

## Chapter 13

# Best Practices for Emergency Remote Teaching

Michelle Dennis

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8449-9192>

Adler University, USA

### ABSTRACT

*Unforeseen events, such as the global pandemic COVID-19, have the potential to necessitate abrupt closures of the physical campuses of higher education institutions. In these situations, emergency remote teaching procedures may be implemented to enable the continuation of courses and reduce the magnitude of disruptions to the learning process for students and faculty members. In this chapter, the author will evaluate best practices for the design of emergency remote teaching, faculty preparation, and student support. Further, the author will explore effective communication strategies for the delivery of information regarding procedural changes to students and faculty.*

Events such as the global pandemic COVID-19, which are unforeseen in nature and necessitate the rapid closure of the physical campuses of institutions of higher education, highlight the importance of the efficient implementation of best practices for the design and delivery of emergency remote teaching experiences (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Procedures for the implementation of emergency remote teaching are similar to those required for the implementation of online education in terms of content, but not in terms of time frame and resource needs. In the case of the former, little time is available and resources are typically less robust, except in cases where contingency planning has been prioritized. In the case of the latter, adequate resources and time support the effective preparation of online courses through intentional and collaborative design, the training of faculty members to facilitate the courses, and the integration of student supports into the online education experience.

This chapter presents three key factors which have been widely explored in the literature in terms of their impact on the success of emergency remote teaching (Martin, Ritzhaupt et al., 2019; Outlaw & Rice, 2015): Design, faculty preparation, and student support. In terms of design, engagement plays an important role in the student experience and can be impacted in many ways throughout the design

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process. The presentation of course content is a second area of focus within the design pillar, and many strategies for the presentation of content may impact the student experience during periods of emergency remote teaching. A final aspect of design, the assessment of learning, is also a key area in which best practices may be employed to improve the design of emergency remote teaching experiences. The second key factor, faculty preparation, can be categorized into four main areas: Expectation setting, training and development, mentorship, and evaluation. As in the case of design, application of best practices for faculty preparation can support a smooth transition and a positive student experience. The third factor, student support, also impacts the student experience during times of transition. Resource and adjustment needs of students and considerations for meeting these needs through the implementation of best practices for outreach and community building are explored. The chapter closes with an analysis of considerations for the implementation of effective communication protocols to ensure understanding across campus communities, thereby impacting the ease with which students, faculty, and administrators adjust to abrupt changes in structure as they pertain to course delivery modality.

## **EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING VS. ONLINE EDUCATION**

There are multiple key distinctions that must be made between emergency remote teaching and online education (Zimmerman, 2020). The latter has been established as a very effective strategy for instruction at the primary (Journell, 2015), secondary (Kumi-Yeboah, 2015), and post-secondary (Eom & Ashill, 2016) levels. Further, online education is structured based on best practices for course design, facilitation, assessment, and faculty interaction, and, as such, requires a significant amount of preparation prior to course delivery. This time investment allows for the accurate alignment of course- and program-level objectives to resources, activities, and assessments. Further, this investment of time allows for the adequate training of faculty members and the planned provision of student supports.

Emergency remote teaching, on the other hand, involves rapid modality changes, which allow content that was formulated for presentation in the face-to-face format to be delivered through virtual means (Hodges et al., 2020). Institutions that have adopted emergency remote teaching procedures in response to the global pandemic vary widely in terms of the resources they have been able to dedicate to this change in modality. Further, institutions of higher education differ greatly in terms of the infrastructure that is available to support these changes. Irrespective of resources and infrastructure, there are key best practices that can support the effective delivery of emergency remote teaching, which pertain to design, faculty preparation, student support, and communication.

## **DESIGN**

Course design, arguably, has the potential to make or break the educational experience, in that poorly designed online courses often create more frustration than learning. The effective design of online courses involves the assignment of a subject matter expert and an instructional designer and is a rigorous and extended process that requires collaboration, discussion, and revision. Throughout the process of online course design, factors such as engagement, alignment, instructional level, and workload are considered, and the optimal result is a well-organized and engaging presentation of content, including aligned resources, activities, and assessments, which represent an instructional level that is consistent

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