



TEMPORARILY MOVING SCHOOLING ONLINE

Considerations for Teachers

When moving online, even temporarily, many teachers will spend substantial time selecting content to populate their course platform. While **WHAT** you provide is certainly important, **HOW** you manage the experience likely matters more. We humbly offer these few tips based on the *Arrupe Way* principles of engagement, communication, and assessment. Much of this will sound obvious, but if you do each with intention you will be setting your students up for success.

Planning for Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Engagement

At its simplest, **behavioral engagement** is about students doing what is required within established timeframes. Because this is a temporary situation, it is important for students to ramp up quickly.

- Make things simple. Whenever possible, use technologies with which your students are familiar. Set up routines or patterns that a student can follow every day. Keep your primary course site/resource clean and simple.
- Set clear expectations. Do you expect students to login daily? How and how often will you be communicating with students and where should they look to find your communications? How should students seek help?
- Provide clear, detailed instructions. This begins with login and navigation instructions. Provide detailed assignment instructions, deadlines, and submission protocols.

Cognitive engagement: Clearly articulate desired learning outcomes.

Emotional engagement:

- Don't underestimate the importance of teacher proximity. Record short, fun videos to stay connected. Schedule online office hours. Send daily/frequent class notes to reinforce expectations and routines.
- Demonstrate real care and concern. Assuming a two-week window, make it a goal to send a personal note to every student. (EXAMPLES: "I appreciate your hard work." "Great job on yesterday's homework." "Just wanted to check in. How are you holding up?"

Silver Lining: *This is an extraordinary, temporary event that provides you an opportunity to call on your students to "step up" and perform with discipline and focus, thus improving their learning skills. What a gift this would be for your students! AVLI has a [Learner Skills Rubric](#) we designed in conjunction with JesuitNet and Performance By Design which may be helpful to review. How might this experience improve your students' Academic Mindset, Behavior, and Perseverance skills?*

Planning your communication

When it comes to choosing your communication tools, less is more. Choose one or two and use consistently for the same types of communications. Check with your tech support team to see what is available through your school. If you have access to a learning management system, it likely includes an “announcements” tool which pushes class-wide information out to students while also maintaining a permanent presence on your course site, providing double the benefit. Email may be your best option for individual communications with students. Be sure to use your school provided email address and save all correspondence.

Consider sending an email communication to parents, articulating expectations and asking for their help in keeping their sons and daughters on track.

Planning Assessment

Consider assigning modest amounts of daily homework. This will reinforce behavioral engagement and you can use it to assess understanding/progress. This will inform your communications. Because of the commitment you will be making to the timely turn-around on correcting, be VERY specific regarding the date and time of turn in. As mentioned above, be clear about submission protocols and the means by which you will return corrected work. You may also want to adopt a fairly rigid policy regarding late work.

Content Delivery and Design

In many ways this is a triage situation. Start with the necessities and work your way out from there. This is where your previous planning using Backward Design will really pay off. What are the essential questions and enduring understandings you need to address over the next two weeks? What unit objectives are most important?

Once you’ve established your goals and objectives, don’t keep them a secret! Let your learners know what you are intending to cover and why.

Design and Formatting

Again, because this is an extraordinary situation, when it comes to your course site/resource no one is expecting a work of art. Still, some simple design choices can help improve student navigation and learning. This may be particularly important for students with learning challenges.

- Incorporate a consistent use of font formatting (colors, bold, size, highlighting...). These visual cues help students mentally organize and they draw attention to items of great importance.
- Consider using a simple “step” design (Step 1, Step 2, Step 3...) - or something similar - to improve behavioral engagement.
- Use the smallest possible tool set to accomplish your objectives. This begins by assessing your needs and pairing resources (e.g. vocabulary terms = Quizlet, discussion = forum, lecture = pre-recorded video, office hours = Zoom).
- If lecture is important, constantly return to your primary learning objectives and be as succinct and targeted as possible. If you are familiar with tools like [H5P](#) and are efficient in using, now might be the time.

Lastly, here are a few things you should likely avoid.

- Long recorded lectures. Students won't watch. The hour it takes you to create would be better used assessing and communicating.
- Using social media tools unless you have a VERY well constructed plan.
- Group work. Quality online group work takes time to develop and it is often quite messy. Noting that this is a temporary experience, save yourself (and your students) the time and frustration. If you are looking for ways of maintaining community, use a forum or synchronous web conference instead.

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