Teaching in Corona Times

Isn't it ironic? Two to three weeks ago, we were rushing from A to B on our campus, queuing for food or coffee, but now we are in our homes and getting ready for a big battle—the battle for online education. This sudden and forced change in our lives has pushed all schools and universities to find a way to ensure the continuity of instruction. So, our purpose is clear at least. Since last week, we have been working closely with IT to help you continue your teaching online. Luckily, we already have Blackboard as our official learning management system, Panopto as a video recorder software, and other tools such as Teams and Zoom. Of course, the choices on the market are endless, but it is always good to start with the available technologies that we know and support.

We wanted to give you some quick tips about online teaching. First of all, do not panic. If you are teaching online for the first time and feel unprepared for this challenge, start by going through your slides and preparing detailed class notes, full of clear and concise explanations and examples. If your course topics can easily be explained with visuals such as graphs, tables, photos, or pictures, prepare them and write instructions or explanations about what you expect your students to do with the visuals or how to infer or interpret the information given in tables or graphs, etc. Once you’ve prepared your materials for a day or week, then upload them to your Blackboard page. Thanks to KUSIS and Blackboard integration, all courses have an open and ready-to-use course page in Blackboard. If you have not used Blackboard yet, you may watch our training videos, read our how-to guides. If you prefer, you also have the option of using F-drive as an alternative to Blackboard. Click this link https://kolt.ku.edu.tr/?page_id=4565&lang=en to reach our Blackboard training and all relevant materials.

Secondly, prepare weekly assignments to see how your students are doing with online learning. Ask your students to upload their assignments to Blackboard and try to give feedback. If your class size is large, you may consider sharing some common mistake students made on the assignment by posting samples to Blackboard. You can provide the answer key so that your students can correct their own mistakes. Please remember that students may need your individual support, so hold your office hours online as they are scheduled and reach out students who really need your direction, encouragement and support.

Thirdly, we know that synchronous teaching is challenging but may be necessary for some courses, especially ELC courses, core program courses, and many others that require more interaction and human presence. Please look over our Panopto, Teams, and Zoom resources (https://www.ku.edu.tr/online/) and pick the one that you can most easily adopt. You can test it with a small group of students such as your graduate students or your project group before the classes start. You can get their feedback and make necessary adaptations, amendments, and improvement. If you feel it is too much to teach two live sessions, you may prefer to conduct one live session per week. After your hard work, if the prospect of teaching a synchronous course still feels overwhelming, make a gradual move and start recording course videos. You need to remind your students not to share your course materials including course videos or video recordings of live sessions with other third parties or in social media.

Lastly, you can also read our frequently asked questions https://kolt.ku.edu.tr/?page_id=4643&lang=en and visit the following external resources before planning your first session:
1. Teaching Online in a Pinch
Bryant University has prepared a website for online teaching. Please visit it to see how you can plan your asynchronous teaching.
https://rise.articulate.com/share/6kqC8QxnyC81vj8hnZWp5BA1hFNTvm9H#
Also please visit their crowdsourced tips and tools for teaching online.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QR7lEgdisO6JtmELs07uUsSSu2Yox86GJY9wGV6mBjA/edit

2. Culture Shock: Teaching Online in a Pinch
EDUCAUSE is a non-profit organization that conducts research on online teaching and publishes useful tips and good practices.

3. Teaching Remotely-Science Labs
Harvard University the Derek Bok Center for Learning and Teaching prepared a website to help instructors on how to teach hands-on courses such as LAB sessions online.
https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/remote-labs

4. Expert Offers Tips for Teaching Online
Cynthia Golden, an associate vice provost and the executive director of the University of Pittsburgh Center for Teaching and Learning, provided tips for online teaching.
https://www.pittwire.pitt.edu/news/expert-offers-tips-teaching-online

5. What Do We Need to Teach?
Deborah J. Cohan, an associate professor of sociology at the University of South Carolina at Beaufort, wrote a very nice commentary on how to approach our students and how much content to teach in these difficult times.
https://insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/20/beyond-focusing-educational-delivery-models-faculty-should-prioritizeessential?fbclid=IwAR1jLCKucELaTjZGnXKBtQlxLCi3aFsL1i4W8Efvw9ESptp35AZWr98JrKc#.Xnkvhlo7dWM.facebook

If you want to share your online teaching experiences with KU community, please send us an e-mail at zzeybekoglu@ku.edu.tr.

Murat Sözer, KOLT Director
Zuhal Zeybekoğlu, KOLT Manager