

Strategic Pedagogy in the Age of Zoom



Matt Kaplan, Executive Director, CRLT
mlkaplan@umich.edu


Framing Question

Strategic Pedagogy: With the addition of ZOOM as new tool in our toolbox, what are now the best practices for education and instruction that we can be intentional about choices of pedagogy? How do we strategize as a university on how we evaluate what works and what doesn't and what we implement? How do we engage students in this, based on their experiences during COVID? Can we involve CAI and/or CRLT on this?

Zoom Affordances

- Online office hours
- Guest speakers
- Interactivity (polls, break-out rooms)
- Chat (back channel, way to store discussion, share)
- Potential for enhanced flexibility and access
 - Students who are ill
 - Students studying abroad / on field placements
 - Flexible calendar (e.g., post-Thanksgiving all online)
 - Online and in-person options for the same course

“Zoom” Challenges



Faculty
Exhaustion

- Hybrid/hyflex teaching
 - Increased time/uncertainty for course planning
 - Increased cognitive load to facilitate
 - Decreased student motivation to attend in person
 - Suitability of classroom spaces
- Digital divide
- Regulatory issues for fully online courses
- Uncertain impact on student learning

Lessons from (Emergency) Remote Teaching: Beyond “Zoom”

- Students appreciated...
 - Less reliance on high-stakes exams
 - Greater flexibility
 - Greater connection to instructors and real world
 - Increased compassion for student struggles
 - Increased transparency
 - Increased active engagement in learning
 - Changes to policies (e.g., extended withdrawal)

Asking the Right Questions

- How to support faculty to plan for and teach in ways that intentionally leverage the best pedagogical practices for a given modality?
 - What strategies align best with disciplinary teaching?
 - How to decide among modalities?
 - How to promote community and accessibility?
 - How to promote engagement and equity?
 - How to attract faculty excited by experimentation?
- How do we evaluate and learn from a range of approaches?

Support for Faculty Innovation

- Time and support for course planning
 - Faculty learning communities
 - Consultations
- In-class support to manage hyflex audiences
 - Additional GSIs or undergraduate IAs
- Reward structures
 - Incentives: time, \$\$, connection to UM priority
 - Tolerance of failure: especially in evaluations

Evaluation: Learning from What Works (and What Doesn't)

- Learn from current writing/resources
- Use appropriate methods to answer significant questions
 - Analytics
 - Surveys
 - Qualitative Approaches
 - Experiments
- Leverage campus resources and interests (unit, individual, central)
 - Central resources: CRLT, CAI, ASSET, Student Life Research
 - Advisors
 - DBER faculty
- Engage students
 - UROP students
 - Student governments (at central, school, and department levels)
 - Students as data sources (including GSIs)

How to proceed?

- Is the goal to create a university approach? Unit approaches?
Completely decentralized?
- Is Third Century Initiative a model?
 - Investment, with support for pedagogy and assessment
 - Wider call for team efforts and partnerships
 - Campus-wide conversations

“The Chronicle recently asked faculty members to share their experiences with student disengagement this academic year. More than 100 people wrote in to describe a disconcerting level of disconnection among students, using words like ‘defeated,’ ‘exhausted,’ and ‘overwhelmed....’ They described common challenges: Far fewer students show up to class. Those who do avoid speaking when possible. Many skip the readings or the homework. They have trouble remembering what they learned and struggle on tests.”

“A Stunning Level of Student Disconnection,” Beth McMurtrie,
Chronicle of Higher Education

“Two ideas come up most frequently in the discussions professors say they are having with one another, and in their observations of their own teaching: increasing experiential learning and redesigning courses to connect more closely to students’ lived experiences and prospective careers.... Creating that sense of connection, to help students see the larger purpose and value of higher education, may be what helps them regain their footing.”

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