this tool when EITS help desk support is available. Online proctoring services should be used as a last resort only.
- Create a second version of the test, to be used by students requiring an accommodation of extra time for timed tests.

## Final Thoughts

Remember that the goal is to adapt your current plans and teaching strategies to make the best of things in a difficult or unexpected situation. Perfection is not expected, and it may be useful to remind yourself of that occasionally. In addition, as unanticipated issues arise in your class, remember that you have a support network to rely upon for help. In addition to colleagues who may be working through similar challenges, consult the [eLC help site](#) or reach out for help with technology tools from [your local help desk](#) or the CTL, EITS, and unit level [collaborative eLC administrators](#). The [Disability Resource Center](#) is also available to help you meet the accommodation needs of students. Finally, don't forget that one approach may not work for everyone during times of significant disruption or changing circumstances. Ask students to communicate any issues or barriers they encounter (e.g. illness, lack of internet connectivity, technical issues, needing to care for family members, etc.), and be prepared to consider accommodations equitably.

## Acknowledgements

In construction of this resource we owe a debt to the following materials, created by other teaching centers across the nation: Brown University ([teaching continuity](#); [times of disruption](#)), [Indiana University](#), Stanford University ([best practices](#); [disruption](#)), and [Vanderbilt University](#).