Teaching and Learning Buzz Season 1, Episode 4

Making a Rapid Transition to Remote Teaching

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Carol: Welcome to the special episode of the *Teaching and Learning Buzz*, a monthly podcast of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Georgia Tech. We're your hosts, Carol and Rebecca. A transcript and show notes are available at ctl.gatech.edu/tlbuzz

Carol: Today, we are talking about how to keep teaching remotely now that the University System of Georgia has made the decision to suspend in-person instruction for a prolonged period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of this recording, Georgia Tech is on Spring Break. Like other University System of Georgia universities classes will be suspended until March 29th, 2020. During the week of March 23rd faculty are requested to test out remote teaching many of us are busy making our plans now. And just as a personal note, we're actually recording this podcast remotely at our own houses, some of us. I know I have a toddler who might start squealing at any moment, so apologies in advance for any background noise you might hear.

[00:01:28]

Rebecca: I think that moment of levity would be welcomed, so I hope she pops up at some point! [laughter] So moving courses into a remote online environment is definitely a challenging task when they were designed to be online classes specifically. Best practices in the physical classroom may not translate directly into remote spaces. The challenges are compound in labs, studios, service learning and other hands-on type of courses. It's important to remember here that if you have never taught a course that was either a hybrid of face-to-face and online or a fully online course, no one expects you to be expert or to do everything "right" when teaching remotely. But if we're flexible and adaptable together, we can help our students continue to learn and grow in this new environment.

Carol: That's…that is really right on, Rebecca. We're all in this together and doing our best. So, we really want to explore today: What are the foundational considerations for moving your course into a remote learning environment. And joining us to talk about what to keep in mind as we make this rapid transition to remote teaching are Dr. David Joyner, Executive Director of Online Education and the OMSCS in the College of Computing at Georgia Tech. He teaches as part of the online master's program in computer science and is the recipient of the Center for Teaching and Learning's Excellence in Online Teaching award. We're also joined by Dr. Vincent Spezzo, Online Teaching Program Manager at the Center for Teaching and Learning. Welcome David and Vincent to the *Buzz*!

David: Thank you!

[00:03:19]

Carol: Alright, so our first question we want to get started with is: How should faculty get started as we make a rapid transition to online teaching?

David: So I can jump in on that first that's Ok.

Carol: Sure, if you wouldn't mind saying your name real quick .

David: This is David Joyner.

[00:03:38]

David: Whenever we're starting to develop a class from scratch to be online, I recommend teachers break things into 3 phases of design, delivery, and development. In this case, since we're doing this so rapidly, I think really only 2 of those apply, which are development and our delivery phases. *Development* is really about the material that you produce about the delivering your lecture material, delivering your content. And *delivery* is much about assessment, grading, answering questions things like. The thing I love about teaching online is it lets you separate those two things and really focus on doing them each well.

Now as we're doing this so rapidly, it's not going to be exactly the same kind of experience where you have several weeks to prepare good front-loaded material, but I think you can still take the same kind of mindset where you've got to focus here. You've got to focus on making sure you get your students the content that they need to succeed, and then you have your focus on assessing their mastery of that content. Separating those two out and tackling them as interconnected but distinct challenges, I think, really make the challenge a lot more tractable and make it easier to up to get started, to know what you need to do first.

Vincent Spezzo: So, yeah, I'd like to…This is Vince…the only thing I'd add to that…that's an excellent suggestion…is just that given the current phase people are it, especially even that people may have never utilized some of the basic systems that we're talking about right now, I'd say the three things I would suggest to do first are: first off, *learn*. Learn all the different pieces that are out there. There are just a ton of resources. But just pick a couple things that you know you're going to want to learn, and focus on those. *Test*. Make sure things do work how you think they're going to work, how you imagine yourself using them. And then the final thing is *talk* to students. I think communication with students is going to be key during these upcoming weeks. You know we have a test week coming up asking students, you know, this is what I plan to use; will this work for you. You know, do you have any suggestions for tools out there that you're already native with? It just shows that, you know, we're all in this together. Reassure students that you're still there for them even if it's going to be at a remote site.

[00:05:47]

Rebecca: That's great advice. I guess one question that I have, you started to talk a little bit about planning frameworks and thinking about delivery and assessment and those kinds of things, but the majority of our faculty will [not] have designed our classes for online and will certainly not be prepared for doing the second half of the semester completely online now. So what are some of the ways that they can decide which of their content or their activities or the course framework are most important to go online, knowing that we're all going to have to be flexible, and we may or may not be able to cover

everything that we had initially planned to cover in our courses. How can they make some of those decisions intentionally?

[00:06:37]

Vincent: Well, I think that's a great question. I feel like you have to really dig deep down because we're going to be losing a week of school here ourselves…so that's going to be a question about what matters most right now. I think you want to keep things simple. You want to look at what outcomes you've built upon. You want to look at what are the most important pieces to my course that I really want students to still have at the end of the semester. And, you know, we're lucky enough here at Georgia Tech that we don't have that much longer of this semester to go. Some institutions have a bit longer where they have to think through a lot more of these. But I think if faculty really just look at what are the outcomes that we left off at, wrap those up, and think about what are the few that I really, really want to have that remain that that's maybe a good place to start try to just do the major ones that are left.

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David: I think it will depend a lot on where your class sits in the broader curriculum for your students. If you're teaching a class that is a prerequisite for another class that they are going to take. If you are teaching Calculus I and they are going to take Calc 2 next semester, there are things you absolutely need to cover because they'll struggle further along. And that to me is always the first priority, is set them up for success at the next level. If on the other hand, you're a senior-level elective class where it's really about students being personally interested in the content, you know, a little bit less of a burden on you all to provide everything you were going to provide…especially assess everything you were going to assess.

David: I think one real liberating thing is you have online is you're broken free from the barriers of having a set-aside lecture time every week, if you choose to do it this way. I highly recommend that faculty take an asynchronous approach where possible, of pre-filming lecture material, doing things like that, and then introducing live interaction later on. And part of the reason why I highly recommend that is that it really does you don't have to pay as much attention to: I need to be ready to go exactly at 9.05 am on Monday because students will be done at 9 55 am on Monday and that's the end class and anything I don't cover in that 50-minute window is gone forever. And so if my microphone takes 15 minutes to get working or my computer freezes or anything like that, that time is not lost forever.

What that means though if you have content that it makes most sense to present in a quick 10 minute sitting, you can present it in a 10-minute sitting. If you have a lecture you've always divided up into two periods because it needed more time than you could devote in one class period, you can do it in one long session. You can actually scope your material based on its natural structure. Now it's a lot to think about on such short notice. That's kind of one of the things we suggest people step back and rethink when they really start developing an online class from scratch.

But the place where it can be beneficial here is, you can focus on communicating the content you want to communicate without actually worrying too much about how much time you have left as students are

going to keep this material after the semester is over. And if your primary responsibility is giving them the content that you want to have, you can focus on that, and then worry secondly about how you assess and see if they've actually mastered it. But for me, the senior-level classes, our interest is really making it available to students so they can do with it what they will, and you can really, kind of, provide the content you want to because you're not as tied down to a semester cadence, a class structure or class time period as you've been in past.

[00:09:54]

Carol: David, you wrote a really interesting piece that you posted through LinkedIn where you were talking about some of that, and we'll refer to that piece in the show notes. But I, you mentioned really quickly about recording your lectures to post asynchronously and then doing interactive activities. I wonder if you could just say a bit more about what you have in mind.

David: Yes, absolutely! So when I say recording your material asynchronously, it's really about taking material that if you're presenting in class would be, I'm standing in front and presenting it to you as a sage on a stage model, which is not an ideal model by any means but it's one of many it's forced into if you have 300 students in a class and things like that, which many of our classes still operate that way. If you have a highly interactive class where the entire class is discussion and things like that, then obviously that wouldn't apply. But I find almost all classes have some element of core content that they're producing or presenting just in a more straightforward fashion. And the benefit of pre-recording that is just you get to polish it a little bit, you get to retry things if you want to try it more than once. You can experiment with technology without the pressure of students watching you live and you really get something that you're confident with before you ever show it to the students.

So it's not about, you know, rehearsing a play where you may rehearse it until you're confident with it but you don't really know how it's going to go on live. It's more like producing a movie, where you actually get to see your finished product before you get it to the students. And it's a great model. The drawback to it, like you said, is that it lacks the interactivity that often happens in class which, depending on your class, there may be more or less of. If you're in a class of 300, you're interactivity may be a couple students occasionally in the classroom raising their hand and asking a question or saying they don't know. [You might say] pause and work on this yourself and raise your hand when you have the answer. Those are actually things you can still do in different ways, so Bluejeans, for example, which I know many of our classes will be using, has a video-sharing mechanism where the moderator can turn on a video and play it for all the students. And so you can pre-record your material and play it for students live during the class period, and you can still do things like pause and say, "Oh hey someone just asked a good question in the chat. Now I'll answer that live." Or I just presented this problem on the board, pause work on it yourself, you chat in the chat box if you're having trouble, things like that and will play again in 5 minutes, that kind of thing.

David: So you can still have some interactivity, but the interactivity doesn't depend on you doing this kind of live presentation where you're, you know, working with unfamiliar technology and things like that. So it's basically front-load as much as you can just because it lets you be comfortable and confident in what you're giving students but then find ways to introduce interactivity later. It doesn't have to be live either.

So in my classes, for example, we almost exclusively use Piazza, the form system, because we actually find we don't really need that much more. It lets students watch things on their own time and then bring up discussion questions, bring up questions for clarification on their own. That all students later can also refer back to. So if you're watching it three days later, it's not like you miss class and you just watch the video; you get to go back and see what the actual discussion threads that had come up are, still participate and they're not going anywhere. And so you kind of this really interesting 24-7 classroom effect where everyone is watching at their own time, but where they can then participate in an asynchronous but collaborative environment.

Now there is a learning curve there for students and you. For my students, at least, they've spent between a couple months and a couple of years being online students, so they have learned how to do this. So I would recommend setting some standards, some expectations for students. Just saying these are the kinds of things we'd like to see you ask. I recommend, especially if you are going to do that asynchronous thing, to make like a mega-thread. So here's a thread where you can ask all of your questions about lecture 1, topic 3 kind of thing just so students know that questions about that are expected. We're creating a dedicated space for them. You know that's the kind of thing we're looking for. So you're just kind of modeling good behavior. If you have TAs, I actually recommend having them interact in a forum like that as if they're students just to model good behavior as well so students can see that's the kind of questions that are appreciated. They'll be answered quickly, and you know that you're not just shouting into the void if you're in that kind of environment. So the overall point of all my babbling is to figure out the things that you can front-load and you can do really cleanly, really well, that are really high stakes, and then add the interactivity on top of that.

Carol: Such great advice!

[00:14:09]

Rebecca: David I want to ask you…Vincent knows this because I approached him to help me make some videos from CTL materials and they were painful [laughter] Vincent can attest to that! So what are some tips you have for faculty who maybe have never recorded themselves before or are, you know, aren't used to doing that kind of talking, so that they are still compelling and engaged when their students are watching their videos?

David: Yeah absolutely! I think that there's a few different parts to it. One is that if you can do something kind of like we're doing right now, which is to get a, you know, if you're have a particularly high performing student or a TA or your spouse or your roommate…just another person who is willing to put the time to either go on BlueJeans or just be sitting with you while you're recording. Just to have someone to talk to. It's just there's something about having that life feedback of having someone to interact with. Some of our most highly rated courses on the online master's program are actually presented by multiple people at once. I did one with my PhD advisor Ashok Goel, and then Charles Isbell and Michael Littman did one on machine learning where they're sitting there together teaching the material together. One of them is a surrogate student, and so they'll ask the student-style questions, and then the normal teacher role will answer those questions. And so you just get this kind of a dialogue.

David: I'm going on…it doesn't need to be nearly that polished. It's just something about having someone live there that forces you into a slightly more natural tone of talking, a more natural cadence. You don't feel like you're, you know, in a dark room talking to nobody as you present. At least to get started. You may not have to do that the entire time. Just if you do that to get started and get, kind of, the feel for it, you will form good habits that will carry forward as you as you go along.

Another is, we always hear the advice of if you are teaching online, use short videos, which is a great pedagogically. It makes it a lot easier for students to take in bite-sized little things. Where I don't hear about very often, which I think is actually bigger benefit, is it's much nicer for us to be able to sit down and say I need to record two minutes of material on this one topic and then I go get coffee. I can go, you know, pet my cats. And like I can take a breather. So you're not putting the pressure on you to sit down and be on the ball perfect for 60 minutes straight the way you have on campus. You can do, you know, small videos, just a little chunk at a time, and then if you mess something up royally, you haven't really lost a lot of, you know, time. Just say, you know, I need to do that two minutes again.

Some of our faculty, myself mostly, take that to an extreme. I'll do individual sentences like three times and then edit them all out. I don't recommend doing that right now because you need to do a lot of class, and I usually do you have the freedom to say, "no I didn't like what I just did, I'll do that part again" kind of thing.

And the other thing that I would highly recommend, as far as that, enter your recording session with a good script. We use scripts, we often have a word-for-word script for our very highly polished online courses. You don't need to do anything like that, but just bullet points. When you're presenting live and you're recording live, it's easy to forget things because you're kind of performing. For most of you, I think this is actually going to be easier than it is for us who very heavily work online because this is really what you have to do in person to make sure you don't leave something out online. But it can kind of lull you into a false sense of security, of "well I forget something, I can go back and do it," but you'll end up wasting a lot of time that way. So just having some kind of agenda, some kind of script of what you're going to cover in a given setting, is very helpful to just make sure you don't leave anything out.

Rebecca: Vince, do you have any follow-ups to that?

Vincent: No, just like David said except I would emphasize that you know nobody has to do these perfect. I don't think anybody is expecting perfection, at least not initially. I think getting something out there, getting your ideas gathered, as he suggested, with scripts is a great way to do it.

To add to the idea of a conversation, that is definitely one of the better ways to do videos when you have multiple people talking. Not only so that you know kind of the group cadences, but students actually enjoy watching people have a conversation. And to that end, especially for our face-to-face courses transitioning, you probably have colleagues out there that are teaching similar subject or maybe even the same subject and you could pair up and do group videos, have two people doing the same subjects, talk together, if you can. You can double your effort and have a little bit of fun. But don't do that physically in the same group [laughing]. You probably still want to do a little distancing there, but that conversation between faculty, it's both a great way to introduce additional experts to class as well as, kind of, you can double your effort and have a little bit of fun as well as kind of combats the social isolation.

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David: Yeah, people watching, I think, get a kick out of that.

Rebecca: Yeah, I was thinking as well on one of David's earlier points that if you are teaching a course that is maybe a requirement or you know that there are multiple sections, checking in with the faculty who are also teaching that course more broadly might be important for the faculty who are going to be teaching Calculus 2, you know, you need to make sure that you know you're in line with kind of what that necessary content and activity really needs to be for the rest of the semester.

[00:19:25]

Vincent: Excellent point.

Carol: So another topic that we wanted to think about is inclusive teaching. How can faculty continue to be inclusive as we move to remote teaching?

Vincent: I was going to say I think, you're probably going to ask the same thing about the definition of inclusivity, but I just want to say I think when you say that, that's a loaded word. A lot of people think it means, you know, immediately of my mind goes to accommodations, right? Thinking about different types of learners, thinking about accommodation needs, that sort of thing. But I think a lot of people are really good, and you know you still need to do that. We're not free from accommodation needs students still have specialized needs that need to be addressed.

But I would like to, you know, just address one particular kind of inclusion that I think might get lost in this mix, and that's the digital divide that we have. Some of these students are, you know, they're used to being on campus where we have excellent technology resources for them available, and they're going to be asked to go do this remotely at their homes, and some places in rural Georgia simply do not have the bandwidth to engage in some of these synchronous technologies. So I think a lot of flexibility is going to be needed for some of these individuals that might not traditionally have, you know, needed things in your class before.

So I definitely advise people to think about digital inclusivity. That's why we recommend doing things like if you are going to a session, record it, put it on Kaltura later or something that they could you know download because it might take them awhile to download it but then they could still consume that material and they might not ever be able to be live with you, unfortunately, so I do definitely want to talk to that point about this kind of hidden inclusive area.

[00:21:20]

David: I completely agree. I think that very many accommodations are actually, I find very interesting. I teach an online class for on campus students, and a lot of students ask for accommodations and very many of the accommodations they have granted to them are actually somewhat automatic online. Things like note takers; usually about capturing a lot of lecture that cannot be captured in any other

fashion. Our lectures are prerecorded anyway, and so there already is a much higher bandwidth, higher quality thing than any live note-taker could ever supply. I've seen accommodations like slides supplied in advance; my videos are all available on day 1, pre-all of the--ideally all of your videos are available as soon as you have them ready. And so there's a lot of things actually--especially teaching online, teaching asynchronously-- carry with them some of the things we've had to manually accommodate in the past as well.

I also agree with Vincent though about the digital divide. It is another place where some of these models around asynchronicity can be beneficial. I have a student a semester in South Africa, and they had a lot of internet troubles down there because apparently a big internet cable was cut. Because every semester it's something new, and so one of the ways around that is let videos download overnight as the video comes and goes--or as the connection comes and goes-- the video download stops and starts, and then the next morning they're all there, and so you can sit down and watch them, you know, on your own. So you have some things that really work around some of those constraints.

Same kind of thing with forums versus chat boxes; forum is the kind of thing of if you lose internet or you have to share your computer in your household with other people kind of thing-- which I think is something about here that many of us are considering, is that we're now sending lots of kids home to the same household but at one computer that four college kids have to share among themselves-- they're not losing something by not being able to get out to be there at the exact right time kind of thing.

David: Inclusivity, I think, also calls to mind though a different sense of including students in general in the teaching process. One of the knocks on online education is it's very much about transmission; it's just, "Here are my lecture materials, go learn it, good luck." And when it's done badly, that's exactly how it works, and that's not an unfair reputation it has because it's very easy to do it that way, but it doesn't end up working very well. I also think a lot of inclusivity is also bringing student feedback back into the fold.

I highly recommend it, regularly, proactively asking for feedback. Ask for feedback specifically on how did this session work, how did this downloaded video work, and also just in general how are things going, what could be better, what would you like to see other classes do kind of thing. Part of that is that it gets you good feedback, and I say a big part of it is it just tells students, "I care about your voice, I care about your experience, I want to hear what you're saying," even if you don't process, you know, or use some of that advice because either it's, you know, it's too technical technologically difficult for you to use or only a small number of students are experiencing a particular kind of issue. But it signals to them that they have a valuable voice in this transition, that we are in this together, not "this is how Dr. Joyner transitions his class online and I just have to deal with it," so it tells them that we care about their experience.

[00:24:33]

Carol: I was going to... I had another question that came up as I was listening to you both because, I think, David, you were talking about having discussion forums, and I was just wondering if it's ever come up for either one of you that when you're in a in a totally online environment, do online discussions ever

turn toxic, and what are some good ways to help students be kinder to each other in those kinds of discussions?

David: It's going to be that kind of podcast, huh? [**Vincent** laughing]. No, they definitely do sometimes, and it's been one of my most intriguing things to watch with my years in teaching online is how that happens because online environments can take on very toxic feels sometimes. It happens less when you have a non-anonymous environment. I find that toxicity usually builds from people interacting without the threat of social repercussions. In Piazza, at least, one of its interesting features is that students can post anonymously to each other. You can't disable that, they can always post anonymously to each other, but you can disable their ability to post anonymously to you which is actually really great because it means they can ask questions without worrying about looking stupid to their classmates and things like that, but they're still known to you so they're not going to go, you know, posting a profanity-loaded rant. But there's still other things that happen. I

think we actually see it in my program a lot more because we have a much older student body who are experienced professionals and quite honestly sometimes may criticize things that they have every grounds to criticize it because they have professional experience in these areas they're not traditional students who are, you know kind of new to the area and might not know exactly why certain things are taught the way they are, and so it's always interesting to see that their criticisms can have merit, but they can also take on a toxic feel.

The main thing I usually find in my—I don't know how general this so if someone tries this and it doesn't work or backfires horribly, I apologize--but in my classes, what I've usually found out is that students are really good at self-policing. Most of our students, they're online a lot, they interact online and social media a lot. For those of us who are in the more traditionally aged audience, they probably do it more than we do. And what I find usually is if I see a particularly toxic thread, before I say anything and oftentimes before I see it, but sometimes I'll see it and I'll let it sit for a little while to see what happens, other students will chime in and defend the class and explain the rationale or explain why things have to be a certain way, and it puts us in this really nice position to be able to step in and be peacekeepers and say there are definitely some merits in this critique but I think this merits to the alternative, this discussion has run its course, and please include this feedback on our surveys.

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David: But it lets them really...it doesn't put you in a position of defending yourself because others are already defending you for you. Generally, what I found is if you don't find anyone defending, it probably does mean there's some particular merit to whatever that conversation is happening, and so it's worth taking into consideration.

I think that's less of an issue with this very rapid change because I think this could be a bit more patience because I think since all understand a lot of our decisions are not highly deliberate, "This is what I had to do because I had to do something this quickly." I think it is worth letting those things sit-- it takes a lot of discipline if you see a student really complaining, it's a lot of discipline to just let it sit-- and see where it will go. Some students will chime in and defend the class, other students will agree with the student

complaining, or it won't go anywhere, which I think very often is a signal to some of those types of conversations that they are on their own in that hesitation.

Now this is all about criticisms of the course...they can take toxic feels in other places as well, which I still find very fascinating. In one of my courses of the semester, we had a debate where some particularly extreme political views were raised, and so you saw this deliberate back and forth of people getting pretty animated and pretty critical of vastly other views. I think that's more about different schools of thought, I think it's long as people are being respectful individuals, then that's exactly what we're in college for, is to have those tough conversations and really debate the merit of ideas as long as it's not getting personal about, “well, you must be this kind of person, what does that say about you individually,” but it is something to be prepared for because it takes you by surprise if you're not ready for the fact that an online environment draws a unique audience of participators.

[00:29:03]

Vincent: Yeah, it’s exactly as David said. I think the only thing you can really do to step a little bit of it is to have some kind of rules for engagement. Have your, you know, policy up there that's like here's how to properly engage in discourse because we're not going to agree on everything, and in a class, you know, where we're having face to face conversation, somebody might let something go because it's a moment in time but online, it sits there and some people come back to it and say, “Hey, I’m going to reply to that.”

And just as David said, that actually is when we have the best conversations online. From classes I've taught, the worst conversations are honestly when everybody agrees. When everybody says the same thing like, “Yeah that's what I thought too.” It's a boring conversation, nobody learns anything. It's when they challenge themselves and they look at different points of view, but there is a thin line there that can get crossed when people start attacking each other rather than the ideas, so you have to be able to, you know, put that out there and just remind students, “Ok we need to remember we're criticizing ideas, not people,” and that's a good way to keep those conversations where they should be and keep them educational and become learning objects.

[00:30:18]

Vincent: So that same regard just as David said to, you know, sometimes students criticize the course, they will criticize your decisions, and those are opportunities for free feedback honestly for where you learn maybe where your communication wasn't quite clear or you hadn’t thought through something. I don't know if this is great advice or not, but you can check Georgia Tech has a very popular Reddit students, and that's anonymous communication threads right there if you want to see what something like this might look like. Honestly I don't find it too toxic most of time; it's very jovial in nature, and students do call out things that happen at the school, but they're often things that they feel strongly about but not in a very toxic matter, as long as it isn’t related to UGA or sports[laughing].

David: I think the subreddit is a good example also of be aware also of sampling bias. I’ve had to caution professors before on teaching a class of 500 people, and one person is very vocal about one complaint;

you're not going to please 500 people. If only one person has that complaint, then you're probably doing just fine. And I think it's the same thing on reddit; you're going to get the people who are most emphatically negative very often, and so what you're really interested in is what other people say in response to that criticism being raised in the first place because people aren't actually joining in, it's probably not that big of a deal.

Vincent: Right.

Rebecca: That's kind of a great connection to thinking about your CIOS scores too, right? I mean, if you kind of apply that model, it seems to be the one or two that, you know, say something mean that we remember when, you know, often the majority of students are perfectly happy with the education they got in that course.

Vincent: Yeah, exactly.

Carol: So as we are starting to come to the end of our time together, I was wondering if the two of you had any resources to suggest that faculty might find particularly helpful in making this transition to remote teaching?

[00:32:27]

David: I would actually take a slight contrarian view of that question. And I say that just to say there are really good tools out there, there's really nice technologies and things like that, and now probably is not the time to learn them. Now is the time to keep things simple, keep things familiar, and figure out how to do this online using as few new technologies, as many technologies as you already know as possible. If you need to go out for resources, I've been shocked at how many things have come out the past few days. I've added my own, and I plan to add some more of my own, but there's just so much noise out there around, you know, you can do this, and you can get intimidated in the other way. So I really recommend, first and foremost, think about how far you can go using only the things you already know how to do and then be very specific about things you need to add to that puzzle to complete your vision. Like obviously, most of us have not done screen-recording for this kind of thing, most of us have not delivered lecture online. That is something you probably need to learn how to do but don't add on top of that.

I don't want to cherry pick, but proctoring is a good example that's brought up a lot. Proctoring systems are fantastic tools for ensuring active integrity at a distance, and they're also really complicated in nature and put a lot of stress on students learning, students and teachers. If you can avoid them, if you can reinvent your assignments, take the assignments as things that have integrity more built into the structure of the assignment rather than just assured by the fact that you watch the students do it so you know they did it by themselves, do that because it's going to avoid a lot of stress introducing those new tools. When you do find things you need to learn how to do, there's a spreadsheet someone out of DePaul has been putting together. I don't have the link to it, but I'm sure we can add the link in our resources.

Carol: Yeah, we'll put it in the show notes.

David: Yeah, it's like 200 resources that different colleges have put together for things, which is kind of where I get this feeling of it being overwhelming out there. There are so many things out there, where do you even start? I recommend start by figuring out how little new you can learn how to do and still deliver your course successfully.

Vincent: Yeah, I agree with that. I think the key here is to use things that are familiar to you. If you do have to learn new tools, if there's things that are missing from your tool box, I would search for those tools that you can get the most leverage out of...so if you think about, you know, "I haven't used, you know, anything," Canvas or LMS is a great resource because it's going to have a lot of these one-off tools that you're going to need already. So try not to put together a suite of 15 different things to use, try to find those one stop shops where everything is available.

The other thing I would recommend is, you know, to look for the tools that are supported not so much because you know that's what the university has but because you're going to want that technology support for you and your students later on, so rather than have to put out fires, you know, you're already going to be so busy designing things and trying to get your content out there and communicate students and help them through this time you don't want to have to deal with technology issues or trying to you know field things with different vendors that are on a campus, let the people on campus give you that support because that's going to come a long way to say you and your students can focus on what they need to focus on.

Carol: Great, definitely both of those ideas are so important and you know just here as a final thought, what final piece of advice or just encouragement even would you like to leave our faculty as they move to remote teaching?

[00:36:06]

Vincent: I would say, and I've thought about this quite a bit, that I really want faculty to come out of this with it's really easy, you know right now to be so deep in everything that you can't see the end of the day, but I really hope people are able to reflect on this time and learn something from it, not so much as the need to be prepared but to learn from the experience. This is throwing people in a lake and having to learn to swim type moment where you're going to come out stronger than ever, and you're going to come up with new ideas, and you're going to come out with all these new techniques that you know are going to actually improve your pedagogy for years to come. And it doesn't seem like that at the moment, I know that's true, it seems like this overwhelming, but when we look back on this I think a lot of the instructors are going to say, you know, "I really learned something," and I really hope that that is something you can look forward to when we do get out of the tunnel.

[00:37:01]

David: I completely agree. I can't narrow it down to one piece of advice I have three, but two that we've already said. Reflect on this experience, and to add onto that, don't necessarily judge online education by this experience because this is not the setting which is set up to succeed; this setting which is set up the stop-gap. And so I have a fear that we're going to see kind of a reaction against online education,

based on some things that go wrong over the next few weeks when they wouldn't have gone wrong if this wasn't kind of an emergency thing. That's just the first thing.

The second thing would be keep it simple.

My third thing though is that for all the stress this is introducing us, it's introducing more stress on students because for them it's also their tuition dollars and their grades and their GPA and their graduation and their future career prospects. They have so much weighing on this, and keeping that student-centric mindset is very, very important. Remember that they're the ones who will ultimately be far more effected by this than we are. Err on the side of generosity where possible; I'd rather risk give a student an A that deserved a B than risk giving a student a C who deserved a B. If I have to make that kind of decision on how to do an assessment where it's going to err on that side.

Another part of that is I highly recommend overcommunicating. When you teach on campus, students see you at the front of the room three times a week, they know you're there because you're literally right there. If you do this synchronously, you might have some of that as well, but there's kind of this deafening silence that happens when you're in an online class and just waiting for an update from the professor and you haven't heard one and you're waiting and waiting and waiting and you don't know when one is coming. There are even some, if you have been browsing the Georgia Tech subreddits, there have already been memes about this like, "I'm sitting here waiting for my professor like it's waiting forever."

[00:38:53]

David: I recommend communicating something every day even if it's just to endorse a student post, or to post a cat gif. There's something that just says, "I'm here, I'm paying attention, if you ask a question it will be seen by me." Someone is at the wheel, pretty much. This is not just you know, "That's right, I was teaching a class this semester," that somebody is there in charge paying attention because you'll never know if you're not doing something active. You can check the forum every single day and read every single thing people write, but unless you actually contribute, they'll never know you're there. It's just giving students peace of mind, you know, "so they're here, they're on my side, they understand this is stressful for me." And just letting them know we're all in this together.

Rebecca: I love the humanity of wrapping up those two kind of specific parting words, that we're human and we're not going to always do the right thing in this brand new kind of fast environment, and our students need a lot of support as well so remembering that were in it together. My other big takeaway from that is that cat gifs are always appropriate [laughing] So whenever you need to add a cat gif to break some tension, do it; people will love it, or allow them to share their own cat gifs.

[00:40:05]

Rebecca: Thank you very much, David and Vincent, for joining us today. The institute is actively compiling resources on the service.gatech.edu site. Click on the COVID-19 button to access this information. CTL is also working to build a variety of teaching and learning resources to help faculty make the rapid transition to remote teaching. We have resources for communicating and sharing content with students, adapting assignments, handling assessments, and many other important topics.

Faculty are also standing by to provide one-on-one help to any instructors with questions about how to make remote teaching work for more specific classes. Visit ctl.gatech.edu/keep-teaching for more information. Please stay safe and well during this period. We will work together to provide the best education for our students through flexibility, caring, and dedication to learning in any environment.

[00:41:19]

Carol: Thanks for listening to this episode of the *Teaching and Learning Buzz*, the podcast of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Georgia Tech. Show notes and a transcript are available at ctl.gatech.edu/tlbuzz.

Rebecca: Check back regularly for new episodes, bonus clips, and more resources. If you have a topic or question that you would like us to explore, we'd love to hear from you. You can reach us at ctlhelp@gatech.edu.