

Tips to reinvent online teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic brought most of us into a more 'virtual world' and hastened the transition towards online teaching and learning in a range of different settings. The inherent changes and challenges associated with this have encouraged many educators to reflect on their teaching style, adapt techniques and try new ideas.

[This article by Julien Bobroff and his colleagues in France](#) provides some novel ideas to reinvent your teaching techniques for an online platform.

Online teaching and learning has its challenges...

Technological	Human
Technical difficulties Poor internet connections Inadequate IT equipment	Social isolation Difficulty assessing body cues and language Lack of human interaction Sense of anonymity for learners Fear of 'speaking up' Multi-tasking during learning sessions People talking over one another Screen 'fatigue' Musculoskeletal problems

But... online teaching and learning is here to stay (for now at least) so should be seen as an opportunity to embrace new skills. The following ideas may help you navigate this process.

Five tips to improve online teaching:

1. **Use platforms creatively (release your inner IT prowess)**
 - Be wary of student (and teacher) fatigue from repeated PowerPoint presentations with commentary.
 - OBS:
 - Requires software, computer and a smartphone (or second webcam)
 - Allows you to integrate different perspectives: face shots, direct animation from notebook [drawings, diagrams], power point slides or videos.

2. **Encouraging interaction**
 - Teaching to a screen of black webcams can be awkward and challenging, no matter how enthralling the topic is.

- Encourage students to turn their video on when appropriate (and microphone off) [some platforms allow you to enforce this at meeting set-up]. Note this may affect bandwidth / internet connection.
- Consider using an ice breaker (e.g. webcam on / off or thumbs up / down to answer rounds or true or false).
- Some platform tools that can be used to encourage interaction include:
 - The chat function (“write your ideas in the chat”).
 - Many platforms have a virtual whiteboard.
 - Interactive surveys (MCQs, true / false)
 - Small group sessions (break out rooms)

3. Get students moving

- Encourage and provide reminders for short breaks to stand and / or stretch

4. Encourage a break from routine

- Be creative with how you cover your content. Can you include teaching methods based on fiction or add a theme to your session using virtual background and / or costumes?

5. Solidarity

- Remember to allocate times for those regular catch ups / informal discussion of ideas (e.g. to assimilate those corridor or tearoom conversations between staff or small group tutorials with students). This is also a good opportunity to practice these online teaching tools.
- ‘Zoom cafes’
- Share your IT tips with colleagues.