Available Wellness

Making the Virtual Transition

For body educators and movement facilitators

In these uncertain times our communities need us more than ever. Here are some tips for setting a foundation of an engaging and intentional transition to virtual teaching – during this period of isolation and beyond – for you and your students.

Preparation

o Remember that right now your online sessions provide **comfort** and **familiarity** more than anything else. Stick to content that you and your students are comfortable with and your experimenting and extra challenging prompts for in-person sessions.

o The best way to learn online teaching skills is by example. Take some virtual classes from a favorite (or new) teachers of your discipline with experience as you design, film, and run your session.

o Communicate clearly with your students. Make sure they all have easy access to links and materials.

Content

o Plan a lesson that is shorter than your official meeting time to make space for technical snafus. For example, have a 50-minute lesson plan for a one-hour meeting time.

o Prepare questions or prompts for participants to engage with you and other people in your session at the start and/or finish. These can be facilitated via the chat feature or by conversation. Think of this as an ice breaker to soften the screen barrier. These can also be a way for you to collect feedback (i.e. asking how people feel before/after your lesson.)

o Record your first few live sessions to watch back and take notes of your successes and opportunities to improve. If you feel comfortable, you can also ask your students for comments.

AudioVisual

o Invest in some kind of mic system! Unlike other disciplines, having a solid audio set up for your classes is essential since students (and you) will be far/turned away from screens or have inward focus during your session. Reliable audio will set you apart and ease everyone – you included – into a virtual setting. Bluetooth earbuds with a quality microphone (like AirPods) work well as well do a lavalier/studio mics.

o If possible, set up your camera so your background has solid colors and clean lines. Avoid being backlit with windows or a large light source directly behind you.

o Give yourself <u>at least</u> 30 minutes to test drive your software and hardware all together before you film or go live. Ask a friend to sign on extra early or do a test run with your full set up so you can ensure you are heard and seen throughout the whole lesson plan.

o Following intros and ice breakers on a live session, if you have more than 5 or so participants consider muting them during the bulk of your teaching to minimize A/V interference. If you do this, encourage questions/comments via chat and set benchmarks to check back that everyone's still with you.

o If using music and streaming live, provide a link to your playlist for students to play on their end so you don't have extra audio interference. Cue them to press pause/play.

o Think of your music library as a platform for virtual connection. If you have curated class playlists, share them publicly to encourage a home practice. Playlists remind your regular students fondly of class and give prospective students a sense of your vibe.

Most importantly …

Remember that we are all in this learning curve together. It's new territory for most, your students included! Mishaps will happen, it won't be perfect, and it's okay. Be patient with yourself – and know that your students will be, too.

Additional Resource

[Training for Change](#) has robust tools and workshops
on facilitating meaningful and dynamic online learning experiences.

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