

## Supporting Students as they Transition to Online Learning

Students in liberal arts settings are used to sitting around a table, facing each other, in real time. Many are also accustomed to living on a campus, where they regularly connect both intellectually and socially. While neither of these traditions can be mimicked exactly, we need to ensure that students do not feel isolated or as though they are learning alone.

### Platforms

What's app, Zoom, Google Chat.

### Suggestions

- 1) Assign group work regularly, for synchronous class connections and throughout the week while students are working on their readings and assignments.
- 2) Put students in working groups for individual projects or for the duration of the semester. A great tool for this is What's App since most students are using it anyway. You can also use Google See "[Create A Room](#)" for Google Chat or "[How To Create A WhatsApp Group](#)" for WhatsApp.
- 3) Rethink your assignments and consider multi-week group projects that are scaffolded and invite students to continuously work together on conceptualization and development. For example you could have them collaboratively create and continuously update a Flipboard online magazine (view a proposed assignment [here](#)), with the explicit instruction to be in touch daily over what's app/Zoom/Google Chat to discuss. You could also have them create and continuously update a timeline of ideas and questions that are coming out of the class (view a proposed assignment [here](#)). Another example is to have students collaboratively create virtual reality field trips to places that might connect to their course work. This [tool](#) works well with Google Chrome.
- 4) In addition to assignments, you could also encourage your students to set up salon-like discussion groups, in which they gather in a Zoom/Google/What's App chat room at an appointed hour, accompanied by food, coffee, tea, etc. The social element of learning is important to maintain, even if it's constructed.