Preparing to teach in *The After Times*: What insights can we take from teaching during a pandemic?

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About Me

- Asst. Professor of Teaching
- Broad range of courses
- Teaching for UBC Forestry’s 3+2 program

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Unplanned Events Can Yield Insight

- My story starts in the *Before Times* (January 2020)
  - Student stuck in Pakistan
  - Missing first 3-5 weeks of term
- What to do?
  - Lo-fi lecture capture
Lo-Fi Lecture Capture

- Quality: Poor, but good enough
- Lots of work for just one student
- What if I posted the videos for everyone?

The Deal

- “I’m going to post videos of our live lectures. These are not a replacement for attendance, they are meant for when you miss an occasional class.”
- “If you keep coming to lecture as normal, I’ll continue to post the videos”
The (Surprising) Results

- Attendance was stable
- Did they watch the videos?

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Anecdotal feedback

- Students with extended absences
- English-Language Learners

My Takeaway

- I wouldn’t normally have tried this.
- Students viewed videos as a learning resource, not a lecture replacement.
- I’m going to record and share my in-person lectures.
- I’ll keep working to make attendance worthwhile for students.

*By making a change to my teaching out of necessity, rather than choice, I learned something unexpected.*
A Natural Experiment

- We’ve made dramatic changes in our teaching in response to COVID.
- What have we learned?
- What has worked for you?
- What hasn’t?
- Think about the insights you gained and the new tools you learned. What can you apply to in-person teaching?

Reassessing Our Practice

- Student Engagement
- Assessment
- Flexibility / Empathy / Compassion
- Newly Developed Materials and Resources
Student Engagement

- Engagement channels shifted
  - Discussion boards, chat, breakout rooms
  - More accessible than speaking in class, visiting office hours?
- How might you continue to offer alternative opportunities for engagement to introverted students?
  - Classroom response systems?
  - Making increased use of online tools (compared to pre-COVID)?
  - More student-to-student interaction?

Assessment

- We adjusted our assessment strategies, often to balance need for academic integrity with trust/privacy
- Did you de-emphasize high-stakes exams?
- Did you devise alternate ways for students to demonstrate their learning?
- Do some of these adjustments make sense to continue in the classroom?
Flexibility / Empathy / Compassion

- Our students have faced significant challenges.
- I’ve been granting no-questions-asked extensions and trying to reach out to students who are falling behind.
  - Make sure all students are aware.
- Did you require documentation (e.g., doctor’s notes) for excused absences before COVID? Will you in the future?
  - Will you tell students to stay home when sick?
- Have you made changes to your extension policy or employed flexible deadlines (e.g., a grace period)? Will you continue to do so?

New Materials and Resources

- Do you have a semester’s worth of asynchronous resources?
  - Time to flip your classroom?
- Adaptable / open-ended assignments
New Materials and Resources

- Do you have a semester’s worth of asynchronous resources?
  - Time to flip your classroom?
- Adaptable / open-ended assignments
- Other activities / resources / materials that are worth using in person?
Closing Thoughts

- My advice to you is not to teach in a certain way this fall
- My advice: Reflect on your experience this year. Which of your new ideas / approaches / tools make sense to bring into the classroom with you this fall?
  - Student engagement?
  - Assessment?
  - Flexibility / empathy / compassion?
  - Newly developed materials and resources?
Questions?

- https://blogs.ubc.ca/teachingamongtrees/
- https://www.youtube.com/c/PatrickCulbertUBCForestry