

# Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning

## Online Observation Best Practices

While many of the standards of good teaching remain the same online, there are a few things that might change. Our foundational principles of backward design & goal-setting, inclusive teaching, active learning, and feedback & assessment are just as useful here as they are in other environments. Consider the following:

1. How does the instructor invite and structure student participation? Are there other ways that one could do this (keeping in mind that instructors who are working alone might have difficulty relying on the chat function)?
  - a. How are students working with each other? Possible answers might be: chatting, using breakout rooms, and collaborating on notes or other work.
  - b. Is the instructor inviting feedback on learning, through polling, inviting student questions, and/or surveys of student concerns?
2. How does the instructor connect with their students? Do they acknowledge students by name, celebrate their contributions, and recognize their challenges?
3. How does the instructor accommodate the various needs of diverse students? Does the instructor seem attuned to challenges of an online learning environment? Are the materials and modalities adjustable for different learners?
4. Signposting the transitions and setting expectations in class discussion become even *more* important in an online class than it already is in a brick-and-mortar classroom. How does the instructor signal shifts in class activity? Are students brought along through each transition? Does the instructor provide clear prompts for breakout activities?
5. Is there a balance between synchronous and asynchronous activities? Has the instructor thought about other ways to engage students who might not be able to join a Zoom session?