



TRANSCRIPT

Low-Tech Strategies for Remote Teaching

Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning

May 20th, 2020

COVER SLIDE

Hi everyone, and thanks so much for joining us for this session on Low-Tech Solutions for Remote Teaching. Before we begin, can I ask everyone to take three steps to help make sure the technology works as smoothly as possible: Please (1) Mute your microphone to reduce background noise and feedback during the session; (2) Turn off your video so that we can avoid glitches and “freeze-ups” during the session; and (3) Close all of your other computer applications, which will help the session run more smoothly on your end.

We will also be recording this session, and so it’s important for you to know that before we begin. We’ll share the recording as well as a transcript of the session for those who would like to refer to it later or who were not able to attend the session today. We will be offering another session on low-tech strategies on June 12th.

This session is a ‘Conversation’ session, and so it can be as interactive as we make it. You’re welcome to ask questions or join in with your own ideas via the Chat feature, which you can open up as a sidebar in Online Rooms. You can also turn on your microphone if you want to ask a question or chime in via audio, and we’ll make sure to pause throughout to give you an opportunity to join in.

My name is Julie Temple, my pronouns are she and her, and I’m an Educational Developer with CITL (as of one month ago), and I’ve also been teaching as a per-course instructor in Gender Studies and in Sociology for the past six years. My colleagues who have collaborated on this session are Denise Carew, Stacey Alexander, and Ashley Howell. I also want to send out a special thanks to Catherine Shortall, who is an Educational Accessibility Specialist here at MUN, for sharing her expertise and providing feedback on this session. She wanted me to let you know that you can contact her any time for support in ensuring that your course is accessible to all of your students.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before we begin, we would like to respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral homelands of the Mi’kmaq and Beothuk. We would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original peoples of Labrador. I live and work in this territory as a white settler from the island portion of this province, and I recognize the immense work that lies ahead for us to work towards true reconciliation.

AGENDA

In the Conversation today, we'll cover 7 main areas:

1. Teaching in a Pandemic
2. Why would you choose low-tech?
3. What does low-tech mean?
4. Which low-tech strategies could you use for:
 - (1) Lecturing;
 - (2) Providing accessible course materials;
 - (3) Assessments
 - (4) Students communicating with you
 - (5) Students engaging with one another
6. What other low-tech strategies have you tried?
7. MUN Resources/External Resources

TEACHING IN A PANDEMIC

So here we are. Let's acknowledge the reality that we are all living in – this is a global pandemic! We have all experienced a shock as the world has changed in ways that we never could have imagined, and we are all living with a great deal of uncertainty. We are all trying to work from home and continue life in some semblance of what we have known, but under what for many of us are very trying conditions. It's simply not possible or reasonable in these circumstances to attempt to replicate how we would have run our courses for in-class instruction. Instead, our focus can be on starting with our course goals, and then designing activities that can work remotely for students to be able to meet these goals. And this of course, means a great deal of flexibility for ourselves and for our students.

Does anyone want to chime in here, either in Chat or by turning on your microphone? How have you found this transition?

WHY WOULD YOU CHOOSE LOW-TECH?

Low-tech strategies are an important way to make sure that you are addressing the needs of ALL your learners. They can also be a way to help deal with the restrictions that we as instructors are dealing with in this new context. For both students and instructors, this pandemic has affected our access to technology that we could take for granted when we were located physically at the university, and so there are extreme differences in our access to WiFi, bandwidth, computers, WebCam/Microphone/Printer, and other technology, and particularly for students and instructors living (and now working and studying) in rural and remote areas.

Using low-tech strategies also means taking into account the differences in the ways that this pandemic impacts students' and instructors' cognitive overload – which we are quickly learning is under strain from online meetings, mental health, our parenting and caregiving workload (and I say this as a single parent of three elementary-school-aged children!), and our access to private or quiet space. The reality is that many of our students are living in conditions where it is not safe or comfortable to study or learn or to bring the eyes of their classmates and instructor into.

Does anyone want to chime in here, either in Chat or by turning on your microphone? Why are you interested in using low-tech strategies?

Low-tech strategies, then, are an issue of equity, accessibility, and inclusion. Learners are diverse and so are their learning conditions. Providing **multiple options** helps meet the needs of ALL our learners.

WHAT DOES LOW-TECH MEAN?

LOW-TECH CAN STILL INCLUDE LECTURE VIDEOS

When it comes to remote learning, many instructors first think about creating videos of their lectures. If you do want to create lecture videos, you do not need your own recording studio or special technology. In Brightspace, you can use your computer or phone camera to record yourself lecturing at home. Using the 'Video Note' feature, you can record videos up to 30 minutes in length, and you can use the automatic closed-captioning option. Or, if you prefer, you do not need to create videos at all. There are many low-tech activities you can use to meet the goals of your course.

Has anyone found any other simple ways to create videos?

WHICH LOW-TECH ACTIVITIES COULD YOU USE FOR...

Now let's look at the low-tech activities that we can use for 5 various elements of teaching: 1. Lecturing, 2. Providing accessible course materials, 3. Assessments, 4. Students engaging with one another, and 5. Students communicating with you.

LECTURING

These are activities that other instructors have used successfully in place of in-class lecturing. Please join in in the Chat if you would like to add strategies of your own that you have found useful!

- Record short captioned videos of your lectures with the Video Note or Video Uploader in Brightspace, or upload to Youtube (10 minutes at a time is recommended).
- Use a physical **whiteboard** for visual notes or diagrams as you video your lecture.
- Include transcripts for all audio or video lectures OR choose the closed-captioning option in Video Note on Brightspace or on Youtube.
- If you need to do synchronous lectures, consider phone conferences. A phone-in option is available for students to dial into Web-Ex.
- Create a blog-post summary of your lectures.
- Podcasts
- Narrate your Powerpoint slides using “Record Slideshow” feature. It is recommended to break up your slideshow into 10-minute parts. Remember to allow sufficient time for students to read the slides as well.
- Series of images with text-based explanation.

Are there any other low-tech activities you’ve used in place of Lecturing?

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE COURSE MATERIALS

Providing accessible course materials is one of the most important areas for low-tech strategies.

Making sure that your files are as small as possible can greatly reduce frustration for us and for our students.

- Documents: using “docx” is automatically smaller than “doc”; “Reduce file size”
- Videos: HandBrake app
- Images: Preview in Mac; TinyJPG or TinyPNG
- Powerpoint: avoid animations and transitions

Files can be sent to students via

- Brightspace upload or via E-mail

We recommend that you consult MUN’s guidelines for creating accessible documents and presentations, and I’ve included the link for these guidelines at the end of the slides.

Are there any other low-tech strategies you've used to provide course materials to your students?

ASSESSMENTS

We have a separate CITL workshop on Assessments that will be offered again in the coming weeks.

Students can use a phone or scanning app (e.g Adobe Scan) to take a picture of written work, journal entries, diagrams, or concept maps and send via Brightspace Assignments tool or by e-mail. If necessary, students who lack access to the internet may need to and submit their assessments by mail.

You can upload or e-mail your slide deck and ask students to annotate to show their understanding, and e-mail back, you can use non-timed, non-credit quizzes via Brightspace; open-book assessments to synthesize or apply learning, micro-blogs or tweet-like reflections on learnings.

Over to you again. Are there any other low-tech activities you've used in place of traditional assessments?

STUDENTS COMMUNICATING WITH YOU

To communicate with you through remote learning, you can choose to go ahead with office hours by using the Online Rooms feature in Brightspace. However, there are also lower-tech options. You could use the Brightspace chat feature instead of video office hours. You could create a discussion forum on Brightspace for student questions, so that all students can see the questions asked and the answers you give. This also cuts down on individual questions from students that are often repetitive. Office hours can also be offered by phone or text, which some instructors have used successfully by very strictly limiting the hours when these can be used. And finally, e-mail or course mail communication can be used, with the advantage of Course Mail being that it keeps all communication with students within Brightspace and out of your no-doubt already very full e-mail inbox!

Has anyone found any other methods of communication useful?

STUDENTS ENGAGING WITH ONE ANOTHER

To engage with one another, you can use similar forums to what we discussed for instructor-student communication. Instructors have also found these strategies helpful:

- Discussion Forums in Brightspace
- Chat feature in Online Rooms – you can create meetings in Online Rooms for students to use as breakout spaces, and then can use in the Instant Chat feature to have real-time conversations. These can also be copied and saved if you would like the discussion submitted.
- Twitter Discussions can also be used. Brightspace has a widget that allows you to evaluate students' participation in a Twitter discussion using a hashtag that you create for your course. I use this regularly now for my Intro to Gender Studies students, and I've found it very successful in having students engage with one another much more so than they did in Brightspace.
- Ask students to collaborate in groups (via e-mail, text, or an online space of their choosing) to summarize readings or to create a final exam review guide.
- Send out discussion prompts and students can have discussions in online chat spaces of their choosing. They can submit the transcript of the discussion.

Are there any other low-tech activities you've used for student collaboration?

PROVIDING GUIDANCE REMOTELY

In class, we provide a lot of guidance and nudging. This is something that students can really miss the benefits of when they are no longer in the classroom. However, there are many ways to continue this type of guidance remotely:

- point out important elements,
- highlight things to focus on,
- provide questions to guide their learning,
- explain how content builds,
- pop in to facilitate discussion forums

WHAT OTHER LOW-TECH STRATEGIES HAVE YOU TRIED?

Now it's over to you again... are there any other low-tech strategies have you tried in your courses? Please add these in the chat or turn on your microphone to chime in.

Any other questions that you might have before we clue up?

MUN RESOURCES / EXTERNAL RESOURCES

We'll leave you today with a list of resources that you may find useful, both here at MUN as well as external resources focused on remote learning.

Self-Service Video Hosting

<https://blog.citl.mun.ca/technologyresources/other-edtech/self-service-video-hosting/>

CITL Online Rooms Videos: <https://blog.citl.mun.ca/technologyresources/brightspace-how-tos/communication/online-roomsvideo-assignments/>

MUN Accessible Document Guidelines

<https://www.mun.ca/student/equity/accessibility/creating.php>

<https://www.ctl.upenn.edu/whiteboarding-tools-work-remote-teaching-technologies>

<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/digitalmatters/2020/03/20/low-tech-remote-teaching-solutions/>

<https://keepteaching.duke.edu/strategies/low-tech-options/>