



Advice on Teaching (Seated Classes) in a COVID-Changed World

This advice is mostly based on observations of how teaching students in Seated classes has been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, but some points might be helpful for components of Hybrid, HyFlex, and Online Classes, as well...

Assume everything will take longer.

- If you use a lot of PowerPoints or videos etc., give yourself at least 5-10 minutes extra time before each class. In Seated courses, you may need to log into the room computer, log into Canvas, log into the Zoom Classroom within Canvas for any students at “home,” and then log into Google Drive where you’ve stored any presentations/files/video not in Canvas.
- Leave 5 minutes at the end of class to clean table and chairs. Get your students used to helping with this. Most will expect to help.
- Make extra time in your schedule to follow up with students via email, as many may miss class, due to quarantine/isolation.
- Consider publishing Zoom “office hours” for students but expect them to make appointments. Otherwise, just make it clear to students that can schedule a Zoom appointment during your regular office hours.

Assume attendance will be inconsistent.

- Even if teaching in a purely Seated class, assume one or two (or more) students may need to join via Zoom on any given day, due to being in isolation or quarantine.
- Expect students to be AWOL even if you have not received an official notice from Thrive or the Sports Medicine office notifying you of an isolation or quarantine. Students are advised to avoid coming to class if they don’t feel well, even if they have not been to Thrive yet.
- Set clear expectations from the beginning on how you and your students will use Zoom. We’ve worked hard to be able to offer seated courses safely this year, so make it clear that Zoom is intended for students in quarantine/isolation and is not meant to be available merely for their convenience. For more guidance on setting Zoom expectations, see the “**Expectations for Remote Attendance/Participation via Zoom**” policies in the *Syllabus Instructions* document on the CLTE website’s [Syllabus / Learning Outcomes Planning page](#).

Assume students will be quieter than normal in class...

- For many, wearing masks tends to have a negative impact on class participation. For whatever reason, students are less likely to speak up during class. All of the student-centered, high impact teaching strategies you might normally use to engage students are doubly important, now. An open question to the class is often met with silence. It is helpful to put students into groups of two or three to talk with each other about an issue, ask them to make notes, and then share what they discussed with the larger group. Getting them talking to each other is almost always

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necessary before they are comfortable/willing to talk to the whole class. Anything you can do to get them talking early in each class meeting will be helpful. The psychological impact of masks surprised many, but it is significant, but perhaps more so for Freshmen.

- In large groups, it is difficult to hear some students through their masks, and it is often difficult to even tell who is speaking. It may be helpful to implement some basic hand signs. For example, ask them to raise their hands slightly when speaking, ask them to hold up one finger when they have a question, ask them to hold a closed fist when they completely don't understand something, etc. This can be useful with groups in Zoom who didn't want to speak up and interrupt, but it can also be helpful in face-to-face classes when difficult tell who is talking at first.
- It is very hard to "read the room," when you can't see $\frac{2}{3}$ of each student's face. Being very specific with questions and asking individuals what they think is helpful. Again, the usual tactics are helpful, but just more of them – more effort, more patience, and more coaching seem to be needed.
- You might consider using something like [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Kahoot!](#) to engage students in some anonymous q&a. Results can be live on the screen for all to see. Since Poll Everywhere runs on the web, even those participating via Zoom can use it live with the class. Using just one or two questions once or twice in a class meeting is sometimes a good way to get the perspectives of everyone in the room, rather than just the one or two you can get to speak up.

If you have a lot of students out of class, and "present" via zoom...

- Encourage students to turn on their cameras. This is difficult to enforce, but you can encourage and incentivize them to have their cameras on.
- Sound quality is often a bigger issue, in some rooms. This is particularly difficult for discussions. All the students on Zoom can hear you, as you will be near the microphone/speaker, and all of the students present in the room can hear someone clearly when they speak from Zoom, but students on Zoom will often have a difficult time hearing comments and questions from students in the room. Get used to repeating student comments and questions for the whole group, so everyone on Zoom can hear, as well.
- Test the technology in the room a couple of times and get comfortable with it. Have one or two people join via Zoom to see how it looks/feels. Trade places and have a colleague in the room, while you go to another room or floor and join, so you can get used to how class looks and feels to a student at home.
- Consider assigning "Zoom buddies," so each student at home has a direct contact with a student in the classroom. If the student at home misses something, they can message with the student in class or ask the student in class to pose a question or comment to you or the group. (This can fragment the attention of students in the classroom, though.)
- Consider having students who are present take turns being your "assistant" for the day on Zoom. They can join the Zoom session from within the classroom, but *not* join the audio call, and then turn down their sound and mute themselves, so there is no audio feedback loop with the speaker and mic in the room. This person can monitor the chat and raise questions from the Zoomers at home. This frees you up to avoid being distracted by the chat while helping to make sure you don't miss anything. In a small group, it is perhaps better to just make it clear to the Zoomers that they should not bother with the chat and should feel free to speak up.

Other thoughts...

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- In seated courses, consider allowing students to submit their work via Canvas, rather than in person, if you are not already using Canvas for assignment submissions. Be sure to use consistent due dates and times (always at midnight, or always at the start of class, etc.)
- Consider recording and posting lectures or discussions that students miss. You might take an Inverted (“flipped”) class approach and record lectures in advance, but if you do, break them into short sections. Some students will cut corners on watching these when they get behind. Similar to how they struggle to make the time for reading, they will struggle to watch a lot of lecture content. Some will hit play for multiple lectures on multiple devices at once, and let them play, to give the appearance of having watched them in Canvas.
- Be flexible but clear about due dates. Is no late work accepted at all? Only within 3 days, or a week? With or without penalty? Only if excused (due to illness, participation in an AU sponsored event, civic duty... personal tragedy)? Most faculty have chosen to be more flexible than normal, and are willing to extend a lot of grace, but clear expectations and boundaries are probably more important than ever.