

Preparing Your Course for Social Distance Teaching¹

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Table of Contents

Summary	2
Introduction	2
Pandemic/Catastrophic Readiness	3
Example: Pandemic/Catastrophic Readiness Statement	3
Questions to Consider before Creating a Plan for your Course	4
Pandemic/Catastrophic Plan in Action	4
Scenario 1: Just-In-Time Planning – Faculty and Students with Internet and Computer Access	5
Communication Options for Those with Internet and/or Computer Access	5
Just-In-Time Options for Content Delivery	6
Just-in-Time Sample Assignments	8
Scenario 2: Just-In-Case Planning -- Faculty and Students without Internet or Computer Access	9
Communication Options for Those without Internet and/or Computer Access.....	9
Just-In-Case Options for Content Delivery	9
Just-in-Time Sample Assignments	10
Planning Resources	11
References	12
Glossary	12
Appendices	13
Discussion Points	13
Faculty Checklist	14

¹ This document is a modification of one created by East Carolina University, whose work we gratefully acknowledge.

Recommendations for Continuity of Instruction

Summary

A pandemic or other catastrophic event may result in the official suspension of all activities including face-to-face classes on the UW-Madison campus. The following two sets of recommendations are offered as guidelines to encourage the continuation of instruction at UW-Madison. The first set of recommendations assumes faculty² and students will have Internet and/or computer access and presents a Just-In-Time scenario, Scenario 1. The second set of recommendations assumes that access to the Internet and/or a computer will not be available and presents a Just-In-Case scenario, Scenario 2.

UW-Madison's Division of Information Technology (DoIT) plans to maintain service of the technology needed for continuity of instruction during a pandemic or catastrophic event. As long as communication and technology remain intact for the duration of a pandemic or catastrophic event, it is anticipated that courses being taught online via Learn@UW will not be greatly affected during the event. This document contains suggestions and is intended as a guide for college, school and/or unit pandemic or catastrophic event planning.

Introduction

Continuity of instruction is important to both the university and its constituents because it assures a means by which the university can continue to meet its primary obligation of providing a rich and engaging undergraduate and graduate education to UW-Madison students. Plans allowing for the continuation of instruction under pandemic or catastrophic events serve two primary purposes. First, such plans assist students in continuing to seek timely matriculation and graduation that minimizes financial and family burdens throughout the event. Secondly, pandemic or catastrophic event planning helps to stabilize the university community and its surrounding neighbors during a crisis by removing or minimizing confusion for a portion of the campus and community's daily activities.

It is important to note that some faculty and students will be able to participate and others may be affected by circumstances that prohibit their participation. All courses are unique and some may require specific set-up or challenges for implementation during a pandemic or catastrophic event, such as labs or clinical components.

In the event that the UW campus must deal with the consequences of a flu pandemic, remember that we will be teaching under exceptional conditions, and our goal becomes providing instruction that allows students to continue to make progress towards their degree. This is a short term response to a crisis; it is "good enough" instruction, which we

² "Faculty" in this memo refers to both faculty and instructional academic staff; it refers to all who are providing instruction to students and who need to develop social distance methods to continue their instruction.

recognize is a significant departure from the exemplary instruction we are used to providing.

A critical component of controlling the spread of pandemic influenza will be community mitigation strategies such as social distancing designed to slow the spread of influenza. When we refer to “social distance teaching mode,” we mean moving to a mode of teaching that is not face-to-face for a period of time. This does not mean converting all classes to on-line instruction. The goal of social distance instruction during a pandemic emergency should be to deliver essential courses and essential course content in a way that leads to continuity of instruction and progress towards degree completion. We acknowledge that this method of instruction cannot replace regular face-to-face instruction.

This document is a “walk through” to help faculty and instructors develop their social distance plans for their courses. It will not provide answers to all questions. Please talk with your colleagues, with your departmental administrators, with your school/college associate deans, and consult the pandemic flu web resources that the university has generated.

Detailed descriptions of each element of the university’s pandemic plan, including discussions, structures, and decisions to enable academic continuity, are contained in the Academic Planning portion of the UW Swine Flu Information and Prevention site (<http://flu.wisc.edu>). And despite our best efforts to prepare, if and when a pandemic or catastrophic event occurs, we will be on new territory. We will need to work together to get through it.

Pandemic/Catastrophic Readiness

We suggest that faculty develop and add a pandemic/catastrophic-readiness statement within each syllabus. This statement should instruct students to be proactive by determining if they would have computer and Internet access if relocation is imminent during or after event conditions. In addition, students with Internet access should be instructed to monitor the UW-Madison homepage (wisc.edu) for emergency information and updates.

Example: Pandemic/Catastrophic Readiness Statement

“In the event that this course is no longer able to meet face-to-face, students should (first go to section XX in this syllabus and complete the alternative assignment) and/or (immediately check the course site and read the announcement.) and/or (etc.). . . .”

The remainder of this document can be used as a template or guide for discussion in developing a continuity of instruction plan.

The UW-Madison Teaching and Learning Excellence site includes a new area for faculty and staff to share their ideas and connect with peers regarding instruction in a pandemic. We encourage you to visit and participate at <http://tle.wisc.edu/pandemic>.

Questions to Consider before Creating a Plan for your Course.

- Determine if your students will have Internet access in the event of a pandemic or catastrophic event.
- What will your teaching objectives be for this time period (material covered, explore new topics)?
- How will you communicate with students (snail mail, email, telephone, Facebook, Learn@UW)?
- What will you communicate to students (course work, updates, questions)?
- How will you develop and/or make your content available (unit assignments, homework)?
- How will you assess your students during this time period?
- Do your texts or other reading materials have online resources that might be utilized during this time?
- Will social distancing affect access to software, for example, lab-based software that is only available on campus?
- How will you distribute your Plan?

Take a minute at the beginning of the semester to discuss what would happen if the class is not able to meet for several weeks.

Pandemic/Catastrophic Plan in Action

Note: In the event of a pandemic or other catastrophic event, we cannot make the assumption that all students or faculty will have Internet or computer access. Based on this assumption, we provide the following suggestions to augment the university continuity plan.

Begin planning by reviewing the learning outcomes you wish to achieve in the event of pandemic or catastrophic conditions. Review the Checklist provided at the end of this document and have open discussions with colleagues utilizing the Discussion Points. These two items should foster and encourage open collaboration among faculty members before and during the declared event.

The plan should address two distinctly different scenarios: the scenario in which Internet and computer access will be available to most students, and the scenario in which students that will not have Internet access and/or access to a computer. Be sure to include any communication updates (how—when—where) and any announcements that are important to your students. For example, let them know how often they can expect to hear from you and how often you expect to hear from them.

A pandemic or catastrophic event timeline for continuation of course instruction should be distributed before or immediately upon university system declaration of social distancing during a pandemic or catastrophic event. The timeline should contain all expectations and

requirements for course communication, content delivery, and assessment, along with the dates associated with these expectations.

Scenario 1: Just-In-Time Planning – Faculty and Students with Internet and Computer Access

During a pandemic or catastrophic event, and after all face-to-face instruction has been suspended (i.e., social distancing), communication will be expected to take place through a variety of tools including WiscMail, Learn@UW, Connect, telephone, text messaging, instant messaging, etc. We recommend that faculty become familiar with Learn@UW prior to a pandemic or catastrophic event in order to reduce frustrations and confusion. Learn@UW is UW's central course management system and is available to all faculty members, instructional staff, and all students.³ Connect is a web conferencing program that provides a virtual classroom for live sessions.

Learn@UW automatically generates a course shell for every UW timetable course offering, including face-to-face, blended, and distance education sections. Each course shell will be populated with students enrolled in the course. The instructor can activate this shell and make it available to students at any time. This committee strongly recommends the use of this platform in event that face-to-face classes are temporarily suspended. Social distancing may impact students' access to course related materials or software.

Communication Options for Those with Internet and/or Computer Access

Email is a great way to provide general communications during a pandemic. Faculty can email their students individually by using Learn@UW's Classlist tool or by searching for a student's name in the UW directory. Faculty can send email to their entire class roster by using the WiscList Classlist service. See the following links for more information:

UW People Directory

<http://www.wisc.edu/directories>

WiscList Classlist Service

<http://www.doit.wisc.edu/lists/classlists>

Email Students via Learn@UW

<http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=12028>

In addition to email, keep in mind the following communication options: phone, postal mail, and Learn@UW's News, Chat, and Discussion tools.

³ If your school or college is not using Learn@UW as its central course management system, (for example, College of Engineering is using eCOW2), administration within your school/college will develop supports parallel to what is outlined here.

Just-In-Time Options for Content Delivery

Possible alternatives to face-to-face in order to continue instructional activities for those with Internet and/or computer access:

Face-to-Face Delivery of...	Alternatives/Ideas for Social Distancing (<i>with internet and/or computer access</i>)
General Course Content (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint and Word files, paper course handouts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add Content to Learn@UW http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=5277 Examples would be Microsoft Word or Microsoft PowerPoint files. Add audio to PowerPoint files (put lectures in short modules for minimum file size and maximum delivery).• Deliver lectures using Adobe Connect. http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=11826• Share content via a My WebSpace account (see Group Directories) http://www.doit.wisc.edu/mywebpace/
Text Book Reading/Assignments (e.g. Text material covered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before the semester begins, check to see if your current textbook offers online resources.• Submit your textbook information to the Faculty Center: http://www.registrar.wisc.edu/faculty/textbooks• Make sure the syllabus is specific about which readings should be done at which time and how this material relates to assessments.• Contact your local library staff to discuss reserve materials: http://www.library.wisc.edu/reserves
Group Assignments (e.g. Group projects and small group assignments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share files in a My WebSpace Group Directory: http://doit.wisc.edu/mywebpace• Utilize the Learn@UW Groups tool that offers groups discussion boards and file storage. http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=2507• Utilize Connect for group meetings: http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=11826

<p>Individual Assignments (e.g. In class assignments or projects)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store assignment information in the Learn@UW Content area. • Students can submit assignments via email, or • Students can submit assignments using the Learn@UW Drop Box. <p><i>Drop Box guide (PDF):</i> http://tinyurl.com/kuzn5b</p>
<p>Exams or Quizzes (e.g. In class evaluation and assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider alternative assignments for assessment. • Deliver exams/quizzes online through Learn@UW Quiz Tool. • Consider giving mastery tests that can be retaken until a specific score is reached.
<p>Course Announcements (e.g. Timely verbal announcements or course updates)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent communications should be delivered via email. Post course updates in the News area in Learn@UW: http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=6386
<p>Course Lectures* (e.g. Face-to-face lectures and PowerPoint presentations)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sending lectures or lecture notes in text format to students via email/classlist: <i>WiscMail</i> - http://wiscmail.wisc.edu • Consider Adobe Connect: http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=11826 • Consider threaded discussion in Learn@UW Discussion Tool: http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=6388 • Add audio to PowerPoint (put lectures in short modules for minimum file size): http://tinyurl.com/narratePPT
<p>Syllabus (e.g. Hard copy distributed in class)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload a copy of your syllabus to your Learn@UW course. This makes it always available to your students.
<p>Student Questions (ex. Verbal responses to questions asked during class or office hours)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Email, Learn@UW discussion forum (post frequently asked questions), or Instant Messenger (hold office hours via IM) <p><i>Learn@UW Chat guide (PDF):</i> http://tinyurl.com/kkt358</p>

**Click links and scroll through Course Tools to locate appropriate topic.*

**Note: When creating or converting course materials to online formats, it is crucial to consider file size. The addition of particular graphics may cause PowerPoint Presentations to exceed online limitations and slow down the student access.*

Just-in-Time Sample Assignments

Consider creating additional assignments that could be added to a course syllabus or as stand-alone assignment(s) available during a pandemic or other catastrophic event that temporarily suspends face-to-face classes. Consider how you could provide these items to students in both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Assignment Examples for Consideration

Prepare an Individual and/or Group Assignment that might work for a short period such as:

- Post a subject content link (in syllabus, Learn@UW, text message, etc.). Have students prepare a paper assignment tying information to course content and personal experience. (Students could submit assignments via Learn@UW Drop Box or Email.)
- Post an extension of the subject content link and prepare (or have students prepare) a 10-question (online or paper) quiz or have buddy discussions through text messaging, discussion groups, or IM.
- Post discussion questions (2) in the Learn@UW Discussion Board to facilitate online discussion. Groups might note time of discussion and 1-2 line overview of discussion for assessment of assignment.
- Assign end-of-chapter materials for group project, individual question and answer session, or buddy discussion. Students can then post in PowerPoint format with notes for peers to assess, or write up overview of discussions. Use end-of-Chapter assignments for chapters not covered in regular class period.
- Provide an "Alternative" assignment in your syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including rubric for assessment. Example for this assignment: Assign Buddies at the beginning of the semester. Then have buddies post one content driven discussion question and be the moderator of the discussion.

Scenario 2: Just-In-Case Planning -- Faculty and Students without Internet or Computer Access

In the event that a pandemic or catastrophic event is declared, students may be required to leave the campus and temporarily relocate to an area that will not afford access to a computer or the Internet. Under these circumstances a great deal of pre-planning must go into syllabi and materials development. Note that in these circumstances a single Just-In-Case syllabus for multiple sections of a course might be appropriate. This event could cause a communication gap between instructors and students while face-to-face classes are suspended. These students will still need an explanation of your expectations and their responsibilities. It is important that a “just in case” course content outline/syllabus, and a timeline be available that students can either download or print, and take with them. Assignments from the current textbook which students can complete and submit when face-to-face classes resume are also an option. As with Scenario 1, social distancing may affect students’ access to course related materials or software and will prohibit the use of any type of face-to-face meetings.

Communication Options for Those without Internet and/or Computer Access

Possible Types of Communication Available:

- Phone
- Postal mail
- Text Messaging

Just-In-Case Options for Content Delivery

Possible alternatives to face-to-face in order to continue instructional activities for those without Internet and/or computer access:

Face-to-Face Delivery of...	Alternatives/Ideas for Social Distancing (<i>without internet and/or computer access</i>)
<p>General Course Content (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint and Word files, paper course handouts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students could download or print content available in advance. (Just in Case) • Paper through postal mail
<p>Text Book Reading/Assignments (e.g. Text material covered)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and place in Syllabus for later use. (Just in Case)
<p>Group Assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and place in Syllabus for later use. (Just in Case)

(e.g. Group projects and small group assignments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook readings
Individual Assignments (e.g. In class assignments or projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and place in Syllabus for later use. (Just in Case) • Textbook readings
Exams or Quizzes (e.g. In class evaluation and assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider alternative assignments for assessment. • Mastery test taken when students return
Course Announcements (e.g. Timely verbal announcements or course updates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone Tree
Course Lectures (e.g. Face-to-face lectures and PowerPoint presentations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper copies provided ahead of time or substitute a particular chapter in the textbook. • Electronic copies of course lectures and/or notes available for print or download. • CDs with all course materials including lectures available for purchase with text.
Syllabus (e.g. Hard copy distributed in class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate hard copy distributed in class.
Student Questions (e.g. Verbal responses to questions asked during class or office hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Phone Tree, (Ask 3 then me) • Faculty Phone (Assign groups and one student as communicator to ask questions.)

Just-in-Time Sample Assignments

Consider creating additional assignments that could be added to course materials and made available during any pandemic or other catastrophic event that temporarily suspends face-to-face classes. Consider how you could provide these items to students in both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Assignment Examples for Consideration

Prepare an Individual and/or Group Assignment that might work for a short period:

- Provide subject content (in syllabus, course packet, text message, etc.) for students to review and self reflect upon in a paper Students could mail assignment(s) in.
- Post subject content link and prepare a 10-question quiz or have buddies discuss using text messaging or phone. Due to social distancing any type of face-to-face meeting will be highly discouraged.
- Post discussion questions (2-4) in syllabus to facilitate discussion. Have students discuss through phone or text messaging. Groups might note time of discussion and 1-2 line overview of discussion for assessment of assignment.
- Assign end-of-chapter materials for group project, individual question and answer session, or buddy discussion. Students can then report for peers to assess, or discuss and write up overview of discussions. Use end-of-Chapter assignments for chapters not covered in regular class period.
- Provide an "Alternative" assignment in your syllabus to be used only in the event that face-to-face classes are suspended, including rubric for assessment. Example for this assignment - Assign Buddies at the beginning of the semester. Provide a current article for students to read and discuss with their buddy.

Planning Resources

The following list of tools and resources are provided in order to promote thought and provide options during pandemic and catastrophic event planning.

Learn@UW Training: Learn@UW face-to-face and online training opportunities

Learn@UW Tools:

- Chat - Synchronous communication (live communication)
- Threaded Discussion - Asynchronous communication (happens at all hours of the day and students and faculty don't have to be present for it to take place)
- Learn@UW Groups - Area in Learn@UW in which small sets of students can interact on group projects. Each group would have the use of Chat, Discussion Forum, File Exchange Area and Email.
- Email - A system for sending and receiving messages electronically over a computer network, as between personal computers.

Connect Training Workshops

Continuity of Instruction Planning Workshops

References

Wake Forest Professor Rick Matthews has posted a “just in case” syllabus prepared in the event of a pandemic and the need for social distancing. His example is posted here:

<http://www.wfu.edu/~matthews/courses/p230/hw/pandemic.html>

Colleges and Universities Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/collegeschecklist.html>

DE Contingency Plan

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/learningplatforms/contingency.cfm>

Learn@UW Tutorials

<http://kb.doit.wisc.edu/luwmad/page.php?id=5278>

Glossary

Catastrophic Event: Area situation causing declaration of emergency. May require social distancing.

Connect is a web conferencing program that provides a virtual classroom using live sessions. Connect provides voice, video, and presentations in a structured online meeting environment.

Emergency Information will be available at the UW influenza homepage

<http://flu.wisc.edu>

Instant Messaging - real time communication between two or more people based on typed text. The text is conveyed via computers connected over a network such as the Internet. Commonly used IM software include: AIM, MSN Messenger, and ICQ. UW-Madison and DoIT offer the WiscChat service: <http://www.doit.wisc.edu/wiscchat/>

Pandemic Flu: Global outbreak of human flu which can spread easily and quickly from person to person and from city to city.

Snail Mail: Postal mail

Social Distancing: Limiting contact and activities with others to slow down the spread of a flu pandemic.

Appendices

Discussion Points

For Units – The following can be used to promote dialogue concerning the learning process and pandemic or catastrophic event situations. Faculty should be encouraged to discuss the following points with peers in a small group setting in addition to any other ideas which may arise as an extension of the discussion.

- What would you do if you were unable to have your class meet face-to-face for an extended period of time beginning tomorrow?
- How would your face-to-face syllabus change if you had to suddenly begin teaching at a distance?
- If servers and communication went down for a long period of time, how would you communicate with students?
- How could the content materials of your current course be changed to reflect the conditions (Scenario 1 or Scenario 2)?
- Is your course currently being taught online by anyone?
- What are your department and program standards for consistent, high quality course instruction?
- How could a course provide value and meet program standards during a pandemic or catastrophic event?
- How would it be possible for students who anticipate graduating at the end of the semester to meet program standards during a pandemic or catastrophic event?
- What would an outline for Just-in-Time or Just-in-Case course materials look like? What would be included? What would be excluded?
- What materials are essential for optimal Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case learning?
- Reinventing the wheel is time-consuming and difficult. How can you provide the minimum requirements without reinventing the wheel?
- When should you share your Just-in-Time and Just-in-Case materials with students?

Faculty Checklist

The following is provided in order to facilitate and focus attention on preparation for a catastrophic event.

✓	Item Description
	Answer the Questions to Consider
	Attend departmental discussion sessions
	Attend Learn@UW Training Sessions
	Test Communication Tools
	Select Communication Tools to Implement
	Develop a Continuity of Instruction Outline
	Revise Syllabus – Continuity Syllabus
	Continuity Syllabus Readily Available to Students
	Ensure Just-In-Time and Just-In-Case Content Readily Available
	Ensure Just-In-Time and Just-In-Case Assignments Readily Available