



## Ten Tips for Quickly Converting Courses for Online Delivery

Yesterday I was asked for some tips on how to convert courses for online delivery. Here are ten tips adapted from <https://blog.highereducationwhisperer.com/2020/02/some-tips-for-quickly-converting.html>

1. **Don't panic:** Courses have been delivered online by universities around the world for decades. There are resources available to assist you. All you have to do is ask.
2. **Focus on student communication, not content:** Being an online student amplifies all the worries students have at the best of times, and these are *not* the best of times. We need to give students the sense there is someone out there worrying about them. Also, we need to encourage them to communicate with other students. You can build such teacher-to-student and student-to-student communication in as part of a course.
3. **It is Not All About Video:** The easiest, but least important thing you can do, is to convert face-to-face lectures to recorded video. Students like having recorded video lectures available. However, don't waste time making high-quality videos: it *makes no difference to learning*. Provided students see a still image of you occasionally, you do not have to appear in the video lectures: Powerpoint slides with audio are fine. Unedited recordings of live lectures are also okay.
4. **Text-Based Notes Are Key:** Provide students with notes detailing what they have to do, and when they have to do it. Ideally, provide this all at the beginning of the course. You will be sending them reminders and updates, but students feel more secure if they have everything at the start. My preference is an e-book, but the format doesn't matter as much as the student being able to download everything, easily.
5. **Target Smartphones:** Students are increasingly using smartphones for study, so make sure your material is suitable. Learning Management Systems, such as Brightspace, support smartphones, so log in on your phone and make sure the formatting you use is working.
6. **Prompt students to study:** Students will be distracted and so you need to tell them what to do, and when to do it. Don't assume the student can find the relevant material, or resource: give them a link *directly* to what you want them to look at. You can start with subtle *nudges*, such as "Thank you to the 49 students who have already completed the quiz", then more direct: "You have until 10 pm, to complete the quiz, for 5% of your grade". Peer pressure, and grades, are very effective ways to motivate students. (If you feel really adventurous, take a look at using intelligent agents in Brightspace <https://help.elc.uga.edu/faculty/communication/intelligent-agents/>)



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7. **Rationalize assessment:** Consider what assessment you can reliably deliver online, and in what size chunks. Are you providing the assessment for formative purposes, to help with study, for summative purposes (the final grade), or both? Consider simple short assessment items and make them easier to mark. Make use of the automated assessment delivery and marking options built into the Learning Management System. I particularly like short regular quizzes (with questions drawn from a bank at random, to make it harder to cheat).
8. **Provide Asynchronous Communication, Supplemented by Synchronous:** Most communication for online courses is asynchronous: you post a message and someone reads it later. This is partly due to the difficulties of getting people together at the same time. It is also due to inevitable problems with online communication. So, focus on the asynchronous posts to forums. These can be supplemented with short video recordings. If you have the resources, then add some live *webinars*, but record these sessions, for those who can't attend.
9. **Use the tools your colleagues use:** Educational institutions provide learning management systems, video recording, webinar, and other tools for online teaching. There may also be other tools in use by your colleagues. These may not be the best tools, but you can get help with them, so it should be your first choice.
10. **Manage expectations:** Online students often expect instant replies from instructors 24 hours a day. Give students reasonable expectations of how quickly they will receive a reply and ensure there are sufficient staff to do this. Try to answer common questions via a forum, rather than to each student individually.

If you have questions or need assistance with the transition of your curriculum to the online format, please contact the Office of Technology and Instructional Services.

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