CELT Teaching Tip for March 26, 2020

Finding success, Frequently Asked Questions & Canvas basics

This teaching tip includes answers to the most frequently asked instructor questions as well as Canvas basics for those new to ISU’s learning management system (LMS) Canvas.

In addition, we want to share how faculty are finding success while delivering content online:

- ISU news highlighted Steve Butler (Mathematics), Raluca Iancu (Art and Visual Culture) in this, "Iowa State faculty get creative as courses move online for remainder of spring semester" page (https://bit.ly/2ycdzr7).
- Matt Wetstein (Physics & Astronomy) developed this Physics 221 Online: Theatrical Trailer (YouTube video, https://youtu.be/5W2NyAgYTZ4) for students.
- Inside Iowa State featured Megan Myers (World Languages and Cultures) in their "Instructors use student survey to guide online transition" article (https://bit.ly/2wDPQ2t).

Do you or your colleagues have success stories to share? Email us at celt@iastate.edu.

With joy for teaching,

Sara Marcketti, Director
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between synchronous and asynchronous?

**Synchronous** happens in 'real-time' at a specific virtual location during one particular time of the day using video conferencing tools (Webex, Zoom) to live stream a lecture/meeting. For example, every Monday at 2:10 p.m. (Central Savings Time) in a Webex virtual room. Use synchronous mode for student office hours and courses where oral communication and live discussions are crucial to attaining learning objectives.

**Asynchronous** happens on your schedule: materials, lectures, and assignments posted in Canvas for students to access. There are due dates, but there is also flexibility in when and where students access and complete the tasks. Self-guided lesson modules, streaming video content, virtual libraries, posted lecture notes, and exchanges across discussion boards are examples. The asynchronous model allows time for students to settle into the learning routine and for instructors to pace their facilitation.

How do I "deliver content"?

- Consider recording short, up to 8-minute videos of mini-lectures.
- Create videos in Canvas Studio (https://bit.ly/39pKmG5) (located on the left global navigation bar above help) and post them inside your online course. Videos uploaded to Studio are compacted and more accessible to students with limited internet access. For advice on how to do these things and more, see the Canvas Studio guide (https://bit.ly/39iy2Cr) in MyCanvas Teacher (http://bit.ly/mycanvasteacher).
- Or consider an even more accessible option, posting mini-lectures in the form of PowerPoint slides with notes, or even a PowerPoint file and a pdf of the Notes documents, in which instructors describe the slides.
How do I deliver exams and promote academic integrity?
Assessments are powerful learning tools and provide useful information to you as an instructor.
- In Canvas, quizzes serve as low and high-stakes assessments (http://bit.ly/2zNxjzE).
- Use Canvas Assignments (https://bit.ly/2UmBpJn) for essay exams (or use the recommend File Upload option in Canvas quizzes).
- Consult ways to promote academic integrity and capture student learning (http://bit.ly/cc-start) for additional ideas.
- Be sure to post responses to the most challenging questions, and perhaps there is a need for more significant explanation via a short Video or posted notes.
- Ask students to self-assess their mistakes and find opportunities for mastery of content.

If you have not seen your questions answered here, please consult the Deliver course content table (https://bit.ly/2JhTrpM) on the Quick Start Guide page (http://bit.ly/cc-start) for other ideas on transforming your in-person sessions into the online environment or email celt@iastate.edu.

3 things to emphasize to all ISU students

Provost Wickert asks, "As you send messages (via email or Announcements - https://bit.ly/2Aui3H1, Canvas Inbox - https://bit.ly/39fHgnX) to students regarding ISU’s conversion to virtual instruction, it is helpful to consistently emphasize three points:

1. Virtual courses continue to count toward students’ degree programs.
2. We have implemented a temporary Pass/Not Pass option (https://bit.ly/2UiMX05) to provide students with additional flexibility.
3. Our faculty are committed to providing a high-quality educational experience in the virtual environment.
   This commitment was expressed recently in a resolution from Iowa State’s Faculty Senate (https://bit.ly/39msziK)."

5 steps to successful teaching in Canvas

Use these key Canvas steps to ensure a successful teaching and learning experience. Conversations with undergrad and graduate students, instructional designers, and examination of tickets submitted to the ISU Solution Center helped create these points.

1. Announcements. Every time a student logs into your course, they see whatever you provide them via the front page (How to set a Front Page guide, http://bit.ly/2AzUAUW) as well as announcements (How to add an announcement guide, http://bit.ly/2Aui3H1). During this time of uncertainty, be sure to create an informational front page and add (and remove outdated announcements) to keep students up to date.
2. Update Notifications. Students can turn off Canvas notifications! Set your notification preferences, https://bit.ly/2Uib6nf and then explain how students can update their notifications (https://bit.ly/2JfLtxg) to ensure that they receive all Canvas updates in their iastate.edu emails.
3. Modules for Organization. Make your course easy to navigate so that students can concentrate on the subject matter at hand. Within each module (https://bit.ly/39gO5pi), you can include PowerPoint slides, lectures, quizzes, assignments, and discussion prompts. Some instructors organize modules by weeks and some by multi-week units under the same topic.
4. SpeedGrader. This Canvas tool is an easy and effective way to provide an electronic record of the students’ work, your feedback, and the grade (How to use SpeedGrader guide, http://bit.ly/2AG53OH).
5. Publish. One of the most frequent issues submitted to the ISU Solution Center is that students cannot access the course, the modules, quizzes, tests, or assignments. The solution? Publish each content item, and use Student View to make sure that they see what you see (How do I view a course as a student? web guide, http://bit.ly/2Au9nAb).

Know where to go at ISU
Our ISU Campus Partners are here to help, call us through the CELT Response Team 515-294-5357 (Monday-Friday, 8-5 p.m.). We have staff across campus willing to assist. If needed, the campus partners will meet with you virtually using WebEx.

Additionally, you may wish to contact one of the support units directly. Please note which program, department, or college each unit serves and contact the unit for your area (http://bit.ly/isu-support).

24/7 Canvas Support
All 24/7 support options may be found by clicking the ? Help icon (found on the left-hand navigation bar in Canvas https://canvas.iastate.edu/) to access the support available to you:

• **24/7 phone support.** Call 515-294-4000, then press 2 to connect with Canvas support.
• **Find answers to common questions** in the Canvas Instructor Guides (http://bit.ly/38M9BC2).
• **Use the resources in the MyCanvas Teacher at ISU site** (http://bit.ly/mycanvasteacher).