



**Recommendations on Online and Hybrid Teaching from a
“Listening Project” with Candidates and Faculty
The Distance Education Study Group (DESG)*
Of the APsaA Department of Psychoanalytic Education
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This document is directed specifically to seminar teaching. It focuses on approaches, setup, pedagogy, community, and the overall learning experience. We hope to increase the effectiveness of online and hybrid psychoanalytic education wherever it may be happening.

The “Listening Project”

The pandemic required APsaA Institutes to adapt quickly to teaching online. Many encountered opportunities, doubts, and challenges. The DPE’s Distance Education Study Group, consisting of both candidate and faculty members, responded. We conducted self-selected “listening groups” via Zoom in 2020/2021, seven with candidates, and five with faculty members. We gathered information about candidates’ and teachers’ experiences of onsite, online, and hybrid psychoanalytic education. Participants came from many different training centers and countries. There was a wide range of experience with different learning modalities. We encountered a variety of opinion about some matters, but we also found near-unanimity on more issues than one might expect. Overall, there is much to learn from the collective experience of our students and faculty (before, during and hopefully after the pandemic) that can improve our teaching.

We learned that the optimal online learning environment is for ALL students to be online. Institutes would be wise to invest in specific planning for teaching online by developing technology and technological fluency; by improving the quality of the learning experience by providing pedagogical support for faculty and students in technology-mediated environments. We also learned that hybrid classes pose specific challenges to the cohesiveness of the learning community. Institutes should, at a minimum, provide an adequate room microphone and room camera and a large screen monitor, but with this setup, online candidates may still feel excluded. One cost-effective solution is to have onsite candidates use laptops or tablets in the classroom. Thus, local and online participants and teachers can see and hear each other equally well.

All the following recommendations emerged from specific comments and themes presented in the listening sessions.

Top 6 Recommendations

Every Institute will have its own unique challenges and opportunities. But certain fundamentals

emerged that are generally applicable:

- Develop, promote and communicate positive attitudes to online psychoanalytic learning and to problem solving when issues arise. Provide multiple channels for information and interaction between and among students and faculty.
- Cultivate cultural humility.
- Use teaching techniques that attend to group dynamics and promote greater student participation.
- In hybrid settings, ensure balance of participation between onsite and online students.
- Optimize hardware and software to improve class experience.

Recommendations for Institutes

Academic Planning

- Value both inclusion and clear structure in planning and implementing the academic program.
- Be explicit about the rationale for offering onsite, online or hybrid learning and be open to positive and negative feedback via multiple channels.
- Provide ongoing teacher training to maximize quality of instruction.
- Be guided by the best practices for online pedagogy emerging from the research and training taking place in higher education.
- Provide immersion in written/spoken English for non-native speakers.
- Develop processes and resources so that the inevitable anxieties can be thought about, discussed and worked out.
- Provide access to specialist faculty of other institutes when needed.
- Develop best practices guidelines in consultation with other institutes.
- Consider something like a twice a month peer group for case discussion, perhaps across different cohorts of students or institutes.
- Seek feedback from students and faculty and address identified deficiencies across all aspects of the teaching program.

Planning for Technology and Support

New online technologies are constantly being developed and refined. Today's state-of-the-art is tomorrow's clunker. Institutes that provide online learning options must stay on top of new technology issues. While the following suggestions are all based in people's current experiences, the underlying principles also apply to emerging technologies.

- Seek expert technology consultation; amateur advice may eventually be costly.
- Invest in the best, simplest, most dependable systems available.
- Give faculty workshops on using video technology.
- Provide help in advance to faculty who are struggling with the technology, perhaps with a phone tutorial or trial run before their first class.
- Set up a "help desk" or engage an on-call tech consultant/resource/troubleshooter for emergencies.

- Emerging technologies, such as PROPs (screens mounted on roving stands that students can control) and various virtual reality (VR) implementations, should be monitored for and evaluated when they become affordable.

Structuring the Classroom and the Seminar

- There is near unanimous opinion that everyone benefits if ALL students are online, including those together in the room.
- Or, advise seating onsite students opposite the camera or screen (not seated on both sides of a long, receding table). Urge all to participate.
- Promote asynchronous learning and engagement by using multiple online channels to post links to research materials and articles for information, interaction and problem solving.

Recommendations for Faculty

Cultivate Cultural Humility

When teachers and students from different cultures gather to learn together, adopting appropriate practices and attitudes for a multicultural perspective will benefit all.

- Inquire about the culture of each distance candidate.
- Cultivate cultural humility and curiosity, which offers faculty and students opportunities to learn about specific cultures, their norms, beliefs, child rearing and more.
- Provide space for the discussion of misunderstandings, slights, hurts, and lack of cultural awareness.

Tips for Teaching

Suggested actions outside the seminar itself

- Attend faculty discussions of common on-line teaching issues.
- Before a class begins, introduce yourself by sending photos, bios or video, as well as the course content.
- Facilitate informal social contacts to foster analytic identity.
- Offer invitations to online "office hours" to facilitate social contact and foster analytic identity, both before the seminar starts and during its course.
- Meet 1-on-1 with each student individually to enrich the personal connections.
- Provide a study guide and your teaching agenda before the seminar begins.
- Utilize asynchronous (outside of the classroom) learning and engagement as one way to enhance the synchronous (in class) experience.
- Offer and facilitate the use of apps such as Slack, Perusal, Yellow Dig, Voice Thread, etc. to build community.
- Participate in opportunities for informal social contact to foster analytic identity.

Suggested actions during the seminar or class:

- Set the online teaching frame at the beginning of the seminar, so that students know that you expect to see them on camera during the class, that they should mute their microphones when listening, and prevent distractions from family members and pets.
- Be personable, approachable, and pay special attention to distance students.
- Speak slowly and clearly into the microphone so distance candidates can hear and comprehend.
- Do not read lengthy prepared texts. Instead, discuss important points.
- Limit straight lecture time to 7-10 minutes at a time, interspersing with class discussion.
- State the central point of papers, contextualize it, and focus the discussion, rather than rambling through them.
- Use teaching techniques that call for greater student participation.
- To encourage participation, ask every student to bring in a clinical example relating to the week's readings.
- Give each student a voice, whether they are online or in the room. If necessary, encourage quiet students to speak.
- Attend to various levels of comfort with Zoom and online participation.
- Attend to online group dynamics that are unique to each group.
- To maintain student involvement and interaction, pay attention to non-verbal behavior that may indicate disengagement or distraction.
- Contain anxieties and complaints that may only be expressed in behavior.
- Create time in the seminar where all can think about, discuss, and work out these tensions.

Technology Tips for Teachers

- Attend institute events that provide preparation for teaching online.
- Maximize Internet speed, WIFI range, and quality of lighting, camera, and headset.
- Test your connection and technology well before each class begins, leaving enough time to fix what is malfunctioning.
- Close all open apps in order to provide maximum broadband to keep interruptions to a minimum.

Fuller discussion and information will be available in the complete report to APsaA's Department of Psychoanalytic Education, in real-time Zoom workshops from the Distance Education Study Group, and in consultation by its members on request.

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