

Snow Days, Sick Days and Other Calamities

It's bound to happen...you are all set to have class one day, and something goes wrong class has to be canceled. If you haven't already been there, chances are you may be one day. So how exactly is a teacher to prepare for an unexpected class cancellation? We can help you develop a plan and teach you the tools to help prepare for when class just can't take place.

Teaching Online (*when you don't normally teach online!*)

Teaching online can definitely seem to be a challenge. However, with the right tools and right knowledge, online education can be a breeze. Here at UIS, we offer several tools for both educators and students that make distance learning a possibility and a success!

The following are tools that are of particular use for when a class that regularly meets on campus is canceled:

CaptureSpace Lite

CaptureSpace Lite includes many additional features beyond what TechSmith Relay had available (TechSmith Relay is now retired completely), including the ability to:

- Record sections of your screen (not the entire screen)
- Trim videos at any point in the recording
- Trim videos after the recording has been published
- Add captions
- Upload attachments
- Add chapters (making it easier for the viewer to skip to specific topics)
- Add a title slide at the beginning and credits at the end

Link to CaptureSpace Lite webpage:

<http://www.uis.edu/informationtechnologyservices/teaching-and-learning/lecturecapture/capture-space-lite/>

Skype for Business (S4B)

UIS uses Skype for Business (formerly called Microsoft Lync), a communication tool, as their solution for web-conferencing and real-time collaboration. UIS faculty and staff can download and install Skype for Business at no charge through the campus WebStore (<http://go.uis.edu/webstore>). While students cannot download the full version, they can use the web app which allows them to participate in web-conferences, meetings, chat, and desktop sharing. Canceled class? It doesn't have to be with Skype for Business! The features of this tool make it possible to host class from anywhere.

Link to Skype for Business webpage:

<http://www.uis.edu/informationtechnologyservices/connect/mslync/>

Tips and ideas for using Skype for Business for an unanticipated online class:

- *Communicate a time to students so they can plan to meet via a S4B web-conference. This is just like hosting class in the physical classroom – only everyone is able to connect from wherever they may be (even if it's on a mobile device!)*
- *In S4B web-conferences, you are able to communicate with video, audio (you must have a microphone) share PowerPoints, your desktop, specific programs that are open, and even share a whiteboard.*
- *If you are planning to present a PowerPoint, simply share it with students via S4B. Additionally, users are able to share videos they planned to show in class, use the audio feature to host a class-wide discussion, and more! Note: to have everyone involved in the audio part of the discussion, they must have microphone capabilities on their computer or mobile device.*
- *Poll students periodically to ask them questions about materials, feedback on the lecture, etc.*
- *The control of the presentation or desktop can even be passed on to other participants. This is another great way for students to get involved – they can actually write on the whiteboard, or lead parts of the discussion PowerPoint!*

Preparation and Ideas

Doing a little advanced preparation in case of an emergency class cancellation can prove to be beneficial in the future. There are some great web tools that are free that can be accessed by students from anywhere, and there is a little preparation that can be done on your end to make your lessons more mobile.

Educational Resources on the Web

- TED www.ted.com
 - TED offers users access to talks from fascinating people all over the world; from medical marvels to business gurus. There are over 700 TEDTalk videos available, with more constantly being added. Try checking out TED and selecting some favorites to save for students for a snowy day!
- Snag Films www.snagfilms.com
 - Snag Learning is another great website where users can browse through tons and tons of educational videos. Many of the videos on Snag Learning are documentaries or even feature films that are thought-provoking, inspirational, and educational. We definitely recommend this resource if having an educational video as a backup plan is something that perks your interest!
- Khan Academy www.khanacademy.com
 - From statistics to organic chemistry, Khan Academy offers users free videos that cover just about every subject imaginable. They are great tools for students to use

if they are having difficulty with specific concepts or area of a subject. Students can navigate through videos that explain concepts, go through specific examples, or they can work through exercises on their own. Each subject area is organized in a way that allows students to find the specific concept they need help with. Again, this is a great resource to check out, and flag lessons that may be particularly useful to share with students in case you are unable to meet for class.

- Lynda (<http://go.uis.edu/lynda>)
 - Lynda is a great resource to answer any tech-related questions when they arise. Lynda is also a great resource to really learn the ins and outs of a program – track progress and manage your learning pace directly within the program. When class is canceled, you may want to take advantage of the opportunity of getting your students more acclimated to a program they frequently use or you'd like to use later in the semester for a project. Simply assign them modules and they can complete them from anywhere!

Tips for Making your Lessons Mobile

- CaptureSpace Lite
 - As we went into detail earlier, Capture Space Lite is a great way to record lectures ahead of time so students can watch them later on. If lectures are pre-recorded, when class is canceled, students could still tune into lecture from wherever they may be, from whatever device they may have.
- Skype for Business
 - Skype for Business also has a recording feature where web-conferences can be recorded for later reference. Like CaptureSpace Lite, they, too, can be accessed remotely for students from mobile devices.
- Converting presentations to PDF formats and uploading them to Blackboard
 - This is a tip many educators already do, but converting presentations for the lecture into a PDF and posting it to Blackboard is a great way to not only prepare students for class for the week, but also allow them to have the materials in the case that class has to be canceled.

Citrix Virtual Desktop

Another great resource to keep in mind is Citrix Virtual Desktop (<http://go.uis.edu/citrix>). Students simply go to <https://uiscitrix.uis.edu>, login with their NetID and password, connect to a virtual desktop, and are able to access any software program available on campus computers. This is a great way to carry out your lesson if it required students to use on-campus software! They will be using their computer from wherever they have an internet connection, and will have the ability to utilize programs such as Adobe Photoshop, PowerPoint, SAS, and more!

General Tips

Establishing a Communication Plan

In the event of an emergency and class needs to be canceled, communication is key. Give students enough time to make any special plans. If you choose to have a mobile lecture, they may need to ensure they have a computer or device available, an internet connection, a quiet place, etc.

Distributing Materials to Students

- Blackboard/course website
 - Materials can be distributed to students easily through Blackboard, your course website (if you do not utilize Blackboard often)
- Box
 - Box is a campus tool that offers faculty, staff and students a place to store, access and share all of their documents from anywhere. Housing class documents in Box makes it very easy to instantly distribute them to students at any time!
 - Log in to Box at <http://go.uis.edu/box> with your NetID and Password, and you can instantly begin uploading and sharing documents.
- Email
 - If class is canceled at the last minute, you may find it most simple to distribute materials to your students via email.

Remember to make sure you communicate to students where they can find the necessary materials.