Tips and Tools for Teaching Remotely
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Tips for Giving Live Online Instruction

- If you're going to use a service like Google Hangouts Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or another service to give live instruction, **keep your webcam on as much as possible**. Yes, you're students can still walk away from their computers while you're teaching, but they are less likely to get bored if they can at least see your face as opposed to just your screen.

- Elevate your webcam to eye level or higher. No one, and especially not K-12 students, want to be looking up your nose for half an hour. On a related note look at your webcam instead of your screen when you're trying to emphasize a point. Tony Vincent provided a good example of how to do those things during his presentation for the Practical Ed Tech Creativity Conference (https://youtu.be/hl5WBoSmnQ8).

- Pepper your live online lessons with lots of little check-in questions for the group. In an online setting you don't get the benefit of "reading the room" the way that you do when your class meets in person. Your check-in questions could be as simple as "who's still with me?" or they might be a little more difficult like "what's the answer to that last problem?"

- Encourage students to ask questions. You might even say something like, "at the ten minute mark I'm going to pause to give everyone a chance to enter a question into the chat."

- Expect technical difficulties in live sessions. 90% of the time the technical difficulty is on the viewer's end and not on your end. If you can, set up two computers or work with a colleague to experience the students' perspective before you go live with your class. Seeing the students' perspective will make it a little easier to provide some troubleshooting tips on the fly.

- If you live in a rural area like me and you don't have the fastest Internet connection, make sure other people in your house aren't streaming at the same time you're trying to broadcast live video.

Tips for Giving Recorded Video Instruction

- Just like with live instruction, try to out your face in the video. Tools like Screencastify and Screencast-o-matic let you record while keeping your webcam on. Your face will appear in the video in a small box in one of the corners of your video.

- Strive for short and sweet. Two five minute videos are more likely to be watched all the way through by your students than one ten minute video is. The exception is if you're really comfortable on camera and really good at engaging people through video.

- Keep the screen active. An easy way to create a video lesson is to record a screencast of your slides. That's also an easy way to bore the heck out of your students if you don't keep the screen active (I learned that lesson the hard way about 12 years ago). Add in more transitions and animations than you normally use in your slides. Or if that seems like too much work then try the approach of my friend Tom Richey. Tom splits the screen between him and his slides so that something is always happening on the screen. Here's one of Tom's recent videos (https://youtu.be/lK728n3-aYU).

Tools for Hosting Live Online Instruction

- In response to the spread of COVID-19 Google has increased the capabilities of Hangouts Meet for G Suite for Education users (http://bitly.com/3aHrH9J). You can now host up to 250 people in a Hangout. You can also now record your Hangout and save it to Google Drive where you can then share it through Google Classroom. Here are instructions for hosting Google Hangouts Meet events: https://www.freetech4teachers.com/2020/03/how-to-schedule-host-and-customize.html

- Microsoft has also responded to the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on schools and businesses by increasing the availability of Microsoft Teams. Earlier today Microsoft hosted a series of webinars about teaching online through Teams. The recordings of those webinars can be watched here (http://bitly.com/2VV8KMv).

- If Google Hangouts Meet or Microsoft Teams aren't available to you, you might consider using Zoom.us. Zoom offers a free plan in which you can host a live broadcast for up to 100 people at a time. Zoom will record the meeting and you can save it on your computer to distribute to your students who missed the live meeting. Here's a video on how to host a Zoom meeting https://youtu.be/3WBpYCLLny4

Tools for Creating Recorded Video Lessons

- Perhaps the simplest way to record a video lesson is to put your phone in tripod and record yourself in front of a whiteboard. I bought this 2'x3' whiteboard at my local Walmart for less than $20. When you finish recording your video, use the YouTube mobile app to do quick edits like trimming the start and end time then publish it for your students to watch.

- If you have a YouTube account, you can conduct a live broadcast that will also be recorded and saved in your account for playback. Watch this video (https://youtu.be/efIJHM1hjRk) to see how that process works. It's important to note that your account must have been verified for 24 hours before you can go live on YouTube. Here's a demo (https://youtu.be/6wluJrFL6bo) of a livestream that I did a couple of years ago.

- Showme (https://www.showme.com/) is a tool that I've recommended for years for making whiteboard-style videos on iPads. It's also available to use on Android tablets and Chromebooks (some, not all).

- Flipgrid (http://flipgrid.com/) added a whiteboard function last fall. You can now record a whiteboard style instructional video for up to five minutes then publish it for your students to watch and respond to. Watch this video (https://youtu.be/MYSKTw5qgy8) to see how the whiteboard function works. And if you want to go "old school" with Flipgrid, here's an idea (https://youtu.be/H60122ib0eo) for teaching lessons through it.

- Wakelet (https://wakelet.com/) has integrated the Flipgrid video tool. That means you can record a whiteboard video within Wakelet. Here's a demo (https://youtu.be/sOufRqfYR50) of how to do that.

- If you're a Mac or iPad user, now is the time to familiarize yourself with the basics of making videos in iMovie. There are lots of quality tutorials available on YouTube including these (https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=imovie+tutorial).

- Chromebook and Windows users looking for a full-fledged video editor should look at WeVideo (http://wevideo.com/). WeVideo has a good set of tutorial videos here (https://www.youtube.com/user/wevideo).

- Finally, EDpuzzle (http://edpuzzle.com/) provides a great way to create comprehension questions for your students to answer while watching the video lessons that you create. Here's my overview (https://youtu.be/eWRseaT7-9U) of how to use EDpuzzle.