

## Activate the Student-Preview Function of the Learning-Management System (LMS)

One of the ways to achieve your goals for each course is by ensuring that students are set up for success. Ensuring that students are prepared goes beyond course content and a thorough syllabus; it also involves the technical aspects of teaching online.

Research shows that students of online classes can become frustrated and disengage with the course if it is difficult to navigate to resources, forums, and other course functions (Darby, n.d.). We can organize course content from a student's point of view in order to reduce the probability of frustration with navigating the course.

### Student-Preview Function of the LMS

The best way to know whether or not your course layout, resources, learning experiences, assignments, and forums are simple and straightforward for students to access is to navigate your course as if you were a student. Activate the student-preview function of the LMS, which allows you to see the course as your students will. This way, you can identify unclear navigation paths and check links to ensure that they lead to the intended resource.

Because you created the course, you are likely to know more than the average user, in which case it may be helpful to ask a colleague or teaching assistant to conduct this check to uncover areas of possible confusion. Track the number of clicks it takes to get to a file or resource and, if the path seems confusing, look for new locations for the link or resource.

### Create a Tutorial

Keep in mind that online students are often on their own when they get stuck or feel frustrated, which is why many disengage. To help students feel more connected and cared for, you may choose to provide quick pointers either posted in a forum or emailed to students along with contact information for support services and tech support.

Additionally, you can use software on your computer, such as QuickTime Player, to create a video tutorial of your screen as you navigate to course materials and resources. In this video tutorial, you can also provide quick tips or pointers to students.

### Sources

Darby, F. (n.d.). *How to be a better online teacher: Advice guide*. The Chronicle of Higher Education.  
<https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-online-teaching>