Designing Access to Support: Ensuring Opportunity to Learn

Adjust course goals and expectations

- Recognize that remote learning goes more slowly and it is harder for students to learn remotely
- Distill course content to core necessary content
- Plan ways to go through examples interactively on screen (e.g., videocast solving problems, write on screen during class, allow students to annotate)
- If possible, plan for ways of doing assignments using a Chromebook, plan use of CloudPC

Provide for asynchronous options and difficulties with connectivity

- Record synchronous meetings, edit to remove sensitive & inefficient parts, post in Echo360
- Offer extra credit or create rotating assignment for students taking class notes, then check these and post
- Add live captioning so that students can follow when audio cuts out
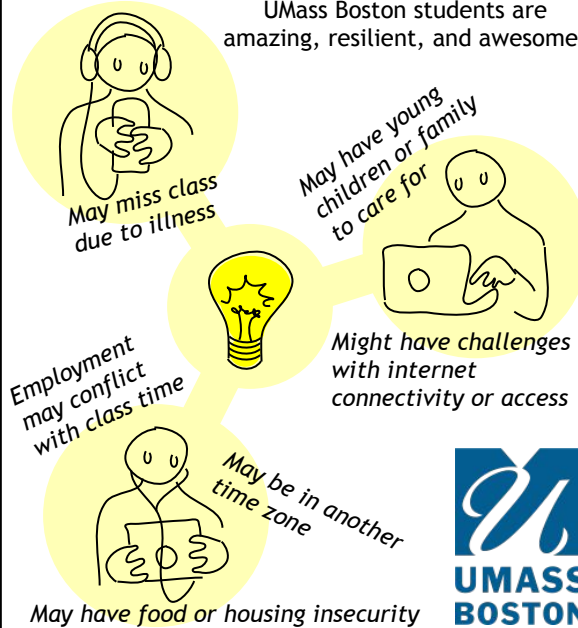
Assume good intentions

- Consider negative impacts that stereotype threat has students
- Design assessments and assignments as opportunities to promote soft skills (resourcefulness, collaboration) instead of policing dishonesty
- Offer information about academic support services, e.g., subject tutoring, writing center

Practice anti-racism

- Become more educated about racism
- Develop more sensitivity to intersectionalities (e.g., Asian & non-native English speaker & essential worker)
- Survey students periodically to ask if there is something students would like you to know about how class is going for them

Respect student privacy re webcams

- Provide alternatives that give students other ways to interact and communicate
- Open chat during class and arrange for a chat monitor, use discussion boards
- Design other forms of interactive activities during classes, use an online timer so students know when to return

Find out about students' well-being and access to resources

- Watch for changes in participation or when students are not doing homework and follow up
- Pay attention when there is a sudden disruptive behavior by a student (e.g., negative comment, inappropriate discussion post)
- Look for signs of loss of internet or computer access, provide link to Chromebook loan program

UMass Boston students are amazing, resilient, and awesome!

May miss class due to illness

May have young children or family to care for

Might have challenges with internet connectivity or access

Employment may conflict with class time

May be in another time zone

May have food or housing insecurity

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Be respectful about deadlines

- Time deadlines to promote healthy sleep
- Adjust deadlines on an individual basis when students cannot meet them
- Assume students are telling the truth and have valid reasons for missing deadlines, and work with them to plan getting caught up
- Plan for ways that students will be able to make up missed exams or take exams with different timeframes (e.g., students in different time zones)

Check in regularly and be ready to offer support

- Do not ignore distress signals, reach out and let the student know you have noticed, offer support
- If a student reaches out to you, ask questions to get more information
- Know how and where to refer students when they need support (Maxient forms, RESPOND initiative, health services, counseling center, UAccess, Title IX, immigration issues)

Support students with disabilities

- Accommodations do not change with remote learning and are still available
- Design assessments so that there can be appropriate extra time for students who require this accommodation
- Providing captioning may be necessary, and is also helpful for other students
- Refer students to the Ross Center and consider offering to be in a first Zoom call with a student

Encourage and model self care

- Show students that you are human too
- Selectively mention ways you are exercising self-care that are also ways that students will be likely to do so (e.g., ok to talk about practicing silent meditation, not ok to talk about out-of-town trips that many students likely cannot do)