Consolidated Discussion from Webinar #1: Debriefing Winter 2020: A Shared Reflection

This document is meant to provide an asynchronous guide and summary to the discussion from the first webinar in the *Summer 2020: Supporting Flexible Instructional Skills Development* workshop series co-hosted by the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences and the Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics. Instructors who participated in the workshop came up with a list of ideas and solutions to various challenges. While the facilitators have created this summary list, the content is **generated 100% by the instructors that participated.** We would like to thank all for their active engagement and hope this summary list is a useful resource.

If you have questions about the webinar series or this document please do not hesitate to reach out to Jackie Hamilton, Senior Manager – Learning, Assessment, and Accreditation at jhamil06@uoguelph.ca and Chris Donaldson, Manager – Academic Programs at chris.donaldson@uoguelph.ca.

Identified Challenges

Throughout the breakout room discussions, participants identified a number of similar challenges faced in the transition to alternative instructional delivery at the end of the Winter 2020 semester. These include:

- Deciding between synchronous and asynchronous delivery
- How to mitigate academic misconduct and maintain academic integrity and rigour
- Final assessment design
- Student and instructor access to technology and reliable internet
- Instructor knowledge of available tools and technology
- Choosing what technology to use (e.g., Zoom, WebEx)
- Managing large classes remotely
- Providing required equipment for experiences typically offered in a face-to-face format (e.g., PPE for lab experiments)
- Student engagement (e.g., students not participating; increased volume in individual student communications over e-mail)
- Instructor burnout
- Managing workload with family responsibilities

Ideas and Solutions that Emerged from Winter 2020

When prompted to identify what worked well over this transition, instructors identified several examples of solutions or innovations that they would recommend to others. These include:

- Designing assessments that were alternatives to final exams (e.g., take home exams, final assessments or projects)
- Use of Turnitin for helping mitigate academic misconduct cases
- Recording lectures in Zoom and making them available to students afterwards
- Using Zoom's Breakout Rooms for graduate professional seminars
- Keeping students informed on changes using the Announcements tool in CourseLink
- Instructor moderating a question and answer forum using the CourseLink Discussions
- Students completing presentations using annotated PowerPoints
- Virtual and expanded office hours
- Synchronous interactivity using the Chat tool in CourseLink
- Uploading exam preparation materials into CourseLink
- Redesigning lab experiences (e.g., scheduling them across all available times, offering blended opportunities)
- Informal communication channels (e.g., WhatsApp group for community-building, posting photos in Instagram for art projects)
- Using mobile devices for document sharing (e.g., photos)

Lessons Learned and Ideas Flagged for Future Instructional Use

Through thoughtful reflection, instructors identified several takeaways and key themes to take forward for future instruction and course delivery. Essentially, these are ideas instructors identified they would use again. With particular relevance to planning for the Fall 2020 semester, the following were discussed:

- Pre-recording lectures (possibly in smaller chunks) and uploading them into CourseLink
- Recording lectures with annotated audio and video PowerPoint presentations
- Designing courses with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous engagement (recognizing students may be in different time zones)
- Provide students with optional synchronous opportunities for engagement
- Universal design – offering flexibility and a variety of assessments
- Developing alternative exams (e.g., open-book, final projects)
- Designing assessments focused on critical thinking and analysis (e.g., instructor-derived quiz question banks; oral interviews)
- Designing assessments that are focused on demonstrating the ability or competence (e.g., shooting a video)
- Mitigating academic misconduct by randomizing questions and answers in the CourseLink Quizzes tool
- Reweighting assessments (e.g., decreasing weight of final exam, increasing points for assessments focused on analysis as opposed to providing definitions).

- Innovative tools (e.g., Chegg.com to post questions and PhD students respond; iMovie for recording and editing videos for student assessments or for instructors to record their lectures)
- Peer-to-peer mentorship (e.g., upper-year students to support first-year transition; experienced instructors coaching early-career instructors).
- Aligning course outline schedule to how and when content is posted in CourseLink
- Invite guest speakers virtually
- Establishing standards for professional behaviour in online / remote environments (e.g., code of conduct, netiquette)