Adapting to Covid: Learning Design Studio Drop-In
July 31, 2020

IAN LINKLETTER – UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BRENNA CLARKE GRAY – THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Contents

Opening

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us today. My name is Brenna Clarke Gray. I'm coordinator of educational technologies at TRU.

Ian Linkletter:

And I am Ian Linkletter. I'm a learning technology specialist in the faculty of education at UBC.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And we're here today with a drop in session. So we've got a few framing notes, some things to keep in mind. You can hear my cohost host here in the background, apologies for that. But we're going to set up some parameters, I guess we used to say best practices. Now we're just going to say good things to keep in mind. And open it up to questions really early in the session. So you can ask questions on mic on camera, or feel free to use the chat. The chat will be moderated, so hopefully we won't miss anything.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, I guess, shall we jump into it? Paula, could you advance the slide for us? Perfect. Yes. So as Duane mentioned, if you'd like to share the territory from which you're Zooming in today in the chat, please feel free. I'm here from Tk'emlups te Secwempec in Secwempecul'ecw.

Ian Linkletter:

And I'm here on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Design in the Time of Covid

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Paula, could you advance again for us? Thanks. So I'm really light on content here today. We've just got two quick slides that we want to set up as frames. We also have some questions that folks submitted ahead of time, which we'll also jump into if that helps people get questions rolling. But I hope that these will serve as a jumping off point for your own questions and concerns. Actually, I just realized Ian, before we jumped into these, we should introduce our guest experts. Would you mind doing that? Totally forgot.

Ian Linkletter:

Yeah. Sure. So let's do a round of introductions for Colin, Florence and Jun, who are expert guests today. If the three of you could let us know your full name, your title, where you're from. Start with you Colin.

Colin Cheng:

Welcome everyone. My name is Colin Cheng. I'm an accessibility specialist and I work at devil's college Douglas College.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Florence did you want to go next?

Florence Daddey:

Yes. Thank you. Hello everyone. My name is Florence Daddey and I also work at Douglas College with Colin. I'm a faculty member from the school of community business administration.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And Jun.

Junsong Zhang:

Hello everyone. My name's [Junsong 00:02:41]. I work at a Justice Institute of British Columbia right now. I'm an instructional designer. Prior to that, I was a [inaudible 00:02:50] Polytechnic University. And I've seen some folks in this session today. So I'm hoping to chat with you soon.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I guess we should talk a little bit about the structure too. So we have these experts upon whom you can draw with your questions. Depending on the questions you ask, we may have the discussion in the large room, or we might suggest a breakout room with one of the experts. So just depending on how nitty gritty, or how detailed, or how long the response might be. So we have the plan to just keep this free and easy and flexible. And if you hear somebody ask a question and we start a breakout room for that question, and you're like, "No, I actually want to know the answer," just let us know in the chat and we can make sure that you get added to that breakout session.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay. Now the slides, Ian, I think now I'll do that. Sorry about that. It's our first drop in. Okay. So I think we're trying to think about some parameters around which we might want to anchor our design thinking as we look to our classes for September. And really thinking now about how you're going to build community for your learners in your class. Also something we're going to come back to a lot today is this idea of stripping your course back to its essential components, and particularly making sure you're not over assessing students right now.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Ian I sent you that link and I'm sure you've added it to our resources page. Ian's built a really fantastic resource page for these sessions. And one of the research articles we were looking at, we talked about it in our session last day. So this idea of a course moving from a face-to-face modality in a nursing program, and then going fully online, and basically a content transfer, same course, just gets ported from face-to-face to online. And a follow up study on that course, that series of courses showed that students who had gone into the online modality were spending six to 24 more hours per week on the course material.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So even when we think sometimes we're just doing a one to one transfer, because of the additional time reading, preparing, typing, writing, that's required in most online courses, you can find that students are really doing a lot more work and being over assessed. And we're already in this moment where students are quite stressed and pressed for time as we all are. So it's something to keep in mind is, whether or not there are components of your course that maybe don't need to be there right now.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

We're also thinking a little bit about whether or not you're assessing appropriately for the context. So for example, maybe high stakes testing. And I know in some disciplines, you're preparing students for a particular kind of accreditation exam. You don't have a lot of wiggle room here. But if you do have flexibility and choice, now might be a time to replace those high stakes final exams with reflective practice. All our student exams are take home for the most part. They're already at home. They may all actually be collaborative assessments too. Is there a way we can tap into that and use that as a benefit in the way we design our final assessments, rather than try to worry about fighting against it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And then finally, it's really important right now to review policies and practices in your course to make sure that they're coherent with what's going on right now. So for example, Dr. Bonnie Henry does not want you sending all of your students to their local walk-in clinic for doctor's notes if they have to miss a class or if they're late on an assignment. So can you rethink those policies so that you're not putting pressure on the healthcare system. And weight policies in general, could they be a bit relaxed? Could you develop a blanket policy right now that recognizes that students are going to be struggling with a lot of different components as they prepare their course materials right now. Ian, I just talked a lot. Do you want to add anything to any of that?

Ian Linkletter:

Yeah. So one thing that I'll just say is that, what I've observed is a lot of emphasis on reputation from institutions. We can't compromise. We can't give any leeway because that affects the reputation of this institution. And every time I think about that point of view, I just shake my head because we're building our reputations right now about what we do during this historic moment that requires empathy. When we don't give our students the flexibility that they need to succeed, then that says more about us than anything else ever could.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm glad you said that, Ian. I think that sometimes we get into this head space where we think that we have to be rigorous, and we define rigor in particular ways. Jesse Stonewall has this great quote about how we can't be business as usual, because it's not business as usual. There's a small person in this room with me as we try to focus on this webinar. It's the same for our students, it's the same for all of us. So thinking about... I don't know. A little phrase I keep coming back to is that, rigor is not the opposite of care. These two things can exist at the same time.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

You can teach students what they need in order to succeed in the next level of this course or in the job that they're moving towards work to be better human beings and also demonstrate care. And that's

really what Ian and I have been coming back to, as we talk about this idea of community in the time of COVID. Paula, could you advance the slide for us? Okay. We're really lucky to have Colin here with us today, who's an expert in accessibility. And I know that folks have questions about maximizing accessibility in their classes.

Maximize Accessibility

Brenna Clarke Gray:

We just came up with a few points that are good when we think about not just accessibility, in terms of like, did you tick the boxes for a student with defined accommodations, but how can you make your course materials more accessible for everyone? Really encourage you to survey your students at the beginning of term about digital access and equity. And what we mean by that is, do they have reliable internet? Do you know that? Are they trying to do the whole course on a phone? Is there one computer in their household of seven people?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

What are the particular challenges that your students are up against? And that can help you make some decisions around how you deliver material to those students. If you know that they're having particular struggles. We know for sure that back in March and April and through this summer semester, we've had students sitting in Tim Horton's parking lots, trying to get files downloaded and uploaded for their courses. So I think serving students is good, not just because it gives you that information, but because it signals to students that you know that there are barriers in place and you want to understand where they're coming from.

Ian Linkletter:

Hopefully, all of our courses will have been designed. I mean, not always, but hopefully they'll have been designed with the help of a learning designer. And step one of that iterative process, whichever one they chose, is analyzing the students, assessing who the course is going to be for. And that's not relevant right now. I mean, it is. We know who the courses are geared for. We know who's signing up for them, but we don't know their circumstance. So I just have to emphasize what Brenna, that asking them and changing your mind if you're hearing things is a really good place to be right now.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. There's a question I just came up in the chat about addressing differential times zones. That is definitely also something to ask students about in terms of those access and equity questions. In the resources document, there's a link to a really great sample questionnaire that you could give on the first day with minor adjustments for your own circumstances. But the answer to that question, I think about time zones is that, if you're leaning heavily on asynchronous course delivery, then you're going to be in a good place for students who are accessing from multiple different time zones, because you won't be requiring that synchronous connection, that's going to be so difficult for those students.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

But it's definitely something to keep in mind and something to communicate really clearly to students, especially around due dates and deadlines. So finding out early in the term, which and how many students might be struggling with that time zone issue could be helpful in just making sure students

retain access. Important that you offer course materials in multiple formats. So one example I give to faculty all the is, if you're creating a video of a lecture, then you should also place the slide deck on the learning management system or whatever tool you're using as well, so students could download that separately if they have difficulty accessing video.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And also you should be taking the time to caption your videos, and then you can provide transcripts as well for students to look at. And there's some really interesting research coming out about captions. Lots of folks prefer to watch captioned videos for all kinds of reasons, language learners find caption videos more accessible. Students with various processing issues can find it helpful. Also just if it's a new field, and you're learning the jargon, and you're learning to spell it, it's really useful to have captions.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And then finally, I always think back to myself when I was a new mom at home with a kiddo, I watched a lot of videos with captions because I had somebody in the room who I didn't want to wake up in that circumstance, definitely not asleep right now. But if we think about the constraints the students are under having returned back to the family home, or living with multiple roommates, we're all trying to study and work in the same space. Definitely that ability to access video in multiple formats is really helpful.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

While we're on the topic of video, I really want to encourage you to think about avoiding long videos. The attentional sweet spot is about five to six minutes and that's with captions. Five to six is not like, "Kids these days have no attention span." It's a brain thing. It's how long your brain can pay sustained attention to complex ideas that you're trying to learn. So I always encourage faculty, video is great and it has its place. But a five to six minute video that underscores a key concept is going to have more punch and also be a lot easier for you to produce well than three hour lecture, where you just read your PowerPoint slides aloud to students, I think should be against the law.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

If you've ever had to watch one of those, there are a lot. And then finally, you can use accessible courses... Sorry. You can use accessible tools like something like Read & Write. Our campus uses Read & Write, which is a screen reader program. You can use that to test it, to test your course materials, to see how well they play with screen readers. Again, Read & Write is another tool that students use regardless of documented accommodation needs. Lots of students prefer a tool like Read & Write to help them move through course materials.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I did see a question about captioning. If your institution is on the BCNET installation of Kultura, the reach add on for Kultura, it does machine captioning. It's what we use at TRU. And it's pretty accurate. In fact, we've had great feedback from the folks in the sciences who were quite impressed. You do still have to go in and edit. My favorite thing about Kultura is that Kultura, it doesn't know the word Kultura, which I find hilarious. So you do still have to go in and edit, but it's pretty good on the technical jargon.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

If you don't have a service like that, I've actually made a tutorial about how to just use YouTube to generate captions for your videos, as long as it's your content. You're not posting a student data. I'll find a link to that. Well, I'm sure Ian's going to want to say something because I've been talking. I'll find a link to that tutorial and I'll post it in the chat.

Ian Linkletter:

No, I'm okay. I've been engaging in the chat. There's been some awesome questions coming in. So we're having multiple tracks already. It's great.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That is great. Well, that is it for our slides. I don't know if Paula wants to swap it back to the gallery view and we can talk as a big group. And I'm just going to mute my mic for a second and deal with this situation. So Ian, I'm going to pass hosting over to you for a sec.

Q&A: Question 1

Ian Linkletter:

Sure. So there's been a few questions in the chat around how do I approach these challenges? How do I approach building community? How do I approach accessibility? And as an educational technologist, I accept those challenges as, what do I know that's available in the toolkit and how could we apply it? But what I'm really curious about is what our experts have to think about some of the challenges that are showing up in the chat. So there was one really awesome question. Would you advise a combination of both synchronous and asynchronous delivery in a course? And I'm so curious how Florence is treating her teaching right now, how Jensong is developing courses right now?

Florence Daddey:

Right. So I do have an instructional design background before accepting my new role as an instructor. So I was able to... And it's a lot of work. I'm able to design my course in an asynchronous format, whereby I provided students with basic instructions in terms of what each week will look like, the learning objectives that needs to be achieved, plus resources that they needed. And then during my synchronous sessions, we basically do a lot of class discussions using the white board, using breakout rooms. But basically building a community from that perspective.

Florence Daddey:

So my intuition of providing the resources and making sure there are questions that needs to be completed each week, they have access to self test questions is just to provide an additional flexibility. I do encourage students to attend my synchronous meetings because that is where we learn from each other, and we build community, and we resolve issues, concerns, difficult concepts. So I do encourage them to attend. Nevertheless, they also have access to the materials, so they can all go in and take the self testing at all time, pre read, they have access, have the discussion board going, post questions where it needed.

Florence Daddey:

But it takes a lot of time to prepare, to plan your asynchronous time before the semester starts. So a lot of work to be done ahead of time. Does that help, Ian?

Ian Linkletter:

I'm keeping an eye on the chat. There might be a couple of seconds delay, but that helps me in my practice. And Jensong, how are you approaching learning design at Douglas?

Junsong Zhang:

So Justice Institute we have too, we have different courses.

Ian Linkletter:

I'm sorry. Justice Institute.

Junsong Zhang:

It's okay. It depends on long the length of the course. So JI has two day or three days short courses, which is intensive. You're converting the three day face-to-face to online environment, versus you're converting the entire semester course, 14 weeks to 14 weeks online. So I think this different. I'll give you an example of how we do both. So for the three days short courses, usually it's train to a contract that have a course. We have a very good combination of synchronous and asynchronous. So what we do is that we provide a lot of content for students to read. So, for example, with an orientation session, which provides syllabus, instructor information, pre-work coursework, for example, a self-introduction, those kinds of work.

Junsong Zhang:

So you have a module that's called orientation. And the course will be open to students in advance, so they can do some of the pre-work. So when you actually deliver the course, there'll be less technical challenges, and they know what's what to expect. So that's our orientation module. And then for the actual course content, some instructor prefers to start with asynchronous session, where they gather together and talk about who you are, what do you do, learn each other's face and names. And from that point, you learn who's in the course and their background.

Junsong Zhang:

And then the instructor will also say, "Now, I've finished this in the opening. I'm going to let you go back to the asynchronous part, which is to read this and that, and watch this and come back to synchronous session for discussion, for presentation, for debate." So they use that approach so that they don't have to lecture students through the synchronous session, because we know that, if students are all in synchronous session for too long, they get tired, they can't really focus.

Junsong Zhang:

So sometimes it's really good to give them some space to learn at their own pace. So that's how we're doing with the two day or three days short course. It's a very good combination of it. And we got various positive student feedback for the leadership course, for the conflict resolution course. Because those courses were never online before. And now it's online, but with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous. Students love it. They find to have a lot of flexibility, at the same time, they can use a

synchronous session to engage deeper conversations and ask questions. So that's a great example for design.

Junsong Zhang:

So the other example that I would add is that when you're turning a 14 weeks course into online, it's a completely different approach. So usually because it's crowded. So you will have to structure it with more consideration, like how your students are accessing it, and that includes time zone. Your student might've been Toronto, your student might be in Asia. So in that case, we encourage those courses to be more asynchronous in that way. Because coordinating synchronous sessions for that 14 weeks is really difficult for instructors.

Junsong Zhang:

What we do to create that instructor or social connection is that we encourage instructors to record some of the videos with their face, basically just introduce who you are at the beginning, "Hi, my name is Jensong. I'm the instructor of this course. You'll learn this and that." And use a lot of discussion board, a very well designed guided questions, just facilitated those discussion in the discussion board so that people from different times from different areas have the time to put in their questions and their thoughts, and you're not leaving everyone behind.

Junsong Zhang:

So I would say for the 14 weeks courses or semester long course, you usually want to make it more asynchronous. And if you see there's a need to debrief... So this is how we call it, debrief. So you actually get students talk about issues, feedback. We call it a debrief. You really have to think about, "Am I doing it once or twice?" Because you have to coordinate a lot of stuff, so that your student are actually involved. So I would suggest the instructor to do it just once or twice. In the middle of the course or toward the end of the course, just debrief, gather feedback and have some face time. But otherwise, try more asynchronous.

Ian Linkletter:
Thanks so much.

Q&A: Question 2

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, they had a great question in the chat. I'm curious about people's experiences with small classes and participants showing their faces or not, and how this influences community building. This is a very hot topic on the Twitters right now. And I don't know if you've noticed this past week.

Ian Linkletter:
Yes.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So in general, our advice is to not force students to keep their video on. There's lots of reasons why a student might prefer to have their video off during class. And it ranges. So for example, Zoom fatigue. Zoom fatigue is a real thing. And at least the early research that we're seeing emerging right now seems

to suggest that we get exhausted watching ourselves more so than the video chat experience. So allowing students to keep the cameras off so they can focus on content is important.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

They also may not wish for you to see their home environment or the space in which they are learning. And I think that that needs to be every students right. We're at a really stream space when it comes to privacy and what students are being asked to disclose by virtue of learning within their homes in this way. So it's our advice that students have the option to turn video on if they want to, if they want to engage in that way, but that it not be forced in. Ian, would you agree with that?

Ian Linkletter:

Yeah, definitely. I think that people find the intrusion into their environment, the most troubling part of technology. Anything where the technology is reaching out into your world and pulling stuff back in seems to creep people out. So we're seeing that with remote proctoring solutions too. My thinking on this is that it's better for people to enter a virtual environment and choose what they're sharing. And I think that can be done in Zoom, but you have to give them the choice. Otherwise it doesn't work that way.

Ian Linkletter:

And there's a lot of other research out there around how mandatory camera sharing policies overlap with equity issues, and who is more likely to be asked to turn on their camera. So there's a lot of layers to this and I don't think it's... I think it's safe to just not require it. I'll find the one article and posted in the chat.

Junsong Zhang:

I want to add to that. We have discussion about that as well in our team. So what a program area has been doing is that, they are doing the same thing. They don't mandate students to show her face. But what they could do is that they can put a picture. So they have been on the course. They do ask you to dance, "Here's your alternatives. If you don't like, you can turning your camera on, you can put a picture of yours so that we know who's who." So that's something they're doing right now as well.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I think it's also worth remembering that we might want to see students' faces because it helps us to engage with the course material. But I don't know that that's a good enough reason to forced cams, which is oftentimes what faculty say, can I get it talking to a slide in your own home office is not the most inspiring always. So it's nice to see students' faces. But I think if you give them the option, as opposed to making it a mandatory in particularly. We hear reports that some practices where you have to have your camera on to get your participation mark or something in the class, I think that's really troubling.

Ian Linkletter:

And there's recent research that came out too that shows that our interpretation of other people's facial expressions on Zoom is not perfect. It's very flawed. So, there's this argument that I need it to be able to know that I have a connection with somebody, and even that might not always be the case.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Sorry, now I'm in the chat.

Ian Linkletter:

Speaking of which I'm seeing a mirror image, and they don't know how to get rid of it. So this is another example of, "I wish I could just turn off my camera."

Q&A: Question 3

Junsong Zhang:

I've seen a question asking what kind of discussion board were using. Do we want to share a little bit more about that?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Sorry. I was reading the chat and I missed the beginning of your question. Sorry.

Junsong Zhang:

I see a question asking what kind of discussion board you're using? So just a quick explanation if you're using the learning management system, usually there is a building discussion board so that you can create a discussion threads there, and you can create groups as well. I know most of the learning management system can do that. But also know there're instructors who are using different tools that is outside of the learning management system, because it's easier to post discussions or there's a privacy setting that they like. So I'll let other people to share a little bit more.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I mean, we do have to be really careful around privacy and using third party tools. I know there was the question that came in, in advance about a tool called Tribe.so, which I was not familiar with, but did some reading about as an option for online community. I think that we do have made in BC solutions to some of the things that people don't like about the discussion forums in the learning management tools, and I get that they are not always the best. Ian talked a lot in our session on, whenever that was. Was that Monday? About using a Mattermost as a classroom discussion tool, which can be done in a HIPAA compliant and responsible way.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Mattermost is nice because it functions very much like Slack, which some students are already going to be familiar with, particularly students who are also working in a professional environment as well.

Ian Linkletter:

Yeah. So there's a lot of tools that are floating around right now during this time when we need technology to do so many things, but it just isn't always there. The province has lifted the data residency requirement of stuff needing to be in Canada until the end of the year. But I think now is the time to find ethical technology that's Fitbit compliant in the long run. So next week at the technology toolkit Friday drop in, we'll have people on hand. If you want to send your IT, send your ed techs to learn how to do that in time.

Ian Linkletter:

We have so many great people here and I'm not sure that I've heard from all of you here in the chat. You don't need to participate. But any burning questions, please? Lots of questions about community platform. So a webinar from Monday, which I can share the recording in the chat. I talked quite a lot about Mattermost as my tool of choice.

Q&A: Question 4

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I see a lot of questions about recording synchronous sessions and then how you have students interact afterwards. So to speak to the question about recording sessions. I think in the spring it was like, "I have all these lectures written. I'm just going to give them and record them, and hope it goes for the best." Because what else am I was looking to do? I'm turning this course into an online course in a week. I mean, it was the best option at the time. That doesn't mean it's the best option.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I do think that if you're going to do live video, recording it in some capacity for students who can't watch it live is important. The flip side of that is that, yeah, I think it's normal to see some drop off in student engagement when they know that something is being recorded. And so, one of the things that we have been advising for faculty who are going this route is to record the content components. But when you break up into a group discussion or you have a question and answer, period, you turn off the recording for that component. It's not ideal because it means that students who aren't in the room are missing out on that. And you would need to replace that interactivity in other ways.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I had one instructor last semester who came up with a really great solution. She wanted to give live lectures, but she also knew that not all of her students could make it. And her biggest concern were those small group discussions. And so she had a breakout session, small group discussion happening in the live class that was not recorded so that students could feel free to engage each other and speak freely. But she also had a parallel version of that breakout session happening in an asynchronous discussion group, so that students who couldn't make it to the live lecture also had that option.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And it was worth a participation mark to do the majority of those throughout the semester. You could choose either mode, week to week, depending on what was best for you. And that seemed to work out really well for her particular student group. So I'm trying to address two questions at once, I think. And I also think video can be useful less as a content delivery tool. And more, if you think about video as replacing something, less replacing the lecture and more replacing your office hours, or replacing consultations that you do on essays or group projects.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

There are times when students want to talk to you. That's okay. We're not saying don't do any synchronous ever. But as a main mode of content delivery, it can have a lot of accessibility issues, particularly in this moment, depending on your student group.

Ian Linkletter:

I'm so interested by all these questions about the video. And not to put anybody on the spot at all, I'm just so curious, how come most people don't have their video turned on right now? You don't have to turn on your video and answer the question, but I'm just so curious. I guess, I was a little bit shy because we don't know the group enough.

Junsong Zhang:

So I wasn't turning it on. So that speaks a lot about students, like what's a social norm for your students, how they feel about being seen in this synchronous format. As an instructor, are you making it clear that their face is welcomed and whatever is in their background is welcomed whether or not they have the option to turn their camera on or not. I think there's a lot going on about accepting the learning as a social place as well. But I'm going to it off right now.

Junsong Zhang:

There's a bandwidth issue as well sometimes, asynchronous course. Sometimes when everyone is turning the cam on, it just got really fuzzy, your voice got cut off. So sometimes the instructor do say, "If you are not presenting at this moment, turn the camera off." So maybe that's something as an instructor you should be aware of. Because not everyone has the same bandwidth and that will impact how they learn and the effectiveness of learning as well.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, that's a really good point. We often recommend that students keep mixing camera's muted during lecture components for that exact reason. Save bandwidth, save the servers and also saved your attention.

Q&A: Question 5

Florence Daddey:

Hi. I just want to make a comment about this question that came in. We have nine new ups coming for the fall. How can TLC approach nine new tools for faculty? So as a faculty member, I always ask myself what is my aim, objectives? What's key values or principles for my class, and how can those tools or apps aid me or help me with achieving those objectives or goals. So if, for example, all my key goal is building community in my online class, then, yes, I'll welcome an exposure awareness to what is available.

Florence Daddey:

But ultimately it is up to me to choose what works best for me in helping me achieve my objectives. I think the danger for us is, sometimes we get overwhelmed with all these tools and we're exposed to them. And sometimes we don't really take time to understand is that they have those tools can help meet our unique needs. So my strategy is, at this point in time, what is one or two tools that can help me drive those objectives forward, which is aiding communication, for example, building community, what are those tools that can help drive those objectives for me? Thank you.

Colin Cheng:

Wonderful. I just commented on that thing. So that's exactly what wanted to hear it from a faculty point of view. So as long as we promote it and say, this is what we have available, you can figure it out what you need then if you need this tool, then you can come to us. So that'd be just to promoter. Correct?

Florence Daddey:

All right.

Junsong Zhang:

Okay, wonderful. Thanks.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And I think Colin is typing this in the shared spaces and divided interest. I definitely think that the fewer platforms we can be forcing students onto right now, the better. I know that we had a fair number of folks using tools that... So I work in the learning technology innovation department, we support a suite of tools. IT services also has a suite of tools. They're not always the same suite of tools. So there are already a lot of "supportive platforms" at the institution.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And then faculty go off and find tools that sound really cool, and they're really excited about, and they want to bring them to class too. And then before you know, it, you're getting students calling your office to tell you that they're taking four courses and they've had to learn seven new platforms in the three remaining weeks of the semester. If you think we're overwhelmed... The best tool for you to use as the tool that allows you to do your job. And I think that we can get really caught up in trying whatever the newest thing is and getting super excited about it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And that's fun. The fun part of this gig for me is the new shiny stuff. But we have to really think about every new platform we introduce as a new platform that we're asking students to master in a really short space of time. And we always need to be mindful about whether we're examining students on course material or their facility with yet another new platform. Because that raises equity issue as well. There was a great question in the chat that I thought we might do as well. There was a great question in the chat that I felt we might do a rapid fire with the invited experts, which is somebody asked, could you just give us some do's and don'ts of teaching online.

Q&A: Question 6

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And without putting the experts too terribly on the spot, I thought maybe did everybody want to give maybe their number one do and their number one don't for teaching in the online space. Anybody want to start with that daunting question?

Colin Cheng:

It is a daunting question, because I'm trying to prioritize one do over everything else is difficult. I would say then, if there was one thing that I would focus on is just being open to all the different situations that are going on for your students. And some of whom may not feel comfortable disclosing what's going on with them. And we don't have to necessarily ask for a diagnosis before we consider that people are struggling in different ways. And so just being open, particularly during this time to all the different needs that exist out there, would be my first do.

Colin Cheng:

What I can do is I can post a resource for 20 tips for making your online course accessible. This comes from the University of Washington and the do it center. And I love referring people to this organization because they have some great resources there.

Ian Linkletter:

We'll be developing out that resources document, which is at bit.ly/bccampuscommunity. I think it would be great for us to have a section of it just for community source links that came up in the session. So if you have journal articles or blog posts, or something that you've written, please share it and we'll index that. Going back through my archive about webcam or to calls.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Florence, do you have that do or don't, or a do it don't you'd share?

Florence Daddey:

Yeah, I was just going to make a comment about do. I think the online environment can be daunting for, in my experience, especially the students I had this semester, most of them were expressed the fact that they're not very comfortable to this new way of doing things and learning. They prefer the face-to-face. So what I did, and I think that probably helped, is setting or providing clarity around your office hours, and making each available and getting them to understand that you are available at these times, your office hours.

Florence Daddey:

And if they want to come in, you are in your collaborate room. Of course, if you have more than two people who want to talk to you, you have to have it schedule. And sometimes I also encourage them book time with me. So having those opportunity for students who are stressed, and we all know it's been quite tough for a lot of our students. Some of them lost their jobs, the international students really, no a lot of family around. And they wanted an opportunity to engage. So I found my office times really useful and beneficial. And like, Colin said, sometimes students are not willing to share.

Florence Daddey:

But when they find out that it's a relaxing environment, I do have a coffee mug on my slide that I post and I say, "Okay, this is time to chat about everything, schoolwork, anything else." And if there are opportunities to direct them to resources that I have or we have in institution, I do that. But using those times and encouraging them is very important, especially during this current environment.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's a really good point. And I also think that sometimes what makes online teaching overwhelming, especially when you're new to it, is this feeling that you need to be on 24, seven, that students are going to be emailing you at all hours of the day and night, and that you have to respond right away. And I find that the most straightforward way to circumvent that is to be really explicit about when you will be available. When students send you 40 emails in a 24 hour period, it's because they panic. They don't know if you're getting it. They don't know if you're going to respond.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Whereas if you can set it up ahead of time, where you say, when I taught fully online, I cleaned out student emails out of my inbox at the end of every working day. It's last thing I did before I left the office. So students knew that that was the time slot on a weekday when they would definitely get a response. And if they didn't hear back by that point, then maybe I didn't get their message or something, just to make your presence predictable. But you need to set those parameters to be something you can live with.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's better to set up a fairly conservative schedule and then maybe you answer emails more frequently than that, than to tell students you're going to be somewhere and then not be there. Your virtual presence is so important in building the community of the classroom. And that doesn't mean you have to be there 24, seven. It just means it has to be predictable.

Ian Linkletter:

And those predictability benefits are something that carry forward for your students too. So one thing that I often refer to that we're losing in this period where we're all online are the routines and the rhythm that can lead to a lot of spontaneous connections and friendships being formed while we're on campus. So just those quick walks together or, "I always seem to run into this person at this time of day," can shape the flow and connections that happen inside of the online environment too. So when you stay consistent and encourage your students to, then they can find the overlap with each other.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

True.

Colin Cheng:

Should I have something here?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Sure.

Colin Cheng:

I'm just going to put my designer hat, because I've been working with tons of instructors on that. I think one thing that most instructor would not think about is providing the good orientation, good technology support in the course design. Because most instructors think about, "Okay, these are the content I need to teach. And here's a video and material that..." so mostly instructor are very much thinking about the content, which is very natural. So when we work them, we provide lots of fun, support for the

technology part. Because accessing online learning could be daunting for many of us, including yourself as an instructor.

Colin Cheng:

So if you're able to incorporate some of the support system for yourself and for students, just to get to know the technology before the course start, it helps them a lot because they will have less question, less technical issues when the course started. So I do think it's important for you to work with your center for teaching learning to have a good system and good support, good instruction around how to use the technology system. Before the beginning of the course.

Colin Cheng:

One thing that I would say not to do is not to create more assignments than you can handle. So one common thing that I find from the instructors is that, they over create discussion boards assignments, and then when they finished the first round of teaching they're like, "Oh my God, there's so much assignment I need to grade. There's so many discussion threads I need to read. I don't even have the time to read all those." And then the next round they start reducing the workload for themselves and the students.

Colin Cheng:

So I think it's really important to think about how much time do you really have for the 14 weeks of teaching. Are you expecting students to do five hours of work, including assignment, including rating, including everything, how much time do you expect yourself to do it? So it's good to think about the workload for yourself and for your students. And then you look at how many assignments and discussion I need to create for those online pieces. And I think that is really helpful for yourself to balance at work and your life as well.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm going to pop a link in the chat, which is for a course workload estimator. If you've never put your course materials through one of these tools... It's not perfect, but I find it really eye opening, because I am one who designs [inaudible 00:49:38] devices. So my background before becoming an educational technologists was that I taught literature at Douglas College for nine years, and I make big old bloated courses. Every poem I've ever loved, I have to teach it or I will die. So I'm really good at overdoing it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So I love these kinds of workload calculators. My favorite one is the one from Wake Forest University. I just linked to it in the chat. It gives you a chance to put all of your materials, everything you're expecting students to read and do for the semester. And it spits out an estimate of how long you're asking them, how much work you're asking them to do. And it's eye opening for me. Every time I always have to scale back. Dana has her hand up. Dana, did you want to say something?

Q&A: Question 7

Dana:

Yes. Hi. Can you hear me?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yes.

Dana:

Cool. And I apologize if this has been addressed in the chat because I cannot follow chat. And chewing gum so I'm at... The college is probably going to have me use Zoom for synchronous this coming semester. And when we're using zoom right now, we can see the names of people, even if they're aliases. And I don't know how that's going to look in the course via the college. But the fact that you can identify at least DPE is... Students have trouble, even if it's a pseudonym to ask questions.

Dana:

And can you recommend something that students can ask a question completely anonymously that can be done, even if I had just opened another window with a different kind of platform that I can see other students can see, but it's completely anonymous. Something you can recommend, I don't know, Hamlet. I don't know all of the tools or what they do. But is there anything that you could recommend that everybody could see as a question, but having complete anonymity? Because I actually found it when I was taking a course that it made a huge difference.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So there probably are feedback tools built into your learning management system that you can use. But something that we've been using more and more at TRU, and it's gone through a privacy assessment here and passed it. So because it doesn't collect any data, students can be completely anonymous. They don't have to have accounts. But you would still want to run it by your privacy folks before jumping in. But it's called Sli.do, S-L-I dot D-O. The reason why I like Slido for class questions... And actually our president uses this for his town halls.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

You can put in an anonymous question, but then other students in the class can see that question being asked, and they can click on it to say, "Me too, me too." And so they can vote questions up that are pressing. And we use it in the town hall to Telepress, and he actually has to address certain things. But he just emailed, that's creepy. But it's really useful in class, because students can all weigh in and be like, "Yes, this thing. Don't leave without clarifying this thing for us." And it is totally anonymous. So the nice thing is that it hits on two levels. The student who is brave enough to ask the question even anonymously, get the question out. But other students in the class who also want you to know that they don't know can underscore it.

Dana:

Perfect. Thank you.

Q&A: Question 8

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No problem. Ken, Slido is like Mentimeter, but Mentimeter didn't pass privacy and Slido did. So that's the difference as far as I know.

Ian Linkletter:

And another option that you could consider is a tool called the Etherpad.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's a great idea.

Ian Linkletter:

So we've been using Etherpad for our resources, but we were the only ones that can edit it on that one. I just posted a link that I just made it two seconds on opened.ca, which is a whole other bag of beans that we'll talk about next week. But on openen.ca you can create your own Etherpads and they're hosted in Canada. So this one that I just made in two seconds, we're not going to use it for anything, but you can play around with it. Actually, you don't lock in, but it does keep track of who wrote what. So, potentially if somebody was typing and then deleting stuff personally, identifiable that might show up, but Etherpad could option.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Colin's got a hand up.

Colin Cheng:

Dana, I'm so grateful that you referenced that chat messages aren't necessarily the best medium for you to follow what's being said. And you can imagine that that's also true for a wide range of students who may have difficulties with focusing or who had visual impairments. And so I think it's important to be mindful that if we're using the chat, that we... And I'm not doing a great job at modeling this because I've written tons of stuff in the chat. But there potentially a lot of students who might be missing out on those side conversations or important information that's being posted in chat spaces.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And it's worth making sure all your students know how they can save the chat in your particular platform, and for you to save a version of the chat too, that you can then post with any recorded version of the lecture, if it's appropriate, depending on the context, which I'm only raising because somebody just asked about it here in Zoom. So if you want to download the chat to save any of the links we've talked about today, you can hit those three dots next two line in the chat bar, and you'll have an option to save the chat. It'll download as a text file.

Q&A: Question 9

Dana:

I have a follow up question then, if that's okay?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, of course. Yeah.

Dana:

So I heard Etherpad and INSEAD, and I know you put something in the chat. But you said that it's available through it... Wasn't BCcampus. OpenEd.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

OpenETC.

Dana:

OpenETC?

Ian Linkletter:

Yeah. So, I'll be talking more about it at next week's Friday. But OpenETC is the open ed tech collaborative. It's loosely formed of folks from BC higher ed institutions. But it's a co op model, it's not formal at our institutions and they have lots of tools to choose from, like WordPress, which has H5P, Mattermost and a lot of open apps through Sandstorm.

Dana:

Sure. Thank you.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Colin's got a hand up and then I think we're probably going to have to hand things off to Duane to wrap up.

Q&A: Question 10

Colin Cheng:

So I've had a question directed to me, just saying, well, what would you suggest then in the absence of using chat? And I'm not saying that chat shouldn't be used necessarily. But if there are comments being posed in the chat window, be mindful of vocalizing what's written in the chat box so that those who may not be able to see read or follow the chat window can also partake in that conversation. So we don't need to necessarily take that tool away, but just be aware that not everyone may be able to access that tool the same way that others can.

Colin Cheng:

And there are certain conventions that are emerging for Zoom conversations, Zoom meetings, that when someone starts to speak, consider announcing who it is that's speaking. So I would start by saying, it's Colin here, just in case people aren't able to see who it is that's speaking. So just identifying every time you are speaking.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's a really good point, Colin. Thank you. I should say it's Brenna here. We have a faculty member at our institution who came up with a really great, I think, follow up to all of her synchronous sessions, which is that she saves her chat. And then any key questions or anything she wants to then expand upon because she didn't have time to address it fully in the chat, she starts a discussion thread on the

discussion forum. And so she has one for each class. Here are the key things that came up in the chat, here are some follow up notes that I wanted to give you that I didn't get a chance. It also gives you a chance to just follow up. Because sometimes you don't say everything you meant to say or you think of it later.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And then students can then jump in. It's a discussion forum, so students can then add or expand upon questions as well of things they didn't get addressed. So just gives you also a space to take the interactivity of the classroom space onto a more asynchronous platform as well. Duane, do I have to hand it back to you?

Conclusion

Duane:

You do. I got my camera on because it seems appropriate at this point. This is Duane speaking, your moderator. So on behalf of BCcampus, I'd like to thank and acknowledge Brenna and Ian for facilitating the second of a five part series on working with students online, and supporting students from a caring place online. And today I'd like to thank our experts, Florence, Colin, and Jun for participating and answering questions. I hope many of you return next week, each Friday for the next three Fridays at 1:30. Brenna and, or Ian together will be presenting. I needed to put something on my screen.

Duane:

I'd like to thank you for participating. This has been wonderful. I think for the first time, everybody that started ended this session together. And thank you for doing this on a Friday before a long weekend. I'd like to acknowledge that we have a number of webinars that will continue through the fall. And there is a link if you'd like to stay up to date on what's happening with BCcampus and sign up for their newsletter, we'll put a link, I believe in the chat area for you. So you can click on that and subscribe.

Duane:

So thanks again. Have a great long weekend. Before we go, I want to acknowledge our technical support in the background today. It was Paula and Declan, here making sure everything moves very smoothly. Again, thank you. See you again soon.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Thanks so much everybody.

Ian Linkletter:

Thank you.