

Online Learning in Architecture

Guidance + Considerations

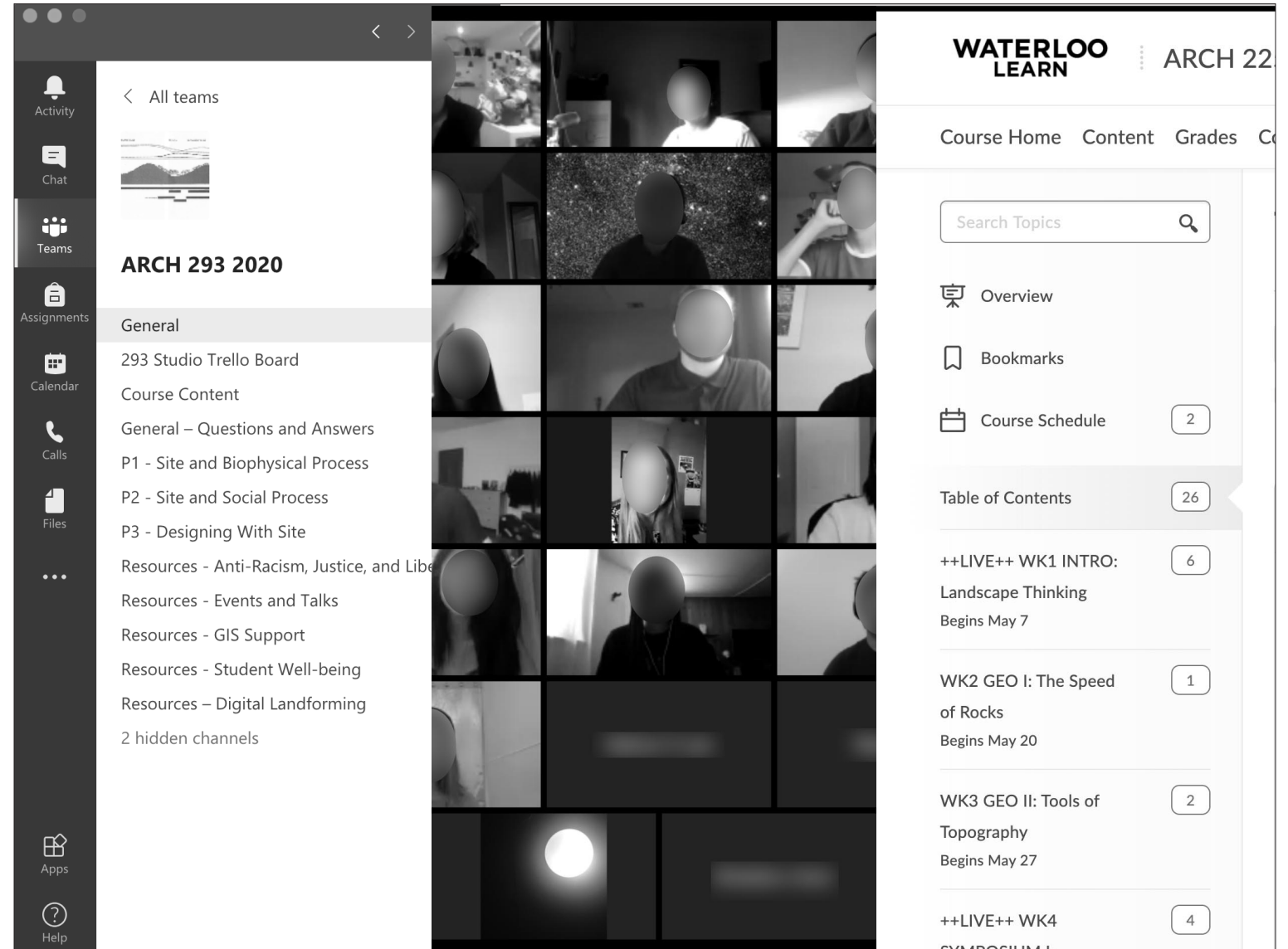


TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Communication / Interaction ... (pages 3 - 7)

Instructor Presence, Student Participation, Informal Communication, Peer-to-Peer Learning, Notification Management

02

Course Content / Structure ... (pages 8 - 12)

Aggregating Information, Content Organization, Avoiding Ambiguity and Feedback Systems

03

Challenges / Support ... (pages 13 - 15)

Fatigue + Mental Health, New Platform Learning Curve, Learning Objectives and Flexibility.

04

Resources / Midterm Feedback ... (pages 16 - 22)

Keep Learning, Centre for Teaching Excellence, Reference Links, Midterm Student feedback, Midterm Faculty Feedback

Communicating with Students:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-creating-positive-learning-environment/communicating-students>

Instructor Presence: <https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/instructor-presence>

Instructor Presence

Be present and let your students see you as a real person

It becomes very easy in an online learning environment to take a step back and have the relationship with the class be exclusively an exchange of information. One of the benefits of the small community at UWSA which is lost in these remote terms, is the opportunity for students to feel comfortable and build professional relationships with their professors.

It is also important to take time to express the considerations and changes you may have made to your course due to the special circumstances of this term. Remember, students have not done your course before and have no idea if the work load and your flexibility now are the same, less or more as usual.

If you communicate these considerations clearly, this will help to manage expectations and students will hopefully respond accordingly. This will make them less likely to assume falsely that you have made no efforts to address their current challenges and the current global climate.

TIP

If you plan for your course to be mostly asynchronous or in LEARN content modules, consider hosting your first class as a synchronous event to introduce yourself to students and address these considerations.

TIP

Consider adding a photo of yourself to your LEARN and Teams profiles that will appear on your discussion board postings or chat. Ask your TAs and students to do so as well.

TIP

Emphasize right away why you value and would prefer students to turn on their video during lectures and presentations and invite them to do so whenever possible.

Learn Help - Discussions:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/discussions>

Chat - Strategies for Hosting
live (Synchronous) Lectures:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/strategies-hosting-live-synchronous-lectures-0>

Student Participation

Discussions in a virtual space

As faculty have reported and can be seen in the feedback gathered, students feel more insecure participating and even appearing at all in these virtual classroom spaces than they do in person. It is more intimidating for students to speak up during a virtual lecture because unlike in the lecture hall they become the center of attention, their comments are documented and there isn't as comfortable a flow of conversation. For these reasons you will have to actively foster student participation in class settings or expect a decrease in students' willingness to contribute. You could alternatively seek out other spaces where students may feel more comfortable speaking up. (ex: written discussion posts, small group discussions, etc.)

Though there are extenuating circumstances that prevent some students from appearing on video, many more just feel uncomfortable giving their classmates and professors such a personal view into their lives when it does not seem to them absolutely necessary.

Knowing how much is lost from the perspective of faculty when they are so disconnected from students, we recommend that you emphasize in your course introduction the reasons you value and would prefer students to turn their video on during lectures and presentations and invite them to do so whenever possible.

TIP

Consider breaking the class up into **small discussion groups** where students may feel more comfortable speaking up.

TIP

Consider directing discussions and questions to a written asynchronous format such as **discussion posts on LEARN.**

TIP

Consider inviting students to **write their questions in the chat during a synchronous lecture instead of requiring them to speak. Have your TAs monitor responses and answer quick questions.**

Informal Communication

Between students and instructors

For the first time, students are communicating with faculty and each other mainly through more formal written communications. Compared to the tight knit community that is the school of architecture, this shift is causing strain on students because they feel isolated and informal conversation with professors and other members of the school community is no longer easily accessible.

These challenges are most pronounced within studio courses where students would usually be able to ask quick questions of their adjuncts throughout the studio day. Strict crit schedules structured to allocate instructor time equitably are unfortunately limiting opportunities for quick informal discussions. It is important to dedicate time for these kinds of conversations and to consider how best to use spaces like Teams Messenger that lend themselves to more casual interactions.

Though it is unreasonable to ask faculty to always be available to answer quick questions by Teams Messenger, the times that they are available should be clearly communicated and students should be regularly encouraged to reach out and discuss informally in these spaces.

TIP

Consider building times into your already synchronous activities that are reserved for informal conversations and questions. (ex: stay on your call 10-15 min after your lectures to take questions, include this in our outline)

TIP

Allocate time that you can be available on Teams Messenger. If you are accessible on this more casual platform, students may feel more comfortable asking you quick questions. (ex: adjuncts during studio hours/other, being open for questions for a set period of time, etc.)

Peer-to-Peer Learning

Supporting spaces for students to see each other's work

One of the most common comments we've gathered throughout this term is the loss of the collaborative work environment found in studio. Students miss the community, but they are also lacking opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and the spaces where they can interact with the work of others to find inspiration and guidance.

It has been challenging to manufacture this environment because it is not replaceable, but also because its benefits are usually the passive result of designers producing work within proximity of each other. It is rarely an active process and the benefits are subconscious, so a student who is overwhelmed will not necessarily see the value of putting in additional effort to manufacture it.

With this in mind, the best way to create a space for peer-to-peer learning would be to tie it to other mandatory class events such as crits and reviews. Focus the work of uploading, laying out and naming files to a single platform that is promoted to students as the virtual "studio desk" space.

TIP

Choose one visual representation platform (ex: Miro) to invite students to "pin-up" their drawings to present during crits as if it were their studio desk. Within this space at least on crit-days, the work of the whole class will be posted and other students can see the progress of their peers.

TIP

Consider using group crits to structure-in passive peer-to-peer learning experiences.

Notification Management

To help both students and yourselves manage notifications you want to be clear about which kinds of notifications people are getting, where they are getting them and how frequently. Consider which notifications are sent through email (LEARN and other updates) versus through desktop or phone applications (Teams) and how this might affect their reception.

Just like organizing content, it is best to create a structure for how reminders and other communications are sent out to your classes, be deliberate and consistent about each media you use and try to keep notifications reserved to a select few.

There are certain kinds of notifications that call for more immediate responses and others that will be checked more periodically. So it is recommended that within your course outline, you tell your students where you will be sending notifications and include information about how to turn on those notifications at the start of your course (we can help with this).

LEARN Notification Settings:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/account-settings#NotificationSettings>

Use @mentions to get someone's attention in Teams:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-mentions-to-get-someone-s-attention-in-teams-eb4f059d-320e-454e-b111-03361d4d6855>

Six things to know about notifications in Teams: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/six-things-to-know-about-notifications-abb62c60-3d15-4968-b86a-42fea9c22cf4>

TIP

Many people do not have LEARN announcements set to notify through email so they may only see these when they log into LEARN. Consider instructing students to turn on this setting for your course if you intend to use this feature.

TIP

In a Teams post, you can notify every member of a group by @ mentioning the Team name. Use this when you want to draw everyone's attention.

TIP

Consider sending out reminders of assignment deadlines regularly half a week before they are due. This will alert students who may be unaware of the work and give them time to complete it.

Learn Help - Announcements:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/announcements>

Learn Help - Editing Content
(setting Access Dates):
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/course-content#Editing%20content>

Aggregating Information

When relaying new information always consider if it can be communicated along with other updates. Try to group content releases or share information in a scheduled and structured manner such as at weekly or other regular intervals.

Much like notification management first consider where and how frequently you will be sharing information then work to mediate it. For example, reserving regular updates, reminders of deadlines and other information to a regular weekly email will be useful for students to return to or reference and could help organize student questions. Avoid straying from your weekly format unless if it is an urgent matter.

TIP

Consider periodically sharing **Question & Answer documents** with the whole class containing your responses to individual questions received from students, this way the information can be easily located and referenced.

TIP

On LEARN, you can **schedule your content releases by setting its Access Dates**. Instead of uploading files as you go, make batches of information available incrementally throughout the term to provide an organized structure.

TIP

Consider sharing your weekly updates, deadline reminders and other comments through the **LEARN Announcement** feature. This way students will get an email notification and the information can be easily referenced on your course homepage.

Content Organization

Be clear and precise about where students can find certain information

Be very deliberate about the organization and structure of your course as it is found online and provide detailed explanations of the course's functioning across online platforms in your course outline/syllabus.

Work to manage expectations and consider including details in your course outline that you might otherwise omit. For example, your preferred method of communication (ex: teams messenger, email, etc.) and how long before a student should expect to hear back from you (ex: same day, within 24 hours, etc.). Consider providing details about assignment requirements as early as possible to provide students more opportunity to plan out their term.

Be deliberate about adding information in the right places. If you are choosing to create a mode of teaching that will live mostly on LEARN where teaching is entirely content based (written, visual media, etc.), organize weekly content into modules and preface each lesson with a summary of key points and learning objectives students should look out for.

TIP

The University of Waterloo has a number of available **LEARN Templates for Remote Teaching** that you can upload and use as a shell for your course.

TIP

In Teams, rely on Channels to organize the sharing of information about specific topics. (ex: channels reserved for each project, channel reserved for additional resources, etc.)

TIP

Re-issue your Course Outline/Syllabus when changes are made throughout the term because students will return to this document for reference.

TIP

Consider offering your lectures through Teams. Recorded "meetings" are automatically saved and posted to the feed and your lectures get added to student's Outlook calendars.

Avoiding Ambiguity

Elaborate planning and detailed course structures are not always possible, and with the suppression of schedules and more flexible expectations, a simple piece of advice is to avoid ambiguity as much as possible.

Typically, offering an ambiguous task especially in a design learning environment is valuable because it allows for creative freedom. Normally a student working in studio could crowdsource their questions and concerns about a given assignment, almost like a built in sounding board, but in a remote learning environment students cannot as quickly or easily resolve concerns.

Online, students feel lost much more quickly when expectations are not explicitly clear as it is that much more challenging to ask for direction. They are more likely to search written instructions for additional information or to analyze the Course Outline because instructors are not as accessible.

TIP

Clarify expectations on all fronts and detail things you might usually assume are understood.

TIP

Example of ambiguous vs. specific instructions:
"It is mandatory to be present at reviews"

vs.

"Each student will participate in reviews by:

1. Presenting their own project,
2. Being a peer respondent on one student's project
3. Being a note taker for another student's project"

TIP

Have submission dropboxes created in advance and properly labelled to match the assignment name in the syllabus. Define a naming convention.

Feedback Systems

Giving feedback and receiving it

Prompt, thorough and clear feedback on assignments has always been essential and a topic often raised by class representatives. It is even more important now than ever since students already feel disconnected in these virtual spaces and overdue feedback while students are working through their next project will only add to the challenges they are facing.

Sliding scales and rubrics are useful marking tools but when interaction with instructors is limited, they can feel disconnected and lacking in the project specific guidance that students are seeking. Though feedback is also communicated within a final crit, it is often difficult to identify which points are the most essential after the fact. Additional written comments could serve students to better inform future design decisions.

It is also important to facilitate channels for you to hear student concerns. Clearly communicate your openness to receiving feedback and detail how best this should be delivered (ex: the class has a google form where they can submit comments that will be reviewed by the class reps, you schedule meetings with your class reps to check-in with them and facilitate conversation, there is a discussion board for student feedback, etc.)

TIP

Consider writing comments to accompany studio marks and feedback rubrics. Even just three comments outlining some strengths and weaknesses of a specific project can go a long way.

TIP

Consider requiring one mandatory 1:1 check-in with each student mid way through the term. This would give you the opportunity to listen to the voices and hear the concerns of students who may not typically speak up.

TIP

Have a submission box for feedback moderated by class representatives to gather a more comprehensive understanding of class concerns.

Fatigue + Mental Health

One of our largest take-aways from the feedback surveys has been that the mental health and motivation of most members of the school community is at an all-time low. There are many factors that are contributing to this, most students who are truly struggling are dealing with things outside of their or our control and the remote nature of school and their community is only making it more difficult.

Additionally, there is no separation between learning, work and leisure. Each of these demands their own activation costs of emotional energy unlike ever before and all of this has resulted in general fatigue and a number of struggles such as these listed by students:

Feelings of isolation, lack of the collective, overwhelming workloads, new proximity to external factors that you might be shielded from at school in studio environment, responsibilities in a home environment are different than they are in a school environment.

TIP

Acknowledge at the start of the term that students are dealing with difficult circumstances and that this term will be unlike any other. Always be open and responsive to those seeking accessibility adjustments.

TIP

Be kind to your class representatives, they will be shouldering the burden of their class' struggles and complaints and will likely need to communicate with you more than a typical term. We will be working to elect class representative pairs so that this responsibility does not fall on a single student.

New Platform Learning Curve

One of the biggest challenges for these remote learning terms is the need for the rapid acquisition of new knowledge and skills in a large number of sharing and collaborative platforms.

To best deal with this challenge, we would like to provide clear, simple and efficient guidance about how each of the platforms functions to both teaching staff and students before the start of the fall school term to ensure that the learning curve is less steep for everybody.

Links to resources and tutorials for each platform should be integrated within Course Outlines and sites. Provide information about who students can go to with technical problems and consider focusing this tech support on a platform that all students could contribute to. This would tap into the embodied knowledge of the student population and provide a space where questions can easily be referenced.

TIP

Consider building in more time for the completion of the first project of the term to account for students adapting to new circumstances and the new platform learning curve.

TIP

Reach out to OLAs and communicate with the teaching team which platforms you are interested in using and we can work to pool existing resources and help you set things up.

**A form will be sent out shortly to gather some of this information.*

Making the Transition to Take Home Exams: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/making-transition-take-home-exams>

Making the Transition to Online Exams: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-assessing-students/making-transition-online-exams>

Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Instructions: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-students/aligning-outcomes-assessments-and-instruction>

Learning Objectives

An important consideration when you are adapting a course for online learning is to practice the principles of universal design while ensuring assessments and instructional strategies remain aligned with intended learning outcomes.

If you plan on changing your assessment structure to adapt to an online learning environment, and are shifting to more frequent smaller weighted assignments such as researched discussion posts, consider the time these exercises might require in relation to the learning outcome they are achieving.

Attempt to minimize unnecessary effort and stress. Learning can be hindered when students expend too much energy working on tasks that don't contribute to their learning. This is especially important during these remote terms when students will already be facing a lot of new challenges.

TIP

Communicate the learning objectives of your course clearly in your Syllabus. Ensure all assessments and instructional strategies are aligned with these objectives.

TIP

Be wary of overly repetitive exercises. Consider whether your assignments serve to support the learning of course material or serve more to verify that students have completed course modules. Compare this to how you would be evaluating during in person courses.

Universal Design: Course Design: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/universal-design-course-design>

Supporting Student's Mental Wellbeing: Course Design <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/supporting-students-mental-wellbeing-course-design>

Flexibility

Though many recommendations for online learning state that you should reduce largely weighted deliverables and rely on more regular smaller weighted assignments in order to allow more flexibility for students, this move has different repercussions in a design learning environment.

When most courses start asking for weekly deliverables, it becomes significantly more challenging to make time for larger projects because a larger amount of time is devoted to simply keeping up with small assignments and course work. In a learning environment where studio projects focus all of a student's time during deadlines, it can be much more challenging to keep up with small weekly assignments throughout the term.

Consider options that allow for students to self-manage the ebb and flow of studio project requirements and provide alternatives for those completing assignments asynchronously (e.g. students can write reflection journals on class discussions).

TIP

If you are requiring regular smaller assignments, consider making a set number of submissions optional so students can adapt their workload.

TIP

Consider offering grace days, a set number of built-in no-consequence extensions.

KEEP LEARNING

- Keep Learning home
- Strategies for Remote Teaching ▼
- Synchronous and Asynchronous >
- Finding and Organizing Course Content
- Preparing Assessments
- Developing and delivering online course content
- Engaging Students in Online Activities
- Final Exams
- Communicating with Students
- Tools and Technology >
- Resources >
- Academic Integrity
- Accessibility
- News
- Events

Keep Learning »

Strategies for Remote Teaching

When teaching remotely, the [principles of course design](#) are the same as when teaching a face-to-face course or a traditional online course. Keep the following in mind:

1. **Keep it simple:** use learning tools that you and your students are already familiar with.
2. Make sure your [intended outcomes](#), [learning activities](#), and [assessments](#) are aligned.
3. Ensure your course site is clear and well-planned. Include a [weekly course schedule](#) to map out the term for the students.
4. Foster a sense of [instructor presence](#) and [communicate with your students](#) regularly.
5. The University strongly encourages the use of [asynchronous strategies](#).

Remote Teaching Course Design Checklist

- Consider the context of your course and **identify opportunities and obstacles** that you and your students are likely to encounter.
- List the desired content for your course, then streamline it by identifying the knowledge and skills that are absolutely essential. From this condensed list, develop the revised [intended learning outcomes](#).
- Identify [assessments and teaching strategies](#) that align with the learning outcomes: how will you know how well your students have achieved the outcomes, and how will you teach so they are prepared to do the assessments?
- Develop an assessment plan that gives students some [elements of choice](#). Avoid having deliverables for marks every single week; instead allow them to skip some submission dates or only count a subset of the marked work.
- Provide [flexible ways](#) for students to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes. Not all students need to complete the exact same assessments to demonstrate achievement. Ask then for their input into flexible assessments as well.
- Include [scaffolded assessments](#) that let students build their skills and knowledge incrementally and provide multiple opportunities for formative feedback throughout the term.

21-07-2020_Keep Learning Site_Strategies for Remote Teaching

KEEP LEARNING

Keep Learning » Strategies for Remote Teaching »

Preparing Assessments

Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning during the term and to receive timely feedback so they can gauge their progress, and keep student's overall workload in mind. In the online environment, students generally have access to all their course materials, including during assessments. In addition, they may be in different time zones, or in challenging circumstances. As such, new strategies should be considered.

- **Develop a clear schedule for assessments, but be flexible:** ensure that deadlines are easy to find in your LEARN course site, but be prepared to be flexible with them. Disruptions may occur, from technological to health-related, which can make deadline difficult to meet.
- **Provide scaffolded projects:** design projects or essays that have multiple steps (e.g., plan or outline, annotated bibliography, draft, and final submission). This step-wise process helps students keep on track, provides opportunity for feedback, and encourages academic integrity.
- **Use low-stakes assignments:** many students find high-stakes, online testing stressful. Instead, consider using low-stakes quizzes, [writing assignments](#) or other small assessments to give students frequent, but less stressful practice at applying concepts. The assessments should be worth just enough points to hold students accountable, but not so many (nor so numerous) that the activity becomes anxiety producing.
- **Move beyond simple facts:** reinforce basic facts and concepts via quizzes, but also get students to extend their learning by applying concepts to new scenarios, synthesizing or analyzing concepts, or creating new ideas or materials with more open-ended assessments.
- **Reconceptualize group projects:** group projects may need to be redesigned since students will not be able to meet in person or perhaps even synchronously. Group discussion boards in LEARN enable asynchronous sharing. [Bongo](#) (Virtual Classroom) is a viable tool for student groups to meet online.
- **Employ test banks:** develop banks of questions that can be drawn from to provide multiple versions of quizzes. Check with your textbook publisher to determine if the question banks can be loaded into LEARN or [Mobiuis](#). Some textbooks also have their own online quizzing tools.
- **Use online tools for collecting assignments:** Various tools exist for collecting student work electronically, such as [LEARN Dropbox](#), [Crowdmark](#), and [Bongo](#) (for video assignments). *These are preferable to having students email assignments.*

21-07-2020_Keep Learning Site_Preparing Assessments

KEEP LEARNING

Keep Learning » Strategies for Remote Teaching » Synchronous and Asynchronous »

Equivalent Learning Experience

Ensuring an Equivalent Learning Experience for Synchronous Sessions

Not all students are able to attend a scheduled class. Students who are unable to attend a [synchronous](#) session (online or on-campus) should not be penalized. Conversely, avoid awarding participation bonus marks for attending a synchronous session, unless you provide an equivalent opportunity for non-attending students to do the same.

When planning to provide an equivalent learning experience for students not attending, consider the following guiding principles. Contact remoteteaching@uwaterloo.ca for further assistance in your specific case.

SHARE material with your students in advance

- Post your slides, readings (use [Course Reserves](#) where possible), textbook chapters and pages on your course site before your live session.
- If you use a [Socratic questioning method](#) in your interactive lecture, post your questions in advance.
- For [tutorial](#) sessions, provide the work that will be done during the tutorial in advance.
- For [seminar](#) sessions, post the discussion questions to be addressed during the seminar in advance.

INVITE participation from students

- Invite students to read material in preparation for your scheduled session.
- Find equivalent opportunities for those who can't attend
 - Prior to the session, create a space for students to ask questions about the material provided. A [discussion forum in LEARN](#), [Piazza](#) or a poll can be used. Address these questions during the recorded session.
 - If your lecture is interactive, provide the questions or activities for the students to work on as they go through the materials and recordings.
 - For [seminars](#), invite students to do the readings, to ponder discussion topics, and to provide their initial thoughts. [LEARN Discussions](#), [VoiceThread](#) and [Perusall](#) are ideal for this purpose.

21-07-2020_Keep Learning Site_Equivalent Learning Experiences

RECENTLY ADDED OR REVISED RESOURCES
WHAT'S NEW

CENTRE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Centre for Teaching Excellence home

About CTE >

Upcoming Events & Opportunities >

Support for... >

Resources >

INFORMATION FOR

Faculty and staff >

Chairs and directors >

Postdoctoral fellows >

Graduate students >

Centre for Teaching Excellence »

Teaching Tips: Teaching during campus closures

Best Practices for Online Labs

This document is a general resource for teaching teams...

Communicating with Students

Be present and let your students see you as a real person....

Icebreakers for Online Classes

Icebreakers are short activities, often at the beginning of...

Effective online tutorials

Tutorials supplement learning that has occurred in lectures...

Holding Virtual Office Hours Using Bongo and WebEx

Similar to in-person office hours, virtual office...

Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning

What is Asynchronous Online Learning?

Asynchronous...

Student Guidelines for Communicating in Online, Professional Contexts

This document provides brief guidance on appropriate ways...

Transitioning to Online Lectures

When transitioning your class online, there are a variety...

Creating a narrated PowerPoint presentation

How to Record Narration for your PowerPoint Presentation...

Making the Transition to Online Exams

Guidelines when pivoting from an in-person exam to an...

Making the Transition to Take-Home Exams

Most university courses have an end-of-term assessment of...

Perusall

Perusall is a free, web-based tool that allows instructors...

Online Discussions: Tips for Instructors

Fostering an effective discussion can be challenging in a...

Collecting and Using Midterm Student Feedback

In any endeavour, feedback provides direction for...

WE'VE MOVED ONLINE!
**ONLINE WORKSHOPS,
EVENTS, & CONSULTATIONS**

KEEP LEARNING WEBSITE
**STRATEGIES AND TOOLS
FOR REMOTE TEACHING**

AUGUST 4-9
**New Faculty Teaching
Days!**

Search for tips

Containing all of the words

Containing any of the words

Containing the phrase

Containing none of the words

SEARCH

Teaching tip categories

- [Teaching Tips: Teaching during campus closures](#)
- [Teaching Tips: Inclusive Instructional Practices](#)
- [Teaching Tips: Educational Technologies](#)

21-07-2020_CTE

22.07.2020

Online Learning in Architecture

CENTRE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Centre for Teaching Excellence »

Teaching Tips: Inclusive Instructional Practices

Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning

What is Asynchronous Online Learning?

Asynchronous...

Understanding Essential Requirements

As a provider of educational programs, the University of...

Accessibility Checklist for MS Word

Printable PDF

Use this checklist to guide you...

Accessibility Checklist for MS PowerPoint

Printable PDF

Use this checklist to guide you...

Accessibility Checklist for Face-to-face Presentations

Printable PDF

Use this checklist to guide you...

What is Universal Design?

The term universal design (UD) originated in the mid-1980s...

Supporting Students' Mental Wellbeing: Course Design

Image used under the Creative Commons Zero (CC0) license...

Supporting Students' Mental Wellbeing: Instructional Strategies

As instructors and teaching assistants you often have...

Why is Inclusive Instruction Important?

According to recent advances in neuroscience research,...

Universal Design: Instructional Strategies

Good teaching involves considering the strengths and needs...

Universal Design: Course Design

Good course design involves considering the strengths and...

21-07-2020_CTE

WE'VE MOVED ONLINE!
**ONLINE WORKSHOPS,
EVENTS, & CONSULTATIONS**

KEEP LEARNING WEBSITE
**STRATEGIES AND TOOLS
FOR REMOTE TEACHING**

AUGUST 4-9
**New Faculty Teaching
Days!**

Search for tips

Containing all of the words

Containing any of the words

Containing the phrase

Containing none of the words

SEARCH

Teaching tip categories

- [Teaching Tips: Teaching during campus closures](#)

17

04_REFERENCES - CTE

CTE - All Teaching Tips by Category

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-tips/by-category/>

CTE - Teaching Tips: Teaching During Campus Closures

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-tips/by-category/191>

CTE - Teaching Tips: Inclusive Instructional Practices

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-tips/by-category/188>

CTE - Universal Design: Course Design

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/universal-design-course-design>

CTE - Supporting Student's Mental Wellbeing: Course Design

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/supporting-students-mental-wellbeing-course-design>

CTE - Communicating with Students

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-creating-positive-learning-environment/communicating-students>

CTE - Aligning Outcomes, Assessments, and Instructions

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-students/aligning-outcomes-assessments-and-instruction>

CTE - Making the Transition to Take Home Exams

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-planning-courses-and-assignments/making-transition-take-home-exams>

CTE - Making the Transition to Online Exams

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/teaching-tips-assessing-students/making-transition-online-exams>

04_REFERENCES - Keep Learning + Other

Keep Learning - Transitioning to Online Lectures

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/transitioning-online-lectures>

Keep Learning - Strategies for Remote Teaching

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching>

Keep Learning - Preparing Assessments

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/preparing-assessments>

Keep Learning - Equivalent Learning Experience

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-learning/equivalent-learning-experience>

Keep Learning - Communicating with Students

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/instructor-presence>

Keep Learning - Course Templates

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/resources/course-templates>

Keep Learning - Strategies for Hosting live (Synchronous)

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/strategies-hosting-live-synchronous-lectures-0>

LEARN Help for Instructors - U Waterloo

<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors>

LEARN Help - Editing Content (setting Access Dates)

<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/course-content#Editing%20content>

LEARN Help - Discussions

<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/discussions>

LEARN Help - Notification Settings

<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/instructors/account-settings#NotificationSettings>

Use @mentions to get someone's attention in Teams

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-mentions-to-get-someone-s-attention-in-teams-eb4f059d-320e-454e-b111-03361d4d6855>

Six things to know about notifications in Teams

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/six-things-to-know-about-notifications-abb62c60-3d15-4968-b86a-42fea9c22cf4>

CONTACT THE ONLINE LEARNING ASSISTANTS (OLAs)

Maddie Lachance:

m2lachan@uwaterloo.ca

Lena Von Buren:

lmvonburen@uwaterloo.ca

Laura Woodall:

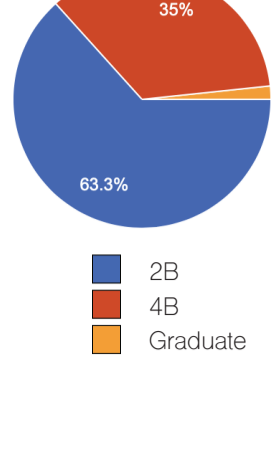
llywoodall@uwaterloo.ca

Online Learning Student Feedback

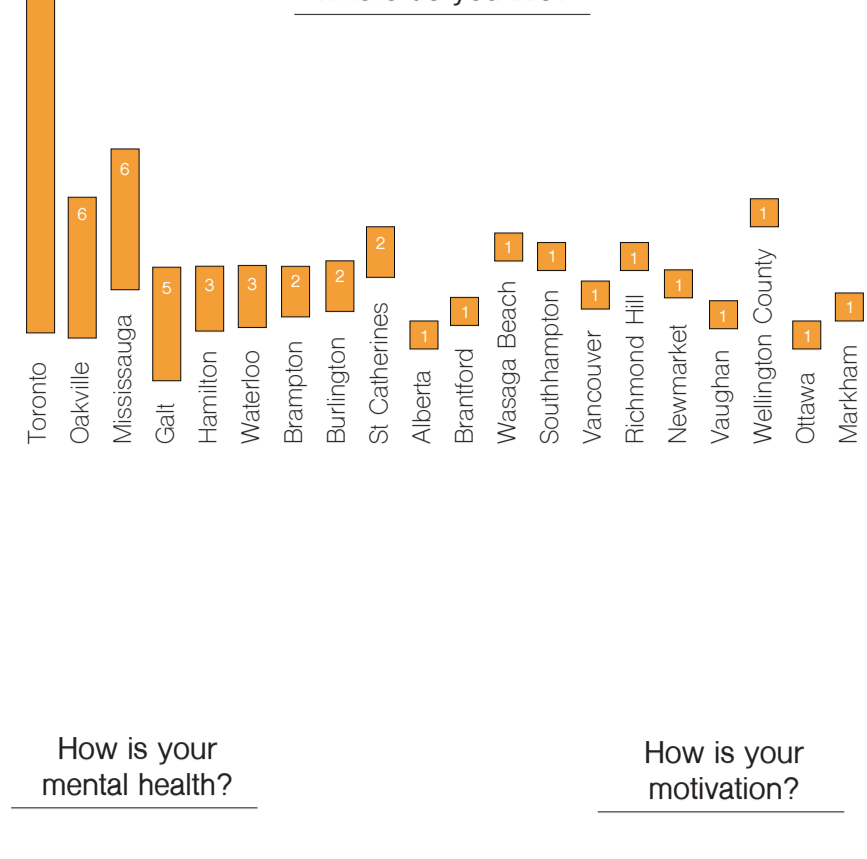
Spring Term 2020 - Midterm

60 Responses

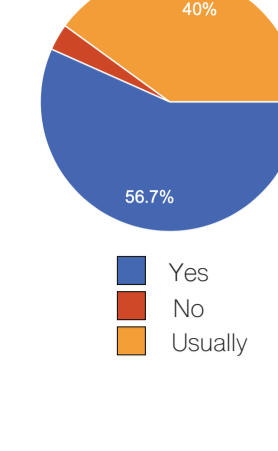
What term are you completing this Spring?



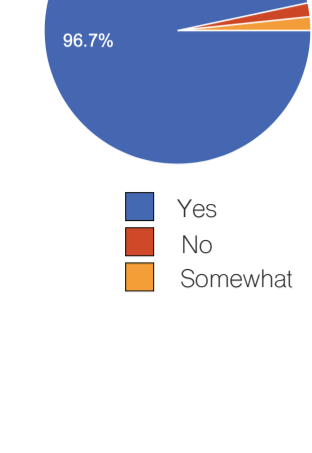
Where do you live?



Do you have a reliable internet connection?



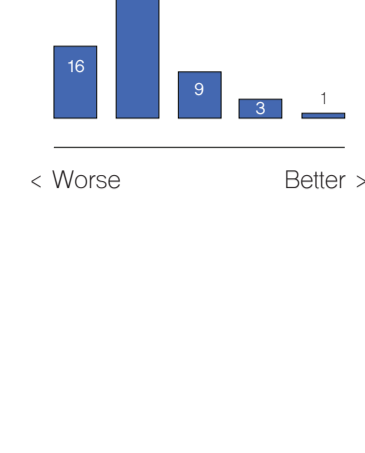
Do you feel safe in your current work-at-home environment?



How is your mental health?



How is your motivation?

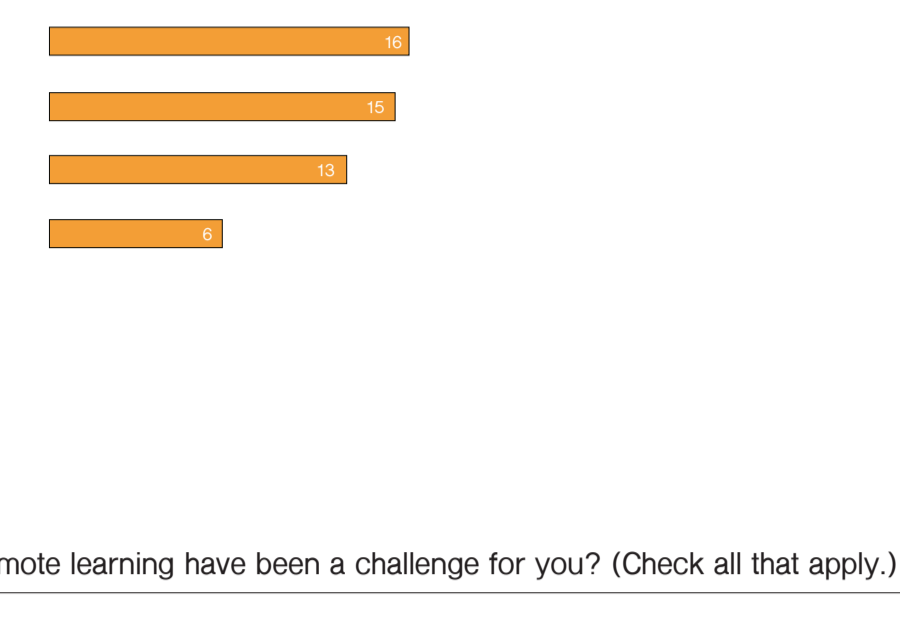


Why?

- Lack of peer interaction / studio
- Harder to concentrate at home
- Increased workload
- Less or more distraction
- Lack of energy / motivation
- Fluctuating schedules
- Being in front of a computer all day

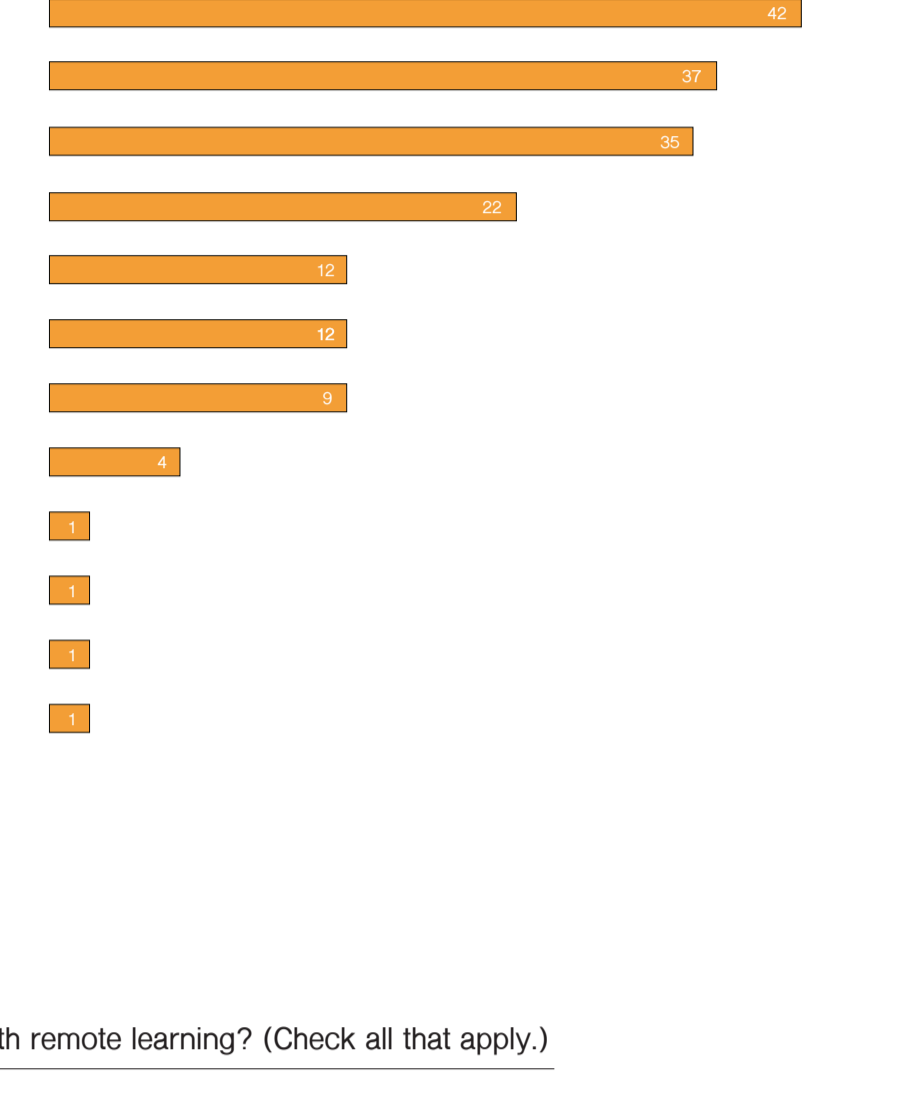
Which of the following technological issues of remote learning have been a challenge for you? (Check all that apply.)

- Adequate digital replacements for face-to-face collaboration tools (Studio culture, Crits, etc)
- Number of required technologies or applications being asked to use
- Instructor discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications
- Access to reliable internet/service
- Access to software or facilities (Adobe, GIS, Workshop, Printers, etc)
- Personal discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications
- Access to a reliable digital service (Laptop, Personal device)



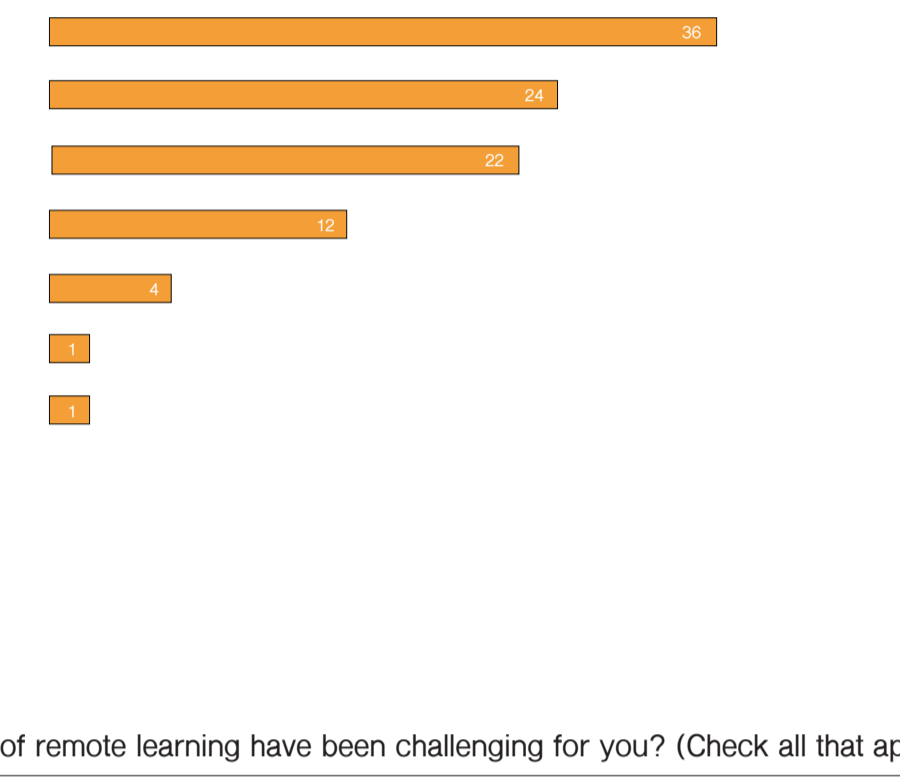
Which of the following learning / educational issues of remote learning have been a challenge for you? (Check all that apply.)

- Personal motivation / desire to complete coursework
- Difficulty focusing or paying attention to remote instruction or activities
- Personal preference for face-to-face learning
- Unexpected increase / changed household responsibilities
- Unclear expectations around course / assignment requirements
- Course lessons or activities that didn't translate into digital learning
- Weight of individual assignments
- Finding time to participate in synchronous classes (live lectures, scheduled studio crits)
- Compelling class schedules or meetings
- Instructor availability / responsiveness
- The work of taking photos of sketches
- Unexpected increase in daily / weekly assignments
- Constantly at home with family
- Emotional stress from current events



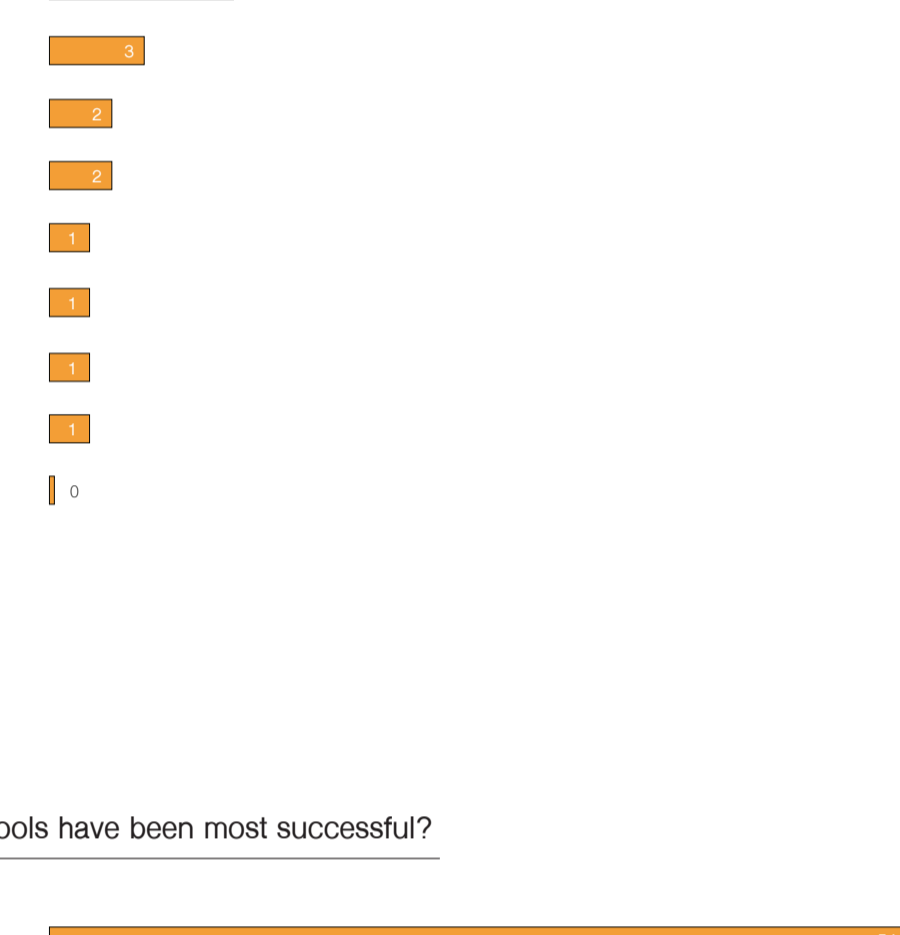
What are your biggest concerns with remote learning? (Check all that apply.)

- Not seeing classmates
- Grades / performing well
- Missing access to academic supports (Library, Writing Centre etc)
- Missing out on extracurriculars
- Not being able to communicate with instructors
- Online privacy / protection of personal data
- Housing security
- Missing out on final semester
- Cost effectiveness of tuition



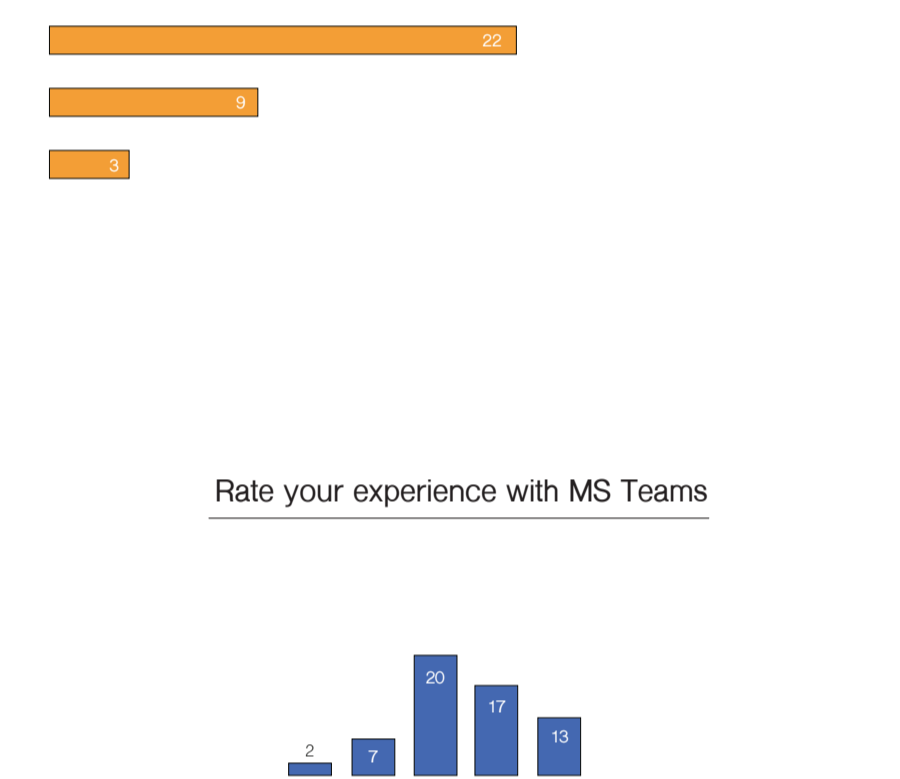
Which of the following technical accessibility / accommodation issues of remote learning have been challenging for you? (Check all that apply.)

- I do not require accessibility accommodations
- Time on tests
- File converting
- Integrating captioning into Zoom
- Access to assistive technology hardware
- Availability of closed captioning
- Availability of transcripts of lectures
- Access to screen readable course documents (Handouts, Notes)
- Availability of live-captioning on video conferencing
- Access to ASL interpreters

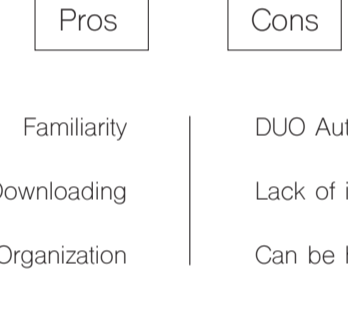


What digital communication tools have been most successful?

- Zoom
- LEARN
- MS Teams
- Mural
- Trello
- Cisco WebEx

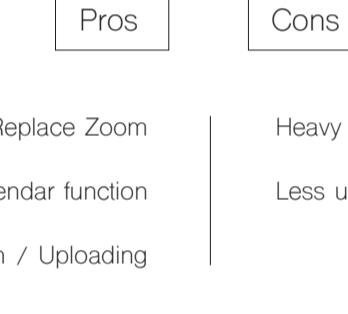


Rate your experience with LEARN



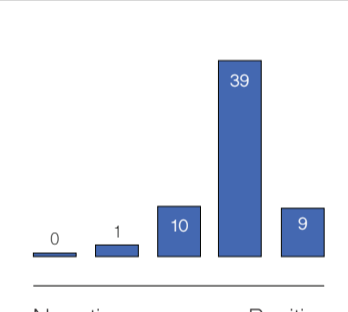
- Pros: Familiarity, Uploading / Downloading, Organization
- Cons: DUO Authorization, Lack of interactivity, Can be hard to find material

Rate your experience with MS Teams



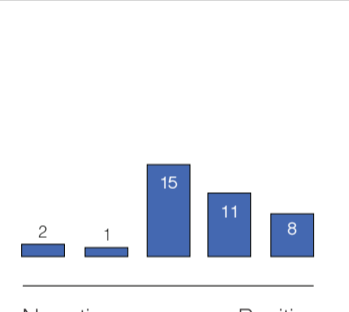
- Pros: Replace Zoom, Calendar function, Content organization / Uploading
- Cons: Heavy program for computers, Less user-friendly than LEARN

Rate your experience with Zoom



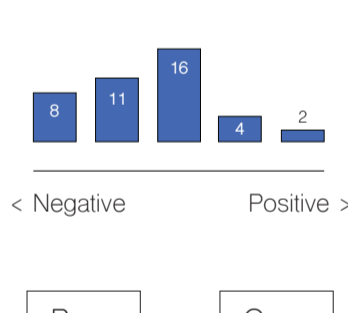
- Pros: Screen sharing, Basic features
- Cons: Waiting rooms, Drawing function improvement

Rate your experience with Mural



- Pros: Seeing peer progress work, GIF / Video function, Live cursor view
- Cons: Importing low-quality images

Rate your experience with Trello



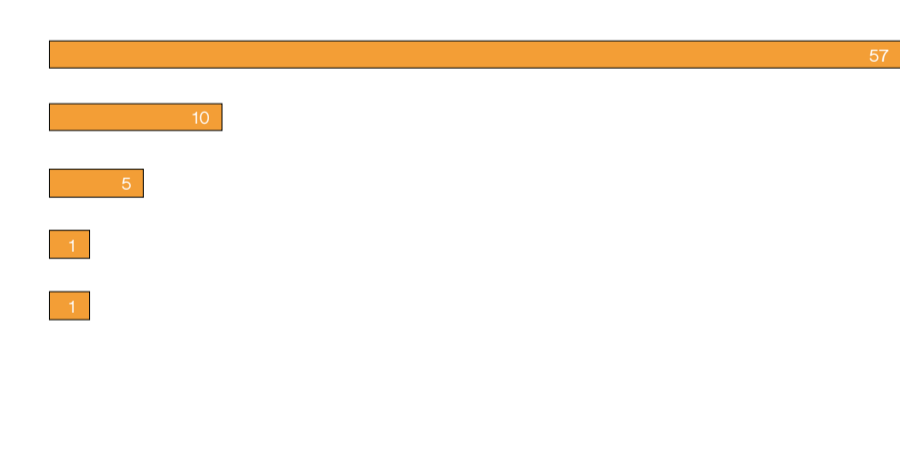
- Pros: Seeing peer work
- Cons: Not user-friendly, Cannot delete cards, Awkward scrolling functions

Please list the top three things you are missing most about learning in-person at the School of Architecture.

- Studio culture and facilities
- Peer support and feedback
- Classmates and community
- Less weekly tasks (discussion posts)
- Physical models
- Sketching
- Asking professors questions
- The pool table

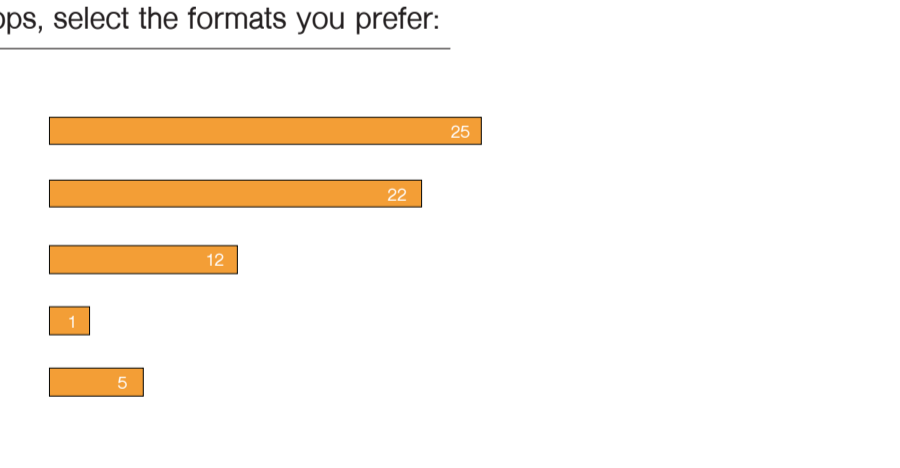
When it comes to lectures, select the formats you prefer:

- Live (video) conference lecture
- Pre-recorded lectures uploaded
- Slides with audio recorded lecture
- Self-guided lessons / readings
- PDFs posted after lectures



When it comes to library workshops, select the formats you prefer:

- Live (video) conference workshop
- Pre-recorded workshops uploaded
- Slides with audio recorded lecture
- Step-by-step written guide
- No preference



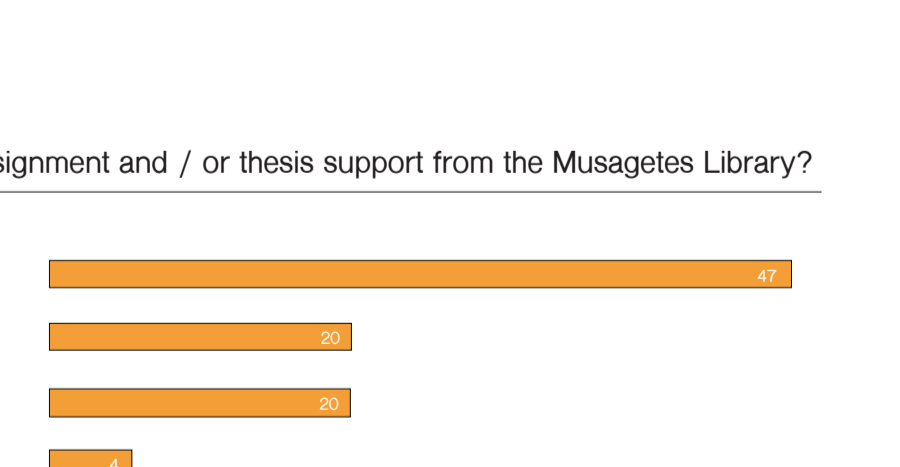
How do you wish to access library workshops?

- Integrated into individual LEARN course
- Through the Musagetes Library website
- Through the Architecture Undergraduate or Graduate Student LEARN sites
- Through a research guide
- No reference

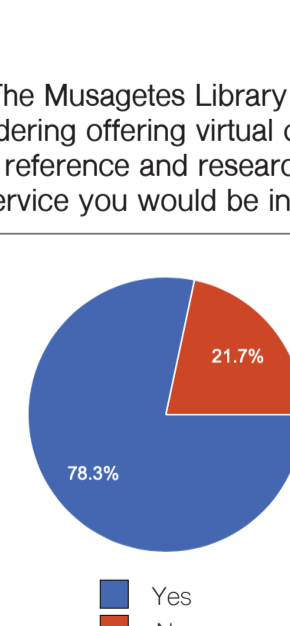


How do you want to interact, and receive research, assignment and / or thesis support from the Musagetes Library?

- Email
- Chat
- Video call
- Phone call
- No preference

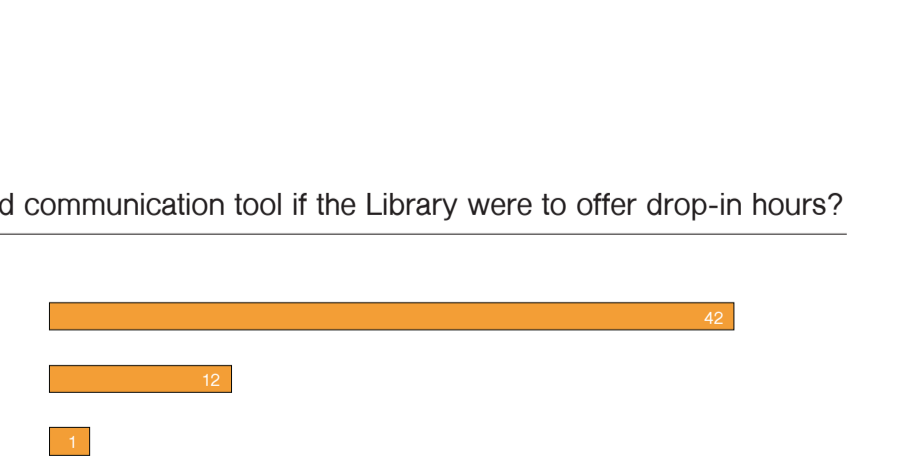


The Musagetes Library is considering offering virtual drop-in hours for reference and research support. Is this a service you would be interested in?



If you answered yes to the previous question, what is your preferred communication tool if the Library were to offer drop-in hours?

- Zoom
- MS Teams
- Cisco WebEx
- Skype



When it comes to Fabrication Labs and workshop resources, what are some possible support opportunities?

- Tutorials for tools
- Fabrication manuals to study
- Tutorials on modelling materials
- Consultation hours
- Laser cutting / 3D printing pickup

Additional comments:

- MS Teams as sole program
- More material on how to use programs
- Question the marking schemes
- Question tuition

Notes
* "Other" Denotes student added comment
** Numbers convey number of responses

Online Learning Student Comments

Spring Term 2020 – *Midterm*

If you are living abroad, what feedback can you share about your online learning experience?

The struggle is classtimes – people will say what time it is in Ontario and I constantly have to remember that it is a different time for me. Has lead to some missed seminars.

Please comment on your motivation and mental health.

Being home near friends who aren't in school makes it hard to concentrate, and things like sports facilities I normally frequent are reopening and exercising takes a lot of time but makes me happy.

Living with family who is able to support and provide for me. I am not frequently leaving my home so exposure to the virus is kept to a minimum.

I live in a quiet suburb, and I've been social distancing, so I have nothing to worry about.

Lack of student interaction/studio environment.

I am with my family and they are supportive.

Increased workload and strange sleep schedule.

Normally I'd take motivation from the people working in studio, without the studio setting, I no longer see if people are working in one place, therefore making me procrastinate more.

It's difficult being isolated from other students and not having each other to work alongside/learn from. The first month of school was incredibly overwhelming in workload which has left me feeling on the edge of burning out.

I find myself feeling more tired and drained doing online school compared to doing studio in Cambridge. Although I am trying to take care of myself and take breaks when I can, I still find myself sleeping later than usual.

Studio projects always feel a bit made up but the shared psychosis of studio helped.

I have a lot of responsibilities at home I would not normally have to juggle with school work it makes it very difficult.

Family relationship issues, grandma with dementia.

A lack of distractions (or the usual kind experience in a regular term/school environment) have somewhat helped, but I'm also experiencing a lack of energy that makes it difficult to stay motivated and productive for long periods of time.

Any mental health conflicts are from exterior forces (COVID, current events). As for motivation, school seems pointless online.

Nothing seems real. "I can take a nap right now... why wouldn't I?"

Working at home doesn't provide an engaging environment. Profs are making students do more assignments in lieu of class time.

It becomes overwhelming and motivation drops. It gets difficult to balance work. I get too stressed from all the work, I want to take a break to relieve stress, but I have no time to relax because there's so much to do. Personal time becomes time to catch up with work.

Online school helps focus on academics in the sense that it eliminates time and energy that I would've spent on hanging out and socializing.

However, it is much easier to get distracted during lectures and escape from my academic duties as there is no face-to-face pressure to stay on track. Coming from someone with ADHD and also very little self control, it is also very distracting to have to use multiple applications at once and switch from window to window. (mural, LEARN, etc.) In a lecture setting, it is much easier to pay attention to what is happening in front of me than to uncomfortably look at memes on my phone under my desk.

Lack of access to good work space.

First generation parent child dynamics are destructive and cloying.

Personally I am finding the general concept of working on studio or other projects now very un-motivating. Not only because of the current situation but because of the uncertain future ahead of graduation. I am also unmotivated due to the lack of finality around this term and the often vague or scattered instructions I've received in my courses.

Which of the following technological issues of remote learning have been a challenge for you? Please elaborate.

There are a lot of new platforms for this semester, but the profs and TAs have been helpful in teaching us how to use them to the best of their abilities – it's a learning process that takes time. I've been having difficulty accessing library resources with my WATCard, which has reduced the number of resources I've been able to use, but that could just be an individual issue on my end, which I'm trying to fix.

I personally just do not like online learning. There's no face to face interaction. I hate my classes with no live lecture because I'm literally just reading. I really just paid 6k to read and talk to other students huh when I could have done that for free. I know it can't be helped but like with everything going on, I wish they took into consideration people's mental health. Just because we're at home doesn't mean we should only be focusing on school. Architecture school is hard as it is already and this term is just purposely breaking people mind and body.

I realize that everyone is doing the best that they can, but it's difficult to have courses like studio be taught online. So much of design is hands on, and not only do we not have materials like trace or the workshop to try and flesh out working ideas, but also constantly navigating people (both classmates and professors) lagging, having audio issues, etc. has been a little uncomfortable. Furthermore, trying to find the GIS data and in general information about our individual sites have proven to be difficult across the board in the sense that not everyone has access to the same amount of information, and further being unable to access the library resources and other sets of information that would have been available had we been in person, is just a little frustrating. But again, I realize it's not really anything anyone can do something about.

I feel uncomfortable staring at a screen for 10 hours everyday at such a close range. Like what many profs say, looking away isn't a solution.

I like the option to research from physical books. Sometimes it's a little bit difficult to research online.

As someone who has ADHD and relies heavily on trained habits that are heavily associated with the spaces they are done in, I have found it difficult to separate work and rest spaces. Studio is where I associate my most rigorous work, and the library is where I am committed to research and study.

Are there concerns specific to certain courses, if yes which ones?

During the intro lecture to the chair course (E. English) I had the impression that the course would change to be more design based, as opposed to design-build. As 'restrictions' are being relieved, the professor's tone has seemed to have shifted to expecting full models.

Structures has been particularly difficult to follow along because of the dense content we have to get through each week, which is not only really hard to sit through but also to absorb three hours of constant information. Studio has had it's own struggle of trying to present information purely digitally, which is something we've been discouraged to do before, so it's a different kind of learning.

Studio is the main course where the crit structure has changed the most. Whereas before a desk crit might be an informal thing where you show rough sketches and your screen it is now more like a presentation. This has been beneficial in terms of practicing my presentation but often means additional time is needed to export my drawings and make a presentation. In other lecture base courses there has been a significant lack of information regarding deadlines and instruction on how to do certain projects. It has also been near impossible to coordinate group projects in my Arch 520 Ecosystem Design course due to the size of the groups that the Prof created and everyone's varying schedule or lack of motivation.

Especially for culture courses such as ico and sci-fi, the lack of exams translates to weekly responses which are much more time intensive and require more precision and research than a normal discussion during lecture.

Arch 276 structures has been especially difficult to focus on, especially as the lessons are 3 hours long. This was also the case in person, but has become much more difficult now that it's online. Since there is so much to cover, there isn't a lot of opportunity to dwell or wait until everyone understands, so it's very easy to become lost during the lesson and then impossible to catch up. The amount of assignments/work to be done for every course also makes it difficult to keep up with any one of them.

Arch 520 – Winton Elective: Tracey has done no actual teaching. The entire onus is on students to complete readings and viewings of films with no additional instruction.

ARCH 493 seems to have the usual studio requirements as an in-person term, this framework has personally felt extremely tiring to execute while living with family. ARCH 520 with Valerio Rynnimeri seemed to not change from the usual in person standards, the lack of due dates and direction early on have been a source of stress.

What are your biggest concerns with remote learning? Please elaborate.

I am genuinely concerned I will fail structures this year. I understand that online learning is different and that we are learning to adapt, but my biggest fear is that I will fail this class and have to stay back the year. I also feel that missing out on seeing classmates and on extracurriculars in this isolated state has had a toll on my mental well-being.

I don't like having my camera on in a live class. It's different from just being in the same room, because in person I can tell if people are watching me, but on Zoom I can't. I like seeing people in in-person classes though. Also it's impossible to make eye contact in video calls, which makes it strange.

It is so so clear to me why we need universal access to internet and why education should be free. Information and access to resources to promote the idea of becoming knowledgeable is priceless!! Or at least it should be.

Since it is the last term of this program, I feel that we are missing out on a lot of experiences including time spent with classmates and seeing past instructors before graduating. It feels like an unfinished end to these past five years.

I feel more reluctant to send an email for a question than in a studio environment where I can just ask a professor who is passing by.

Why do you prefer these lecture formats, are your reasons course specific? (Live lecture, Pre-recorded lecture, Slides with audio recorded lecture)

It's personally easier for me to pay attention when I can see the face of the instructor, and questions can be raised on the spot.

For structures, I think the pre-recorded lectures would be more beneficial. For all other courses, live lectures are better and more interactive.

I like courses with pre-recorded lectures in that sometimes the lectures are more organized and concise, and it encourages me to take it at my own pace. However, I will admit that synchronous lectures help in keeping me to a schedule.

Live lectures are the most like how we already learn in school, and the schedule makes it easier to commit to learning from them. Granted I live in EST so it's been easy for me to make these times. However I've also appreciated the self-guided lesson because I can engage with the content more personally and stay alert by being required to write a response to them. I recognize that that format works for more self-motivated people, though.

Currently I only have live video sessions. While these are good as a way to get the information right away they do tend to run over time and possibly having shorter pre recorded sessions may be an easier way to digest the information at our own pace.

As long as it's recorded, I'm fine. I really like recorded lectures because if I missed something, I can come back later. In addition, if I have any home responsibilities that forces me to miss a lecture, I can catch up with out worry. Particularly helpful in structures because I can stop the lecture when I need some time to understand something.

I like the asynchronous work because it allows for new engagement such as discussion boards in 225.

Additional comments.

Use MS Teams as sole program, and integrate scheduling into calendar function. Have better thread/forum for class to ask questions/answers to professors, as if a question was asked in front of the whole class, so information can transfer to all students.

The learning itself has gone surprisingly smoothly; it's mostly motivation that's been an issue for this term. As for research tools, I've already been using online research tools before the online term, so it wasn't much of a big transition to online-only research, though having all of these master lists of resources was a big boon! Substitutions for exams make sense, digital-only deliverables are working fine, and I don't feel like there's a lot missing by not submitting physical models. It seems like Architecture is a digital subject in that it can be adapted online surprisingly easily. My profs have taken into account mental health pressures and adapted some deliverables, which makes sense given the unusual circumstances. This is setting up to be a more forgiving and laid-back term. There's less academic rigor in my life in exchange for having a more laid-back and dull lifestyle, and I can't say if that's a good thing or not.

I think the school has done a commendable job in transitioning to an online interface, given the strange and unexpected circumstances.

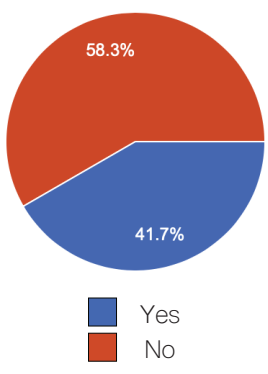
It's just been a hard term and it would be really nice if we also get a 'Pass or Fail' marking scheme. You can't expect to have the same experience when it's not. Architecture school isn't meant to be taught online.

Online Learning Faculty Feedback

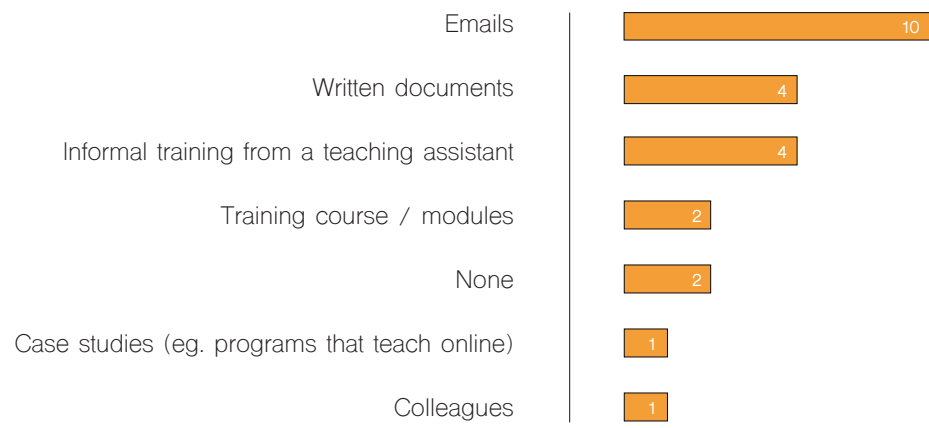
Spring Term 2020 - Midterm

12 Responses

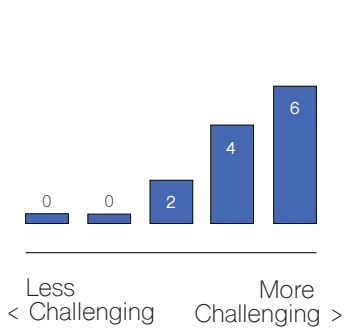
Have you taught an online course before?



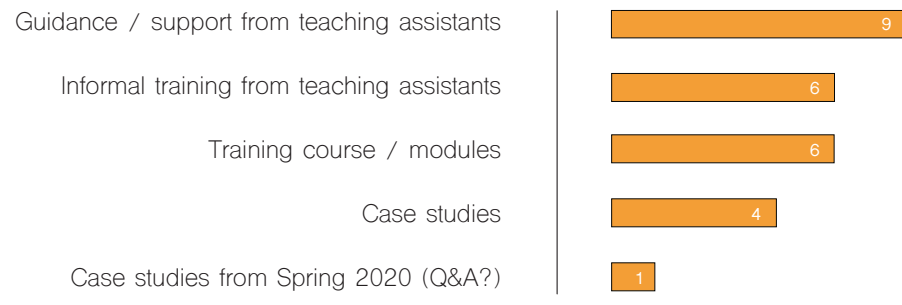
What training/information did you receive to prepare? (Check all that apply.)



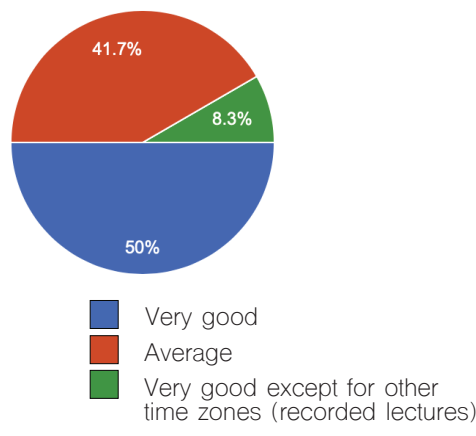
What is your overall impression of currently teaching online courses versus in-class?



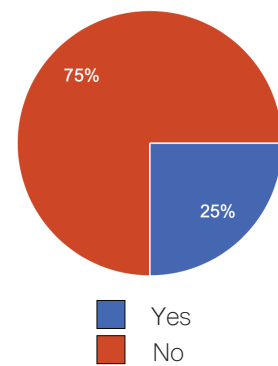
In your opinion, what would be the best way for instructors in the Fall to prepare themselves for online teaching? (Check all that apply.)



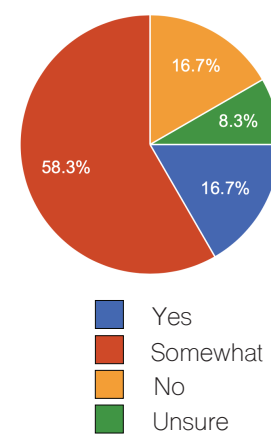
How is class attendance?



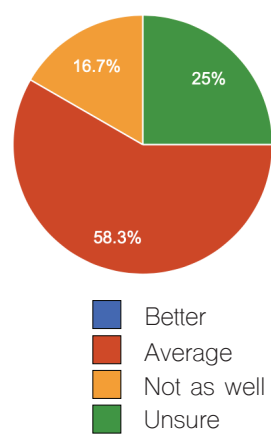
Is there group work in your course?



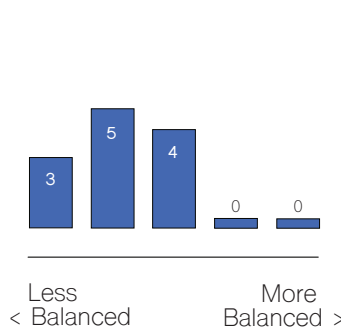
Are you or your TAs overwhelmed with the transition?



In your opinion how are students performing compared to their usual level?



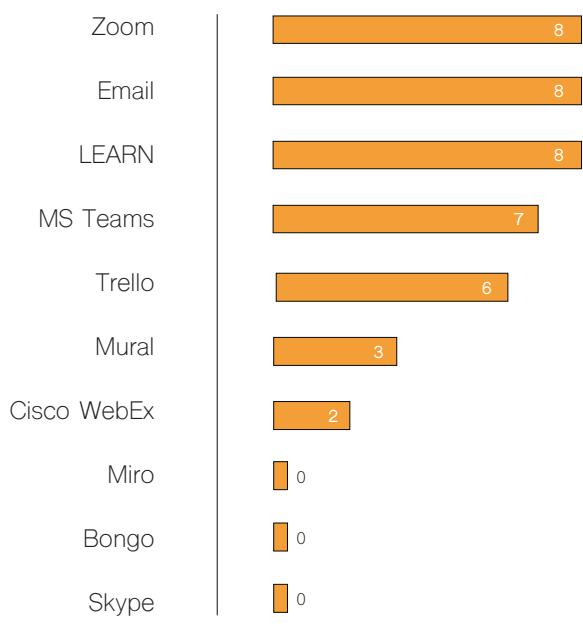
How would you compare your current work and personal life balance?



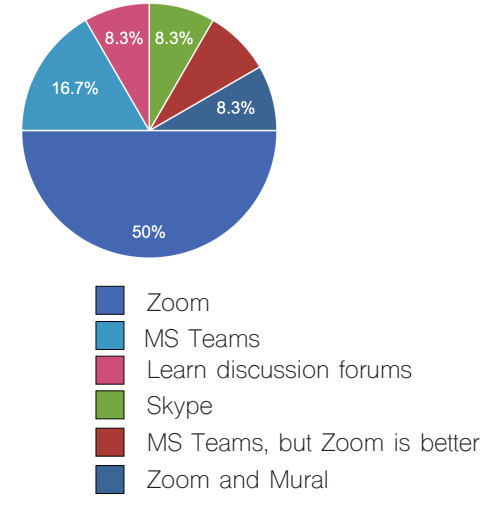
Are there new challenges you are facing?

- Harder to drop-in to check on students
- More work for course prep
- Issues with accessing software or tech
- Engaging in fluid discussions with students
- Too many communication channels
- More time and mental energy is required

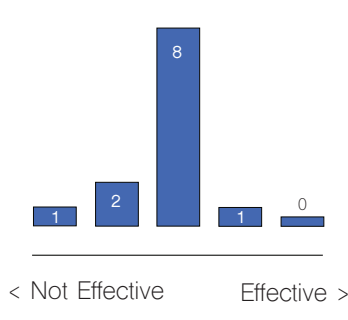
What softwares/features are you currently using? (Check all that apply.)



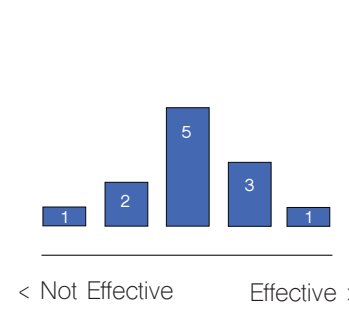
In your opinion what is the most effective digital communication program for class?



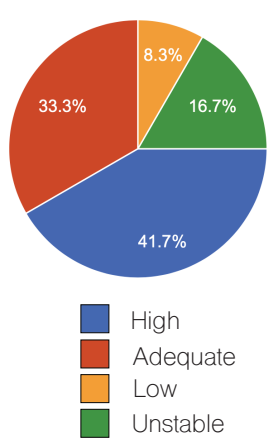
Please rate the effectiveness of the program Trello (for instructors that have used)



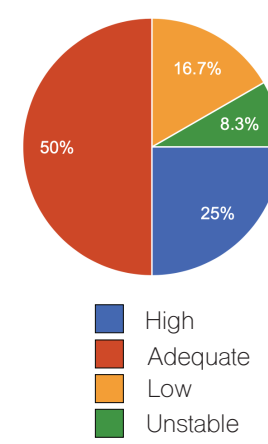
Please rate the effectiveness of the program Mural (for instructors that have used)



What is the quality of your video display during conferences?



What is the quality of your audio during conferences?



Additional feedback or comments:

I went to James Skidmore's webinar offered through CTE in March(?) about using Discussion Forums for classes. It was helpful and I followed it roughly, but I could really have used a template or more technical guidance on how to set these up, it probably took me 2 weeks just to set up the system. I wonder if it would be possible to set up a few templates for different models of courses that instructors could be introduced to/trained in, and they could select and customize.

There are a number of concerns with regard to student well-being and designing virtual spaces that manufacture social relations between students. During formal reviews, we have been assigning one student as a peer-respondent and another as a note-taker. They respond via text (embedded as comments on Mural) and can jump in with comments via audio/video as well. The feedback on this has been positive. With regard to class structuring, many students have expressed enjoying listening in on and participating in other students' desk crits (we have been running these in small groups 3-5) while a small number (~2) have expressed a desire to meet one-on-one with Instructors.

Notes
* Numbers convey number of responses
** Lists made from faculty comments