

Success During Your First Week: The Transition to Remote Delivery of Teaching¹

None of us expected to be in this situation. But we are in it together. Our primary goal – after ensuring our own safety and the safety of friends and family – is to continue providing students a successful educational experience as we transition to remote delivery of teaching. Creating a successful educational experience doesn't necessarily mean producing a highly polished online course. Instead, you can create that experience by continuing to show your students that they matter, communicating with them honestly and openly, practicing empathy about the circumstances they might be facing, and being flexible and prepared for contingencies that will undoubtedly occur.

Here are five concrete steps you can take during the first week to help deliver your course remotely.

1. Communicate with students right away

Even if you don't have a full remote delivery plan in place yet, communicate with your students as soon as possible. Inform them that changes are coming and what your expectations are for checking their BGSU email or your course shell in Canvas (BGSU's learning management system) so you can get them more details soon.

2. Establish the basic elements of your course

Each online course should have at minimum the following components:

- An active Canvas shell with easy access to your syllabus, course guidelines, course content, assignments, and grades.
- A strategy for keeping your students informed and engaged, such as a weekly overview informing students of all course responsibilities for the week, daily messages, and/or scheduled discussions.
- Clearly posted virtual office hours (e.g., times when you will be available to connect with them via WebEx, Canvas chat, phone, or times when they know they can expect quick email turnaround). If needed, you may want to hold office hours by phone until you have your technology up and running.
- A plan that provides students multiple opportunities to engage with the course. For example, if you plan to present live lectures, you can learn over the next week how to record it so that it can be made available for students to review at a later time.
- A contingency plan for students who face technical difficulties. Students will be receiving communications with support and assistance for their technology and connectivity issues.

¹ From Iowa State University's Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/prioritize-and-communicate/>), with modifications.

- An assessment plan that details your expectations for participation and how their grades will be determined. You may need some time to reconsider how you will do this going forward (e.g., moving from a small number of exams to graded group work); if so, let them know that.

3. Check in with your department chair or school director

Your department chair or school director is a key resource. They understand your particular situation and can help guide you to the technical and pedagogical resources you need given your level of comfort and experience with the development and delivery of remotely delivered courses. Your chair/director can link you up with colleagues in your department or school, Information Technology Services (ITS), Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE), and On-line and Summer Academic Programs (OSAP) who are “standing by” to help.

4. Find the right help

In addition to your department/school and college, here are some people you can contact directly for help; they can connect you with the right people and/or resources to help you succeed during your first week:

ITS: Patrick Lisk (plisk@bgsu.edu)

CFE: cfe@bgsu.edu and either Connie Molnar, Holly Barber, or Rita Pool will reply

OSAP: Terence Armentano (terence@bgsu.edu) or Paul Cesarini (pcesari@bgsu.edu) for remote teaching help and pedagogy strategies

Other Resources:

- BGSU’s website on working, teaching, and learning remotely <https://www.bgsu.edu/its/wtlr/>
- ITS “quick start” for remote teaching in Canvas <https://www.bgsu.edu/its/wtlr/remote-resources.html>
- ITS main page for “teaching online” <https://www.bgsu.edu/its/wtlr/remote-teach.html>
- How to import a simplified canvas template that includes the basic elements so you can get started in Canvas - <https://youtu.be/H9EcO5EvkmA>. And how to edit the simplified canvas template you just downloaded to add your content - <https://youtu.be/xL-dCp0tuKA>

And in addition for our Firelands campus colleagues: Refer to the shared list of faculty support

5. Cut yourself and your students some slack

Many of us, including our students, are new to teaching remotely and may feel overwhelmed by all the options and advice out there. If that’s you, you are not alone. Your department chair

or school director, Dean, and BGSU offices (ITS, CFE, OSAP) are ready to help. We'll all get through this first week of transition to remote delivery together!