ONLINE ART TEACHERS

A newsletter for teaching with & without access to home technology

Translating Online Practice for K-12: You CAN Do This!

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#OATK12

This resource has been created in an effort to share ideas and strategies for going online in a short period of time. For some of us in the field who have been teaching online for a while, we've had time to finesse and tweak our online classrooms into well-oiled machines. You, superhero art teachers, may not have the same gift of time, so please give yourselves some grace when going online. This organization (Online Art Teachers, #OATK12), as well as countless others are here to support you with strategies and ideas, and also serve as a forum to discuss, troubleshoot, and reflect. Please lean on us and one another in this time of need.

When it comes to online course design, I often liken the creation process to cooking or baking. With the right ingredients, and carefully worded recipe, you are bound for success! Following is my recipe for good online course design, which can be applied to various age levels and content areas.

Recipe for Success!

Ingredients:
- Intuitive Design
- Engaging Content
- Meaningful Assignments
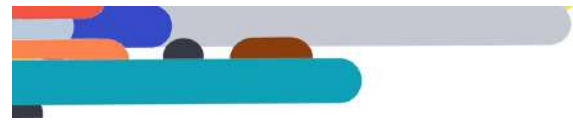
Intuitive Design

Intuitive Design
Why is it important?

- Learners like control over their learning
- Learners have multiple responsibilities
- Learners come with different levels of experience with online coursework
- Learners like consistency

When shifting course content online you need to start with a platform. I believe that consistency across the board is ideal, so start by looking at what is available through your district. The more teachers that use the preferred platform, the easier it is for students and parents to become familiar with the general layout and set-up. The less viewers worry about layout, the more they can focus on meaningful content.

I've worked with several Learning Management Platforms (LMS for short), from Blackboard, to D2L, to Canvas, to Schoology and Google Classroom. At the most basic level, these platforms function similarly across the board, serving as a home to share content and direction for students. What can vary from platform to platform is overall look, organization, and means for accessing specific tools. Following are several

resources for different LMS platforms out there:

- [Blackboard: On-Demand Videos](#) (Blackboard Inc., 2020)
- [Best Practices with Blackboard](#) (Blackboard Inc., 2017)
- [Brightspace (D2L) Tutorials](#) (Brightspace, 2018)
- [Set Up Your Canvas Course in 30 Minutes or Less](#) (Canvas, 2020)
- [Schoology Videos](#) (Schoology, n.d.)
- [Getting Started with Google Classroom](#) (Pocketful of Primary, 2019)

If your school district does not subscribe to a particular LMS, you can very quickly set up your own classroom webpage/blog to add daily/weekly content for students. I personally have used [Google Sites](#) and [Wix](#). Some of my favorite teacher websites follow.

- [Artful Artsy Amy](#) (n.d.)
- [Art Ed Guru](#) (n.d.)
- [Art is Basic](#) (Beckett, n.d.)
- [Cassie Stephens](#) (n.d.)
- [Dryden Art](#) (Fuglestad, n.d.)
- [iPad Art Room](#) (Hunt, n.d.)
- [Mini Matisse](#) (Hahn, n.d.)

Another alternative would be to post regular content on social media for students and parents to subscribe to. Here are some inspiring samples.

- [12 Interesting and Inspiring Art Teachers to Follow on Instagram](#) (Harmon, 2018)

- [40 Teacher Facebook Pages You Should Follow Today](#) (We Are Teachers Staff, 2019)

Something to keep in mind, if you post weekly course content online over social media or on an open website, is student protection. As educators, we must protect student identity, so be mindful of anything that you post that requires student participation. Perhaps they get initial content from your website or social media posting, but then submit assignments via Google Drive. A benefit to using a provided LMS is student security. When you are using an approved LMS student information and identity is protected. Be sure to familiarize yourself with your school expectations when it comes to online protections.

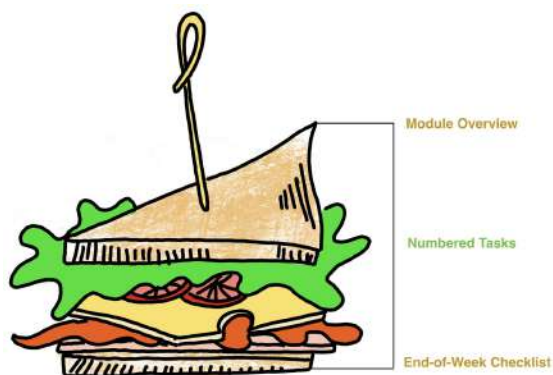# Engaging Content
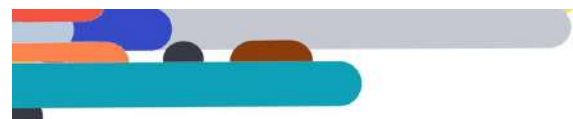
Engaging Content
Why is it important?

- Learners want multiple viewpoints
- Learners want highly applicable content
- Learners take in more when they are enjoying the learning process

In my online classes I create a folder for each week of content. You can take a similar approach. Maybe you

have weekly folders, maybe daily folders. The end goal is to put everything a student needs right in front of them, with clear and succinct labels.
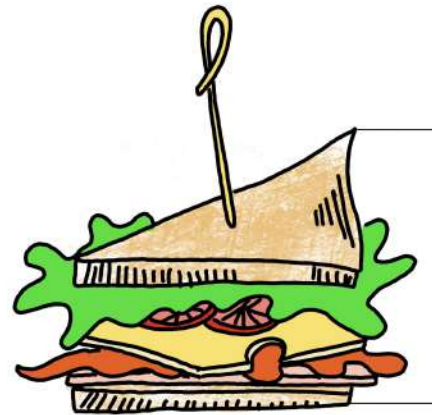

When I think about the general organization of my weekly folders, I think of a sandwich:

The top piece of bread is an overview of weekly tasks. The meat, veggies and

toppings in the middle - that is the bulk of the work, with videos, supplementals, and assignment instructions. At the very bottom is another piece of bread, a checklist of all things that should have been completed.

Through this organization I am as explicit as possible with students, or in some cases, parents. In the instance that you are working with very young students it may actually be a guardian clicking through tasks.

In the title of each folder I include deadlines. These deadlines are also reflected in the course calendar, as well as individual tasks.

Each piece of content is numbered (Step One, Step Two…). Being clear and succinct helps ensure clear understanding of tasks across the board.

Whenever linking items in weekly modules, I always opt for items to automatically appear within the platform itself. Keeping your students in one place is a key factor when it comes to focus and minimizing frustration. Following are examples of how videos, articles, and supplementals can look when embedded in an LMS system.
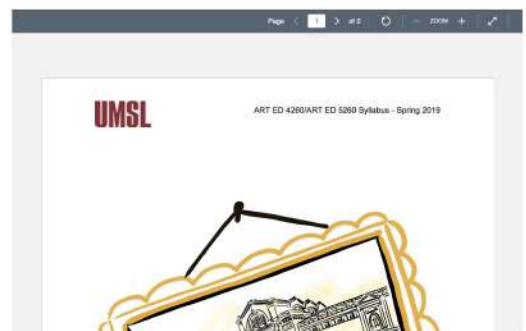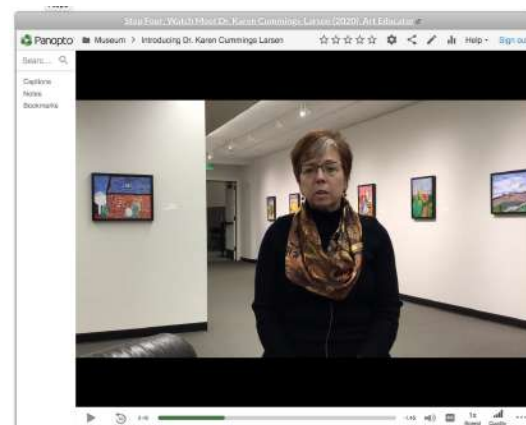
If a particular resource cannot be embedded right into my classroom, I ensure that it opens up in a new tab, so students do not lose access to their original classroom space.

Engaging Content: Humanizing
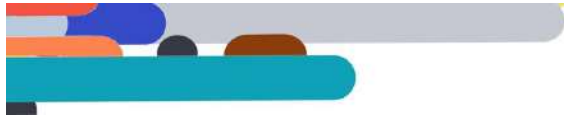
When adding content to weekly modules, I recommend humanizing yourself as much as possible in your online space. Think about how much you are going to miss seeing your students in the upcoming days, weeks, or even months. They are going to miss seeing you as well! This might even build up some newfound appreciation for you and your program.

In my own classes I humanize regularly to help students feel my presence and support throughout the learning experience. I post weekly video updates in which I run through the content for that week.
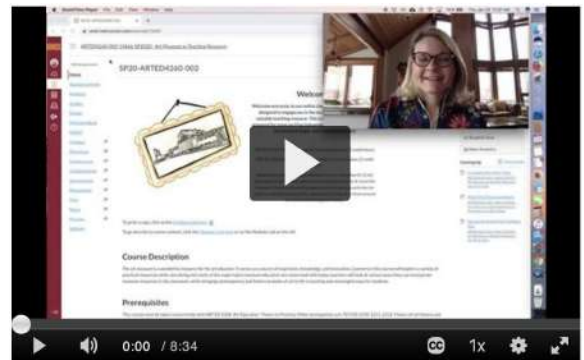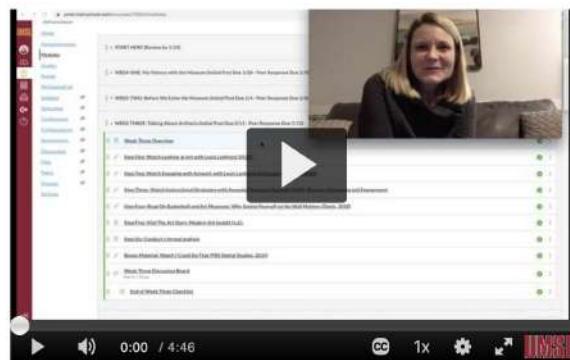
To create these videos I often use split-screen, so students can see my face and our online class content at the same time. I utilize a very simple set-up with QuickTime on my Mac laptop, but there are a host of other good tools available. Following are my go-to QuickTime tutorials and links to other sources I've used with success in the past.

- [Using Quicktime to Record Your Computer Screen](#) (Kinney, 2018)
- [How to Record Your Face AND Screen Using Quicktime](#) (Kurt, 2020)
- [Screencast-O-Matic](#)
- [Loom](#)

In addition to video updates, I record myself and other familiar faces as much as possible for my online courses. There is a lot of easy-to-grab content out there from fellow art teachers, but I try to use outside content as little as possible. Students need to see **my** face. Plus, some of you are in districts in which websites like YouTube are blocked. Creating your own content immediately addresses concerns of access.

When you are videotaping, be patient with yourself. I recommend a **two-take limit**. Limit yourself to two-takes, but strive for one. You are not looking for perfection - especially during this time of triage. A cat walks across your keyboard during your tapping, keep going. A child pokes their head up within the video frame, keep rolling. Those moments humanize you during this time of transition, and can also lead to some fun, off-the-cuff banter among students.

Depending on my output, I have a couple of different set-ups to videotape. If I am doing a quick video update and tour of the current class tasks, it's just me and my apple laptop. If I am doing a demonstration or informational video, I set up either my iPad on a tripod or my phone on a tripod. Following are my available tools.
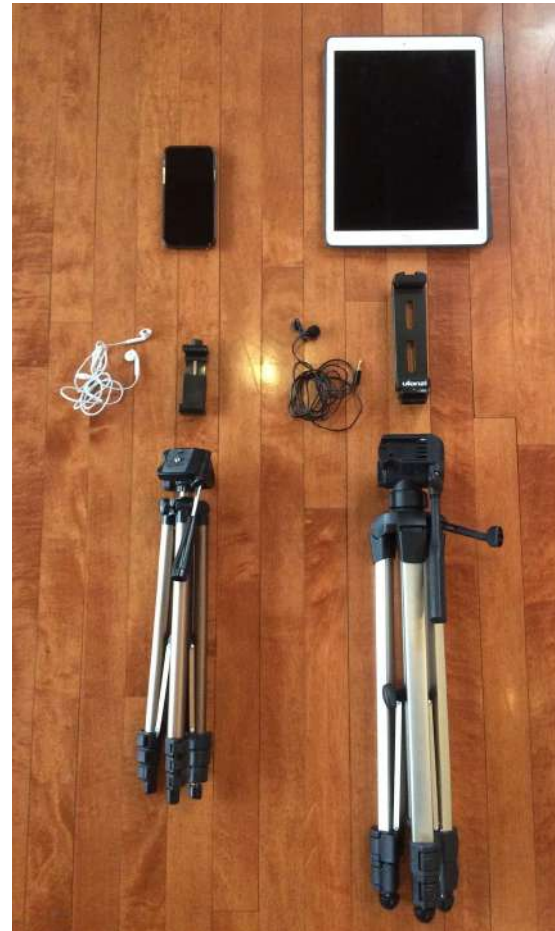
Here are some close-ups with links to individual tools:

Pictured:
iPad Pro
[iPad Tripod Mount](#)
[Lavalier Lapel Mic](#)
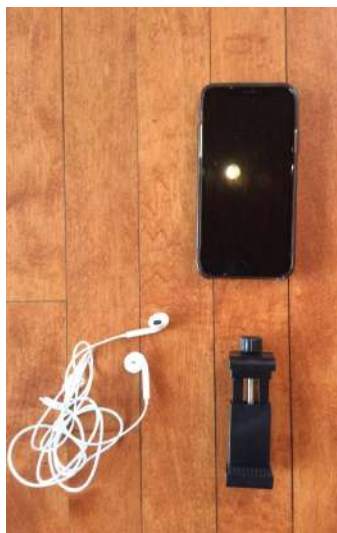
Pictured:
iPhone
[iPhone Tripod Mount](#)
Headphones

I use either my Apple headphones or a lavalier to ensure nice audio in my videos, but this isn't necessarily needed if you are recording in a nice, quiet space. You will also want to experiment with lighting. Try not

record in front of a window. This can make your face and content very dark. Work in well-lit and even lighting.

There have also been times where I don't have a tripod/mount available and I've gotten super creative with setting up books to prop up my device. The benefit of using a tripod and mount with a digital device is the ability to shift angles, so you can, for example, record your hands during a demonstration. If you still have access to digital tools at your school, or could take things home, like a document camera, I highly recommend taking advantage.

When recording, keep your content short. I try to limit my videos to five minutes or so, and chunk content as much as possible. Sometimes students will work their way through a video series. Starting and stopping allows for needed de-compression time for viewers. It is also easier for them to go back and find things if they wish to revisit specific content.

File size can also come into play when it comes to storing and accessing videos. In an LMS you may be able to upload to tools like [Panopto](#) or [Kaltura](#), depending on your school's subscriptions. I personally like to upload to Panopto and then link the videos in my Canvas course.

With Panopto you can also take advantage of [automatic captions](#) (Panopto, n.d.). See the image on the next page for a preview. This is an

important consideration when it comes to student accessibility. Be sure to check with your student rosters to see who may need certain accommodations in your online classroom space.
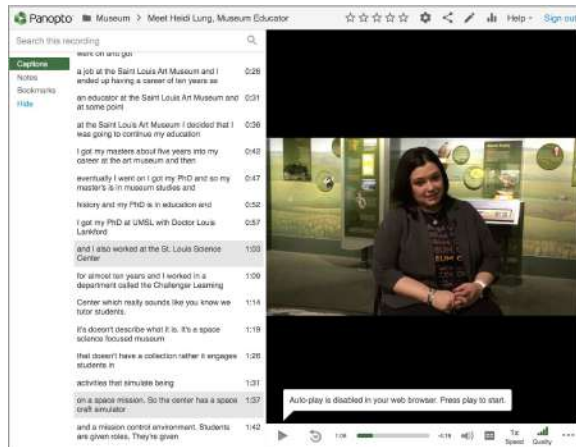
Humanizing yourself as the instructor is one thing. It is equally important for students to humanize themselves. I currently utilize discussion boards for students to share their learning each week. Sharing assignments and reflections in a public board can elevate the expectations for students, but more importantly it can help replace that face-to-face time you would otherwise have in a classroom setting.

Through an LMS, students can contribute to discussion boards in various ways. They can write, they can share files, they can create video, and/or audio responses.

If you aren't using an LMS to maintain ties with students there are some other creative ways to hold

conversations and critiques with students. I've used Voicethread extensively to facilitate dynamic conversations. This would be a great tool to share in-progress or final art pieces (one image per slide) and then invite students to share text, audio, or video critiques for peers. To learn more about Voicethread implementation, check out this link (Voicethread, n.d.).

Regardless of your selected platform, creating a system for responding to student work will be important. Students need to hear from you directly. Perhaps you respond to each student slowly over time. Or, you may create reflective videos in which you respond to the class as a whole. The manner in which you respond should help students feel connected and secure.

Meaningful Assignments

When shifting to an online modality, don't forget about your original plan for curriculum and assessment. You've undoubtedly spent **a lot of time** putting together meaningful lesson plans, handouts, rubrics, teacher examples, and so on. Use that content to inspire your work online. This can also help ensure that your students stay on track when it comes to the general scope and sequence of your year. The last thing you want is for online learning to put students a step back in their artistic development overall.

There is a ton of free content out there that is exciting and easy to access. Don't be afraid to be a bit picky when it comes to pulling in outside content. Does it tick a box in your existing curriculum? If it does, great. If not, save it for another time, and another fully developed curriculum. Whenever possible, create your own content. In the very least, when you re-enter the classroom space, you can use such content as a support down the road, perhaps for absent students.

Following are some resources, should they fit within your existing curricular goals. This list is by no means comprehensive. I recommend following the Online Art Teachers (K-12) social media pages for ongoing inspiration and resources.

Art Resources:
- Art Story (n.d.)
- Google Arts and Culture (n.d.)

- TedEd Visual Arts (n.d.)

Artists Online:
- Art 21 (n.d.)
- Art School (PBS, n.d.)
- Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems! (n.d.)

Music Videos/Cartoons:
- Art with Mati & Dada (n.d.)
- Bugs Bunny Art Museum (Ballard, 2016)
- Dust My Shoulders Off (Jane Zhang, 2016)
- 70 Million by Hold Your Horses! (L'Ogre, 2010)

Virtual Museum Resources:
- 10 Amazing Virtual Museum Tours (Bambury, 2017)
- 12 World-Class Museums You Can Visit Online (Obias, 2016)
- Tate Kids (n.d.)
- Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2020)

Cross-Curricular Opportunities:
- National Parks Online (Pyper, n.d.)
- Storyline (2020)

When it comes to art production, unless you have made preparations to send materials home with students, keep supplies as simple as possible. Perhaps a majority of your lessons involved pencil drawings. Maybe there is a found-object sculpture project. I love the idea of nature walks, to both get kids outside and creating temporary pieces with natural materials. If your school is

1:1 they can create digital works. There is so much you can do with an iPad!

Use this challenging time as an opportunity to stretch and flex as a teacher and curriculum designer. Create art right along with your students. Share in the same ways that you want your students to share through pictures, storyboards, videos, and so on. Model for kids the healing power of the arts through your own practice.

Other Considerations

Speaking of the healing power of art, while it may seem like a bit of departure from the main focus of this newsletter, that being the shift to online learning, I feel it's important to consider student and faculty mentality during this transitional time. You and your students are undoubtedly feeling a tremendous amount of stress moving online. In addition to giving yourself some grace when it comes to classroom development, it is equally important to rest and build in time to recharge.

Mindfulness practices can be a wonderful way to not only address built-up stress for you, they can also be used strategically to transition students into an artful mindset. Consider this, in a typical middle school or high school setting, students have passing periods

to re-set in-between subject matters. At home, they may quickly move from subject to subject without stretching their legs or clearing their mind.

I would recommend starting each of your art modules with an optional mindful practice. This can help create a sense of space in between subject areas for the busy online student. Following are some resources to consider.

- Stop, Breathe & Think (n.d.)
- I Am Peace (Storytime Now!, 2018)
- Zen Art (Romano, 2020)

Closure

By subscribing to this group you have already made the commitment to meaningful and substantial online learning. While we don't have all the answers right now, collectively we can support and encourage one another during this tumultuous time. I hope that you walk away with a few tips and tricks for going online quickly from this newsletter. I am here to support all of you in your journey. Please reach out when needed.

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