

PREPARING FOR ONLINE TEACHING: COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING

ACTIVITY	TEACHERS SAY ...
<div data-bbox="170 643 465 938" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communicating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connecting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caring 	<p>CREATE A PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have a strong communication strategy in place and ‘live’ this – being compassionate, while also having strong boundaries in place, helps manage student expectations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communicate, communicate, communicate – students (and teachers) say that a well-crafted and detailed weekly email/BB announcement, released on the same day and time every week, helps manage expectations plus builds trust and confidence (NOTE: Do not bombard students with more frequent emails as they receive a LOT of email traffic from other courses as well as the institution) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When communicating what’s going to be happening in ‘the week ahead’, include guidance on how students can approach and manage their course workload that week <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan for the ‘peak stress’ times – for example, send a reminder email one week before an assignment due date, and encourage students to seek an extension if they think they won’t be able to submit on time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don’t rely on just one form of communication when you have critical information to share – take advantage of other messaging tools such as Slack, Teams Chat, Facebook, SMS, etc <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No sudden moves – avoid making too many changes to what students are expecting once the semester is underway (and if you do need to make a change, communicate very clearly) <p>DURING YOUR SESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarify when you will expect students to ‘speak up’ in class – for example, communicate the purpose of set tasks, how the session will be structured, and at what points you will be expecting students to contribute (this is particularly helpful for EAL students) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have a sense of humour – things can and do go wrong (eg, technical problems, dogs barking, children walking into your Zoom class), but your reaction can make all the difference to how students view this situation



- ☑ Lead by example – for example, when you're ready for a coffee break, chances are your students will be, too

FOSTER CONNECTIONS

- ☑ Social media can help create a sense of community – teachers who use social media in their courses find that students post more comments/images/ideas, ask (and answer) more questions as these are visible to the whole cohort, and find it easier to connect with industry speakers and 'clients' (thus offering more informal networking opportunities)
- ☑ Encourage students to connect and collaborate with one another (eg, [reading circles](#), [literature circles](#), [study groups](#)) – peer-to-peer support makes a positive difference in overall wellbeing and learning success
- ☑ Show students how to communicate directly with you via a private message in chat – student who are too shy or reluctant to speak up in class appreciate the opportunity to 'chat' privately with you

SHOW YOU CARE

- ☑ Be proactive and responsive – teachers who undertook their own mid-semester surveys used this feedback to implement the changes students wanted
- ☑ Create a weekly wrap-up video to communicate and share key learnings/links (eg, using [Loom](#)) – this is particularly helpful for EAL students as well as those who were unable to attend class (eg, technical problems)
- ☑ Be compassionate – teachers who maintained regular contact with students, demonstrated flexibility as needed, sought feedback from students about their experience, and embedded reflection in classes to help students be more 'mindful' of the online learning experience, reported positive outcomes for themselves and their students
- ☑ Be accessible – many students are navigating uncertainty in online learning, and it helps them to know you are available and responsive to their concerns/learning needs
- ☑ Be ready to refer and connect – if you are concerned about the wellbeing of students, refer them to the relevant [support service](#) (eg, connect them via an eIntroduction email, provide a 'hot line' number, etc)

ATTENTION: Do you have another '*Communicating and Connecting*' tip to share? Please add it [here](#).