



Education in a Time of Disruption

Lessons Learned from
Emergency Remote Teaching
for Art and Design Schools
and Departments



Table of Contents

Preparing Students for the Future	3
Adjusting to Emergency Remote Teaching in Design Schools	5
- Flexible Expectations—For Faculty and Students	6
- Technology Access and Tools to Enable Remote Learning	7
How Might ERT Affect the Future of Design Education?	8
Virtual Assignment Ideas for Any Situation	9

Preparing Students for the Future

What do educators do when the future of learning arrives before they're ready?

As we all learned in spring of 2020, the world can change without warning. In a matter of a few weeks, [90%](#) of higher education institutions were forced to transition from traditional classroom learning to virtual learning as the COVID-19 outbreak grew. These changes were particularly challenging for higher education art and design students and faculty. Where before students were completing their work in well-equipped, on-campus labs and studios, those resources were suddenly unavailable.

Online learning was the obvious solution for finishing up the school year in accordance with CDC guidelines. But in the future, online learning may enable students to move forward with their design work no matter what's going on in the world.

53%

of American colleges are planning for in-person instruction in the fall.

10%

are planning for online instruction.

32%

are proposing a hybrid model.

The rest are considering a range of scenarios or are still waiting to decide. ([The Chronicle of Higher Education](#). Numbers as of July 19, 2020.)

80%

of Fall 2020 classes at UCLA will be online.

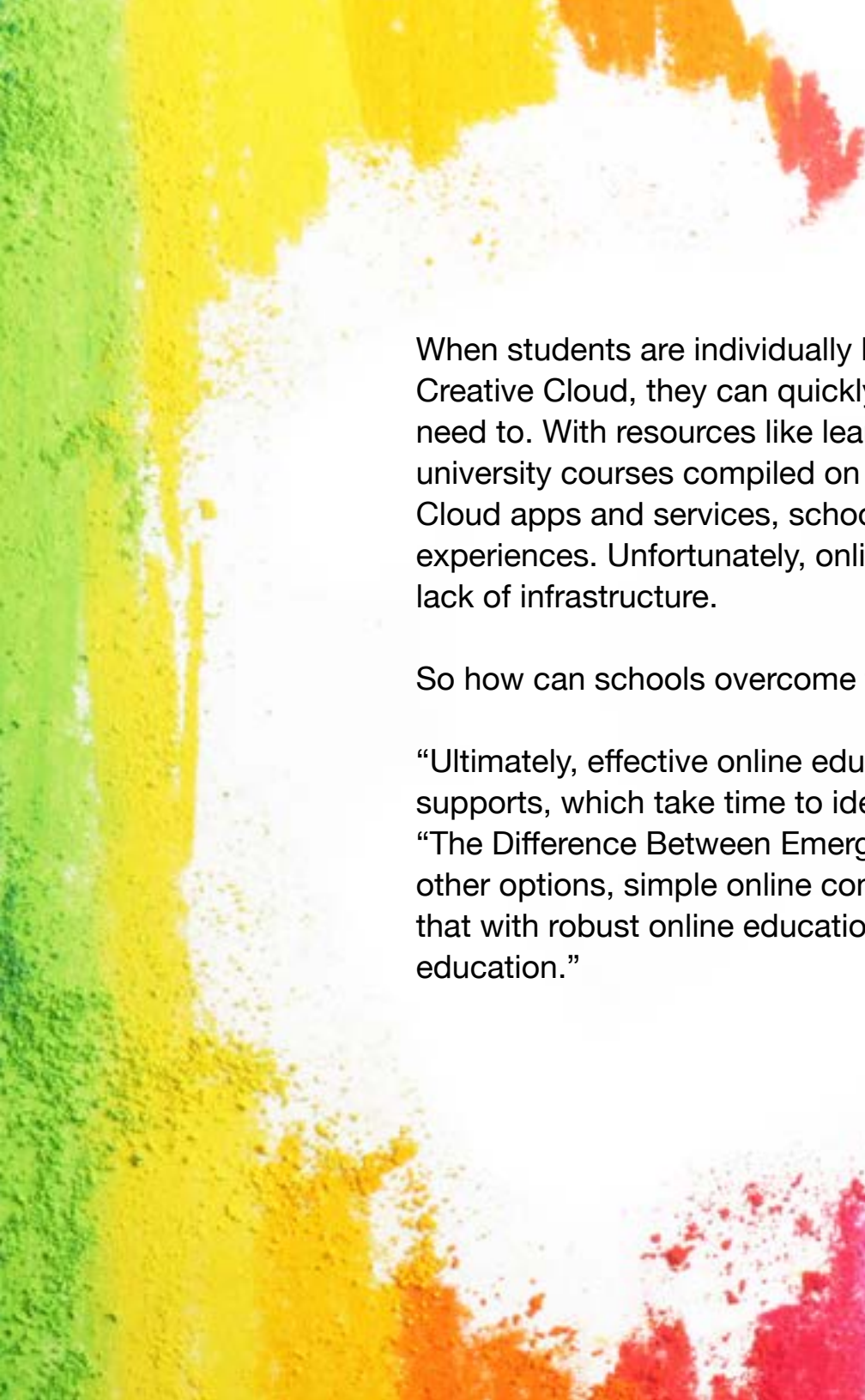
([Inside Higher Ed](#))

20%

of classes at The University of Texas at Austin will be online in Fall 2020.

([The Texas Tribune](#))





When students are individually licensed to use creative distance learning tools like Adobe Creative Cloud, they can quickly pivot to an agile, online education option anytime they need to. With resources like learning management systems, [LinkedIn Learning](#), free-to-audit university courses compiled on [Class Central](#), and individual student licenses for Creative Cloud apps and services, schools can create highly effective and satisfying online learning experiences. Unfortunately, online learning faces some challenges, including stigma and a lack of infrastructure.

So how can schools overcome these challenges and provide high-quality online education?

“Ultimately, effective online education requires an investment in an ecosystem of learner supports, which take time to identify and build,” according to an article in [Educause](#) titled “The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning.” “Relative to other options, simple online content delivery can be quick and inexpensive, but confusing that with robust online education is akin to confusing lectures with the totality of residential education.”

“Typical planning, preparation, and development time for a fully online university course is six to nine months before the course is delivered.”

— [Educause](#)

Online learning increases retention rates by

25% to 60%

as compared to face-to-face learning.

([The Research Institute of America](#))



Adjusting to Emergency Remote Teaching in Design Schools

Faculty have rediscovered the value of flexibility.

For many institutions, emergency remote teaching (ERT) in the spring of 2020 was a wake-up call, with [75%](#) of higher education presidents and chancellors rating “Training faculty less familiar with digital delivery” as very challenging or somewhat challenging. When the next emergency happens, will instructors have the infrastructure and support in place to continue to carry out their duties?

The season of ERT required instructors to try new approaches, many of which can be used to improve teaching going forward.

“There is still great uncertainty, but plans for the state are now taking shape and we have ourselves learned much over the last two months. . . . We all realize that the fall will absolutely not be a return to business as usual. . . . Now, more than ever, the people of Hawai‘i need the opportunity to affordably engage in higher education to advance their careers and their lives.”

— [David Lassner](#), President of the University of Hawai‘i

Flexible Expectations—For Faculty and Students

During ERT, flexibility was essential. Some faculty adjusted due dates and grading guidelines to make room for the inevitable roadblocks, while others experimented with technologies they hadn't used before. As new needs arose, everyone—from distinguished professors to the newest instructors—had to find new ways to operate their classes and alter coursework.

For example, Penny Ann Dolin—associate professor of practice in the graphic information technology program in the Fulton Schools of Engineering and contributing faculty at the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, both at Arizona State University—changed several of her photography students' assignments to be Adobe Spark presentations instead. "Students would normally submit TIF files of their photos, and then we'd talk about them as a class," she says. "Having my students create dynamic presentations helped them learn to craft a narrative around their photography and defend their ideas. It provided a unique opportunity for students to refine their visual communication skills in a way that may not have happened otherwise."

[Olivia Colacicco](#), a junior majoring in graphic and interactive design at Temple University, had an assignment to create visual imagery for posters, standing banners, and name tags. She and her team would ordinarily have printed out their designs to see what they would look like in physical form. But without access to the necessary physical supplies, they instead turned to Adobe apps to make digital prototypes. "Since using Adobe Dimension and Adobe Stock, which I might not have discovered if I hadn't been studying from home, I was surprised to save so much time," Colacicco says.

63%

of faculty changed the kinds of assignments or exams they asked students to do.

47%

made it easier for students to take their courses as pass/fail. ([Bay View Analytics](#))

"We need to teach our students to work with the latest technologies available today and prepare them to adapt to all of the new technologies that they will be exposed to throughout their careers."

— [Scott Dansby](#), Director of Industry Relations at Full Sail University

What resources did schools turn to?

At Arizona State University, more than [100,000 Zoom meetings](#) were held as of the end of March 2020.

Canvas LMS concurrent users increased by more than [60%](#) in the weeks leading up to April 2020.

[Khan Academy](#) supported 18 million learners per month before the crisis. Since school closures began, time spent on the site has increased by 2.5 times, student and teacher registrations by six times, and parent registration by 20 times.

Technology Access and Tools to Enable Remote Learning

It became apparent that both students and educators needed tools and best practices to make it through ERT smoothly. In an [Inside Higher Ed](#) survey, 85% of presidents and chancellors at two-year public universities indicated that ensuring student access was a “somewhat challenging” or “very challenging” concern, while 63% at four-year private universities indicated the same thing. Another challenge was having technology support available: 68% of presidents and chancellors at two-year public universities indicated that getting technology support was a “somewhat challenging” or “very challenging” concern, while 43% at four-year public universities indicated the same thing. Some of the solutions discovered may be helpful in the future, even with in-person teaching.

Along with his colleagues, [Jeff Elsbecker](#)—lead instructor in the digital modeling and fabrication program at IYRS School of Technology & Trades in Rhode Island—changed final projects to have largely digital outcomes and held regular individual check-ins with students to give them the technology support they needed. Each student also got access to a 3D printer for home use, which allowed them to create prototypes on their own.

[Clara Lieu](#), an adjunct instructor of art at Rhode Island School of Design, had to teach her figure drawing class without live models, which proved to be a challenge. But her previous experience with online classes helped her make the adjustments she needed. She says that it’s important to put yourself on video for your students, “even if you’re camera-shy, to build presence.” Additionally, she recommends using platforms students are comfortable with, like YouTube, and “distilling the essential points of any lecture down to their essence” to keep students’ attention.

[Academy of Art University](#) created a Rapid Remote Teaching Resources page with quick and easy answers for students who need technical support. These include instructions for accessing online classes, submitting artwork, setting up a Zoom account, and contacting the Help desk. And [Rochester Institute of Technology](#), like many schools, is reducing capacity and blending in-person and online instruction models to reduce density.

“We’re all learning an awful lot about technologies and techniques that have been available but have been thus far overwhelmingly underexplored or not used broadly and widely.”

— [Frederick M. Lawrence](#), Distinguished Lecturer in Law at Georgetown University, CEO of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and Former President of Brandeis University

How Might ERT Affect the Future of Design Education?

The COVID-19 disruption has led to the use of learning modalities that can complement traditional, in-person teaching, “from live broadcasts to ‘educational influencers’ to virtual reality experiences,” according to the [World Economic Forum](#). As instructors reflect on what worked and what didn’t, they can move forward with modalities that make a positive impact on their students’ learning.

Coalitions and learning consortiums with diverse stakeholders have taken shape. Educational professionals, governments, publishers, technology providers, and telecom network operators have come together to create temporary solutions in the midst of the crisis, and these partnerships may lead to greater academic innovation.

“In 1665, Cambridge University closed because of the plague. Isaac Newton decided to work from home. He discovered calculus and the laws of motion. Just saying.”

— [Paddy Cosgrave](#), Chief Executive of Web Summit

“This gave us an opportunity to try a different path and overcome some long-standing resistance to remote work. Many designers have been holding on to the idea that it’s always important to physically have your hands on an object. While having physical objects still has its place in certain instances of design, being forced to do things this new way has really opened up their eyes.”

— [Abby Guido](#), Assistant Professor of Graphic and Interactive Design at Temple University

“The fast-changing nature of today’s society has affected the creative industry quite a bit. The skillsets that people are looking for right now are quite different than a lot of the more traditional design programs others are teaching.”

— [C. J. Yeh](#), Professor at The Fashion Institute of Technology



Virtual Assignment Ideas for Any Situation

Because Adobe Creative Cloud is available from anywhere on any device, it's a perfect resource for today's design students. Here are some ideas for assignments that can work in any situation—in person or remotely.

Faculty and Peer Feedback with Adobe Acrobat Pro

Using [Acrobat Pro](#), students can easily scan and share their art and design work with instructors and peers. Then, peers can leave comments and mark up text with highlights, underlines, and strikethroughs to share their ideas and feedback. It's a quick and easy way to learn how to give and receive constructive criticism and improve the artistic process.

TikTok Videos Using Adobe Premiere Rush

Premiere Rush is an all-in-one, cross-device video-editing app that enables students to share their videos directly to TikTok. It's a fun opportunity for students to build storytelling skills and practice creating persuasive content.

Virtual Board Games Using Adobe XD or Dreamweaver

Students focus on the user experience as they create board games that can be played anywhere. XD allows students to design, prototype, and share the apps they make to deliver their games, and Dreamweaver lets them create a responsive website version.

“[This is] an exciting chance for us to do some things for an online format that will make our face-to-face classes better than ever before.”

— [Michael McGreal](#), Chair of Culinary Arts at Joliet Junior College

“Most faculty members I’ve informally polled never took a grad school class on how to teach in college, let alone one called ‘How to teach online in a global pandemic.’ . . . I never realized just how much of my teaching abilities relied on my ability to read the room. Now I have to learn to read the Zoom.”

— [Christopher R. Marsicano](#), Instructor at Davidson College

Having to teach during a global pandemic is an unexpected challenge. But higher education instructors are moving forward using lessons from spring 2020—about teaching and communication in general, about their pedagogical philosophies, and about valuable resources and opportunities that had never crossed their minds before.

How can Creative Cloud help your students succeed in any circumstance? See how to transform your students’ distance learning experiences using the following resources:

[Adobe Education Exchange Distance Learning Resources](#)

Faculty can explore this hub to find inspiring activities, webinars, courses, and articles that support distance learning.

[Adobe Live](#)

Behance hosts live tutorials on photography, graphic and motion design, illustration, and UI/UX with apps like Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Fresco, Adobe XD, and more. Students can watch the livestream or explore the archives.

“Adobe Creative Cloud is used in businesses around the world, from global corporations to small startups. By teaching students to use Adobe creative apps effectively to communicate designs and ideas with others, we’re setting students up for successful careers.”

— [Andrew Phelps](#), Professor at Rochester Institute of Technology College of Art and Design

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