**Flexible Learning Experiences Improve Access for SUNY Students**

Carol B: Did the synchronous students have a different instructor or did they watch the live course?

Andrea M: The synchronous students attended the same class as the face to face sessions with the same instructor.

Patricia I: Melissa - did you like that format?

Melissa P: Yes, I actually loved being online both synchronous and asynchronous during COVID.

Patricia I: Due to COVID or would like them going forward?

Melissa P: I think it is really important to increase this online format going forward and giving more options to be allowed to take more hyflex courses.

Steve H: As someone who has been teaching online since '05, I have to concur with the concerns about engagement. While I wholeheartedly support flexibility options, too many students see "flexible" as fluid, in that, it becomes the last priority after work, family, etc. etc.

Roberta D: Participation vs attendance and student needs and flexibility- crucial. Thank you for this discussion.

Carol B: Do deadlines keep the students on track, or are there flexible due dates?

Ryan M: At FLCC we generally have due dates.

Norma C: Students don't pay attend to the start date of the course either. They assume that they are all full term classes starting on the first day of classes.

Amber G: I definitely have due dates for students and give flexibility if they need extensions.

Irene: Teachers need to be intentional and strategic during a planning phase to move away from passive lecturing by using active learning strategies and scaffolding student activities in synch and asynchronous settings.

Amber G: I will say we still do have official “snow days”.

Trevor J-S: My class will have snow days.

Megumi K: One issue I have is that students underestimate the amount of work involved in Engineering. Flexibility does not mean you have more than 24 hours a day.

Runi M: I appreciate this comment above because I am finding that many students are overloading themselves because they think that they can “do” more because they don’t have to commute to class…I think this is can be really detrimental for students.

Steve H: @ Megumi, it's not just engineering. ALL disciplines suffer when students presume their school work can just fill-in cracks in an overloaded schedule.

Steven G: Faculty contracts may also be out of date with regards to compensation for teaching in different modalities (our current contract only has "in person" and "online" formats defined in regards to salary).

Megumi K: Steven, very true.

Ryan M: Great point Steven.

Irene P: Andrea, these are major contention points for P-12 teachers this year and a burden for student teachers. Thank you for bringing this up.

Steve H: @ Steven - sadly that has been a factor since the dawn of online course delivery. (And don't get me started how adjuncts are given even less autonomy.)

Michael P: I'd argue that's a greater problem with how education is structured from the very beginning. Students are, more or less, taught that the instructor is God and they expect that from university too. They have little experience taking responsibility for their own education outside of homework and tests.

Andrea M: @Irene - I can imagine. I was a middle school math teacher and all my classes had very minimal “lecture” and were mostly group work, which is difficult when some students are f2f and some are online.

Patricia I: A journal/commentary of the video is required for the day of 'flip discussion'. That way - hopefully - all students will watch the material AND the more reticent students are able to read their commentary and be part of the 'action'.

Irene: @Amber, thanks for sharing your teaching experience!

Dave W: Low stake grading for each sessions can encourage student self-regulation and reward attendance and participation.

Dave W: This has been successful in F2F flipped styles.

Ryan M: @David, absolutely

Jim M: I find that weekly structured modules with due dates works well with asynchronous.

Steven G: @Melissa -- thank you for that perspective; we incorrectly assume (hope) that students will want to, or be able to take the time to engage with the class in the way you did.

Steven G: @Eric -- the answer to the concept check question could also be used to track an "attendance/participation" portion of the grade for asynchronous students. Did you do this?

Amber G: <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2020/05/11/single-most-essential-requirement-designing-fall-online-course>

Eric B: @ Steven, yes - all students earned a participation grade for each lesson. The participation grade for in person or remote students was assigned based on them "showing up" and participating in class activities and discussions. The default grade for in person and remote was 10/10 (an incentive to come for synchronous class). The grade for asynchrounous students was determined based on a rubric and the quality of their written response.

Megumi K: I recorded every single class session and uploaded it on YouTube and made it available through the LMS. I was disappointed to learn that VERY few students re-watched them. Separate videos for homework solutions got many more views (naturally).

Erin M: Thank you for sharing that Amber - good takeaways for us all.

Carol B: or dance

Carol B: Does anyone have experience with using this for a studio course - like art or theater?

Michael P: I don't know if I agree with not having due dates. I feel students need to have at least some level of structure. While I agree you should be flexible in your course design, feedback on work is just as important for the educational experience and you can't give that unless you have student work to give it for.

Amber G: I have due dates. But if students need an extension, I will give it to them.

Ryan M: @Michael, I have due dates but I allow incredible flexibility. I call them soft due dates.

Amber G: Most students complete work by the due dates and the ones that ask have extenuating circumstances.

Amber G: I agree that structure is important.

Carol B: How can one manage this if there is no campus support or cameras in the classroom?

Ryan M: @Carol, I think without support it is destined to fail.

Amber G: Great point @Melissa!

Carol B: My students were very thankful for allowing text questions during COVID.

Amber G: I put it in my syllabus that I will respond to students emails within 24 hours unless it’s a weekend/holiday - there may be a longer response time (although honestly I usually got back to them quickly on weekends too).

Carol B: That way I could respond right away.

Carol B: Some people would say NEVER to that, but the students found it very helpful and only a few used it.

Carol B: I did request they not text after 11pm.

Robert B: Yes Melissa, without the standard face to face interaction it is vital we stay in contact with students in a more flexible manner!

Amber G: @Great idea Carol. I know other faculty that do that. Since my college uses Teams, students can essentially send “text messages” that way too.

Carol B: I offered lots of drop ins for my asynchronous course and only a few took advantage.

Steve H: I've had a dedicated Google Voice number for years and I get almost no calls/texts.

Tricia C: I found that the students preferred to schedule 1-1. I would sit alone in a zoom for my office hours. We use Remind to connect.

Megumi K: I used Remind so they can text me. Students were pretty thoughtful in using it judiciously to contact me via text.

Carol B: No one ever attended my regularly schedule video office hours either.

Michael P: I'd be concerned about offering my cell phone for students to text me re: FERPA... is there anything regarding that sort of communication from the perspective of FERPA?

Eleanor K: I was very flexible with due dates - but I noticed that some of my students really just couldn't meet the most basic requirements of the course, no matter how flexible I was. I spent a lot of time even reaching out to those people one-on-one. I do agree the structure is necessary.

Wendy J: Campus policies need to catch up with both students and technology. The requirement to hold office hours in person on campus is antiquated.

Carol B: @michael - interesting question

Steve H: @ MIchael - That is why I use a dedicated Google Voice number, it is for my students only.

Amber G: I also always have an “Ask a Question” discussion board in Blackboard that students can use anytime. I make sure to “Subscribe” to those boards so if students post a question, I can respond as soon as I am able to.

Amber G: I also have a Google Voice number.

Steve H: @ Amber - always include those too

Megumi K: I "donate" one of my office hours in the math lab per week. I am thinking of converting it to a "study session" instead of calling it "office hour".

Amber G: but I rely on Teams chat for texting with students

Carol B: @Amber - that’s great because then students with the same question can see the answer.

Robert B: @ Michael- I believe Remind allows contact while keeping cell # private

Jamie H: @Michael, Robert is correct

Ryan M: I do not tell students I have soft due dates, to them the due dates appear to be solid. But when they reach out I lead with compassion and trust.

Andrea M: @Ryan - To me, that is perfect.

Dave W: Our school started a laptop loan program for students who need it.

Steve H: @ Ryan - that has generally been my philosophy as well, but I notice more students are expecting just open deadlines.

Carol B: I have found that the ones that really need an extension get the work done and the ones that just didn’t do it and want an extension, never actually end up completing the work anyway.

Steven G: @Dave - Our campus has had a laptop loan program for a while, but we really ramped it up this past year.

Amber G: We also have a laptop loan program.

Dave W: @Steve It was vital for some our students during COVID.

Steve H: @ Dave - granted, but it was a trend I noticed well before COVID

Michael P: Recognition from administration that no two students are in the same financial situation and may not be able to afford a modern laptop/tablet.

Steven G: @Dave -- yes, same here. Some students were trying to take classes solely via their smartphones!?!

Amber G: Excellent point @Michael

Andrea M: @Steven - We had faculty trying to teach only with phones too.

Amber G: Yes, sad, but true @Steven. I am not sure how students could successfully write long papers just on smartphones. :(

Carol B: Perhaps school will start specializing on one modality.

Jamie H: LOL. I was just typing holograms and VR

Michael P: @Amber Maybe that's something to consider in general ID... are there alternative ways for students to deliver the same content (say, through presentations)?

Megumi K: I think maybe a VR environment for much more realistic labs.

Dave W: I programmed AI models - trust me, they will not replace us. ;-)

Trevor J-S: Adaptive learning is on its way.

Steve H: Fair point @Amber, but I am perplexed how so many advanced technology skills can be applied (TikTok, etc) but then basic academic tasks are beyond some students' skills sets.

Tricia C: We were able to find an organization that donates laptops and desktops that companies no longer use. The students were beyond grateful when they found out they didn't have to return them.

Dave W: @Trevor, yes, we are already using adaptive learning.

Amber G: @Michael good point! I am allowing students with some assignments the option of a presentation vs. a paper.

Steve H: SUNY is already utilizing an AI "enhanced" discussion platform.

Jamie H: PackBack

Michael P: I give it 50 years... not for the tech to be developed (I see that happening in 10), but for it to become accepted in higher ed and in the general public.

Amber G: I vote for universal internet and automatic laptops to faculty & students.

Steve H: @ Jamie, yes, (ugh)

Ryan M: @ Amber I second

Trevor J-S: @amber - Agree

Carol B: At some point, a college education will go the way of the dinosaur.

Dave W: As citizens, we need to promote universal access to free wifi to solve an equity gap. At least we should be pestering our representatives to make wiFi free in cities

Dave W: and rural areas

Carol B: People will go back to learning a skill.

Michael P: @Carol … Hard disagree. The College \*experience\* will go the way of the dinosaur. There will always be the need for specialist training.

Erin M: Thank you for the great conversation in the chat from all participants!

Carol B: agree @michael - I think it will be in a different format and not be called “college"

Steven G: Right now, I think we're in the "let's throw all these delivery modes out there and see what happens" phase. Who's collecting the data to see what modes really work for faculty and students...

Steve H: Remember MOOCs were supposed "end" college.

Irene: @Andrea, 100% agreed!

Carol B: I think being “on campus” for a four year experience will become a luxury not many will be able to afford.

Megumi K: The value of college is being questioned anyway...so I agree, different formats for "higher ed" will emerge.