How have your teaching approaches evolved so far to respond to this time of crisis?

Checking in with students

- Maintaining a consistent connection with students. Starting meetings by asking how they are.
- I've emailed students who started missing class or assignments to check in
- We also offer regular check-ins. Like for the last class, we suggested students use virtual backgrounds for class and then did a check in to share your virtual background and why you chose it or share what virtual background you would have if you could choose one. This also helps students shield their backgrounds for privacy and socio-economic reasons as well
- Regular individual check-ins to allow students an opportunity to simply share how they feel, individualized timelines, and I also try to consistently express confidence that they will succeed despite these circumstances
- I teach online normally, so I've been checking in with students more frequently than usual - frequent announcements, emails. Especially if a student is late with an assignment, I will reach out and make sure they are OK first, then find out if they need extra support.
- Check-in where people can pass, but where everyone has an option to contribute
- I offered twice per week check ins and having a chance to talk with students — not only email — worked well to bring anxiety levels down about projects.
- A teacher at NW law school for some years has begun class with a circle process good for getting problems and emotions on the table for everyone to then deal with. We do circles periodically for the same reason and will do one tonight.

Build in flexibility

- I have made deadlines more flexible for students while still trying to be consistent (penalties for late work are the same as when they were before we went online) and offering extensions
- I always make it optional for students to show their video. I want students to be comfortable and some don't want to share their video either because they are shy or their surroundings may not be something they want to show.

Create small groups

- We do much of class in breakout sessions -- students seem to have more comfort in small groups
- I use small groups - breakout groups. They talk to each other in the small groups.
• We perform small group role-plays. We have been using break out rooms but one of my students didn't feel comfortable speaking aloud in her home given the course content, so her role-play was done by chat.

• I'm doing a group final, too. And reassured students that if I didn't have a good sense of their participation from class, I would assume they were having connectivity problems or were in an environment that made concentration difficult, so we would have a follow up phone call before I assign a grade

**Offer encouragement**

• Anytime a student emails me with a question, I always reply with something along the lines of "thank you for reaching out, I am happy to answer questions that you have" and then go on to answer them. I am hopeful that enforces a safe space to contact me.

• For example, open up each class with a short reflection, prayer or practice. Always encourage students to listen to their inner voice, never share if they are hesitant, they can always share later. If they are in a pair and share remind them to ask their partner before sharing in the larger group

• When we first moved online, I had students think through their plans for managing time, finding a work space, staying connected & motivated — they seemed to really appreciate the chance to think this all through and know that I cared

**Ensure consistency and availability**

• Teaching online, it’s difficult to stay connected to students. I try to be consistent as I was prior to the COVID situation.

• One of the first things I did was create online “office hours“ and sent a Zoom link, for the same time/day each week. Students can come and go as they like during those “office hours”

• Keeping class and communications consistent, opening up office hours to be much more accessible, being more flexible with deadlines, being proactive in reaching out to students who begin to fall off the map

**Create space for casual or less serious interactions**

• I implemented the use of Forums to where students can post more light-hearted course related materials- for example they post a statistics related joke of the week and vote on the best one.

• In ZOOM lectures, I always greet students and take about 5 to 10 minutes of the lecture to casually talk to students. Ask what they are watching or reading to pass the time. Asking them how they are. Then getting in to the course content.

• My nursing students are very concerned about the current environment. So, I always greet my students with more motivational statements and also try to provide them with ‘fun - offline’ opportunities that may be of interest...books, movies, etc.

• I have the students describe their surroundings before we start...like “I am in my mom’s office in Cleveland”.

• We've also made an attempt to link course content to the current situation where we can. To avoid that feeling of disconnect between course material and their lives

**Follow up more**
• Typically if I reach out to a student who is absent or a student who doesn't turn in an assignment...if I don't hear back from them in a week's time I usually fill out a CARE report. I have found this to be a good resource for faculty because then another body at LUC reaches out to that student to make sure they are ok.
• Because I teach online during a typical semester, I can tell you with my kids who show some of these signs, the teacher/professor needs to be organized, responsive, and empathic.

What are some particularly challenging situations faculty have had to address during this time?
• We have a student who was already struggling who didn’t turn in an assignment (despite reminders and extensions) and didn't attend class last week. I sent an immediate e-mail to ask how he was doing and to set up a time to talk and didn’t hear back. I then sent a follow-up e-mail but also haven’t gotten a response.
• I feel comfortable working with small class sizes where I can provide more individual attention but worry about what large online classes would look like
• I had individual final presentations set up. Students thought that doing the presentations in small groups was a way to connect in community. So I changed the assignment to be a group final
• A student who has been submitting some of the best work in the class up until now suddenly didn't turn in a big assignment, when I followed up, she said she had tech issues and would re-attempt. what she did turn in was only half an assignment. piecing things together based on her past performance I reached out and asked if something was going on/she needed extra support, found out she’s an EMT and has been struggling to balance everything
• One student "fell off the grid" for an extended period and didn’t answer emails. The Program Director finally sent a "well-being" check email to which the student responded that she had been having extreme difficulty coping. I was able to help her prioritize what to turn in and adjust due dates without penalty.
• A conscientious student started missing classes without emailing me in advance - I continued reaching out to them and they finally responded after several weeks to say that it had been a hectic time for them without going into details. While they had not responded, I filed a CARE referral and emailed them to let them know I had filed it. I have also provided a self-study option for my students so they don’t have to worry about not turning up for online classes - I just ask them to let me know if they want to do self-study.
• I have a student is was struggling with the move off campus. He is working on the final group project, but hasn’t turned in his midterm yet.
• A student who rarely talks in my class (and has reported ongoing anxiety issues) shared that she was targeted for racial harassment and talked much more during our group check-in than she normally does.
  o I have also had students report that racially-based microaggressions have occurred during some of their extended synchronous online course sessions and that the format has made it more challenging to call out or address. So there are instances where this model is creating or activating trauma
  o I think if you are seeing micro-aggressions, then norm-setting in advance is particularly important. Given that we have discussions on implicit bias in our class, we incorporate norm setting early on. Through some circles at the law school, our students have asked
for a "flag on the play" norm, where anyone can ask for a comment to be flagged for discussion in a more neutral way.

- I would post an announcement about expectations, professionalism, respect, etc. If an item is posted that is not meeting the expectations, state that the post will be removed.
- I have done this, but they are reporting that it has happened in other courses. I am working on it, but it has been challenging to really support and help resolve it meaningfully
- What do you do when a student comes to you that they felt there was a microaggression in class?

• I have one student who shared that he was leaving campus to return to what he called a "toxic" situation at home. He also kept his job near campus, where PPE is not provided, which means he is out in the world even more than he would have been. He has expressed anxiety about getting his mom sick and has struggled with keeping up with independent work. It has helped a lot to review the great progress he has already made, to adjust assignments/timelines and even shorten a few, and to schedule weekly individual Zoom calls to allow him to just share what is going on (not to go over deadlines). He said this has helped him decrease stress and is managing things much better.

• How do you think about balancing the less is more approach with the idea that students are paying a lot to be here, hoping to get value out of tuition dollars, etc?
  - Students are counting on a certain amount of points in the syllabus to get particular grades- how would that be achieved with less is more if points for assessments are taken away now?
  - Quality vs. quantity, perhaps?
  - Everything takes longer online so I agree less is more. more meaningful work
  - I don’t know that “more” is always better. I am trying to think about what would be the most meaningful kind of assignments / learning experiences

• I like the suggestion for offering supplemental options for students who want it - there are some students who have said they are glad to have schoolwork because it takes their mind off of the pandemic

Resources

https://instructionalmoves.gse.harvard.edu/norm-setting-beginning-semester

https://teaching.cornell.edu/resource/getting-started-establishing-ground-rules

https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/how-to-respond-to-coronavirus-racism

Suggestions for future sessions with FCIP

• Can you please address how we use these principles when teaching online?
• This is quite specific but I am curious if there are any resources we could share with our students in the SOE who are also working with youth — I have student teachers who are working with youth and wonder if we might be able to offer them some guidance for their work
• I would appreciate an additional session on creative collaborative community guidelines, norm-setting, and student conduct expectations in the online learning space.
• Definitely sounds like addressing and responding to microaggressions in an e-learning environment would be a great topic for a future session. It’s already challenging in an in-person environment and the lack of body language and connectedness in-person makes it even harder.