GOLF: Get Online Fast

Helpful Guidelines for VCCS Faculty

March 10, 2020

Virginia's Community Colleges

eLearning & Educational Technology Committee

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In an uncertain world, college campuses experience unexpected closures from time to time. However, instructional technology provides a means of continuing the learning process online. When campus closures interrupt normally scheduled educational activities, it is imperative that instructors consider alternative means of continuing class. VCCS' eLearning & Educational Technology (eLET) Committee has provided the following recommendations for moving course content online.

Prepare In Advance

Have a Plan

Emergencies related to severe weather or a health crisis can result in missed class time for students and instructors. This may require instructors to demonstrate flexibility with due dates, assignments and excused absences. One way to avoid confusion is by providing clear channels of communication regarding any changes to your syllabus so that the campus closure does not derail educational progress. This may mean adjusting due dates and posting in your syllabus a statement that encourages students to identify an alternative location with strong internet connection, or how to access offline content for completing class assignments.

To successfully continue instruction during an emergency instructors, students and course content all need prepared for alternate means of communication. The sections below outline strategies based on these categories.

Preparing Students

At the beginning of the semester, create an emergency closure plan for each of your courses and include this plan in your syllabus or within your course Modules. Inform students in advance how to access Canvas remotely, how to communicate with you and any expectations for attendance or excused absences.

Consider adding the following statement to your syllabus: "In the event of an emergency class cancellation, please refer to the course materials in Canvas for further instructions. [SWCC Canvas Student Orientation](#) for more information on how to use Canvas."

We also recommend using the [Canvas Inbox](#) for communicating via email and creating [Announcements](#) if your materials are in a Canvas course site.

Inform students of your continued plan for communicating and continuing the course, including plans and policies for when the college is closed and plans and policies for when the college is open, including expectations for absences.

Identify materials and resources that students can use offline.
- [How do I view course content offline as an HTML file as a student?](#)
- [How do I view course content offline as an HTML file as an instructor?](#)

Provide clear instructions on how to access the course Canvas site, help resources, and any other necessary electronic resources. Direct them Canvas student tutorials here: [Student CANVAS Tutorials](#)
- [Canvas Student Overview](#)

This sample Announcement contains suggested wording:

During this time when ==courses are all being shifted to online delivery,== this class will stay up to date with course materials and collaborate with one another online through Canvas. Access Canvas remotely through this website: https://learn.vccs.edu

Course requirements, classes, deadlines, and grading schemes are subject to change. This may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, and revised attendance policies, semester calendars and/or grading schemes.

Take a look at the materials made available under the Modules tab. There will be important information such as ==[a video, new course materials for this week's content, and an activity that is due this week etc etc]==.

Take note of the updated schedule for when and how to connect online over the next few weeks and let the instructor know if there are any questions. The instructor will hold office hours this week via Zoom ==[insert personal meeting room link]== and can also be reached via email ==[list email here]==.

For questions or assistance with Canvas or other instructional technology, contact Garrett Wright at 276-964-7563 or garrett.wright@sw.edu or Melissa Stiltner at 276-964-7706 or melissa.stiltner@sw.edu.

For additional campus specific information, please refer to:

- *Website --* https://sw.edu/
- *Southwest ALERT --* https://member.everbridge.net/453003085614991/login
- *Telephone number for Southwest Main Campus: 276-964-2555*
- *Information about national emergencies and college closings https://www.fema.gov/emergency-alert-system and* https://sw.edu/alertinfo/
- *SWCC Emergency Operations Plan* https://sw.edu/wp-content/uploads/emergencyplan.pdf

Technical Preparation

- Test your internet connection from your alternate work location
- Save documents to your VCCS supplied Google Drive through the MyVCCS portal
- Know how to access your faculty email through Office 365 -- or gmail account. https://login.microsoftonline.com/
- Test your ability to log into Canvas. Remember Canvas can be accessed two different ways – via https://learn.vccs.edu and through the MyVCCS portal
- Know how to reset your password and unlock your account from home (remember that it may take up to one hour for the new password to take effect)
- Changing your myVCCS password -- https://pwms.my.vccs.edu/api/open/showOpenChangePassword?tenantDomain=sw.edu&returnUrl=https:%2F%2Fsw.my.vccs.edu
- Change your faculty email (Office 365) password -- Please contact:
  Charles Musick at 276-964-7647 or charles.musick@sw.edu
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  Brandon Walls at 276-964-7547 or brandon.walls@sw.edu

Moving Course Activities Online

The material in this section has been adapted from Farleigh Dickinson University's "Faculty Quickstart Guide".

Even though they are not present in class, students may continue to learn your subject matter by participating in online discussions, working on problem sets, writing research papers or essays, watching videos or listening to online lectures, and more. Many kinds of activities will be available to your class even if an emergency closes the campus. At the same time, there will be limitations for certain types of assignments that you will need to consider and work around. For example, students will be able to write papers, but their ability to conduct research may be limited if the campus library is closed and

access to online library resources is intermittent or completely unavailable. To prepare yourself to take your students' learning online in an emergency, please complete the following steps.

- Look at the objectives in your course content summary.
- For each learning objective, write down the supporting activities you currently use in the classroom. Course Mapping Help Guide
- For each activity, consider online or distance-based alternatives. Look at the "**Categories for Moving Classroom Activities Online**" section of this document for specific suggestions of possible online activities.
- Also, look at the section "**Methods for Providing High-Quality Online Instruction**" for guidance on how to create a quality online learning experience for your students.
- Identify challenges you can anticipate for each activity during an emergency (e.g. availability of library or other support services, access to studio or laboratory materials). For especially vulnerable activities, consider alternative methods for achieving the learning objective in question. **Be creative, and focus on the desired learning outcome rather than your favorite instructional methods**. Some classes are heavily weighted towards hands-on student experiences (e.g. laboratory sciences, studio art, fieldwork). If a majority of your course learning outcomes will be unachievable in an emergency situation, let your Dean know as soon as possible. Such courses must be identified prior to an emergency so alternative plans can be made.
- Write a description of your current activities and possible emergency alternatives so that you are ready to create new assignments and materials quickly if an emergency does arise.

Categories for Moving Classroom Activities Online

Here are ideas of how you might accomplish your learning objectives online in an emergency:

Lecture

- Record short lecture "snippets" using Studio in Canvas
- Record a voice presentation in Canvas and add it to an Announcement or Page
- Upload PowerPoint Slides with narration
- Hold class using Zoom at the exact time class would normally meet
  - Review this Zoom Basics Webinar and the Zoom Cheat Sheet and FAQs document for more information.
- Search the internet (or a teaching materials repository) for Open Educational Resources (OER) or websites that teach the same content you would have covered in your lecture. Give students specific instructions on what to review on the website; consider assigning questions they should answer as they review it.

Demonstrations

- Search [YouTube](), [TeacherTube](), [TED talks]() as well as textbook companion websites for videos or interactive websites that show the demonstration you planned to do in class
- Post a problem to be solved in a [Canvas Discussion]() in and have students post ideas for solutions

Labs

- Delay lab assignments until the college reopens, if possible
- Create alternative labs that could be safely conducted at home using normal household supplies [FREE Virtual Labs]()
- Find video using [YouTube](), [TeacherTube]() that shows the necessary principles through demonstration

Tests

- [Give quiz or exam through Canvas]() (use the Time Limit feature to restrict the student's ability to consult materials while taking the test)
- Create an open-book, take-home style exam, such as in-depth essays or document analysis

Class Discussions

- Use a [Discussion]() in Canvas. Post some questions for discussion and have students respond to your question and to each other
- [Create a Zoom meeting]() to hold class meetings where everyone attends virtually
  - For more in-depth instruction on Zoom, [view this webinar]()
- Host a [Google Hangout]() to interact with the class

Group Work

- Create small [group discussions]() in Canvas for student planning and collaboration
- Use Google Apps for students to [create shared documents]()
- Have students present their group work to the whole-class [discussion]() and let other students post questions and comments in response

Peer Review

- Assign students to pairs, give them each other's college email addresses and have them exchange papers via email attachment, write up their feedback via email, and send the review to the fellow student and to you for grading.
- Create small [group discussions]() in Canvas for pairs or small groups to post their work and receive feedback from classmates

Presentations

- Have students record presentations using [Studio in Canvas]()

- Have students post presentation documents in a [Canvas Discussion](#) and let other students post comments and questions in response

Review a Reading Assignment

- Use [Zoom](#) to have a real-time chat with students and review a reading assignment
- Use [Studio in Canvas](#) to record yourself leading students through the key points and features of the reading assignment
- Create a guided question-and-answer assignment that lets students lead themselves through the key points of the reading assignment

Review Course Content

- Form online study groups via Canvas, see [What are Groups?](#) Give students a specific section of material to review and summarize and have them share their summaries with the whole class in the discussion forum.
- Use [Zoom](#) to hold a review session
- Use a [Canvas Discussion](#) to have students post their questions and answer their classmates' questions

Drill and Practice for Students

- Find mobile apps such as electronic flashcards or other learning tools/games provided online or by your textbook publisher's website (ie: http://www.flashcardmachine.com/, http://quizlet.com/ , http://www.cram.com)

Find Out How Students Are Doing in the Class

- Post an open-ended discussion question in a [Canvas Discussion](#) or send the class an [Inbox message via Canvas](#)
- [Create a survey in Canvas](#) to get anonymous feedback from your students
- [Create a Google Form](#) and embed in Canvas for students to complete

Office Hours

- Use [Google Hangouts](#) or [Zoom](#) to instant message with students
- [Use Google Hangouts for phone calls](#) or use [Zoom with dial-in numbers](#), if you do not wish to use your personal phone number when calling students

Provide Offline Resources

- Instruct students [how to download / offload any documents, resources, materials that could be used offline](#)
- Direct students to off-site locations for access to computers, Wi-Fi, electricity, printers, or other needed technology if their immediate location has none of this available

Methods for Providing High-Quality Online Instruction

Please read the following guidelines:

Maintain a High Level of Instruction

- Address recall, application, and critical thinking in the learning objectives using [Blooms Taxonomy](#)
- Write learning objectives that are consistent with SWCC course content summary.
  - https://sw.edu/catalogs/crs-desc/
- [Describe measurable outcomes](#) and focus on what students will learn in the learning objectives
- Design learning activities that match the objectives in type of learning and relative importance
- Provide [Active learning in the online environment](#)
- Provide practice and [feedback](#) before the final assessment
- Gradually increase the difficulty of learning activities
- Require approximately the same amount and level of work as campus courses
- Require active learning beyond reading and viewing
- Provide student choice where possible
- Provide a variety of activities
- Prepare students for assessment with the learning activities. Include assignments that would reduce the possibility of cheating, such as timed tests in Canvas or submission of drafts to [Turnitin](#)
- Include grading criteria and type of feedback to be given in learning activity directions. If possible, [use rubrics to facilitate your grading](#) and to [communicate your expectations](#) in advance to your students.

Engage Students in Learning and Interaction

- [Record a welcome video](#) for students as an introduction and course description
  - Make your video short and engaging
  - Show off your personality so that your students get to know who you are
  - Go over your expectations for the students
  - Go over any special instructions
  - Reiterate your office hours

- Engage students by challenging common assumptions, by introducing significant problems, and by encouraging personal applications
- Include community-building activities
- Include meaningful discussion to support understanding, application, problem-solving, and critical thinking Include guidance and expectations for discussion contributions
- If used, design group activities to include stage-setting, modeling, guidance, and evaluation
- Establish communication expectations
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning

Promote Active Involvement in the Course Throughout the Semester, Including:

- Make regular, proactive contact with each class (for example, make a weekly text or voice announcement in Canvas, send a weekly email or [Canvas Inbox](#) message to the class, keep a class blog, etc.)
- Participate in course discussion forums appropriately. You can save time by posting a summary of the discussion instead of reply to each student individually. Intervene by clarifying/refocusing if a discussion wanes or veers off-topic
- Create an open discussion forum and instruct your students to post questions to the forum and respond to queries posted in it each of the five days per week to show that you are available to students.
- [Establish a social presence](#) (sharing personal information about yourself so your students can get to know you and using a friendly tone in your communications to them)
- Work to develop rapport with your students, just as you would in the classroom. Find out about your students' backgrounds and interests and use these to tailor explanations and feedback
- Deal promptly with disruptive students to restore order and a safe environment for the class
- Encourage students to communicate with you and to share ideas and cooperate with each other
- Contact, encourage and follow up with students who are not participating/making progress in the course

Communicate Effectively With Your Students

- Post and observe your online office hours. If a meeting, travel, etc., prevents you from holding a normal office hour, announce this change to your students by email and/or Canvas announcement
- Respond to student inquiries within 24-48 hours

- Provide grades and detailed, constructive feedback on assignments within one week. This can be done in Canvas via comments you post in the Gradebook.
- Be available and responsive to students five days (of your choosing) per week. Be sure students know which two days of the week they should not expect you to be available. Being "available" these five days a week includes responding to student email, confirming receipt of assignments, logging into Canvas to monitor and participate in discussion forums, and working on grading

Follow Good Practices for Effective Communication in an Online Environment

- Be aware of the challenges in conveying information by email. Word your messages carefully, use language that students understand, use humor judiciously, and consider using phone calls or voice emails instead of text emails for complicated matters
- Avoid terse communications—include a greeting and make your messages, even brief announcements, friendly
- Model and encourage respectful and constructive communication in the discussion forums and in your email messages and feedback
- Recognize student problems early, work with the student to diagnose the problem, and provide appropriate assistance or referral (e.g., direct students to counselors or assist the student in finding campus or online help resources)
- Use only your SWCC email, and your students' College email (username@email.vccs.edu), when discussing any personal matters, including grades.

Use Technology Well

- Use Canvas for the basic environment
    - [Canvas Instructor Guide - Table of Contents](#)
- Use technology that is appropriate for the learning activities, not vice versa
- Use technology commonly available to students
- Support student use of technology
- Provide alternate technologies for accessibility
- Plan for technology failures

Use the Canvas Mobile App for Communication, Grading, Assignments, Studio, and Zoom App

- Download Canvas Teacher App
    - [Canvas Teacher iOS Guide - Table of Contents](#)

- ○ [Canvas Teacher Android Guide - Table of Contents](#)
- ○ [iTunes App Store](#) (iOS)
- ○ [Google Play Store](#) (Android)

- Download Zoom App
  - ○ [Download the Zoom app on iOS](#)
  - ○ [Download the Zoom app on Android](#)
  - ○ [Getting Started on iOS](#) (Apple)
  - ○ [Getting Started on Android](#) (Google)
  - ○ [How do I sign into Zoom on a mobile device?](#)

Canvas and Pedagogy Webinar Recordings with Slides

Visit https://edtech.vccs.edu/webinars/
Here you will find Canvas Webinars that include:
- LMS Best Practices in All Modalities
- Canvas Basics
- Google in Canvas
- Canvas Gradebook
- Quizzes and New Quizzes
- Studio
- Zoom Basics

Use the search bar on the page to look for specific other topics not listed here.

Make Your Canvas Course Easy to Use

- Provide clear, complete directions
- Structure course navigation in user-friendly format
- Avoid unnecessary and empty menu items and folders
- Speak directly to students – avoid the third person grammatical style
- Use imperative mood for directions
- Be consistent

Provide for Learner Support

- Include your current information and office hours
- Include student technical support information https://sw.edu/get-help/

What To Do When The Time Comes

If an emergency does happen, here's how to get started:

- Communicate with your students right away. Remind them of your plan for continuing with the class and of how to access class materials online or offline.
- Go back to your planned alternate activities and begin creating online activities for upcoming class material. Keep your students informed about what you are doing, when they can access the new assignments, and how they should proceed with their work.
- Contact your Dean immediately if you are having problems making the transition or have questions about the flexibility you should offer your students.

Don't Panic

- You can get help from the Distance Learning Department https://sw.edu/distance-learning/

Acknowledgments

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