



Time Management & Teaching Tips for Larger Online Sections

With larger online classes, having organizational systems in place is a must. Beyond that, strategic communication, peer-led collaboration, and using powerful feedback techniques will help with larger numbers. Having a larger class means there is opportunity for robust peer learning and collaboration. Here are some considerations as you create an engaging experience for your students and allow you to balance your time and energy.

Preparation and Administrative Hacks

- ☐ Prepare your class ahead of the pre-term deadline and be sure to check that the book in the online bookstore is accurate and that all your links work.
- ☐ Enter due dates for every graded item in your course, in D2L and in the syllabus.
- ☐ Download your Classlist (un-check everything but User Details) into a Google Sheet and create a column for information you gather about them week-to-week ("Student Info") and one for every week the course is in-session.
- ☐ Design your weekly routine. Consider the flow of the class in terms of due dates, live sessions, grading deadlines, etc. and map out a key activity pattern to keep your workload manageable. (Hint: Be transparent with students about the flow and pacing of the course and offer ideas of study skills to help their routines.)

Communication

- ☐ Leverage one-to-many communication. Use announcements and email blasts wisely and with intention.
 - ☐ Be aware of posting a multitude of announcements, which causes confusion and results in more students reaching out and requiring an individual response.
 - ☐ Create your Weekly Announcement with text and video about important deadlines, to-do's, and any important advice/information they should have to be successful. Be sure to inform students that questions about due dates, content, assignments, etc., should always be posted in the Q&A Discussion Board.
- ☐ Set expectations about how to use communication channels and expected response time.
- ☐ Schedule an optional Zoom on Day 4 to do a "live" Q&A of how the course works and to answer pressing questions. This approach typically decreases the amount of individual message to which you must respond
- ☐ Subscribe to your Q&A Discussion Board (i.e., set up notifications) so you receive an email when a student posts a question.



Facilitation Strategies

- ☐ Vary your discussion engagement. Consider the following options:
 - ☐ Use your class list to create a response rotation to ensure you are responding to a variety of students week over week.
 - ☐ Look for connection points among student ideas and focus on collaborative questions rather than long scripted responses that are dense with content.
 - ☐ Assign discussion roles to the students in a rotating manner (discussion leader, question guru, resource sharer, etc.) to create agency for students and decrease the discussion burden of faculty as the central voice.

Assessment and Feedback

- ☐ Create feedback banks for key assignments to allow for easier commentary and grading feedback.
- ☐ Utilize the rubric to specifically point out areas of improvement rather than repeating the same criteria in the written comments.
- ☐ Use audio and video feedback (with accessibility compliance/captions) to provide high level feedback.
- ☐ Use surveys during the course to get student feedback on perceptions of content and concepts to best direct additional time and resources.
- ☐ Use reporting and features of D2L to communicate to students who are behind or who are excelling. Reports allow a quick view of activity and engagement to ensure the best use of time and focus.

Resources:

Darby, F. (2020, April 14). 5 low tech time saving ways. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <https://www-chronicle-com.nl.idm.oclc.org/article/5-low-tech-time-saving-ways-to-teach-online-during-covid-19/>

In this article, Darby describes how many faculty who are new to online teaching, are looking for ways to make the shift to remote instruction less of a mentally-draining activity. She provides examples of low-tech, time-saving asynchronous techniques to make remote pedagogy easier and more interesting for the instructor and students.

Stanford, D. (2020, March 16). Videoconferencing alternatives: How low-bandwidth teaching will save us all. IDD Blog: Center for Teaching and Learning at DePaul University.



<https://www.iddblog.org/videoconferencing-alternatives-how-low-bandwidth-teaching-will-save-us-all>

Though we all enjoy interacting with our students, Stanford points out two key factors which can make video conferencing potentially problematic as a go-to tool for all learning activities. The author challenges instructors to shift their thinking about choices we make about the technologies we use in order to have a meaningful impact on how inclusive and effective our teaching is.