



White Board

Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

Five Tips for Switching to Online Instruction

AS SCHOOLS ACROSS THE nation announce they are switching to online instruction in an attempt to slow the rapidly evolving coronavirus pandemic, teachers everywhere are scrambling to convert their face-to-face classes to virtual classes—a process that often takes weeks of preparation—in a matter of a days. Not only has this quick turn-around forced faculty to scramble, but changing delivery methods in the middle of the semester has left many of us wondering how we're going to provide a seamless learning experience to our students.

Here are five tips to begin the transition to teaching online over the next couple of weeks.

Don't panic, be empathetic.

Sure it's a pain for you to have to convert these lessons, but this is a much greater peril for many of our students. There are students in your class who can not afford to return home, who do not have safe homes to return to, who depend on their meal plan to eat. There are students in your class who do not have easy access to technology or are fearful of what may be happening to families in areas that are more affected than we are at the moment.

Keep it simple.

Focus on the next week, or even just the next class, depending on your workload. Converting three classes to virtual format will take some thought, so consider building your current module first before worrying about what will happen next week. Where are my adjuncts at who are losing their minds trying to juggle seven classes at two or three different schools? Take a breath and start simple.

Communicate with your students. A simple, "Hey, guys, I see you, hear you, and will provide directions in the next 48 hours" is much better than a panicked email. Or worse, no email at all! Planned actions are better than reaction or no action.

Stick to the curriculum but look for shortcuts.

Got a group project coming up? Can you convert it to an individual project without sacrificing learning outcomes? Do your students really need to watch a video of you reading them your PowerPoint presentation or could a couple short 3-5 minute videos explaining a difficult concept support the PowerPoint?

Still using photocopies and don't have access to a scanner? Use a free app like Genius Scan or Scanner App to distribute your printouts.

Don't like video? Record an audio clip of yourself (try the EZ Audio Cut) or find a reliable source to explain the concept (an article or short video that summarizes the key points).

Don't skip discussion or question/answer sessions.

Just about every learning management system (LMS) out there has a discussion post option and you can easily search for tutorials for LMS like Canvas, Moodle, or Blackboard on how to set one up. You can chat in Teams in Office 365, or hold Zoom hours online.

Pro tip: Most schools are doing their due diligence to provide excellent resources and tutorials. Schools like Penn State University are offering step-by-step and in-person training to help with this transition. Find what resources your school offers to help or look at the resources other schools are offering.

But my classes CAN'T be converted to online.

Yes, they can. Teach art? Teach music? Public speaking? Exercise science? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. The tools above (and oodles of others) make it easier than ever to convert your material online. Start simple, start small, and keep open communication with your students.

How are we going to do all of this without disrupting the educational experience? We're not, but that's okay. Our students are looking to us for guidance. In many cases, we're the first line of communication for our students' questions and concerns. This is not the time to panic and give up, it's a time for you to tap into your creativity and critical thinking in order to overcome an obstacle. It's a time for us to demonstrate the resiliency and grit we so desperately want to see in our students and our future generations.

Bio: Aurora D. Bonner is a writer and educator who helps others think creatively and mindfully. She has worked in higher ed for 14 years, teaching and promoting student success. Find her at aurorabonner.com.

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Classes End - Apr 27
Reading Day - Apr 28
Spring 2 - Classes End - Apr 28
Spring 2 - Exams - Apr 29
Exams - Apr 29-May 5

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Undergraduate Teaching
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Leading Our Classes Through Times of Crisis with Engagement and PEACE

THE WORLDWIDE COVID-19 pandemic has caused a fast and radical shift across colleges and universities to remote and online teaching models. As such, our face-to-face courses have been taken out of the physical classroom and thrust into virtual domains. While many instructors are fluent and may prefer online teaching practices, others are struggling to rapidly expand their skill sets and become fluent in technologies they have never, or perhaps only briefly, explored.

Although this transition to a remote teaching and learning format is uncomfortable for many of us, it has been inspirational to witness the collaborations that have emerged as a result of this pandemic. More specifically, in order to support these hasty efforts to move teaching online, a variety of communities of instructors have emerged to provide guidance, advice, tutorials, and other resources to help themselves and their colleagues achieve “good enough-ness” (teaching excellence is not the goal right now) in continuing to teach their students.

The recent emphasis on logistical resources and teaching-related information is understandable. Anecdotal accounts abound of instructors experiencing great anxiety at having been directed simply to “put classes online”, and these resources and information can help alleviate that anxiety and empower instructors to keep teaching. What has received less attention, however, has been discussion of how we as instructors should lead our students and inspire them in this time of emergency. Indeed, it is important to remember that while this is a new and unsettling experience for us, this is an equally new and unsettling experience for our students (many of whom are likely to be displaced from their housing situations and/or face economic hardships).

How we address these changing circumstances to our students will markedly impact their own reactions. We have an opportunity to use our teaching personas, philosophies, and practices to both help our students understand and manage the gravity of this current crisis and reassure them that we have some control, even in this uncertain



situation, to create positive personal and professional experiences through our continuing academic connections. Below, we provide recommendations for how we can use our teaching personas, philosophies, and practices to lead our students during this crisis.

Acknowledge, and accept, that things are different now for us and our students. We could not anticipate the essentially universal transition to remote learning models. Many instructors do not want to teach online, and many students do not want to learn online. We are justified not only in our frustrations caused by this transition, but also in our desire to commiserate briefly with colleagues about how difficult and scary this will be (and not just academically, but cognitively, emotionally, physically, socially, etc.). But rather than focus on the negative, we recommend that instructors immediately transition to discussing with their students how they are ready to accept and lean into these changes. As instructors, we have the unique opportunity here to provide guidance, excitement, and inspiration about the changes we are facing. We have the opportunity to

communicate with our students the value of this modified educational experience, which is a much more effective use of our time and skills than grieving about how things were or could/should have been.

Show your students that you will be reasonable and empathetic. Once you have acknowledged the changes and guided your students to accept that these changes will happen, you have the opportunity to reassure your students that, at least academically, things will be okay. Explicitly state to your students that you will shepherd them through this difficult time by making changes to their academic experience that are reasonable and fair. Share with them your empathy to their experiencing potential crises in many domains of life. Your student athletes may have had their seasons cancelled. Your senior students may not see their friends again or experience walking across the stage to receive their diplomas at graduation. Your students, or their family or friends, may be impacted directly by COVID-19. Let them

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know that you recognize that your class is not the only responsibility or concern they have right now, and let them know that they can trust you to continue to promote their learning and academic success through this difficult time.

Model engagement, optimism, and PEACE for your students. Our teaching philosophy is called "Trickle Down Engagement," and is based on the idea that instructors' engagement in the course and the content will impact students' engagement, and ultimately, will facilitate their learning. Our Trickle Down Engagement teaching philosophy is based on theories of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2017), intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999), positive psychology (Fredrickson, 2001), and emotional contagion (Frenzel et al., 2009), and our data supports this link between instructor engagement, student engagement, and student learning (Saucier, Miller, Jones, & Martens, 2020).

We believe that in times of crisis, instructors have the unique opportunity to model their engagement intentionally and palpably to their students to guide and inspire them through that crisis. Instructors have the opportunity to model acceptance of (as we stated earlier) and optimism about the situation. Further, instructors have the opportunity to bring PEACE to their students. In saying this, we mean not only that instructors can promote a sense of calm, reassurance, and positivity to their students (Saucier, 2019a) while teaching remotely, but PEACE is an acronym that describes the teaching persona they should make apparent to their students all the time. Instructors should explicitly manifest the attributes of Preparation, Expertise, Authenticity, Caring, and Engagement (PEACE) to their students (Saucier, 2019b). By doing so, instructors can use their teaching personas intentionally to inspire their students to persevere through the challenges we currently face.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world and will fundamentally change how we face many aspects of life. The transition of education to remote teaching models has been and will continue to be difficult for instructors and students. While this pandemic is (hopefully) temporary, we may make permanent impressions on our students by focusing on more than how to deliver our content in online modalities. We as instructors have unique opportunities

to use our teaching personas, philosophies, and practices to inspire our students to keep learning, especially as we keep teaching in engaging and PEACE-ful ways.

Bios:

Donald A. Saucier, PhD, (2001, University of Vermont) is a university distinguished teaching scholar and professor of psychological sciences at Kansas State University. He has published more than 60 peer-reviewed journal articles, and he has been selected as a fellow of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the Society for Experimental Social Psychology, and the Midwestern Psychological Association. His numerous awards and honors include the University Distinguished Faculty Award for Mentoring of Undergraduate Students in Research, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Teaching Resource Prize. Don is also the current faculty director of the Teaching and Learning Center at Kansas State University.

Tucker L. Jones, M.S. (2018, Kansas State University) is a doctoral candidate in the department of psychological sciences at Kansas State University. His research interests focus on exploring the various factors that are associated with emotional and behavioral responses to others. Tucker's recent work has examined (a) individual differences associated with emotional and behavioral responses to ambiguous social situations in which rejection might be inferred, (b) antisocial and prosocial teasing in children, and (c) individuals' reactions to children/adults with various undesirable characteristics.

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Donald A. Saucier, PhD, and Tucker L. Jones, MS; *Leading Our Classes Through Times of Crisis with Engagement and PEACE; Faculty Focus; March 25, 2020; [https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/philosophy-of-teaching/leading-our-classes-through-times-of-crisis-with-engagement-and-peace/] March 31, 2020.*