Teaching Tip

Wearing masks while teaching makes it challenging to communicate in the “COVID-19/masked up” classroom. However, instructors can still rely on non-verbal cues if they work at exaggerating facial expressions and hand gestures and encourage students to do the same. Other non-verbal cues include using technology in the classroom the same way instructors might have for online learning. All of this is an adjustment as is having to wear a mask for long periods of time. Here are some strategies to help overcome these challenges:

• Find the mask that works for you. Explore the options. Disposable masks can make it easier to breathe. Try different masks.
- Make sure it fits correctly. Tips for wearing masks with glasses.
- Invest in larger quantities after you know which is most comfortable.
- Change mask throughout the workday, especially if you’re talking a lot.
- Consider a mask with a clear mouth panel.

• Be sure to project your voice and enunciate as clearly as possible. Talk slower and louder as needed. Practice diaphragmatic breathing to help from straining.

• Summarize and repeat as needed. Change wording if you have to repeat more than once.
• Use body language, hand gestures, and exaggerated facial expressions.
• Use multiple methods of conveying information.
• Consider using a voice amplifier or recording lessons.
• Minimize background noise.
• Find different ways to connect to encourage student interaction. For example, develop signals or use technology to gauge student understanding or get immediate input, such as polling, word cloud, surveys, etc.

For a list of references contact us at (334) 953-5454.