My dear and dedicated colleagues,

We are at the midpoint of our transition week. Would you please take a moment to name three great things that have happened with you since Wednesday (big or small)? And then would you please take a moment to settle into yourselves and how you're really feeling in this nanosecond? Thank you. Let's share the reality.

Today, if you're following with me, we're stepping into **Building the Basics**, starting to fill in our frameworks and mold our previous course content into our new course containers. If you've been teaching online or hybrid, the challenges are likely not to have been shifting your courses but keeping your students on track as they respond to the break for their face-to-face classes and the overall anxiety in the news and social media as well as their personal lives.

I'm a strong believer in structure (if you've seen my desk, you'll know why), especially for learning. When students are provided with structured activities and assignments, they spend less time trying to understand what to do and why than actually doing the work that makes the learning happen. And, structure has the benefit of creating limitations to push against, which tends to provoke creative problem-solving and capacity-building.

In today's email I'm offering you structure + resources + tips that I hope will be useful along the same lines. Try this rubric: AWARENESS, ACCESS, ABILITY, ACTION. Let's make sure our students are AWARE of what's happening, have ACCESS to their learning, can maximize their ABILITIES to learn, and can take ACTION that's effective based on our guidance.

Please note: The Optimum/Spectrum offer below has been verified. The Blackboard and DOES videos are just what we need (and they have more!).

Tomorrow, we'll go through other resources for student wellbeing that need space on your syllabi and your distance spaces.

Check these areas to increase the likeliness of student success:

AWARENESS (of the changes and expectations)

- **John Jay Official Statements** (these aren't focused solely on students and may need sections quoted or highlighted)
https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/coronavirus-updates

- **Financial Aid Updates & FAQs**
https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-important-financial-aid-updates-and-faqs

ACCESS (email, technology, time and space)

- **Lloyd Sealy Library: Computers** (access on campus at the library)
https://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/services/computers

- **Comcast Internet Essentials** (free 60 day broadband and wifi access for new customers)
https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19

- **The New York Public Libraries are closed March 14-31.**

ABILITY (technical, time management, self-advocacy)

- **Bb Student Tutorial Video**
https://johnjayonline.wistia.com/medias/ql4u2yepf7

- **Link to Bb Student Guide**
https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/webapps/john_jay_online_blackboard_student_user_guide.pdf

- **Tips to Succeed in an Online Course**
https://johnjayonline.wistia.com/medias/j50q42ia1q

- **Cultivating Self-Advocacy for All Students on College Campuses** (read the list of success attributes linked to self-advocacy)
https://nebhe.org/journal/cultivating-self-advocacy-for-all-students-on-college-campuses/

ACTION (achievable assignments, realistic deadlines)

- Provide context and make transparent connections to learning objectives.
- Use bulleted or numbered lists for instructions.
- Lay out assignments in small, connected steps.
- Refer to specific moments in activities, assignments, and discussions that relate to the current assignment.
- Offer a weekly date for clarifying instructions and affirming progress.
- Set assignment deadlines for the same date and time each week (e.g., Thursday, 11:59pm).
- Set up a discussion thread, Google doc, or other shared writing space for students to post questions, comments, and suggestions. Respond to these 2x each week on the same days and relatively the same times.

*Assessment and grading will be discussed in future emails.

Summing up:

Structure helps us feel:

- **Calmer**
- **Steadier**
- **Readier**

In building our basics for previous courses, we've often been designing for ideal situations. Let's design for flexible and creative ones instead.

Warm and safe thoughts,

Gina