IMPACT OF THE EMERGENCY TRANSITION TO ALL-REMOTE INSTRUCTION ON TEACHING AND LEARNING AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY: INSTRUCTORS

Mike Metzler
Associate Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Laura Carruth
Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Kathryn Crowther
Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Perimeter College

Rachel Gurvitch
Kinesiology and Health

Milind Shrikhande
Finance
Emergency transition at GSU

• Classes suspended: March 13
• Classes re-started, all-remote instruction: March 30 (Spring break in between)
• Transition management:
  ➢ USG made the decision to move to all-remote instruction
  ➢ Provost Hensel developed the transition plan with input from the Academic Task Force Committee
  ➢ Provost worked with CETL to develop a Keep Teaching Plan
  ➢ Keep Teaching Website (now converted to the fall plan website)
• Resources for instructors https://cetl.gsu.edu/resources/faculty/
  ➢ CETL Webinars
  ➢ CETL Keep Teaching Guide
    https://cetl.gsu.edu/resources/resources-for-remote-teaching-and-learning/
  ➢ Faculty were encouraged to take Master of Online Teaching (MOT) 4 week course.
Survey Completers: Instructors of Record

- Survey requests and bi-weekly reminders sent by email from Office of Institutional Effectiveness to all IORs in spring 2020 with at least one transitioned course (n = 2,579)

- Informed consent from all completers

- Inclusion criteria:
  - Verified having taught at least 1 course that transitioned to all-remote instruction
  - Completed transition description for at least 1 course

- 676 IOR completers (26.2% response rate)
  - All campuses
  - All departments, schools, and colleges
By Location

- Newton County: 65%
- Alpharetta: 11%
- Decatur: 6%
- Clarkston: 10%
- Alpharetta: 4%
- Newton County: 3%
By gender identification

- Male: 43.7%
- Female: 53.0%
- Non-Binary: 0.6%
- Do not wish to answer: 2.6%
Years teaching in higher ed, counting 2020

- 1 year: 5.4%
- 2 years: 4.8%
- 3 years: 2.4%
- 4 years: 4.0%
- 5 years: 5.7%
- 6 years: 4.0%
- 7 years: 3.1%
- 8 years: 2.5%
- 9 years: 2.5%
- 10 years: 5.7%
- 11-15 years: 17.6%
- 16-20 years: 13.2%
- 21-25 years: 11.5%
- 26-30 years: 7.0%
- 31 or more years: 10.7%
Course/s taught spring 2020*

* Not including thesis, dissertation, directed readings, etc.
1,080 Transitioned courses in survey

• 87% undergraduate, 13% graduate (degree, non-degree)

• 60% were courses required for a major

• (Probably) every type of course, instructional setting, and type of instruction

• All were 100% F2F before the transition, 100% remote/online after
Instructional modality after transition

- **ASYNCHronous only**: 57.3%
- **SYNCHronous only**: 10.9%
- **Mostly ASYNCH, some SYNCH**: 21.6%
- **Mostly SYNCH, some ASYNCH**: 5.3%
- **Other**: 4.9%
Course/s transitioned to all-remote (preps)

1. 33.2%
2. 34.2%
3. 12.7%
4. 9.9%
5. 3.4%
6. 6.4%
Key finding

• Two-thirds of instructors had never taught 100% online prior to the transition
Previous fully online course/s (not hybrid)

- None: 66.6%
- 1: 6.9%
- 2: 4.9%
- 3: 3.4%
- 4: 1.6%
- 5: 1.6%
- 6: 2.7%
- 7: 0.7%
- 8: 0.7%
- 9: 0.3%
- 10 or more: 10.4%
• Instructors expressed before the transition that they were well prepared, and again when looking back
I was adequately prepared: when classes re-started and after the semester
Key finding

• Instructors needed much more time to prepare for classes after the transition
It took more time to prepare for classes after the transition than before

- Strongly disagree: 3.6%
- Disagree: 7.1%
- Neither agree or disagree: 9.7%
- Agree: 34.2%
- Strongly agree: 57.3%
Key finding

• Instructors made numerous modifications to assignments, assessments, and grading
Did you modify any course assignments for online instruction from their original design in your syllabi?

- Yes: 86.0%
- No: 14.0%
After the transition, did you change any part of your course grading system/s as originally written in your syllabi?

Yes: 80.1%
No: 14.0%
I _____________ the number of planned assignments/readings that were originally planned before the transition.

- **Increased**: 10.3%
- **Reduced**: 36.9%
- **Kept the same**: 52.8%
I ___________ the number of planned graded assessments (quizzes, tests, papers, projects, etc.) that were originally planned before the transition.
Compared to the same course/s I had previously taught, grades this semester were

- Much lower: 0.8%
- Somewhat lower: 5.7%
- About the same: 44.9%
- Somewhat higher: 32.7%
- Much higher: 7.8%
- I can't say/not enough evidence: 8.1%
• I also know that the very high grades this semester are in part a reflection of the fact that just finishing in my opinion should be rewarded and I gave a lot of extra credit (equaling an entire letter grade).

• I value face to face discussion. If I teach online again, I would need to find a way to integrate video meeting into my course.

• I want to be able to give open-ended assessments that show the students’ understanding of the content as well as their ability to apply and synthesize their learning. This was difficult for me to do with online instruction, and I need advice on how to proceed for the future.

• I was far more lenient with grading after the transition online, so I do not feel that my course was as challenging and therefore, as rewarding, as the F2F portion.

• I’d like to teach online more frequently after this experience. I’ve never had so many positive thank you emails from students.

• I spent a lot of time trying to offer my students the best experience I could in the given circumstances. To transition content which can really only be delivered F2F, the problem solving was intense and many students responded positively to the shift considering.

• In the laboratory, there is quite a lot of interaction with my availability to help at the moment of an activity. Without that, I did my best, but the asynchronous nature and the lack of physical contact with material was missing.

• It’s hard to talk students through complex physics concepts without it being a conversation.
Instructors perceived they were less effective after the transition.
Using a self-definition for effectiveness, compare your teaching effectiveness before the transition and after it.

- **Much less after**: 8.1%
- **Somewhat less after**: 45.7%
- **About the same**: 35.3%
- **Somewhat more after**: 5.0%
- **Much more after**: 0.8%
- **I don't know**: 5.2%
Key finding

• Instructors took steps to reduce the potential for academic dishonesty, but still saw increases in the frequency of academic dishonesty (many types)
Did you take any preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of academic dishonesty for your remote course/s?

- Yes: 62.7%
- No: 35.7%
Compared to before the transition, suspected or confirmed academic dishonesty violations in my course/s were:

- Much less frequent: 7.7%
- Less frequent: 4.7%
- About the same: 25.1%
- More frequent: 15.4%
- Much more frequent: 9.5%
- Not enough evidence to answer: 37.6%
• Despite the cheating, I feel most of our student population also prefers asynchronous lectures with synchronous exams.

• I am very apprehensive to teach online. I have learned that students will go to great lengths to cheat. It’s disheartening.

• Those are the [courses] with the much higher grade distribution - and I think it’s because the students cheated on the non-proctored exams which took place after the transition.

• I wish that online classes were required to have proctored exams, then I could really determine how effective online learning is.

• Unfortunately, students took the easy way out. Long exam windows and not being able to use Respondus created an environment where students sought to cheat and not learn. I spent a lot of time creating a nice course, the students spend a lot of time on Reddit plotting how to cheat. It was discouraging.

• We could not tell if they were cheating on online testing.

• Amazing level of Academic Dishonesty.

• Assessments without proper proctoring made me nervous about academic honesty violations.
Key finding

• Instructors expressed strong institutional support for the transition
GSU's leadership provided sufficient guidance for the transition
GSU provided adequate resources, training, and technology

- Strongly disagree: 4.2%
- Disagree: 8.6%
- Neither agree or disagree: 9.0%
- Agree: 30.2%
- Strongly agree: 48.0%
I had adequate time to prepare for the transition
I felt supported by my department chair to alter course expectations to meet students' needs

- Strongly disagree: 1.8%
- Disagree: 3.1%
- Neither agree or disagree: 7.1%
- Agree: 13.3%
- Strongly agree: 74.7%
The university provided timely and effective solutions to problems I could not resolve on my own
Comments on institutional support and management (Selected)

• I know we had to do this but I resent the mandate that everyone must become an online instructor. This was very stressful to faculty and students and the tone of the Mandatory training or you don't have a job in the fall seemed very demoralizing!

• I wish we provided a better alternative for our film students. I wish they had more access to online resources such as adobe cloud and Final Cut Pro on campus and at home. I wish having access to these programs at home was standard and paid for with student fees or allowed in our budget.

• It would have been nice to be compensated in some way for all of the additional time and work that was put into successfully making this transition for my students.

• Required student evaluations would be an improvement.

• Students were not served well by this transition. They should have all been given the option of a refund for the semester, since many were put into situations where meaningful participation in their education was no longer possible. The fact that the university did not conduct evaluations (of teaching or of student perceptions of effectiveness in transitioning) is shameful.

• Synchronous instruction needs to be allowed.

• The best option to prepare for a similar situation/transition is to offer hybrid courses.

• The experience to shifting to fully online was a challenge but I felt totally supported by the university and had access to a lot of resources.

• Faculty had more access to resources than GTAs (including GTA labor). GTAs were stuck in the center, and this experience has made me never want to teach an online course again, though that it unlikely.
• I wish that GSU had provided more resources and attention to supporting faculty and staff's mental health and well-being during this time.

• I would have appreciated more information being shared about creating an equitable online experience for all students, especially our first-generation college students, low SES, etc.

• Zoom is not allowed at GSU, but should reconsider with the use of the professional license and not standard Zoom.

• I would have encouraged GSU to pursue fully online teaching during the Fall of 2020, rather than the blended method.

• Get rid of iCollege and get a system that helps faculty not hinders then [sic].

• GSU's webex system is inadequate. When I did hold synchronous meetings and office hours I [sic] used Zoom.

• GSU is GROSSLY behind in online learning.

• I don't appreciate the University Admin words of praise for the work we did to then only turn around and mandate that those teaching in the summer also complete CETL 4-week training.

• I ended up spending a lot of my own money on online services like Zoom and Dropbox to be able to deliver content to my students. I wish departments had some flexibility in supporting these expenses.

• I feel like there was a lack of incentive to prepare high quality content. We worked over spring break and seemed to not have a traditional break between spring and summer due to mandatory online training. There should've been a small stipend, fellowship, or offering of future online classes for those who transitioned from scratch because it was a tremendous amount of work.
Comments on CETL

• I think CETL did a phenomenal job with the limited resources it has. GSU needs to multiply the CETL staff & resources a minimum of five-fold.

• CETL was invaluable. They were just great.

• I found there was a ton of help available, especially through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

• I guess I would like to have more F2F time with the folks from CETL as I develop my iCollege sections. I do feel that they have so much more expertise and experience than I have, and I feel as if I'd have significant questions as I was actually sitting and putting my sections together.

• It will be a good idea if CETL provides access of recording videos on how to use online teaching instead of or at the same time as the online webinar. Thanks.

• The CETL staff and their trainings have been wonderful. I have enjoyed all the webinars I have attended. I am re-watching some from the MOT class I just completed just to make sure I understand the aspects of iCollege I haven't used before and that will be really helpful for online instruction if we have to do this again in the fall.
Instructors cited many, and varied challenges
"Teaching" online. There was little of it.

Bandwidth capacity -- Webex struggled mightily.

Creating a sense of community, having necessary organic group discussions.

Converting from in-class to online teaching in the last third of the semester was the hardest, most frustrating work I have done in an awfully long time. It was emotionally draining as well; I felt responsible for helping 50 students, who did not sign up for an online class, get a good result.

Encouraging students' learning and reducing the academic dishonesty.

Everything went as planned but impossible to duplicate highly experiential course in online environment.

Some [students] disappeared and had to be prodded to complete the work.

Heavily discussion-focused courses lost their "heart."

Home schooling 2 elementary school children while trying to work full time was most challenging.
Key finding

•It was challenging and stressful for instructors and students alike
Looking back on this historic, emergency transition, please enter one (1) word that would describe your experience.
## Word count comparisons

### INSTRUCTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressful</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhausting</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightening</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hectic</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stressful</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horrible</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrible</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• I 100% prefer teaching online. I would choose online over F2F any day!
• I believe I did the best I could to adjust to the shift, and my students did so as well. I prioritized the well-being and safety of my students.
• Challenge for both faculty and students - beyond my expectations.
• I never want to go through that again!
• I suspected, but now confirm, that students simply do not learn as well/much without face to face instruction. Period.
• I would say that this experience was one of the most difficult teaching challenges I've faced in a long career. It was very demanding of all of us. All of the students had some sort of disruptions in their lives, and many of them were already carrying heavy loads.
• It was a difficult situation for students, faculty, and administration. However, I believe most did rise to the occasion and did an excellent job.
• It went better than I expected. I found it intellectually stimulating, but I didn't feel good about my level of interaction with students.
• Spring semester was Hell, but the students and I got through it. I learned as much, if not more, than they did.
• The entire thing was a disaster and we should expect nothing other than a disaster under disastrous circumstances.
• This entire experience has made me want to retire, which is quite sad because I still love to teach.
• This was "panicgogy," not pedagogy.
• We all did the best we could, and I understand that the shift to online was necessary (and may need to happen again). But it is absolutely no replacement for face to face instruction...It is almost impossible to teach difficult humanities texts online. This has made me even less likely to teach online voluntarily.
• We all made it!
For more information, please contact

• Mike Metzler (Director of SoTL Research, CETL)
  mmetzler@gsu.edu

• Laura Carruth (Director of CETL)
  lcarruth@gsu.edu