

Tools in the Classroom

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As many courses return to campus this semester, we might be tempted to throw out our online teaching playbook. With students back in their seats, and us back up at the front, we might not see a need for any of the online tools we used when teaching online.

Over the past two years, we had to go further than ever before in order to get students to be engaged. We tried our best to avoid giving lectures to black boxes on Zoom and asking questions into the ether. We learnt how to use ed tech tools and present our content in new ways; we thought about how we could use online tools to engage our students and enrich the learning environment.

Now that many of us are back in the classroom, I encourage faculty to consider which online techniques they used online would still be valuable in a face-to-face environment. The vast majority of our students bring laptops to class or have phones, and **those that do not are able to borrow one through Seneca.**

Some activities, such as **Mentimeter** (or other online polling tool), can be used effectively in a face-to-face environment. Instead of asking students to raise their hands, or speak up in class, we can use these tools to ask questions and solicit responses. Some students might feel more comfortable responding this way, and meaningful conversation can still flow from the results of our polls. Plus, it's not like using an online tool means nobody can still raise their hand and chime in the old fashion way. Adding this tool just gives students another way of participating.

Similarly, using collaborative Word Documents is still a powerful way to collect class-wide notes or brainstorm effectively. Having students use an online whiteboard projected on the screen is much faster and easier than having the instructor listen and then transcribe ideas one at a time.

Certainly, not all online techniques work in a face-to-face environment, but we ought to be

careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Many of the strategies and tools we used still have value in a face-to-face course and allow for more engagement and a richer learning experience. We shouldn't get rid of these simply because we're back in front of our class.

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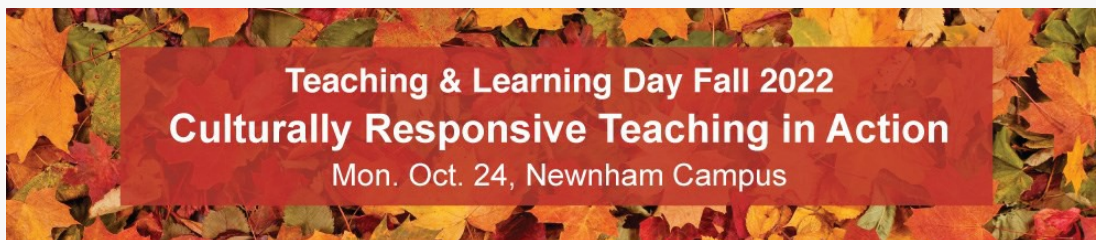


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