



University of Cape Town

Low Tech Remote Teaching Principles

Teaching and learning remotely during a global pandemic is a challenging task for everyone. **Keep it simple for you and your students.**

CILT will help you move your course online: reach out to us at help@vula.uct.ac.za, use the remote teaching resources online (www.cilt.uct.ac.za/cilt/remote-teaching), or book an individual consultation (<https://bit.ly/2xhc8Zt>). Join the UCT Remote Teaching Community on MS Teams for peer support.

<p>1. Keep it simple and low tech. Use tools familiar to you and your students, with the addition of limited new tools to move online. Be mindful of uneven access and connectivity.</p>	<p>6. Scaffold learning by chunking content. Break your course into small segments, organised around the amount of time you expect your students to spend per week. Be explicit about completion dates and the time required for each activity.</p>
<p>2. Accessibility is core, not optional. Create multiple formats for learning materials. For video, make sure you have captions and transcripts available (CILT can help you with this). Check-in with your students early on to gauge whether you are meeting their accessibility needs.</p>	<p>7. Have a clear course outline. Have a course outline in a dedicated place on your Vula course site that details the course structure, changes, new deadlines and assessments and keep this updated. Notify students when any changes are made.</p>
<p>3. Provide structure using Vula Lessons. With the move to remote teaching, use the Vula Lessons tool to create a structured learning pathway. Organise materials by week or by module.</p>	<p>8. Be visible online and quickly contactable. Run online 'office hours' regularly, using Vula forums and chat to answer queries. Tutors and colleagues can help: it is important to be available and respond quickly.</p>
<p>4. Use what is available. There is not much time to prepare. What resources from previous years can you reuse? What external resources are available? You don't have to produce a high tech video for quality learning.</p>	<p>9. Help keep your students on track. Help keep your students on track. Set small, compulsory learning activities such as short weekly quizzes or discussion forums to encourage regular student engagement and identify who is struggling.</p>
<p>5. Keep learning active. Face-to-face interaction will be minimal for an unforeseen time period. Use icebreakers, the discussion forum and chatroom where possible to give that feeling of connection.</p>	<p>10. Be kind to yourself and empathic to your students. This is a challenging time for everyone. Encourage an environment of caring and support. Be flexible: exceptions may need to occur around course requirements.</p>



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Low Tech Remote Teaching Do's and Don'ts

Do this		Don't do this	
✓	Keep it low tech Teach in ways that use low tech tools, such as text and slides. When using videos, always provide low tech alternatives, such as captions and a transcript.	✗	Excessive high tech Don't assume all students have good internet access, including data and wifi access, at all times.
✓	Communicate frequently and consistently All instructions and assignments must be communicated via Vula. Using other channels can be complementary.	✗	Mixed communication Using multiple platforms inconsistently can mean students miss key communications.
✓	Be inclusive Be conscious of the many different learning contexts students will find themselves in - build in flexibility. Provide multiple formats for students. Have text, slides, transcripts, captions and audio available as alternatives to video.	✗	Single approach Making no provision for many different contexts (technology, power supply, learning environment, resources, support) by adopting one format only will limit who can participate.
✓	Asynchronous learning Create learning experiences for students to be able to work around barriers (such as power, connectivity, social context). Build asynchronous learning activities.	✗	Synchronous learning Making online interactions through live webinars or live tutorials will exclude some students. Be sure to have alternatives.
✓	Less is more Assignments are likely to take twice as long to complete at home. Prioritise and be realistic.	✗	Being unrealistic Assigning work every day and requesting students to complete according to short timelines does not take into account the current circumstances.
✓	Well organised resources Use Vula lessons to structure your activities. Label and organise course resources very clearly using descriptive titles.	✗	Left up to students Requiring students to search for the learning materials they need on your course site distracts them from the key learning activity.
✓	Give explicit instructions Outline detailed instructions about what to do, deadlines and specify the estimated length of time to complete tasks.	✗	Be unclear and vague Communicating in lengthy paragraphs with instructions that are difficult to follow or tasks that are vague wastes learning time and demotivates students.
✓	Run online 'office hours' and be visible online Provide students with regular online office hours and provide support, answer questions and clarify confusion.	✗	Stand by at all times You don't have to be available 24/7 and leave no break for yourself (unless it's urgent, it can wait for office hours!)
✓	Seek student feedback Seek student feedback about their workload, emotional state, learning preferences, and learning pace.	✗	Use a hands-off approach Teaching in a way that does not give students a voice and/or choice, can leave them feeling overwhelmed.
✓	Use a limited selection of new tools Use tools students are familiar with and a limited number of new tools for remote teaching purposes.	✗	Try many new and unused tools Trying new tools that you've never used may lead to technological difficulties and increase challenge.
✓	Break down content into short identifiable topics Provide material in shorter chunks with clear learning objectives and assessment outcomes.	✗	Give academic materials in long, unstructured form Don't upload long journal articles and videos without clear direction about the learning objectives and purpose.
✓	Keep outline and schedules for course in one place Give students an outline containing dates for assignments and submissions in one place. Alert them that there may be changes and indicate how they will be notified.	✗	Send updates via announcements only Make sure that students can easily find the key information about your course in one place. It reduces anxiety.



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Low Tech Remote Teaching Checklist

When creating a low tech remote course, ensure you have met the following minimum quality standards:

Creating content	
	I have adapted my existing content to develop my remote teaching materials.
	My course material has been chunked to make it more suitable for remote learning.
	My Vula course site uses Lessons and provides clear navigation and instructions about what students need to do.
	All resources, quizzes, forums topics etc. have descriptive titles.
	I have a page on my Vula course site dedicated to the course outline with up-to-date schedules and assessments.
	I provide low tech options such as text documents or powerpoint slides with slide notes for all my course materials.
	I have captions and transcripts available for video lectures.
Engaging students in learning activities	
	I have designed at least one activity for engagement per topic to keep students on track.
	I am using tools my students are familiar with, and if new tools are used, step-by-step instructions are provided.
Building community and communications	
	I have 'online' office hours or spaces for students to ask questions and receive answers on a regular basis.
	There are clear protocols to get help with admin, technical and content queries on my course home page.
	I have found out about my students' access and barriers, and made provision for these.
	I have a plan to give students feedback and responses to queries timeously.
	All essential course communication takes place through Vula announcements.
Assessment	
	Assignment requirements and submission dates are displayed in one place on my Vula site and clearly communicated to students as they change during this uncertain time period.
	The assessments I have designed are realistic for students given the time and access constraints in this context.
	I use small assessment tasks to gauge student learning and progress allowing adaptation to course activities and content where necessary.



Centre for
Innovation in
Learning and
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