Transitioning to Online Teaching[1]

Communicate with students right away

Even if you don't have a 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 email or Canvas (ISU's learning management system), so you can get them more details soon. Consider sharing the following verbiage,

> "In the event of a disruption to the normal class schedule or planned activities for this course, the format of this course may be modified to enable completion of the course through other means, including other locations, online work, etc. If this occurs, we will provide an addendum to the syllabus, including full instructions."

Check with your department

Your department may issue more details about the situation and guidelines about their expectations for classes. Administrators may want to have many of the department's classes handled in similar ways, so check with department chairs before doing too much planning.

Consider realistic goals for continuing instruction

What do you think you can realistically accomplish during this time? Do you think you can maintain your original syllabus and schedule? Do you hope students will keep up with the reading with some assignments to add structure and accountability? How do you want to engage them in the course content?

Review your course schedule to determine priorities

During the disruption, what will be essential for you to continue? Will you provide lectures, structure new opportunities for discussion or group work, collect assignments, etc. What activities are better rescheduled or completed online? Give yourself a little flexibility in that schedule, just in case the situation takes longer to resolve than you think.

Review your syllabus for points that must change

What will have to temporarily change in your course plan (policies, due dates, assignments, etc.)? Since students will also be thrown off by the changes, they will appreciate details whenever you can provide them.

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

Pick tools and approaches familiar to you and your students

Try to rely on tools and workflows that are familiar to you and your students and roll out new tools only when necessary. This situation may already be taxing everyone's mental and emotional energy; introducing a lot of new tools and approaches may leave even less energy and attention for learning.

Identify your new expectations for students

You will have to reconsider some of your expectations for students, including participation, communication, and deadlines. As you think through those changes, keep in mind the impact this situation may have on students' ability to meet those expectations, including illness, lacking power or internet connections, or needing to care for family members. Be ready to handle requests for extensions or accommodations equitably.

Create a more detailed communications plan

Once you have more details about the changes you plan to make, including when this plan is effective with start/end dates, communicate them to students, along with your revised. Your plan may include the following:
- How best to contact you (e.g., through email or directly through Canvas) and how long it may take you to reply
- How to participate in online student (office) hours
- How to attend virtual lectures or access recorded ones
- How labs, studios, or lessons will be managed
  - We will provide suggested strategies for how these can be managed and encourage you to be flexible and creative when thinking about alternate approaches to these experiences
- How to engage actively in course activities and online discussions
- How to collaborate with students and instructor(s)
- How to participate in group work
- How to submit assignments, projects, presentations, etc.
- How to complete quizzes, tests, and exams
- How to locate the technologies (new or old) and where to get technical support