Teachers' tips

This page serves as space, where the teachers can share their opinions, tips, and feedback regarding online teaching. Those may be short paragraphs and tips on how to approach particular issues or longer articles on how to deal with online teaching as a whole. Contact Jakub Sichta if you want to contribute.

Engaging small students group (Denis Alekseev)

As of engaging strategies, in small groups, I tried to give students some short exercises (make a graph, solve a short problem, etc) and then send their solution to my messenger (e.g., WhatsApp). So, it looks like a good alternative to personal participation in class, but only applicable to small groups.

Jan Zápal's approach to asynchronous classes

1. What I describe below is my (Jan Zapal) 'teaching setup' I used in the spring of 2020 to teach microeconomics 2 (first year of the PhD) and political economy (second year of the PhD). The setup is optimized relative to my preferences, needs, and teaching style. Namely, I write a lot on the board, but also use slides. I did not want to use extensive time to 'redesign' my course. Least effort was the guiding principle. Another goal was to have a setup that was independent of CERGE/Lifesize - I wanted to avoid scheduling problems stemming from the limited number of rooms within Lifesize - and would allow me to teach both at the office and at home.

2. I use Zoom. When I teach, students are connected and can interact with me in 'real-time'. In order to minimize connection problems and background noise, the only camera and microphone that are on are mine. Students unmute when and only when asking questions. I record the lectures. Students report using the recordings even having been at the lecture (e.g, to check something they did not understand during the lecture). Absent students clearly benefit from the recordings. A free version of Zoom limits meetings to 40 minutes. The Charles University Zoom Licence is available to CERGE-EI faculty.

3. In terms of the technology, what I need as a minimum is a whiteboard, in front of which I put a camera and wear wireless headphones with a microphone. Camera resolution is important for what I write on the board to be readable. I bought Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920. Headphone microphone quality is important for what you say to be heard. I bought Sony WI-XB400. Putting the technology to work might take time, tweaking, experimenting, and further bits and pieces of hardware and/or software. These are specific to your system and you will discover what you need by yourself. (E.g., USB Bluetooth adapter to connect the headphones, software to turn off the autofocus of the camera so that what you write on the board is not out of focus when you step in front of the board.) Total setup costs were about 5000CZK.

4. Zoom allows one to record meetings. What ends up being recorded is what you show via the camera, what you show via the shared screen and any audio. All additional cameras (e.g., of the students) are also recorded, which is one more reason to keep them off since you don't want your slides showing small because there is another recorded window of a student staring at you. Storing the recordings might be an issue but all CERGE/Charles employees should have access to CESNET. An example of a recorded lecture is here. Uploading and sharing the video is done in a couple of minutes

once you have CESNET access.

Various Approaches and Tips from Teaching Fellows Community

Michal Ďuriník Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, PhD from Macquarie Graduate School of Management in Sydney, Australia

What I use:

(1) Loom - This is a screen-recording tool that saves the recording in the cloud. You can simply share it with a link. They have the full functionality available to teachers for free. Use it for: recording your lectures and sharing with students addressing quick how-to questions (“How do I register my project topic in the IS?” or “I don't get the income effect graph in micro”). Record as you explain it then just send the link. You can record your screen, yourself via a webcam, or both.

(2) Veconlab - This is an online environment for economic experiments. Very useful if you're teaching experimental and behavioral econ, but comes handy with micro, game theory, etc. There is a large library of pre-programmed experiments and games (prisoner's dilemma, double-auction markets, public goods game, and many more). You can spice up your class with a 15-minute experiment that illustrates the concepts you're discussing.

(3) Kialo - This is self-described as a “tool for teaching critical thinking”. You propose a thesis (“Prague and Brno should switch names to boost tourism”) and students attach their pro and con arguments. Students can develop, comment on, and vote on each other's arguments, helping the most convincing rise to the top. I find it useful to send out the thesis a few days before the class, so students have their arguments already formed and stress-tested for the class.

Here is where I ask for help: I'm teaching my classes in MS Teams (as mandated by the Uni). I would love to use the Think-Pair-Share method but can't figure out how to break up the group into smaller groups where students can chat, and then bring the small groups back together into a large group. Ideally, I would be able to visit each of the small groups separately to observe how the small discussion is developing. Any ideas? Ideally, I'd like to stay within MS Teams

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Hello Michal,

as for MS Teams group splitting, have a look at this video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo6yqh7erEY

The way it functions is a bit hairy (like basically everything in MS teams) but in the end, you can make it work, I'm sure :)

Vladimir Pyrlik, CERGE-EI PhD student

https://vpyrlik.github.io/GTF20/derivations.html#22

The HTML version of my presentations, list of resources is on Page 15 (the links there are clickable). There are several reviews of styli, software that can be used to transfer the content of the screen from a smart device to a computer (and the corresponding conferencing solution, like Zoom, LifeSize, etc.), and of joint working spaces aka virtual boards.

An amazing **whiteboard-like web application** that makes individual in-class work really easy:

https://whiteboard.fi

I have recently discovered it thanks to a colleague from the math faculty of CU. There is a short tutorial video, and the app itself is pretty intuitive. It's very good when you are to give the same task for individual work and want to track the progress of all the students at the same time.

Our beloved wooclap.com. **In addition to all the nice things that we say about it, it is very important for many of us to know that the text fields in Wooclap slides and questions** support LaTeX!** There are other interactive testing solutions that support LaTeX, for example, matHQuiz, yet they are commonly rather limited in the types of questions we can use there. In my experience, this makes Wooclap the best option these days.