Onwards to Better: Key Considerations for Teaching

During remote learning, students conducted all their learning activities via a computer and instructors often provided notes, slides, and lecture recordings. As we return to a new academic year, what should stay? In this series we address major questions educators face and provide evidence-informed answers (see full references here: https://beav.es/3Vc)

SHOULD YOU MAKE SLIDES/NOTES AVAILABLE?

WHAT SOME FACULTY MAY THINK: Students will pay less attention.

WHAT SOME STUDENTS MAY THINK: I can pay more attention.

What the Evidence Suggests ---

Pros
• Provides more time to think about the material, highlights what is important, provides a template to take better notes and listen more to instructor.
• Does not negatively affect attendance.
• Increased inclusivity for students with ADHD/learning disabilities, student-athletes, and those who cannot attend.

Cons
• Can be distracting, confusing, leads to less attention, and hurts coding of new information.
• Students given slides may do worse on exams.
• Slides may lead to less and lower quality note taking.

BOTTOM LINE: Slides and notes can vary in clarity, complexity, and length so a blanket prescription is difficult to test. Limiting access to notes has no deleterious effects on learning and may prompt more attention and better note taking (Grant, et al., 2021).

In General: The effectiveness of your pedagogical choices on learning depend on a number of factors (e.g., the educator and student characteristics, discipline, course level, lecture, & slide quality). Be intentional, transparent, and compassionate in pedagogical decision making. It always pays to be CCOMFE (Compassionate, Clear, Organized, Multi-faceted, Flexible, and Engaging).

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