

Teaching and Learning During COVID-19

A 2020-2021 Joint Research Project

Teaching, Learning, & Academic Innovation

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- Understand course-related experiences and perceptions of instructors and their undergraduate students during COVID-19
- Generate recommendations for improving teaching and learning at UK
- Share findings with the scholarly community

Phase 1: Surveys

Fall 2020

Course-Specific Surveys

- For instructors and students
- Survey 1: Aug. 2020
- Survey 2: Nov, 2020

Structure

- Rating scale
- Open-ended



Environmental Factors

Workload
Diversity and inclusion
Course organization
Instructional support

Psychological Factors

Motivation
Mindset
Mental/physical health
Sense of belonging

Behavioral Factors

Learning challenges
Attendance
Self-regulation
Engagement

Open-Ended Items

Ideas for improvement
Challenges to learning
Advice for future students
Helpful course features

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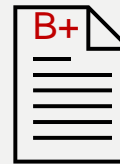


Phase 2: Outcomes

Winter 2021

Learning Outcomes

- Course grades



Institutional Data

- Demographics
- Classification
- Major
- GPA
- Course enrollment

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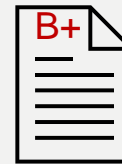


Phase 2: Outcomes

Winter 2021

Learning Outcomes

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Institutional Data

- Demographics
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- Major
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- Course enrollment

Phase 3: Interviews

Spring 2021

Individual interviews

- Students
- Instructors



Participants



111 Instructor Volunteers

Survey 1 (August) = 102
Survey 2 (November) = 110
Interviews (Spring) = 34



261 Course Sections

Offered across 12 UK colleges



7,146 Consented Students

Survey 1 (August) = 6,060
Survey 2 (November) = 5,835
Interviews (Spring) = 12



CONFIDENTIALITY (IRB #340682): Data were collected with consent of participants. The research team will not share specific information about which instructors and students have participated. To preserve confidentiality, findings will be reported in aggregate.

Current Lines of Inquiry

NEW INSTRUCTIONAL POSSIBILITIES

- Multimodal assignments
- Remote learning activities
- Re-designed elements

COURSE ORGANIZATION

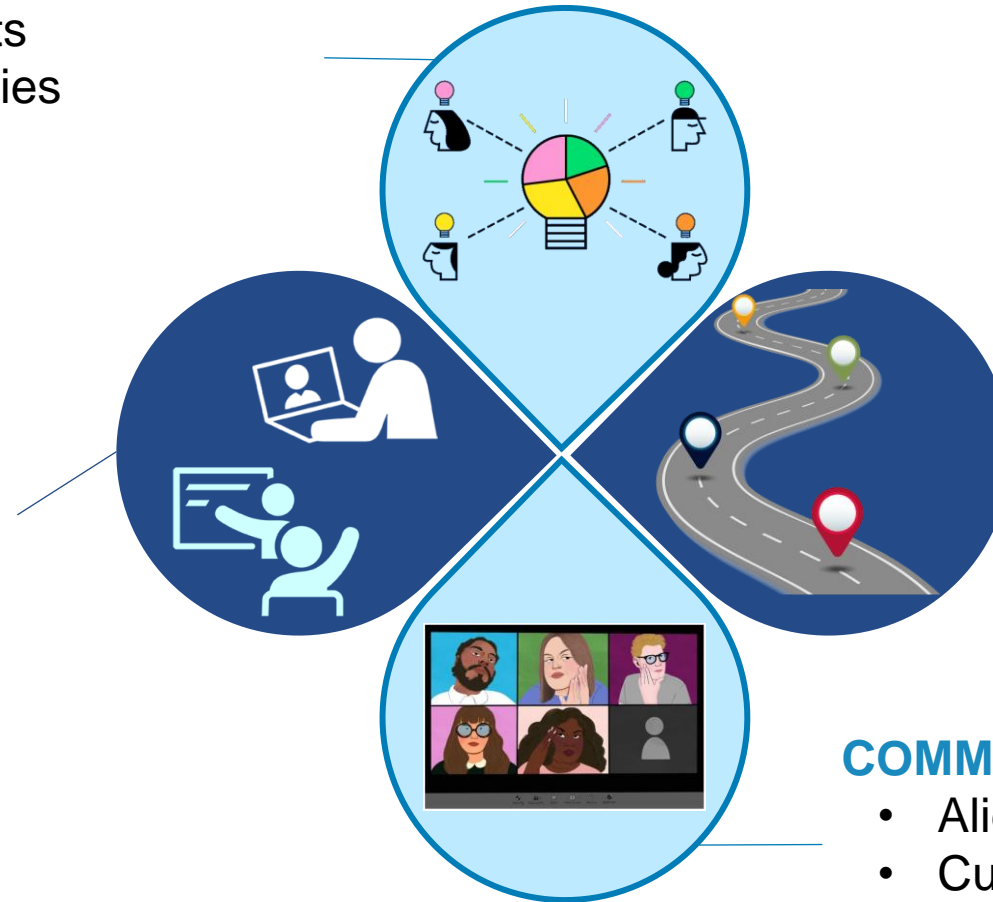
- Best practices
- Effects on learning
- Effects on self-regulation

INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY

- Learning outcomes
- Effects on motivation
- Attendance patterns

COMMUNITY & BELONGING

- Alignment between instructors/students
- Culturally-responsive teaching
- Exemplars



How Can I Help my Students Build Time Management Skills?

In the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 5,000 University of Kentucky students were surveyed to learn more about the nature of teaching and learning during this global educational phenomenon. This sheet contains preliminary data and student comments.

What instructional strategies have helped students with time management?

In the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 5,000 undergraduate students and 100 instructors were surveyed to learn more about the nature of teaching and learning during this global educational phenomenon. One of the open-ended questions instructors answered was, "What is so effective about your current approach to teaching that you think is working well?" This sheet contains preliminary data and instructor comments from this research.



Divide Up Large Assignments
"Breaking the course content into smaller chunks for students to go through at their own pace."



Streamline Navigation
"I have greatly reduced redundancy in this class and have made the class organization on canvas intuitive and easy to follow."



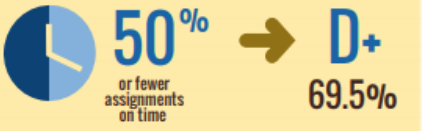
Use Frequent Due Dates
"Flexibility for students to work ahead, but frequent due dates to keep students moving through the material."



Organize with a Canvas Template
"Our college developed a Canvas template, and students...say the course is very well organized on Canvas. They have had no problems navigating and instructions are clear."

What do the data show?

Students who turned in 50% or fewer assignments on time earned an average final grade of 69.5%.



Students who turned in 100% of assignments on time earned an average final grade of 86.6%.



What can instructors do to help students with time management?

- **Estimate Reading Times**
When assigning longer readings, provide estimated reading times so that students can gauge the amount of time required to complete a task. You can estimate how long it will take students by first timing yourself reading the selection, then multiplying by 1.5. Once you've determined the estimated reading time, assign the next reading assignments in your syllabus or course.
- **Make Your Syllabus Calendar**
In Atul Gawande's bestseller, *The Checklist Manifesto*, he uses medical research to demonstrate the power of checklists. The same concept applies to understanding the human brain compels us to do things. Word, you can easily change it. New Bullet feature.
- **Weekly Video**
At the start of each week, provide a video overview of the week's content.

Top Suggestions for Canvas Course Design

What do students have to say about the most effective ways instructors use Canvas?

In the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 5,000 University of Kentucky undergraduate students were surveyed to learn more about the nature of teaching and learning during this global educational phenomenon. One question asked students to identify which aspects of their instructor's teaching were most helpful. A number of students discussed the effective use of Canvas course shells as one helpful practice. The quotes below are a sample of those survey responses.

- "The format of our Canvas page is easy to understand and all of the course material is divided up into weekly sections to make it more manageable. This allows me to remember a bigger portion of the content."
- "The resources provided on the Canvas lab are helpful and he provides a lot of good examples in each topic. Each lecture has a quiz associated with it which is helpful to practice the material before homework and tests."
- "Constant, high quality communication via Canvas. In a semester filled with information overload, her signal is consistently effective."
- "My instructor communicates with us through Canvas everyday so we understand exactly what we need to be working on each day and throughout the week. The course is also very easy to navigate on Canvas which is very helpful."

Strategies for Using Canvas to Support Student Learning

Instructors, we have a lot of flexibility when it comes to course organization and design. As we create our Canvas course shells, employing some of the following strategies can help make them more navigable and intuitive for our students.

- **Organize Content into Modules**
Use modules to organize and order course materials to guide your students through the course. Consider creating a template for pages to present information (e.g., assignments, quizzes, and other resources) in a consistent way.
- **Use Canvas Announcements**
Use Canvas announcements to share reminders, class updates, and a general idea of when and how you plan to communicate with students.

How is this helping instructors?

How Can I Encourage My Students to Ask For Help?

How do other instructors encourage students to seek help?

In the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 100 University of Kentucky instructors were surveyed to learn more about the nature of teaching and learning during this global educational phenomenon. Reflecting on the fall semester, instructors were asked to report on their teaching successes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some representative comments are shared below.

- "I actually have more students that are NOT afraid to reach out to me and ask for help. (In office hours) I was asking students for suggestions and tried to be more helpful and meet all their needs."
- "When we broke in March to go on-line, I gave the problem sets to students to work on and told them I would use class time for office hours. I found that few people joined me. So this semester...I turned the problem set activity into something we would work through together, via zoom."
- "I encourage [students] to reach out to me for help outside of class time...The direction I give is: 'If you have a question that is not urgent email me. If you need help with the software or your are stuck, then text me and I will make time to get online and help you.'"

What can I do to foster help-seeking in my students?

As instructors, we can't make students come to us for help, but we can design a learning environment that will reduce the psychological barriers that might keep students from reaching out when they are unsure. Here are five ideas to help encourage students to ask for academic help when they need it.

- 1 Re-brand Office Hours**
Some students may think that "office hours" are hours when the instructor wants to work uninterrupted in their office. Clarify this misconception and make this sacred time slot more student-friendly by re-branding office hours as "Student Hours," "Review Hours," or "Open Hours."
- 2 "Ask the Students" Discussion Board**
Give students a low-key way to ask questions by creating an ungraded "Ask the Students" discussion board in Canvas. Students can pose questions to be answered by their classmates, and you can follow the discussion board thread to see which concepts students are struggling with.
- 3 Assign a Gateway Visit**
It's much easier to get students to return to office hours (virtual and in-person) if they've already visited once before. Have students "break the office hours seal" by assigning a visit to one of your first office hours sessions for a nominal amount of participation points.
- 4 Schedule Office Hours Strategically**
Students may not visit office hours because they don't want to seem like they need help. Remove this barrier by scheduling office hours a day or two before weekly assignments are due, and tell them you will help them check or review their work before turning it in.
- 5 Build in Short Reflections**
Build in short reflections to help students pause and think about what they know & what they need help with. One strategy is using a stoplight reflection after teaching new content: Green=What do you understand really well? Yellow=What are you unsure/fly about? Red=Where are you totally lost?

Access to many free tutoring and student support services. These resources are available at <http://bit.ly/HelpUKY>

75% Of instructors reported taking part in CELT or TLAI workshops

How is this helping students?



How Has COVID-19 Affected Students' Time Management?

In the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 5,000 University of Kentucky undergraduate students were surveyed to learn more about the nature of teaching and learning during this global educational phenomenon. This sheet contains preliminary data and student comments from this research study.

What advice do students have for future students taking this course?

Reflecting on the fall semester, 20% of students' open-ended responses to this question suggested that time management was key to academic success during a pandemic and beyond. Some representative comments are shared below.



Start Off Strong

"Go hard at the beginning of the semester & give yourself some room to mess up at the end, making sure you're ahead of the game at the beginning of the semester really helps set up the rest of the semester."



Give Yourself Time

"Give yourself plenty of time... if you wait until the day of... you will be rushing and not actually retaining anything. If you have questions, you can come to Zoom meetings prepared... I did not and I regret it FULLY."



30 Minutes Each Day

"The assignments in this class are very manageable if you don't procrastinate. Taking 30 minutes each day to watch one lecture or do one assignment will ensure you get all of your weekly tasks done, stay on track, and do well on the exams."



Follow Class Schedule

"Stay on track and watch lecture videos on the days you're supposed to (like you would if you attended class in person), otherwise you are going to fall behind and end up having to watch 5 or 6 lecture videos at a time the night before a test."

What do the data show?

Students who turned in less than half of their assignments on time earned a D+ as their average final grade.



Students who turned in all assignments on time earned a B+ as their average final grade.



What study strategies work best if my time is limited?

- Self-Quizzing**
Rather than simply re-reading a text, take some time to pause periodically and ask yourself questions like "What are the key ideas? When do they apply? How would I define them? How do the ideas relate to what I already know (Brown et al., 2014, p.201)?"
- Mix It Up**
Mix in practice of other subjects and skills when you set aside time to study rather than focusing on a single subject or problem type (Brown, et al., 2014).
- Periodic Practice**
Create a schedule for self-quizzing that allows time to elapse between study sessions (a little time spent every day) and quiz yourself over new and previous material. Anything you want to remember must be periodically recalled from memory (Brown et al., 20pp.203-204).

Brown, P.C., Roediger III, H.L., & McDaniel, M.A. (2014) *Make it stick*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.



How Do I Ask For Help When I'm Unsure?

What advice do students have on asking for help?

Reflecting on the fall semester, students were asked to provide advice for future students on how to be successful in a course. Over 750 students' open-ended responses to this question mentioned that asking for help from professors, UK academic services and peers was a good way to be successful. Some representative comments are shared below.

"Make sure you go to office hours"

"When I came to UK... I was afraid to ask strangers for help on my assignments...it has had a negative effect on my understanding of the material covered."

"If you don't understand something **SPEAK UP!!!**"

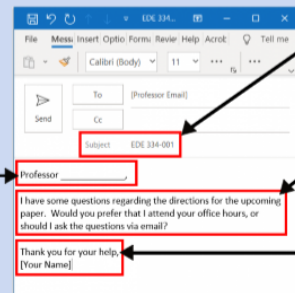
Ask questions as soon as you feel lost. So...major takeaway: **ASK ALL THE questions YOU EVER HAVE IN THIS CLASS!**

"Ask for help on assignments...if you're confused...your professor is always willing to help."

"Don't try to do it all on your own."

How Do I Email My Professor to Ask For Help?

Greeting
The first email you send to an instructor should be a little more formal than one you might send to a friend or family member. Include a greeting, using the instructor's name preceded "Professor".



Subject
Many instructors teach multiple courses. Including the course name and section saves them the time of having to look through class rosters to figure out which course you're asking about.

Message
Keep it polite, short, and to the point. Aim for 3 sentences or less.

Closing
End your email with a formal greeting like "Thanks for your help".

How to get help with... Time Management



<http://bit.ly/HelpUKY>

If you have questions about a class or assignment, your first step should be to **talk to your instructor or teaching assistant**. Stop by their office hours, send them an email, make an appointment, or hang out after class to chat. If you still need help, students at UK have access to many free tutoring and student support services. These services provide help with a wide range of courses, assignments, and situations. Access a list of these resources at <http://bit.ly/HelpUKY>.

Time Management Life Hacks



Use Checklists

According to Atul Gawande's bestseller, *The Checklist Manifesto*, using checklists can make a huge difference in the accuracy & efficiency of your work. Use the checklist feature in iOS Notes App to create a to-do list, or change your bullet points into boxes in Microsoft Word or Google Docs to make your own checklist.



Prioritize Your Tasks

Stoplight Prioritizing is a method to help you prioritize tasks into 3 categories: red, yellow, and green. Red tasks= the hardest and most time consuming, green tasks= due right away or easy to complete tasks, and yellow=in between. Start with green, and slowly move tasks from yellow & red to your green list.



Set an Alarm

Don't assume you'll remember an upcoming deadline or event. Instead, set an alarm or reminder on your personal device (phone, iPad, tablet, etc.). Wake up at night worried about something you need to do tomorrow? Set an alarm to remind yourself to think about it in the morning, and go back to sleep.



Make an Outline Before You Read

Before you start reading a chapter or selection, look through the entire selection, and use the section headers and other text features to write down the different sections in an outline format. This helps students see the overall structure of the text, and to begin priming their working memory to receive new information.



Divide Your Study Time

Give Yourself a Break is a strategy that helps students determine the amount of time they can sustain focus while studying, and divide their study time accordingly while building in small movement or mindfulness breaks between study time.



Future Inquiry

- Examination of effects for particular groups (e.g., first-gen, BIPOC students)
- Testing mediators and moderators
- Discipline-specific analyses (e.g., STEM)
- In-depth analysis of open-ended responses
- Comparative analysis of interview data

Acknowledgements

- Ms. Jaeyun Han, Research Assistant
- Center for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching
- P20 Motivation & Learning Lab

