ABMP School Forum 2022
Presentation Notes

Adapting to the Digital Classroom: Building the Essential Skills of Modern Teaching

Synchronous vs Asynchronous

- ***Synchronous learning*** is online learning that happens together in real-time. Class time is scheduled at a specific time, just as in a brick-and-mortar environment. The difference is you all meet online instead of in person.

- ***Asynchronous learning*** happens separately on one's own time. Classes are recorded and made available for students to complete by a specific due date.

- Benefits of Synchronous Online Learning
    - It can mimic the feel of a brick-and-mortar classroom.
    - Interactions happen in real time.
    - Gaps can be illuminated.
    - Connections are made and relationships are fostered between student and instructor and peer to peer.

- Drawbacks of Synchronous Online Learning
    - There is less flexibility on when learning can occur.
    - Tech issues are likely.
    - Longer classes can cause fatigue.
    - It's harder to check for understanding.
    - It's harder to create connection

- Benefits of Asynchronous Online Learning
    - Capability of video editing.
    - Student convenience.
    - Expanded use of the lessons.
    - Expanded learning for the student.

- Drawbacks of Asynchronous Online Learning
    - Can be challenging for students who struggle.
    - Some students have short attention spans.
    - Some students struggle with negative self-perception of intelligence and do better in an in-person environment.
    - Some students have unsupportive families.
    - There is limited instructor and peer interaction.

- *Hybrid/blended learning* is a mix of online (and that could be asynchronous and synchronous) and in-person learning. It brings the best of all worlds into possibility.

- How do you know when to use which type of learning?
    - Typically, synchronous is best for learning in the cognitive (or knowledge) domain, a portion of the psychomotor (or skills) domain, the affective (or attitudes and beliefs) domain, and the interpersonal (or relationship) domain.
    - It is best to reserve this type of learning for only cognitive or affective learning. While you can assign scenarios that students can respond to in writing, knowledge can never take the place of skill-based learning. If you want to learn good communication, you have to be communicating in real-time with another human being.
    - Ask yourself:
        - Is this something students can learn on their own and then show up with adequate preparation?
        - Can a solid construct be formed without a lecture?
    - The model you choose depends on:
        - The individual teacher's abilities
        - The students' needs
        - The content being taught

Keep Learners Engaged

- Input from educators nationwide has illuminated that keeping learners engaged is the biggest obstacle in online learning.

- Methods to encourage learners to be present with you.
    - Be present yourself.
        - Be fully there and caring even when you are multitasking technology.
        - If you need to pause for a moment to catch up with chats, direct the students to take 3–5 deep breaths as you catch up.
    - Create engagement from the start.
        - Dive right into the content and make it personal.
        - Acknowledge that their time is valuable.
        - Start the lesson with input from students so they expect the class to be interactive.
        - Have a predictable flow to your class.
            - Name the topic and purpose/connection to other content.
            - Clarify what materials are required and remind them how they will be expected to engage.
            - Explain how the lesson will unfold.
            - Do a short brain-priming engagement activity.

- Engage the senses.
    - 80% of learning is visual. Use imagery! Use bright colors (yellow and white are considered best colors for positivity)! Make sure you are well lit onscreen and in an inviting environment.
    - Avoid excessive text on the screen. Students can't read and listen at the same time. Images work best with minimal key words that match the content/image combo.
- Be enthusiastic and encouraging.
    - Learners recognize that when learning is enjoyable, when it feels good, it's more effective and less effortful. They'll stick with you even when a screen divides.
- Encourage students by acknowledging their work and responses.
    - Studies show that students are likely to disconnect if they are asked to do work that is never recognized.
    - It's easy to simply say things like: "Thanks for that response, Susie" or "That's valuable input, Lamar" or "Your critique of that point was spot on, Roxanne."
- Deliver the content in short chunks.
    - After short intervals of learning (about 10 minutes or at the end of a content chunk), engage the student in a lesson-specific activity that lasts about 3–5 minutes (called a learning pause) that would require them to have listened to the information in order to complete it.
- Say "no" to the lecture.
    - Have students come prepared to class having completed a reading and/or writing assignment. Then, you pose questions and form discussion groups.
    - Invite "Think it Through" moments that encourage brainstorming and wondering, plus everyone feels free to chip in.
- Let students teach.
    - Incorporate reciprocal teaching.
    - Assign student teachers.
    - Have students create picture boards or mind-maps, then come to class prepared to present their work. (Sort of a show and tell of homework).
    - Have students do mini case studies and present their findings to the class.
    - Have students read an article, watch a webinar, or listen to a podcast and do a review of the content. To add a twist to this, you can assign one of these that you know is inaccurate or lacking in adequate information, and have them dissect it.
- Give students a website or series of websites and have them determine if it is a viable source.
    - Is it from a credible or well-known source?
    - What is the connection type (Http vs Https)?
    - Is it coming from a secure site? Basically, does it include a lock icon?
    - When was the information published? Is it current?
    - Were the facts checked against 3–5 other sources?
- Call on students who aren't participating.

        - Let the person know you are about to call on them.
        - When you pose a question, such as for a learning pause after a content chunk, tell the class they get 2 minutes to come up with an answer, but that you are going to ask Rosa and Matthew to share their answers with the group. That way, everyone is given time to craft an answer and those who are going to share know it's coming and can prepare.
        - Normalize the experience of being called on by doing it. If students expect it, they'll be on their toes and prepared for it. But also allow and encourage a short pause before answering.
        - Normalize being wrong.
    - Build relationships.
        - Be competent.
        - Studies show that students feel most connected with teachers who:
            - Show they genuinely care about their students' success and push them to the next level by showing that they believe in them.
            - Provide an environment that protects the students mental, emotional, and physical safety.
            - Acknowledge them as unique individuals who are capable of more than they might even be demonstrating. They see both who they are and who they can become.

Create Accountability

- Methods to create accountability in the digital classroom.
    - Require cameras to be on.
    - Ensure participation by having them take a picture of their note-taking worksheet that has space provided for answering questions.
    - For learning pauses, instead of having them pause the video, let the pause occur with the camera rolling.

Personalize the Learning Experience

- Methods to personalize the learning experience.
    - Create a sense of community.
        - The first way to do this is to make students feel seen. Greet students as class starts—just as you would if they were walking into the room before class begins.
        - If it's an asynchronous environment, when you record video, act as if the students are right in front of you and you are speaking directly to them (not as if from a script…be slightly informal).

- Encourage communication.
    - Require students to use the chat function.
- Show exemplary work.
- Be enthusiastic and encouraging.
- Model self-direction and self-regulation.
- Provide a variety of types of input for the work.
    - Text answers
    - Send pictures
    - Type email
    - Turn in voice recordings
- Ask self-awareness questions.
    - How do you feel you are progressing with XYZ?
    - What could you do to increase your commitment to this task/to study/to learning these details?
    - In what areas have you made progress and what is something you are still struggling with?
- Give outside activities.
    - Assign to go out in the world and observe gait patterns, postural tendencies, and emotional reactions.
- Have them "secret shop."
- Design ways students can connect their learning to their life.

Ensure Understanding

- Methods to ensure understanding in the digital classroom.
    - Plan ahead.
        - If you are trying to go off the cuff in an online environment, you will not succeed.
        - This means have a lesson plan in place. Use your brick-and-mortar lesson plans and make adjustments.
        - Internalize the lesson. You can't make a lesson stand out as powerful and memorable unless you understand and can communicate how it fits into the bigger picture and why it is important.
    - Foresee potential obstacles and challenges.
        - Ask yourself, is the content complex?
        - Complete all activities you intend to ask students to complete. That way they are, in reality, not just theory.
        - Get your videos queued up, your examples prepared, and your images to show.
        - Be prepared to connect one lesson to another and explain why activities support learning the topic at hand.

- Offer crystal clear instructions.
    - Display step-by-step instructions for any tasks you want students to perform.
    - Have a practice session at the start of the program—in other words, train them how to use the learning platform.
- Develop written scaffolding materials.
    - This includes handouts, rubrics, checklists, and forms.
    - Offer note-taking forms specific to the content so students have a structured place to take notes and write answers to learning pauses.
    - Write out scenarios or discussion questions that are prompts for activities; that way they can reference them. Send them ahead either via email or on your learning management system.
    - Prepare exemplars. For learning pauses with specific answers—even writing tasks that require them to come up with a response to a prompt and you are looking for specific points to demonstrate understanding—have an exemplar.
- Communicate efficiently and effectively.
    - Don't ramble on or get on a tangent.
    - Stay focused in your words and clear about points you are making.
- Build in formative assessment strategies.
    - Ask content-specific questions that have to be answered via chat (synchronous) or email (asynchronous), that way you can recognize when there are gaps.
    - Supply students with A, B, C, D cards and/or TRUE/FALSE cards so you can still do quick quizzes in a visual way (synchronous).
    - When you see misunderstanding, address it!
- Take observational notes and refer back to them.
    - If it isn't a written response that you can collect or save (such as in a document or chat), have students discuss, and listen in on their discussions. Make note of misunderstandings and address them immediately after the pause.
    - When you see that students need additional assistance, have clear avenues available for questions and guidance.

Overcome Technical Anxiety

- Challenge:
    - Technology can feel overwhelming.

- Solution:
    - Do your homework. Choose a learning management system or communication platform and learn it.

- Challenge:
    - How do you know which one to choose?

- Solution:
    - Take tutorials.
    - Practice with colleagues.
    - Learn the features.
    - Sign up for free trials to see which best fits your school and its size and structure.

- A ***communication platform*** is a cloud-based technology that allows people within an organization to communicate virtually through voice, video, and messaging.

- A ***cloud*** refers to servers that are accessed over the internet. Data is stored in remote data centers.

- A ***learning management system (LMS)*** is a software application used to administer, document, track, report, automate, and deliver educational courses or programs.

- Challenge:
    - You've decided that you just don't like technology, can't do it, and/or it will be hard.

- Solution:
    - Try some emotional intelligence techniques to self-assess why you have this limitation about the digital classroom, and then practice methods to shift your attitude.
    - Visualize yourself successfully managing an entire class with lots of questions and interactions.