Teaching

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Welcome to Teaching, a free weekly newsletter from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

This week:

- I tell you about how Clemson University is preparing its instructors to teach online.

- I share how other colleges are talking about transitioning to remote teaching.

- I provide some links to online teaching resources.

We know things are in flux on many campuses. It's a stressful time, and we will be following the coronavirus story closely. Please let us know what you think we should be covering along the way. And if you'd like to join our Facebook group for further conversation with people at other colleges, and with the Chronicle staff, you can find it at [Higher ed and the coronavirus](#).

One University Gets a Jump on Emergency Preparedness

When Clemson University held an online-teaching day last August, closing the campus and requiring instructors to teach online, a pandemic was not uppermost on people's minds. But the South Carolina institution did want to ensure that all of

its 2,000-plus faculty members and instructors were capable of teaching remotely in case an emergency shuttered the campus.

As it turns out, that "eLearning Day" and a similar follow-up event last month were particularly timely. As the coronavirus spreads across the country, leading some campuses to shift instruction online temporarily, Clemson has a handle on what it takes to help its professors transition to remote teaching.

Most colleges are planning for a potential or actual disruption this spring. So can other institutions learn from Clemson's experience as they prepare?

For one, says Anne Marie Rogers**,** associate director of learning technology for Clemson Online, many professors are more proficient in online teaching than they think. Learning-management systems like Blackboard and Canvas are ubiquitous across the education landscape. And while some instructors may use only a bare minimum of tools in their LMS, that's a start.

"One instructor was really concerned she could not teach online," recalls Rogers, who is part of an academic-continuity team. "I said, 'Do you use Canvas?' And she said, 'Oh yes, I put all of our class materials on Canvas.' I said, 'There you go. You're already teaching online. What else do you need?'"

Still, instructors have many specific issues to work through, Rogers notes. How do I talk to my students? What happens if sufficient bandwidth is an issue? How can students record and post presentations? How can I start a discussion online? Should I try to teach "live," or is it OK to record a lecture and ask students to watch it when they can?

For each question, Rogers says, an education-technology specialist can help find answers. For the past week or so, Rogers's office and staff members in the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation have been holding drop-in hours for faculty members who need such guidance to transition to online teaching.

All faculty members at Clemson have been asked to double-check their plans to teach online. And departments and colleges have surveyed professors with such questions as "Can you go online? When can you go online? What do you need?"

The emails, drop-in visits, and phone calls from professors to the central ed-tech experts have ramped up significantly this week. In addition, says Rogers, specialists have been asked to reach out to instructors who stated in their survey that they needed help.

Still, Taimi Olsen, who oversees the innovation office, says she wonders: "Have we reached everyone? Do a lot of the faculty feel like they're getting the support they need?"

Professors, she notes, have also been working in groups to figure out challenges such as how to replicate laboratory work online. And some fields have very specific issues. Computer science and bioengineering, for example, are data-heavy fields. So discussion is underway within those departments on using cloud computing for data storage.

A teaching and learning center can be most useful, Olsen says, by connecting two academic divisions working on the same problems. "We're helping them brainstorm, listening, asking questions," she says. "So when I talked to a team-

based group of civil engineers, did they know nursing is also looking at issues of simulation?"

She and other specialists are tapping into campus expertise in other ways. They've asked a faculty learning community that has been working on digital tools, for example, to share its findings with the rest of the campus.

How is your department or your campus preparing for the possibility of moving classes online? Write to me, at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com, and your story may appear in a future newsletter.

Resource Guides for Teaching Online

Many colleges have produced, or are updating, emergency guidelines for teaching online. Here are a few that are particularly thorough.

- Kansas State University Global Campus has created an interactive [online community](#) to share resources and advice for planning academic continuity.

- The University of California at Santa Cruz has put together this [guide](#) on teaching during unplanned events. It offers both technical and pedagogical advice.

- Indiana University has developed a "Keep Teaching" [guide](#) that walks instructors through different scenarios, including complex ones, such as how to replicate lab activities online.

- Daniel Stanford, director of faculty development and technology innovation at the DePaul University Center for Teaching and Learning, created a [handy Google document](#) with links to remote-teaching resources at various colleges. Readers can add their own college's resources to the list.

Do you have a favorite advice guide? Or is there a particular organization that you think provides great support for online teaching? If so, drop me a line at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com, and we may list it in a future newsletter.

More Thoughts on Teaching Remotely

- In an essay for *Educause Review* and on his blog, Perry J. Sampson, an engineering professor at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, shares advice on student engagement when teaching remotely.

- Michelle D. Miller, a psychology professor at Northern Arizona University, has written this advice piece for *The Chronicle* about how to go online in a hurry.

- For readers who have a bit more time to think about developing effective online teaching strategies, check out three of our free advice guides: *How to Be a Better Online Teacher*, *How to Give Your Students Better Feedback With Technology* and *How to Make Smart Choices About Tech for Your Course*.

Thanks for reading Teaching. If you have suggestions or ideas, please feel free to email us, at dan.berrett@chronicle.com, beckie.supiano@chronicle.com, or beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com.

Prefer to read the article version of the newsletter? Here's a link.

—Beth

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