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Flexible Teaching at Boise State: A Guide for Faculty

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Based on the [Teaching Remotely Guide](#) compiled by Dr. Leslie Madsen, Associate Director, [Center for Teaching and Learning](#), in collaboration with [Learning Technology Solutions](#) and [eCampus Center](#).

Several portions of this guide are adapted from [materials](#) developed by Jenae Cohn and Beth Seltzer at Stanford University.

If you would like to refer to this guide again or share it with colleagues, you can use the following short link: <https://bit.ly/3b3ZV8z>

If you have any questions about this document, please contact Dr. Madsen at lmadsen@boisestate.edu.



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The Need for Flexible Teaching

Dynamic teaching requires creative and flexible thinking about how instructors can support students in achieving essential core course learning objectives. This guide offers suggestions for instructors at Boise State looking to continue offering a student-centered learning experience through a variety of teaching formats including, online, hybrid, and remote environments.

While the process may feel unfamiliar and at times frustrating, try as much as possible to be patient. In times of disruption or change, everyone expects some pedagogical and technological hiccups. Be willing to switch tactics if something isn't working.

Focus on maintaining a [growth mindset](#) for both yourself and your students. Under normal circumstances, we make a point of conveying to our students how much we believe they can grow as learners in our courses and disciplines. Similarly, approach new teaching formats knowing that you and your students can and will succeed in this unfamiliar learning environment.

Remember, while you might not be able to teach something exactly the way you imagined, as long as you're still meeting the learning goals of the course, you're doing fine.

Guiding principles of flexible teaching

Let pedagogical strategies lead the way

Instead of letting unfamiliar technology drive the design of the lessons you're bringing online, remember [the backwards course design process](#):

1. Focus on your course learning outcomes, those things you expect students to be able to do by the end of the semester. For the vast majority of courses, the learning outcomes likely will remain the same regardless of the modality of the course.

2. Determine how students will demonstrate they have met the learning outcomes. These assessments might include assignments turned in as text, images, slide decks, audio, spreadsheets, short videos, and more. You might also give low-stakes quizzes in Blackboard so that students can get immediate feedback.

3. Design the learning experiences and instruction students will need to succeed with the assessments. These might include asking students to listen to brief live lectures (via Zoom) or pre-recorded screencasts (via Panopto); read ebooks or articles from the University Library's catalog, as well as articles and reports on the open web; and podcasts and videos.

Flexible teaching is adaptable to student needs

You already know that students show up in our courses with a huge range of educational preparation for university-level work; diverse and sometimes divergent cultural habits, beliefs, and values; and disabilities that can affect their learning or how they access course materials.

You may find that some students' engagement with course materials and other students may shift when they're not meeting face-to-face. For example, you may find that a student who was comfortable and talkative in the face-to-face classroom struggles to connect with other students in Blackboard's discussion forum because his dyslexia requires him to spend extra time on his written communication. Meanwhile, a previously quiet student participates enthusiastically in a discussion on [Flipgrid](#) because she has more time to prepare her remarks.

Make it a priority to maintain [an inclusive, equitable online learning experience](#) for all students. This includes being mindful of the [accessibility](#) of your course content.

Reduce your own stress and workload

Evolving your face-to-face course into a flexible format can feel overwhelming to you and your students. Accordingly, limit your adoption to one or two new-to-you digital tools; for many faculty, that means getting to know Blackboard better and learning how to host meetings in Zoom.

Recording lectures and creating new multimedia for your course can quickly become exhausting. Consider using existing resources from the Library or the open web, or repurposing other learning resources you already have available. For example, instead of lecturing, you might ask students to read an article and then listen to a podcast episode that provides a complementary viewpoint on the same topic. You could then take questions on that topic from a previous semester's exam and modify them for use in a discussion forum.

Finally, remember to be gentle with yourself. Take a moment to explore the [helpful resources](#) available to you through OIT including software support, wireless hotspots, and best practices for safe computing and [remote working](#). Also, keep in mind that converting your course to a more flexible format is a step-by-step process that requires patience and space to celebrate small victories.

What does a minimum viable course look like?

The Boise State Provost's office has [asked](#) all faculty to provide students with Blackboard course sites that include:

- an announcement area
- instructor contact information and office hours
- the course syllabus and other essential documents
- instructions on where to find additional course content outside Blackboard (if applicable)
- a general discussion board, monitored by the instructor, for students to post questions about the class

Of course, configuring this suite of essential course features is just the first step. You'll still need to determine how to engage your students in ways that make sense within the context of your course. The rest of this guide provides some suggestions on how to go about doing that.

Resources such as [Concrete Strategies for Hybrid and Remote Teaching](#), created by the Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University, can also provide great ideas to help you get started.

Another tool to help you focus your efforts is the [checklist for emergency remote instruction](#) created by Quality Matters, an organization that provides research-based guidance for instructors building entirely online courses. Although the checklist highlights emergency response, the content can be applied to flexible teaching practices. The checklist's first section outlines the initial steps to take in transitioning your face-to-face course to an online environment, while subsequent sections offer suggestions for easing the transition for students, building student confidence with remote learning, and incorporating meaningful active learning. [This 3-minute video](#) explains the checklist.

The Quality Matters checklist recommends instructors "provide explicit directions and comparisons of the structure of the online version with the F2F version, clearly identifying where students can find course components." Here's [one example](#) of what that might look like for your students. As you reimagine your course for an online environment, you might find that drafting a similar table helps to clarify your thinking and planning.

Access to technology

Boise State faculty and students come from various socioeconomic backgrounds. Faculty and instructors who need technology support can contact the [Help Desk](#), explore the [Working Remotely](#) resources, or reserve specific technology tools (including WiFi hotspots) through the [CTL Gadget Garage](#).

It's important to be aware that some students do not have access to computers or WiFi at their residence. Some students may also access all course content on their smartphones—and they may have limited data plans. Therefore, when planning course meetings, activities, or assignments, please keep in mind that students may have inequitable access to technology and networks.

- Assume some students will lack regular access to the devices and connectivity they need to access coursework and engage with other students online.
 - Places where they typically access free Wifi (e.g., campus, coffeehouses) may be closed or otherwise inaccessible to students:
- Many students access course content on their phones; keep in mind that some will even complete assignments on their phones.
- Prioritize text over multimedia.
- Prioritize activities that don't require a lot of data usage on students' cell phone plans.

Surveying your students

It's also a good idea to survey your students to determine their access to necessary technology. (Be careful to do this in a way that keeps their answers confidential from one another.)

Two easy ways to do this:

- [Google Forms](#) makes it easy to collect this information from your students, and you'll be able to see their answers in a spreadsheet.
- You also can use email. Be sure to put your email address in the "to" field and your students' email addresses in the "bcc" field to keep their answers visible only to you.

(Even if you survey your students, remember that their access to internet and cell service can change suddenly, especially if they lose their income during the pandemic.)

Here's a sample survey:

These questions help me better understand your access to technology and the internet when you are away from campus and your workplace.

Your answers will influence which technologies I will use to conduct the class online.

1. Do you have consistent access to a computer? If so, does it have a webcam and microphone?
2. Do you have consistent access to the internet? If yes, does your internet plan allow you to use unlimited data, or is your access to the internet limited or slowed down after you use a certain amount of data? If your internet plan limits your data, do you usually hit this limit by the end of each month?
3. Does your internet access allow you to reliably stream a video?
4. Will your primary way of accessing course content and completing assignments be on a smartphone? If so, does your cell plan have limited or unlimited data? If your plan offers limited data, do you regularly run out of minutes and/or data?

Benefits and challenges of lecturing

While lecture is the default mode in many face-to-face classes, lecturing can introduce several pedagogical and technological challenges for instructors and students, especially in remote or online situations.

Benefits of lecturing

From the faculty perspective, lecturing can be an efficient way to deliver content. There's a good chance you already have lecture outlines and notes. At a time of disruption, it can be a comfort to stick with what you know.

Lecturing lets you deliver exactly the content you want. With some topics, your skilled delivery of a lecture—your vocal inflection, body language, and emotion—can reveal far more about the topic than can a text, and your enthusiasm for your topic can be infectious.

Challenges of lecturing online

Students' attention strays during lectures. If you ever have noticed your students tuning out during class, you would be horrified to see them “watch” lectures online. Just like many of us, students will have several browser tabs open or be active on their smartphones; lectures too easily become background noise.

Faculty are rarely satisfied with how they appear or sound on video. While most faculty have a talent for teaching, there's something about video that brings out demoralizing self-criticism. You may be tempted to record, and then re-record—and then record *just one more time*—your lecture until you get the lighting, background, sound, and content just right. Recording lectures, like housework, expands to fill the time available—and then some.

Lecturing presents technological challenges. While there are relatively straightforward ways to record your lectures and put them online, you may encounter issues with cameras, microphones, lighting, sound levels and background noise, conveying content that you would normally write or diagram on a classroom whiteboard (e.g., mathematical equations), file sizes, video length, and the need to caption your videos.

Alternatives to lecturing

When it comes to course content, remember that:

- There's no rule that says *you* must be the source of most of the knowledge in the course.
- There are experts in every field of study and practice who have been generous about sharing their content freely online.
- [Albertsons Library](#) has extensive databases of articles and multimedia resources.
- You may also find [open educational resources](#) (OER) to share with your students, especially if you are teaching lower-division courses. (For help finding and adapting OER, email oer@boisestate.edu.)

Similarly, remember that lecturing for most of the class period is only one teaching and learning activity out of hundreds of possibilities. Jennifer Gonzalez's [list of class discussion strategies](#) includes many that can be adapted for online environments (see especially the section on "ongoing discussion strategies"). If you have your students engage in synchronous zoom discussions or asynchronous blackboard discussions, be thoughtful about the communication climate being fostered. Prepare yourself to respond to student comments that are inappropriate or microaggressive. For discussion considerations and response strategies, see [Responding to Microaggressions in Online Learning Environments During A Pandemic Pivot](#).

Testing (or not) in online courses

Online testing presents a number of quandaries for instructors who prefer proctored exams and who have been administering tests in class or sending students to the Boise State Testing Center. Instructors have justifiable concerns about verifying the identity of the student taking the test and whether the student is using test aids that have not been approved by the instructor.

Assuming all students in a course have access to computers with webcams and reliable internet service (as discussed earlier, this is not always the case), an instructor can lightly proctor an exam via a synchronous Zoom session. The instructor would need to ensure the test is available to students anywhere (not restricted to the Boise State Testing Center's IP addresses) and make the test available as the Zoom session begins.

However:

- The instructor will not be able to view individual students' screens to verify they're the ones taking the test. A student could give their Blackboard username and password to someone located off-camera, who would then take the test for them.
- The instructor would not be able to see if the student had other browser tabs open, a second monitor, contraband notes, or other test aids located off-camera.

Update: As of Monday, March 30, instructors who wish to offer proctored exams remotely can use Review+, a virtual proctoring service, at no cost to students. [Learn more about Review+ and setting up a virtually proctored exam.](#)

Alternatives to testing

Because of these issues with academic integrity, students' access to appropriate technology, and unexpected costs to students, it may be best if you ask students to demonstrate their achievement of course learning outcomes in other ways. To discourage plagiarism and decrease student anxiety during a stressful disruption, consider having students complete several smaller assignments, each worth a smaller percentage of the course grade than the percentage originally constituted by your exams.

The Indiana University-Bloomington Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning provides some [great examples of alternate ways to assess students](#), organized by the type of learning you are trying to assess. Some examples of what they suggest include:

- Alternatives that demonstrate students understand course material:
 - Explanation of a multiple-choice answer (students must explain why the answer they chose to a multiple-choice question is correct, or why the alternative answers are wrong)
 - Meaningful paragraph (given a list of specific terms, students must use the terms in a paragraph that demonstrates that they understand the terms and their interconnections)
- Alternatives that demonstrate students can analyze or evaluate using class concepts:
 - Analysis of a case study (students are given a case study specific to material covered in class, and are asked to use class vocabulary to analyze the situation described/solve the problem posed)
 - Analysis of data or a graph (students are given data or graph that has not been a part of the course content, and are asked to analyze the information using terms/knowledge from the course)
 - Creating a chart, graph, or diagram with explanation (students create a chart/graph/diagram and explain their summary of the data presented)
 - Fact sheet (students create a one-page summary of important facts related to a topic, and explain why they chose to include them)

- Literature review (students must gather and summarize information in their own words, related to a specific question you pose)
- Policy memo or executive summary (this assessment can also be a real-world application of the ideas in the course while demonstrating their ability to summarize and communicate important concepts)

Two other helpful resources for alternative assessment ideas are the [UC Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning](#) and [Rutgers' School of Arts and Sciences Office of Undergraduate Education](#).

Because students will have inequitable access to technology, you will need to plan these assignments carefully. You might even give students the option to choose in what medium/format they turn in their work, assuming it meets certain criteria. Worried about grading students' diverse responses to the same assignment? You can create a rubric to guide your feedback and grading. For example, here's [a rubric](#) from a History course where students submitted a variety of multimedia projects in response to a single assignment. Students and the instructor co-created the rubric in Google Sheets. Note that the criteria are not specific to any particular medium.

A note about academic integrity

Many faculty assume students taking an online course are more likely to cheat than those in face-to-face courses. Students, too, perceive their peers as more likely to cheat if they're learning online. While digital tools and the internet certainly have provided students with additional, novel ways to cheat, researchers investigating the relative frequency of cheating in face-to-face and online courses have come to divergent conclusions.

Some have observed that students taking courses on campus are more likely to violate norms of academic integrity; others have found the incidence of cheating to be similar in both face-to-face and online learning environments. However, as Jennifer Peterson writes in [a literature review](#) that serves as an excellent introduction to the issues surrounding academic dishonesty in higher education, "Many studies. . . have found that there is, in fact, more cheating in the on-campus setting than in the online setting."

Instructors can employ many strategies to discourage academic dishonesty, regardless of the medium or modality in which students are learning. The University of Nebraska – Lincoln offers tips on [creating written assignments that dissuade plagiarism](#) and promote academic integrity.

Want to learn more? Check out "[Best Practices for Promoting Academic Integrity in Online Courses and Exams.](#)" a guide created for Boise State faculty by the campus's Testing Center, the Academic Integrity Program in the Office of the Dean of Students, and Learning Technology Solutions.

Conducting labs online

Designing flexibility for hands-on and experiential learning can be challenging especially for lab courses. In this case, you may have to deviate in more significant ways from what you had planned. We offer lots of ideas below.

A good place to start this process is to think about what your course learning outcomes are; what your students really need to learn or be able to do at the end of the semester? Use that to guide how you'll proceed.

The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard has an excellent overview of [how to teach different lab scenarios remotely](#):

- If a lab's primary focus is **having students learn how various techniques can be appropriately applied** within scientific experimentation, you might be able to replace at least portions of the lab activities with online simulations.
- If your lab primarily **asks students to interpret experimental data**, you can develop problem sets based on relevant datasets from published literature.
- If your lab **has students conduct project-based research**, chances are by mid-semester your students have a project well underway. If that is the case, you can have students begin to draft a paper, grant application, and/or poster that interprets data they have collected to date and explains the next steps they would take to continue their experiments.

Virtual labs and simulations

Virtual labs and simulations are similar, but have important differences. Simulations usually involve students observing, but not interacting significantly (or at all) with what they are viewing on the screen. In contrast, virtual labs allow students to mimic data collection and processing, then analyze that data and draw conclusions. Check out the article [“Digital Labs and Simulations”](#) from the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching to learn more about how and why these digital tools can be useful.

Not surprisingly, you're more likely to find simulations and virtual labs for commonly taught, introductory-level courses than for more specialized upper-division or graduate courses.

Here are some places you can look for simulations and other alternative lab experiences:

- [LabXchange](#) is a free online platform that gathers "content from a variety of sources in the form of online learning assets, including videos, assessments, and simulations." The platform allows users "to search, select, and insert these assets into their own customized

learning pathways." (See, for example, [this collection of concepts and lab techniques in biotechnology](#).)

- The [Stanford Virtual Labs Project](#) offers several virtual labs related to physiology, immunology, biology, the brain/nervous system, and health.
- [PhET](#) offers interactive, research-based science and mathematics simulations. The simulations—all of which are open source—are written in Java, Flash or HTML5, and can be run online or downloaded to a computer.
- The MERLOT database provides information about, and links to, several websites where students can conduct [virtual labs](#).
- Some California State University faculty and staff organized [virtual labs from several disciplines](#) into a unified resource on MERLOT.
- [Mathematica](#) and WolframAlpha Pro make possible a new level of automation in algorithmic computation, interactive manipulation, and dynamic presentation—as well as a whole new way of interacting with the world of data. Ideal for use in engineering, mathematics, finance, physics, chemistry, biology, and a wide range of other fields.
- [MATLAB](#) is a programming environment for algorithm development, data analysis, visualization, and numerical computation available to Boise State students, researchers, faculty, and staff.

Note that **virtual labs and simulations pose challenges for students with certain disabilities**—especially those with low vision. In such cases, it makes sense to have pairs or small groups of students perform virtual labs together over Zoom, describing what they see and discussing their observations. With simulations, you may need to make a screencast for low-vision students in which you play the simulation and verbally describe what is going on.

What if there aren't appropriate simulations or virtual labs for my course?

When these digital resources are not available for your course, you have several options:

- If you have access to a lab or lab classroom, you can perform the experiments yourself via Zoom. You can ask lower-division students to observe what you do, record data, and analyze the results. You can have more advanced students direct your performance of several protocols, then analyze the relative success of different approaches to an experimental situation.
- Depending on the learning outcomes for your lab or lab-based course, you might consider substituting other interactive elements. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute's [BioInteractive](#) project has an extensive collection of [interactive media](#) and engaging [digital, as well as some analog hands-on, activities](#) based on peer-reviewed science that are appropriate for undergraduates. The site also has [nearly 200 videos](#) on a variety of subjects.
- Contact the Boise State Center for Teaching and Learning for help brainstorming other options. Email ctl@boisestate.edu, or complete [a consultation request form](#).

Learning technologies at Boise State

There are a huge number of digital tools you can use in teaching online. Institutional support through the [Help Desk](#) is provided for the following platforms; Blackboard, Zoom, Panopto, and Google G Suite.

WiFi access

While on campus, faculty and students have wireless internet access through the [eduroam](#) network. Eduroam is an interconnected network that can also be found at colleges, universities, and libraries across the [world](#). If you or your students are near an institution with the eduroam network, you can sign in with your Boise State email address and password.

Blackboard: Your course's headquarters

[Blackboard](#) is Boise State's learning management system. Providing a Blackboard course for your students is an essential foundation for Flexible Teaching. If you are new to using Blackboard, you may appreciate some orientation to key Blackboard tools and functions.

- **Assignments:** Instructors can create space for students to upload submissions, from informal reflections to formal written assignments and projects. Instructors can select the grading approach within the assignment. Assignments are best for instructors who wish for the students' work to only be viewed and assessed by the instructor.
- **Announcements:** Instructors can send mass emails or messages to the whole class via the Announcements tool. The benefit to using Announcements over e-mail is that instructors do not need to collect individual student e-mail addresses and the messages are archived in the Blackboard course site.
- **Discussions:** Instructors can create threaded, written discussion forums for instructors to engage in written (or audio/video) dialogue with each other and respond to written prompts.
- **Learning Modules:** Instructors can organize course content into several chunks or groups of learning content. The pieces of information that students will access, including the syllabus, assignment sheets, activity descriptions, and outside links and resources, can be grouped together in the order that students might access those resources. Modules can give students access to readings, activity descriptions, outside links, and assignment submission links all in one place.
- **Content Collection:** Instructors can post key course documents, like the syllabus or readings, in this space. By adding files to the content collection you will be able to access the content from anywhere in Blackboard, and will be able to pull the content directly from your content collection instead of your computer.

- [Grade Center](#): The Blackboard Grade Center offers a robust, full-featured gradebook. You can weight columns, easily see which assignments still need grading, manage extra credit, grade with rubrics, transfer your grades to Peoplesoft at the end of the semester, and even record audio or [video](#) feedback.

Blackboard assistance

- You can [access additional instructions for using these and other tools in Blackboard](#) at Boise State's [Teaching and Learning Tools knowledge base](#).
- If you're stuck and want immediate help, you can contact [the Help Desk](#) via phone (208-426-4357), email (helpdesk@boisestate.edu), or [chat](#).
- If you want more focused, one-on-one assistance with an instructional technologist, reserve a time via the [Learning Technology Solutions appointment calendar](#).
- If you need more pedagogically-focused help (e.g., strategies to keep students engaged in discussion forums), seek help from the Center for Teaching and Learning. To set up an appointment, email ctl@boisestate.edu.

Zoom: Video Conferencing

[Zoom](#) is a video-conferencing platform you can use to hold your class synchronously or meet with students during office hours. Students can use Zoom to collaborate on group work or set up study groups. Zoom allows you to engage in real-time conversations with your students using audio, video, and text-based chat features.

You can use Zoom to:

- [Share your screen](#), webcam feeds, and audio simultaneously.
- [Poll students](#).
- Record meetings to [a local computer](#) or to [the cloud](#).
- Send classes into smaller [virtual breakout rooms](#).
- [Set up a group chat](#), even if you aren't on a Zoom call.

[Log into Zoom](#) using your Boise State username and password. From there, you can set up a meeting. When you share the meeting link with participants, they can follow the web link or call a phone number to join in on a live conversation.

Zoom requires students and faculty to download the Zoom software the first time they use it. The software installs very quickly and is easy to use.

You can access Boise State Zoom in two different ways:

1. Visit boisestate.zoom.us and log in with your Boise State username and password. From there, you can download the essential software application and create future meeting links.

2. [Integrate Zoom into your Blackboard course sites](#). If you use Blackboard extensively, you can schedule meetings within the LMS and launch unique meetings throughout the semester.

Zoom assistance

- You can [access additional instructions for using Zoom](#) at Boise State's [Teaching and Learning Tools knowledge base](#).
- If you're stuck and want immediate help, you can contact [the Help Desk](#) via phone (208-426-4357), email (helpdesk@boisestate.edu), or [chat](#).
- If you want more focused, one-on-one assistance with an instructional technologist, reserve a time via the [Learning Technology Solutions appointment calendar](#).
- If you need more pedagogically-focused help (e.g., ways to use Zoom for small-group activities during class), seek help from the Center for Teaching and Learning. To set up an appointment, email ctl@boisestate.edu.

Panopto: Recording Video or Audio

Panopto allows instructors to record audio clips or videos using their computer's camera and microphone. Instructors may also record the contents of their screens. The Panopto software uploads those videos to a server and provides a link faculty can share with students.

Although many instructors know Panopto only as the lecture-capture system in some Boise State classrooms, it has many other features and uses.

- You can record videos from your computer camera or screen.
 - You may capture video or audio of yourself.
 - You may also record the contents of your screen.
- Students can view videos on their own schedule.
- Students can search for time-stamped words either displayed or spoken in the video.
- You can create [quizzes embedded within videos](#) and link them to the Blackboard Grade Center.
- You can create student video assignments, where students who have a computer with a camera and the ability to run Panopto can submit their own Panopto videos to Blackboard.

To access Panopto, visit boisestate.hosted.panopto.com.

Panopto assistance

- If you're stuck and want immediate help, you can contact [the Help Desk](#) via phone (208-426-4357), email (helpdesk@boisestate.edu), or [chat](#).

- If you want more focused, one-on-one assistance with an instructional technologist, reserve a time via the [Learning Technology Solutions appointment calendar](#).
- If you need more pedagogically-focused help (e.g., ways to design assignments for students using Panopto), seek help from the Center for Teaching and Learning. To set up an appointment, email ctl@boisestate.edu.
- [Creating content in Panopto](#) (from Boise State OIT)
- [Relevant tutorials by Panopto](#)
- [All support resources from Panopto](#)

Google G Suite: Tools for Collaboration

[Google G Suite](#) is the official group collaboration software for Boise State University students, faculty, and staff. Also known as “BroncoMail,” G Suite provides access to dozens of Google applications including Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Drive, Google Sites, and YouTube.

To access Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, and Slides, go to drive.google.com and log in with your Boise State email address.

Google G Suite offers several useful features:

- Google Drive safely stores all kinds of files in the cloud, for easy access on or off-campus.
 - If you haven’t already moved your files from your office computer to the cloud, do that ASAP. Google Drive is an excellent tool for this task.
- Students can collaborate synchronously or asynchronously via Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets.
- Google Drive integrates with Blackboard:
 - [Faculty can embed Google Drive content](#) into Blackboard.
 - [Students can submit, and faculty can grade, Google Docs assignments](#) within Blackboard.

Google Suite Assistance

- If you’re stuck and want immediate help, you can contact [the Help Desk](#) via phone (208-426-4357), email (helpdesk@boisestate.edu), or [chat](#).
- If you want more focused, one-on-one assistance with an instructional technologist, reserve a time via the [Learning Technology Solutions appointment calendar](#).
- If you need more pedagogically-focused help (e.g., ways to design assignments for students using Google Docs or Slides), seek help from the Center for Teaching and Learning. To set up an appointment, email ctl@boisestate.edu.
- [G Suite Learning Center](#), from Google

Flipgrid: Dynamic Discussions

[Flipgrid](#) is a free video discussion platform from Microsoft that helps educators see and hear from every student. In Flipgrid, educators post discussion prompts and students respond with short videos, together building an engaging and supportive learning environment.

To access Flipgrid, go to [Flipgrid.com](https://flipgrid.com) and set up a free account.

Flipgrid assistance

- [Getting started with Flipgrid](#) (from Boise State OIT)
- [Flipgrid Help Center](#)
- [Flipgrid Resources for Educators](#)
- [Providing feedback through rubrics](#)
- [Closed captions](#)
- [Flipgrid security and privacy features](#)
- Get help from CTL staff on teaching with Flipgrid: ctl@boisestate.edu

Explain Everything: Annotate Instructional Videos

[Explain Everything](#) is a whiteboard [mobile app](#) that lets you teach, present, take notes, sketch, and collaborate—as well as record your screen as you're taking any of these actions. (It's also available [via browser](#).) You can use Explain Everything to:

- [create explainer videos](#).
- [provide effective feedback](#).
- [deliver visually engaging presentations](#).
- [provide formative assessment](#).

Explain Everything assistance

- [Getting started with Explain Everything](#)
- [Using Explain Everything](#)
- [Explain Everything support](#)
- Get help from CTL staff on teaching with Explain Everything: ctl@boisestate.edu

Appendices: Detailed instructions and use cases

Appendix A: Three options for online course delivery

In this section, Jenae Cohn and Beth Seltzer of Stanford University explain your three options for shifting your classes temporarily online.

Option 1: Run Your Class Live With Zoom

This option works especially well for small discussion-based classes, though it's also effective for large lectures, especially if you have a moderator.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Use slides and screen sharing** within Zoom to make sure discussion questions are visible to students who may have a slow Internet connection or who may struggle to hear the audio for the initial question. (Look for [“Share Screen”](#) at the bottom of your Zoom call.)
 - On your first slide, **display an agenda** at the start of the class session so that students know what to expect of the shared time together.
- **Use the chat** (bottom of your screen). See [In-Meeting Chat](#).
 - Moderate discussion, i.e., “call on” a student with a comment to speak, to help them break into the conversation.
 - For larger classes, assign a Fellow or TA to moderate the chat and make sure important questions and comments are addressed. Even for smaller classes, it may be worthwhile to ask a student (or two) to take on special roles as “chat monitors” to voice if there are questions that arise that the instructor has missed.
 - You might use the chat to troubleshoot technical problems. For example, if a student is having trouble connecting via audio or video, the chat might be a space for you as the instructor or for fellow students to work together to problem-solve. This may, again, be an opportunity to assign a student to a special role, especially if you have students eager to help on the technical aspect of things.
 - If you have a TA or a fellow who can support the class instruction with technical help, this would also be a good person to respond to troubleshooting tips in the chat.
- **Use Zoom Breakout Rooms** to help students talk in smaller groups (just as they would do break-out groups in a larger class environment). See [Managing Video Breakout Rooms](#).
- **Rethink your classroom activities** to make the class more interactive even if Zoom students don't have ideal connections and aren't able to hear and see everything perfectly.
 - Have students write and comment together on a shared Google Doc.
 - Try using [Google Forms](#) to collect student responses, and then share results with both in-person and online students.

- **Consider making discussion questions available in advance** in Blackboard so that students can access the questions if screen sharing does not work. If sharing slides in advance to Blackboard, share them as PDFs, as students will be able to access the material on their phones.

A Few Troubleshooting Tips:

- **If your microphone is not working**, use the phone number listed in the Zoom invitation when you set up a Zoom call. You can use your phone as the microphone and audio source for your call rather than your computer's built-in microphone if necessary.
- **If your Internet connection is slow or lagging**, consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up the Internet's bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency.
- **If you have earbuds or a headphone set, wear them!** Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up during your quality, which will make it easier for your students to hear you. Similarly, you may want to advise your students to wear earbuds or headphones during the call.
- **Advise students to mute their microphones if they are not speaking and unmute the microphones when they wish to speak.** Students may be joining Zoom calls from all kinds of different locations, many of which may create background noise that could be distracting. Encourage students to mute themselves if they're not speaking to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noise. Using the "raise hand" feature or simply seeing the microphone unmuted will give the group a visual cue for when a student wishes to speak.
- **Check the "chat" space for student questions and contributions.** Some students may not have working microphones and, therefore, may be unable to contribute via voice. The chat room is a good place for students to contribute, ask questions, and be involved.
- **Check the [Zoom Help Center](#).**

Accessibility Suggestions:

- **Automatic live captioning is not available in Zoom (automatic captions are visible if you record a Zoom session).** You may wish to use **Google Slides** and enable the **live captioning feature within Google Slides**. If you share your screen using Google Slides, your voice will be captured and live captions will appear. See [Present Slides with Captions \(via Google Drive support\)](#) for more information.
- **For students who are blind or have low visibility, narrate the material that you're displaying visually on the screen.** Just as you might read materials aloud in class, read screen material that you share on-screen just in case students are not able to see essential text.

Option 2: Pre-Record Your Lectures

If you are not comfortable presenting live, another good option is to pre-record any lecture material and upload it to Blackboard. We recommend that you pre-record lectures using Panopto, as this will generate automatic closed-captions that are needed for accessibility reasons. Panopto videos can be automatically added to your Blackboard course; see [this help article](#) for more information.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Keep videos short and lively.** It is often harder to focus on a video than on a person! [Check out some tips for creating lively short online videos from online educator Karen Costa.](#)
- **Test your microphone** to make sure that you have good sound quality. Consider using a headset with an external microphone to capture better audio.
- **Consider ADA compliance.** Automatic closed-captioning is not perfect. Speak clearly and not too quickly to make the content as accurate as possible. If using a tool other than Zoom for recording your lecture, consider **uploading your videos to YouTube** to take advantage of their automatic (though not perfect) closed-captioning.
- **Integrate interaction with the lecture material.** You might consider setting up a Blackboard discussion board with some specific questions, using a quiz, or setting up a chat session for a text-based live discussion.

Option 3: Skip the Video

Many online courses do not have a video component at all. If you are not sure you have the right equipment and are uncomfortable with the tech setup, this might be a good option, at least for the short-term.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Annotate your slideshow with notes** and share this with students using Blackboard, or email it to them.
- **Set up a discussion** for students in Blackboard. Use specific, structured questions, and let students know expectations for their responses. See our recommendations on [Written Discussions](#).
- **Share links to outside resources.** Encourage students to watch videos, read articles, etc.
- **Use Chat** to have a live, text-based chat session with students. See our recommendations on [Chat](#).

Appendix B: Replacing a document camera

Check out CTL instructional designer Brian Martin's genius hack for building a DIY doc cam in under a minute. Brian also provides some easy-to-implement tech tips on focusing and lighting. [Watch the video.](#)

Appendix C: Holding office hours

Set up virtual office hours to meet with students using your webcam, share your computer screen or collaborate using Zoom's whiteboard feature. Students can also join your Zoom session with just audio, via their phones. You also can set up an [online chat](#).

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Keep the link to the Zoom room you're using for your students in a central place on your course Blackboard site.** The main factor to consider when holding office hours or conferences with students via Zoom is your accessibility as an instructor. Make sure they know how to find your "office" (just as you might offer them directions to your office on-campus).
- **Encourage students to share their screen with you.** Screen sharing is possible not just for the instructor in Zoom, but for students too. Help your students navigate towards a screen sharing option so that they can show you their written work on their screen.

Appendix D: Student presentations

Student Presentations

If students are sharing their presentations **asynchronously**, ask students to record themselves at their screen. They can record a voiceover narration of their slides (or other content on their screen). Some software allows them to embed a smaller video of themselves delivering the presentation.

Software

- [Zoom](#) and [Panopto](#) can be used for audio/video recording in this capacity, as can [Quicktime](#) (on Mac only).
- Students can also record voiceover narration in [Keynote](#) (Mac) or [PowerPoint](#) (Mac or PC).
- If students do not have access to a laptop computer or webcam, they can use the voice memo feature on a phone to record audio. Invite students to share their slide decks and audio/videos as separate files if necessary.

Submitting projects

Students can submit their final project in Blackboard.

Tip: If students create their video in Panopto, or if they upload a video they created in other software to Panopto, they simply need to share the Panopto link to the video; there's no need to upload it. Linking to videos instead of uploading them will mitigate any issues with the videos' file size in Blackboard.

Visibility: If students submit the recording via Assignments, the file will only be visible to the instructor. If students upload the recording via the Discussion Forum, the file will be visible to other students in the class.

If students are sharing their presentations synchronously, ask students to use Zoom to give a live presentation for their peers. See [Run Your Class Live with Zoom](#) for suggestions and technical tips for using Zoom in this way.

Student-Facing Language to Help Students Understand Options for Final Presentations

Student-Facing Language For Students Giving Live Presentations

Your instructor will provide the URL to the class's Zoom meeting. Click the URL or paste it into your browser of choice to join the class meeting.

- Audio and Video Setup
 - After launching the Zoom meeting from the meeting URL, you will be prompted to join the room's audio. Click "join audio by computer." Zoom allows audio participation through your computer's internal speakers, a headset, or a phone line.
- Mute Yourself/Stop Webcam
 - To mute, click the microphone icon in the bottom-left corner. To unmute, click the microphone icon again. Follow the same process to turn the webcam on and off.
 - Background noise can be minimized if you mute yourself when you're listening.
- Share your screen
 - If you select "Share Screen" in the toolbar at the bottom of the Zoom window, you will see a list of your current desktop, as well as all active applications, on your computer.
 - Select the one you'd like to share.
 - By default, screen share opens in full screen, which hides the participant list and chat windows. If you'd like to see these, either click "Exit Full Screen" in the upper right corner or re-open the windows by clicking "Manage Participants" and "Chat."
 - To stop sharing your screen, choose "Stop Share"

Student-Facing Language for Students Pre-Recording Presentations

To record your presentation in the manner described below, you'll need a web camera, the built-in microphone on your computer, and screen sharing software combined to capture your face (in a smaller window) as well as the slides on your screen.

- Open the Zoom app.
- Click "Host a Meeting" (don't worry, you don't need anyone else in the mtg!)
- Be sure to activate audio and video (bottom left corner). When you activate video, you will have a video window in the upper corner of your slide deck where we can see you presenting the material.
- Turn on [Screen Sharing](#) (center bottom) and you'll be prompted to select what you want to share: go to your desktop (and select your ppt) or you may see your ppt as a direct option, if you have the file open.
- Hit "Record" (bottom center screen) and select "Send to cloud." A red recording light will appear at the top of the screen.
- Deliver your presentation.
- When you finish, click "end recording."
- Within a few minutes, you'll receive two links in an email from the Zoom cloud: a shareable link and a second private link where only you can download your video file.
- After watching your recorded presentation, if you're not satisfied with it, simply repeat the steps above. You can record as many times as you'd like.
- Follow your instructor's instructions to submit the link to your video.

More questions? Check out the guide to [recording in zoom](#).

Appendix E: Supporting multilingual students

Thanks to Dr. Gail Shuck, professor and ESL coordinator in the English department, for writing this section.

Why are online courses often difficult for multilingual students?

- Excessive language demands of reading and writing in online courses.
- Lack of context cues, such as intonation, nonverbal expression, objects in the surroundings, and opportunities to ask questions
 - They often have great skill in using multiple cues from face-to-face contexts in order to participate fully. In online courses, however, most of those cues (speech, nonverbal expression, objects, and even physical location) are removed.

- More time needed to process written language in two or more languages (and then formulate thoughts/answers in two or more languages).

One key resource for these students is *you*.

Offer your multilingual English learners equal access to your course content by:

1) extending the time on timed tests and quizzes. Please keep in mind that if a student does not have a disability, they cannot go to the Educational Access Center for test proctoring. However, the principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) suggest offering multiple means of assessment as well as delivery. A first step toward UDL is as simple as different amounts of time for different students. Testing via Blackboard has this capability built in.

You might, alternatively, extend the time on timed assessments for all students or significantly shorten tests. That way, no one feels singled out, and everyone has an opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

2) delaying deadlines on written assignments, as necessary, to account for the increased reading and writing demands.

3) only assigning texts to read that are critical to meeting the learning outcomes of your course. Cutting back the reading demands, or offering alternatives (see below) to all students, can lighten the load for students who learn better through spoken interaction.

4) offering opportunities for students to draw on their strengths as speakers:

- Video and slide presentations—from them, for them
- Having a conversation with you if you think the student might understand the material but not be able to express it in writing under time pressure (for written work and tests).
- Have students who prefer it create their own Zoom meetings in lieu of Blackboard Discussion Boards. (Assign an attendance-taker, a note-taker, a content organizer, a time-keeper, etc.)

What other resources are there for multilingual students?

- English Language Support Programs offers free, one-on-one, weekly tutoring, which will continue remotely this semester for students willing to consult with a tutor (with linguistics and multilingual experience) via Zoom, Google Meet, Google Docs, and/or email. Please have students contact englishsupport@boisestate.edu if they would like

to set up weekly meetings with a tutor.

- The [Writing Center's online consultation service](#).
- For more information about teaching strategies that work with multilingual classrooms, please see [English Language Support Programs](#) or contact Gail Shuck, Professor of English (gshuck@boisestate.edu).