

Adapting Face-to-Face Activities

Activities requiring high levels of peer-to-peer collaboration and discourse, hands-on or lab-based learning, or opportunities for practice and feedback are common in face-to-face learning environments. In face-to-face environments, students have access to materials, resources, peers, and teachers. There are key differences between face-to-face and online learning environments that make some of these common activities challenging to conduct in online environments. Knowledge of online learning instructional strategies and supporting technology can help teachers effectively adapt these common activities for online environments, where students primarily work at different times and different places than their peers and teachers.

1. What are the main differences between teaching activities in a face-to-face environment versus an online learning environment?
2. How do instructional strategies and resources differ for teaching face-to-face and online?
3. How can I ensure that all of my students have access to resources needed for their online learning?



to Consider

While there are differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching in blended and online environments, learning activities that work well in face-to-face classrooms can often be adapted for online learning environments. Peer-to-peer collaboration and discourse, hands-on or lab-based learning, and opportunities for practice and feedback are common learning activities that often require adjustments to be effective in online environments.

For peer-to-peer activities in online learning environments, communicate the value of group work and provide strategies for groups to work collaboratively and productively. Provide tips for how students can communicate online, set regular check-ins with individuals or groups, and provide deadlines for drafts or tasks. Be intentional with group assignment organization by using factors such as student interests and personality characteristics, or academic content strengths and weaknesses. Utilize collaborative digital tools and applications to help meet the activity's academic goals and support collaboration. Use shared folders and files to support student organization. Establish clear roles and intentions for how students should contribute to group work and break-out group discussions. Consider establishing common contribution roles to facilitate students' contributions, and provide opportunities for student reflection.

Support online student collaboration using tools from Microsoft or Google in which students can share and edit files, and have students participate in synchronous, real-time conversations through video conferencing tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. Other online tools that support and enhance collaboration include interactive whiteboards, virtual bulletin boards, or mind maps. With adaptations, hands-on or lab-based activities can still be highly effective in online environments. When adapting hands-on or lab-based activities, consider providing students with take home kits of specialized equipment and materials, utilizing materials and supplies commonly found in students' homes, and replacing hands-on or lab-based activities with comparable online simulations, interactive activities, or videos.

To provide feedback to students within activities in online environments utilize Google or Microsoft apps that allow file sharing and real-time commenting. Clipart or digital stickers can be used to provide informal feedback. Google or Microsoft Forms, or other online assessment tools, can be utilized for just-in-time self-checking quizzes to provide immediate feedback for informal or formal assessment.

KEY Elements