

Resource Guide

Assisting Students with Short-Term Absences Keep Current

If there is anything we've learned from 2020 it is to expect the unexpected. Preparing for the unexpected is a difficult task, so I'd like to offer a few considerations for how you may keep your students current in what's going on in your class if someone needed to be absent for a short time but more than just one or two class meetings. There may be occasions during which students are ill or may not be able to attend class, but are capable of doing the work to keep up. Providing opportunities during the absence may prevent a student re-entering the course after a two-week absence only to be so far behind and have such a lack of information that grades are impacted regardless of ability. Not only will you be offering another avenue of sound pedagogical practice for your students, you may lessen your work load in trying to *catch students up*.

- Maintain a current list of readings and assignments in your Canvas course. – This minimal step will at least help with students not falling behind in readings and any reading-based assignments.
- Consider recording your lectures. – Many of us have recorded content for students in the last year. This provides additional context, and in many cases content, that may not be addressed in readings from texts or articles. The use of a tool such as Panopto would also allow for you to insert checks for understanding, highlighting content you feel needs to be elevated.
- Think about providing opportunity for collaborative notetaking. – Often, discussion questions asked and answered during the lecture, and other incidental content explanation, would be missed even if the first two suggestions were implemented. Providing a shared document (e.g. Google doc) would allow for students to access the same document and take notes providing absent students with richer information than a recorded lecture, while at the same time enriching the experience for students present.
- You may be able to adapt your office hours. – Using the appointment feature in your Canvas course or providing Zoom office hours for students who are off campus may help you remain in contact with your students regardless of distance. This practice with Zoom has become much more mainstream over the last year and will provide absent students access to you even if they cannot attend the in-person class.
- Finally, consider using the Satellite Model. – Sr. Instructional Developer Sandy Gambill proposed the Satellite Model in July of 2020 in preparation for teaching fall courses in a variety of formats. At the heart of the model, faculty create an online instance of their

courses complete with lectures, readings, ancillary content and materials, assignments and assessments; providing a great deal of flexibility. Students unable to attend class physically would be able to participate in coursework and if paired with collaborative notetaking, get a richer sense of the course as well. It may also afford you with an opportunity to think differently regarding how time spent in the physical classroom is utilized with more intention.

Resources

Lecture Capture [[LINK](#)]

Satellite Model [[LINK](#)]

Collaborative Notetaking [[LINK](#)]

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by [email](#).