

LAFAYETTE

CENTER FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

Feedback/Notes from “Student Perspectives on Remote Learning” Session

May 28, 2020

General Questions

Describe a successful experience you had this semester in one of your classes. What did the professor do that facilitated learning remotely? In general, what have been some strategies/techniques for online learning that have been effective?

- Using break out rooms & small group discussions
- Using chat feature in order to speak
- Utilizing Moodle and being consistent (for example, posting regularly in Moodle); using one main platform to eliminate confusion
- When Professors graded in a timely manner
- Breaking up class sessions so they aren't as long (for example, 3hr class broken up into smaller sessions)
- Keeping a regular schedule that is consistent
- When professors create 15-minute intro videos to watch before remote class begins
- When professors take the time to check-in and speak with the group before, after, or during the remote class
- Hybrid approach by recording lectures and having additional notes as refreshers
- When professors have flexible time schedules for students living in various time zones
- When professors use a messaging service to stay connected (such as Slack)
- Overall, live interactions were appreciated
- When professors share their Google Calendar with the class so students are aware of office hours, class/course schedule, and deadlines

What was the biggest difficulty that you encountered during remote learning?

- When class didn't meet regularly; this often lead to more homework
- Writing papers remotely was challenging; I couldn't utilize campus amenities such as the library and it was harder to work at home with other distractions
- Overall lack of structure with remote learning made it difficult. Planning out day to day work and class was much different and difficult to get used to

- My family life was impacted by COVID-19 because of the loss of jobs for family members. I had to pick up a job and contribute to household income. This created so many variables that I felt difficult to step away from work or class and balance the two.
- Being remote and at home, I had to contribute more to their household in other ways which lead to more distractions and challenges with school work.
- It's challenging when time is not as fluid and things sneak up (e.g. when professors do not provide ample enough time to complete an assignment). This is even more so challenging during finals.
- Technology can be challenging. I was utilizing the College's technology resources when on campus. Once I got home, I found I did not have access to effective equipment (for example outdated computers and software, and reliable WiFi). This was challenging.
- I am more introverted and found it hard to speak up during the remote class
- I found it difficult to find a space at home that limited interruptions (for example, family members walking in and out of the space, or using the space during my remote lesson).
- I felt as though it was difficult to find time for self-care when caring for my family members and also being a student.

What equity and inclusion issues should professors be concerned with during remote instruction, and what can they do to ensure that all students are able to learn?

- Being more aware of how mental illness is affected during remote learning. Most coping mechanisms that health officials suggest to people who have a mental illness cannot happen during the COVID-19 quarantine period (such as seeing family members or friends, getting out of the house, etc)
- Being more fluid, dynamic, and understanding when students reach out with concerns

Time Management

How are you balancing other responsibilities while at home? What is a realistic estimate of how much time you have each week at home to dedicate to remote learning?

- Managing school responsibilities at home was more challenging. I used my own platforms (such as Slido, Google Calendar, etc.) if professors were not utilizing platforms such as Moodle.
- Balancing a job and school work was challenging. I found it difficult to push work aside for school and vice versa.
- 60 hours a week for school was expected but I felt as though I could only complete 50 hours at most. This was because of all the distractions and other variables that come with remote learning.
- I felt the opposite and that school work at home was sometimes refreshing when I felt as though I could easily take my mind off of school when being in my home environment.

Engagement in Learning

What was the most effective strategy for keeping you engaged with the material? Engaged with other students and building a sense of community?

- When I was asked by my professor(s) to take leadership and become what felt like an expert in my learning by creating my own recordings discussing what I have learned from the materials and share with the class
 - Downside, was not having in-person interactions
- I felt it is important to have class discussions and record if able
 - Productive class discussions where students know what to expect
- Providing different online resources that allow for more interactions (for example, pairing readings with videos)
 - This allowed me to digest the material and in a sense receive a mental break
- Discussion-based classes where professors assigned 2-3 students to recap for the class by leading a breakout room w/ my peers.
- Small 5-6 people discussion groups was helpful to debrief
- Having assigned readings and utilize our online class time for discussion and recap

Building a Learning Community

Similarly, what has worked to help build community in the remote classroom?

- Slack was helpful (allowed multiple channels to connect with peers and professor)
- When professors took 10 minutes at the beginning or end of the class to ask how we (the students) are doing w/ our remote learning and talk about this as a class

Optimizing Specific Course Formats and Strategies

What were the most clever/effective uses of technology in your classes?

- Perusall - provided a central space to upload articles/readings and annotate as class as well as responding to others
- Slack to communicate
- Break out rooms with 2-3 students to connect with peers and go over the material
- Chat feature in Zoom/Google Meet to allow an effective way to communicate without interruptions
- When professors connected their iPads/tablets to their computers to use as a white/chalk board.
 - I found this more helpful and engaging rather than PowerPoints
- Kahoot - when used to start the class with a quick quiz to measure /comprehend readings/assignments/material
 - I felt this was a fun and creative way to learn and felt it built a sense of community as well
- I typically present a poster at the end of the semester (when on campus). I felt it was helpful when my professors allowed us to use infographics and other online resources to present my material.
 - I felt as though this was helpful and adaptable.

What did exams and homework look like? How were you graded? What worked well?

- My exams were split between open book and typical exam format and I felt I did well in both.
- I felt having fixed times for exams was more stressful especially because I live in a different time zone.
- I preferred open book and felt as though I learned the material more effectively than having to memorize the materials
 - I found it difficult to memorize the material with the many distractions I have at home
- Open note exams are not necessarily less-challenging. In fact, they can be more challenging and enjoyable because you have to synthesize and apply information in a way that is more interesting. I was more invested.

If you decided to choose pass/fail grades how did this affect your overall grades?

- I was studying abroad and the school expected us to only use pass/fail.
- I split my grades up between pass/fail and regular grading. I chose pass/fail for my electives and not for my capstone courses. I found it challenging to keep my gpa up in my capstone courses.

What is the best length for lecture videos posted to Moodle?

- Trying not to go over 20 minutes
- Having a playlist and putting them in short clips to allow shorter videos rather than one long video

How can professors effectively teach laboratory courses remotely?

- Using different computer software that appeared to most users
- Preparing for labs once they are back on campus
- 3 hour labs was difficult and I felt I would have preferred breaking the lab time up
- When professors use good software to simulate the labs as best as possible
- Allowing time for students to use software and effectively
- I felt that writing lab reports for labs that I did not contribute to was not motivating.
 - I felt I would have preferred exercises on how to write each section of a lab report instead

Did you find synchronous or asynchronous activities work better for your learning situation?

- I preferred synchronous a lot better because it provided more structure
 - I preferred to know ahead of time what was expected
- I felt it was appropriate to have both synchronous and asynchronous to allow for more diversity
- I felt live sessions were better (I live in a different time zone) because it allowed me to get immediate feedback and interactions
- I felt recorded sessions were also helpful

Final Advice

As your professors prepare to teach the fall semester where there is a possibility for remote instruction what final advice do you give them so that they can provide a high quality education?

- Advice for fall - things that are important to consider are compassion, adaptability and flexibility. Emails from professors should recognize unprecedented times and keep with that message throughout the semester. Do not be afraid to adapt your syllabus so that your assignments make sense and still take a similar amount of time. Be adaptable with 504 plans and other accessibility needs so that you can include all students.

List of Technology Tools that Students Found Helpful

- **Slack** - provides effective communication amongst peers/professors through multiple channels in a text-like format
- **Kahoot** - when used to quiz students on material creatively and fun!
- **Perusall** - for uploading articles/material in one central location and being able to respond to others
- **Google Calendar** - to help plan out course schedule, material, office hours, and deadlines
- **Moodle** - when posting material regularly and consistently
- **Chat feature in Zoom/Google Meet** - to allow for effective communication without interruptions
- **Connecting iPads/Tablets to computers to simulate chalk/white boards** - when performing problem-solving activities instead of just using PowerPoints