PURDUE

## UNIVERSITY

Department of English

LTC Guide: Teaching Remotely

Online, f2f, Hybrid

For Fall 2020 and possibly beyond, the English Department is planning for courses in several formats. Some courses will be taught "face-to-face (f2f)," that is, in the traditional way of meeting on campus in designated classrooms multiple times a week. At the opposite end of the spectrum are traditional "online" courses that are taught 100% online, mostly involving asynchronous learning activities. In between are courses that will involve "hybrid" methods of instruction, that is blending distance learning with campus classroom meetings. Also in this "hybrid" category are those courses in the regular English catalogue that, while taught remotely, will simulate the traditional practice of meeting at regular, weekly classroom hours two or three times of week, only of course the meetings will be "virtual"

Face-to-Face Learning

Hybrid Blended Learning
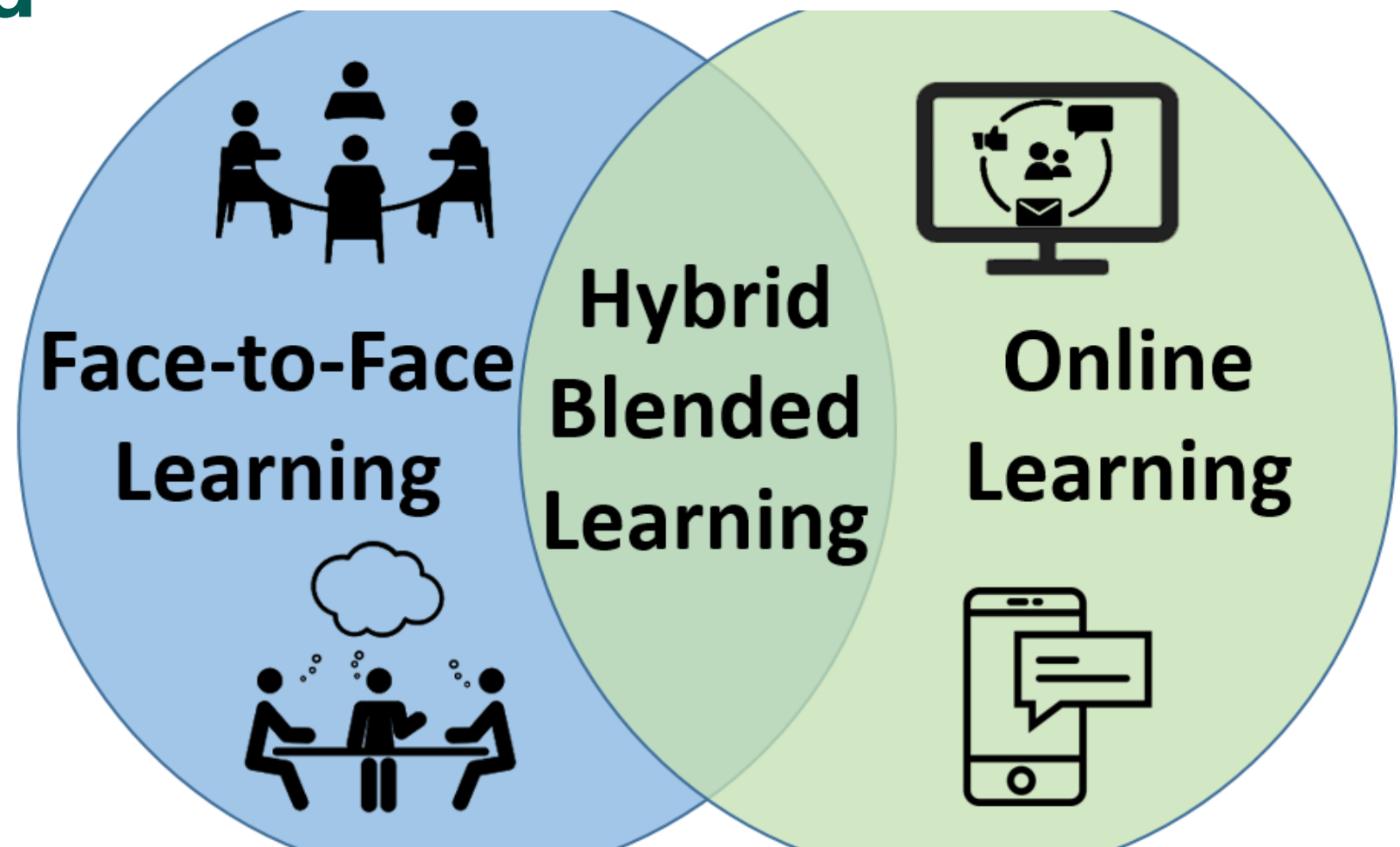
Online Learning

by way of video-conferencing software. The term educators use for "real time" meetings online is synchronous. According to the website www.bestschools.org: "Synchronous learning is online or distance education that happens in real time, whereas asynchronous learning occurs through online channels without real-time

interaction. Many hybrid learning models will include a blend of both asynchronous and synchronous online learning." This guide is designed to help you think through these pedagogical approaches.

Additional Considerations
Pedagogical Methodology

Impact X: Purdue has invested in Impact as a way to tailor pedagogical method to the outcomes you wish to achieve. More info can be found at this link.

Flipped classroom: one way to increase student investment in learning is to have them creating knowledge rather than simply ingesting it, as with traditional lectures. Online tools can help with this.

Tools: our forced move to online teaching can lead to the discovery of new helpful tools that can also help you in your f2f teaching, for example, annotation, timeline-building, map-building, discussion boards, blogging, and digital curation.

Asynchronicity: there are some inherent advantages to asynchronous methods: your students can do work on their own time and this approach allows students who are shy in face-to-face discussion to express themselves in a format that is less intimidating for them.

Finding

light

in

the

darkness

D2L | Brightspace

Before getting into individual online learning tools and strategies, we need to begin with Purdue's new Learning Management System: Brightspace. Most Purdue instructors have used Brightspace, or its predecessor Blackboard, in their course design to house their syllabus, schedule,and perhaps even their gradebook. For online learning today, all roads lead from or to the Brightspace course website, and unless students are assigned a printed textbook or you wish to use some other set of tools in addition, they find everything they need there. One of the values of Brightspace for remote instruction is that it provides templates for all kinds of things, including for organizing the course. The basic organizing principle for the online syllabus is the weekly module. Modules fit into larger topical "units," and they consist mainly of a list of activities for the week, plus links to all the scheduling, instructions, and resources

needed to complete those activities.

Brightspace also provides direct access to MyMedia where all video files and video-making software is located. MyMedia is also the home to Kaltura, which has its own video-making program. Right there, with a camera-equipped computer, the instructor can record and import into Brightspace a video or screencast within minutes.

Announcements in Brightspace. The first thing students see by default when logging on to Brightspace is Announcements. The one feature missing from Brightspace (as opposed to Blackboard) is the ability to click a box to enable an announcement to be sent to students via email.

Personal Video Presentations. By personal Video Presentations is meant videos featuring the instructor looking into the camera. Purdue Online courses traditionally limit these to weekly or bi-

weekly events for up to 10 minutes. The rationale presented by Purdue Online is that students' attention spans can't handle longer presentations on screen, but it's also an engrained philosophy that online teaching limits passive forms of instruction. Typically these are for the purpose of introducing topics and addressing known concerns about assignments related to them. They should be highly focussed and substantive in content.

Screencast Presentations. These presentations, often used with Powerpoint, either include a thumbnail image of the instructor or no camera image at all. Many instructors opt for a mix of personal and screencasting. Screencasting is preferable when explaining content on Brightspace.

Discussion Boards. Instructors can engage with students in discussion forums either as discussion participants or as graders providing feedback. For more on discussion boards, see p. 8.

Online Course Design

Typical discussions about course outcomes and objectives focus almost entirely on the cognitive domain of learning. This includes items we remember, how we understand concepts and apply concepts, and the ability to analyze, evaluate, or create based on the knowledge, understanding, and application abilities. In literature courses, where we ask students to engage critically with material, including the consideration of multiple possible perspectives as well as personal connections, these classes often go beyond the cognitive, seeking to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves, others, and skills like empathy and reflection. These goals become even more important in online courses, where we are more reliant upon students to contribute meaningfully to discussion, without our constant presence and ability to step in to guide a discussion.

In considering goals that go beyond the cognitive domain, you might consider the model created by D. Fink, which identifies six non-hierarchical categories of learning. In his book, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*, Fink recommends developing outcomes for various categories:

Foundational Knowledge: What information and ideas should students remember and understand?

Application: What skills should students develop, what types of critical, creative, and practical thinking do they need, and how will they manage projects?

Integration: How will students connect ideas, people, and realms of life?

Human Dimension: How will students learn about themselves and others?

Caring: How will students develop new feelings, interests, and values?

Learning How to Learn: How will students become a better student, inquire about a subject, and ultimately become self-directed to continue development beyond this class?

When you think about constructing these overall goals for the course, keep two core ideas in mind: how do you want student's learning in a way that will impact their lives two or three years after taking the course? How do all of these components interrelate?

Concrete Examples

An example of traditional, cognitive focused learning environments in a literature course, which includes the associated learning dimension(s) (from Kristin Lucas and Sarah Fiona Winters' "Thematic Organization and the First Year Literature Survey" in *Teaching the Literature Survey Course* ed. Dujardin, Lang, and Staunton):

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Identify the defining features of major literary forms (foundational knowledge);

Identify and use key literary and critical terms in the process of analysis (foundational knowledge and application);

Apply basic critical and theoretical methodologies to close, critical readings of a wide variety of texts (application and integration);

Discuss texts and ideas comfortably and respectfully in class (integration and human dimension);

Construct and sustain analytical arguments in clear, coherent prose and proper essay format (integration, application).

In expanding these outcomes for the online course, we might add or replace some with:

Develop skills in digital learning, to better understand yourself as a learner through interacting with others and reflections (Learning how to learn);

Students will come to see themselves as active participants in interpretive communities (human dimension);

Students will value literature as a reflection of themselves, others, and the experiences of each (caring).

While the outcomes are often very broad, spanning goals for the entire semester, it is also important to think about concrete steps students might take along the path to success on these outcomes, often tied to specific learning activities and assessments. These should be articulated as objectives, which can help students see a path toward success in the course.

The goal of Purdue's Impact training program is largely oriented towards such goal-oriented thinking and practice.

Assessments

When determining an appropriate and effective assessment, consider the following questions:

How can students demonstrate successful accomplishment of one or more learning outcomes?

How does this assignment connect to the ways students engage in class activities?

How does this fit into the broader landscape of my grading system?

When we coordinate our attempts to address these three questions, we can create robust assessment structures that allow us to measure student success in any class structure, upholding our ideals regarding academic excellence. These questions also empower us to think outside the box. If much of the learning in our class takes place through discussions, group work, and projects, perhaps it would be inappropriate to have all of this lead to a timed individual test. You should always consider how assessments are reflecting the broader goals and outcomes of the course.

Assessments in an online class

One of the most significant shifts when we move a class online, for many instructors, is a new emphasis on regular assessment. In many face-to-face courses, we may weigh our assessment structure toward large research papers, which often span most, if not all, of the course's learning outcomes. We can do this because we are able to use in-class time to engage directly with individual students through discussions and activities to know when our intervention or help is needed to keep them on track. In online courses, we often use significantly more lower-stakes assessments, tying assessment practices into every component of a course (even if just a check system to recognize completion of a task).

The Three Components of an Assessment

When it comes to making an assessment, we can focus on three elements that should be communicated with students (transparency should be at the forefront of any assessment).

Assignment goal: How this assignment contributes to the achievement of learning goals for the class and beyond.

Framework: What students will actually be doing. In larger assignments this should include multiple steps. Note that this does not mean it needs to be overly prescriptive. You might provide one possible pathway. Or, you can highlight how students will have options and choices in each step.

Success: What success looks like and how will it be measured. This might include a rubric, but might also include other types of descriptions of successful completion, or real-world models to emulate.

Discussion

Many approach the construction of an online class through moving in class-discussions to discussion forums. This is definitely an appropriate strategy, but it requires that we think through the ways they are significantly different, including:

We do not feel the same connections to people on forums as when we sit near, see, and/or hear people. This may have benefits when it comes to implicit biases, but drawbacks when it comes to understanding each other and valuing others' perspectives.

Discussion on a forum takes place over a greater period of time; we should not expect the same type of back and forth with questions and responses since we have no way of knowing who will read and/or respond next.

We can take advantage of the opportunity to think and construct responses offered by asynchronous forums.

It is easier to provide space for everyone to participate on a forum as well as for multiple discussion threads to continue simultaneously.

One key decision is to think about whether discussions should be in groups or the discussion should take as a whole class. This can be determined by considering the size of the class in conjunction with the goals of discussion.

Discussion Boards have been around for a long time in Online instruction, with Blackboard responsible for popularizing the model at least a decade ago. When poorly designed and over-used, students hate them. However, as a recent article in *Inside High Ed* has argued, they can be a highly effective learning tool in Humanities online education.. Given the two components they emphasize and intersect (learning through collaboration, and ideas exchange through writing),. they are ideally suited for the study of literature. Discussion forums typically are scheduled in online classes for one main post to be due mid-week, and response posts (to classmates' main posts) due at the end of the week. While many instructors give little grading weight to discussions, two adjustments to traditional discussion board design can justify making them an important part of student assessment. One is to provide a challenging set of criteria (via a rubric) for posts; the other is to put students in small groups where they develop a sense of community. As Professor Vanessa Dennen of Florida SU asserts, "the value of interaction between students cannot be underestimated." "It is a place to keep them apace with other people, to see who the other people are in the class," Dennen writes. The advantage of small groups in a large class is that you can give each group the same assignment—say 6 groups of 5 in a class of 30—and not worry about students poaching from each other's completed posts, since in Brightspace, groups cannot see what other groups are doing, until you allow them to.

Helpful Links

Purdue's Guide to Teaching Remotely:

https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/teaching-remotely/

Purdue's Guide to Using Brightspace:

https://www.purdue.edu/learning-management/West-Lafayette

Brightspace weekly "drop-in" help sessions (every Mon 12-1pm; sponsored by Teaching and Learning Technologies):

https://tinyurl.com/y5xnpjfp

HCommons' guide to online teaching resources in the Humanities:

https://makingthecourse.hcommons.org/online-teaching-resources/

The U of Maryland's intro to using:

Zoom: https://tinyurl.com/y5wcwhth

WebEx: https://tinyurl.com/y4hrwss8

Google Hangouts: https://tinyurl.com/y333cc78

Further Reading/Advice

How to use Zoom effectively

What effective remote courses have in common

How to balance synchronous and asynchronous instruction

How to connect with your students through online media

How to build community while meeting with your students on Zoom

How to think about adapting your in-class model to a remote teaching model

Lists of teaching activities from the K. Patricia Cross Academy.

Articles about Teaching with COVE Tools

Sample online syllabi at COVE

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