Navigating New Problems Through Collaboration

“Teamwork was necessary. Good leadership, initiative, to think outside the box...Those things were absolutely necessary.” ~Jim Lovell

It has been 50 years since the Apollo 13 mission, and there are still many things we can learn from that amazing story. The astronauts on that mission took a seemingly impossible problem and turned it from a tragedy into a success. Although they were unable to complete their initial mission, they were able to survive the explosion and after nearly six harrowing days, bring their spacecraft safely home. In order to do this, it was necessary for the astronauts and mission control to prioritize tasks and take stock of all available assets, including the expertise of their colleagues. Not one of them could have done it on their own.

During this time of quarantine and social distancing we are experiencing, it would be easy to feel isolated from the human element of education because of our shift to online and virtual teaching. However, there are many unique opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations, including Communities of Practice and the newly launched Collaboration Station.

Many complex subjects make collaboration between disciplines essential. Seeing the same problems from a new perspective can lead to unique solutions. Collaboration also allows us to model working well with others for our students. By establishing common goals with colleagues, working with each other, and finding synergy across disciplines, we can successfully navigate these challenging times and bring our students the most well-rounded education possible.

“All we can do so little; together we can do so much.” ~Helen Keller
TLF Announcements

Collaboration Station

We are creating a database to provide a space for faculty to connect with and learn from each other as we navigate virtual and online learning environments. Please contribute information to help us create a robust resource for faculty. The purpose of this database is two-fold: 1) to help prepare faculty members for virtual, online, and hybrid teaching in the upcoming semesters, 2) to connect faculty facing similar challenges in the virtual teaching environment. Your answers will add to a searchable database that will help faculty find solutions and co-collaborators in navigating the virtual and online teaching environment.

We are asking you to respond to questions about the following four topics: Online Delivery; Virtual Delivery; Course Design; and Tools. Thank you for your contribution.

Tuesday Teaching Tips

The Teaching and Learning Forum is hosting a weekly series of “best practice showcases” every Tuesday at 2 pm via Zoom. Each showcase features 2-3 faculty members demonstrating a best practice in design or teaching online or in a virtual environment. These events will showcase some of the best practices for teaching in virtual and online formats presented by the faculty technology coaches from all colleges. Presentations will be in the format of GFTS sessions (Great Ideas for Teaching Students) with Q&A opportunities at the end of each showcase.

New Faculty Academy

Working with the Provost’s Office, WSU Online, Continuing Education, and the TLA Committee, the Teaching and Learning Forum has fully revised and reimagined our new faculty onboarding practices. We will be providing virtual sessions beginning in July, culminating with the New Faculty Retreat at Zermatt Resort October 15-17. These sessions will focus on Canvas, ChiTester, syllabi & assignment construction, and first day class meetings. Our goal in these efforts is to provide new faculty with the essentials they will need to be successful as they begin courses this fall.
Where can I find scholarly articles about interdisciplinary collaboration?

- Collaboration: A Way to Promote Faculty Development and Reduce Burnout
- Collaborating to Learn, Learning to Collaborate
- Insights and Observations about Collaboration

What resources does Weber State University offer for collaboration with my colleagues?

- Communities of Practice
- Collaboration Station
- Center for Community Engaged Learning
- The Honors Program: Many honors courses are the result of collaborations between colleagues and are often co-taught.

Where can I find online resources for my classes?

Here is a list of resources to help you place course content online:

- Canvas Training for Instructors
- Introduction to eLearning
- Instructional Design Webinar (4/10)
- Upcoming Live Canvas Training Sessions
  - Canvas Basics: Tuesday - August 4, 2020 and Tuesday-August 11, 2020
  - Canvas Advances: Wednesday - August 12, 2020
  - Instructional Design Topics: Wednesday-August 19, 2020

Faculty are encouraged to reach out to the WSU Online Office for help in transitioning to an online format or adding to the online content you already have.

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