

Students' Perspectives: Tools to Support Online Learning

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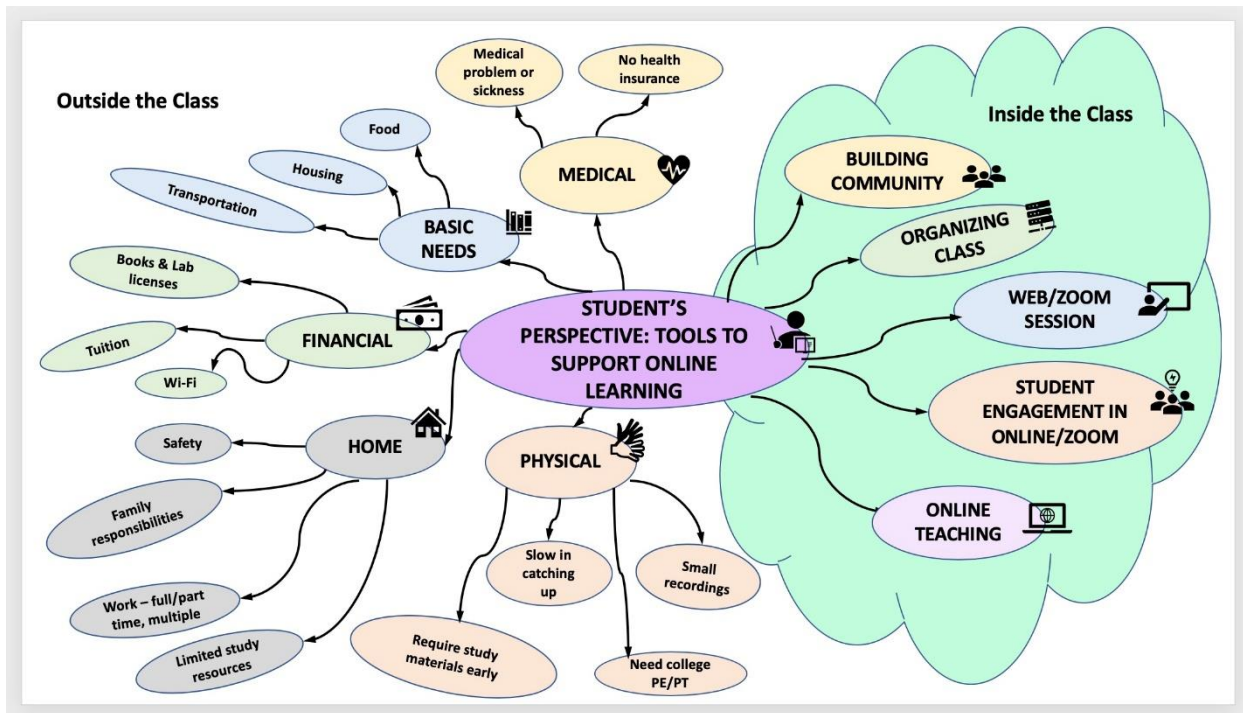
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ABOUT

This document provides students' perspectives on how faculty can create an effective online learning environment for students. Faculty can leverage these tips and tools to enhance their approach in this new era of total online education. It is important that faculty and students work in dialogue to address student concerns and support students in their learning so they can successfully pass the class and achieve their goals.



OUTSIDE THE CLASS

Understanding students' needs and circumstances helps in building trusting and supportive relationships between faculty and students.

BASIC NEEDS

- Food Assistance
- Housing resources
- Access to transportation
- Financial Emergency such as urgent car repairs, rental payment, doctor's bills, etc.
- ✓ Direct students to this link to address these basic needs: www.deanza.edu/resources

MEDICAL

- Student and/or loved ones may experience health issues
- No health insurance
- ✓ De Anza's Health Services offers a virtual clinic: www.deanza.edu/healthservices

FINANCIAL

- Struggling to afford class materials (e.g. Books or a lab license)
- Inability to pay tuition
- Limited or no access to Wi-Fi
- ✓ The Financial Aid Office can help students to obtain grants, waivers, loans, scholarships or student jobs: www.deanza.edu/financialaid

HOME

- Safety – Students who face domestic abuse may no longer have access to physically safe spaces (e.g. College campus or a library)
- Living in an area with a significant time difference might make it difficult to attend live class
- Family responsibilities
- Full-time/part-time work or multiple jobs
- Distracted with devices or by their surroundings due to living situation
- Limited access to a quiet space for study or Zoom meetings
- ✓ These resources are for students concerned about their safety: www.deanza.edu/healthservices/resources
- ✓ Psychological Services offer students personal psychological counseling and more: www.deanza.edu/psychologicalservices

PHYSICAL/DISABILITY

- Require access to materials/activities prior to class
- Need Physical Education (PE) or Physical Therapy (PT) to do their routine exercises
- Unable to download Zoom recordings on "accessible" devices if the file is too large
- Might need more time to catch up on topics
- ✓ Disability Support Programs and Services offer more guidance: www.deanza.edu/dsps

- ✓ Dividing Zoom recordings in small sizes allows students to download it on “accessible” devices
- ✓ Ensuring students go to their assigned PE/PT
- ✓ Having patience and responding promptly to students’ requests
- ✓ Making sure classmates are including them
- ✓ Slow introduction and repeated emphasis on a subject
- ✓ Ensuring students are up to speed and, if needed, modify the pace of instruction
- ✓ Providing clear details on how exams will be held in lieu of scratch sheets for online exams

INSIDE THE CLASS

Listed below are suggestions, based on students’ perspectives, that faculty may choose to act on to create a more student-friendly course.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

- Allowing ample time for students and faculty to introduce themselves in the first class session
- Enabling the “People” function in Canvas so students can see/reach out to classmates
- Consider using “Pronto”, which is a messaging extension on Canvas that enables more "live" or "natural" student interactions within Canvas discussion boards
- Creating opportunities for students to get to know each other such as:
 - Check-in with students at the beginning of class while waiting for more to show up
 - Have students post videos of themselves on Flipgrid (an app) where they respond to a prompt and reply to each other
 - Create a discussion board on Canvas specifically for students to reach out to one other
- Providing information about De Anza events and local events for students to get involved, such as a conference, student panel, movie night, etc.
- Consider having an in-class peer mentor—an invaluable resource for students who prefer peer-to-peer guidance

ORGANIZING CANVAS

- Showing students how you organize Canvas and where to find course material
- Making all (or most) course content available instead of time-locking/time-opening assignments so students can move ahead to prepare in the case of unforeseen circumstances
- Using “Modules” to centralize all information: the syllabus, course readings, assignments, links, Zoom recordings, etc.
- Consider limiting the amount of sections placed under Modules (e.g. Week 1, Week 2...) so that the Canvas page does not appear overwhelmingly cluttered
- Informing students through Canvas announcement if an assignment or the instructions were updated

WEB/ZOOM SESSIONS

- Respecting class ending time as students may have other classes or responsibilities afterward
- Minimizing synchronous class time and live assessments, only to be used to emphasize what is necessary

- Recording every class in short chunks to allow students to access these recordings from smaller bandwidth devices
- Consider being available a few minutes before or after class to answer students' questions
- Mastering Zoom features for a smoother session—will be able to assist students with Zoom navigation, changing names and pronouns, and/or adding profile pictures
- Effective use of breakout rooms:
 - Having planned breakout sessions beforehand: who to group, the time limit, and the purpose of the breakout session
 - Asking students their desired breakout room size and if breakouts would be beneficial to them
 - Zoom allows the host to pre-assign participants to breakout rooms before the class session starts

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ONLINE & ON ZOOM

- Seeking student feedback/responses to make sure they are following along
- Offering various ways for students to engage during class on Zoom:
 - Spoken responses
 - Responses in Zoom chat
 - On-screen annotation
 - Making use of the polling feature on Zoom
 - Utilizing breakout sessions for small-group discussion
 - Creating a Google doc to share with the class so each breakout room can write what they discussed & you can “see” the progress in each breakout room
- Making the class recording available after the session ends for students who could not attend
- Having yourself or a peer mentor contact/check in with students that are not participating, not attending class and/or not submitting assignments

ONLINE TEACHING

- Being mindful that some students may need more time to process instructions since English is not their native language
- Providing larger time windows to turn in assignments for students
- Being mindful to instruct in a manner catered to various learning styles
- Giving clear instruction and communicating that in a timely manner
- Engaging on a one-to-one basis with students whenever possible

Thank you for considering our perspectives! We see your willingness to listen to students and what we know will help us succeed in an online environment.