REFLECTING ON REMOTE TEACHING IN FALL 2020

What lessons have we learned and what questions remain?
AGENDA

1. Remote teaching challenges from the Instructional Technology Specialist perspective (recorded)
   - The struggles of going entirely synchronous
   - Keeping students engaged and focused

2. Success Stories from Faculty in F20 (recorded)
   - Dr. Deidre Rose
     ➢ Sessional Instructor, Sociology & Anthropology
   - Dr. Andrew Hamilton-Wright
     ➢ Associate Professor, School of Computer Science
   - Open discussion on the transition to remote teaching (not recorded)
     ➢ Common themes gathered from participant registrations
     ➢ Additional questions and concerns
WHO ARE WE?

• OpenEd’s Instructional Technology Specialist Team
  – Owen Wooding
  – Carolyn Creighton
  – Rich Couto

• What do we do?
  – Work with faculty, staff, departments, and colleges to find pedagogically sound technology-based solutions to enhance teaching and learning
CHALLENGES OF THE REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION

Common questions presented to OpenEd’s Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) team during F20
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

What hasn’t seemed like a challenge since that faithful day in March?

- Face masks, toilet paper panic, hand sanitizer, Lysol wipes, lockdowns, bubbles, etc.
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

What hasn’t seemed like a challenge since that faithful day in March?

- Working from home (and for some of us more “quality” time with children)
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

What hasn’t seemed like a challenge since that faithful day in March?

- Staying healthy – physically and mentally
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

What hasn’t seemed like a challenge since that faithful day in March?

• And of course, for those of us here today, figuring out how to adapt our courses for remote delivery!
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

• Is adapting your course easy? No, not for everyone, but we’re humans and humans adapt.
• Just like you’ve adapted to the world of COVID, you can adapt your course for remote delivery!
• Will there be hiccups along the way? Probably.
• Can you fix those hiccups? Probably!
• You may even find some new ways of doing things along the way that will be beneficial when you return to the classroom.
• Like any card game, you can only do the best you can with the cards you’re dealt.
REMOTE TEACHING TRANSITION CHALLENGES

- The Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) team wants to share our experience from working with faculty in S20 and F20 and help you play your best hand in W21!
COMMON AREAS OF CONCERN FOR REMOTE DELIVERY FROM F20

• As U of G’s ITS team, we’ve been on the (virtual) front lines working with faculty to adapt their courses for remote delivery

• We’ve had many requests for help on a variety of topics, but we can’t cover them all, so for first part of today’s session we’ll be focusing on two that came up a lot:

1. The struggles of going entirely synchronous
2. Keeping students engaged and focused
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

You can’t just do what you were doing in-class online and expect it to work perfectly
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• We’ve found that many instructors expect that they will be able to simply run their course remotely just like they had face-to-face and simply swap out their in-class lecture for an online synchronous lecture through a web conferencing tool like Zoom, Virtual Classroom, or Teams.

• The reality is that there are many factors that can make going solely synchronous difficult and we’ve had several instructors inevitably come back to our team looking for ways to pivot to different delivery methods at various points of the semester.
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• Common misconceptions about synchronous delivery:
  – Students just show up to the online lecture like they would for an in-class lecture
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• Common misconceptions about synchronous delivery:
  – All the students will be on webcam, reacting to what I’m saying and actively participating in my online class
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• Common misconceptions about synchronous delivery:
  – Lecturing to my webcam will be just like lecturing in a classroom
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• Common misconceptions about synchronous delivery:
  – Students be focused only on my lecture, not looking at their phones, on another website, etc.
  • This happens in-class too, but when no one can see them, it likely happens even more
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• The reality of many synchronous lectures
  – Students may not always be able to attend
  • Added responsibilities at home, technical difficulties, different time zones, workload from other courses, etc.
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• The reality of many synchronous lectures
  – Many students are likely going to be reluctant to share their image or appear on video, or even ask questions
• It can feel like you are talking into a void
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

• The reality of many synchronous lectures
  – You must focus on more than just talking and advancing your slides
  • Chat questions, student disruptions, WiFi connection issues, etc.
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

Are you saying not to go synchronous?

No. But...

(there’s always a but)
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

If you are going to go synchronous, consider:
- Including some asynchronous options/components as well
  - Record the lecture and post it for review later
  - Include some prerecorded asynchronous lectures or short videos about specific topics in designated weeks
- Adding some anonymous participation opportunities through polling on Zoom or use a third-party tool like Mentimeter (start simple)
- Dedicating some TA hours to help you monitor the chat, answer questions, handle polling, etc. so you can just focus on the lecture
- Soliciting feedback from your students! A simple anonymous survey or a start, stop, continue, etc. (Qualtrics, CourseLink Survey, etc.)
- **Have a backup plan for technical difficulties!**
  - I like to prerecord a version for practice, then I have it available to post online if the Internet conspires against me
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

Other than lectures, what could synchronous delivery time be used for?

• **Live demonstrations**
  – Simple, practical experiments
    (don’t be afraid to take your computer outside –weather permitting)
  – Use virtual white board to chart/graph, work through a solution, etc.

• **Opening a dialogue about difficult topics/concepts**
  – Go over that question from Quiz 2 that almost everyone got wrong
  – Pull some common questions that come up often on your Ask Your Instructor discussion forum (if you’re using one)

• **Collaborative problem solving**
  – Present a problem, ask students to work together to solve it
    • Consider a feature like breakout rooms for larger classes
  – Offer a low stakes incentive to get the ball rolling on participation!
    • First dibs on picking topics for an assignment, small bonus grade, etc.
THE STRUGGLES OF GOING ENTIRELY SYNCHRONOUS

Summary

• Going fully synchronous, from our experience, seemed to present extra difficulty and frustration for many instructors in F20
• Consider what benefits your students are getting from delivering an hour or more of lecture live vs. a recording of that material
• Remember that this is a unique and challenging situation for your students as well
• Don’t be afraid of creating asynchronous material; it isn’t as difficult or time-consuming as you think
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

This is hard enough face-to-face, but it can feel even more difficult in a remote environment.
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

• As the ITS team, we often hear from instructors that they find it difficult to judge if they are connecting with students or knowing if students are engaging with the material, especially when you can’t see how they react to what you’re saying in class or in a seminar/lab.

• This is often an unexpected challenge that instructors come across during the first few weeks of a course that has transitioned to remote learning.

• Luckily, there are some simple steps you can take early on and throughout your course to help combat these potential problems.
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

- What you do and how much you do can often depend on the size of your course, the delivery methods you are using, and the tools with which you are comfortable.
- There are 3 basic things that the ITS team would recommend for all courses being delivered remotely:
  1. Establish your online/social presence
  2. Add some basic interactivity to your synchronous/asynchronous content
  3. Try to reach out to students who may be struggling (Remember to EAT)
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

1. Establish Your Online Presence
   - Create a welcome video and post it as an announcement in CourseLink
   - Create an Ask your Instructor discussion topic via CourseLink’s Discussions tool (and actively participate in it)
   - Use CourseLink’s Intelligent Agents tool to send automated emails (in your own voice) to students
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED –
ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

- Create a welcome video announcement in CourseLink
  - This provides an opportunity to humanize yourself
  - You can record the message directly using the Announcement tool, no additional software is required (though you can upload a prerecorded video too)
  - Feel free to post additional video notes at key points of the semester (before an assignment, midterm, etc.)
  - CourseLink will auto-caption your videos for accessibility (though the captions aren’t always perfect, especially with some advanced terminology)
  - Create announcements ahead of time (when you have time) and schedule release dates/times
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED – ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

- Create a video announcement in CourseLink - Example
KEEPRING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED – ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

• Create an “Ask Your Instructor” discussion topic
  – Engage your students and allow them to ask questions/get answers when it is convenient for them
  – Set expectations around response times
  – Subscribe to the topic to get alerts about new posts
  – Allow anonymous posts to increase participation
  – Pin posts with timely/relevant information so other students can find the answers easily
  – Bring up select good/frequent questions from the forum during synchronous lectures
  – Add a picture to your CourseLink profile and it will appear on your discussion posts
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED — ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

- Create an Ask your Instructor discussion topic
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED – ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

• Use Intelligent Agents to send students automated emails
  – Intelligent Agents is a communication tool in CourseLink
  – It allows you to send emails to multiple students that can be personalized with replacement strings (“Hi [Owen],” It’s Professor Creighton from [BIOL*2060]...)
  – These emails are sent based on a trigger (release condition) you set (scored X on Y, haven’t accessed the site in X days, haven’t submitted to a dropbox folder, etc.)
  – These emails should sound like they are coming from you (be written in your voice) to be most effective
  – CourseLink locates the students and sends the email, you just handle the replies
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED – ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

• Use Intelligent Agents to send students automated emails
2. Add some basic interactivity to your content
   - **Avoid only** being a talking head for hours by adding some interactive polls/questions to your live lectures
     - **Consider** exploring more fulsome feedback tools such as Mentimeter, iClicker Cloud ($), or Poll Everywhere ($)
   - **Avoid only** posting a running list of links and files to your Content tool, then telling students to read them
     - **Consider** mixing in interactive content like videos that include simple formative assessment questions
   - **Avoid** the cycle of quiz, paper, midterm, quiz, paper, exam
     - **Consider** including some different assignment types like Video Assignments
Add some basic interactivity to your content
- Avoid only being a talking head at lectures

- Consider exploring interactive feedback tools for lectures
  - Zoom and Virtual Classroom have simple polling and basic question features built-in
  - Mentimeter has a large set of interactive features and a useful limited free version (2 question slides, 5 quiz slides, unlimited audience)
  - Poll Everywhere also has a large set of interactive features and great presentation integration, but the free version is limited to only 25 audience members
  - iClicker Cloud (the online version of physical iClickers) offers a simple interface, polling options, target/heat map response for image-based questions, and can integrate with CourseLink for grading (free 2-week trial for students)
**ADD SOME BASIC INTERACTIVITY TO YOUR CONTENT**

- **Avoid a running content list of links and files**

  - **Consider** mixing in some interactive content
    - You can use tools like Zoom/MS Teams to create videos, upload them to Microsoft Stream and then use embedded Microsoft Forms to create simple (or complex) question prompts to help students assess their understanding/reflect
    - Microsoft Stream and Microsoft Forms are part of the O365 suite that everyone at U of G can access
    - Videos can include any type of content, be creative (but respect copyright)
    - We have an entire webinar session on how to create these sorts of videos available on our Remote Teaching and Learning website
ADD SOME BASIC INTERACTIVITY TO YOUR CONTENT
- AVOID A RUNNING CONTENT LIST OF LINKS AND FILES

• Example of video content with an embedded quiz prompt

'Instructional Video Intro' | Microsoft Stream
ADD SOME BASIC INTERACTIVITY TO YOUR CONTENT
- AVOID THE CYCLE OF QUIZ, PAPER, MIDTERM, EXAM

- **Consider** including some different assignment types like video assignments
  - Video assignments is a CourseLink integration that allows students to:
    - Submit videos as assignments (as individuals/groups)
    - Answer video prompts (with video or text) for graded assessments
  - Instructors can grade the submissions in CourseLink and even leave feedback at specific time intervals of a student’s video response
  - Resources for setting up video assignments are available on the Remote Teaching and Learning site as well as through CourseLink Support
**Add some basic interactivity to your content - avoid the cycle of quiz, paper, midterm, exam**

- **Video Assignments Example (instructor view)**

  - Grading information that can link to a grade item
  - Student/group information and submission date/time
  - The submitted video from the student/group
  - Instructor feedback at specific linked video playback time stamps
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

3. Reach out to students who may be struggling
   – Use feedback options in assessments to make suggestions to students who aren’t performing well
   – Use the Class Progress/Progress Summary tools to quickly determine who is struggling and look more closely at a student’s activity on your course site
   – Make use of Intelligent Agents to send messages to at risk students or to remind students who haven’t yet submitted to Dropbox folders, started their Quiz, or posted to a discussion topic
Keeping students engaged and focused - Reach out to students who may be struggling

- Use feedback options in assessments to make suggestions to students who aren’t performing well
  - Dropbox, Discussions, Grades, and Quizzes all have feedback in their assessment options that can be used to reach students (beyond just the score)
  - In quizzes, feedback can be provided at the question-level, but is only visible via a Submission View
  - Consider using CourseLink Rubrics for assessment and pre-populating initial feedback for specific score/criterion intersects (if you scored level 1 on criteria 2 you automatically get a message about X)
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED - REACH OUT TO STUDENTS WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Example: Using CourseLink Rubrics with initial feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Novice 1 point</th>
<th>Apprentice 2 points</th>
<th>Proficient 3 points</th>
<th>Expert 4 points</th>
<th>Criterion Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling and grammar</td>
<td>Unacceptable number of spelling and/or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>Noticeable spelling &amp; grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>Minimal spelling &amp;/or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>No spelling &amp;/or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>/ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge</td>
<td>The paper does not demonstrate that the author has fully understood and applied concepts learned in the course.</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates that the author, to a certain extent, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course.</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates that the author, for the most part, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Some of the conclusions, however, are not supported in the body of the paper.</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates that the author fully understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Concepts are integrated into the writer’s own insights. The writer provides concluding remarks that show analysis and synthesis of ideas.</td>
<td>/ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic focus</td>
<td>The topic is not clearly defined.</td>
<td>The topic is too broad for the paper.</td>
<td>The topic is focused but lacks direction. The paper is about a specific topic but the writer has not established a position.</td>
<td>The topic is focused narrowly throughout the scope of the assignment. A thesis statement provides direction for the paper, either by statement of a position or hypothesis.</td>
<td>/ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of discussion</td>
<td>Cursory discussion in all the sections of the paper or brief discussion in only a few sections.</td>
<td>The writer has omitted pertinent content or content runs on excessively. Quotations from others</td>
<td>In-depth discussion &amp; elaboration in most sections of the paper.</td>
<td>In-depth discussion &amp; elaboration in all sections of the paper.</td>
<td>/ 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED - REACH OUT TO STUDENTS WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Use the Class Progress tool to quickly determine who is having trouble (Course Admin > Learner Management > Class Progress)

List of students (sortable)

Click a specific student to view their progress summary

Customizable list of indicators

Visual indicators for a student

Search for a specific student

Display a specific section/group

Customize indicators

Filter to: All Users

Use agents to automate feedback
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED - REACH OUT TO STUDENTS WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Use Intelligent Agents with release conditions to send messages to at risk students or to remind students who haven’t yet submitted
KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED AND FOCUSED

Summary

• If you want to increase engagement with your students, you must make some effort to initiate engagement on your end
• In a remote environment this can be more challenging, but there are tools that can help
• Don’t try and do too much too early, but start simple and adjust as needed as the semester moves along
• Remember to EAT:
  – Establish an online/social presence
  – Add a little interactivity
  – Try to reach out to struggling students