Eight Guidance Notes to Ensure the Success of Distance Learning
Al-Hussein Technical University
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These are some notes that are based on Al-Hussein's Technical University's experience in Distance Learning. If followed, they would ensure a successful and engaging learning process for the students.

1. _To Ensure Continued Student Engagement, Instructors are advised to Keep up with Face to Face online meetings at the Set Lecture Timeslots_
Students like to have regular online meeting with the instructor. This keeps them engaged and encourages them to observe the lecture set time. A tool like "Microsoft Teams" is ideal for this purpose. **Simply asking the students to study online pdf files or watching some videos on their own is risky and may result in the students not keeping up and losing interest.** When the student knows that he/she has a specific lecture time (online), this will encourage him/her to attend and keep up with the rest of the group of students and the instructor. This also provides some of the social dimension that students usually miss when not attending "physical" classes.

2. _The ideal Method of presentation to students is drawing and typing by the instructor live during the lecture, if possible, as opposed to turning Powerpoint slides._
Going through Powerpoint slides is good, but it is not as engaging as live drawing and typing by the instructor. Ideally, the instructor should use a tool such a OneNote or Drawboard PDF and use it in landscape format (very similar to using a whiteboard in a real physical lecture). Once the lecture is completed, the instructor is advised to save the file and send it or publish it to the students.

3. _Use Flipped Classroom Effectively to Encourage Student Engagement_
Ask students to watch certain videos or read certain documents before the lecture time. In this way, students will start the lecture ready to discuss what they have watched/read. A lively discussion can follow in the online lecture itself. This tool is called "Flipped Classroom" because the students watch the material outside the lecture and have a more meaningful discussion during the lecture with the instructor and fellow students.

4. _Encourage Participation by Students by Making them present their own Presentations._
Encourage collaboration by students. For example, students could be asked to each prepare some part of the material and present it in class. The student could be given the control of the screen (to become a presenter) and he/she could present to other students and a discussion could follow. The instructor could interject comments or questions during the student's presentation.

5. _Make the Online Lecture Interactive by Asking Students to do Activities and send in their output instantly._

Make the lecture interactive by asking the students to do activities during the online lecture (solve a problem or write a piece of code) and e-mail their work to the instructor who can share it with the whole class. This is one of the highest levels of interaction and would ensure that the students have something interesting to do during the lecture.

6. *Use Simulation Software as an alternative to Laboratory sessions*
When physical presence is not possible (as it the case now), it is going to be difficult to conduct physical laboratories. A suitable alternative is simulation software. For example, in engineering, MATLAB/Simulink offers an ideal tool for students to adjust parameters and run scenarios. Students could run the software on their laptops and share the results with the instructor who in turn can share it with the whole group. The students could be asked to build the full model from scratch to simulate a real-life system.

7. *The Effective use of Short Tests/Quizzes will help Students Remain Up to Date with the course.*
Moodle (e-learning) is a powerful tool for running online multiple-choice quizzes. These quizzes can be taken by students from home at certain agreed timeslots. These quizzes encourage students to study regularly and keep up to date with the course. They could even be used as self-assessment tools for students. As time goes by, the instructor can compile a large question bank to be used in the quizzes.

8. *Time-constrained exams can be run by asking student to turn on their cameras and sit the exam at home.*
A specific time slot can be set for the exam (e.g., 2 hours). The students turn on their cameras to allow the instructor to see them working. The Assignment is released at the start of the exam. The students can answer the questions using a tool like Microsoft Word and submit the Word file at the end of the exam. Alternatively, the student can write by pen and then scan and submit the scanned document.

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