

Teaching and Learning Continuity: Teaching Tips

General Points

- Provide clear and unambiguous instructions. This cuts down on the number of emails and queries you will receive.
- Use the technology that you and your students know and can use. Remember that you can include links to our FAQs in your Blackboard course to help your students.
- If you are using your own computer, check that you can do everything you will need to do. If you have any questions you can contact elarning@aber.ac.uk. These FAQs will help you:
 - Working from home: <https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/index.php?id=1547>
 - Teaching and Learning Continuity: <https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/index.php?id=2922>
- **Further resources:** View the excellent set of resources in the [ACUE online teaching toolkit](#):
 - [Welcoming students to the online environment](#)
 - [Managing your online presence](#)
 - [Organizing your online course](#)
 - [Planning and facilitating quality discussions](#)
 - [Recording effective microlectures](#)
 - [Engaging students in readings and microlectures](#)

Manage your learning content effectively

- **Active learning at a distance:** Think about the learning tasks that you want students to carry out, not just the content covered. Make sure that the tasks are made clear to the students. If the learning task is clear, it will promote active learning even at a distance.

For example, a somewhat vague learning task would be to read three articles.

A more active task would be to read the three articles and evaluate their arguments relative to each other, or analyse data across several sources to identify patterns, etc.

- **Accessibility:** Apply principles of good accessibility practice to your PowerPoints, Word documents, and other materials.
 - Apply ALT tags to images in any materials.
 - Ensure that speaker notes are included in your PowerPoint files and upload the PPT file into Blackboard. Do not just upload a PDF. This gives students another channel to get all of the information you want them to have.

- Use plain English as much as possible. If your students don't understand something well, they won't be able to ask you during lecture.
- Make sure that your Blackboard course is easy for them to navigate. They should be able to find the relevant material for each week easily and quickly.
- **Reading materials:** Ensure that all reading material is accessible through Blackboard. Use Aspire reading lists. If some material is only available in print form (e.g. books in the library), find alternative e-books or online sources they can use instead.
- **Adaptive Release:** You can use [Adaptive Release](#) so your materials appear at set times. Try and avoid too many complicated adaptive release rules as they can be difficult to unpick and work out why a student can't see documents.
- **Box of Broadcasts** is an excellent resource for TV and radio material. You can arrange recordings of upcoming material or use previously broadcast programmes.

Use Blackboard Tests and Surveys for formative assessment

Tests are an excellent way for students to check their understanding of a topic and help you know more about their progress.

- Be sure to include feedback on right and wrong answers, so that your students can learn from the formative quiz.
- You don't have to give the correct answer but can give links to readings, or further resources to help learn the material.
- Write questions that help your students engage with the material, rather than just remembering facts. You can write questions that require them to analyse material, work with scenarios, and do calculations.

Enable students to engage with you and each other via a discussion board

Discussion boards are an excellent way to run a remote seminar. They allow students to engage when they can and are also familiar to use.

- **Activities:** Provide activities for the students to engage with on the discussion boards – set starter questions that require them to actively engage, for example analysing data, comparing articles, summarising their reading, creating questions from the materials they have read.
- **Guidance on engagement:** Provide guidance for students on how you want them to engage with the discussion boards.
 - For example, you could ask them to write their own posts, and comment on others.
 - Tell them how often you want the students to engage and how often you will engage.
 - If you are running a thread for each seminar, you may want to keep the discussion going for a week and then start a new one at a set time.
- **Guidance on writing:**
 - Do you want them to write formally or informally?
 - Should they reference their reading?
 - Short posts are better than essays – the aim of discussion boards is for students to interact rather than just post their essays

Use Blogs, Wikis and Journals for student reflection and collaboration

Blogs and Journals are a good way of students to document an ongoing process or practice – for example a reading journal. Students can use text, images, video etc. Blogs are visible to all class members, and Journals are private between the student and the instructor.

Wikis are good for group work. They can be used by all the class, or you can split into groups, and each group can have a wiki. Students can use text, images and video, and you can see each student's contribution.

- Give students clear instructions about how to use the blogs, wikis or journals. Tell them what you expect: how often you want them to contribute and how often you will engage with them.
- Example contributions can be useful to help students understand what you expect.
- You can make comments on posts to provide feedback.
- All three types of activity can be graded if you want to use them as an assessment method.

Make a Panopto recording

Panopto recordings are a good way of presenting information to your students along with PowerPoint slides. You can re-use recordings you have already made, but if you are making new recordings specifically for continuity purposes, bear the following in mind:

- Make your videos shorter than a standard lecture. Students will find it easier to concentrate on shorter videos.
- Link the recording to a learning activity for your students. Encourage active listening with questions, or other activities.
- Make the PowerPoint and speakers notes (if you use them) available on Blackboard.

Add quizzes to your Panopto recording

Quizzes are a good way of breaking up your recording, similar to the way you would use questions in a lecture

- Write clear questions that will help your students engage with the recording actively.