Failing forward is a concept that is particularly resonant now, a month into academe's shift to remote instruction. That's because, for many faculty members new to online teaching, much of what they resolutely tried in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic is going badly.

I've spent the past 12 years in online teaching, and I've come to love it. But what I'm hearing from instructors — via social media, email, and old-fashioned conversations — is growing despair. They are exhausted by their efforts to teach class in real time via Zoom and other videoconference formats, and so are their students. Many academics seem to think they're doomed to this mentally draining existence until the end of the semester, or beyond.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Chances are, you are making the same mistakes common to every rookie online instructor — assigning too much busywork (which requires you to spend endless hours grading) and relying too much on Zoom and other "live" teaching tools (without any of the re-energizing aspects of face-to-face instruction).

Yet when those of us in instructional design urge faculty members to incorporate asynchronous teaching into their courses, we get *a lot* of questions. I've concluded that most professors new to remote instruction literally don't know what "asynchronous online teaching" is, or how to do it. First, a quick primer:

- The concept of class time is very different in asynchronous instruction. You're used to thinking of teaching in discrete, 50-to-90-minute chunks — planning what happens in each session and what students are supposed to do outside of class. Instead, you have to start thinking of class as something that takes place over the course of a week as students log in at different times of the day or night, depending on when they have access to technology.
- Don't think about what you and your students will do during a particular class session. Instead, as a recent *Chronicle* essay, "Going Online in a Hurry," recommended: Structure online activities around your course goals.

How? Here are five low-tech, time-saving asynchronous techniques that will make your remote pedagogy easier and more interesting for you and will help your coronavirus-stressed students successfully complete this semester. All five can be used via your institution's learning-management system and don't require you to figure out any new tech tools. It's not too late to adopt any of them — even if you've mostly been teaching live via Zoom. Just tell students you want to try something

different. Model a willingness to experiment, and fail forward, both valuable lessons for students to observe in practice.

No. 1: Post static content for students to read and watch. It may be hard to imagine not lecturing the way you would in your usual classroom, but remote teaching is a different format, and so requires a different approach.

Students can get a lot out of high-quality readings and videos that you've selected from existing sources — online textbooks, articles, blogs, videos from credible news outlets, TED Talks (or TED-Ed videos, which come with lessons and activities), and even YouTube, where you can find a lot of great instructional videos (like this one) from professors around the world who teach your subject matter.

Or create your own content, including written-out lectures, narrated slide-show videos, or highlights and summaries of other course materials. Keep in mind, you can reuse all of the content that you've curated and created, so the effort required now will pay off in future semesters.

Two key considerations:

- Point out the important elements of your static content. In a face-to-face classroom, you highlight things you want students to focus on in an assigned reading, and you point out how new concepts relate to things they just learned. You must do that online, too. For example, give students questions to guide their viewing and reading, explain how one piece of content builds upon the previous, and describe the context for, and the purpose of, each reading or video.
- Hold students accountable for their learning (see strategy No. 2).

No. 2: Use the quiz and assignment functions in your campus LMS to make sure they're "doing the reading." We've all had students who didn't do the reading before class and showed up ready to absorb new information from the lecture. We know that's not very effective, but when students know you will be in a certain room, on a certain day and time, and that you'll go over new material then, it can be tempting to skip or skim the reading. To get around that problem in an in-person class, you may give pop quizzes.

In asynchronous teaching, you can use the LMS to create quizzes and other required assignments that help students engage with the course content and demonstrate their learning. Students are unlikely to do the activities unless they are worth points, so make sure they are required. And make sure they are simple: To see if the students

have read or watched the material, give an autograded, multiple-choice quiz with a restricted time setting.

No. 3: Wake up to the learning potential of asynchronous text discussions. Some have struggled to see the value of such discussions, but I am a strong advocate of them. In fact, in my view, that's where the real teaching and learning happens in online classes. The benefit for an instructor is that text discussions can be very efficient in terms of the time required of you.

A well-designed online-discussion prompt not only creates strong social interaction among students but also fosters and deepens their learning. Craft nuanced, debatable questions that encourage students to relate new concepts to their own lived experience. Provide clear instructions, checklists, or rubrics so that students know what you want them to post, when, and how often.

Students really do learn from one another. Pop in to the discussion at preset times each week, so you can facilitate their co-construction of knowledge with additional questions, clarifications, and nudges. It's all about strategy (more on that in No. 5).

No. 4: Create a routine, reliable weekly schedule. A structured schedule helps most people succeed. Your students were used to regular class meetups — Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30 a.m. With remote instruction, you will get varying results if you leave them to organize their own weekly routines.

Help your students with their time management by establishing a regular flow and rhythm for the week — quizzes on Thursdays; their initial online discussion posts are due Wednesdays, with replies due Saturdays; written assignments due Monday night, reflecting on the previous week's learning.

Students will appreciate the predictability, especially at a time when so much is uncertain. With regular deadlines, they will know when tasks are due and can plan their week accordingly. Keep in mind, however: We're in a global crisis, so you may have to be flexible with some deadlines.

No. 5: Make frequent, strategic, and highly visible appearances online. Many faculty members are spending far too much of their time in low-return-on-investment efforts with individual students. I'm hearing of endless one-on-one sessions on Zoom or hours spent answering email questions from individual students. While admirable, that is absolutely not sustainable — or healthy.

Instead, aim for lots of publicly posted classwide messages. Think one-to-many communication. Here, again, I don't mean live lecturing. Rather, post low-tech communications that everyone can read, watch, or both. Your class announcements,

your replies in discussion forums, and your summaries of course material — all of those can be typed up and posted for all students' benefit.

One-to-many communication can eat up a lot of your time, too, if you're not careful. So create a weekly schedule for classwide posts that will have the most bang for the buck. You can be "present" online in meaningful ways that are still manageable. (For more on the nuts and bolts of creating low-tech but effective online activities, read Daniel Stanford's post on "How Low-Bandwidth Teaching Will Save Us All.")

Meanwhile, be patient. Be willing to admit when things aren't going so well. And be ready to try something new (again), as long as it's simple. Your future self — and your current students — will thank you.

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