

Faculty Tip sheet for Online Teaching

1. Be present.

Although it can feel different when interacting with learners virtually as opposed to in the classroom face-to-face, it is important for faculty to set clear and realistic expectations for when they will be available to learners (before the class, after the class, and any time in between) so they do not feel abandoned during this transition time from face-to-face classroom to virtual classroom.

2. Create a multi-sensory stimulating environment.

Since you will not be physically present in the classroom, it is crucial to create a learning experience that elicits multi-sensory input: using auditory, visual and simulated kinesthetic prompting in your teaching. For example, make sure to alter the tone of your voice throughout your session to underscore key points. Also, keep the images/slides of your content moving; do not spend too much time on one slide to avoid learners' visual inattention and fatigue. Although it can be challenging to create hands-on experiences with online teaching, try using terms like "imagine yourself doing ____" or "think of a time when you _____", when attempting to foster personal connections related to a concept, and literally pause to allow time for learners to process and imagine these experiences.

3. Encourage interaction between learners.

Utilize the chat room (Web-ex) and discussion board (Brightspace) features that may be available in your online classroom. The chat rooms offer a venue for live questions and answers during your session, while discussion boards are a great way to maintain momentum in between scheduled sessions, where learners respond to a question that you have posted, or to each other, which taps into their need for social, collaborative experiences. Keep in mind to phrase your questions in an open-ended fashion to yield critical thinking from your learners. Be sure to timely respond to learners' posts, and validate their experiences. Remember Socratic-type probing: 'why do you think that?', 'what is your rationale for that?'

4. Be sensitive to varying learner needs.

Some learners may be anxious or overwhelmed in an online teaching format, as they may be viewing the class in an environment that is not as routine and comforting as the physical classroom, and they may have to navigate through some other distractions (family, roommates, and children). Take a moment to acknowledge that, and ensure your learners that they can come to you with any difficulties and you will help seek appropriate guidance.