

# Promoting Quality E-Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic via an Award-Winning Webinar Series for Faculty Transitioning to Teaching Online



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# Promoting Quality E-Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic via an Award-Winning Webinar Series for Faculty Transitioning to Teaching Online

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*Abstract*—During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Columbia University's School of Social Work created a webinar series to support faculty who had to quickly transition to online teaching without prior e-learning experience. The award-winning series was freely open to all faculty anywhere, and shared the School's expertise from running a high quality online master's degree program and intensive online faculty training institute. This article describes the series' goals, planning, logistics, sessions, and impact.

*Keywords*—e-learning, distance learning, online education, emergency remote teaching, faculty development, teaching during COVID-19, keep teaching, trauma-informed teaching and learning, inclusive online teaching, online student engagement, open source

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Introduction to This Webinar Series

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, Columbia University, like most other academic institutions in the United States and around the world, took the dramatic step of switching its entire campus to online instruction in a matter of days [1]. Prior to the COVID-

online teaching, and a panel of instructors with experience teaching both online and in physical classrooms. Making our expertise in online education freely available was a match with the University's mission to "advance knowledge and learning at the highest level and to convey the products of its efforts to the world" [5] and the School's mission to "enhance well-being and promote human rights and social justice at the local, national, and global level" and to seek "academic relationships with many countries and regions" [6].

This series was honored by the International E-Learning Association with a 2020 International E-Learning Award in their Academic Division, Blended Learning Category [7] and by the University Continuing Professional Education Association (UPCEA) with a 2020 Crisis Management Marketing Award.

### B. Supports for Faculty Transitioning to Online Teaching

As universities began transitioning to emergency remote teaching due to the pandemic, many developed guidelines and training tools for faculty teaching online. In one shared google document created by the Director of Faculty Development & Technology Innovation at DePaul University, a list of links was

Conference proceedings published in *IEEEExplore*.

Links to access this paper:

<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/9385465>

and

<https://doi.org/10.1109/ecof51404.2020.9385465>

# THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON E-LEARNING (ECONF20)

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# Context

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- In the United States, institutions of higher ed transitioned to remote emergency teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic starting around March 2020
- Most instructors did not have prior experience teaching online, and needed support to transition to this new modality
- Columbia University's School of Social Work has a well-established online program, and had expertise to share
- Therefore, we opened up our training freely to any educator anywhere by creating a public webinar series

# Overview of our webinar series

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- Offered twice and scheduled to accommodate a variety of availability:
  - First week in Adobe Connect, during lunchtime in U.S. Eastern Time
  - Second week in Zoom, during the evening in U.S. Eastern Time
- Free
- Platform agnostic
  - Focused on online pedagogy, rather than how to use specific tools
- Available asynchronously via recordings and downloadable materials

# Webinar series: Session topics & agendas

The Basics of Online Student Engagement and Online Instructor Presence	Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning (TITL) Online	Inclusive Online Teaching and Teachable Moments in Online Classrooms (2 versions)	Panel of Instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Welcome, agenda, and introductions</li> <li>II. Options for engaging students via instructor presence</li> <li>III. Options for engaging students using live class session tools</li> <li>IV. Options for engaging students outside of live classes</li> <li>V. Wrap up, Q&amp;A, and thank you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Welcome, agenda, and introductions</li> <li>II. Resilience and Self-Care</li> <li>III. Trauma-informed approach and trauma-informed teaching and learning (TITL)</li> <li>IV. Practical ways to use TITL online</li> <li>V. Wrap up, Q&amp;A, and thank you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Welcome, agenda, and introductions</li> <li>II. Creating an inclusive classroom community online</li> <li>III. Example: Teaching a Course on Gender and Sexual Identity Development (Week 1) / Planning to respond to microaggressions &amp; other teachable moments in classrooms (Week 2)</li> <li>IV. Planning to respond to microaggressions &amp; other teachable moments in classrooms (Week 1) / Example: Responding to a teachable moment in an online classroom (Week 2)</li> <li>V. Wrap up, Q&amp;A, and thank you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Welcome, agenda, and introductions</li> <li>II. Panel: Experienced online instructors</li> <li>III. Question and answer with panel</li> <li>IV. Wrap up and thank you</li> </ul>

# How to access the series

The webinar series recordings & slides, and other materials, are freely available at [https://bit.ly/CSSW\\_WebinarSeries\\_TransitioningOnline](https://bit.ly/CSSW_WebinarSeries_TransitioningOnline)

 COLUMBIA | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

## Webinar series to support faculty who are new to teaching online: Recordings and resources

Hosted by Columbia University School of Social Work's [Online Campus](#)

Free and open to all faculty anywhere; all are welcome

The series is offered to support faculty moving quickly from face-to-face teaching in residential classrooms, to remote teaching online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to the Columbia University School of Social Work Communications team for making the recordings available on our YouTube channel, the CSSW IT team for setting us up on a Zoom Webinar account on a tight timeframe, and the Columbia University Libraries Digital Scholarship team for making the slides available on Academic Commons. Thank you to Taylor Eutsey, Agata Dera, Rebecca Chung, and Mary Downs for providing live support for the sessions.

Shortened link to this doc in case it's easier to share:  
[https://bit.ly/CSSW\\_WebinarSeries\\_TransitioningOnline](https://bit.ly/CSSW_WebinarSeries_TransitioningOnline)

Article about this webinar series: [During Pandemic, In-House Expertise Anchors Faculty New to Teaching Online](#)



We are happy to share that this series has won a 2020 International E-Learning Award from [the International E-Learning Association](#) and a 2020 Crisis Management Marketing Award from the University Professional Continuing Education Association (UPCEA).

Webinar #1:

### The basics of online student engagement and online instructor presence:

Engaging students using instructor webcam, chat, polling, and breakout rooms

- Facilitators:
  - [Matthea Marquart](#), MSSW, Director of Administration, Online Campus and Lecturer, Twitter @MattheaMarquart
  - [Kristin Garay](#), MSW, Manager of Online Campus Technologies and Associate
- Offered twice:
  - Monday, March 23rd, 1:00-2:00pm ET (in Adobe Connect)
    - [Recording](#)
    - [Slides](#)
  - Tuesday, March 31st, 8:30-9:30pm ET (in Zoom)
    - [Recording](#)
    - [Slides](#)

Webinar #2:

**Trauma-informed teaching & learning (TITL) online:** The principles of TITL, practical ways to apply them online, and self-care for instructors and students

- Facilitators:
  - [Johanna Creswell Báez](#), PhD, LCSW, Manager of Course Development, Online Campus and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Twitter @Jcreswellbaez
  - [Matthea Marquart](#), MSSW, Director of Administration, Online Campus and Lecturer, Twitter @MattheaMarquart
- Offered twice:
  - Tuesday, March 24th, 1:00-2:00pm ET (in Adobe Connect)
    - [Recording](#)
    - [Slides and handouts](#)
  - Wednesday, April 1st, 8:30-9:30pm ET (in Zoom)
    - [Recording](#)
    - [Slides and handouts](#)

Helpful resources for those who are new to teaching online:

- Getting started with teaching online:
  - One-pager: [Quick Tips for Online Instruction: The Basics](#)
  - One-pager: [Lighting and webcam setup for teaching online classes](#)
  - One-pager: [Preparing to teach your first class online in Zoom](#) (focus on technology)
  - Op Ed: [Need to move your class online in a hurry? Here's how](#)
  - Blog post: [The Power of Lighting in a Virtual Classroom: Tips on Improving Webcam Lighting for Online Educators](#)
  - Article: [Dear Professors: Don't Let Student Webcams Trick You: Instructors who teach live online classes should thoughtfully consider whether to require students to use their webcams during class](#)
  - Book chapter (paywall): [That Human Element: Fostering Instructor Presence Through Online Instructional Videos](#)
  - Advice for online students: [7 Insider Tips for Online Social Work Students From Recent Online Degree Grads Who Now Work in Online Education](#)
- Trauma-informed teaching and learning:
  - One-pager: [Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Online: Principles & Practices During a Global Health Crisis](#)
  - Op Ed: [Trauma-Informed Online Teaching: Essential for the Coming Academic Year](#)
  - Blog post with one example of implementing trauma-informed teaching: [Fostering a spirit of collaboration with Social Work Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
  - Workshop slides: [Essential Trauma-Informed Online Teaching Tools](#)
- Active learning & student engagement in online classrooms:
  - One-pager: [Strategies for successfully engaging all students in live synchronous online classes](#)
  - Workshop slides & handout: [Synchronous Strategies for Interactive Live Virtual Class Sessions that Engage Students and Build Community](#)
  - Book chapter (paywall): [Instructional Strategies for Synchronous Components of Online Courses](#)
  - Book chapter (paywall): [How Coteaching and Other Strategies Promote Lively Student Engagement](#)
- Teaching clinical skills online:
  - One-page poster: [Converting an experiential clinical skills-based lab from an on-campus to a live online version: A pilot](#)

# Impact and lessons learned

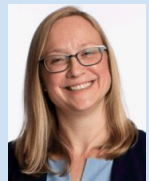
- 776 educators from 265 institutions around the world signed up for the sessions
  - The live participants engaged actively and built community
- The materials have been shared by other institutions and by individual educators
  - As of November 18, 2020, the recordings have been viewed on the School's YouTube channel 4,977 times and the slides have been viewed in Columbia University's Academic Commons 2,500 times
- Rewarding to have a wide international reach
  - When possible, we recommend opening up trainings and sharing resources afterward

# Connect with the authors



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