



Remote Ready Teaching Checklist

This document is designed for those facilitating and supporting live, online sessions under emergency or unexpected conditions. The technical details focus on **Zoom**.

You will likely use a mix of asynchronous (**not** in the same place at the same time) and synchronous (same place, same time) types of instruction in your online courses. Live, online sessions are an example of synchronous instruction, and that “same place” is the Zoom platform, with everyone connecting remotely from the privacy of their own home/office.

This checklist is not intended to be a replacement for Zoom or Canvas “best practices” and troubleshooting documentation, or the training you receive at your College.

Create & Share Your Session Details

- ❑ **Create your live (synchronous) session in Zoom.** Follow the instructions received through the training provided by your College.
- ❑ **Share your live (synchronous) session link with students.** Follow the instructions received through the training provided by your College.
- ❑ **Create your supplemental Canvas Course.** Follow the instructions received through the training provided by your College. A **Remote Ready Layout** is available to you through the District Alamo Colleges Online office. (You may use a layout provided by your College.)

Reminders

- ❑ **Remind students of your session start date/time.** Send an email in Canvas the day before and then about an hour before your session starts.
- ❑ **Remind yourself.** For those used to commuting to campus and face-to-face teaching, remote sessions will be quite different. They can be easy to forget. Set a few alarms on your personal devices. Give yourself plenty of time, to allow for any technical challenges.
- ❑ **Remember accessibility.** Consult with your institution’s accessibility services office, especially if you have students with documented requests for accommodations that could be impacted by the shift from face-to-face learning to remote learning.
- ❑ **Less is more.** Don’t expect to be able to accomplish as much as you’d like, especially in your first few sessions. Allow plenty of time to get everyone comfortable with using the remote learning platform and to answer

questions. Prioritize checking in with students on a human level. You might have to sacrifice some content. Remember, your best is good enough.

Session Preparation Essentials

- ❑ **Share technical guides with your audience.** It might be someone’s first time in Zoom, so consider reminding students in advance that technical information is provided in the Canvas Course supplement. Include this in your reminder email along with other information that your students need in order to come prepared (assignments, readings, etc.)
- ❑ **Use a headset and a microphone (if available).** This provides a clear way to capture your voice, and allows you to more clearly hear conversations. Encourage your participants to do the same. Basic earbuds that include a microphone also work very well.
- ❑ **Position your webcam and light source.** An external (USB) camera might provide a better visual experience for your audience than your built-in laptop webcam, but use what you have. Position your webcam at eye-level (a stack of textbooks works well as a “booster seat”). Position your light source directly in front of you to illuminate your face.
- ❑ **Run a tech check.** Test your computer, camera, and microphone in Zoom at least 24 hours before your scheduled meeting by logging into your session. Use all the equipment (including headset or earbuds) that you plan to use during your session.
- ❑ **Join from a location with a strong internet connection.** Reduce background noise by going to a private space.

A wired connection is best. If you are using WiFi, then connect from your home or office. WiFi in public locations can be spotty and not recommended.

- ❑ **Be on time.** Plan to arrive at least ten minutes before your scheduled meeting. Do another tech check and prepare your desktop for screen-sharing. You can also start interacting with your learners in the chat. Lots of great conversations happen before sessions even begin.
- ❑ **Appearance matters.** Clean up your background (what is visible behind you in your physical location) to ensure that it's appropriate/not distracting. Check your lighting conditions. Lastly, be aware of your behavior. When you are on video, people can see what you are doing at all times. It can be easy to forget you're on camera, so just be mindful.
- ❑ **Record the meeting.** This allows you to share it with learners who weren't able to attend. Make sure that everyone consents before proceeding. If you forget to record, set a (quiet) alarm to nudge you.

Interacting with Participants

- ❑ **Demonstrate instructor presence.** If you are making a rapid shift from face-to-face to remote instruction, your students will likely know you already. However, take a moment to say "hello" at the start of the session and check in with them see how they are managing.
- ❑ **Support and refer.** Remind your students that College support services are available and can be found in the Academic & Student Resources page in the Canvas Course supplement. Consider sharing this in your meeting preparation/reminder emails in advance of each session.
- ❑ **Set expectations early on.** Share the agenda and explain how you want your learners to participate. Should they use non-verbal feedback using the raise hand, yes, no, go slower, go faster, etc. features in Zoom? Be clear, and take a few minutes to demonstrate the features you'll be using (and which you expect participants to use).

In-Meeting Tips

- ❑ **Mute audio when not speaking.** All noises can be picked up by your microphone including typing, shuffling papers, etc. Minimize distractions by muting your microphone when you're listening. If you are the meeting host (main presenter), you can "mute all."
- ❑ **Check the chat box.** Some participants might not be able to speak up during the meeting. Others might have technical difficulties. The chat box can be used to address those issues as well as provide another place where conversation can take place during the meeting.
- ❑ **Check on your screen-sharing.** If you're not sure

whether your participants see the content you've intended to screen-share, ask them! If something's not working right, remember that you can always send files or website links to your participants through the chat. Do your best and don't let tech challenges throw you off track.

Engagement Tools

- ❑ **Start and end strong.** Primacy-recency effect states that people will most remember the first and last five minutes of a learning experience. Use your time wisely by planning a strong start and finish. Stories, videos, images, chats, and polls can all boost engagement.
- ❑ **Use the chat.** The chat is your best friend in an online session. While we might discourage chatting in a land-based classroom, the opposite is true in an online session. Encourage your students to comment about the topic at hand in the chat. This will keep them engaged and active. Ask lots of questions, especially if you're lecturing, and comment on students' responses in the chat. It's very easy to use the chat for an informal poll (e.g., share one word that comes to mind when you think of today's topic).
- ❑ **Switch it up.** Just as we want to be mindful of the length of lectures in a land-based classroom, the same is true in an online session. In addition to punctuating your lecture with questions and engaging students in the chat, try not to lecture for more than 10 minutes. Take a break, do an activity, and then resume your lecture if needed.

Acknowledging Anxiety

- ❑ **Recognize your own anxiety.** Aside from the abrupt shift from face-to-face to remote instruction, the *reasons* behind that shift might be ramping up our stress and anxiety. It is also very normal to feel camera-shy, even if you've been teaching in front of a classroom for years. Take a deep breath, and remember that perfection is not the goal. Be human, do your best, and ask for help when you need it.
- ❑ **Recognize your students' anxiety.** Students may experience higher levels of stress and anxiety that might impact their classroom behavior or experience.

Wrapping Up

- ❑ **Remember to stop the recording.** Tell your participants when you do so, as they might have some questions that they were too shy to pose during the recording.
- ❑ **Stick around a bit.** Wait for a few participants to leave before you hit the "end meeting" button, so that the closing doesn't feel so abrupt. Thank participants for their time and remember to send any follow-up materials as close as possible to the session timing, so that it's still fresh in participants' minds.