



▶ THE CAR DEADLINE WAS MONDAY, MARCH 15: IF YOU HAVEN'T SUBMITTED A CAR, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR DEAN/ASSOCIATE DEAN!



▶ SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES DURING THE PANDEMIC CAUSED THE STORY ABOUT STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON ONLINE PEDAGOGY TO BE TABLED FOR NOW.



▶ HAVE AN IDEA OR A SUCCESS STORY THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE FOR ASSESSMENT NEWS? CONTACT KYLIE PRICE.

Sandburg

2021

Spring

# ASSESSMENT News

ENHANCING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO ENRICH INSTITUTION-WIDE ASSESSMENT

## Sandburg Assesses the New Normal

By KYLIE PRICE  
Assistant Dean of Assessment

During the last twelve months, Sandburg reevaluated how to deliver instruction in the best possible way.

Face-to-face instruction can be more than just a personal preference: several academic disciplines simply do not transfer well online.

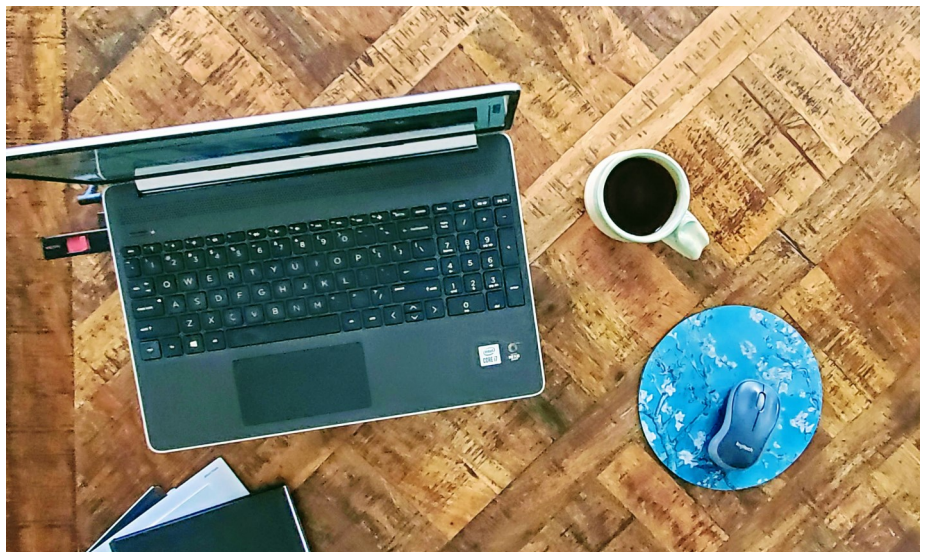
But the pandemic didn't give us a choice.

Lisa Walker, Art Assistant Professor, says, "Studio classes are still best face-to-face, of course," but she adds, "in a pinch, I can teach a studio of students from home."

Like Walker, while many people still require and prefer the face-to-face atmosphere, many of us have discovered pedagogical techniques to incorporate after the pandemic.

Chris Barber, Criminal Justice Instructor says, "The best thing that has come to light is that students have an option to make contact without having to find me in my office. The student can still have a face-to-face virtual meeting with me when they're stuck or need more explanation on an assignment or project. I can share my screen, so they can see my explanation of something."

Barber plans to keep that option of virtual meetings once Sandburg



**Regardless of preference, online instruction has been a necessity during this pandemic, and assessment of that online instruction is helping redefine pedagogy.**

transitions back to a face-to-face setting.

Stacy Bainter, Nursing Instructor, also plans on utilizing virtual meetings after the pandemic. In addition, she says, "Since going virtual, the online students have an option to schedule a time with me, or I open the review at a specific time on a specific day, and we [meet] on Teams so I can answer any questions. More students have been interested in completing exam review

via Teams since going virtual. I plan to continue this option in the future."

Bainter also plans on continuing the use of Instilled video if Sandburg keeps that Moodle resource for her online recorded lectures.

Jill Johnson, Psychology Assistant Professor, says, "I have included 'Psych Talk' during my Wednesday office hours."

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# ASSESSMENT News

## COVID FATIGUE IS REAL: HERE'S HOW TO AVOID IT

By KYLIE PRICE  
Assistant Dean of Assessment

Do you feel exhausted by everyday tasks? Do you feel disconnected? Have you put your own self-care needs on hold? Have your students? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, understanding what COVID fatigue is might help you.

In February, the Illinois Community Colleges Online hosted the *Growing Online Learning 2021: TLC: Teaching, Learning, and Caring* Conference, and Rachel Boldman, Vinny Cascio, Mary Grimm, and Dr. Janice Malak collectively presented the keynote that focused first on how to understand the trauma surrounding COVID fatigue and then how to identify students in distress and intervene appropriately.

We’ve seen this type of traumatic experience before, Boldman explains. Collective trauma changed us as a population after 9/11, and post 9/11, airport screenings were the adjusted response to that trauma.

“The collective trauma of COVID-19 is unique,” she says, and the loss, social isolation, fear, and change associated with it exhausts people.

“When we’re under stress,” Boldman continues, “our brain—our old brain—thinks that we’re being threatened.” The fight-flight-freeze response, she adds, is how bodies respond to stress: our brain cannot necessarily differentiate between an actual threat versus everyday stressors.

“COVID fatigue is real,” Boldman argues, and it’s caused by “accumulated stress and that heightened state we are in.”

COVID fatigue not only causes exhaustion but can lead to a feeling of disconnection, too.

Malak suggests that the silos that were established on campuses prior to the pandemic have been exacerbated now.

Exhaustion and disconnection can lead to a third symptom of COVID fatigue: self-care neglect.

Cascio defines compassion fatigue as “the emotional, physical, and/or spiritual distress that can occur when caring for others.”

Because of these many roles that faculty and staff utilize, it can impact them greatly, but he advocates to recognize the symptoms in order to be proactive.

“Not one person has the right or perfect answer, but we have some strategies that we can tap in to,” Cascio says.

One such tool, he says, is the Professional Quality of Life Measure.\* This self report examines symptoms, and while it is not a diagnostic tool, it can identify where the person is in order to provide better self care. It helps to demonstrate what people are neglecting and what they can implement.

Boldman further discussed how to “tackle” compassion and COVID fatigue, and setting boundaries was a primary technique.

In addition, she suggests utilizing alternative ways to connect with people, including the app Marco Polo.

Boldman argues not to neglect nutrition or exercise, but she also encourages advocacy for one’s self.

Grimm specifically discussed boundaries and how those boundaries are not always physical. She defines it to include personal lives: a boundary is “a line of integrity of our well being; when a boundary like that is crossed, it would weaken the structure as a whole.”

When it comes to relationships, she argues, “we have to value the integrity of our well being.” If we don’t, she adds, it will lead to compassion/COVID fatigue.

Before the pandemic, she says, it was easier to implement these boundaries. Now, we have to restructure and reestablish these boundaries.

## Continued Sandburg assesses the new normal

At least four or five students attend each session, she explains. “We started out discussing some of the psychological experiments that piqued my interest when I was a student.”

Johnson plans to continue these “Psych Talks” once Sandburg is back face-to-face because the benefits, she adds, are “three-fold.”

First, Johnson says, “I get to talk to students during my office hours.”

Second, she says, “It gives students an idea of what college conversations are like. Last week was the first time they worked together to discuss mass shootings to come up with ideas on how to solve the problem.”

And third, Johnson continues, “They have made friends with new people in a very safe way and have grown because of it.”

Assessing the new normal isn’t restricted to the faculty at Sandburg though.

Rebecca Eaton, Coordinator of Library Services, says, “We started offering virtual workshops and appointments so students could access them from anywhere.”

She says the Library “will definitely continue with both as it has increased access for distance learning and non-traditional students.”

In assessing these services, Eaton adds, “We might transition virtual workshops to a hybrid model as students are allowed back on campus. We have noticed a definite surge of screen fatigue and want to avoid contributing to that post-pandemic.”

Thus, the pandemic forced all of us at Sandburg to reenvision how we offer instruction and student services. Assessing those new techniques can teach us how to move forward successfully and effectively.

\* You can access this tool on the Assessment Resources Moodle page.