Dear GC students who are teaching and faculty:

We have been hearing that some of you that do not have experience with distance learning would appreciate more tips on teaching. At the bottom of this email, we have included some links that may be helpful. We would also like to especially thank Queens College Provost Elizabeth Hendry who composed the original memo which we have lightly adapted to Graduate Center needs.

We know that there are a lot of questions and unfortunately, "we do not know" is our too frequent refrain. Please keep the questions coming and we are developing a FAQ which will be posted on the [Provost's Office webpage](#) soon. (We will let you know when).

But, first, take a deep breath. This is an overwhelming time for all of us. We thought you might appreciate the following excerpts from a piece that was shared with us—we don't know the author so can't give credit, but here it is slightly edited:

Pedagogy in the Time of COVID19:

1. Be kind to yourself and your students. Everyone is stressed, even if they're playing cool. That includes faculty. And that's OK.

2. Let's acknowledge that the quality of education may not be as good in suddenly revised formats as it is in the pedagogical model we've actually planned for. That's OK as well—we're just trying to survive.

3. Do not read about best practices for distance learning. That's not the situation we're in. We're in triage mode. Distance learning, when planned, can be really excellent. That's not what this is. Think about what you must cover and what might be expendable. Thinking you can master best practices in a day or a week will lead to feeling like you've failed.

4. You will not recreate your classroom, and you cannot hold yourself to that standard. Moving a class to a distance learning model in a few days' time may preclude the possibility of excellence. Give yourself a break.

5. Prioritize: What do students really need to know? This is really difficult, and, once again, the quality of teaching and learning may not be to the standards that you usually pride yourselves on. But these are not normal circumstances.

6. Stay in contact with your students, and be transparent. Talk to them about why you're prioritizing certain things or asking them to read or do certain things. Most of us do that in our face-to-face teaching anyway, and it improves student buy-in because they know content and delivery are purposeful.

7. The GC has pedagogical experts on academic technology that you may have only been dimly aware of until now. Be kind to these colleagues. They are suddenly very slammed, but they have compiled many great resources for you use: https://continuity.commons.gc.cuny.edu/

8. If you're making videos, student viewership drops off precipitously at five minutes. Make them capsule videos if you make them. And consider providing a summary/transcription of your video to ensure accessibility for your students. Do not assume your audio is good enough or that students can understand without transcription. This is like using a microphone at meetings—it doesn't matter if you don't need it; someone else does and they don't want to ask.

9. Make assignments low or no stakes if you're using a new platform. Get students used to just using the platform. Then you can do something higher stakes. Do not ask students to do a high-stakes exam or assignment on a new platform.

10. If you're teaching undergraduates, be particularly kind to your graduating seniors. They're already panicking, and this isn't going to help. If you teach a class where they need to have completed something for certification, to apply to grad school, or whatever, figure out plan B. But talk to them. Radio silence, even if you're working on a solution, is not okay.

Useful Links

- The Association of College and University Educators created a website with very easy steps to introduce faculty to distance learning: Online Teaching Toolkit, http://acue.org/online-teaching-toolkit/

- Many of the CUNY campuses' Teaching and Learning Centers have created extensive online resources you many find helpful. A not exhaustive list

  Graduate Center https://continuity.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
  CUNY Central https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/faq-for-faculty-and-staff/
  Queens College https://keepteaching.qc.cuny.edu/
  Baruch https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/ctl/
  Brooklyn College http://www.brooklyn.edu/web/academics/centers/ctl.php
  Hunter College https://acert.hunter.cuny.edu/
  College of Staten Island https://www.csi.cuny.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-center-professional-development
  John Jay College http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/teaching-and-learning-center-tlc

- GC Digital Initiatives: The GC Digital Initiatives team is available for consultations on a wide range of topics related to technology. We invite GC faculty, students, and staff to use this form to set up 30-minute appointments with them.
  Guides and Tutorials (includes resources on Data and Databases; Design; Mapping; Programming (including Python); Project Management; Projects; Text Analysis; Web Development; Social Media and Scholarly Publication)
  Digital Scholarship Resources

- Many book publishers are making their online teaching and testing platform available to all students currently enrolled in a course in which the faculty member uses one of their books (whether or not students have purchased the book). Reach out to your textbook publisher to see if this is a possibility.

- Many educators across the educational community have contributed to this Google document with links to many free educational resources.

Once again, thanks for everything you are doing to get us through this crisis. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.

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