



Faculty AHA! Moments



Spring 2021



Seton Hall University

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FACULTY AHA! MOMENTS FROM SPRING 2021 TEACHING

“Aha! Moments” appeared as a weekly series of teaching tips for remote/HyFlex instruction submitted by the faculty at Seton Hall University from the spring 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021 semesters. The current collection, from spring 2021, showcases faculty discoveries, strategies, and innovations as they learned how to teach in new environments and with new tools. The Aha! Moments are grouped into the following categories:

- Assessment Strategies
- Pre- and Post- Class Activities
- Approaches to Presentations
- Strategies for Encouraging Discussion
- Enhancing Student Engagement
- Adapting Tools/Materials/Approaches

I hope you find these ideas both helpful and inspiring, as I have.

Mary Balkun
Prof. of English/Director of Faculty Development

Assessment Strategies

Widian Nicola, Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice Department

Deliberate and integrated assessment tools allow social work educators to evaluate student literacy levels and social work competency. This dual purpose can be achieved using case studies as exams, as well as extended writing assignments. An informative tool in evaluating student comprehension and application of theory, the case study has the capacity to reflect a student's ability to think critically, creatively, and make connections, as well as determine how a student might relate to the text personally, thereby widening the use of self in social work practice. By using a case study in exams, students are introduced and challenged to analyze the helping process, to apply what they have learned through course readings and lectures, to assess their compatibility with social work values and principles, and to develop a professional identity. These practices further students' affective learning, that is, self-awareness and self-reflection, which are essential to professional development.

Rachael Warmington, English Department

The final exam for my Great Books I course will be set up as an adventure narrative in Twine. Twine is a digital interactive story telling tool. As students answer questions correctly about the texts we have read, they will earn points and be taken on a literary adventure. My exam is open book.

Twine can also be used as a study aid. See Jon Heggestad's 2020 article, "Twine Storytelling as Study Aid" <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/twine-storytelling-study-aid>

FOLLOW UP TO THE ABOVE:

I learned that Twine is not secure enough, has grading limitations and is time consuming. Twine it is also out of our SHU network. In addition, there is a lot of midlevel coding that is part of the process. With this in mind, I explored different options.

I decided on Microsoft Forms. MS Forms can be accessed via our course Teams or by logging in to Office 365 with our SHU accounts. It is secure, does not require coding and enables question branching which is perfect for what I set out to do. Here is a breakdown of what I did and a link to a copy of my final exam for your perusal.

Microsoft Forms will prompt you to sign into your Seton Hall account.

Both the Multiple Choice and True or False Questions are worth 10 points each. However, if you get a question wrong, there is a second change question where you have the opportunity to earn 5 points. There are 12 regular questions and 12 second chance questions. There is also a Short Essay question that is worth 75 points. I will grade this question separately.

I do like Twine and see future possibilities for it, such as writing projects, but I decided that it may not be the best platform for a final exam. Microsoft Forms is something that would be more accessible to SHU faculty and secure, since it is in our network.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=InzwUbdT30S5fKEyYdcQdbjxbEbTSudIjSG0e8FjyrNUQzUzS0xVSkZRQVNJNEI1ODITTjVJUEQ5RS4u>

[Fill | Great Books Final Exam \(2\)](#)

Welcome to the Quest for the Literary Grail You have been selected to go on a quest to save your world from the destruction of the Great Books. The evil beings known as Story Eaters have made it their mission to erase all literary works from existence. The only way to stop them is to retrieve the Literary Grail. Thought to be a myth, the Literary Grail is real and the vessel that contains a copy of all of literary works and the secret to banish the Story Eaters. You must retrieve the Grail and banish the Story Eaters before all literature has been erased from existence. Please answer the questions correctly to obtain the resources and knowledge that you need to retrieve the Literary Grail and banish the Story Eaters. There will be multiple choice questions, true or false questions and one short essay question.

forms.office.com

Ira Jaskoll, Computing and Decision Sciences Department

I teach two sections of Business Statistics in the Stillman School of Business. It is difficult to give exams to 30 students remotely. When I have given take-home exams I had a problem with academic honesty. I then decided last semester to have the students submit for their midterm exam a Case Study solution with a PowerPoint. I assigned only a few students to each of multiple Case Studies. As is the situation, no two Power Points can be the same. I was able to determine if the student was able to master the material and present it professionally. For the final exam, each student was given a different problem with multiple parts that they had to solve and submit their solution in writing to me. In addition, they had to send me a YouTube taped explanation of their solution to their problem. The students had to demonstrate that they understood and could explain how to solve their Final Project. It took me many hours to listen and grade their finals, but I was pleased with the results. One has to be creative to test our students when they are studying primarily remotely.

Pre- and Post-Class Activities

Martha Schoene, Physics Department

Many of my students have been reluctant to respond to questions during the remote synchronous Microsoft Teams lessons. To minimize this reluctance and long pauses in the lesson or labs, I set a list of questions and ask the students to add information from the lesson to answer one of these prepared questions during the roll call at the end of class.

As part of a “Gen-Z” project, for one Discussion Board post students are asked to include a YouTube, or TED talk video on an assigned topic. It gives them something visual and informative to address in their answers. Students have continued to post links to videos that relate to each week’s Discussion Board questions. I also request that students share an event that relates to their community or their daily lives in their responses to other student’s posts.

I have students send images of their lab set ups and tests at the end of class; then I compose a comment sheet that students review before they complete and submit their lab reports.

Also, I have had to accept that when the technology does not work smoothly during a synchronous remote class, I switch to an alternate way to cover the material, arrange a “help” session with my contact in the TLTC, and just move on.

Sherry Greenberg, Undergraduate Nursing

- In high stress times during the semester (e.g. midterms), I have enjoyed animal therapy with students for the last 10 minutes of class. Students and faculty can show their pets and/or stuffed animals.
- Disney’s 2-minute “It’s a Small World” virtual boat ride. Available at: <https://youtu.be/I2Do309e4YU>
- Set out-of-office emails or automated email responses that you’ll be slower to respond to emails when attending virtual conferences
- Set up virtual office hour time slots
- Add to your syllabus when you expect to respond to emails during the week and on weekends/holidays

Catherine Zizik, College of Communication and the Arts

A bit of “Name That Tune” trivia and its impact on atmosphere in the virtual academic space. For over a year now, we have all been balancing academics and camaraderie in the virtual classroom. It is also important to gather all students to class on time from many different virtual platforms, acknowledging that students learn differently, and while some have adapted well to our pandemic-generated learning models, others students have not. Many students struggle to keep engaged and interested while staring into a screen. One of my objectives is to align laughter and some fun into daily icebreakers.

Enter “Name That Tune.” At the very second I click “join meeting” for my Teams class meeting, I play a generationally recognizable song that “fits” the mood or topic of the day. I use the chat for students to guess the song, the artist, and the date the song was released. Of course, they guess the song after approximately 5-10 seconds and I applaud their musical knowledge and then segue into a very brief interactive discussion on the song and why I chose it. I include 2-3 basic conversation starter questions regarding the song (When did you first hear this song? What lyrics stand out to you?). I find that this trivial yet friendly conversation jump-starts the class into a lively, non-threatening atmosphere. I do this for each class and now the students jump on even before class to be the first ones to guess correctly. They expect it and I have had all students participate in some way during this time. In a 3-hour class I will initiate the same procedure after the break.

Here are three song examples, along with rationale for using them:

1. “Good Day Sunshine” by the Beatles. Used in the first week of spring when weather was terrific. Discussion questions were: What rituals to you have when spring starts? Have you dined in any good outdoor restaurants?
2. “We Are The Champions” by Queen. Used the Thursday at the start of the Big East Tournament. Discussion questions: Who will watch? What are our chances to win? I also discussed Queens’ impact on the LGBTQ population and society in the 1980s.
3. “We Are Family” by Sister Sledge. I used this song to support our class topic on definitions of

groups vs. teams. Integrated in this topic was the definition of a family in 2021. Discussion questions: Do you have a group that you call “family” other than your biological family? Based on an assigned reading, the question was: Social science research shows that the post-WWII, baby boomer definition of the nuclear family has changed. What is this new family like?

If you find that you are struggling to identify songs that align with your daily topics, you can simply google "songs about _____"; fill in the blank and you will be amazed what you will find. Look at what I found after a search for songs about philosophers:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/beatles-songs-with-philosophical-themes-2670407>

And for the chemists, here is your list: <https://www.ranker.com/list/best-songs-about-chemistry/reference>

Good luck, and remember. . . have fun; it helps our virtual learning environment.

Approaches to Presentations

Jon Radwan, Communication Department

"PowerPoint for Teams"

PowerPoint presentations using a projector with everyone in the same room are great because the speaker can keep their back to the screen and maintain eye contact with their audience to gauge responses and adapt accordingly. PowerPoint presentations via the Microsoft Teams screen share function are terrible because the speaker only sees their own slides. Presenters are left to wonder if the audience is paying attention, and asking for a verbal response gets delayed and jumbled as three students slowly turn on their microphones and then speak at the same time. After a semester of speaking at my slides and hoping students were following along, I developed the following technique.

First, I explain that at least 75% of meaning in interactions is expressed and interpreted via non-verbal cues, and that is why we all need to turn our cameras on. Most Communication majors already know this, as does everyone who has taken COST1600 in their Freshman year to establish the foundation for SHU’s Oral Communication proficiency. Next, I explain that my goal is for everyone to be *present* for one another so we can create a collaborative group dynamic that fosters learning. In a Teams meeting, selecting backgrounds can be creative and expressive, and blurring them is ok, but choosing not to share non-verbal energy with your professor and classmates should not become a norm for synchronous online classes. Students with concerns about camera use are invited to discuss them during office hours; I promise that good reasons will be respected, and everyone else will visually and aurally tune into the group as we synchronously smile, frown, wrinkle, squint, drowse, gape, and emote. Class discussions are held via large gallery mode, and everyone is invited to earn participation points by using the camera, the microphone, and the chat feed.

When it is time to present slides, I do not launch my PowerPoint file. Instead I open it in edit view and split my screen into 1/3 PowerPoint and 2/3 Teams. When it is time to talk about a slide, I

copy it from PPT and paste it into the Teams chat feed. This allows me to maintain eye contact as I discuss, and students can click on the slide to expand it using the same 1/3 portion of their screen. Maintaining eye contact with students during lectures may help prevent educational disasters like this one - <https://www.pennlive.com/life/2021/02/professor-gives-2-hour-lecture-realizes-he-was-on-mute-the-whole-time.html>.

Student feedback on this technique is generally positive, and I feel much less exhausted after teaching than I did last March.

Strategies for Encouraging Discussion

Debra Zinicola, Education Studies Department

When students are sharing a presentation, paper, poem, parts of an assignment, or a project on screen, I have the rest of the class voluntarily type a favorite part, powerful sentence, an overall reaction, a positive comment, or a personal connection in the chat. When others see their peers responding, they tend to also contribute, especially those who prefer not to volunteer to speak. Spontaneously, heart and thumbs-up reactions appear. Asking for general feedback inspires “active listening” and the receiver typically seems pleased and expresses gratitude.

When students are presenting a final project at the end of the semester, it can be tedious for the viewers. I often have one or two feedback prompts for all to respond to while they are watching and listening. I divide the class into 4 parts A, B, C, D, for example. I’ll have them all take notes related to the prompts. After the presentation, I’ll ask one letter group of students to each put their comments into the chat as an attachment. Others who want to make a comment can just type a comment into the chat. Some add gifs, cartoons, quotes, emojis, and positive reactions to their comments. This way, they all attend to their peers’ presentations (that typically or virtually they might ignore otherwise), since they do not know which group will be asked to submit the “attachment” for participation points. I believe they learn more from their peers as a result of being asked to supply specific feedback, and our post-presentation conversations are rich and include more student participation compared to when I did not use this practice.

Ruth Tsuria, Communication Department

Tired of reading discussion boards? Try this instead!

Please pardon the “click-bite” title, but now that I have your attention, I’d like to share a strategy that I’m employing this semester that is working really well. As someone who taught online classes even before the pandemic, I have been debating the role of the discussion boards with myself for a while now. On the one hand, they require students to practice writing every week and to engage the material and their peers critically. On the other hand, more often than not, they turn into superficial participation (“Great post!” “I totally agree” etc.). Not to mention – if you have a class with 20 students or more, it can become burdensome to read the equivalent of 5000 words or more every week.

In the past, I turned the discussion boards into a space for critical thinking by asking the students to provide their own questions. Instead of me asking them a question for which I get 20 similar responses, this approach allowed innovation and forced the students to own their interpretation of readings. This worked well, but this semester I added another element. For my public and presentational speaking class, students have to record themselves speaking about the reading

(sharing a favorite quote; asking a question; etc.). They then share this video to the discussion board. I find this very helpful as it gives the students an opportunity to practice speaking in front of the camera, a skill that will stay very necessary even in a post-pandemic world. In asynchronous courses, I found that it also allowed me and the students to get to know each other better: it's much easier to "read" a person than to read their 250-word essay. The students still need to employ writing skills—they have outlines and blog reflections due every few weeks—but this change makes engaging the students much more fun for me, and, I hope, for them. I'm happy to share more information if anybody is interested.

Raienne Lee, Undergraduate Nursing Department

In my Teams meeting, we go through several practice nursing board questions. I share my screen and show each question with choices on a PowerPoint slide. I have the students use the chat box feature on the side to answer questions. This allows me to monitor participation as well as call on students to explain their answers. It behooves the students to be present because the answers are only verbalized or shared in the chat box.

Ed Jones, English Department

During the semester, in College English II (which functions in part as an introduction to literature), I ask students on a few occasions to be prepared to carry on discussions of about 30 minutes without guidance from me. There is guidance, actually, but it comes in the form of questions that they ask about a literary work in advance of the class discussion, posted in SharePoint for all to see. (The only criteria for the questions is that they have to be ones that the students genuinely want to hear their classmates' responses to.) The other form of guidance is defined ways of participation in discussion, including asking questions, responding to someone else's response (especially disagreeing), including a particular aspect of literature (e.g., point of view, metaphor, symbolism), citing the text itself, and more.

For the final exam, students are assigned to read a particular story. I've had particular luck with Raymond Carver's "Cathedral." They come to the final exam having entered one or two questions in a SharePoint doc. Once the period begins, they have 45 minutes to talk and take notes. It doesn't really matter if students have read SparkNotes or whatever in advance, because their essay has to demonstrate that they have paid attention to the conversation that has just occurred in the classroom. The discussions are invariably lively and, as a result, the essays are also lively. The goal for the semester, as embodied in the final exam, is to make students experience what it is like for a body of scholars to be in dialogue with each other as they interpret a literary work.

Ben Goldfrank, School of Diplomacy and International Relations

When students give in-class presentations, I typically use a rubric on physical paper, which allows me to pay attention to the talk but also to keep track of the different aspects of both content and public speaking skills and give students feedback on paper in the next class. Teaching online, I originally tried to do this electronically, but it was impossible—when the students shared their screens, I couldn't simultaneously type. Now I print out the rubric, take notes (and circle or underline pre-printed praise or critique) during the presentation, and then later on, when I've reviewed the student's slides and provided additional hand-written feedback on the one-page rubric, I take a picture of it, with the grade, and send it to the student via Teams. I think I will continue to do this in the future because students get the feedback (and the grade) more quickly this way.

Enhancing Student Engagement

Chris McGunnigle, English Department

More and more, I have been asking students to “Chat me.” This started off as a roll call method where I would ask students a question which they would answer according to the theme of the day. For example, “should Seton Hall be HyFlex or remote in spring 2021? Chat me your Thesis and one reason why.” This gave me a sense of who was in attendance while developing course skills. In other lessons, I could keep track of who was “there” in class when I wasn’t watching the videoconference displays while encouraging interactivity, participation, and skill/content development. For example, after watching a video of Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” speech, I asked students to Chat Me any words they didn’t know. Afterwards, I responded, okay, now Chat Me the definition of a word of your choice that you or a classmate didn’t know. Rather than the typical students not wanting to talk in class, there was 100% response and I could build course lesson content based on content being delivered by student Chat. I’ll be using Chat Me even when we are no longer remote or HyFlex.

Kristi Stinson, Undergraduate Nursing Department

Teaching during this time of HyFlex learning has made me even more acutely aware of how to best connect with my students. The physical distance has put up a barrier that makes it much more important to find methods to teach in a way that best captures and keeps their attention. My current research interest is in Generation Z students, a technology driven, multitasking population who crave the digital world. So, I have used some of the Generation Z characteristics to tailor my teachings to their learning styles. I try to start each session with a gaming modality, usually Kahoot, to bring the material to them in a competitive way that they enjoy. I ask them what they want to talk about that day—what interests them most, what they are struggling with the most—as Gen Z students have a belief that they should be able to play a role in their course of study. Because of their growing up in the digital world, Gen Z has a short attention span (8 seconds), so they want to be “invited in quickly.” Because they best learn through bite sized content, I try to break up the class time, especially when conducted HyFlex/remotely, in ways that allow them to get mental breaks. I discuss the topics of the day and connect them to current television and movies--this generation does not know of a world without YouTube and binge watching TV. I have created a list called “Dr. Stinson’s List of Magical Medical / Nursing TV Shows,” where I highlight certain episodes and disease processes in them—what was done correctly, what was done wrong—that I plan to gift to the students during their senior year.

Peter Reader, Theater Program, Communication and the Arts

To get student engagement, I created a game, “Let’s Put on a Show.” Students are assigned positions from Producer to Theater Owner to Designers and Authors. They all have to give presentations on their responsibilities in creating a theatrical production. Currently, we have *Up! the Musical*, *Princess Diaries*, *the Musical*, and *Outside the Garden Wall*.

Rachael Warmington, English Department

While I tend to give brief lectures, I have had to make them more engaging and interactive in the HyFlex model. I also applied these changes in my asynchronous online courses. I have been using Sutori, Sway, and sometimes PowerPoint for my lectures. I personally prefer to use Sutori, but all of these presentation tools enable you to utilize various mediums to create engaging lectures and presentations.

In the past I tended not to use presentation tools very often in my on-campus classes. However, I found that teaching using the Hyflex model created different classroom dynamics that made interactions more challenging. For example, some students who attended class remotely were in distracting environments. In addition, I found the classroom energy to be different. Lastly, some students had difficulties with their internet connections. All of these things impact student engagement and learning.

Creating these interactive lectures assisted me in fostering engagement. In addition, students who had internet issues or were absent for class were able to access the course lectures and keep up. Overall, participation increased both for students attending class on campus as well as students attending class remotely.

Joseph Badillo, Chemistry and Biochemistry Department

We have all experienced difficulties engaging students in discussion during remote learning. To increase student engagement, I have been using iClicker for my CHEM 2314, Organic Chemistry II course. I often begin lectures with a warmup; I ask students to log in to iClicker and we will go through 2-3 multiple choice questions related to the material we covered in the previous lecture (see example below). Once the correct answer is displayed, I ask for volunteers to explain why they chose the correct response. I will then pepper additional iClicker questions throughout the lecture to keep students engaged. iClicker works by taking a picture of your screen; this enables you to take a snapshot of prepared questions or develop questions on the fly. Questions can be multiple choice, numeric, targeted, multiple answer, or short answer. Although I do not use these features, iClicker can be used to take attendance and grade participation. iClicker is a subscription service and for students starts at \$15.99 for 6 months. Students can access iClicker via the app on their phones or computer. My class received a free trial for the spring semester; if you are interested in trying iClicker, here's the link: <https://www.iclicker.com/>

CHEM 2314 EnolatePractice

Predict the product.

A **B** **C** **D**

Adapting Tools/Materials/Approaches

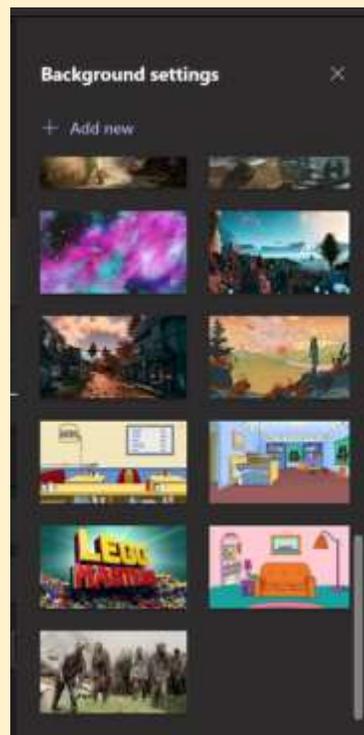
Joey Huddleston, School of Diplomacy and International Relations

More and more I'm learning that the key to a tolerable HyFlex experience is keeping it very simple. My discussion group questions just weren't working anymore with my "Conflict and Security" class, a HyFlex class of 30. I had divided the class into 8 break-out sections, each with a unique question, but when we came back together to discuss the material, I would usually get brief, minimal attempts at responses, with little reaction from others. It was boring for everyone. A simple tweak fixed it. I now do only 2-3 questions and assign them to multiple groups. When students come back together, they usually have different takes on the topic, which generates discussion, even in the very awkward HyFlex modality.

Shakima Davis-Walters, Communication Department

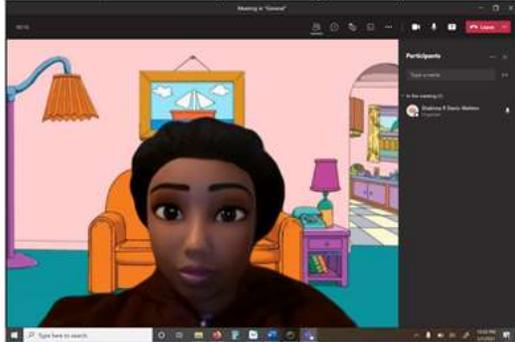
At the beginning of the semester, I was experiencing a problem with students not having their cameras turned on. Having the ability for everyone to see and hear each other is very important in teaching Oral Communication. I understand some people may feel uncomfortable sharing their surroundings; therefore, I have shared these new features with my students to combat their woes. I demonstrated two ways they can customize their background and use different lenses to disguise their faces.

First, I showed them how they can customize their background by searching for "free Teams background images" in their browser. There are plenty of sites with free Teams background images; moreover, adding a customized background allows any art student to show off their work to their classmates. In the Teams background settings, you click on the "+ Add new" link and upload the new background. I added these images, such as The Simpsons, Family Guy, Bob's Burgers, The Walking Dead, and others to my collection. I am a cartoon fan! Please see the screenshot below.

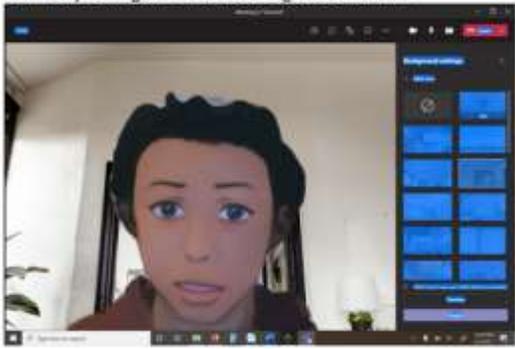


Next, I showed the class another way of customizing their appearance on Teams through [Snap Camera](#). For example, below are the images, I took while sitting on my bed.

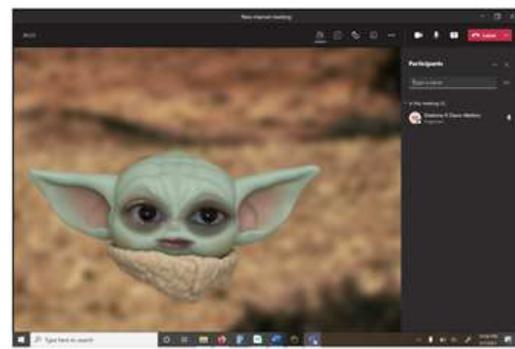
Cartoon Style with a Simpson's background I uploaded to Teams



Anime Style using the standard background in Teams



This is still me using the Baby Yoda lenses from Snap Camera.



I noticed an increase in camera usage by demonstrating these two new features to my class. I want my students to have fun as well as keep their privacy. I hope this helps! I am also attaching the YouTube video, where I learned about how to use Snap Camera in Teams.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYzgtDTf8ow>

Kelly Shea, English Department

I teach remotely, and last week, for the first time in this whole Year of Covid, the Wifi went down during class—and while my students were in channels in small groups! Good news—the channels don't turn off just because the host's internet is wonky! More good news—I was prepared, with Plan B.

When I realized what had happened (my comments to each group weren't loading), I quickly opened Teams on my iPhone (using data, not Wifi), joined the meeting, and continued the class that way. FYI, I could not quickly see how to get into the channels from the app, but I was able to do everything else. Pro tip: prop the phone up on a little holder or book, if you can, so you don't have a shaky video, and don't get too close to your camera. I am very clear with my students and ask them to let me know how it looks (I wish to avoid the big "boomer" head/face view) and how to reposition myself, if necessary, so I'm somewhat normally in the frame.

Moral of the story (and tell your students, too): download Teams onto your smartphone, if you have one. You can come into the Teams meeting that way, if necessary. I just ask the students to let me know if they are on mobile Teams (or in phone-call mode only—another option), because they do show up a bit differently. There's almost always a way not to be absent! I've had students come into class from their cars as their mother drove them to get a Covid test. The stories abound.

Plan C (or B): if your smartphone is equipped to be a hotspot, use that as your Wifi connection and keep operating on your laptop.

Oh, Plan D? Asynchronous email message and subsequent Discussion Board prompt. There's almost always a way to engage!

Susan Nolan, Psychology Department

I've had some problems with videos. Sometimes a YouTube video is glitchy, such as streaming with a mismatch between audio and video. And once, a film for which I had a library link wouldn't share sound due to copyright issues. In cases like these, I give students the link, and we all start the video at the same time after a countdown from 10 to 1. We then answer questions and have a discussion in the Teams chat as we watch the video separately on our own screens.

Anthony Koutsoftas, Speech-Language Pathology Department

I mostly use Bb Collaborate for my online and remote classes. It takes some learning to get used to, so each session I teach the class a new feature of the system, including how to share, collaborate, and poll, to name a few. Since the majority of their time is spent collaborating remotely, these features help them make better use of their time. Recently, a student was having a difficult time connecting due to a Wifi situation at home, and I pointed out that there is a phone number with a PIN call-in feature generated for each Bb Collaborate session. The student was able to phone into the meeting. The information for the call-in feature is in the upper left hand corner menu of Bb Collaborate. I am not sure you have this option with Teams.

Thomas Massarelli, Professional Psychology and Family Therapy Department

I had a situation recently where MS Teams went down and was under construction (10 minutes before my class started). Students were emailing me saying they couldn't get into the class. I had to think fast as to what to do. I emailed the entire class to see if they could get into Google classroom. Most of us have a Google account, so I figured I would try it. The end result was I

was able to email everyone in the class through BlackBoard and sent out a Google classroom link. It worked! All of the students were able to sign into this other online platform. I did not have to cancel class!

Another incident I had was when I was using RPNOW for the Comprehensive Exam. To ensure that the students understood the pre-testing instructions on how to set up RPNOW, I provided a 3-question practice test so they could go over the procedures. I had the practice test run for a week before the exam and gave unlimited tries so the students could practice more than once. On the day of the exam, I stayed online with the class to make sure everyone began the exam without a hitch. One student was having difficulty, so I was able to connect with her through email and walked her through the process. It turned out she had not downloaded the RPNOW software onto her laptop. Once she did, the situation was resolved!

Elizabeth Redwine, English Department

My Teams did not work last week because my laptop chose that moment to update. I had an in-person student lead the attendance questions and give instructions for the first part of class discussion in Teams. Putting her in charge worked so well that I am now going to have students lead attendance on purpose!

W. King Mott, Political Science and Public Affairs Department

Like most of us, I am sure, I have had one of those moments. Since that time I have included a “technology might fail us!” paragraph in my syllabus and I post it in Teams as well in Files. It is:

Certainty regarding the use of technology can lead to desperate situations. Let us attempt to avoid them by utilizing the following:

1. Always back up assignments (somewhere else besides your laptop!);
2. All written assignments are Word Docs, so should you have trouble uploading, please do not open the document as they are date and time sensitive; simply send at a later date;
3. Our daily work includes a PowerPoint by one of the students; if I am unable to enter the Teams meeting, proceed with our routine schedule and complete that part of the class;
4. All podcasts made by me are also available and should be viewed;
5. As soon as possible I will notify the class and make changes in the syllabus;
6. ALL communication both with me and your colleagues is in Teams. Let me be clear: all information related to any official communication is in Teams.
I've actually used this once...and the class did 1/2 of the work as prescribed.

Chris Kaiser, University Core

I cannot think of going back to teaching without a laptop. It completely aided in the class and enabled so many more real-time activities. For example, asking questions has never been easier with the chat, as we can search for answers to questions based on the material being taught in real time. It's just great. It is also fascinating to see students on the west coast with sunlight out their windows when it's night time here. It's surreal. But there have been amazing opportunities as a result of the technology, and I hope to be able to incorporate all I have learned Post Pandemic (PP), or better still, Post Covid (PC).

Eric Johnston, Undergraduate Theology Department

I'm embarrassed it took me this long to figure out, but when I am in the classroom, if the computer on my camera sees the light of the screen behind me, it dims my image, so that students have been seeing me in the dark. I discovered that if I turn the table where I am sitting or the lectern where I am standing so that the screen is not behind me, the camera projects a much brighter, easier to see picture of me.

Genevieve Zipp, Department of Interprofessional Health Sciences and Health Administration

As our University has, the PhD in Health Sciences program faculty have “leaned into” the Covid 19 challenges that have impacted the Academy. As facilitators of our doctoral learning community, we have sought to ensure that our learning community continues to engage in the program’s many innovative doctoral experiences. Much to our delight and hard work, we have been successful in not only meeting this goal but advancing our innovations. For example, engagement in our program’s Research Forum series is one of the several teaching and learning strategies that we employ to meet the need of our learning community to develop as scholars.

Research Forum is designed as a time for our learning community (faculty and students) to come together to learn from and with each other about the problems driving the purpose of our research, our philosophical world view, research approach, design, and the research method and procedure proposed to address the problem. The forum seeks to ensure not only the rigor of our work but also that our work in some explicit way adds to the body of knowledge, and that our presenters can effectively speak to the “so what” question. As a learning community, we believe it is our responsibility to engage each other in scholarly discussions that will challenge our ideas, provide alternate solutions, and develop our insights. While we have offered this experience as a thread throughout our program on campus on a monthly basis since the program’s inception some 20 year ago, student participation was not always consistent. Forums are strategically offered on alternate evenings throughout the week during each semester. This makes it challenging for students who are not taking classes that evening to attend some forums since many live far from campus (out of state and even internationally) and generally work full time in diverse healthcare professional environments.

With the impact of Covid-19 not only hitting our learning community from an academic perspective but a professional perspective, we moved quickly to offer this meaningful learning experience via a synchronous online platform. While we were not sure how the students would receive this mode of delivery, we provided insight to its effectiveness and asked them to “learn by doing.” Much to our surprise, our learning community embraced this mode of delivery, attendance increased, and students began to refine their “scholarly voice.” Student questions, critical analysis, and overall motivation to engage increased as well. As program faculty we are delighted that we can deliver the same high quality Research Forum learning experience via this synchronous online mode of delivery and consistently engage more of our learning community.

As educators, we all know the three determinants of learning that require attention: 1) readiness to learn, 2) preferred learning styles, and 3) needs of the learner. Upon reflection, the program faculty came to realize that Covid-19, with all the challenges it has thrust upon the academy, has also forced us to recognize the importance of continually reassessing the changing needs of our learning community. As faculty our preconceived notions of how best to engage in the learning journey with our students must continually be challenged. We must be open to change and evaluate the impact of innovations to aide our students in their learning journey. Moving forward, the program faculty have committed to ensuring that the Research Forum continues to be delivered synchronously online to meet our learning community's needs and advance their scholarly journey!

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