Moving quickly to an online class

This video is about moving your course online quickly.

At some point, you might be instructed that your face-to-face class must now be delivered entirely online.

The more you prepare now for this possibility, the more smoothly this move will be.

There are many things you should be preparing now to have this ready.

1. Create an OWL site for your course.

Even if you don't have to make the move completely online, you can use the site as a resource centre for your students. They can access the syllabus, reading materials, announcements,

Also, you may want to utilize the site for tests and quizzes and turn papers in. The physical act of distributing papers and students handing in hard copy may well increase physical contact between you and your students. Taking tests online and having students hand in assignments through the OWL will help ensure physical distancing.

2. Record your lectures

Load the videos into the lessons section of the site.

Do not rely on Zoom to deliver lectures.

Zoom is a great tool, but it was not designed for lecturing. Once you have more than ten people on the line, it can be challenging to manage. There is a lot of buffering. If your student has a poor internet connection, it will become tough for them to access the meeting.

Also, it isn't easy to maintain engagement of the student in the Zoom environment. I often think about lecturing in zoom like having a postage stamp talk to you for one or two hours.

You can contact me for help making your videos. And you can watch my series called Making Videos to help you too.

3. Review your reading materials

Please make sure that any reading materials you require the students to read are available online.

There are significant challenges in this possibility, but there are also remarkable opportunities.

4. Examine what activities you use in-class

Lectures, discussions and assessments can all be moved online. Through tools like Collaborate, you can set up synchronous periods for the class to engage in active learning.

5. Review your assessments and tests

It is advisable to avoid high stakes large value tests and exams because they vastly increase the instances of cheating. It is advisable to have more, lesser value assessments. Also, consider all online tests to be open book.

Online proctoring services are expensive and problematic. It tends to be very invasive on students' privacy.

You may well say, wait a second, Mike, you're telling me to put my whole class online now. That is true. It is far better that you spend the time now developing the online version of your course rather than scrambling to get it done once the order is given.

If you do this work now, transitioning to an online course will only take a matter of minutes, not weeks of frantic work, as you try to create everything at once. Being prepared means you can concentrate on communicating with your students and focus on their needs instead of desperately trying to cobble together an online course.

Students will know to go to the OWL site. And the class can continue.

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