

# Tips for Finishing the Semester Strong

By: Martha Diede, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence

In just a few weeks, we'll complete this semester. Students will have to submit their final work for your classes and for their other classes. Everyone will be working, teaching, and learning remotely, which might not offer the optimal environment. So how can we finish well together? A few suggestions:

- Remind learners to start their semester-end projects if they haven't already.
- Review your course outcomes.
- Have students produced work that demonstrates meeting those outcomes?
  - If so, do you require a final exam?
    - Could learners work on a small project to help them cement their learning in your course?
    - Could you ask learners to apply course concepts to a real-life challenge?
  - What might learners suggest as a way to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes?
  - What ideas do they have for showing what they have learned and are able to do?
  - Can you design a small assessment that will give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their learning?
- Remind learners to remain in contact with you as they transition to remote learning. Establish a single method of communication. (Blackboard [announcements](#) is a great choice.) Set some expectations: for example, "I'll answer emails regularly, but never after 5 pm on weekdays, and rarely on weekends."
- Think about your class time as a way for learners to connect with you and with each other. As everyone transitions to remote teaching and learning, build some time for [connection](#) into your plans if possible.
- If you haven't yet, consider suggesting that your students set up class buddies – another person in the class who can help to confirm deadlines, compare notes, and share course navigation tips and tricks.

Regardless of how you plan to have students finalize their work for the semester, having them reflect on this experience and the ways in which they participated in their learning process can be a powerful learning tool. Ask them to address writing or discussion prompts such as

- What standards do you have for yourself as a learner? How well did you meet those standards this semester? Why? How do you know?
- Think about your future employer. What did you learn during this experience that will make you a better employee?
- What changed about their efforts in the process of learning this semester? Did they put in more effort than they thought? Less? About the same?
- Think about your thinking. What did you think about learning at the beginning of the semester? What do you think now? What examples can you give to show your experience?
- What standards will you set for yourself as a learner next semester? What do you need to meet or exceed those standards? How can you get those supports in place now?