

Our dear colleagues,

Thank you for staying with your students and each other this past week. Thank you for staying with me and trusting this process.

Today is our day to step back, pull up into our strengths and certainties, breathe in, and hold ourselves ready to risk the weeks ahead. There is a sense of approaching the starting line of a race (for some of us, this resembles the Paralympics; for others, a triathlon) and remembering that form and stance matter more than sheer force of will. I ask you to join me in this mindset today as we engage in proofing, testing, and sharing.

We ask our students to proof their work before turning it in, and this is fair to ask of ourselves. However, given our circumstances, the proofreading that seems most necessary might be dedicated to those areas of your redesigned courses where errors most matter. Reminding ourselves that some corrections (many) can be made along the way with student input, we can think about which instructions students will first encounter and which connections (read links as well as logic) need to work to guide students between prompt and activity.

I (Gina) suggest that we plan to include students in making corrections as they are most likely to find what isn't working. Rather than leave this to chance, you might intentionally invite them to work with you, even awarding extra credit for those who find errors and suggest workable fixes (note the 2-step process). This allows you to test the course as you go, after today's focus on making sure the first week to 10 days of remote learning are as sound as you can make them.

To assist with today's proofing and testing, Judy recommends the following tips. If you are not using Blackboard, please read her advice at the end and be sure to use it. Many students will assume their remote courses will be on Blackboard and need information there to find the course and you elsewhere.

### **Blackboard Proofing, Testing, and Sharing**

Now that you have uploaded your materials and organized your course in Blackboard, remember to:

- Review your course to update hyperlinks, check due dates, and schedules
- Verify the syllabus has been posted
- Be sure to set clear expectations and provide clear instructions about accessing course materials
- Check all Media to be sure it displays properly.
- If you are using video, remember that video length matters. According to studies from MIT, instructors should segment videos into short chunks. Ideally less than 5 minutes.
- Check set up for the Discussion Forum(s)
- Test the navigation and accessibility in student mode
- Prepare your announcement or introductory email and include your contact information, preferred method of communication, use of video conferencing (Bb Collaborate? Zoom?), expected response times to emails and assignments. You may want to ask students to reply by the end of the first day.
- **Are You Ready?** online workshop: You may want to ask students to complete the one-hour, Are You Ready? Preparation for Online Learning Student Workshop for students to get acquainted with navigating within Blackboard. Students can find it in Blackboard under the John Jay Student menu item at the top of the Blackboard screen. They can self-enroll and complete it. You can ask them to upload the certificate pdf as evidence of completion.
- Students can view a brief video about How to Be A Successful Online Learner at <https://johnjayonline.wistia.com/medias/s84fcmue8z>
- Students can contact Blackboard Support by emailing BlackboardStudent@jjay.cuny.edu
- Remember to Make Your Course Available in Blackboard!

*Note: If you are not using Blackboard for your course, we strongly urge you to post an Announcement in your Blackboard course section and provide clear information and links so students know how to find the course.*

We both would like to emphasize that you must MAKE YOUR COURSE AVAILABLE in Blackboard or your students will not find it. We are attaching an infographic with student tips and a screenshot of where you can find the availability setting in your course. For additional Blackboard support (for faculty), email [Blackboard@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:Blackboard@jjay.cuny.edu).

We will reach out this afternoon with additional brief tips and reassurance. Until then, we send our belief that you will be ready and that you are more than capable. Thank you.

Be safe. Be well.

Your faculty support team,

Gina and Judy

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