Teaching Remotely: A Guide for TAs

This guide has been developed to assist you in supporting courses and students remotely (e.g. via Zoom or eClass). Your role as a TA will be determined by your course director and depends on their course design. Any decisions you make about the course should first be discussed with your course director. Not all sections and advice in this guide will apply to you. Navigate this guide through the table of contents, selecting the sections that apply to your personal TA role, and the directions you've been given by your course director.

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Introduction

Circumstances around us constantly change the way you teach. The content of courses is updated, assignments refreshed, and you try different strategies to adapt to student needs and interests. When a shift is sudden, it brings many questions to the fore, perhaps even confusion. Yet, any instructor knows that learning can take many forms based on what they aspire their students to learn and do. The good news is that sound pedagogy crosses over any course format and directly applies to online and remote learning. Indeed, the foundation of any course, whether delivered face-to-face or remotely, is a set of learning outcomes that shape both teaching and learning activities as well as assessments. In other words, constructive alignment

is key to any course delivery. With this foundation, each course will have its own unique path but aim for an organized, clear, and consistent learning environment.

While the course design process is similar regardless of course format, the experience of teaching and learning online or remotely is different from face-to-face. Key differences, mainly from the perspective of the course director include:

Face-to-Face Learning	Remote Learning
There are specific class meeting times and structure for students.	Allow flexibility for students to access content and participate in activities at their own pace, but within a consistent structure. Even with synchronous, scheduled online activities, consider recording them and set a consistent time in which online participation is due. For example, the module for each week is made available on Monday at 9am and due to be completed at each student's own pace by Sunday at 10pm.
The in-class time commitment is clear.	It takes more time to teach and learn online (Freeman, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Kenny & Fluck, 2017), and it can be hard to assess how much time online learning activities take for students. Consider asking for students' feedback to better gauge the time commitment required.
Verbal instructions and communication in class flows naturally.	Instructions need to be carefully recorded and communicated online. This includes clear written communication and expectations for students.
You can answer student's questions that are spontaneous or during a question and answer period, for everyone in class.	Consider setting up a Q&A forum and insisting students ask their questions only in this forum so everyone can participate, contribute answers, and learn from each other as well as from you when you answer questions in this forum. Recurring questions from your office hours can be communicated to everyone using a Q&A forum.
You can more easily sense when student engagement is decreasing and respond in the moment.	You can deliver content in smaller chunks, e.g. one concept per chunk, and in multiple formats (e.g. video, audio, readings, etc.). Motivate students and engage them with small activities between chunks. You can monitor student participation and provide feedback.
Students are present together and can form a community, engage with each	Find ways for students to interact and connect with each other online. For example:

Face-to-Face Learning	Remote Learning
other in pairs or small groups either spontaneously or as planned and structured by you.	• Ask students to create and share, introductory videos of themselves; • Create groups in eClass and ask students to engage together in some or all modules; • Use Zoom breakout rooms for small groups to engage with each other synchronously.
In-class assessments, like writing, labs, and invigilated tests and exams are common.	Rethink your assessment strategy, balancing working within the parameters of teaching and learning online, and maintaining academic rigour. Find ideas in the sections on assessment and academic integrity of this guide.
Alt exams offer quiet places and extra time for students who are registered to write tests and exams, and take care of all the administrative tasks for you.	For online assessments you may need to work closely with your students to meet their needs. You may be prompted to take a universal design approach in your assessment design and implementation.

Table 1: Key Differences between Face-to-Face and Remote Learning

Communicating with your Course Director

Initial Communications

It is important to reach out to your course director as soon as you receive your TAship to begin planning for your role. Even when teaching remotely, a real-time meeting is preferred early on to work with your course director to explore your role and its relationship with their course design. The section on communication methods has options you can propose for meeting and communicating throughout the course.

Be open-minded to a different role and tasks online

Teaching remotely allows flexibility and different options for course design, which can mean different tasks for you. Determine what you hope to get out of this role, and what your strengths are that you could bring to the role. Also consider what training you might need, particularly related to teaching remotely.

Tools

- TA CD Relationship Questionnaire – This is a questionnaire that you and your course director can fill out simultaneously and then use to start a conversation about your role and responsibilities.
- TA CD Relationship Answers – suggestions of questions for you to ask corresponding to each of the topics in the above questionnaire.
- TA Workload Form
- Course Workload Estimator
- Setup an eClass Playground course to explore and learn about eClass
- Resources for using eClass

Resources

- TA and International TA Handbook

Best practices

- List all of the questions you have for the course director, as well as everything you wish to share about yourself, your strengths and needs, in preparation for your first meeting or communication.
- Provide an explicit rationale for how your strengths are an asset for particular responsibilities you wish to take on, and why specific training you need will benefit the course.

Know your workload

Be sure to know how many hours are assigned to you as a TA. The number of hours should be included on the contract you signed for your TA position. When meeting with the course director, ask as many questions as you need in order to understand completely your role and responsibilities.

Tools

- TA Workload Form
- Course Workload Estimator

Resources

- TA CD Relationship Questionnaire – This is a questionnaire that you and your course director fill out simultaneously and then use to start a conversation about your role and responsibilities.
- TA CD Relationship Answers – suggestions of questions for you to ask your course director, corresponding to each of the topics in the above questionnaire.
- TA and International TA Handbook

Best practices

- Request any training you feel you need in order to complete your job as set out in your TA workload form.

- It takes longer to teach and learn online (Feeman, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Kenny & Fluck, 2017), so time is very important for you to consider as you meet with your course director to determine your duties.
- Sign the TA workload form only after you fully understand your duties as set out, and have double checked that the number of hours assigned in the TA workload form does not exceed the number of hours for your contract.
- Devise a plan for keeping track of your hours that will work for you.
- Avoid overwork. Let your course director know immediately if you feel you are taking longer to do a task than was assigned in your workload form. Your workload form may be adjusted, or expectations may be clarified to ensure you can complete the task in the time allotted.

Communication Throughout the Course

Communication is important in all classroom settings, but especially when there is little to no face-to-face opportunities to connect. You may consider using a variety of methods to connect and communicate effectively with the course director and any other TAs, if applicable. You may need to discuss marking keys and rubrics, or bring forward any issues or challenges you are facing.

Tools

- Email
- eClass Groups can be used with eClass Discussion Forums to maintain communication with the teaching team in one place.
- Use Zoom, eClass Direct Message, or Microsoft Teams for real-time communication
- Microsoft Teams can also be used to organize the teaching team.

Resources

- YorkU guidelines for safe use of technology
- YorkU Zoom Virtual Backgrounds
- Zoom privacy
- Prevent Zoom bombing

Best practices

- Devise a communication plan for yourself to ensure you keep your course director in the loop, and get the support you need.
- You may have more direct contact with students and may receive feedback from them about the course that should be relayed back to the course director.
- Also share with the course director your own experiences, any concerns you have, and feedback related to how the students are doing in course activities and assessments.
- Online written communication needs to be clear and precise to avoid confusion and misunderstanding that can create conflict. If you find yourself needing to write long emails, you may want to suggest a brief check-in instead.

Designing Tutorials, Labs, or Studios

Guiding Principles for Online and Remote Teaching & Learning

Online and remote teaching and learning is not something fundamentally different from other forms of pedagogy. The same foundational principles that guide your work as instructors in face-to-face classes apply to online and remote practices as well. Four of these principles, however, become particularly important when designing, developing, and facilitating learning experiences in an online environment, and hence are worthy of more focused attention:

- Constructive alignment
- Accessibility & Universal Design for Learning
- Copyright & privacy considerations
- Academic integrity

In the sections below, we will explore these principles to demonstrate how they apply to specific components of online teaching and learning, and how one can implement them in the context of specific deliverables.

Constructive Alignment

Constructive alignment is a process that helps an instructor identify teaching and learning activities as well as assessment tasks that are directly linked to the intended learning outcomes. Through this process, the course instructor actively considers how course level outcomes, learning tasks and teaching strategies, and course assessments align with each other, as shown in the integrated approach to course design depicted in Figure 1.

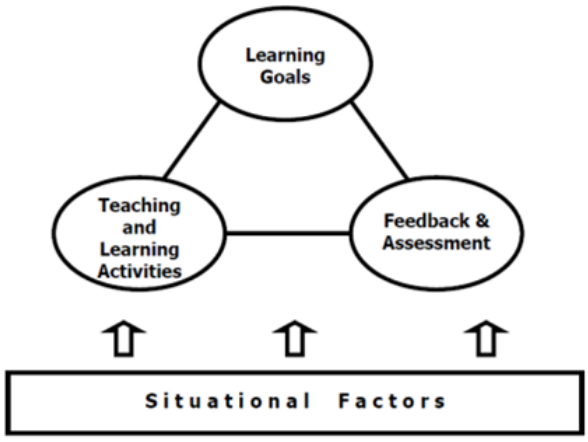

Figure 1: Integrated Approach to Course Design (Adapted from Fink, 2003)

Establishing good alignment between your teaching and learning activities and the course learning outcomes will ensure that students are provided the information and practice they need to gain the knowledge and skills emphasized in the course. Similarly, an obvious link between assessment tasks and the course learning outcomes will help the instructor in determining

whether students have reached the learning goals set out for them. Finally, teaching and learning activities that emulate how students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in assessment tasks further reinforce the learning cycle.

As a teaching assistant it will be important for you to maintain the constructive alignment that your course director has set for the course. This means speaking with the course director about the course design so you know what the learning outcomes are for the course so that you can support students in achieving them. This will happen through any teaching and learning activities you engage students in through your tutorials, labs, or studios, as well as when supporting and grading assessments. Ask your course director what the goals are for each assessment and do your best to support your students in achieving those goals. Providing feedback to both the students and the course director will help maintain constructive alignment.

Accessibility

Accessibility means making it possible for all students to use all course materials. There are a few things to take into consideration when teaching remotely:

- Student access to technology and/or reliable internet: it is important to keep in mind that some students may not have access to all kinds of technology (some might rely on their phones) or may not have access to reliable internet at all times (which would make access to online Zoom session or uploading a video that they create cumbersome).
- Different time zones: with the flexibility of online learning, some students may be joining the course from different time zones.
- Access to a quiet space: some students might not have access to a quiet space as they might be sharing their space with other people.
- Mental health: the current situation adds stress to students as well as the instructor's lives.
- There is a learning curve for students to adapt/learn new technologies (instructors too!)
- Refer to Student Accessibility Services for unique cases/specific questions about required accommodations.

Plan for disruptions

Not all students will have equal access to technology and/or reliable Internet connections, and different students may have different levels of comfort or expertise using the technology or tools you choose. What is distracting or potentially harmful to one's attentiveness in an online learning environment depends on learners' individual needs and surroundings. An optimal teaching and learning environment offers options that reduce threats and negative distractions to enable a safe space in which learning can occur.

Tools

- My Online Services

Resources

- Tips for Accessibility for Remote Learning

Best practices

- Prepare yourself and your students with a contingency plan for when the internet/technology cuts out unexpectedly for instructors and students.
- Ensure that the tool(s) you choose are ones that you feel comfortable using and that you can reasonably have access to no matter where you are working.
- Test these tools in advance, and continue to consider what these technologies will allow you to do to replicate or adapt what you would do in the classroom.
- Be prepared to walk your students through how to use the tool(s) you have identified for activities and/or are needed for completing assignments.

Beyond technology accessibility, accessibility is often discussed under the umbrella of the principles of universal design for learning.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a concept that emerges from the crux of best practices and principles of instructional design, educational theory, accommodation, assistive technologies, and instructional technology strategies. At its simplest, UDL means maximizing our effort to remove all physical and cognitive barriers to learning, thereby ensuring every student, regardless of individual circumstances, gets an equitable opportunity to participate in the learning experience and achieve the intended learning outcomes.

UDL goes far beyond the scope of its individual components by focusing not on after the fact accommodation, but on instructional design that seeks to proactively identify and eliminate potential barriers to learning, regardless of whether those barriers had already received legislative endorsement or institutionalized recognition. Its ultimate goal is ensuring equal access to learning, as opposed to merely equal access to information (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005). UDL takes a concerted effort to achieve this by maximizing flexibility, inclusivity, diversity, and individual control.

Offer content in a variety of formats

Learning occurs when multiple representations are used to deliver curriculum. These varying mediums allow students to make connections within as well as between concepts. Providing options for representation of content is essential as there is no one size fits all approach that will be optimal for all learners;

Tools

- You can enable Zoom to automatically generate a transcript
- Use an accessibility checker when using Word or Adobe Acrobat before uploading your documents

Resources

- Create Accessible Documents (from Queen's Accessibility Hub)
- Accessibility: Tips for Inclusive Teaching (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Best practices

- Some students use alternate format material in order to access their readings using technology. It may be necessary to have the text converted to an appropriate format so that it can be read by a screen reader.
- If you are posting video content for your class, videos should have closed captioning or transcripts made available.
- Use an accessibility checker when using Word, PowerPoint, or Adobe Acrobat before uploading your documents.

Invite participation in various ways

There is not one means of engagement that will be optimal for all learners in all learning contexts: face-to-face or online. Providing multiple options for student engagement is essential and will provide a more accurate depiction of student learning.

Tools

- Use Zoom or Microsoft Teams for real-time participation
- Use eClass Discussion Forums or eClass Wikis for participation via text, or recorded audio or video

Resources

- UDL Engagement from CAST website

Best practices

- Involve students in the setting of their own personal academic and behavioral goals
- Provide tasks that allow for active participation, exploration and experimentation
- Invite personal response, evaluation and self-reflection to content and activities
- Include activities that foster the use of imagination to solve novel and relevant problems, or make sense of complex ideas in creative ways

Copyright & Privacy Considerations

With the move to remote teaching, there are some new and different considerations to keep in mind regarding copyright and privacy. Whether you are sharing course materials online, recording Zoom sessions to the cloud, or asking students to make use of third-party software, there are a few things to be aware of.

Copyright and open access resources

When sharing course content online:

- Be aware of and apply York's Fair Dealings Guidelines
- Take advantage of resources available through Copyright@York and York's Libraries to inform which materials you select for remote teaching.
- Public domain, open access, and creative commons materials can supply many copyright-compliant resources for remote teaching.

- Feel free to link to legally posted content in any format hosted elsewhere online such as York Library Subscriptions, Youtube, etc. Many educational and cultural video resources as well as audio (music) resources are available through streaming to all faculty and students.
- When using or sharing materials not created by you, be sure to appropriately credit the original author (e.g. author/organization name, date, and link to original source).

Protect your intellectual property

- If you've uploaded content you have created yourself, such as notes or slides, ensure students are aware of your intellectual property rights.
- If you are creating new materials for your course, consider adding a Creative Commons license to your work so it can be shared with and used by others.
- If you have recorded a Zoom meeting to share with students, only hosts can download recordings saved to the cloud. However, it is possible that students could use additional screen capture software to make recordings and share them online.
- If your intellectual property rights are being infringed upon, contact copy@yorku.ca for further advice on the situation.

Respect privacy concerns

While teaching in real-time, ensure the protection of your privacy and the privacy of your students when using online communication platforms. When engaging with students online:

- Be aware that some students may have privacy concerns regarding the use of video conferencing software such as Zoom. These concerns may relate to sharing video of their immediate environment, in which case the virtual backgrounds offered in Zoom may provide a solution for some, or you might consider asking students to participate via audio or text-based chat only.
- Other students may have concerns about their learning during synchronous sessions being recorded and shared online, or they may not be comfortable making use of third-party software. While there are no immediate perfect solutions to these concerns, it is helpful to anticipate them and to consider what reasonable alternatives might be possible given your own course context.

Tools

- Zoom privacy features (e.g. virtual background, password-protected meetings, unique meeting links)

Resources

- YorkU guidelines for safe use of technology
- YorkU Zoom privacy and security
- YorkU Zoom Virtual Backgrounds
- Zoom privacy
- Prevent Zoom bombing

Best Practices

- If you plan to record real-time interaction online, ensure you tell your students that you are recording and acquire permission to share the recording.
- Consider having participants share a static picture, virtual background (in Zoom), use audio only conferencing, or rely on the chat feature.

Complement existing material with royalty-free tools and resources

Teaching remotely is not an all-or-nothing endeavour. With a little technical efficacy, ingenuity, and courage, existing materials can easily be expanded and combined with newly developed content.

Tools

- Use free image/photo editors to refine your visual elements, including Gimp, PicsArt (free in the MS App Store), or Paint.NET.
- Create sophisticated infographics, charts, and posters with Piktochart (free option is available).
- Use your webcam or cellphone to shoot simple, effective snippets of video (e.g., for introduction).
- Use free video editors to polish your videos, including OpenShot, VSDC, Kdenlive, DaVinci Resolve, or Blender

Resources

- Image libraries (royalty free): Pixabay, Unsplash
- Video libraries (royalty free): Pixabay, Videvo, Pexels, Videezy, Dareful,
- Animation libraries (royalty free): VideoPlasty

Encourage Academic Integrity

Just as with in-class delivery, issues of academic dishonesty may arise in remote instruction. Encouraging academic honesty involves both mitigating or preventing instances of cheating while also educating and informing students about academic integrity. Work cooperatively with your course director to identify and implement strategies such as those described below for promoting academic integrity in the course. Your course director will likely have to set up any of the tools available to promote academic integrity.

Educate your students about academic integrity

In times of stress, or when adapting to a new learning environment, students may be less likely to recognize that what they are doing to complete an assignment or exam is considered a breach of academic integrity. It will be important to remind students that the same rules apply around academic integrity, no matter where or how they are learning.

Tools:

- eClass (posting files: resources/honour codes)
- Communications through eClass Course Announcements
- Guidelines for participating in eClass Discussion Forums or eClass Wikis

Resources

- York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty
- York University Academic Integrity Website
- SPARK Student Module on Academic Integrity

Best practices

- Create an honour code statement with your students at the start of the course.
- Post information about York's policies on academic integrity on your eClass site, or provide students with an honour code statement they must review and agree to before submitting work online.
    - **Example (Faculty of Science):** *By completing and submitting this exam, you acknowledge that you have read this policy, and that you have completed this exam individually and have not used or referred to any unauthorized aid, including plagiarized information from other sources, nor has anyone else written or assisted you with this exam. Should you be found to have referred to or used any unauthorized aid, or that you did not complete this exam individually, you will be in breach of York's Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. You also acknowledge that this exam is copyrighted which means you cannot put any test questions in the public domain without the permission of the instructor.*
- Be compassionate and flexible (within reason) when supporting students to help mitigate the stress and pressure that tends to precede instances of academic dishonesty.
- Report any suspicions of academic dishonesty to your course director.

Use online tools to promote academic integrity

Our digital tools and online platforms can help to adapt strategies that we would typically implement for in-class assessments. There are resources and tools that can help you to prevent academic dishonesty whether you are offering an online exam or assigning a final project or paper.

Tools:

- eClass Quizzes
- Turnitin

Resources

- Best practices for instructors designing an online quiz in eClass
- Plagiarism prevention (Turnitin)

Best practices

- eClass quizzes offers multiple versions of the same exam, shuffling questions, using a random subset of questions from a question bank, displaying one question at a time, restricting what feedback is available immediately to students (e.g. correct answers), and limiting the duration and/or availability of the test or attempts students have to complete the exam.
- Turnitin is available as a means to review student assignments for plagiarism.

- If students are completing final papers or projects that require them to refer to a variety of external articles or other resources, ensure that you require students to cite their sources to help mitigate concerns regarding plagiarism.

Facilitating Learning in Tutorials, Labs, or Studios

Communicate with Students

Communication is important in all classroom settings, but especially when there is little to no face-to-face opportunities to connect. This includes setting expectations both of yourself and your students. As the instructor of a tutorial, lab, or studio, you play a vital role in both communicating expectations about course standards for engagement and participation online, and in modelling how that appears in practice. Consider the following, but before implementing these or other strategies, be sure to first discuss with your course directors:

- If you want students to feel comfortable and welcome in the course, make a special point of showing that to them. Be aware of your tone, consider posting a welcome video, and be willing to share a little bit about who you are as a person.
- Is there a typical way that students will be engaging in the lab or tutorial throughout the course (e.g. real-time via video conference, discussion forums, chat windows, course wikis, etc.)? If so, establish minimum standards for what successful participation looks like, and communicate these to your students. Consider sharing a simple rubric for online participation grades. Many examples are available online. Find resources below for additional examples.
- Be prepared to spend time facilitating conversations in discussion forums on an ongoing basis. Regular instructor presence is essential for showing students that their contributions are being read, and also for nudging discussion to the next level by asking students to take their thoughts further, respond to one another's points, or make connections within and beyond the course.

The subsections that follow offer additional helpful tips and resources.

Create a welcome video or post

Help your students to feel comfortable in your tutorial, lab, or studio, by posting a welcome video in the announcement forum. Let them know what your intentions are and how you will communicate with them.

Tools

- eClass Announcements for a quick and effective way to deliver general messages and reminders.
- Smartphone or tablet for recording (learn how).
- Use Panopto or Zoom as a quick way to record videos.

Resources

- Creating effective videos with a Smartphone

Best practices

- Include information about yourself, such as your name, credentials, along with other non-academic interests such as hobbies, favourite books or movies.
- Ask students to create a short video introduction of themselves.

Establish clear expectations

Establish what success looks like in your tutorial, lab, or studio, and communicate this to your students. For example, are they expected to join you remotely at specific dates and times? When are assignments due? How will they be participating with you and their classmates throughout the course?

Tools

- eClass Announcements for a quick and effective way to deliver general messages and reminders.
- Private/confidential messaging in eClass
- Email

Resources

- Creating rubrics in eClass
- Collection of resources for rubrics
- Accept assignments in eClass
- Communicate with students in eClass

Best practices

- The most effective method of creating and then communicating course expectations to students is to develop rubrics for each assignment, quiz, or other activity that students need to complete. Ask your course director for existing rubrics or request to create them.
- Make sure your feedback is concise, consistent, specific and meaningful.
- Keep a close eye on students' progress and subsequent activities.

Establish netiquette

Netiquette is a set of rules or standards for creating a positive learning space online. It is important to make clear to your students your expectations for how to communicate in the online environment

Tools

- Use eClass Announcements forum or your own discussion forum(s) to communicate these expectations

Resources

- Netiquette rules

Best practices

- Ensure that you respond to and address violations of Netiquette.
- Model exemplary behaviour when interacting with your students in the online environment.
- Ensure your students understand that communication should be respectful even when diverse or opposing opinions are expressed. The rules of Netiquette concern *how* such disagreements are expressed, but rarely their actual content.

Interact with Students

Students will want to interact with you by asking questions and getting support. Your teaching experience will also benefit from interacting with your students.

During the first week of the course, use icebreakers and orientation activities to develop your online learning environment. You can use discussion forums to have students:

- Reflect on their interests and backgrounds and how they relate to the course
- Collaboratively set expectations for themselves, their peers, and their instructor(s) during the course
- Complete a scavenger hunt or bingo to familiarize themselves with the online learning environment (individually or in small teams)

The subsections that follow offer additional helpful tips and resources.

Setting up virtual office hours

If part of your TA workload hours, provide specific times each week where students can connect with you virtually, in real time, individually or in groups, to ask questions and discuss private/confidential matters.

Tools:

- Zoom
- Microsoft Teams
- eClass Direct Message

Resources

- YorkU guidelines for safe use of technology
- YorkU Zoom Virtual Backgrounds
- Zoom privacy
- Prevent Zoom bombing

Best practices

- If you use Zoom to hold virtual office hours, recommend that students turn off their video, or participate in text-based chat only, and use the waiting room feature so that students don't interrupt each other's time with you.
- If students email you or drop-in to office hours asking for private/confidential support, you may wish to set up an individual meeting with them outside of your regularly scheduled office hours.

Setting up a Q&A forum

Provide space for students to post questions and contribute to and view answers to all questions. This will replicate the in-class Q&A, which allows you to answer questions for everyone.

Tools:

- eClass Discussion Forum

Resources

- Using Forum in eClass
- Set up a student Q&A discussion board

Best practices:

- To avoid answering the same question via email multiple times, require students to post all content-related questions in the Q&A forum.
- If applicable, reserve email for private/confidential matters (e.g. personal questions) only, or refer students to the course director.
- Manage student expectations by identifying when you will be responding to questions in the forum, and ensure you have a consistent presence in this forum.
- Encourage students to use this forum to answer each other's questions.
- Remind students of the netiquette that was set at the beginning of the course.

Ask for feedback periodically throughout the course

Whether you formally ask for feedback through a survey or series of questions about the course, you likely get feedback from your students through observation. This form of informal feedback from students that helps improve their learning experience in your course must be reconsidered in a remote environment.

Tools:

- Use the Feedback tool in eClass to create anonymous questionnaires
- Use Journals in eClass to get private, non-anonymous, qualitative feedback from your students

Resources

- TA Feedback Guide

Best practices:

- Always ask your course director before eliciting feedback from students.
- Where possible, allow students to give feedback anonymously.
- Explain to students why you are requesting their feedback.
- Report back to students and explain how the feedback is being used (or why it isn't being used) to implement changes.
- Begin with simple questions and move to more difficult ones.
- Encourage discussion – ask questions that provoke elaboration as opposed to "yes" or "no" questions.

Make Space for Student-Student Interaction

Student-student interaction is critical for an online learning community, as online courses can make some learners feel isolated and alone. Discussion forums and breakout groups in Zoom or in eClass are tools to facilitate interactions, but you can also consider:

- Reading groups in which members keep each other accountable and work together to summarize or analyse weekly readings (this also works for lecture content).
- Collective annotation of websites using tools like Hypothes.is
- Pair, triad, or small group use of online mindmapping software such as EdrawMind, or Coggle in order to respond to prompts, synthesize course content and themes, or organize research.

The subsections that follow offer additional helpful tips and resources.

Have students introduce themselves

Student introductions let you and your students get to know one another which helps build the sense of community. These could be text-based or video-based.

Tools:

- eClass Discussion Forum
- Smartphone or tablet for recording (learn how)

Resources

- Creating effective videos with a Smartphone
- A video on creating an effective video

Best practices

- Set up a discussion forum explicitly for introductions; include question prompts such as: Who are you? Where are you from? What is your favourite hobby?

Form groups

Forming groups increases the available time and space for each learner to share their ideas. If you are accustomed to doing small group or pair work in your tutorials, labs, or studios, there are tools to facilitate this remotely.

Tools:

- Breakout Rooms in Zoom
- eClass Groups in Discussion Forums
- eClass Groups in Wikis
- Group Assignments in Crowdmark

Resources

- Implementing Group Work in the Classroom
- Resources to share with students
    - York University Student Guide to Group Work
    - Teamwork skills: Being an effective group member
    - Meeting strategies for group work
    - Making group contracts
    - Group roles: Maximizing group performance
    - Group decision making

Best practices

- Stay involved with the groups; monitor and mentor along the way
- When forming groups, be aware of factors such as differences of individual learning goals and time zones

Facilitate online discussions

One of the key ingredients of a successful online learning experience is opportunities for interaction, facilitated by a moderator (Rudestam & Schoenholtz-Read, 2010). This can be done in a variety of ways, using different tools. The key to success will be your continued presence in the discussion, starting them off with prompts and guidelines for participation, as well as strategies for continuing the conversation, and feedback for learning.

Tools:

- eClass Groups can help make discussions manageable for you and your students.
- eClass Discussion Forums are useful for graded online discussions.
- eClass Wikis are useful for discussion within collaborative work.
- Use Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or eClass Direct Message for real-time discussions.

Resources:

- Fostering Effective Discussions Resource
- Online Discussions: Tips for Students

Best practices:

- Prepare students for discussion, not only in using any tools, but most importantly in how to have discussions online. You can do this through modelling how to have an effective online discussion.
- Students will be more likely to participate in discussions if counted toward their course grade. If you have the ability in your TA role to assign participation grades, it is a good idea to make participation in discussions part of this grade. Identify clear criteria for how student participation in discussions will be assessed.

- Be present. Create space for students to participate by beginning discussions with an effective question, instructions, or a task, prompting them, and then pausing to listen, encourage their individual thoughts and for them to take ownership over the discussion, following up with questions and feedback.

Engage Students with the Content

Teaching remotely is more than just replicating your face-to-face classroom activities in the online environment. It involves deliberate adaptation and modification of how you deliver in-class activities and utilize informal feedback.

Adapt in-class activities using appropriate mediums

When considering how to engage students with content in an online setting, it may be helpful to think about activities that will allow students to practice and develop their skills as well as ones that will develop critical thinking by making connections between theories and content.

Tools:

- Use Zoom or Microsoft Teams to facilitate activities in real-time
- Use eClass Discussion Forums or eClass Direct Message for discussions
- Use eClass Wikis for creating collaborative pages
- Use iClicker, Kahoot!, Mentimeter, or other free polling apps.

Resources:

- Teaching and Learning Activities
- iClicker resources for students

Best practices:

- Make sure the technology you choose is something you feel comfortable using or learning and is a forum that you can reasonably support your students in accessing.
- Test the tools out yourself first, and be prepared to walk your students through their use.
- Mitigate the fact that not all students have equal access to technology by ensuring your tutorial, lab, or studio, and activities are accessible.

Prepare students for assessments

Consider how you will communicate the assessments for the course, that is the instructions, expectations and guidelines, to students. Also consider how you will help them develop the skills students need to complete the assessments.

Tools

- Course Announcements for communicating assessments and rubrics with students, including due date reminders.
- Upload instructions and guidelines, including rubrics, in eClass Assignments and Crowdmark or alongside Turnitin.
- Zoom or Microsoft Teams for real-time skill development in tutorials, office hours, or to offer review sessions.

- eClass Discussion Forums, Quizzes, or Wikis for skill development or review sessions
- peerScholar and Workshop in eClass for peer assessment.

Resources
- Using Crowdmark for Online Assessments

Best practices
- Share with students expectations for assessments (e.g. rubrics, word limits, expected time for completion).
- Remind students of assessment deadlines using Course Announcements.

Provide informal feedback to aid learning

In the face-to-face environment we may take for granted the amount of informal feedback we provide to students in class (e.g. responding to discussion points, answering questions, clarifying, etc). Consider how you will do this in a remote environment.

Tools:
- Give feedback on real-time activities facilitated in Zoom or Microsoft Teams, or via eClass Direct Message.
- eClass Discussion Forums allows you to leave a summary of feedback to individuals, small groups, or the whole class.
- eClass quizzes can offer immediate feedback when they are self-grading.
- eClass journals allow students to write entries for the instructor to comment on.
- eClass assignments, Turnitin, and Crowdmark allow students to submit files that members of the teaching team can provide feedback on.

Resources
- Resource on Formative Feedback

Best practices
- Quality, timely feedback helps establish your presence in the course
- You can try different modes of feedback delivery, including written, audio/video, and automated (e.g. self-grading quizzes)
- Feedback can also be delivered at the individual or group level, for example leaving feedback on weekly discussion posts

Additional Considerations for Lab Demonstrators

As a lab demonstrator it is a challenge to facilitate and assess the practical skills you support remotely. Below are alternative activities, as well as tools and resources to help you.

Alternatives to Labs (individual/group)
- Simulation/virtual lab
  - Use specifically for practical skills like operation of equipment, decision-making, medical procedures and assessments, etc.
- Problem sets with data

    - Use for interpretation of data and understanding of experimental protocols and research methods
- Projects
    - Use to capture students' research ability and knowledge of the entire research process
    - Examples include designing an experiment, report or paper, grant application, or a poster, all of which describe student's work including context and future directions

Tools

- eClass Discussion Forum
- Wikis in eClass
- Smartphone or tablet - resources for creating videos and example of use
- Examples of video production tools
- Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or eClass Direct Message for real-time activities
- eClass assignments, Turnitin, and Crowdmark allow students to submit files that members of the teaching team can provide feedback on.

Resources

- This resource provides a summary of online resources, categorized by discipline, available for simulation, virtual labs, data sets, and other online material
- An extensive list of resources for virtual science labs, including health sciences and statistics
- SmART - a resource for teaching skills with a Smartphone

Best practices

- Consult with your course director to determine how your role is being adapted for teaching remotely.

Additional Considerations for Studio Instructors

As a studio instructor it is a challenge to facilitate and assess the learning you normally do in the classroom in a remote environment. Below are ways to adapt activities, as well as tools and resources to help you.

Creative Work and Critiques

Have students share creative work by:

- Taking a photo and uploading it to a group eClass discussion forum or media collection
- Working as individuals or groups to create video or audio, and sharing along with reflective commentaries

Critiques and follow up discussion can happen:

- In real-time using eClass chat or Zoom - see the privacy section for use of Zoom
- Asynchronously through a discussion forum

Performances (individual/group)

- Students record their entire individual performance using phones, tablets, or computers and upload to eClass
- Students record a segment of their performance (e.g. a monologue, certain dance techniques and choreography) and, if applicable, accompany the performance with a detailed script or choreography plan for the entire planned performance, both uploaded

to eClass
- Students deliver performance in real-time via Zoom (to instructor, a small group, or whole class) - see the privacy section for use of Zoom

Tools
- Media collection in eClass
- eClass Discussion Forum
- Wikis in eClass
- Smartphone or tablet - resources for creating videos and example of use
- Examples of video production tools
- Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or eClass Direct Message for real-time activities

Resources
- Considerations for moving university **dance** classes online
- Guide to remote **music** education
- Resources for teaching **music and audio production** online
- Teaching **Theatre** online
- Resources for teaching online by **athe.org**
- SmART - a resource for teaching skills with a Smartphone

Best practices
- Consult with your course director to determine how your role is being adapted for teaching remotely.

Marking and Grading

Grade according to the course director's instructions

To ensure that you are maintaining the constructive alignment of the course, ask the course director what the purpose, goals, instructions, expectations, and grading guidelines are for assessments you are grading. Even if this is given to you in writing, via instructions and a grading rubric, it is a good idea to speak with the course director about this to ensure you are both on the same page. Also ask what the course director's expectations are of you as the grader. Specifically regarding methods of grading, timeline, etc.

Tools
- Assessment Tools: Rubrics and Tables

Resources
- Collection of resources for rubrics

Best practices
- Return student work and grades in a timely manner, according to the course director's guidelines. To assist with efficiency,
    - Don't leave your grading to the last minute.

    - Grade a handful of items early and time yourself to determine your grading rate
    - Grade in batches or chunks so you don't allow personal tiredness to affect your grading
- After grading a few samples of student work, share these with the course director to ensure you are grading according to their expectations.

Grade consistently and fairly

Students will focus more on learning and your feedback if they feel their work is being graded fairly. To be fair, you must grade with consistency across time, graders, and students.

Tools

- Crowdmark organizes grading by question, not student, and allows multiple graders to anonymously grade the same assessment simultaneously.
- eClass Assignments allow anonymous grading, where student names are not visible to graders.
- Turnitin and eClass Assignments allows you to set up a rubric to use when grading.

Resources

- Using Crowdmark for Online Assessments
- Fair Assessment Practices

Best practices

- Always refer to grading guidelines and expectations (e.g. rubrics, solutions with grade breakdown) when grading to avoid comparing and grading student work against each other, as well as keeping you on track and consistent over time.
- If there are multiple graders, consider grading a few assignments together to work through and interpret grading guidelines and rubrics so that you maintain consistency across graders.
- For assessments like tests and exams with multiple questions, grade one question at a time, instead of one paper at a time. This will make you more efficient, consistent, and fair.
- Anonymous grading will help you avoid grading the student and focus solely on grading the work they've submitted.

Provide feedback

Feedback is necessary for students to learn and continually improve. Positive and constructive feedback focused on how students can improve incrementally is most helpful.

Tools

- Turnitin and Crowdmark in eClass have comment banks that you can populate and drag and drop to multiple assessments.
- Record an audio or text file of your feedback and upload to Turnitin or eClass Assignments, or type feedback directly.
- Zoom or Microsoft Teams can facilitate real-time feedback after a presentation, performance, or demonstration.
- Use these tools to offer feedback on videos created by students
- Leave feedback on eClass Discussion Forum posts or eClass Journals.
- Automated feedback is possible using self-graded eClass Quizzes.
- peerScholar facilitates the peer-review process, and allows multiple file formats for submission and review.

Resources

- Using Crowdmark for Online Assessments
- Characteristics of Feedback that Supports Learning

Best practices

- Focus on helping students improve by one letter grade instead of "getting an A."
- Quality, timely feedback helps establish your presence in the course.
- Provide students with clear expectations in terms of feedback turnaround time on assignments.
- Depending on your assignment, you can try different modes of feedback delivery, including written, audio/video, and automated.
- Feedback can also be delivered at the individual or group level, for example a summary of feedback on common errors, or recording a sample solution.

Where Can I Get Support?

Pedagogical, Technical, and Work-Related Support at York

Teaching Commons support

The Teaching Commons offers a variety of supports for helping you to design, redesign, or adapt your course to a remote or online format.

Visit our website for an overview of all we have to offer.

Self-enroll into the BOLD Institute Open Session (an open eClass course – you can self-enroll using your Passport York credentials)

Email Contact: teaching@yorku.ca

Learning Technology Services (LTS) support

LTS can offer support on the technical aspects of adapting your course to an online format, including support for eClass, Zoom, and other York-supported learning technologies.

Visit their website

Get eClass support

Get help with Zoom

Get help with lecture recording

Get help with moving courses online

Email Contact: lts@yorku.ca

Library Resources, Academic Integrity, and Copyright

Library resources

The library offers a plethora of resources related to research guides and finding materials online.

Visit their website

Find research/libguides

Academic integrity and copyright

Concerns related to academic integrity and copyright are often top of mind when teaching and learning online. For additional information for ensuring academic integrity and upholding important considerations related to student privacy and sharing intellectual property.

Going Remote with Integrity (YouTube video):

Copyright at York

York's Fair Dealing Guidelines

Supports for Students

There are a variety of resources, services, and supports available to students online. The list below provides information about ways students can access support via virtual appointments and/or accessing digital resources.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) supports students with accommodations in completing their courses, and also has created resources to help instructors consider how to ensure their courses are and remain accessible in an online format.
Visit their website
Email Contact: sasinfo@yorku.ca
Accessibility Resources

Counselling and Personal Support for Students:
Good2Talk Postsecondary Line: 1-866-925-5454 (24/7)
good2talk.ca

Student Guide to eClass

Student Guide to Remote and Online Learning

ESL OLC Resources & Online Booking

Research Help Services (Libraries):

SPARK - Student Papers and Academic Research Kit

Writing Centre Online Video Chats (Appointments)

Virtual Career Lounge

Book Virtual Career Services Appointment (Online):

Career Corner (Career Services supports):

List of online services available to York students

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