

Continuity Preparation Checklist

Identify Basic Resources and Skills for Virtual Learning

If you have done or know how to do most of the Basic tasks listed below, you can readily adapt your course to an online learning space for a single meeting or two. The Intermediate tasks will allow you to sustain instruction across multiple class sessions. Which ones do you need to learn more about?

(Please note that some tools that are starred* below do not meet FERPA guidelines for keeping students' educational information secure.)

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Basic Communication

- Sign up to receive text alerts from [Mason Alert](#)
- Identify what your and your students' communication-from-home resources are (if students don't have strong Internet access at home, can they identify a nearby library or other location they could use?)
- Log into [Blackboard](#), where a course shell exists for every course you teach this semester
- Make each course's [Blackboard site available](#) to students
- Use Blackboard's [Announcement](#) function (or [Blackboard email](#)) to communicate to your class
- Create a [discussion board on Blackboard](#) (or consider using an alternate discussion option like [Piazza](#))
- Download and use the Blackboard or [Blackboard Instructor app](#) on your phone (in case wireless isn't functioning)
- Use a Blackboard Guide—such as [Beginning of the Semester Checklist](#)—to learn a new approach or solve a problem

Basic Course ReDesign

Successful redesigners are able to [prioritize goals within course learning](#), since they may face time and resource limits

Successful redesigners are able to [identify basic preparational knowledge](#) that students can learn without much intervention or interaction

Successful redesigners are able to [identify more complex or difficult knowledge](#) that will benefit from [interaction](#), stepwise learning, [collaboration](#), and/or their instructional encouragement and feedback

- Know the top priority learning goals for each week/unit of your course: what should students know how to do by the time you reach each checkpoint?
- Identify which goals are primarily about preparational knowledge: students can identify, recall, and define key concepts
- Identify which goals are complex or applied knowledge: students can analyze, apply, solve, and evaluate concepts and problems in the field
- Identify which goals are about knowledge creation: students provide their own interpretation, build their own solutions, create a project to share, or report on new data
- Identify the concepts or tasks that cause students the most difficulty as learners in your course

Basic Information Sharing: Text

- Access key course documents on a [college shared drive](#) or public cloud application (Dropbox, iCloud) from home in case access to your office PC is not possible
- Create [a PDF at home from a text document](#) or scanner
- [Edit a PDF](#) at home
- Scan a document at home to make a PDF [using your phone or tablet](#)
- [Upload a file](#) to your Blackboard course
- Edit a document in [OneDrive](#) (or an online application such as Google Docs*, which is not secure)
- [Share a document in OneDrive](#) with others (or used an online application such as Google Docs* or Dropbox*, which are not secure)
- Locate and direct students to an online text from [Mason University Libraries](#)
- Provide text to be shared through [Mason Library E-Reserves](#)

Basic Information Sharing: Video

Research shows that short videos (4-6 minutes each) are much more likely to be watched start-to-finish by students; videos longer than 6-10 minutes may not provide the full information to all students.

- Find and share (via GMU email or [Blackboard](#)) an educational [video from YouTube](#)* (or other public website).
- Create and share (via GMU email or [Blackboard](#)) your own video from home using basic tools (smartphone video recording)
- Design a video preview guide, notetaking assignment, or short quiz to help students focus on key elements of the video

Basic Assessment of Student Learning

- Use GMU emails to distribute guidelines and collect student assignments
- Use the [Test tool on Blackboard](#) to [create quizzes, questionnaires, or exams](#)
- Use the [Assignment option on Blackboard](#) to collect student work

Basic Relationship Building and Time Management

- Decide on a regular communication protocol and inform your students of your availability and response time
- Consider options for group feedback and crowdsourcing: create an “Ask for Help” discussion thread, respond to a series or set of discussion posts at once rather than individually, design structured peer-review tasks
- Prioritize your teaching and response time to match key goals and difficult concepts for learners

Intermediate Communication: Synchronous Group Discussions

- Confirm whether your home WiFi supports videoconferencing
- Know how to participate in a voice conference or video conference from home using web applications supported at Mason ([WebEx](#), [Collaborate Ultra in Blackboard](#)) and provide your students with guidance (to [Collaborate](#) or [WebEx](#))
- Know how to participate in a voice conference or videoconference from home using public web applications (Skype, Zoom, Bluejean, etc.)

- Know how to [share a screen shot or document](#) while on a videoconference call from home in your chosen videoconferencing application
- Know how to operate features such as [Chat and Record](#) in your chosen videoconferencing application

Intermediate Information Sharing: Video

- [Use Kaltura to create a screencast video](#) (your screen/slides plus your face and voice) via Blackboard ([click here for more about its features](#))
- Use a public online application to create a screencast video (e.g., Screencast-o-matic, Screencastify, Jing, Quicktime, or Screenflow)

Intermediate Assessment of Student Learning

- Build and use a [grading rubric on Blackboard](#)
- Use [Respondus Lockdown on Blackboard](#) to create a more secure testing environment