

Zoom, Canvas, and Smartphone Student Use in the Time After COVID-19

Closing the Distance in Distance Learning Part 2

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Ransdell and Rieck (2020) found that distance learning was a physical and mental challenge in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study compares Zoom, Canvas, and smartphone use from 2020 to 2023, when the COVID-19 pandemic has receded. For many students, phones are used more and larger devices less. Students who realize that Canvas can be used to earn points on assignments do well. Those who do not tend to struggle and spend less time on task. This paper describes good use in 2023 of Zoom, Canvas, and smartphones as a follow-up to the findings of Ransdell and Rieck (2020). Closing the distance between instructor and student sometimes means closing the distance between online materials and student choices. In 2023, students who follow the main outline of the Big Five in Canvas stand a better chance of spending their increasingly limited time well.



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College students can be quite resilient despite many physical and mental challenges. However, even among those already taking distance learning classes, the pandemic made an often-difficult task more difficult. Lower resourced students, especially in K-12, found it challenging to have the physical broadband and mental effort to transcend new limits on learning access (Tawfik et al., 2021). In 2021, they found that teaching in K-12 was negatively affected by social and emotional challenges in the face of technological change. Teachers felt a greater distance from their young students and, of course, they were also more physically dis-

tant. This research is about Zoom, Canvas, and smartphone use during and after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many other changes occurred during this period, but this paper is about better understanding how students use software. It describes good use of Zoom, Canvas, and smartphones as a follow-up to the findings of Ransdell and Rieck (2020).

Ransdell and Rieck (2020) established that college students found distance learning a physical and mental challenge even though students already experienced at least some of their instruction online. In fact, as in the present study, older and more academically selective adults can often be resilient. This study aims to compare 2020 computer behaviors in Canvas, Zoom, and smartphone use to those same behaviors in 2023. In 2023, better students use the main components of the Big Five in Canvas, Announcements, Assignments, Syllabus, Media Gallery, and Grades more efficiently than those with poorer learning outcomes. Instructors should make even more explicit the game to the system. Focus on Assignments. Spend your time in a specific and goal-directed way. Follow the natural student tendency to the straightest line to a good grade. Spend time exactly where it is needed according to the rules of the syllabus.

Time on task is often stronger in students with better grades. Distance learning affords a time-on-task record in Canvas. Daniels et al. (2021) found that the impact of COVID-19 triggered changes in both teacher and student on university students' self-reported motivation and engagement. Motivated students learned more in part because they spent more time on task. Ransdell and Rieck (2020) found that student time on task in Canvas and learning outcomes like grades were positively correlated. As time on task increased, students made better assignments and learned more course content than those who spent less time on task. In 2020, 93% of the variability in time on task

at the beginning of the course was predicted by the time on task at the end. Time on task was significantly correlated with better grades. Game theory suggests that students who try to game the system might learn what you want them to learn (Sanchez et al., 2020). In 2023, students who realize that Canvas can be used to gain points on assignments do very well. Those who do not tend to struggle and spend less time on task. This paper describes good use in 2023 of Zoom, Canvas, and smartphones as a follow-up to the findings of Ransdell and Rieck (2020). The following section will describe good use of Zoom, Canvas, and smartphones as found in the best distance learners in 2023.

The best use of software helps anticipate ways to pull the distance between instructor and student closer. Zoom allows students to join live sessions with faculty in a facsimile of a physical classroom. Even the best students in 2023 do not show their faces during the class, and the weakest do not attend and do not watch recordings. Recordings are a double-edged sword because if you record, fewer people attend, and fewer show their faces on screen. Alternatively, as of Fall 2023, many students, including the best-performing ones, spend more time on the Big Five in Canvas (Ransdell & Rieck, 2020). Students with better assignments spend more time overall in Canvas and more time in Announcements and Assignments. These students also show more evidence of using the textbook or ebook required for the course. Returning to the basics of reading the materials and following the syllabus have rebounded some from 2020 but are still less prevalent than instructors would wish. Smartphone use to connect to instructors and material has increased in the general world and with college students as they try to game the system of assignment points to grade. In 2023, the best use of student-to-instructor connection is to focus on the assignments and materials and get students to spend more time on tasks, espe-

cially as their time seems ever more divided and scarcer.

The best uses of software can mean explicit focus on assignments and points to be gained. Rubrics for points have long given students a way to work more autonomously, but students have only sometimes focused on them. Instructors who streamline their Canvas and Zoom-based materials can help students learn where to spend their time. First, announcements in Canvas are the central point for explanation and navigation. Auto announcements can be sent to cell phones and other mobile devices. Moreover, students get updates on new things to read in the class in Canvas. Second, the syllabus is the business contract between the teacher and the students and should be easy to find and referred to often. Third, assignments show all the reading, writing, and creating you are asking of your online students. Ask them to focus their limited time on assignments. Fourth, Media Gallery can reinforce reading and writing assignments by showing that the process leads directly to higher grades. Fifth, grades show the students where they are at any given moment toward a specific grade. They should be able to refer to the syllabus and see the grading scale and what will happen if they turn in something late or not at all, for example.

In summary, let students know that there is nothing special about Zoom. In 2023, students seem even less likely to want to engage, show themselves, and speak up in video. Follow that trend by showing them that following the Canvas Assignments, Announcements, Syllabus, Media Gallery, and Grades will lead to better performance, even without weekly Zoom meetings standing in as class time. Let students know that there is something special about using Canvas wisely. Keep the structure simple. Always point back to instructions and rubrics for how to work

autonomously. Closing the distance between instructor and student sometimes means closing the distance between online materials and student choices. In 2023, students who follow the main outline of the Big Five in Canvas stand a better chance of spending their limited time well. Technology like Zoom, Canvas, and smartphones can provide the integral components of autonomy, relatedness, and competency for an intrinsically motivating experience. Autonomy is good: you can schedule it or watch the video when you want to, but if not, there is also a way to do it autonomously. Zoom is not always a replacement for class time. Students may be turned off by the video format or devote as little time as possible to earn the grade. However the instructor must find a way to use the increasingly limited student time spent online to focus on assignments and learning outcomes.

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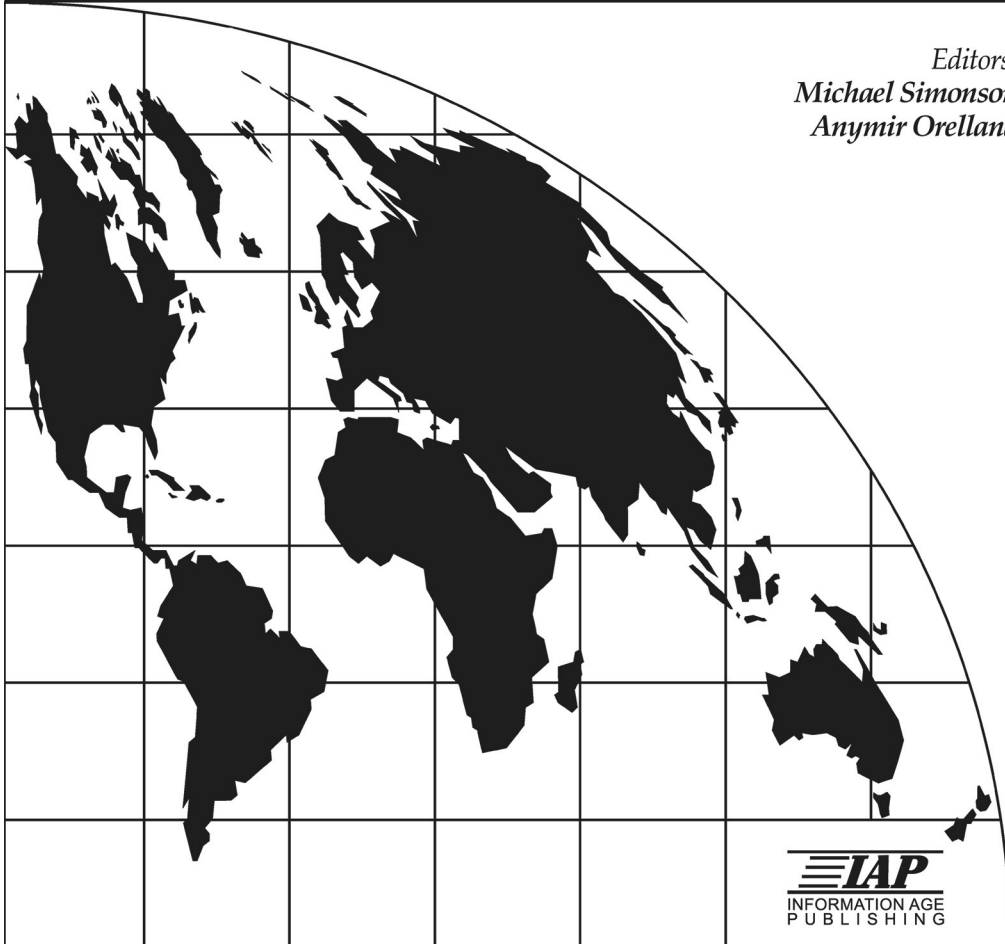
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