

Virtual Teaching Academy  
Session 2 Recap  
Virtual Teaching Best Practices  
3-4:30pm EDT  
June 26, 2020

On behalf of the University of Phoenix, Blackboard and everyone associated with the Alliance for Virtual Learning, thank you for attending our inaugural Virtual Teaching Academy. Following each session, a high-level outline will be emailed to you.

For your convenience, important links can be found below. Additionally, please feel free to use the hashtag #VTA2020 across your social media platforms. Don't be shy about the fantastic work you're doing on behalf of your students!

\*Please use the "Webinar link" provided below, to join each daily session.

Important links:

\*Webinar link: [https://applauncher.gotowebinar.com/#notStarted/280718920414727439/en\\_US](https://applauncher.gotowebinar.com/#notStarted/280718920414727439/en_US)  
Link to presentations: <https://content.blackboard.com/virtual-teaching-academy>  
Link to VTA sessions: <http://content.blackboard.com/virtual-teaching-academy>  
General contact email: [info@blackboard.com](mailto:info@blackboard.com)

Note: If you have chosen to add our Webinar sessions directly to your virtual calendar of choice, you will be notified to attend each daily session at the correct local time.

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As a foundation for session two, attendees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the K-12 National Standards for Quality Online Learning (NSQ).

- Virtual Teaching Best Practices:
  - K-12 & HE Online Course Design
  - Standard A: Professional Responsibilities
  - Standard B: Digital Pedagogy
  - Standard C: Community Building
  - Standard D: Learner Engagement
  - Standard E: Digital Citizenship
  - Standard F: Diverse Inclusion
  - Standard G: Assessment & Measurement
  - Standard H: Instructional Design
- Teaching virtually can be stressful. That's a fact. But remember, in reality, students often feel very connected digitally. As teachers, the question is: How can we maximize our comfort *and* the comfort of our students? We can:
  - Support peer-based learning where kids can interact with each other.
    - Assignment idea: Have students interview each other.
  - From a technology standpoint, make sure you know how to use virtual break-out rooms for small-group learning within platforms like Zoom.
- Give students an opportunity to share and showcase his or her work.
- Teach your students digital citizenship skills
  - How to handle trolls/negative comments and feedback from posts
  - Creating a healthy online identity
- Pathways to teacher support
  - Provide structure in around when and how you deliver instruction.
  - Create a centralized place where teachers can collaborate and learn from each other.
  - Encourage your district or school leadership to provide short, recorded webinars for you to use as resources to increase your comfort level with respect to teaching in a virtual environment.
- Consider bringing in external volunteers/or paid support staff for things like dealing with truancy issues, attendance and other administrative challenges so you can focus on teaching.
- Rethinking how our classrooms are structured in a virtual environment is essential. The more you plan on the front-end, the more successful you will be.
  - Working closely with parents is essential. Find out if parents are tech savvy or if you need to interact with them in other ways.
- High-octane synchronous learning can burn out teachers and students.
  - Key Takeaway: As teachers, we need to remove ourselves from the center of the virtual learning environment.
  - Think about it as flipping the classroom. In an online environment, teachers don't need to be "live" in front of their students for extended periods of time. Let the format work for you, and remember:
    - You don't need to lecture live. Recorded lectures, and allowing students watch them on their own, is an outstanding example of asynchronous learning.

- If you feel like you're spending too much time teaching/lecturing live, let students take the lead. That way, teachers become facilitators.
    - What is an example of a great way to connect with students virtually?
      - Consider quick check-ins with students. This approach can be helpful from an emotional standpoint.
    - Synchronous learning, when you're gathered virtually as a class, works well for science experiments.
      - Think of this example like: "I do it." "You do it."
    - The beauty of online learning is its flexibility. Take advantage of it!
  - Set up assignments that students can work on at their own pace.
    - Think about setting up virtual office hours.
    - For younger students, you may want to consider daily 1:1, 10-minute check-in sessions.
    - For younger learners be aware of screen time
  - Pro tip for successful online lessons:
    - Put the assignment at the top of the page or lesson so students don't automatically scroll to the bottom.
    - Create checklists throughout the lesson
    - Put various mini assessments at different points throughout your prerecorded lessons
- Rhythm + Pacing
  - How can teachers plan their week?
    - You want to create a rhythm to the course; consistency and repetition are key
      - Start week 1 with an email announcement that sets expectations for students.
        - structure your engagement with students consistently so students are checking in with you on a regular basis.
      - This is important because research indicates that if students log-in and post assignments twice a week they have a 95 percent success rate.
      - Keep communication lines open during times when you're not meeting virtually. However, set boundaries for responding to students and parents.
      - How often should we meet with parents?
        - Regular meetings are fine but it's more important to find informal ways to engage parents while at the same time, providing formal ways for parents to be involved.
        - Consider creating assignment guides for parents.
    - Speaking of assignments, how do we track them?
      - Take what works in your traditional classrooms and shift it online.
        - But be flexible:
          - Take into account Internet outages etc.
          - Consider making assignments due each Tuesday. Why?
            - Doing so means you'll have an opportunity to enjoy your weekend. It's all about work/life balance.
            - Also, a Tuesday deadline gives your students an extra day to work on their assignments.
    - Rhythm + Pacing doesn't just apply to your students. It also applies to parents. This is new to them too and many of them are feeling overwhelmed. Consequently, creating a schedule for parents, will pay dividends.
  - Five areas of focus for your online teaching toolkit:
    - Content Storage
      - Your Learning Management System (LMS) should:
        - Hold your content

- Streamline grading
  - You want a discussion forum
- Planning & Productivity
  - Google Docs
- Communication
  - Discussion forums are really useful, but they can be challenging to set-up.
  - Think about what makes an engaging discussion in your traditional classroom and move that online
- Learning & Assessment Don't be afraid to leverage apps and tools such as
  - K-12 – Apps like BrainPOP; Discovery Ed; Kahn Academy; Minecraft
- Content Creation
  - Can we push ourselves and our students to focus on content creation?
    - When we do, everybody is more engaged!
- This Big Takeaway: Be as authentic as Possible when you're teaching virtually!