Draude’s instructional tech career: from experimentation to emergency

It seems fitting that Barbara Draude was a nurse by profession, as well as educator and instructional technology innovator.

Draude, who retired in April as ITD assistant vice president of Academic and Instructional Technologies after 34 years at MTSU, began her career experimenting with instructional tech. When she finished her work on campus, it had become an invaluable resource in a health care crisis.

Plans for a retirement celebration had to be canceled due to social distancing and crisis management, as MTSU quickly moved to all-remote instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, Draude was at the forefront of that transition, helping faculty fully utilize the resources she and her team had spent three decades putting into place.

“I really was sad for it to end that way, but I was very, very proud of how my team and IT in general were able to rise to the occasion of what was needed.”

—Barbara Draude

Introducing BlueID online, virtual card options

The BlueID office is open in SSAC 112, but you can save a trip and skip the lines.

We have launched BlueID Online as your one-stop destination for digital MTSU ID Card management. Visit mtsu.edu/BlueID for details.

Upload your own ID photo and then receive your card in the mail or pick it up in person. Or simply request a replacement. You can manage your BlueID account. Just log in and:

• get up-to-the-minute balances for Raider Funds, MT Dining (Flex Dollars), and meal plans
• view card transaction history in real time
• disable your card at any time if it’s lost
• enable low balance alerts via email or text for Raider Funds and Flex Dollars

You also have the option to obtain a Virtual BlueID for your mobile device.
Classroom recording system to help with remote and online access

To help facilitate the University’s fall reopening plan, every classroom on campus is being equipped with a new audio-visual system that will automatically record teaching sessions for access by students.

Along with training and tech support for faculty, the primary goal for the fall semester was to make sure the new technology doesn’t accidentally “walk away,” said James Copeland, ITD assistant director of Classroom Technology.

The microphones are on a lanyard to be worn around the necks of instructors, so Copeland and ITD staff will be reminding them to make sure they are removed before they leave the class for the day. Instructors are also encouraged to properly charge the mics when they leave the classroom.

The classroom A/V systems are being installed in 423 rooms in 42 buildings on campus. They feature a 10X zoom camera that is set to automatically focus on a whiteboard in each room.

Recordings will begin at the designated start time of a class and end when it does, he said.

The Panopto recordings will be automatically uploaded to cloud storage to be accessed through Desire2Learn (D2L) by students in online, remote, or hybrid classes or by those in traditional classes who miss a class or would like to review a lecture.

Faculty using laptops for Zoom sessions will record them using Panopto to upload to the cloud or directly to D2L.

New process set to borrow equipment

ITD has Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots, and laptop computers available for faculty, staff, and students to check out for use during a semester.

To make a request to borrow equipment, go to mtsu.edu/itd/equipment-request/.

ITD handed out nearly 1,400 laptops, Chromebooks, or wi-fi hotspots and at the start of the COVID-19 response last spring.

MTSU Marketing Professor Kim Sokoya, associate dean of the Department of Management, records a class session for remote teaching this spring. Faculty and staff scrambled to offer remote learning in the spring due to the COVID-19 crisis. A new classroom recording system will facilitate that remote and online instruction by automatically recording class sessions.

Faculty have the option to delay the recording start, not record their classes, or edit recorded sessions using Panopto, Copeland said. All recordings are scheduled to be deleted at the end of the semester.

A training video on the classroom recording system can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=-DT0-70L14A.

Anyone with questions is asked to contact the IT Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.
Over the past few months, the MTSU community rallied together to go all in on all-remote teaching due to the COVID-19 crisis. That academic environment is continuing as remote, online, and hybrid classes are key parts of the fall reopening plan.

The challenges involved in answering that call varied depending on the type of class, number of students, and previous usage of instructional technology. Several faculty members shared how they made the transition in the early days of the crisis:

**Joan McRae, professor, World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures**

Before the switch to all-remote teaching in March, McRae was teaching one online course already, so that put her a little ahead. However, the bigger challenge was her Humanities 2610H course, which focuses in large part on creating and editing Wikipedia articles.

The bulk of instruction in that course had been on campus in the classroom. So the main question she faced was “figuring out how to teach the Wikipedia construction without being able to actually show them the where’s and how’s in person.”

The solution?

“I made a screencast video to show them where to find the information they needed, after creating a pseudo-student account so my screen would look like theirs,” she said.

“Still, it is a challenge to get them to input information in the correct places, and we are really missing those joyful opportunities to share when we’ve figured something out, like how to integrate an image—never an easy thing in Wikipedia.”

As for how students would make classroom presentations remotely, she knew some would have issues with internet connectivity. So she made a curriculum adjustment.

“Presentations would have had to be recorded and then posted. That might be a challenge for some students in a very stressful environment,” McRae said. “So I decided that to reduce the stress level on students, we would replace presentation grades with D2L discussion questions—graded. We have a group Zoom meeting for students to show off their Wikipedia articles. It’s an adjustment, but in the best interest of students.”

The responses to the discussion question option were “delightful,” she said.

“Since participation is visual and required, there is a more even distribution and answers are more thoughtful. I am going to keep this element in the course even when we are back on grounds. The Wikipedia class continues to be a challenge, but we are making progress. I’m learning more about Zoom and how it can be used for an online class in the future,” McRae said.

**Jeremy Aber, associate professor, Geosciences**

Aber said two courses he taught this spring semester were GIS classes that were “tech-heavy” and before the transition combined in-class and lab sessions. Fortunately, he was already using Desire2Learn (D2L) extensively to distribute and collect assignments, he said.

“The biggest challenge was dealing with the software,” Aber said. “ArcGIS is required for the classes, is expensive, and only runs on Windows. Thankfully, I have student trial licenses that I can distribute to the students, but for Mac users, I had to switch to the FOSS QGIS and come up with new activities to replace the labs they wouldn’t be able to do. I had to try and find things that would cover the same types of tasks as the normal labs I use so they weren’t getting a lesser experience.”

Aber said those early all-remote teaching sessions went “pretty well actually.”

“I already put my lecture PowerPoints on D2L, so I’ve just been recording audio narration to go along with them, and the student response has been good,” he said. “I have been using Discord to communicate with students as well as email, and being able to share a feed of their screens has allowed me to help troubleshoot when they run into issues with assignments.”

**Ryan Seth Jones, assistant professor, College of Education**

Jones’ experience is representative of the challenges faced by faculty members teaching classes requiring interpersonal dialogue and hands-on learning.

Before the switch to all-online, his Ph.D. classes were taught in person with a large amount of time “devoted to discussing readings in class.” His undergraduate MTeach classes were a combination of in-class meetings and field experience in local high schools.

“The biggest challenge was the field experience. These students were supposed to teach a week-long unit they designed in a local high school, video-record themselves, and write a series of structured reflections on the experience. Obviously, there’s no way to replicate this in an online environment. So, instead I had the students read previous reflections and analyze the teaching described in the reflections,” Jones said.

See Transition Tales, page 11
Interest in IT came from tinkering with old-school tech

Alan Franklin, ITD's director of Client Services, said his career in higher education IT began with some old-school technology.

“I can recall that we had, growing up, many different computers such as an Atari 800XL, Commodore 64, and Tandy TRS-80,” Franklin said. “I was too young at the time to really do any more with these other than play some of the games. We bought our first IBM computer when I was around 8 years old. It was powered by an 8088 processor and I discovered that the Disk Operating System was something that was incredibly easy for me to learn and manipulate.”

He said it was on that device that his love for IT really began to develop.

“I was quickly capable of mastering aspects of DOS that even my father struggled with. As time progressed and operating systems changed and became more advanced, I never seemed to struggle with adapting to those changes,” he said.

That interest in and aptitude for all things digital has continued throughout his career. Franklin joined ITD in January 2017 as director of Client Services. Some of the initiatives he has helped complete include the transition from Windows 7 to Windows 10 for campus computers and testing of the Pharos print management in order to migrate classroom and lab printers to that system.

Franklin grew up in Greenfield, Tennessee, where he lived until 2007 when he moved to Martin, Tennessee. There he earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee–Martin, with a major in Management Information Systems.

“I began my career in information technology as an employee with Institutional Distributors in Martin, while attending UTM as a student,” Franklin said. “I was then offered a position as a student employee with the Information Technology Services department at UTM, which I happily accepted.”

After about six months as a student employee, he took a full-time position as an IT technologist at UT–Martin and advanced through the ranks from senior IT Technologist to manager of the Technology Support Services.

“The primary motivation for me to begin my career in higher education was to be a part of a team that is continuously making a positive difference in the way faculty teach and students learn,” he said. “We are providing innovative solutions to problems and constantly finding new ways for faculty to engage and connect with their pupils.”

Most recently that has involved helping during the University’s switch to all-remote teaching this spring and summer due to the COVID-19 crisis.

“The technological landscape is continually changing and we, as IT professionals, must be focused on implementing these new technologies in various ways to meet the needs of the University,” he said.

Franklin and his wife Xuan have three sons, Lucas (14), Kasey (7), and Eric (4). So much of his time away from work is in family activities.

“My oldest has always been interested in various sports so I spent much of my time in his earlier years either coaching or assisting with soccer, basketball, baseball, and tennis recreational teams,” Franklin said. “Aside from sports, we tend to spend much of our time in outdoor activities such as hiking or camping.

“Finally, our Christian faith is a huge part of our family and I would be remiss not to mention that we take every opportunity as a family to be the hands and feet of Christ and spread His love to others.”
Former college instructor Ponder is IT designer and tech specialist

Jennifer Ponder joined ITD in July as an instructional designer and technology support specialist in the Faculty Instructional Technology Center.

Ponder, of Murfreesboro, started her career as a college instructor.

“I began teaching English at Jacksonville State University in Alabama when I was 23 years old. I had the most amazing career with colleagues and students that became like family,” Ponder said. “I had the opportunity to teach everything from developmental writing, to the Hebrew Bible in translation, in online, hybrid and face-to-face formats. I transitioned from that role in 2018 to become the director of JSU’s teaching and learning center, the Rebecca Turner Faculty Commons. I retired from JSU in July of this year when I accepted my current position at MTSU.”

She holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree in English, a master’s in instructional technology, and is continuing her education by pursuing a Master of Business Administration.

At MTSU, her responsibilities include helping to support Desire2Learn (D2L), Zoom, Examity, Teams, and newly implemented classroom technology.

“I have so much to learn and will forever be grateful for my colleagues . . . for answering a bazillion questions a day from me,” she said.

MTSU grad Umstead joins ITD as systems administrator I

Brian Umstead has joined ITD as systems administrator I in Enterprise Server Services.

Umstead, of Halethorpe, Maryland, earned an associate’s degree in Applied Science—Information Technology from Motlow State Community College in 2013 and a bachelor’s degree in Information Technology from MTSU in 2019.

“Prior to MTSU, I worked in the private sector supporting both individuals and small office/home office environments, and eventually small/medium business customers. I have provided support in most areas of IT, including networking, desktops, servers, migrations, and firewall/security administration,” Umstead said.

“I decided that in order to gain employment in a larger enterprise sector, I should return to school and earn my degree in Information Technology,”

He is focused on the maintenance and support of the University’s Windows-based server infrastructure. This includes physical servers and virtual servers in data centers, as well as cloud-based services.

Recently, he has been assigned as the technical support for the Facilities Services Department, which includes building automation, lighting controls, environment sensors, and campus-wide project support, he said.

“The thing I like the most about my job, and I know it sounds cliché, but it’s the fact that I am helping students, faculty, and staff use the ITD technology to accomplish their mission,” he said.

“The biggest challenge for me has been orientating to the enterprise scale of the University’s systems, along with the many departments that need to interact in order to keep those systems operational and reliable.”

In his spare time he enjoys live music concerts and likes to tinker with electronics projects such as restoring antique tube radios and building tube-based amplifiers.
Access Success

Be proactive to make sure no student overlooked in remote teaching

We are required by law to make our offerings as accessible as possible for people with disabilities. This includes proactively incorporating accessibility practices when creating course offerings and accommodating individuals re-actively when being notified by the Disability and Access Center (DAC).

When we build and renovate buildings, we proactively ensure access by having ramps, elevators, etc., and that same mentality should be taken when building your courses. For instance, ensure access to the video you will be using in your course by making sure it is captioned and/or audio-described.

Remediation is always more difficult than being proactive. When preparing materials to include in any course, take a moment to research how to include accessibility in the preparation process.

This is always important, but especially during this time of increased remote teaching. Make sure your Word docs, scans, videos, podcasts, or whatever else you may be creating, using, or procuring are accessible at the start by checking out a robust website created by MTSU's Faculty Instructional Technology Center.

It can be viewed at mtsu.edu/ait/accessibility.

One mode of delivery that has been highly utilized in the current remote delivery of classes is videoconferencing. When planning to use such a delivery method, be prepared with a way to arrange live captioning (Visit the Zoom Help Center for training on providing CC). Live captioning would not have to be applied proactively, but if a person needed it to ensure access, it would have to be incorporated quickly.

An official notification of this need must come from the DAC. If a student requests any accommodation directly, always refer him/her to the DAC, and wait for approval before moving forward.

Finally, “it’s the law” and “it’s the right thing to do” are true statements to help promote accessibility, but it is often more meaningful to offer an example of the direct personal impact of proactive accessibility.

Imagine if a faculty member spent all summer meticulously crafting a class that is full of multimedia components and is greatly looking forward to presenting it, but he/she forgot to consider accessibility. The fall semester comes and a week into the class the students are expressing excitement about it.

Then a student adds the class who, due to a hearing impairment, needs all applicable video materials captioned and transcripts of all audio material. Now, the faculty member, in a significant time crunch, has to recreate or modify all the applicable materials.

Be proactive and avoid a similar scenario.

Lance Alexis is MTSU director of ADA compliance. He can be reached at lance.alexis@mtsu.edu.

Wolfe is new ITD instructional tech specialist focusing on accessibility

Cheri Wolfe started with ITD in July as instructional technology specialist—Accessibility.

Originally from Jackson, Tennessee, she lives in Manchester. Wolfe earned a bachelor’s degree from Lambuth College in Chemistry and Secondary Education, a master’s degree in Educational Leadership from George Washington University, 18 more credit hours in Curriculum Design from University of Tennessee, and an Instructional Design Certificate from the Online Learning Consortium.

Her career has included working 10 years as a middle school and high school science teacher, as a curriculum designer/online learning at MathScience Innovation Center, and an instructional technology specialist for the Virginia Department of Education.

She also served as curriculum supervisor for Virtual Virginia, the Commonwealth’s online program, and as an IT specialist for University of Tennessee at Martin.

Wolfe’s duties for ITD will include instructional design, Desire2Learn (D2L) administration, teaching and facilitating workshops and training, and providing accessibility advice and support.

Her hobbies include camping, hiking, reading, and walking her Great Dane.

“I love working with people; teaching feeds my soul,” Wolfe said.

Alexis Virginia, the Commonwealth’s online program, and as an IT specialist for University of Tennessee at Martin.

Wolfe’s duties for ITD will include instructional design, Desire2Learn (D2L) administration, teaching and facilitating workshops and training, and providing accessibility advice and support.

Her hobbies include camping, hiking, reading, and walking her Great Dane.

“I love working with people; teaching feeds my soul,” Wolfe said.

Lance Alexis is MTSU director of ADA compliance. He can be reached at lance.alexis@mtsu.edu.
Tech Tips & Tricks:

OneDrive is often-overlooked as a file-sharing resource

Our University Microsoft account comes with a variety of productivity tools and one of the most useful—and one that is commonly overlooked—is OneDrive.

OneDrive is Microsoft’s Cloud storage service that can be used to save documents, photos and small videos. OneDrive is capable of being your online backup resource or can be implemented as primary storage. It allows for easy sharing of documents between MTSU Microsoft account holders and can upload files as large as 20 Gigabytes.

OneDrive is a great resource too few know about. If you know OneDrive at all you will know it from the MTSU portal page. If you go to https://portal.office.com and login with your FSA credentials you will see a list of tools. Online versions of Word, PowerPoint, Excel and more programs reside on the portal page. Here too you will find OneDrive. Identified by the cloud icon, it can be used right away to upload documents or images by simply clicking into it and pressing Upload or dragging the files into the window.

A lesser-known use is configuring your Microsoft Office account to save to OneDrive like a University share drive. Simply choose Add a Place, select OneDrive, then log in with your University credentials. OneDrive can also be downloaded and installed as a stand-alone application. MTSU OneDrive accounts are 1 terabyte in size and expand to 5 terabytes when needed. That storage capacity obviously suggests a location to back up many files, but it is designed to do even more.

Click on the Shared link on the left-hand navigation and you will find folders for Files Shared With Me and Files I Shared. There also is an option to create Shared Libraries for group collaboration.

Some instructors use it as a way to receive documents from students particularly when those files are too large to receive as an attachment or uploaded to Dropbox. Likewise, the student can save the file to their OneDrive then share it from the file to the instructor.

Another use of OneDrive is as a replacement for your computer’s My Documents folder. OneDrive exceeds the My Document’s folders usefulness by being available from anywhere. If your documents are stored in OneDrive they will be accessible through any device that has a web browser including phones and tablets.

Perhaps the most beneficial reason to store documents on OneDrive, and the most overlooked, is that since the files live on the server they cannot be lost or corrupted if your computer fails. You needn’t worry about hard drive failure if the files are saved in the cloud.

When cloud storage is mentioned, some have concerns about security. While it is fair to be concerned about the security of your files, MTSU has implemented Multi-factor Authentication, which has made the use of OneDrive more secure.

If you are interested in using OneDrive but have questions, contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or through email at help@mtsu.edu.

Proofpoint quarantine updated

ITD updated the quarantining function of the Proofpoint advanced email threat protection system in June so bulk email will no longer deliver to users’ inboxes.

In November 2019, ITD suspended the default quarantining function of the Proofpoint system so bulk email (aka mass emails delivered to large groups, typically for marketing purposes) would bypass the quarantine and still deliver to users’ inboxes. These emails had appeared in the daily Proofpoint user digest, giving users the ability to Release the Message, Allow the Sender, or Block the Sender.

Now the email filter is configured to Quarantine and Hold to help reduce the amount of unwanted or bulk emails that MTSU students and employees receive.

If you have any questions about Proofpoint, you can read more in the online FAQs at mtsu.edu/security/proofpoint-faq.php. You can also contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or at help@mtsu.edu.
Options for using Skype for Business while working remotely

There are several different options available to use your Skype for Business (S4B) work phone number while you’re working from off campus.

**Option 1 (Preferred): Run S4B on a Computer (NOT via Remote Desktop)**

This method allows you to answer both your personal line as well as any department number you currently answer. This will work whether or not you are using VPN to connect to the MTSU network. If you are working on a laptop provided by the University, Skype for Business should already be installed. If it isn’t, please contact your department’s IT person or the ITD Help Desk. If you do not have a MTSU-provided PC, you can install S4B on your home machine. Here are some instructions to help you get started:

- Go to: [products.office.com/en-us/skype-for-business/download-app](products.office.com/en-us/skype-for-business/download-app)
- Select Download Skype for Business and select Download Licensed Client
- Log in with username@mtsu.edu and FSA password
- Click on Install Office

The directions will depend on your computer. If you see anything specific to S4B, please follow those instructions. You may have to install the entire version of Office.

You will need to have speakers and a microphone. If you are using a laptop, you can use the imbedded speaker and mic, but that has been known to cause echo. A Microsoft-certified headset is preferred. Either way, once you are logged into the client, run the Audio device setup to make sure it’s working correctly. If you are using Remote Desktop to connect to your work computer and only have S4B in the Remote Desktop session, you will be able to see the calls come into your Skype for Business client but won’t be able to answer them. You will need to answer Skype for Business calls outside of your Remote Desktop screen.

**Option 2: Use the Skype for Business mobile client**

Access to the Skype for Business mobile application has been enabled for all users. You can find the S4B app in your mobile device's app store. Proper setup of the app is crucial. A few key points: sign-in address is your email address (firstname.lastname@mtsu.edu); username is fsa/username for Windows users and username@mtsu.edu for Mac users, password is your FSA password. When prompted for a phone number, you must enter your MOBILE number— not your MTSU phone number. If you answer a main department number or need further assistance, please email telecom@mtsu.edu.

Calls completing to the S4B app will depend on your cell phone coverage and congestion, etc. If you see that your calls are consistently not getting to you in time, you can extend the number of rings before it rolls to voicemail. This can only be done by connecting to the S4B client. Outbound calls made from the mobile client will display your MTSU telephone number. Signing in/out of the mobile client allows you to control when you are available to receive MTSU calls.

**Option 3: Forward to another number or voicemail using the Skype for Business client or from your desk phone.**

If options 1 and 2 aren’t viable, you may “forward” your personal MTSU phone number to another number (cell or home number, etc). Click on the S4B settings gear icon and select Call Forwarding. Along with forwarding, you may select Simultaneously Ring. You may also set up the forward via your desk phone.

Forwarding calls to a cell phone or home number will take the call out of MTSU completely. If the call is not answered, voicemail will be left on the cell phone or home phone answering system. However, if you set simultaneous ringing, calls get sent back to your MTSU voicemail.

Calls to department numbers will not be forwarded. Please see Option 4 if main department numbers need to be forwarded. Outbound calls from your home telephone or cell phone will display your personal home or mobile telephone number, unless you are blocking it with your carrier. The forward is set until you remove it.

**Option 4: ITD can set a “hard forward” on your personal or department number that will be active 24 hours a day.**

If none of the other options are available to you, ITD can set a forward on your extension. This forwards all calls to another number regardless of day or time. If the call is not answered, it will go to the voicemail of the number where the work line is forwarded.

If you answer both your personal calls and a department line, please specify both of the numbers in a request to telecom@mtsu.edu, and ITD will get that set up for you. Please note that turning this on and off can only be done by ITD and time of completion may vary.
MTSU’s Zoom enterprise education license has additional privacy safeguards that comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In order to stay safe online with Zoom, ITD cybersecurity recommends faculty and staff use the following guidelines:

• Use only the MTSU Zoom system found at mtsu.edu/stayoncourse/faculty/zoom/index.php. This page also has numerous quick links to video tutorials and training.
• Avoid posting Zoom meeting invitation information on social media and other public online forums when possible and only send the invitations to those who need it.
• Always verify your Zoom meetings have a password set.
• Always verify only the host can share the screen. This feature can be enabled in the Advanced Sharing options per the following:

Using the MTSU Zoom system affords you the following advantages over the free version:

• Use of MTSU’s Single Sign-On (SSO) system in combination with multi-factor authentication, which protects your MTSU Zoom account from unauthorized access
• FERPA protections baked into the product that are not normally available with the free version, which you can read more about at zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom%20for%20Higher%20Education.pdf
• Additional support from ITD through an administration console not normally available with the free version

“Zoom Bombing” is when hackers join or hijack Zoom conferences and show inappropriate content. The best way to prevent this is to pay special attention to the “host” controls for your meetings and send meeting links privately either through email or by posting in D2L. You also can lock a meeting’s participants once everyone has joined. These steps also will help avoid “Zoom Bombing”:

• USE the MTSU Zoom system discussed in this article, NOT the free version.
• SET a password for your Zoom meeting.
• VERIFY only the host can share the screen to prevent unwanted users from crashing your Zoom session.
• USE the waiting room feature to control who you admit into your meetings.
• GENERATE a Meeting ID automatically rather than using one personal meeting ID for all meetings.
• ENSURE your Zoom software stays current with the latest updates from Zoom.
• DO NOT post Zoom invitations on social media and other public online forums. Only send Zoom invitations to those who need it.

If you have additional questions concerning privacy, please email security@mtsu.edu. If you have questions about the MTSU Zoom system, contact the Faculty Instructional Technology Center at 615-904-8189 or itdacad@mtsu.edu.

Panopto and MS Teams could be part of your remote-learning toolkit

Several familiar or lesser-known instructional tech resources have risen to the forefront at MTSU during this period of remote and online learning brought on by the COVID-19 crisis. They include:

► Microsoft Teams—The hub for team collaboration in Microsoft 365 that integrates people, content, and tools for easy collaboration. Training is being offered for all MTSU staff over the next few months. Basic instruction can be found by clicking on the following webpage links:
  • LinkedIn Learning
  • Microsoft Teams User Video Trainings
  • Instructor-Led Training for Microsoft Teams

For more information, contact Silvia Fernandes, UC systems administrator, at 615-904-8368 or silvia.fernandes@mtsu.edu.

► Panopto—Panopto is available to create and manage video content for use in instruction. Basic introductions can be accessed through the following links:
  • Panopto Quick Start for Faculty. This resource contains the step-by-step instructions to get started with Panopto in your D2L class.
  • Panopto Resources webpage. This page contains links to instructions, videos, Q&A, etc.

For more information, contact Carlos Coronel at 615-898-2359 or carlos.coronel@mtsu.edu. Workshops on these and other resources can be found at mtsu.edu/itd.
said Draude, who came to MTSU in 1986. This past spring, the investments she made in instructional technology at MTSU were put to the ultimate test as University officials asked if MTSU had all the resources to successfully implement 100% remote learning.

“I said, ‘Yes we do, we don’t have to create all this stuff. We’ve got so many of these resources available. We’ve got this, we’ve got this, we’ve got that.’ With the exception of the Zoom license, which we had to scramble for, we really had resources in place to be able to do this. We had the training we needed to do it, we had an experienced staff to jump right in,” Draude said.

One of the main points Draude made was: Don’t expect faculty to become online instruction experts in such short time. Instead, she encouraged them to continue their current teaching methods and goals using just the level of remote resources they needed and felt comfortable with.

“When this started out, I said ‘Let’s not call it online teaching, let’s call it remote teaching. Because a truly online course takes time and planning and instructional design,’” Draude said. “I wanted faculty to understand that even a phone call, a Zoom session, an email are all still ways they could remotely teach.”

That is a philosophy she had developed over nearly three decades. It is the idea of not using technology for technology’s sake, but in service of pedagogical goals.

“Look at it as a learning technology and not just a convenience,” she said. “A completely online course is there for convenience of students who could not get that learning any other way. The absolute best thing is to combine those two—what’s best in online and in a face-to-face environment—for the best results.”

Draude said classroom tech started because people were interested in experimenting with it “because they thought it was kind of fun and cool.”

“In the early days of instructional tech, it wasn’t institutional-based. It was more individual-based,” she said. “In the past it was just the fun bells and whistles. What we’ve been trying to do ever since then is find a way to have technology doing something better than you could do it otherwise.”

That journey began with an interest in medicine. A native of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Draude earned an undergraduate degree in Nursing from Penn State University. She worked as a hospital nurse in Chambersburg before deciding to seek a master’s degree with an educational component. She then earned that master’s in Nursing Education from the Medical College of Virginia, part of Virginia Commonwealth University.

“I graduated from there and applied for anything I was qualified for east of Mississippi,” she joked. After interviews in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, she accepted an interview in a place she had never heard of—Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She took the job at MTSU teaching in the two- and four-year Nursing degree programs, focusing on the fundamentals all the way to critical care. While continuing her education at MTSU, she took a class called Intro to Business Applications “on a lark.” It was a precursor to Computer Science courses, with an emphasis on databases, spreadsheets, and other emerging technology.

“Turns out it was fun, but I didn’t think would lead to anything,” Draude said. But she worked in one of the first department-based computer labs and began using some of that tech to prepare course content.

“MTSU was just getting into all that,” she said. “I ended up becoming the de facto computer person in Nursing . . . at the very beginnings of using tech in teaching.”

Meanwhile, Lucinda Lea, the University’s first manager of Academic Computing, was helping MTSU integrate administrative computing, academic computing, and telecommunications into the Office of Information Technology, the precursor to ITD. The OIT formed what was called Digital Media Studio, which begin offering workshops that Draude attended. From there she took a new role working with Lea as faculty liaison, focusing on investigating, testing, and making recommendations for a course management system. When a system was selected, Draude was asked to continue doing promotion, training, and administration.

Draude continued to juggle teaching and consulting with faculty on instructional tech. The LT&ITC began in 2004 as part of an academic master plan initiated by President Sidney A. McPhee. Draude said it started around a 42-inch desk before finding a home in Walker Library. In recent years, she built a team in the LT&ITC and FITC to advise faculty on how to better use resources such as D2L in traditional or blended classes and develop full online courses. Dr. Sidney A. McPhee. Draude said it started around a 42-inch desk before finding a home in Walker Library. In recent years, she built a team in the LT&ITC and FITC to advise faculty on how to better use resources such as D2L in traditional or blended classes and develop full online courses.

“That’s where the true value of instructional technology is—because it improves the learning. There are certain things you can learn better in a technology-enhanced environment and things you can learn better in a face-to-face environment,” Draude said. “To me, the best of both worlds is when you blend those things together.”

Draude continues living in Murfreesboro, visiting family and doing some consulting work. She also hopes the current emphasis on remote learning leads to a “more formal blended learning philosophy on campus.”

“I’m going to miss the people. It was fun to sit and work with a faculty member and think ‘What can we do? We can try this, and what about this?’” she said. “Those kind of meetings are what I really enjoyed. It makes it fun and a learning experience for everyone—I will really miss that.”
Those early remote classroom sessions went OK, “given the circumstances.”

“The first few weeks were good, but mostly because students were so uncertain and it was a chance to reassure them that I would work for their good. But our Zoom meetings became very tiring, and it was more difficult to make them productive,” Jones said. Looking to the fall, he sees “opportunities to offer courses with significant synchronous meeting time via Zoom.”

Leon Alligood, associate professor, Journalism, and advisor to the Sidelines student news outlet

Before the switch this spring to all-remote teaching, Alligood was using a combination of tech resources such as video chat for guest speakers.

“I teach writing and project-based classes, so the biggest challenge was keeping the lines of communication open. Texting has been helpful, which is something I never used before. Students don’t ignore texts as much as they ignore emails, I’ve found. Even to text and say, ‘I just sent you an email. Open and read, please,’ is helpful,” he said.

Alligood said after a shaky start, things went well.

“The first week I felt this wasn’t going to work. But then assignments filtered in and I felt better. I actually had more contact with some students than I would in a face-to-face setting. That’s been an interesting development, one I’ll get to explore when I teach online again . . . in the fall,” Alligood said.

The new digital era requires attention to detail so students aren’t left behind, he said.

“Time management is key. If you don’t manage it well, students will fall through the cracks,” he said. “One other thing I’ll say about teaching online: It’s a process that demands my A-game every time I go online to answer a student’s question, to offer a critique, or to lead a discussion. It’s a different construct, a new language of teaching. I’m still finding my way, making mistakes, and in the process being taught lessons at the same time.”

Keith Gamble, chair, Department of Economics and Finance

As department chair, Gamble was only teaching one class at the time of the transition—ECON 2110/FIN 2010 Personal Financial Planning. Fortunately, it had been fully developed online in partnership with the LT&ITC Instructional Design Team. While that put him in a great position to move into all-remote teaching, he misses the personal interaction with students.

“Before the switch, I was teaching a web-assisted cross-listed section that met once a week and a fully online cross-listed section. In the weekly class meeting, students and I worked through the most commonly missed homework and quiz questions together,” Gamble said.

He had used the in-class time to add new bonus-point opportunities for his students to share remotely their experiences on the D2L discussion board. Gamble also continued the instruction on most-missed concept and numerical questions through the D2L discussion board.

“I miss the in-person interactions with my students. Writing emails and discussion board posts work, but they are not as easy and quick as face-to-face classroom interactions,” he said.

“I think instructional technology in higher education has a bright future. It will take time for students to adjust to learning remotely.”

Gamble said the biggest challenge to student success in an all-digital environment is time management.

“Procrastination creates failure. Many students use regular classroom meeting times as their time management. In the absence of that synchronized learning experience, students must create their own method of discipline in their studies.”

—Keith Gamble, chair, Department of Economics and Finance

Sean Foley, professor, History

Foley had utilized numerous digital resources in the classroom before, but had not extensively used D2L. He credited ITD staff including Academic Instructional Tech Jimmy Williams for helping him expand use of such features as Dropbox, Discussion boards, and testing.

“I have been impressed by how well ITD and Williams in particular responded to my questions,” Foley said.

"It has been an extremely busy period, but so far it has worked. I have been pleasantly surprised by how well D2L as a system has worked without crashing."

For assistance, contact the Faculty Instructional Technology Center (FITC) at 615-904-8189 or itdacad@mtsu.edu.