Advise, colleague to colleague

Sine Zambach, postdoc at Department of digitalization/Business information and analytics, 21/8-2020

This document comprises a compilation of good advice for online teaching and student engagement, collected by a survey on Educators at CBS' experience from the COVID-19 lockdown, distributed 11/6.

The comments in this document are selected, roughly sorted by topic, and are kept in the, sometimes personal, style of the writer. Additionally, links to inspiration can be found in the end of the document.

Student engagement and motivation was the most challenging as well as urgent topic in both the questionnaire and the comments. Therefore, emphasis has been on selecting advice concerning this.

Internal material from Teaching and Learning

You can find webinars on Canvas, Panopto, Zoom, Quizzes, etc. here: http://teach.cbs.dk/

Advice from colleague to colleague as responses to the Survey-question:

"Do you have any good advice for your co-workers about partial or fully online teaching?"

(102 comments in total, selected comments below)

Student engagement and motivation

- Expect a strange sensation as you talk to a screen without much student feedback during online live sessions, never knowing if students are still paying attention or not.
- Make videos and quizzes available for limited time and communicate this clearly to guide the students learning process and flow a bit.
- Ghost participation needs to be managed. Students need something to keep them continuously interacting somehow, e.g. quiz-style questions.
- Be careful and do not offer *convenient* learning, as e.g. through podcasts or lectures they can just listen to while running. They do not engage actively, and that shows in their ability to work with the course contents.
- Partial online teaching is a good way to provide additional information to students so they have the chance to benefit from recorded information in case they missed classes.
- Experiment and ask students about their experiences. Differentiate methods if possible to various "types" of students and activities.
- Do not give up on real-time discussion and group work.
- I think socialization process of students is still very important especially if they are supposed to be involved in group work.
- Engaging students into discussions works better in groups than in plenum when it is online. Consistent group work (if possible, project related) throughout the semester seems helpful to keep students motivated and engaged. Checking in with students ca. mid-term about their learning experience was also helpful.
- Take problem-based student-centered project (learning) more into account. It seems to give resilience to the learning processes when the institution is under pressure, Help to develop digital interactive forms of this learning form.
- Having the students upload small case summaries on PPT for their fellow classmates on turns. Small written assignments with personal and collective feedback. The personal feedback was 2-3 lines for each groups. The collective feedback was a written example of how I would have responded.
- Ask the students to have their cameras turned on.
- Think about how using a diversity of tools and modes of engagement can support/hinder the performance of your students - they are diverse, too!

- Talk to your students. They are all different across study programmes. Be professional. Use their feedback to optimize your teaching. Stop thinking online vs. classroom. Why guide yourself by technological possibilities? Switch the focus to student learning instead. Use whatever it takes to improve that (taking into account resources, possibilities, and, of course, what we are required to be, etc.)
- I need engaged students, I like live teaching with breakout sessions. And online supervising.
- Check that the papers are not exact replicates of recorded lectures. Remember to listen to the students - some quickly falls behind. Install feedback mechanisms. Mach the exam form with teachings.

Technology tips

- Make sure the sound is good. Poor sound is often more stressing than poor video!
- Online courses from teach and learn and internal support amongst colleagues
- Set off sufficient time for updating and operating the online activities.
- A lot of preparation and very experienced teachers.
- Patience - It takes time to convert to on-line teaching, and to familiarize oneself with different platforms and tools. Awareness in blended learning of what works on-line as compared to face-to-face and how best to combine the two. Communication is always important but even more so when teaching on-line (Where, what, why and how)
- Ask people with online teaching experience or special knowledge.
- Look for online resources outside CBS.
- It is a great idea to use a pad that you can write on.

Asynchronous teaching

- Divide your lectures into topics in bit size video (max. 15min) followed by an assignment and/or quizz and a live Q&A
- Lower the amount of subjects included in the lecture. Talk for 10-15 minutes and give the students an exercise to work with what you have said. Plan on repeating yourself more and visualizing your content. Combine with videos so there are more shifts than usual to maintain the concentration
- Things students liked/found useful were: Small speaked slides of about 10-15 minutes to recap central points from lectures/mandatory readings – for exercise classes.
- Make video sessions short - not more than 45-60 minutes (20-30 is probably the sweet spot). Give students assignments before video sessions and make them count. The tv format lures everybody into passivity and it is hard to fight.
- Make everything into smaller bits and bytes
- Learn about writing scripts for video lectures. Try using a teleprompter on phone/tablet for smooth speak. Figure out how to optimize the interplay between online and off-line teaching activities.
- Use annotations
- Rethink courses as sequences (e.g. one theme with 'theory' videos, online forum / quiz, then case study or group work in class or online, possibly a short assignment) rather than sessions. For example, drop full-day zoom classes to stick to the 'official' hours, that doesn't work. Think about how using a diversity of tools and modes of engagement can support/hinder the performance of your students - they are diverse, too!
- My advice would be to lean into the possibilities of what the online world has to offer - interesting YouTube videos, educational games and other possible tools that can enhance the learning experience and engage the students differently.
- We can make use of some of these technologies to deliver courses globally. And we can have international guest lecturers giving presentations online without having to physically bring them to Copenhagen.
- Figure out how you can make it worthwhile to record videos. You need at least four different courses where you can re-use the video make the effort of producing it with decent quality worthwhile.
- Prepare to spend a lot of time re-purposing materials for effective videos and online exercises!

Synchronous teaching

- Allow a multiple of roughly 5 for video-lecture preparation time (it takes very long). It's a great idea to use a pad that you can write on. Streamed lectures are good to keep a structure for the students, to \meet\" and they take less preparation time. A 2/3 pre-recorded, 1/3 streamed mix can make sense for a course with relatively much new content/concepts that need to be explained."
- Continue relying on online project supervision (that worked very well for me).

- Doing live sessions is much easier than prerecorded videos. Prerecording videos requires skills that are very different from normal presentation skills especially when one has to record alone at home.
- I use zoom as I can have up to 50 breakout rooms - making the learning much more experiential as students can work in groups. It is a lot of work but highly effective. Use zoom instead of Microsoft Teams for large classes.
- Use Zoom synchronously and engage students for the best learning experiences.
- When online synchronous teaching, you need always a second laptop otherwise you do not know what you send out (classical blind flight) and it enables you to make a second recording just for the case the first does not run...
- Learn about writing scripts for video lectures. Try using a teleprompter on phone/tablet for smooth speak. Figure out how to optimize the interplay between online and off-line teaching activities. Continue relying on online project supervision (that worked very well for me).
- Doing live sessions is much easier than prerecorded videos. Prerecording videos requires skills that are very different from normal presentation skills.

How to stitch a course together in general

- Set off sufficient time for updating and operating the online activities. Make videos and quizzes available for limited time and communicate this clearly to guide the students learning process and flow a bit.
- Streamed lectures are good to keep a structure for the students, to meet and they take less preparation time. A 2/3 pre-recorded, 1/3 streamed mix can make sense for a course with relatively much new content/concepts that need to be explained.
- Practically it is of course about transforming what you have to a new format, but it is maybe really more about what you aim for didactically and then finding ways of achieving that in practice.
- Think out of the box. Plan for more time to prepare in the start.
- Partial teaching online could be beneficial for both students and teachers.
- I believe it is only the mix of online and in-class methods that will solve current challenges we face with teaching at distance.
- Take problem-based student-centered project (learning) more into account, it seems to give resilience to the learning processes when the institution is under pressure, Help to develop digital interactive forms of this learning form - also with the effects on the Nordic Nine in mind.
- It is very important to see online teaching not just as a technical tool. It has to be integrated with a pedagogical idea of how it can add the students leaning forward. That the in-class room is highly relevant for real teaching to take place
- To always consider pedagogics before the (tech) solution. Do not just add - but rethink the activities according to the learning objectives
- Use it with care and be aware that it cannot replace face-to-face teaching. Communication is much more than a video and speech. You need body language to get the full picture.
- When it comes to 'advanced topics' and critical thinking - nothing can replace physical proximity and face-to-face interaction
- It is not either classroom OR video OR live stream - but about employing a meaningful BLEND of the two (three).

External material

Some of the feedback from educators consisted of links to blogs, articles and webinars. These are collected in this section.

- Some teachers were involved in teaching in China and thus already experienced enforced online teaching from January/February. Here are some reflections and advice from the process: https://sdc.university/about/news/learning-to-teach-in-new-ways/
- Till Winkler, Associate Dean for Digital Curriculum, has created the following blog post with good advice: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-steps-go-digital-your-teaching-times-crisis-till-winkler/
- A CBS-Wire interview with Peter Gammeltoft on how to engage students online: https://cbswire.dk/online-teaching-learning-and-the-meaning-of-life/
- At NTNU in Norway, a preliminary survey was carried out in end March with the following conclusions and advice:
  - https://www.ntnu.edu/excited/experiences-and-takeaways-from-the-first-two-weeks-of-a-fully-digital-ntnu (The overview page)
  - https://www.ntnu.edu/documents/1271705576/0/Student+report+-+Online+Teaching+and+Learning.pdf (The preliminary student survey report)
  - https://www.ntnu.edu/documents/1271705576/0/EducatorExperiencesAllOnlineTeachingv1.pdf (The preliminary educator experiences report)
- There is a study from CELL, a Norwegian center for excellence, containing advice for online teaching in response to COVID-19: https://www.jus.uio.no/cell/digitaldugnad/report-university-teachers-16-april-2020.pdf
- Chartered Association of Business Schools has created a survey with ~2600 respondents with respect to working conditions at business schools: https://charteredabs.org/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-working-lives-of-business-management-and-economics-academics/
- Kristian Sund, Roskilde Universitet, presentations of ways to move online: https://forskning.ruc.dk/en/publications/suggestions-for-moving-teaching-rapidly-online-in-the-face-of-the
- Webinar med Alastair Creelman: https://www.pearson.com/nl/en_NL/webinars-digital-learning-pearson/When-everyone-went-online-online-education-covid19.html
- Interview with Harvard Vice Provost Bharat Anand on their transition during COVID-19:
  - May: https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2020/05/jhj-rebooting-online-ed
  - June: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/06/the-outlook-for-harvards-online-learning/