

Spring 2021 Teaching Recommendations for CEMS Faculty

The first page of this document builds on prior recommendations made to CEMS faculty in preparation for the Fall 2020 semester (pp. 2-3). The following recommendations were developed by the CEMS Pedagogical Innovation Committee and with information gathered from the Fall 2020 CEMS Student Experience Survey. Students found learning in REMT and MIXD courses to be the most challenging. Therefore, the following recommendations are largely focused on those modalities.

<p>Communication. <i>Clearly and efficiently communicate requirements and deadlines to students.</i></p> <p>Communicate upcoming class topics and due dates on a regular schedule (e.g., same day each week) and using a consistent format (e.g., Blackboard announcements).</p> <p>Make expectations and instructions for remote assessment clear, particularly for exams (Rec. #7 below).</p> <p>MIXD: Post the schedule of in-person and remote classes in a central location for students to easily reference. This information should be included in the syllabus and could also be added to a dedicated tab or Calendar page in Blackboard.</p>	<p>Organization. <i>Provide students with a predictable and well-organized structure for the class.</i></p> <p>Select a primary location for students to access course materials (Blackboard, MS Teams)</p> <p>Organize your course materials in a consistent and predictable manner (e.g., using Blackboard Course Shells or organizing materials by module, topic, etc.)</p> <p>Provide course materials that support remote learning (e.g., Dedicated Blackboard ‘tabs’ for MIXD schedules, MS Teams How-To’s, Professional Netiquette guidelines, etc).</p>
<p>Participation and Engagement. <i>Encourage a culture of participation in your classes.</i></p> <p>Remind students that remote learning is different than in-person learning and requires their active participation in the learning process to get the most out of the course.</p> <p>Orient students to participation features in MS Teams (raise hand, chat) and set expectations for professional use of these features during class (<i>See MS Teams Professional Etiquette below</i>).</p> <p>Encourage students to keep their cameras on during class discussions and group work if they are able. Students reported a greater sense of engagement when peers had cameras on. This adds a level of accountability and may discourage students from looking at their phones or other distractions during class. Of course, the decision to have a camera on is ultimately up to the student, their individual comfort-level, and technological constraints (hardware, bandwidth, etc).</p>	<p>Interaction and Connection. <i>Provide opportunities for students to interact with you and other students in the class.</i></p> <p>ONL: Develop your ‘online presence’ by creating a simple ‘About the Instructor’ page and through frequent and regular communication with students (e.g., videos, announcements)</p> <p>Provide opportunities for students to ask questions. Encourage attendance at synchronous office hours, invite students to stay after class for questions, create mini-assignments that require students to bring questions about course content to class.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for discussion, e.g., Synchronous group discussions using MS Teams Breakout Rooms or Channels, or asynchronous discussions using Blackboard Discussions, Yellowdig*, or Piazza*.</p> <p><small>*CEMS students rated Yellowdig and Piazza more highly than Blackboard in the Fall 2020 student survey.</small></p>
<p>Professional Netiquette. <i>Set clear expectations for student behavior in MS Teams meetings.</i></p> <p>Remind students that the experience of remote learning will prepare them for an increasingly remote work force and, for this reason, professional behavior is expected. Provide students information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How and when to share video, e.g., option to blur or set appropriate custom backgrounds ▪ How and when to share screen, e.g., during group work or when asked by the instructor. ▪ How to use the Chat, e.g., eliminate jokes or irrelevant conversation, use a professional tone to ask questions. ▪ How to ask questions, e.g., submitting relevant questions in Chat or Raise Hand. ▪ How to support dialogue, e.g., helping to alert the instructor when Chat questions haven’t been answered. ▪ How to actively participate in group work, e.g., Keep cameras ON, be respectful and inclusive of teammates. 	

Recommendations for CEMS Faculty: FA20 Instructional Delivery *(emailed to faculty on 6/10/20)*

As we prepare for teaching in fall '20, the following recommendations are offered for consideration by CEMS faculty. These recommendations are grounded in recent resources provided through the UVM Center for Teaching and Learning ([Pivotal Pedagogy](#), [Teaching Effectively Online](#)), best practices at other institutions, and results from the CEMS Remote Instruction Student Survey (April 27 – May 10, 2020).

Recommendation	Basis and specific recommendations
<p>1</p> <p>Make your courses 'flexible' with regard to delivery method</p>	<p>Instruction will likely require some combination of in-person and remote delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review CTL guidelines for online course design and teaching continuity. Consider methods such as HyFlex and Universal Design for Learning. Ensure the course learning outcomes can be achieved, both in-person and remotely. If they cannot, contact CTL or the CEMS Directors of Curricular Enrichment for support. Identify the primary learning platform for your course (See Rec. #6); Ensure that all course materials are available on this platform. For synchronous delivery, ensure student access to recorded lectures after class. Consider the requirements for assessment and explore options for providing exams/assignments online or in alternative formats (See Rec. #7).
<p>2</p> <p>Build community in your courses</p>	<p>Community-building is an important means of keeping students engaged and motivated regardless of whether a course is offered online or in-person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to your students at least one week prior to the first class. Let them know that you are looking forward to teaching them this semester. Create an introductory post or video for your course(s). Provide an overview of what students will learn, why this information is valuable, and the 'culture' you would like to create in the course (e.g., participation, exploration, respect). Introduce yourself either in writing or by video. Sharing your story can make students more inclined to share theirs. Invite students to introduce themselves and their interests. Explore using Blackboard discussion board, FlipGrid video chat, or an activity in MS Teams (See Rec. #6). Provide more 'face-time' in online lectures or synchronous meetings. Create opportunities for discussion throughout the semester. Try Blackboard, FlipGrid, YellowDig for student/group discussions (See Rec. #6).
<p>3</p> <p>Promote engagement and inclusion in your courses</p>	<p>Students that feel engaged and included in their courses, tend to assume greater responsibility for their learning and demonstrate success in their studies. Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all course materials are accessible. See CTL guidelines and resources for accessible course materials. Review UDL guidelines for inclusive course design. Caption all videos using Screencast-O-Matic, MS Stream, during live lectures in MS Teams, or plan ahead to use UVM's captioning service. Create opportunities for student choice: Project topic, format of assessment, which quizzes to complete given a minimum number required, different achievement 'paths' (series of smaller assignments vs one larger assignment). Vary the format of course materials and their delivery (written, video, audio) Vary the type of assessment (formative/summative) and delivery (written, multiple choice, peer-review, timed/proctored versus take-home exams). Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction: In-class group activities/assignments, discussion boards, virtual office hours, study groups. Reward student participation and engagement. Have fun with this!
<p>4</p>	<p>Particularly for online courses, strong instructor presence and clear communication is key to keeping students on-task and engaged in their coursework.</p>

<p>Maintain clear and frequent communication with your students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clearly about the course layout and the platforms on the first day of class (or prior). Show students how and where to access course materials. • Communicate with students weekly (minimum) using both Blackboard and email • Set clear expectations around class attendance, participation, and assignments. • Include a netiquette statement (Network Etiquette) in the syllabus stating the proper behavior while interacting online. • Communicate frequently during the first two weeks to ensure that students understand the course expectations and can navigate the course materials. • Provide students with a course schedule, list of assignments and their due dates to help plan their week/semester
<p>5 Provide synchronous classes and help sessions where possible</p>	<p>The majority of CEMS students preferred synchronous instruction in spring '20. Synchronous instruction is another way to promote student engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey students at the beginning of the semester to assess possible barriers to access (live lectures, course materials, software and platforms). • Record live lectures so that students can watch/review asynchronously. • Record help sessions for those who cannot attend, especially if example problems are discussed regularly.
<p>6 Minimize and coordinate required learning platforms and technology within your program</p>	<p>Students may become overwhelmed when too many learning technologies are required. To minimize the number of learning platforms required in fall '20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Blackboard as the primary learning management system (where possible). • Use MS Teams as the primary conferencing tool for live class meetings. • Prioritize additional technologies and proctoring tools with Bb integration. • Coordinate and minimize additional UVM-approved platforms not covered above. • Minimize the cost to students of additional platforms and technologies.
<p>7 Be prepared for online or alternative final assessments</p>	<p>If social distancing measures are required, final assessments may need to be fully or partially online. Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See CTL's Exam Decision Tree to explore options for different exam formats. • Use UVM-approved platforms for administering exams (Blackboard+ integrated tools, Gradescope). • Consider alternatives to timed/proctored final assessments, particularly if students indicate barriers to access or opposition to online proctoring • If proctoring is required, use UVM-approved, low- or no-cost options. • Ensure academic integrity is maintained in whichever option you choose.

For help applying these recommendations in specific courses or types of courses (large or small lecture, lab course, project course, seminar), please reach out to support staff at [CTL](#) or the CEMS Directors of Curricular Enrichment, Priyantha Wijesinghe (pwijesin@uvm.edu) and Courtney Giles (cdgiles@uvm.edu).

Watch this space! Join the [CEMS TEACH team](#) for on-going teaching-centered conversations and the [CEMS TEACH webpage](#) for fall '20 updates and workshop opportunities.