TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL REALM:

The Roles and Tools of an Online Instructor

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AGENDA

- Discuss the various roles of an online instructor.

- Explore the theoretical and practical applications of each role.

- List digital tools for teaching/learning.

THINK ABOUT IT...

CLEARING UP A FEW THINGS...

- Successful Online Class ≠ "Converting" Face-to-Face

- Not all online courses are self-sufficient/operate in the same manner

- Online courses are not necessarily "easier" iterations of their face-to-face counterparts

- Some online courses have face-to-face components, in which case they are hybrid courses

ROLES OF AN ONLINE INSTRUCTOR

A great article available through the FSU Library Database:

Liu, X., Bonk, C. J., Magjuka, R. J., Lee, S. H., & Su, B. (2005). Exploring four dimensions of online instructor roles: A program level case study. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9(4), 29-48. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/75a1/b1d56196fcc9a75a41af1b13aabfc5423b16.pdf

- Explores student and faculty perceptions of online instructor responsibilities

- Discusses online instructor roles in 4 dimensions

- These dimensions are NOT exhaustive—they are a framework for our thinking

- These can be helpful for course planning and philosophy statements

ROLE 1 - PEDAGOGICAL

Theoretical Concepts	Practical Applications
• Demonstrating mastery of the content and methods of teaching • Fostering critical thinking and facilitation versus lecturing • Using specific strategies to help learners achieve learning goals (alignment)	• Stay updated on your content and resources • Use facilitator techniques to guide student thinking (providing resources, asking critical thinking questions, giving feedback on assignments and discussion boards) • Ensure that materials, activities, and assessments align with your course and module objectives

ROLE 2 - MANAGERIAL

Theoretical Concepts	Practical Applications
• Providing learners with clear direction • Ensuring easy accessibility to materials • Using a logical organization • Fostering an environment of open, productive discussion	• Write clear, thorough instructions for all activities and assignments—use multiple sets of eyes • Check each unit to ensure that links function and files are downloadable—take note of browsers • Arrange course content in a way that is logical—Canvas modules are great for this • Do not dominate discussions but make your presence known—modeling may be helpful

ROLE 3 – TECHNICAL

Theoretical Concepts	Practical Applications
• Incorporating course technologies support teaching and learning endeavors • Providing full support for course technologies	• Avoid using "technology for technology's sake" – alignment is key • For any technologies used in the course, link to tech support, privacy statements, and accessibility statements • Technology Acceptance Model—Perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use are important factors in technology implementation • Model citation: Davis, F. D.; Bagozzi, R. P.; Warshaw, P. R. (1989), "User acceptance of computer technology: A comparison of two theoretical models", *Management Science*, 35 (8): 982–1003, doi:10.1287/mnsc.35.8.982 • More information on TAM: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_acceptance_model#CITEREFDavisBagozziWarshaw1989

ROLE 4 - SOCIAL

Theoretical Concepts	Practical Applications
• Fostering a learning community • Establishing rapport • Preventing isolation	• First week activities are key—use instructor/student introductions and ice breakers to establish connections • Provide at least one response to each student for participation—even if it is as simple as "Great work!" • Analyze your learners to figure out the best way to balance your discussion forum presence • Ensure that discussion rules/guidelines are followed (think back to your managerial role) • Encourage reflective conversation on how students have grown in their learning throughout the course • Employ "check-in" techniques

What tools are at my disposal for teaching in the digital realm?

DIGITAL TOOLS

Canvas (FSU LMS)
- Majority of the roles accomplished through LMS setup
- Lynda.com offers great tutorials

Canvas Conferencing/Zoom
- Great for synchronous activities/check-ins
- Use with caution; attendance can be poor

Google Docs/Slides
- Perfect for collaboration work

Flipgrid
- Great way to establish rapport through seeing your learners
- Achieves many higher-level learning objectives

Voicethread
- Similar to Flipgrid but allows for longer recording and commenting on specific portions of presentations

Canva
- Easy, free tool for designing media

Wix
- Easy, free website developer tool; great for hosting content

Lockdown Browser App
- Integrate browsing restrictions for at-home online exams

Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Canvas includes an OER app
- Great for utilizing teaching materials that use freer licensing such as public domain or creative commons

Note: You may need to fill out forms to request integration of these apps prior to beginning your course

CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY: ACHIEVING HIGHER-ORDER LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TOOLS

- Think of a teaching topic. It can be any audience and any topic/teaching context, from your own area of expertise or simply a topic that interests you.

- What digital tools might you use to create a meaningful learning activity or assessment for that topic? Try to think of something that fosters critical thinking

- You might select a tool off the "Digital Tools" list or, if you have one that is not on the list, please feel free to share it