

Virtual Tactile Studio Courses

On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 28 members of the UMN teaching community convened to discuss delivery of tactile studio courses such as drawing or sculpture in a virtual setting. Ideas and effective practices generated during that discussion are documented here. Contact cei@umn.edu to suggest an addition to this resource.

Session Recording

- [YouTube video](#) of the session

Facilitators and panelists (if applicable):

- Facilitator: [Anita Gonzalez](#), Center for Educational Innovation
- Panelist: [Jason Ramey](#), Studio Art, UM-Morris
- Panelist: [James Boyd Brent](#), Design, UM-Twin Cities

Remote Classroom Practices

The panelists identified a number of ways in which tactile studio courses can **quickly and effectively adapt their practices** for remote learning.

Course Materials

- **Share background and contextual information** via the Canvas or Google Drive
- **Annotate photographic examples of past projects** as models to describe what is successful / unsuccessful.
- **Provide supply kits with essential materials** to help students achieve course outcomes.
- **Encourage the use of non-standard materials** to complete assignments.

Create Community

- **Host synchronous sessions via Zoom** to help maintain a sense of course community.
- **Explicitly create ways for students to connect** through scaffolding: ice-breakers; pair work; work in groups as semester moves on.
- **Encourage student-to-student connection** through texting or apps such as [MarcoPolo](#) for informal exchange of ideas.

Innovative Approaches

Panelists and participants in this session highlighted a number of ways in which holding remote tactile studio courses may require a different approach in attitude, delivery, and execution.

- **Emphasize resourcefulness and self-direction** and the **value of design thinking in our current world.**
 - By using non-standard materials from home as potential design materials, students think beyond has normally been used.
 - Encourage site specific installations.
 - Ask students to create a home studio environment as part of course content
- **Focus and emphasize concept development and ideation process.** Encourage students to spend more time answering the question “Why am I making this work?” This can be accomplished by uploading sketches with explanations and asking students to be more detailed about this aspect.
- For students with background in hand and technical skills, remote learning is a good opportunity to spread out at home and explore ideas in even more depth.
- Students can use materials in safe ways to create casts at home which can then be sent back to their studios via mail to be cast in bronze or aluminum.
- Use 3-D software, such as [Revit](#), to model and share experiences (AutoDesk may be offering free use of software due to COVID-19)

Acknowledge Limitations

While much can be accomplished through remote instruction, it’s important to acknowledge that there are limits to what can be taught remotely due to access to specialized materials and equipment, the ability to provide feedback on techniques and movements, and safety.

- Developing foundational technical and physical skills sets is challenging; teaching hand and coordination skills is difficult to do without seeing performance and providing feedback in real time.
- Assessing 3-dimensional pieces is challenging; it’s difficult to address the technical aspects of construction
- Financial limitations of mailing pieces back and forth (pieces may be heavy and frequency of delivery may prove cost prohibitive)
- Safe material options may be too limiting for higher education context (e.g. clay disposal at home is unsafe; safe options don’t allow for the range in technical expertise or finishing applications)
- Positive momentum of the studio is missing; students miss the energy of being in studio and the spontaneity of getting ideas from casual conversations