

Online Student Presentations

Our thanks to Jennifer Hart, Associate Professor of History, for contributing to this guide.

Presentations are a large part of many course grades. Whether it is a shorter presentation sharing a research plan or a large cumulative presentation, moving these online can pose challenges. This guide will share some tips for (re)framing student presentations in the online environment and suggest several alternate formats; as well as some guidance for group projects and presentations, including grading.

Consider Students' Technology Access

At this time, we suggest instructors keep things as simple as possible for themselves and their students. Ask yourself the question, "What is the lowest tech option that will enable students to show they have met the learning objectives?"

In addition to considering the learning objectives associated with the student presentation, take students' technology access into consideration. Many may be accessing your course using a cell phone or with cell phone data instead of Wi-Fi. This makes options like live (synchronous) video presentations challenging, if not impossible.

Reframing Student Presentations

Using the principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#), offer students multiple ways to show their learning. A traditional, synchronous presentation may work for some students, with others may fair well recording their presentation and submitting it. Providing options like creating a brochure, digital poster, infographic, blog post, or social media campaign may allow your students to demonstrate their knowledge in a unique and engaging way.

Some specific tools are listed at the end of this document. Remember, you do not need to be the expert in these extra tools, just to share them with students as options they can explore. Students may also have tools that they are familiar with. Many of these come with mobile applications that can allow students to create their product on their phone or tablet.

Group Projects

Just like with individual presentations, group projects or presentations require some rethinking given the unexpected nature of the move to online teaching. Again, being flexible with your students is key. Consider allowing students to opt to work individually, as they may not be able to as easily work together as when they were on campus given schedules and caregiving duties they have be coping with now. You can also allow groups to choose the type of project they will submit.

Canvas allows the option to create groups of students, with students either [automatically placed in groups](#) or [manually sorted by you or allowing for self-sign-up](#).



Clearly communicate with students that they are encouraged to come to you with any challenges they are facing in their group project. Regular check-ins with students are useful and keep the anxiety level lower.

Grading Group Projects

Before they begin the project, have students create and submit a plan for their project. This plan should include:

- A communication plan: When and how (email, text, etc.)
- Roles: Divide the project into roughly equal roles and assign a group member to each role
- Criteria for success: How will the members of the group know they can successfully fulfilled their role and that the project overall was successful?

Grade students on both individual contribution and overall group-created product. Placing a large emphasis on individual performance can increase student engagement while decreasing anxiety. Be very clear about your expectations. Provide a checklist or rubric to help students understand what you consider to be their criteria for success. The [Transparency in Teaching and Learning \(TILT\) framework](#) provides excellent guidance on creating clear expectations.

Suggested Tools

This is a short list of potentially useful tools for students completing presentations and group projects. Feel free to share this list with your students. All options are free or have free options.

- [Canva](#) – Create images, infographics, brochures, and more
- [Explain Everything](#) – Upload and annotate images on a digital whiteboard while recording; both mobile and browser-based options available.
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. – Use these for creating social media campaigns
- [Google Sites](#) – Create websites or blogs
- [Hypothes.is](#) – Group annotations and closing reading of texts
- [Lucidchart](#) – Virtual diagrams, data visualization, and collaboration
- [Mural](#) – Digital workspace for visual collaboration
- [Office 365](#) – Access the suite of tools using your WSU login; create collaborative documents, presentations, spreadsheets, and more.
- [Padlet](#) – Use a Padlet as a resource repository
- [Popplet](#) – Concept mapping tool for iPad
- [Voicethread](#) – combine text, videos, and more to create a presentation
- [Whatsapp](#) – A mobile texting application
- [Wordpress](#) – Create websites or blogs

