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Data-informed ways to support students



PennState
Teaching and Learning
with Technology

An IRB-approved survey of 3,787 students and 576 instructors, administered from April 24th - May 1st, measured effects of the switch to remote teaching and learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Report prepared by Alex Serpi (alex.serpi@psu.edu).

Opportunities to Support Students



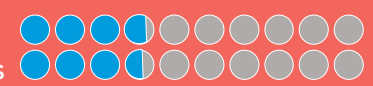
Poor internet access plagued 30% of students 22% of instructors



Unreliable hardware hampered 11% of students 12% of instructors



Troubleshooting technical issues slowed 38% of students 36% of instructors



Trouble communicating affected 41% of students 50% of instructors



Approximately 21% of students have been diagnosed with a disability or impairment.*

TWICE as many students reported using accessibility tools after the switch to remote teaching.

1. Communicate locally



- Support 1-on-1 interactions
- Quick, focused messages
- Add links to detailed information
- PENN STATE GO**

80% of students prefer Canvas alerts

75% of instructors prefer emails

Get Help

connecttotech.psu.edu
Tech Tutors

*Based on self-reported data from the ECAR 2020 survey by Educause.

2. Shift to an outcome-focused mindset



Scenario	Previously	Moving forward
Asking students to demonstrate knowledge	Create a Microsoft Word document →	Write an essay
Sharing content with students	All information distributed during a Zoom lecture →	Information available during a Zoom lecture and in a text document
Asking students to create content	Make an iMovie →	Tell a story using video

Rather than focus on the platform, focus on the outcome.

Get Help

Media Commons
mediacommons.psu.edu/available-software/
Tech Tutors
LinkedIn Learning



3. Engage Tech TAs & Tech Tutors



- Don't assume students are tech savvy
- Guide them through tech (even Canvas)
- Include resources in syllabus (ex. IT Support Desk, Connect to Tech)

Get Help

Find both at techtutors.psu.edu

Tech Tutors
1-on-1 technology training

Tech TAs
tech support during virtual meetings

4. Streamline content



- Move to cloud computing
- Create smaller files
- Make content available for download
- Don't use PDFs
- Discourage printing
- Use PSU-supported software
- Keep software updated
- Avoid the need for specific or specialized software

Get Help

IT Learning & Development
Media Commons
software.psu.edu

Streamlining content also helps individuals with older devices and cloud devices, like Chromebooks.

5. Design universally

Schedule deadlines to account for internet outages and other life events



Presenting Content

- Turn on captioning
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Provide information from synchronous classes in other formats

Designing Content

- Use large, clear fonts
- Consider color contrasts
- Caption images and hyperlinks

Get Help

IT Accessibility Group
Educational Equity Office
Microsoft Office 365
The Brand Book

tit.psu.edu

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