Drake Tomorrow:
Why We Change, How We Change
2019 Learning Symposium
August 16, 2019

Change is the end result of all true learning.
- Leo Buscaglia
Why We Are Changing

• Trends in higher education
• Serving diverse populations / changing student populations
• Digital proficiency
The Next Generation of Students...

“For the third year in a row, the convenience and flexibility offered by online programs topped the list of reasons.”

2019 Online Education Trends Report by Best Colleges
Online Teaching:
The What, the How, and the Huh?
Agenda

• Objectives
• How to be a better online teacher
  – With tips from Drake instructors
• Resources
• Q&A
At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

• Explain why it is important for Drake University to embrace online education
• Locate helpful resources to develop/grow your skills for teaching online
• Explain at least three ways you can create an effective online classroom
• Implement a new teaching strategy in one of your courses
Online Education Is Here to Stay

Image by Mudassar Iqbal from Pixabay
How to Be a Better Online Teacher
Better Online Teaching

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1. Show up to Class = Be Present

- Strategies:
  - Welcome students to the course
  - Post weekly announcements
  - Be engaged with students — often and early
  - Be timely and responsive to student questions, discussions, etc.
  - Offer ‘virtual’ office hours
  - Provide feedback
    - Comment within rubric
    - Use inline grading
    - Use video posts
Tips from your Colleagues

• Lance Noe:
  – Keep videos brief
• Kelly Bruhn:
  – Create a cheat sheet to manage details about your students
  – Record recap or ‘cheerleading’ videos “in your element”
2. Be Yourself

- Convey your Persona
  - Include your personal interests in your bio
  - Participate in “Introduce Yourself” discussion
  - Convey positivity and compassion
  - Infuse your writing with warmth
  - Be human
  - If you mess up, fess up
3. Put Yourself in Their Shoes

- Think like a student
- Design for clarity
- Consider various learning styles
- Use Universal Design principles
- Strive for ADA Compliance
Tips from your Colleagues

• Anna Clark:
  – Language has to be less nuanced and more exact
  – Use phone and Skype calls with students to settle things more quickly when things get messy
4. Organize Course Content Intuitively

• Be methodical, systematic, and purposeful
  – Guide students
  – Keep instructions clear, concise, and consistent
  – Open links in new windows

• Streamline organization and flow
  – Chunk content
Tips from your Colleagues

• Lance Noe:
  – Keep course organization straight-forward and linear

• Anna Clark:
  – It’s important to realize that we can’t just throw a face-to-face course online
5. Add Visual Appeal

- Streamline text
- Chunk content
- Use pictures, graphs, formulas, and infographics
- Insert thumbnails for videos
- Remember accessibility needs (e.g., hearing impaired, English learners, etc.)
Example 1

Backward Design is a method of designing courses where you start with the outcomes.

- Where do you want students to be at end of course? What are the outcomes?
- What assessments will demonstrate they have mastered the outcomes?
- What activities prepare them for the assessments?
Example 2

Backward Design

A method of designing courses in which we begin with course learning outcomes, where we want the students to end up.

From there, we design the assessments needed to determine if the outcomes have been met.

Then, we design the learning activities that help students learn enough to perform well on the assessment.

1. Outcomes  2. Assessments  3. Activities

Another approach to course design is one that is textbook-centered.

Not the best choice -- text edition updates prematurely necessitate course redevelopments.

Also, this approach can emphasize the text’s voice above the instructor’s.

Advantages of using Backward Design:

Strong, clear focus communicated to students

Students across multiple sections achieve same learning outcomes
Example 3

THE BACKWARD DESIGN APPROACH

1. Identify the desired learning results.
   - Look at the content you’re supposed to teach and determine the important ideas students need to understand.
   - Think about what students need to be able to do, in the long term, with their learning. Use that to identify knowledge and skill objectives.

   Ask: What is worthy and requiring of understanding?

2. Determine the acceptable evidence.
   - You should assess students using measures that show that students really understand.

   Ask: What is evidence of understanding?

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.
   - Share with students an authentic and relevant purpose for the learning to bring far away facts to life.

   Ask: What learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest, and excellence?

6. Explain Your Expectations

• Be thorough yet succinct
  – Communicate expectations in Course Syllabus
  – Communicate due dates in Course Schedule
  – Provide clear course and module learning objectives
  – Write directions like a conversation
  – Create two-minute intro video
  – Provide rubrics
  – Share examples of student work
7. Scaffold Learning Activities

Scaffolding = breaking down complex tasks into systematic steps

Not recommended:
• Do ‘all at once’ in 1st graded assignment
  – Record video, share link to recording, and post responses in discussion

Better alternative:
• Use scaffolding in low stakes activity
  – Record video to introduce yourself
  – Follow explicit instructions to share link to recording in discussion
  – Ask questions if get stuck
• Apply lessons learned to a graded assignment
Tips from your Colleagues

• Anna Clark:
  – I’m the subject matter expert, but the ID specializes in translating that information into manageable, consumable “bites” for student consumption.

  – I haven’t been forced to change my content; instead, I’ve been encouraged to optimize the way I communicate it.

  – This process has benefited both my online and on-ground course delivery.
8. Provide Examples

• Use multiple explanations or examples
  – Share video from another point of view
  – Post short guest lecture video
  – Provide opportunity for peer review/feedback
  – Share exemplary student work
  – Model desired behavior
9. Commit to Continuous Improvement

• Strive to get better
  – Connect with experienced colleagues
  – Ask for feedback
  – Attend workshops
  – Participate in book discussion groups
  – Subscribe to teaching-related newsletters, blogs, etc.
Tips from your Colleagues

• Matthew Mitchell:
  – Focus on progress not perfection
  – Be patient with your partners and also extend that same patience/grace to yourself.

• Lance Noe:
  – Don’t try it all the first time
    • Start sound
    • Build based on feedback and increased comfort level
10. Embrace Technology

• Do not use technology for the sake of using technology
• Use technology to enhance learning
• Think “mobile friendly”
  – PDFs
  – Blackboard Collaborate
  – Sans Serif font
10. Embrace Technology

“Everything changes, nothing remains without change”
-Buddha

“Changes call for innovation and innovation leads to progress”
-Li Keqiang
Building the airplane while flying it

Original artwork by Mary Jane Blystone
We’re all in this together

Thank you!