

What Worked, What Did Not: University Instruction during a Pandemic

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Broadcasting with an audio-only app like Discord (instead of audio-and-video platforms like Zoom) turned out to be highly effective. Both student and instructor need only a smartphone for running the app and headphones with a built-in mic for speaking and listening. Photos, PowerPoint presentations, and text can be posted on Discord's text channel, meaning class material can be preposted, or photos of the whiteboard can be shared with little disruption. Discord requires much less bandwidth than Zoom, making it easier to use for students. Furthermore, many students reported that they were less distracted and they learned more by not having to stare at a computer screen. The instructor, meanwhile, does not need to worry about standing in front of a camera.

Lesson 2 learned: Audio-only instruction is often sufficient for educational purposes. Video instruction is not always necessary.

Suggested solutions: Instructors should familiarize themselves with apps such as Discord. When in-person and remote instruction must be provided simultaneously, Discord can very easily replace Zoom.