VITALITY

Weekly VITAL teaching ideas

First Day Ideas on Zoom

What ideas have bubbled up for the first day of class on Zoom? We would like to share two ideas: (1) beginning to build class community and (2) setting the tone for the course.

Using a visual to accompany text or narration can have a positive effect on a student's experience in online learning (Rademacher, 2019). Consider using a *visual aid*, in place of text-heavy syllabus, to highlight the course structure, design, and assignments. As transparency and clarity are important, be sure to address the learning goals, how the assignments support those learning goals and contribute to students' learning, and how students will receive feedback and be assessed.

Image was created using Google docs Link to visual aid design tools

What desired interactions do we want to see in Zoom? What guidelines may be helpful? Continue to build community by collaboratively generating guidelines with students. Students are more likely to take ownership of what they create (i.e., Zoom guidelines), remind each other of these guidelines and adhere to them. For example, you may ask, "*Based on your experience with online learning, what strategies have been effective or ineffective? What behaviors would we want to establish in our class to promote a positive learning experience for oneself and others? Post your response to chat.*" Students read the responses in chat and find common themes: they might point out that most of their peers agree that cameras should be turned on in breakout rooms, raise hand feature should be used to ask questions. These common themes, in turn, could become the guidelines.

Keep the guidelines brief, actionable, use the students' words in stating them, and post them in Blackboard LMS as part of classroom expectations. Remind the students that guidelines are intended as a guide and not set in stone; they can be adjusted, amended, as helpful. Revisit the guidelines with students periodically, e.g., *How well are you able to abide by the established guidelines? Are the guidelines still working for you? Would it be helpful to revisit or adjust the guidelines to make them more helpful to you?*

Adapted from C, Wong, EdD, Faculty Focus, August 2020 – accessed 01/21/21

Reference: Rademacher, C. "The Value of Images in Online Learning." 05/13/2019