

## Teaching in the time of coronavirus

My course for junior and senior chemistry majors, like all courses at Emory in spring semester, underwent a schizophrenic transition. We had a crash course by the College in using Zoom and how to combine Zoom with Canvas. I did try to learn as much as possible but there really wasn't much time for in-person training and then we all went into isolation mode.

I had been using Canvas in a fairly basic mode and was giving quizzes, the first exam, collecting homework in class. All of that had to change and I did feel pretty much on my own. Of course, my students were isolated in their homes, where they had to find a room or someplace where they could Zoom into their courses. I used Canvas 'Announcements' to communicate with my class and to improvise a way to continue the course as much as possible in the way it had gone before spring break.

So, we kept class hours the same (T Th 11:30-12:45 pm) and all the students were able to install Zoom on their computers (I did send the link to Emory site where they could download and learn a bit about Zoom.) The first class was almost surreal as more and more students joined in (the electronic door-bell sound) at 11:30. Most did not use video and there were very few questions as I proceeded with the first "lecture". I had trouble sharing the screen and thankfully I got help from a couple of students. (There are several options in screen sharing that I learned "on the fly" and I'm sure this was distracting for the students.). I'm sure this first class was pretty dismal.

Well things did get better. Students were able to upload their weekly homework using Canvas. They figured out how to create pdfs, or photographs their homework and upload. We continued with weekly quizzes by using the Announcement feature of Canvas where the link to quiz pdf was sent. The second exam was also done via a pdf and Canvas and students uploaded by the deadline. Thankfully this could all be done with Canvas. In several instances students just emailed their quiz to me. Once I realized how easy it is to record the zoom session, I did record "lectures", saved to my laptop and then uploaded to Canvas. Students valued this.

Well so much for logisitics, etc which were eventually ironed out with Zoom and Canvas. What could not be replaced was the ability to scan faces as lecture material or the answer to a question is given. I rely on this very much to see if it's ok to move or to pause and invite comments or questions. This was not possible to do with Zoom.

Finally, to the most important aspect of teaching on-line and the one I know the least about. It is how the students were coping. I invited them to Zoom with me weekly to discuss the course or anything related to on-line teaching. Only six out of 25 did this. This disappointed me. But as I mulled this over, I interpreted this as a sign of their stress. I think many students were protecting their privacy and perhaps their feelings. I don't know for sure and I hope Emory makes a major effort to inquire about this.

Well that a short version of my experience with on-line teaching last semester.

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