



# EMERGENCY ONLINE TEACHING HELP AND SUGGESTIONS

by Helen Lovatt

**M**any US universities and some UK universities are transferring to wholly online teaching at very short notice in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Colleagues who are experienced at online teaching have been sharing advice and support. I thought it useful to gather together a digest of classics-related material that might prove helpful.

The main message is 'less is more'. We clearly don't have time to design fully functional audio-visual fireworks and interactive activities using previously unfamiliar technology and our students are not really ready for it either. The main thing is to think carefully about what you can manage and how to help students access it and do what you can.

In the long run, we may find that we learn through this experience things that will enhance future teaching and help us teach more inclusively and effectively in the future. For now, this will be a big challenge. Good luck all!

## Advice from Classics-based colleagues

The **Open University** has been teaching remotely for many years. Thoughts from **Tony Keen**, experienced OU classics tutor, here: <http://tonykeen.blogspot.com/2020/03/on-suddenly-switching-to-online-teaching.html>

And Joanna Paul, OU lecturer and CUCD education officer retweeted this very useful thread from **Jess Perriam** <https://twitter.com/jessyp/status/1237633585475174400>

And **Helen King** of the OU (@fluff35) on what it means to teach online: <https://twitter.com/fluff35/status/1237682924771782656>

**Kate Gilliver** at Cardiff University has been running online teaching for some time. Thoughts from her here:

Here's a couple of pointers from someone who's been doing flipped learning for several years and using pre-recorded online lectures:

1. The first time I pre-recorded lectures, I did full 50 minute lectures based on my existing lecture notes. Students found these a bit dense and harder to follow. There were fewer pauses, fewer jokes (which provide pauses), and because I couldn't see my students' reaction, I didn't know if the material was going in effectively.



2. Second time I recorded 'lecture shorts' - anything from 15-30 minutes, sometimes just one lecture short, sometimes two (eg: today we had the active class on flood and fire in ancient Rome; the pre-recorded material consisted of two mini lectures, one on each topic. Just having them in smaller packages makes them easier for the students to digest. The response from the students suggested this was preferable - just breaking things down into smaller bites helps.
3. I do a little bit of editing - if I know I've ballsed up an explanation I'll re-start it because I think following it remotely rather than live, it's harder to clock that it's a non-starter and a clearer explanation is following. That also includes editing out the f\*\*\*s when I know it's gone wrong. But I don't edit out the errs and umms or worry if I stumble over something. It's not a YouTube recording, only my students are going to watch it and if it were live, the errs, umms and all the blemishes are going to happen anyway.
4. The second time I did flipped learning my workload was absurd and I ran out of time. I dropped down to recording sound only (I was using Panopto personal lecture capture) rather than recording video of me - a headshot - as well as the powerpoint. Recording sound only was quicker because I could refer to my notes more easily and not worry about maintaining eye-contact with the web-cam (and thus the students). I asked the students if this affected their engagement with the lectures, and I asked them again this time when I'm using some of the same recordings. Both times the majority of them said it didn't make any difference to them.
5. Recording a lecture for later consumption rather than live-casting it allows fantastic opportunities to get them to pause the recording, read some sources, an article, watch a video clip etc. things I'd never have time to get them to do in a 50 minute live lecture. There are advantages!

**Amy Pistone** at Gonzaga University had put together a very useful digest of advice and materials here: <https://www.amypistone.com/resources-for-teaching-remotely/>

From **Hannah Čulík-Baird** @opietasanimi Professor of Classics at Boston University

<https://t.co/bMVPfb4f9k> : a general thread on online teaching

And an example of an online version of a course, with instructions for students:

<https://twitter.com/opietasanimi/status/1237896065161953292?s=20>

Professor of History at University of North Dakota at Grand Forks **Bill Caraher** (@BillCaraher) on using podcasts in teaching:

<https://mediterraneanworld.wordpress.com/2020/03/12/quick-note-on-creating-a-podcast-lecture/>

A useful discussion on online tests for language classes, initiated by **Aven McMaster** of Thorneloe University @AvenSarah

<https://twitter.com/AvenSarah/status/1237792064936517632?s=20>

**Ben Johnson** @Latintutorial has taught Latin in Maine for thirteen years and has produced a very wide range of free online youtube videos on Latin grammar that students could use for revision or explanation: <https://www.latintutorial.com>



**Bulletin 49 (2020)** <https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk/bulletin/>

## More general advice

**Rebecca Barrett-Fox** of Arkansas State University on why you shouldn't try too hard or be a perfectionist. [https://anygoodthing.com/2020/03/12/please-do-a-bad-job-of-putting-your-courses-online/?fbclid=IwAR33uC0FI7gaej6oaO1A\\_VUPTT\\_Q8aPGqyCriua5v94HbGcglGn07WqFOkA](https://anygoodthing.com/2020/03/12/please-do-a-bad-job-of-putting-your-courses-online/?fbclid=IwAR33uC0FI7gaej6oaO1A_VUPTT_Q8aPGqyCriua5v94HbGcglGn07WqFOkA)

**Paige Harden**, Professor of Psychology at the University of Texas, Austin, with more general advice on online teaching and moving suddenly online. <https://twitter.com/kph3k/status/1237383704311476224>

**Jessie Male** from New York University posted thoughts and ideas from her students on a *Disability memoir* course, which is particularly useful for accessibility. <https://twitter.com/ProfJMale/status/1237155808464588800>

**Danna Young** (University of Pennsylvania) on recording to Zoom, with detailed instructions. <https://twitter.com/dannagal/status/1237474786844041217>

**@zaranosaur** on online events more generally. This might be useful if you are planning a conference and would prefer to keep it going by taking it online. <https://twitter.com/zaranosaur/status/1236320784727117824?s=20>

Marine biologist **David Shiffman** on his intentionally-online-from-the-start course, with general tips: <https://twitter.com/WhySharksMatter/status/1238458377606496257>

Many thanks to all who shared links, particularly Liz Gloyn of Royal Holloway (@lizgloyn), always a fantastic source of information, support and #tinyjoys.

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March 2020