

Moving Forward

Creating Nimble Instructional Capacities for the New Reality

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 is changing our instructional realities. With physical distancing in the classroom and a high likelihood of a resurgence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus later this fall, Reinhardt faculty must be prepared to increase the amount of online direct instruction in all course offerings. Analysis of the Reinhardt Student Impact Survey suggests several recommendations to improve our online course components during summer planning.

1. Unify all first point of access for online course content to Canvas.
2. Review purposes and applications for appropriate synchronous online components.
3. Review, explore, and develop asynchronous online Direct Instruction (DI) methods and modalities.
4. Incorporate online DI methods and modalities in all course offerings.
5. Develop hybrid (50/50) and micro-hybrid (>70/<30) courses.
6. Be prepared to move all F2F courses to hybrid in situation “Yellow.”
7. Be prepared to move all F2F and hybrid courses to fully-online in situation “Red.”

To assist, CITEL will be providing training and support during the summer planning months. Please see the accompanying “June Workshops” document for a description and schedule for in-person workshops. This schedule, and additional CITEL resources are detailed below. Additionally, CITEL will facilitate discipline-specific Faculty Working Groups for those wishing to meet in-person or electronically.

INTRODUCTION

What strange times. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 on higher education is still uncertain. The only path forward in such times is to make plans to be flexible, to be nimble. Below, we outline Reinhardt’s plan for creating nimble instructional capacities that will allow us to continue to provide the Reinhardt experience, no matter the situation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is COVID-19. The pandemic caused an abrupt transition to online learning in the Spring 2020 semester. COVID-19 will continue to cause uncertainty in the months ahead. In late May new cases in our area were on the rise and there is little evidence of significant downward trends. If the current pandemic follows the infection trends of the 1918-1919 Spanish Influenza as many predict, we may see a surge towards the end of the Fall 2020 academic semester. If that occurs, we could see a replay of our forced move to online instruction. Furthermore, we may need to limit room capacities to adhere to physical distancing guidelines. Our financial reality is that we can not do that by capping enrollments. Therefore, as a united faculty, we must innovate

our instruction through alternative learning modalities in order to continue to provide quality learning experiences under these limitations.

REFLECTION

The move to online instruction caught almost everyone in academia unprepared. Across the nation, faculty who had designed courses to be delivered F2F were forced to hastily redesign their courses to be delivered electronically. As Joseph Janes, a professor in the Information School and chair of the Faculty Senate at the University of Washington noted:

The level of stress, the level of uncertainty and anxiety is just really high, and for understandable reasons...people are managing and doing the best they can and particularly trying to reassure students and stay in touch with students, many of whom are feeling very anxious, very stressed in a deeply uncertain time for all of us (Burke, 2020).

Given the nominal time to prepare, many instructors tried to recreate the F2F paradigm through online conferencing platforms like Zoom, Big Blue Button, or Microsoft Teams. Unfortunately, this did not always translate to beneficial learning experiences for students. For instance, what we learned from Reinhardt's Student Impact Survey, was that this solution, coupled with disjointed course delivery mechanisms, created additional academic stresses and barriers for students already facing challenging times. It is important to note that these challenges were not limited to Reinhardt, as "the requisite change to online learning has been challenging for most colleges, especially those campuses that emphasize an intimate college experience" (DePietro, 2020).

Student Impact Survey Results

In early April, through our partnership with Pharos, Reinhardt University administered a student impact survey to understand how the transition to online learning affected our students. Analysis reveals several themes:

1. Barriers to learning created from synchronous requirements.
2. Use of multiple instructional platforms.
3. Inadequate access to technology.
4. Student unfamiliarity or apprehension with online learning.

Synchronous Requirements

It was understandable that in the short amount of time professors were given to redesign their courses, many tried to recreate the familiar F2F model in an online environment. In hindsight, maintaining the practice of standard meeting times and instructor-centric delivery of content created problems for students who were in new living situations not conducive to focusing on academic challenges. 91.6% of responding students indicated they attended their online classes

from home. Some students noted that with younger siblings completing their elementary and primary education online, and with parents attempting to work from home, they had to compete for internet access. While on campus, students may have had 9:00-9:50 MWF reserved for a course, but from home, competing interests may have prevented them from being online at that particular time. Many students were forced to return to work to support their families. Further, students indicated that synchronous conferences through Big Blue Button or Teams were marred by inadequate internet connectivity or poor audio/video quality.

Online assessment strategies borrowed from the F2F paradigm also caused significant barriers for students. Quizzes that were only open for a short window of time or due dates that coincided with F2F class times posed challenges for students in different time zones, or for students that did not have regular access to the internet.

Multiple Instructional Platforms

Another barrier to learning was created by inconsistent use of one instructional platform. Students reported that they had to consult multiple locations to retrieve assignment details and due dates. They reported that some professors administered their courses through Canvas, others through EagleWeb, others by email, and yet others through other content managers or conferencing platforms. Without a common course delivery modality, students became confused about assignment details and submission processes.

Inadequate Access to Technology

Students reported they did not have adequate access to the internet, and, in some cases, did not have a device that allowed them to fully engage in their courses. A Reinhardt taskforce on IT infrastructure is developing guidelines to advise students on basic computer and accessory requirements to fully engage with online learning. Additionally, we will be launching a computer donation drive to assist students who do not have the financial resources to purchase the minimum requirements.

Not Ready for Online

Many of the students mentioned they were unable to organize their efforts and were easily overwhelmed by the tasks put before them. Some complained about the workload, specifically additional writing assignments. Others mentioned that they were confused by what was required for a particular assignment, and many said they lacked the motivation to continue their academics in the online format. By and large, they had not developed the tools of self-direction required by online instruction.

MOVING FORWARD

Having the experience of the spring and the time to plan during the summer, we can prepare now to maintain our high standards of teaching excellence and student learning through this pandemic. Our recommendations for the Fall semester are to:

- Unify all first point of access for online course content to Canvas.

- Review purposes and applications for appropriate synchronous online components.
- Review, explore, and develop asynchronous online Direct Instruction (DI) methods and modalities.
- Incorporate online DI methods and modalities in all course offerings.
- Develop hybrid (50/50) and micro-hybrid (>70/<30) courses.
- Be prepared to move all F2F courses to hybrid in situation “Yellow.”
- Be prepared to move all F2F and hybrid courses to fully-online in situation “Red.”

Unify All First Points of Access

By unifying all first points of access, we can relieve confusion and provide a single method for students to locate assignments and due dates. All online course components should be provided in Canvas including the syllabus, gradebook (and assignments details), and digital course materials (organized in content Modules). Where possible, provide access to external content providers through Canvas LTI's.

Synchronous Components

Though we are making a concentrated effort to increase *asynchronous* online direct instruction, synchronous components are viable for certain purposes. Synchronous events, such as Big Blue Button conferences or Team meetings are best used when an instructor desires active participation and interaction with students. Such conferences are an excellent means of formative assessment, in which professors can discern areas of confusion or misunderstanding. If the purpose of the lecture is primarily to present information, then that lecture is probably best accomplished with an asynchronous recorded lecture that students may engage with at any time. If the purpose of the lecture is to ascertain student understanding or to generate real-time discussion, that lecture may be best suited as a synchronous online conference.

Asynchronous Online Direct Instruction

To recognize disparate student responsibilities, we need to provide online DI that does not exclude students who are unable to access synchronous components. Asynchronous online DI takes many forms, from instructor recorded lectures to guided walking tours. Additionally, online assessments, even formative assessments are considered DI. Each 3-credit course requires 37.5 hours of direct instruction and 75 hours of outside of class student work. For every hour of reduction in F2F instruction, we need to provide the equivalent in online DI. The Point University “[Master List of Non-Classtime Methods and Modalities](#),” provides examples of online DI with suggested times to complete that can be of assistance when planning online DI. Reinhardt faculty may want to develop similar guidelines through the proper faculty committees.

Online DI in All Course Offerings

To prepare our students to learn effectively through online instruction, we should provide opportunities to expand their learning experiences through online DI. As students become more familiar with online instruction and learn, with the guidance of their professors, how to

successfully pursue learning in an online environment, it will be easier for them to make a transition to higher ratios of online instruction should the need arise.

Hybrid and Micro-Hybrid Course Designs

Hybrid courses mix F2F and online direct instruction. A course designated as a “hybrid” course generally achieves this through fifty percent F2F contact and fifty percent online DI. One option might be to split the course roster into “Blue” and “Gold” cohorts and meet with each cohort on alternate class meeting times. This will require providing additional online direct instruction so that each student still receives the mandated amount of direct instruction.

What we are calling “micro-hybrid” courses use a smaller percentage of online DI. For example, a Tuesday/Thursday course that generally meets from 9:30-10:15 could elect to dismiss at 10:00 and provide an additional 30 minutes of online DI to make up the difference. While staggering dismissal times to avoid student congestion during normal cross-over times is one benefit, the primary advantage of this model is instilling the expectation that students will engage with online content between classes. Additionally, this can help the professor “flip” the classroom so that there is more time for engaging discussions and interaction with the instructor during class time. Finally, the experience gained by the professor in providing consistent online DI will afford an easier transition if external circumstances require another move to online instruction.

Prepare for Yellow or Red

Reinhardt administration has adopted a “stoplight” condition for campus. Our new normal is condition “Green,” with F2F classes operating under physical distancing guidelines and heightened COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Condition “Yellow” corresponds with a formal declaration of a health emergency by local, state, or federal governments. Condition “Red” corresponds with government-issued stay at home restrictions.

If Reinhardt declares condition “Yellow” all instruction will move to a 50/50 hybrid model. If declared, we do not expect a condition “Yellow” to last long. More realistically, it will be a short period of transition to prepare for condition “Red.” If Reinhardt declares condition “Red” all instruction will move to fully online.

Professors should develop plans for hybrid and fully-online versions of their Fall courses.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

CITEL is providing training and support over the summer months to assist faculty as they plan for the Fall semester.

Summer Workshops

Over the summer, CITEL will provide instructional technology and course design workshops that focus on developing online DI for hybrid and fully-online courses. **Because of physical distancing requirements, space will be limited to 12 participants per workshop. Workshops that do not have at least 8 registered participants will be canceled.** Professors can register for these

workshops directly from this document by clicking the “Register Now” link in the schedule below. Some workshops have prerequisites, but all prerequisites can be completed online.

Online Workshops

These workshops are a self-paced Canvas Course. Though there are two workshops listed, they are subcomponents of a single course, Canvas Basic Online Training. You can self-enroll through the following link: <https://reinhardtuniversity.instructure.com/enroll/FTG8P9>

- **Canvas Bare Minimums:** Modules 1-5 of Canvas Basic Online Training. Faculty who complete Modules 1-5 will learn how to customize their course cards, upload a syllabus, set up their grade book with assignments, take attendance, and receive the Canvas Bare Minimums Badge, Level 1.
- **Canvas Course Checklist:** Modules 6-13 of Canvas Basic Online Training. Faculty who complete Modules 6-13 will learn how to use the Reinhardt Canvas Template to build a Canvas course that meets all 1-star requirements of the Canvas Course Evaluation Checklist and will receive the Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.

In-Person Summer Workshops

- **Canvas Basics:** Getting comfortable with Canvas and providing “bare minimums” of online course components.
- **Canvas Course Checklist:** Fulfillment of all one-star requirements on the Canvas Course Evaluation Checklist through use of the Reinhardt Canvas Template. Prerequisite, Canvas Bare Minimums Badge level 1.
- **Playing with Sand.** You won’t break it! Learn how to create a Sandbox in Canvas or Teams to “play” with different features.
- **Community of Inquiry Model:** Encourage collaborative inquiry by establishing social, cognitive, and teaching presence.
- **Online Direct Instruction Methods and Modalities:** A review of online DI and how to build “force multipliers” that increase DI time. Prerequisite, Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.
- **Crafting Engaging Discussions:** Using Canvas to inspire online discussions. Prerequisite, Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.
- **Developing Excellent SLO’s and Aligning Assessment.** Crafting student learning outcomes that guide your assignments. This is an interactive workshop, so bring your syllabi and ideas!
- **Creating Screen Capture Lectures.** Learn how to record a screen capture lecture to narrate a PowerPoint or demonstrate software. Prerequisite, Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.
- **Online Conferencing: Teams and Big Blue Button.** Synchronous course components should be designed with student interaction in mind. Learn how to moderate a great online conference. Prerequisite, Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.
- **Coming Soon! Innovative Assessments for Learning.** An extension of Developing Excellent SLO’s and Aligning Assessment Workshop, you will learn how to design

innovative online summative and formative assessments “of” and “for” learning. This is an interactive workshop, so bring your syllabi and ideas! These workshops will be scheduled in July. Look for an announcement via email.

- **Coming Soon! Lightboard Training:** Learn how to record a lecture in our new Reinhardt University Lightboard Studio! *Prerequisite, Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1.* These workshops will be scheduled in July. Look for an announcement via email.

Workshop Schedule

The workshop schedule for June appears below. You can sign up for a workshop by clicking the “Register Now” link to register via Calendly. On the Calendly event page, select the date (in blue), and then the time (the only time listed) and then click confirm. Please enter your name and email address on the confirmation screen. Note, all workshops will take place in the Library Computer Lab with physical distancing of 6 feet, limiting workshop capacity to 12 participants. Workshops with less than 8 registered participants will be canceled.

*Requires Canvas Bare Minimums Badge, Level 1

**Requires Canvas Checker of Lists Badge, Level 1

Date	Time	Workshop	Link
June 16	9:00-10:20	Canvas Basics	Register Now
June 16	10:30-11:50	Canvas Course Checklist*	Register Now
June 16	1:00-2:20	Online Direct Instruction Methods and Modalities**	Register Now
June 16	2:30-4:00	Crafting Engaging Discussions**	Register Now
June 17	1:00-2:20	Playing with Sand	Register Now
June 17	2:30-3:50	Creating Screen Capture Lectures**	Register Now
June 18	9:00-10:20	Developing Excellent SLO's and Aligning Assessment	Register Now
June 18	10:30-11:50	Community of Inquiry	Register Now
June 18	1:00-2:20	Online Conferencing**	Register Now
June 19	9:00-10:20	Canvas Basics	Register Now
June 19	10:30-11:50	Canvas Course Checklist*	Register Now
June 19	1:00-2:20	Online Direct Instruction Methods and Modalities**	Register Now
June 19	2:30-3:50	Crafting Engaging Discussions**	Register Now
June 23	1:00-2:20	Recording Screen Capture Lectures**	Register Now
June 24	9:00-10:20	Canvas Basics	Register Now
June 24	10:30-11:50	Canvas Course Checklist*	Register Now

June 24	1:00-2:20	Online Direct Instruction Methods and Modalities**	Register Now
June 24	2:30-3:50	Crafting Engaging Discussions**	Register Now
June 29	9:00-10:20	Developing Excellent SLO's and Aligning Assessment	Register Now
June 29	10:30-11:50	Online Conferencing**	Register Now

Additional CITEL Resources

YouTube Channel Playlists

CITEL has provided several YouTube training videos. While most videos are part of Canvas Courses and are best encountered as part of that sequence, they have also been arranged by topical playlists. Those playlists are:

- **Canvas Administrative Tasks.** Videos about copying courses, importing courses from EagleWeb, cross-listing courses, and attendance.
- **Canvas Assignments, Speedgrader, Discussions, and Quizzes.** Best encountered through Canvas Course Checklist (Modules 6-13) in Canvas Basic Training.
- **Modules**
- **Reinhardt Template.** Best encountered through the Canvas Course Checklist (Modules 6-13) in Canvas Basic Training.
- **Accessibility.** Videos about captioning, transcriptions, and link validation.
- **QEP.**
- **Online Conferencing Options.** Videos about Big Blue Button, Teams, and Zoom.

A link to the Playlists page of the CITEL YouTube Channel appears below.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKtHt0wm_VKlaPuTlwEhc5Q/playlists

Microsoft Stream Channel

Additional videos are available through Microsoft Stream. These videos have been organized into the following channels. You can access these channels by clicking on the links below, or by searching for them by name in Microsoft Stream. Open Stream, and then click the “Discover” drop-down and select “Channels.”

- [Canvas Miscellany](#) – Canvas tutorials created by Mason that ended up on Stream instead of YouTube.
- [Canvas Training Archive](#) – Screen captures of live webinar training provided by Instructure. Please note, these are almost a year old, and some of the Canvas features that are demonstrated may have been deprecated or updated in other ways.
- [Grade Posting and Roll Verif](#) – Grade posting tutorials and tips, and the roll verification process.

MagnaPub Curated List

CITEL will provide a list of MagnaPub videos relating to online instruction, online and hybrid course designs, and engaging online assessment strategies. This list will be housed on the CITEL website. We will send an email announcement when it is ready.

Plug and Play Student Learning Resource Modules

To complete assignments, students need instructions for managing technological challenges that overlay the specific learning objectives of these assignments. The preferred practice for online courses is to develop student learning resources that provide sufficient training to reasonably assume that a student can complete the assignment in the manner the professor expects. Creating these resources can be a time-intensive endeavor.

CITEL will create several learning resources for the most common online assignments, and make those resources available through Canvas Commons. These resources will be continually under development throughout the summer and made available as modules for import from a Canvas Commons course titled "RU Learning Resources for Students." CITEL will provide instructions for professors to pull these modules into their courses.

CITEL website – Additional Items

CITEL is developing a web presence at reinhardtuniversity.edu/CITEL to serve as an easily accessible resource for professors developing their online course components.

- Canvas Guides – A collection of documents to guide professors through common Canvas tasks.
- Curated Articles - Links to articles about transitioning to online instruction and modifying the F2F environment to best protect students and faculty during this pandemic.
- Consultations – The consultation page makes it easy to schedule individual and group consultations with CITEL faculty through Calendly. Calendly is connected to CITEL faculty calendars and only suggests times that CITEL faculty is available.

Faculty Working Groups

Faculty from various disciplines are encouraged to meet by discipline to generate ideas and build on successes from the spring. CITEL would like to help facilitate these discussions by providing a space and being available for advice or consultation on specific Canvas tasks. CITEL has designated Tuesday, June 23, from 9:00-12:00 for groups wishing to meet on campus. If you would like to come to campus to discuss strategies with your colleagues, please email Mason (nmc@reinhardt.edu) with your group size and desired time to meet. We will reserve a space, set it up for appropriate social distancing, and be available to answer any Canvas or course design questions you might have.

For groups that prefer an online meeting, we will be available Thursday, June 25 from 2:00-5:00. Please add us to your online conference meeting so we can assist as requested. Please email Mason (nmc@reinhardt.edu), or Lydia (Lydia.laucella@reinhardt.edu) if you would like CITEL assistance with your online meeting.

LAST THOUGHTS

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a very real existential threat to Reinhardt University. Reinhardt has faced similar threats in the past, and through the amazing work of past administrations and faculty, returned stronger. We must prepare to move forward on our mission to educate “the whole person by developing the intellectual, social, personal, vocational, spiritual and physical dimensions” of our students, even if our preferred instructional methods are hampered by current events. How we respond and how we innovate this summer will determine our future. Reinhardt’s fate is in our faculty’s hands. Take heart! We are in very good hands!

REFERENCES

Burke, L. (2020, March 18). The big transition. Inside Higher Ed.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/03/31/faculty-discuss-their-quick-transition-online-instruction>

DePietro, A. (2020, April 30). Here’s a look at the impact of coronavirus (covid-19) on colleges and universities in the U.S. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewdepietro/2020/04/30/impact-coronavirus-covid-19-colleges-universities/#6a0ee48261a6>