

CELT Teaching Tip for April 2, 2020

“Uncertainty is a bandwidth stealer”*

Uncertainty strains our mental, physical, and emotional resources. Much like scheduled Canvas, Webex, and Zoom maintenance updates, there are steps that we can take to help our students (and ourselves) feel a bit more certain.

I do not know about you, but I am stressed. Stressed about the well-being of my parents in a Covid-19 hot zone, worried about family members working in health care, and sad that the students in my creative thinking class do not have the experience that I had planned just a few months ago. And yet, I am sitting in my comfortable extra office/bedroom/gym with little worries that I will have a job or that I have enough food to eat. I am safe. For many of our students, staying home means a loss of employment, added responsibilities, and the stress of keeping up.

Here are some ideas to make this uncertain situation feel a bit more stable:

Consider assessment as a paradigm shift. Changed assessment strategies do not mean foregoing quality and teaching excellence. Consider how you can use Canvas quizzes and assignments as learning aids, and project and problem-based learning as essential survival skills. Even the College Board is adjusting its usual AP exams, eliminating multiple choice and reducing three-hour exams to 45 minutes. There is precedence for a temporary paradigm shift in the traditional assessment of student learning and in treating our students as adults also struggling with readjustment amidst uncertainty.

Keep accurate gradebooks. Undergraduate students will be able to take a pass/not pass at the end of this semester (<https://bit.ly/33ZN1VM>). Many students continue to work diligently to earn their deserved letter grades. Keeping your Canvas gradebook up to date provides students with an accurate depiction of their current standing.

Dispel the unknown. Provide students a structure and plan for the rest of the semester so that they can organize their time.

Listen to your students. With all of the uncertainties right now, do you know how your students are doing? This act can be as simple as asking your students how they're doing. Students can write a word, sentence, paragraph, post a picture, or choose to opt-out. This one question can give you valuable information about their well-being and ability to connect to technologies and complete course work. If you can, provide prompt, encouraging feedback to students using written, video, or audio tools that reinforces you heard them.

You might also ask students to complete an anonymous plus delta (<http://bit.ly/isu-plusdelta>) to have a pulse on the positives and possible adjustments to your teaching and their learning. Create a Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net/>) from their responses and post prominently in your online course to inspire and help them persevere.

Uncertainty remains in many spheres of our lives. We can help students feel more certain by assuming the best, listening to them, and understanding that they are feeling as much, if not more, stress as we are.

With a joy for teaching,
Sara Marcketti, Director
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

*Quote from author Cia Verschelden during AAC&U Webinar on “Safeguarding quality, equity, and inclusion as learning moves online (<https://bit.ly/2JuCVmf>).”

Pass/Not Pass Option for Graduate-level Courses

In response to the coronavirus pandemic in Spring 2020, Iowa State University has adopted a temporary Pass/Not Pass (P/NP) grading policy for graduate (500- and 600-level) courses impacted by the transition to virtual instruction. For deadlines and to learn more read through the ISU Graduate College's Pass/Not Pass Option for Graduate-level Courses page (<https://bit.ly/3aF3QI0>).

Keep Community, Stay Informed, Be Well with ISU

Global pandemics cause changes to our daily lives and significant life transitions that are stressful and can affect student well-being in various ways. Being well and engaging in proactive, actionable ways to enhance our well-being is critical during this time. To begin, bookmark these two Student Health and Wellness's Keep Community, Stay Informed, Be Well Campaign sites:

- For new activities, videos, and support bookmark the Keep Community, Stay Informed, Be Well Canvas course (<https://bit.ly/342pvar>).
- Visit the Keep Community, Stay Informed, Be Well Campaign site (<https://bit.ly/2w9Lwb4>) for resources to help you during online instruction, remote work, and social distancing.
- Connect to @bewellis on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) to enhance your well-being and see the multitude of ways that Cyclones are staying well!

Welcome Kabongwe (KB) Gwebu, CELT's newest staff member!

Kabongwe (KB) Gwebu will be leading upcoming Inclusive Classroom training and workshops, as well as coordinating the Inclusive Classroom Council, and learning community. KB received his Bachelor of Science in Management from Minnesota State University, Mankato and his Master of Science in College Student Personnel and Administration from the University of Central Arkansas.

Currently pursuing his doctorate in Higher Education from Iowa State University, KB brings a wealth of student and academic affairs experience to his new role in CELT.

Contact KB via email kgwebu@iastate.edu

Panel: How-to tackle assessments & uphold academic integrity (Apr. 10)

Amidst preparing your courses for online delivery, managing changed personal and professional schedules, and multi-tasking, CELT virtual Online Learning Community's (OLC) meetings might be your new normal!

Plan to attend ISU's OLC first virtual meeting, where we will feature a panel of three instructors discussing how they tackle assessments in their online courses and continue to uphold academic integrity while supporting their students in these challenging times.

Panelists: Drs. Monica Lamm (Chemical and Biological Engineering), Sayali Kukday (Genetics, Development and Cell Biology), and Elizabeth Stegemoller (Kinesiology) approach online assessment from different angles, but all with a razor-sharp focus on their students and instructional objectives.

Register for ISU Online Learning Community (April 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., online only)

Register via Webex now (<https://bit.ly/2JvpPVN>)

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>).

Upcoming virtual events

- Workshop online, Miller Open Education Mini-Grants: Proposal Writing Q&A, Apr. 6 (2:10-3:00 p.m., Online only via Webex registration page, <https://bit.ly/2UxH8fl>)
- Webinar, Building an inclusive and learner-centered syllabus, Apr. 7 (4:10-5 p.m., Online only via Webex registration page, <http://bit.ly/2FkOY3n>)
- Virtual panel: ISU Online Learning Community (ISU-OLC), Apr. 10 (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Online only via Webex registration page, <https://bit.ly/3bzqzVU>)