

Adapted for Ball State From:

Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption, for SIS and PWR
Jenae Cohn, Academic Technology Specialist for PWR, jdcohn@stanford.edu
Beth Seltzer, Academic Technology Specialist for Introductory Studies
Stanford University

Feel free to remix for your own institutional contexts!

PEDAGOGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous?

Identifying Key Tools and Functions within Canvas

What is Mediasite & Webex?

SHIFTING YOUR CLASSES ONLINE

Option 1: Run Your Class Live With Webex

Option 2: Pre-Record Your Lectures

Option 3: Skip the Video

Office Hours

OTHER USE CASES

Student Presentations

Pedagogical Recommendations:

Student-Facing Language to Help Students Understand Options for Final Presentations

Using Canvas for Announcements, Sharing Material, Collecting Assignments, and Grading

Written Discussions

Chat

Individual Students Using Webex to Attend In-Person Classes (Small, Discussion-Based)

Live-Streaming In-Person Lectures

Scheduling Tools for Student Tutorials/Conferences

Peer Review

Meetings with Teaching Teams

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

General Tips for Teaching Online:

Resources for Online Writing Instruction

GETTING STARTED WITH Mediasite & Webex AND CANVAS

PEDAGOGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Teaching during times of potential disruption requires creative and flexible thinking about how instructors can support students in achieving essential core course learning objectives. This document offers suggestions for instructors in who need to provide effective teaching online due to institution closure and who are looking to continue offering a student-centered learning experience in a remote or online learning environment.

While the process will no doubt feel unfamiliar and at times possibly frustrating, try as much as possible to be patient. There will always be hiccups, but times of disruption are, by their nature, disruptive, and everyone expects that. Be willing to switch tactics if something isn't working. Above all, stay focused on making sure the students are comfortable, and keep a close eye on the course learning goals--while you might not be able to teach something exactly the way you imagined, as long as you're still meeting the learning goals of the course, you're doing fine.

The key to effective online teaching is ORGANIZATION and thinking of a variety of contingencies and how to address such problems. The following are some considerations to think about right away before setting up your course in the online format:

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous?

There are two options for instructors to facilitate class sessions remotely:

Synchronous: instructors and students gather at the same time and interact in "real time" with a very short or "near-real time" exchange between instructors and students.

Asynchronous: instructors prepare course materials for students in advance of students' access. Students may access the course materials at a time of their choosing and will interact with each other over a longer period of time.

Instructors may choose to engage their students synchronously or asynchronously depending on the course content or material that needs to be taught. There are many advantages and disadvantages to asynchronous and synchronous teaching options.

Advantages of Synchronous Teaching

Immediate personal engagement between students and instructors, which may create greater feelings of community and lessen feelings of isolation

More responsive exchanges between students and instructors, which may prevent miscommunication or misunderstanding

Disadvantages of Synchronous Teaching

More challenging to schedule shared times for all students and instructors
Some students may face technical challenges or difficulties if they do not have fast or powerful Wi-Fi networks accessible

Advantages of Asynchronous Teaching

Higher levels of temporal flexibility, which may simultaneously make the learning experiences more accessible to different students and also make an archive of past materials accessible.
Increased cognitive engagement since students will have more time to engage with and explore the course material.

Disadvantages of Asynchronous Teaching

Students may feel less personally exchanged and less satisfied without the social interaction between their peers and instructors.
Course material may be misunderstood or have the potential to be misconstrued without the real-time interaction.

Identifying Key Tools and Functions within Canvas

If you are new to using Canvas, you may appreciate some orientation to key Canvas tools and functions.

Assignments: Instructors can create pages for students to see instructions for assignments and upload submissions. Assignments can be informal reflections to formal written assignments (with the ability to use plagiarism software automatically), quizzes, discussions, and projects. Instructors can select the grading approach within the assignment. Assignments are best for instructors who wish for the students' work to only be viewed and assessed by the instructor. It is also possible to create peer-reviewed assignments. There is a LOT of functionality that allows you to tailor the assignments, grading, etc. to your own and your students needs.

Announcements: Instructors can send mass e-mails or messages to the whole class community via the Announcements tool. The benefit to using Announcements over e-mail is that instructors do not need to collect individual student e-mail addresses and that the messages are archived in the course Canvas site. Announcements can also be set up in advance should you wish to provide reminders to students.

Chat: The whole class, instructors and students alike, can engage in a "real time" text-based, instant messaging conversation. Messages received in Chat remain archived and can be read outside of synchronous time too. This can be a nice way for instructors and students to communicate nimbly without needing to use voice-based chat and without needing to use any outside apps or resources.

Discussions: Instructors can create threaded, written discussion forums for students (and the instructor) to engage in written (or audio/video) dialogue with each other and respond to written prompts. For tips on asynchronous discussions, you can contact Tara Wood.

Files: Instructors can post key course documents, like the syllabus, readings, assignment sheets, and activity descriptions in this space. You can think of the Files page as a file cabinet. In Canvas, you link to the file so that students do not have to go searching around for a file.

Modules: Instructors can organize course content into several chunks or groups of learning content. The pieces of information that students will access, including the syllabus, assignment sheets, activity descriptions, and outside links and resources, can be grouped together in the order that students might access those resources during a synchronous or asynchronous class session. Modules can give students access to readings, activity descriptions, outside links, and assignment submission links all in one place.

The analogy that might help to understand how Canvas works is: Canvas is a big box with everything for the course IN the box. The Home page of your Canvas course site will be the Inventory List for the box that is organized week by week with links so that students simply move down the list week by week. Only the instructor can rummage around in the box, all the students can do is click on the links to each item in the box as they need it. If you pick a straightforward, chronological order for your Inventory List, students will be able to follow along quite easily.

Pages: Instructors can create content for students to read or access that is not already created in a separate website or in a Word Document or other kind of document. The settings for Pages can also be changed so that the page can be edited by both instructors and students to create a class Wiki.

For more information about the differences between organizing Canvas course pages in Modules, Pages, or Files, check with Tara Wood or Rob Hall.

For more information about getting set up in Canvas broadly speaking...

Video Conferencing, etc.

SHIFTING YOUR CLASSES ONLINE

You have three options for shifting your classes temporarily online:

Option 1: Run Your Class Live using Webex.

This option works especially well for small discussion-based classes, though it's also effective for large lectures, especially if you have a moderator. You can use this also for lectures.

The Tech Side:

How to use Webex (briefly):

Pedagogical Recommendations

Use slides and screen sharing within Webex to make sure discussion questions are visible to students who may have a slow Internet connection or who may struggle to hear the audio for the initial question.

On your first slide, display an agenda at the start of the class session so that students know what to expect of the shared time together.

Use the chat (bottom of your screen). See In-Meeting Chat.

Moderate discussion, i.e., "call on" a student with a comment to speak, to help them break into the conversation.

For larger classes, assign a Fellow or TA to moderate the chat and make sure important questions and comments are addressed. Even for smaller classes, it may be worthwhile to ask a student (or two) to take on special roles as "chat monitors" to voice if there are questions that arise that the instructor has missed.

You might use the chat to troubleshoot technical problems. For example, if a student is having trouble connecting via audio or video, the chat might be a space for you as the instructor or for fellow students to work together to problem-solve. This may, again, be an opportunity to assign a student to a special role, especially if you have students eager to help on the technical aspect of things.

If you have a TA or a fellow who can support the class instruction with technical help, this would also be a good person to respond to troubleshooting tips in the chat.

Does Webex allow for Video Breakout rooms?

Rethink your classroom activities to make the class more interactive even if Webex students don't have ideal connections and aren't able to hear and see everything perfectly.

Have students write and comment together on a shared Google Doc.

Try using Poll Everywhere or Google Forms to collect student responses, and then share results with both in-person and online students.

Consider making discussion questions available in advance in Canvas, etc. so that students can access the questions if screen sharing does not work. If sharing slides in advance to Canvas, share as PDFs, as students will be able to access the material on their phones.

A Few Troubleshooting Tips:

If your Internet connection is slow or lagging, consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up the Internet's bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency. If you have earbuds or a headphone set, wear them! Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up during your recording, which will make it easier for your students to hear you. Similarly, you may want to advise your students to wear earbuds or headphones during the call.

Advise students to mute their microphones if they are not speaking and unmute the microphones when they wish to speak. Students may be joining calls from all kinds of different locations, many of which may create background noise that could be distracting. Encourage students to mute themselves if they're not speaking to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noise. Check the "chat" space for student questions and contributions. Some students may not have working microphones and, therefore, may be unable to contribute via voice. The chat room is a good place for students to contribute, ask questions, and be involved.

Accessibility Suggestions:

Automatic live captioning is not available in Webex, but the MediaSite people can close caption videos for you or you can upload your video to YouTube which does automatic closed captioning. You may wish to use Google Slides and enable the live captioning feature within Google Slides. If you share your screen using Google Slides, your voice will be captured and live captions will appear. See Present Slides with Captions (via Google Drive support) for more information.

For students who are blind or have low visibility, narrate the material that you're displaying visually on the screen. Just as you might read materials aloud in class, read screen material that you share on-screen just in case students are not able to see essential text.

Learn More: [Canvas Webex Integration](#), [Webex Cheat Sheet](#)

Option 2: Pre-Record Your Lectures

Video: Tara delivers a narrated PowerPoint lecture

If you are not comfortable presenting live, another good option is to pre-record any lecture material and upload it to Canvas. We recommend that you pre-record lectures using Mediasite.

In Canvas, you will need to go to the Settings link and then to the Navigation tab and drag the My Mediasite button up to the Visible section (or right click and Enable it) and Save so that you can see it in the left side bar.

Once you have done this, you will click on the My Mediasite link, put in your BSU credentials, and then follow the instructions for downloading the Mediasite Desktop Recorder. Then simply click on the links based on what you want to do (three choices are offered).

Basically, you'll want to open up your Powerpoint or slides, make sure your microphone and camera are on and that you are recording. Mediasite will process an uploaded video file and then provide a link to it so you can embed it in your Canvas course. When you are creating an assignment or content page, you will see a button with a light blue V (it is called external tools). When you click on it, the drop-down list will show Mediasite as one of the options. Click it and it will take you to Mediasite and a list of your videos to choose from. Select your video and click Make Viewable and Link to Presentation.

For other videos (You Tube etc.) simply click on the button for YouTube and paste in the URL.

Pedagogical Recommendations

Keep videos short and lively. It is often harder to focus on a video than on a person! Remember, that students tend to lag in their interest in watching lectures after about 30 minutes. Often it helps to break lectures up into 30-45-minute increments.

Consider ADA compliance. If you have students that need accommodations, Ball State can provide closed captioning for your videos. In addition, you might consider posting the transcript of your lecture, as well. You might also consider uploading your videos to YouTube to take advantage of their automatic (though not perfect) closed-captioning. Canvas has a link within the Page function that allows you to link directly to YouTube videos.

Test your microphone to make sure that you have good sound quality. Consider using a headset with an external microphone to capture better audio. If you use a Mac, you can directly create a QuickTime video by recording your laptop screen. The video can then be uploaded to MediaSite which is integrated with Canvas.

Integrate interaction with the lecture material. You might consider setting up a Canvas discussion board with some specific questions, using a quiz, or setting up a chat session for a text-based live discussion.

Option 3: Skip the Video

Many online courses do not have a video component at all. If you are not sure you have the right equipment and are uncomfortable with the tech setup, this might be a good option, at least for the short-term.

Pedagogical Recommendations

Annotate your PowerPoint with notes, save it as a PDF and share this with students using Canvas. Set up a discussion for students in Canvas. Use specific, structured questions, and let students know expectations for their responses. It is usually recommended with asynchronous discussions to require 2-3 posts with the first post due by, say, Thursday, with additional response(s) due by the end of the week. This allows for real interactions between students while discouraging waiting until the last minute.

Share links to outside resources. Encourage students to watch videos, read articles, etc. Use Chat to have a live, text-based chat session with students.

Office Hours

Set up virtual office hours to meet with students using the Chat function in Canvas. You can also conduct virtual office hours by announcing to students that you will be available to answer emails immediately during specific “office hour” times.

Notes on Communication: Using Announcements & Organization

Communication is probably the single most important issue in online teaching. The students cannot ask questions in class, so are more likely to quickly send an email. Often, you will receive many students asking the same question. Equally important and related to communication is organization. Make sure that you set up your course materials in a clear and logical order. Canvas allows you to create Modules. It is generally recommended that each Module corresponds to a week of course work. By grouping a week’s lectures, assignments and other materials together in one Module, students can simply click on each item in its proper order.

Recommendations for Announcements: make sure you are very explicit and detailed in your announcements. It may seem like overkill, but you will want to give step-by-step instructions to students in any announcement or assignment. Try to anticipate any potential questions and provide answers in advance. This helps to keep down the number of emails you receive. It also helps to let students know that if several students ask the same question, you will post one announcement with the answer, rather than responding to ten emails. You may also wish to set up automatic reminder announcements that will release at a time of your choosing to help students stay on track and motivated.

Pedagogical Recommendations:

Online teaching requires setting boundaries between the instructor and students in a way that is a little different from courses taught face to face. Make sure that students understand that you will only answer emails during certain times. This will depend on what you are comfortable with. Students often perceive an instructor as being available 24/7 since the course is online. It

might seem self-evident, but it is usually a good idea to set expectations: emails responded to only during business hours. No email responses on the weekends, etc.

Tech Side:

Make sure to go in to Settings on your Canvas course page and under the Navigation tab, drag the Chat button up to the “visible” list if you wish to use it—these are the links in the left side bar that students can see/use. The main factor to consider when holding office hours or conferences with students is your accessibility as an instructor. Make sure they know how to find your “office” (just as you might offer them directions to your office on-campus).

OTHER USE CASES

Student Presentations

Pedagogical Recommendations:

If students are sharing their presentations asynchronously:

Ask students to record themselves at their screen, using a web camera, the built-in microphone on their computer, and screen sharing software combined to capture both their faces/persons as well as the slides on the screen.

Quicktime (on Mac only) can be used for this and there are other software available too.

Using Canvas for Announcements, Sharing Material, Collecting Assignments, and Grading

Many instructors already use Canvas regularly for tasks like sending announcements to their courses, sharing course materials, collecting assignments, and giving students grades and feedback.

If you’re not already using Canvas for some or any of these functions, this might be a good opportunity to become more familiar with the platform.

See Canvas Guides for Grading for more info.

Syllabus: You should post a copy of your syllabus in Canvas, if you haven’t already done so. The quickest way is to simply post a PDF file. Simply add a Page, upload the file and attach it to the Page.

Keep your students up to date by posting Announcements in Canvas. Suggest that students check their Canvas notification preferences to make sure they are set to receive

announcements via email. Make sure students are aware that they **MUST** check announcements frequently and that they are responsible for anything you post on Canvas.

Upload your course content to Canvas using the Files tool. You can upload multiple files at a time as well as set usage rights and publish files in bulk.

Use SpeedGrader to provide feedback on student assignments. Any grades entered in SpeedGrader are automatically added to the Canvas Gradebook. Speedgrader is found on the same page as an Assignment. Once an assignment is published, you will see a link to Speedgrader on the assignment page.

You can manually enter and edit grades in the Gradebook.

Canvas Guides: these are extensive guides for every function in Canvas. You will find the link on the left side bar in Canvas—it is the question mark at the bottom of the list.

Chat

You may not currently use a chat function in your class, but it can be a useful tool, especially for student office hours or for students who may be more comfortable asking questions via chat compared to by phone or video calls.

In Canvas, there is a Chat tool available that functions as an instant messaging platform. The messages in chat are visible to the full class community and can be read in real time. For private conversations, you may want to use Webex or Facetime or Skype.

Synchronous

Use Webex, as you would in small classes. Mute all participants, and make sure someone is monitoring chat.

Asynchronous

If you usually send around a physical sign-in sheet, you might be looking for alternatives that let you schedule appointment slots with students and to take “attendance” Canvas has analytics that will tell you when a student has signed on to the course, how long they spent and which pages and assignments they clicked on.

Peer Review

Synchronous Recommended Tool: Google Docs & Webex

Asynchronous Recommended Tool: Canvas Peer Review or Google Docs

Pedagogical Recommendations

Write out clear and specific instructions about the expectations for peer review. This means specifying the qualities of writing that students may want to look for in each other's work. Distributing guiding questions or a worksheet that students can fill out as they review their peer's work can be a valuable supplement to guide students' virtual reading.

If you are introducing peer review synchronously (via Webex or another teleconferencing platform) and having students work in real time in Google Docs, consider:

Engaging the students in a chat-based or video-based conversation about their expectations for peer review

Have students use the chat box feature to share ideas about what makes for effective peer review

Use a polling tool, like PollEverywhere or Google Forms, to collect ideas about students' impressions of and expectations for peer review

If you are introducing peer review asynchronously, consider:

Opening up a discussion forum with a prompt that invites students to share their past experiences with peer review. What worked? What didn't? What are their goals this time? Aggregate student responses to create a document that outlines the class expectations and understandings of effective peer review experiences.

Ask students to include questions for their peer reviewers at the top of their document so that their reviewers can have a sense of what the author would like them to focus on.

Include links to technical documentation and support so that students can troubleshoot if they are not able to access peers' documents.

Resources for Online Writing Instruction

For those of you who encourage students to use the Writing Center, they do have online assistance available. The Writing Center has created a Module that you can add to your Canvas course that provides all the info and links to get help from the Writing Center. To get this module, do the following:

1. Click on the Commons link in the left side bar. This brings up the Canvas Commons. Search for Writing Center. This should bring up a Module (in red) that says "Ball State Writing Center".
2. Click "Add to Favorites"
3. Go back to your course, and click on the three dots button next to the add Module button.

4. This says "Commons Favorites"
5. Click on the Writing Center Module and Canvas will automatically load the Module into your course when you exit out of the Commons tab.
6. You can then drag the Module from the bottom of the page to wherever you want it to be

This is a very quick overview designed to touch on as many issues that you might have. The Canvas people are VERY helpful and will answer your questions as fast as they can. I am always happy to also answer questions and provide suggestions.

Best,
Tara

tswood@bsu.edu