

Teaching with a Bimodal Approach: A new option for Fall 2021

In anticipation of a gradual return to campus, the University of Ottawa will offer courses using a bimodal approach starting in the Fall of 2021.

A bimodal approach is a combination of two real-time teaching spaces. One physical space in a classroom on campus with a professor and a reduced number of students, and a second virtual space to include students who will be taking the same course remotely.

This approach favours active learning strategies.

The Virtual Campus (powered by Brightspace) will provide a platform for communication, collaboration and evaluation for the course.

In the classroom, the multimedia podium and its components will serve as an anchor for both learning spaces. Using remote teaching technologies, professors will be able to launch a virtual meeting that will allow the integration of the two teaching spaces.

Professors can use the control panel to switch between their presentation, the in-class camera, or the chat feed online for questions. Some classrooms will also be equipped with a document camera.

More than ever, in a bimodal class where students are face-to-face and connected remotely through videoconference, clear communication, student-centered and active learning strategies are essential for student engagement. For instance, don't forget to pause for questions, use polling tools, and think-pair-share strategies.

What to expect?

It's a fact, student engagement will be different.

It's always helpful to remind students they are all active participants; to plan activities in advance and use of online and in-class tools such as chat for questions, polling, and breakout rooms.

In addition, some students connecting remotely may opt to turn off video, and in-class students will likely be wearing masks, so visual cues will not be the same.

Greeting students when they login remotely and as they enter the classroom where possible, helps to reinforce the sense of learning community.

Blend of online breakout rooms and in-class groups for group work and allocate time for each group to report back.

Stay tuned for upcoming TLSS training and resources regarding the University of Ottawa's bimodal approach.

References

Beaty, Brian J. Ed. (2019) *Hybrid-Flexible Course Design Implementing student-directed hybrid classes*, EdTech Books.

Bergstrom, M. (2020) *Teaching HyFlex: It's a Genre Problem*, Faculty Focus.

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/teaching-hyflex-its-a-genre-problem/>