

# Putting yourself in your students shoes and the key to solid online course facilitation

Presented by:  
Kimberly Avery, MAED  
Michael Erwin, MAED, ABD

# Today's Society

- Students are not traditional students
  - They have work
  - They have family
  - They have a ton of outside obligations
- Many struggle with time management as well as other outside factors including possible disabilities.
- As instructors we need to really examine our teaching styles and how they affect our students
- We need to think back to what it was like to be a first time online student
  - Feelings: nervous, frustrated, overwhelmed, stressed

# Student onboarding

- Student onboarding is a very quick process at many Colleges and Universities
- Students can make an inquiry and be in a class within a week or two
- My experience as a first time student was very scary. I remember logging into where our “class” newsgroups were to be listed and they weren’t there. I was in a panic and wanted to cry out of frustration when my phone rang and it was my onboarding counselor checking on me. She helped me get to where I needed to be and there was an overwhelming sense of relief.
- Many first time students have this same experience and overlook things because they are overwhelmed.

# Instructors Role

- Our interactions with our students start from the moment we are attached to the class.
  - It is in how you set up your class, how you welcome the students
  - The time you take to greet them in their biographies
  - This sets the pace for the course and then how you continue to work and facilitate the course is what engages them further.
- Communication is the key to getting students off on the right foot in your class.
- Asking questions
- Engaging students in discussions
- Being attentive to their needs as individual students

# Instructors Role

- Many of us have been teaching for years and after a while we become like robots.
  - Patterns of setting up the class
  - Welcoming students
  - Responding to posts
  - Grading
  - Then the cycle repeats every week
- We get excuse after excuse for why work is late, why they don't understand something, why they disappeared out of class, etc.
  - How we handle this with the students can make or break the student experience.

# Instructors Role

- As an instructor we need to step out of the mentality that we have heard this excuse over and over because while we have heard it before ***it is not from this student.***
  - We need to take time to get to know our students on a personal level as individuals.
    - Many feel it is not possible online but if you really take time to understand their bios
    - Engage in learning about them and it can tell you a lot about the students
- Many instructors become rigid over time and don't want to deal with it but that can be the difference in helping a student become successful and letting them feel that no one cares.

# Instructors Role

- Think of each student as an individual and deal with their issues individually
  1. Advocate outreach. It takes time but well worth it if the late work stops because the student can get caught up
    - *Less work for you*
    - *Sense of accomplishment for them*
  2. Take the time to make them comfortable with you.
    - *When they think you don't care then they don't care*
  3. Are you always going to be able to get them back in the classroom?
    - *No, but at least you can rest assure that you made every effort possible*

# Why is this important?

- We forget what it was like to be a first time student because some have been out of the classroom for so long
- We forget being anxious every time we started a new class and had to get to know the new instructor, their teaching style, their expectations, etc.
- We need to remember what it was like to try to learn something new in a short period of time.
- We need to think about on those who made our experience better and try to incorporate what we can into helping our students have the same good experiences.
- Help them live with the good instead of dwelling on the past

# Strategy for Facilitation “Start”

- **Know the course materials and structure**

If you don't you may miss something that is important. Are there issues?

- **Develop a schedule for delivery**

Know when to post and when to give critical feedback. With timely feedback students can learn more and apply themselves more effectively.

- **Welcome students “Powerful First Impressions”**

Ensure students have your contact information and office hours. Policies, Due Dates, Resources, Share your Expertise

# Strategy for Facilitation “During”

- **During the Introduction Discussion**

Be sure to respond in a friendly tone. Use a conversational style and infuse humor when possible to create levity. Students can be very stressed about about a new course and this is the time to show them you are approachable and concerned as well as fun. Do not be thin on introduction responses. Get to know them. Background, Skill level.

- **Email Response Time**

It is always critical to be timely, but the first week try to be particularly speedy. Decipher what the student is really asking.

- **Weekly Welcome Announcements/Post**

These are ideal to setup the week and infuse the fun of the topic into the intro. Intro posts are ideal to help students navigate the materials. Tips, Pitfalls, Etc.

# Strategy for Facilitation “During”

- **Grading must include feedback and grading rubrics**  
If students do not know how to improve they won't Rubrics make it very clear how they are being evaluated. Monitor progress. Are they hearing your feedback??
- **Feedback in the Discussions and Grading**  
Accommodate the various level of skill and ensure its thorough. Accommodate the learning styles. Voice, Video, Other.
- **Use Tools to be more Productive while offering fuller, richer feedback**  
Vimeo, Dragon, Jing, Camtasia, ShortKeys. Many others

# Strategy for Facilitation “Tools”

-  **Shortkeys**  
This tool quickly adds boilerplate or anything you commonly have to type in.
-  **Jing®**  
Jing is extremely valuable. Located at [www.jingproject.com](http://www.jingproject.com)
-  **DRAGON**  
NATURALLY SPEAKING  
This tool captures what you say and types it out as almost as fast as you can say it. 99% accurate. Allows for faster and more substantive feedback.
- **Camtasia**  
This tool ideal for advanced audio video and mark-ups.

# Strategy for Facilitation “End”

- **Final Projects**

Ensure the feedback throughout the course is supporting the assignments and final projects especially if there is a portfolio at some point.

- **Offer Future Support**

Students are encouraged to know you are there if needed in the future for support or even feedback on portfolio pieces.

- **Close Course with a Personalized Email**

Something that recaps the course and how fun it was and perhaps tell them what is next.



Questions?