

## Teaching Matters and Assessment Center (TMAC)

Dr. William FitzGerald, Director | Erin Miller, Graduate Assistant

### Note

---

Hello, all! Over at TMAC, we've been working to present you with a COVID-19 edition of the TMAC newsletter. There's lots to discuss regarding pedagogy in our current environment. This newsletter contains just some of those topics — accessible teaching and online teaching tools — but we hope that you will use these news bits as starting points to engage in important conversations about pedagogy during these unusual times. We've also included an anonymous survey at the end of this newsletter for instructors to express frustrations and victories they're experiencing as newly-christened remote teachers. If you have questions regarding pedagogy or would like to discuss your remote teaching ideas, please reach out to Erin Miller, the TMAC graduate assistant, at [em910@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:em910@scarletmail.rutgers.edu).

### In the News

---

*The following news bits revolve around pedagogy in light of COVID-19. Please read for information regarding specific student populations who might be uniquely affected by this situation and a reflective self-assessment to help you make informed decisions about remote teaching.*

### Accessibility in Remote Teaching

While New Jersey is under stay-at-home orders, it is important to remember that our students with disabilities may be at greater physical risk during the public health crisis, which may impact their ability to complete course work. In addition to anxiety about their physical health, students with disabilities might struggle to adjust to their remote-learning classes. For five basic things you should know about how COVID-19 might affect peoples with disabilities, check out this [article](#). Some things you can do now to be inclusive to all students includes providing captions or transcripts for videos or voice lectures, ensuring online resources are presented with distinguishable background and text colors, and being mindful of the benefits of asynchronous lessons/assignments for students who need additional time to complete work.



As teachers make the en-mass move to remote teaching, it's important to remember that many of the resources we're incorporating into our teaching were first designed and used by disabled peoples. Check out Aimi Hamraie's "[Accessible Teaching in the Time of COVID-19](#)" for a brief history of how the disabled community created these important technologies (that we need now more than ever!) and some helpful advice for making remote teaching accessible. She also has a succinct [Twitter thread](#) with even more helpful tidbits.

**Self-assessment:**

- Do I include captions in my videos or an accompanying transcript? Does the software I use provide auto-captioning?
- Is there contrast between the text/image and background of my visual resources?
- Do I provide enough time for all of my students to complete their work?
- Are there other ways I can make my teaching more accessible to students?

**Student Internet Access/Online Inclusivity**

If you haven't yet, please check in with your students about internet access. In times where everything seems to be changing, we cannot assume that all students have access to wifi. We also can't be sure they have the necessary technology to complete coursework remotely. Here's a [sample questionnaire](#) you can modify to assess your students' current internet and tech access.



In addition to asking about internet and tech access, you can make your courses more accessible to students by being mindful of the bandwidth required for your course materials and assignments. Requiring weekly Zoom calls takes up more bandwidth than a lecture uploaded to Sakai, Canvas, or YouTube, and the latter options would be much easier to access on students' available technology. Here's a comprehensive [Google Doc](#) from fellow instructors about teaching remotely with tech access in mind.

**Self-assessment:**

- Are there students in my classes who have limited or no access to reliable internet?

- Are there students in my classes who have limited or no necessary technology to complete assignments and access course materials?
- How much bandwidth is needed to complete my assignments? Is this a reasonable amount?
- Are my course materials mobile friendly? (for students who may only have a phone or tablet)

### Online Teaching Tools

Moving to remote teaching incentivizes using new teaching tools! Here's a [comprehensive list](#) of online teaching tools recommended by fellow instructors, most of which are free, and what the uses and advantages of that tool are. You might be familiar with some of these, like [VoiceThread](#) or [Zoom](#), but we invite you to check out the dozens of other resources listed such as [Padlet](#), a real-time, interactive discussion-board platform, or [Hypothesis](#), a browser add-on that allows students to share their notes on online course materials. If you have experience using any of these resources and they've been helpful, let us know!



zoom  
Kahoot!

#### Self-assessment:

- Is there some aspect of my classes that could be improved by implementing a new online resource?
- Do these resources offer low-bandwidth alternatives to some resources I'm already using?

### Survey



We invite you to participate in this anonymous [survey](#), the information of which will be used to help TMAC provide relevant content in the future!