**Looking for good news during COVID-19. April 2020.**

This is a historical record of a specific response to the COVID-19 outbreak of early 2020 in terms of how it affected my section of ECUR 291. I will document later what students wrote in a bonus discussion forum activity I added on the fly. But before that record is a little background provided by some (edited) group messages I sent out at that time via PAWS. Most of these students were still at the beginning of their teaching career, having just completed their Extended Practicum. There are references to Lisa Krol, the author of this online course, who had also created (in the months previous, not in response to the crisis) the first version of the online final exam.

John Lingard

Online facilitator, Section W02, Winter Term 2020, ECUR291.3 (via DEU).

May 22, 2020. [On that date, there were 7 virus-related deaths reported in the province.]

**ECUR 291 Assignment 3 and final exam sample questions.** *[Sent as a group e-mail, and also posted in Announcements, on March 17.]*

Hello, everyone. Happy St. Patrick’s Day! I hope you are all coping with these strange and ever-changing difficult times. Please look after yourselves, your friends and family, and neighbours.

It seems relatively trivial to be talking to you about the course, but life goes on. I guess we are all lucky that Lisa made the change to an online exam for this term. I’ll send you more details on those logistics closer to the time, but I’ll attach to this message (e-mail version only, as before) some sample questions that Lisa has provided to show the new format And I will end this message with some notes about those questions.

**ECUR 291 Trying to adjust.** [*Sent as a group e-mail, and also posted in Announcements, on March 25.]*

Hello, everyone.

I hadn’t meant to write to you all right now, but I just got a message from one of you feeling really overwhelmed by the SK Health Authority planning document and its grim projections. It’s really unfortunate that this has added to the already enormous disturbing amount of negative and depressing material on the internet these days.

[Some background for context: On March 25, 2020, *The Star-Phoenix* published an article with the headline ***COVID-19 could ‘overwhelm’ health system according to Saskatchewan Health Authority model***. It reported that a draft SHA document estimated the virus “could affect 30% of Saskatchewan people, potentially leading to thousands of deaths.” One model “foresees fatality rates between three and five percent, or somewhere between 9,000 and 15,000 people.” The conclusion was that COVID-19 “will almost certainly overwhelm the health system.” At that time, there were three virus-related deaths reported in the province. After the completion of our discussion forum activity detailed below, a later article, on April 8, gave details of the final report, with revised figures for one scenario of “anywhere from 3,075 to 8,370” deaths, with a warning that without any restrictive measures the figures could rise even higher: “That would mean almost 10,000 deaths.” The actual COVID-19 fatalities reported on that day remained three. Back to my message … ]

When this all started, my first thought was that you would be able to continue fairly easily with this course just because it is online. But I later realized that ECUR 291 is only one part of your educational load, and the upheaval caused by your other courses trying to adapt to the new realities will spill over into how you handle this one. The student I mentioned at the beginning asked for an extension on the discussion forum whose deadline is Friday, two days away. I’ll address that in a minute.

I further realized that your educational load is only one part of your life overall. Many of you have work to consider as well, which has to be really stressful now, whether it’s because you have to find time to do that work, or because the work has stopped. You are also concerned, of course, with maintaining your own health while caring for your family and friends. That should always be your first priority: family comes first. This is just a class.

In the light of all that, let me try to adjust, and suggest some changes to the way the course will continue. I have no control over the final exam, but imagine the plan is still to have you write that online on Saturday, April 18. I will write later about that separately. In terms of the discussion forum, I have already opened all three of the final modules for those of you who have the ability, desire and need to work ahead. My view on accepting posts to a module after the Friday deadline has always been to say no – as a couple of you have found out! – mostly because no one else would read a post after the deadline had passed. But, in these circumstances, I will accept any post on any designated activity from Module 9 to 11 until the day before the final exam. I will still send out my usual message on Saturday or Sunday about Module 9, but I’ll check periodically to see if any posts for that module show up after that, and I’ll mark them as usual.

*[The bonus activity transcript follows, but first a final section of context, from another PAWS group message:]*

**ECUR 291 Keeping Calm and Carrying On.** *[Sent as a group e-mail, and also posted in Announcements, on April 4.]*

Hello again, everyone.

Yes, I know that old WWII Brit mantra has been done to death by memes and rip-off T shirts, but I’m trying to reclaim it for our own wartime life.

I hope you are all keeping safe and healthy as well as calm.

I know that right now one of the plates that most of you are trying to keep spinning (a real geezer allusion there!) is your final assignment. I don’t mean to distract you from that, but just wanted to point out the extra activity I added two days ago in the discussion forum: Module 10 – Activity 19 (sorry!). I was trying to get more of that cheerful stuff out there, but I don’t know how my idea will connect with you. My hope was that it would be a means for you to get 3 marks in a way that would be easy – nothing to read or watch – and also relevant and engaging.

***Activity 19 - Applied education***

*Top of Form*

*I thought I'd add a bonus thread, with the usual 3 marks available, for anyone who is interested.  This may be a different way for some of you to reach 33.*

*My hope is that you can tell us all a* ***good news*** *story about something you've done recently that shows how you used any fact or skill you learned - in any class you've ever taken - to help someone in real life during these crazy times.  This is where I should give you a brilliant example of my own, but I fail.  Because the icy sidewalks are back, I've been doing my daily walk at the Market Mall Gym and Country Club, a.k.a. the lower level of their parkade.  If I can count (on the fingers of two hands) all the vehicles parked there - six today - does that show my math skills and thus qualify?  (No.)  Please do much better than that.  I want to see inspiring, resourceful accounts of wonderful achievement!  But if you're too busy, I will understand.*

As I said, it may be that this will fly like a lead balloon, but I hope not. As a further inducement, and to exemplify the crazy times we are living in, I have just decided to defy all the laws of mathematics and the Ed Curr office by opening up this activity to **everyone** – hence this group message – so even if you have already got your 33, I will let you get to 36, and count it that way. Don’t tell Lisa, and I won’t tell the Blackboard Grade Centre. I never use that to calculate your final grades anyway: it’s all done, as you may have guessed, on paper, with my trusty calculator. Which tells me you could now get **16.36%** for the activity participation, instead of the original maximum of 15%, if you take my offer.

And I’ve now got a better example for you, from a message I just received from one of you. She mentioned, almost in passing, that she’s helping her students and their parents by using all the things she ever learned from her classes, and from what my father-in-law called The University of Life – the only one he ever got to. She will probably be embarrassed that I’m telling you this, but I’m giving her 3 marks anyhow, without even asking her to post this formally in the forum. But the rest of you will have to from now on!

Here’s what she said:

I decided to go ahead and hand in my third assignment.  Normally I would have liked to spend more time fine-tuning my work, however due to my present circumstances I felt I needed to get this one off my plate.  I have now started remote teaching my Grade 7 class, and it has proven to be both challenging and incredibly time consuming getting used to new online learning challenges.  In addition, I no longer have childcare...so I must say the transition to this new method of teaching has been overwhelming!

Inspiring? Check. Wonderful? Check. This activity will be open for your posts until April 17, just like the other Module 9-11 activities.

Good luck with your lesson plans and keeping on generally.

Stay safe and strong.

*[Here’s the bonus activity transcript, with the students’ last names removed:]*

John Lingard Instructor Manager

Module 10: Activity 19 - Applied education

*Top of Form*

*I thought I'd add a bonus thread, with the usual 3 marks available, for anyone who is interested.  This may be a different way for some of you to reach 33.*

*My hope is that you can tell us all a* ***good news*** *story about something you've done recently that shows how you used any fact or skill you learned - in any class you've ever taken - to help someone in real life during these crazy times.  This is where I should give you a brilliant example of my own, but I fail.  Because the icy sidewalks are back, I've been doing my daily walk at the Market Mall Gym and Country Club, a.k.a. the lower level of their parkade.  If I can count (on the fingers of two hands) all the vehicles parked there - six today - does that show my math skills and thus qualify?  (No.)  Please do much better than that.  I want to see inspiring, resourceful accounts of wonderful achievement!  But if you're too busy, I will understand.*

Stephen F

RE: Activity 19 - Applied education

Top of Form

Much like the rest of the class, I’m sure, this quarantine has been a difficult time. Things have definitely been turned upside down. One positive story I can tell about this time and my skills as a teacher came from a recent text from my old partner teacher. He had let me know the class was up and running online. He offered me the opportunity to make up a video and lesson for the kids. Since I’m not getting any sub work in the foreseeable future, I figured this could be a chance to keep my skills sharp. So now, in between all my schoolwork, I find myself developing a lesson on Romeo and Juliet. I will be reading the closing section of Act 1 and then providing students with a few different options to show their understanding. We used Google Class extensively during my extended practicum so, thankfully, I am somewhat familiar with the software used to interact with students. I hope to get a little more involved with the class after I finish with all my school responsibilities.

Krysta F

RE: Activity 19 - Applied education

Top of Form

That is really cool Stephen! If you need any more help with Romeo and Juliet I am happy to! I developed and taught an entire Romeo and Juliet lesson that I am very proud of! If you get stuck just let me know!

Sam F Top of Form

That's super awesome to hear Stephen! I am a huge Willy Shakes fan and was actually cast as Sampson in a recent adaptation done in Saskatoon. It's so important for students to learn the beauty and poetry of theatre, and considering Shakespeare is likely their first experience studying a play, it's so important to keep them engaged. Way to go!

Paul H

Top of Form

Hi Stephen - thanks for your post. That sounds like a great opportunity! Also, its good to hear that you are able to use the skills you developed in your Extended Practicum in this context. I taught Macbeth in my EP, but that was in person, obviously. I would imagine teaching Shakespeare online would be... difficult. I would be interested to hear how it goes!

Leslie C

Top of Form

Patrick Stewart is currently reading a sonnet a day on FB. It's like a happy combination of Picard and ELA.

Stephen K

Top of Form

Hello! This is a great experience that you've been able to do during all of this. I used Google Classroom all through my internship and its a fantastic tool to use in a classroom to keep students up to date on their classwork even at home. I hope the rest of the class goes well!

Renzie D

Top of Form

Glad to hear of some positive stories during this COVID Pandemic. I personally have never used online teaching platforms. I plan to continue my growth in technologies because of the benefits it brings. Stay Safe!

Mindy D

Top of Form

Currently, my family's life and my life has become very different due to schools closing and working from home. I have completed some PD on the See Saw app, Sora app and the Mathletics program students are using in school.  I am scheduled throughout the day to webchat through Microsoft Teams with special needs students.  My students and I participate in discussions about the drastic changes they have faced recently.  My students are reading to me and I am reading to them.  My students especially like visiting with my children when my children interrupt due to being at home.

My children and I have been baking up a storm practicing our mechanical mixtures, solutions and our fractions. My children deliver baked goods to family members who are unable to leave the house.  Except for today, my daughter asked if we could make juice from scratch due to the high amount of sugar found in juices, so we made lemonade without sugar. Not too sure how this is going to taste with no sugar, but she has found inspiration through watching videos with me from my Nutrition class.

Leslie C

Top of Form

That’s so great you are able to do some baking! I ran out of flour, so all my baking plans are on hold until the next grocery day. Kids and pets make facetime way more fun.

Sam F

Top of Form

Being a textbook extrovert with a jam-packed daily routine, this quarantine has been near debilitating for me. In three days I was supposed to be on a plane to Dublin to dance at the World Championships for Irish Dancing. It took me a long time to get out of that slump I was feeling after it was cancelled, but now I am in a much more mentally healthy place. I have set up a goal for myself to accomplish a physical task, an academic task, an artistic task, a productive task, and a relaxing task every day. This gives me a reason to get out of bed every morning and for that, I am so grateful and happy my mindset has changed. Coffee even tastes better when you actually have time to sit and enjoy it. One specific event that was good news for me was that I just received an audition call for a show at Persephone, and I was able to find an accompanist to play my audition song! My partner actually got called to audition for a better part than the one he submitted for, so I can't tell who I am happier for, him or me! I am spending my days surrounded by my pups and starting off 2020 with a huge focus on self-care, and that's definitely not something to complain about.

To summarize, I have learned a lot about what it means to be content with who you are and the importance of self care. I have also learned that goal setting and routines are things that are vital to my personal mental health and something that can be created at any time. This was very much supported in my ECUR 450 Elementary Health Methods class, where we created an action plan to set goals and make routines to better ourselves. This is something I would absolutely impart to my students and make as part of our classroom routine. No matter the situation, we can always be improving!

Rachelle K

Top of Form

Hey Sam,

I am a textbook introvert, but I can still relate to a lot of what you said! I love that you are doing things everyday in support of your holistic health, that is really inspiring! I need to make similar goals for myself as I know they will be helpful to my overall wellbeing!!

By the way, CONGRATS on getting the audition call!! I’m so happy for you!!

Angelina M

Top of Form

Much like the rest of the class, the news of having to social distance and self-isolate has been a hard pill for me to swallow. This has come with quite a few major aspects of my life being temporarily taken away. One of the many skills that I have learned throughout all of my education classes is the ability to adapt and create multiple ways to deliver instruction that meets the needs of all learners. These two skills have come in handy as my rhythmic gymnastics club has switched to online instruction using the Zoom app during this quarantine time. As a lot of educators are having to navigate through the world of online delivery, I as well had to prepare myself for this new way of coaching. This was a huge shift for me as it is hard to not physically be with my athletes to help those kinesthetic learners and many other challenges of not being in our large, open facility. Since I live on a acreage outside of Saskatoon I have also struggled with lost wifi connections periodically. However, the ability to adapt my teaching style and create new and innovative ways for my girls to train in their home setting has been a life saver. It does require more planning and attention to detail to ensure they are practicing all their skills in a safe environment but my coaching team has embraced this change with a positive attitude and a open mind. The parents of our athletes are in constant communication with us letting us know how thankful the girls and the are that we are still offering classes as it keeps some normalcy in their life. Hearing from the parents that the girls are really benefiting from having our classes still operate as normal just in a different format, makes all the struggles and planning worth it. Although it will be a tough couple months away from my girls, these precautions are put in place to ensure everyone’s health and safety. It has also made me reflect on how lucky I am to be involved in so many great programs that makes it so hard to be away from.

Carter H

Top of Form

Hey everyone, I hope you are all surviving well and rationing your toilet paper or at least investing in a bidet.

I have actually had to be quite practical with my education during this time. I have a little brother (7) who does not go to school anymore because they are all closed, with my family working in jobs that are still active during this time I have had to step up to take care of him a lot and making sure he does the school work that his teachers have left him. It is hard because he is my brother but I have approached it like I am a substitute (grade 2 is not my area at all) and trying my best to teach him everything his teacher wants him. Instead of just leaving him with his work I do my best to read ahead a bit so I can teach him the material instead of him just having to read it.

Also to add to John's email today about "Keep calm and carry on", I like the phrase but personally, one that keeps me going is "Bear and Forebear"; do what you can with the situation you are in and persevere.

Anyway hope everyone and their families are doing well, stay safe.

Abigail W

Top of Form

I also find it hard taking on the role of a substitute teacher when I help my brother. He sometimes gets a little frustrated with me asking why can't I just tell him, it's not like I'm his teacher. He had different plans when he asked for my help.

Krysta F

Top of Form

In one of my Ed Psychology classes we talked a lot about mindfulness. Considering what the world is going through right now, I decided this would be a perfect time to start practicing this again. My family and I will go on mindfulness walks (staying far apart from each other), I have began journaling and painting to help center myself. I have also decided to do daily meditation to help my mind stay in the best shape it can during this pandemic. I suggest all of you do the same! Isolating yourself can be really hard on your mental health so it is important to continue to check how you are.

Angelina M

Top of Form

Hello Krysta,

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. It is so important for everyone to take the time to participate in activities that will help put their mind at ease and reduce stress. My family and I also go for walks and I look forward them as it is a way for me to get outside and clear my mind. I like your idea of using painting as a outlet. I used to love painting when school wasn't so busy and I might take that up again. I agree, isolation can be hard on ones mental health so it is extremely important for people to find something that will help motivate them to stay positive during this uncertain time.

Thanks again!

Rachelle K

Thanks John for opening up this thread! I really enjoyed reading the responses from everyone and having some positivity added to my day!

Although this time has been difficult, there have been some good things that have come out of it. My favourite thing that has happened during the pandemic is that I adopted a kitten! His name is Gato... which means cat in Spanish, and if you spell it differently it means Cake in French. He has brought a lot of joy into my isolation life!

One thing that I have learned during my time in the college of education is that teachers must be able to roll with the punches and be able to adapt when things are not going according to their plans.  I volunteer for a weekly youth program for high school students. Since the program cannot meet formally anymore we have been meeting over zoom, discord games or sending each other vlog updates of what are keeping busy with. While it is not the same, it is the best we can do right now to stay connected to the kids and try to continue to encourage them. The girls I am closest with are in grade 12 and have had their senior year cut short, with our final months of university looking very different now, I can relate to them. This crazy time is definitely not something that anyone planned for, but I have been impressed by how everyone is trying to adapt and keep up with routines in any way we can! Thank goodness for technology!!

Mindy D

Top of Form

Hi Rachelle,

I agree with you the Professor had a great idea when assigning this post.  I enjoyed reading about everyone's changes they have had to make.  I see we are all working from home and taking care of loved ones such as family members, pets or students.

Congratulations on the new addition to your family.  Is it a boy or a girl? The kids and I were watching the news the other day and the SPCA mentioned they were looking for people to adopt pets. Some people have had to rehome their animals due to the financial crisis and health crisis.  A pet is a perfect companion.  We have a small dog, and the kids are keeping him busy. I am not sure how he is going to respond in the future when we all go back to school and work, but we will manage.

I agree as a teacher, it is essential to remember that sometimes we must go with the flow.  Every day is different and changes can happen in a second. This fall, we had a water issue in our school.  We could not wash our hands or drink the water.  The teachers and students had to quickly adapt to bringing water bottles from home and using portable toilets and hand washing stations outside of the school.  The lack of water led to a lot of disruption in the classrooms.

Leslie C

Top of Form

I feel like we require a picture of Gato. Baby kitties are the best.Bottom of Form

Rachelle K

Top of Form

Mindy - Gato is a boy.

Leslie - Gato has an instagram page! I know its silly to make a pet an instagram, but he’s just so cute and I think it was the quarantine getting to me ha ha! If you want to see him, look up @gato.thecato

Stephen K

Top of Form

This crazy time is definitely a great opportunity to connect more with friends (digitally) and pets! I hope you enjoy the volunteer work you are doing with the high school, that’s a great experience to be a part of right now and I'm sure the kids appreciate begin able to connect with people even while stuck at home!

Shawn P

Top of Form

It's great to see that people are finding some positives during these strange times!

There was one big moment that is fresh in my mind where I was able to use what I have learned in education, and that was when I went for an interview for the JET program. I mentioned during our first synchronous meeting that I was applying for this program to teach English in Japan, and a couple of months ago I went for an interview in Calgary. They asked me some questions about strategies I could use to teach English and ways I could make English classes fun, and I was able to use what we learned in this class to answer. Apparently they liked my answers because yesterday I got an email saying that I got accepted into the program, so I'm pretty happy right now!

Thanks to everyone who shared some of their good news, it was great to read!

Paul H

Top of Form

Hey everyone. I hope you are all looking after yourselves during this difficult time. One good news story to come out of all this that I can share involves some things I have learnt over the course of this semester, not in any one class, but in simply making it through what has been an unexpectedly difficult semester. More specifically, I have learnt the importance of being kind to and patient with yourself, especially during difficult times. I had an opportunity to share this insight recently with my sister, who was having a tough time coping with this whole self-isolation thing. She had reached out to talk and had expressed feeling frustrated that she was not being more productive, given all the newfound spare time she had. I encouraged her to be patient and kind to herself, as these were uncertain and difficult circumstances with unexpected impacts. We had a good conversation, but honestly, I didn’t think much of the conversation until a couple days ago when I talked with my sister on the phone. She told me that our conversation had helped her change her perspective and beginning looking for the little victories. In retrospect, I am glad that the lessons I learnt enduring my own difficult circumstance were able to help my sister adjust to self-isolation. Anyway, hope everyone is staying sane.

Nicola C

Top of Form

Hey Paul! As always, love you lots! I have recently been having victory in allowing myself to find and accept little victories. This morning, I was up at 8:30am, meditated, and cleaned the kitchen before noon. Did I do much school work over the weekend? No. Have I run 4 days in a row? Yes., Have I been feeding myself nutritious and tasty food? Yes. Have I been listening to my favourite albums and reading old poetry? Yes.

Eventually I will complete everything I need to and I will do it one step at a time.

Just after I wash the floors...

Leslie C

Top of Form

I have been at home with my children since March 16th. My entire existence has been trying to get through classes while supporting their wellbeing through these changes. One thing that has been helpful through this is having the skills to develop a supportive learning program for my kids that will be age appropriate for each.

 Both my older children begged to do something. I developed a short but useful day for them (grade 7 and 3) as well as used my resources to put together a simple playschool day for my 3-year-old.

This provided my kids something to do, where they have purpose. Because I can link each activity to an outcome they take it seriously. (And it keeps them off their devices a bit!)

That’s it. This is the longest I have been home since I was 12 (my Dad figures). I am outwardly handling it sub-par. But at least my kids’ needs are met and I'm grateful I can still complete my degree.

Hailey B

Top of Form

I love that you mentioned your children's wellbeing! Throughout all of this craziness, I feel like some people are forgetting that our children, as well as our own, wellbeing should be our top priority! I am positive that the activities and mini-lessons you have planned for your children are great! It sure seems like it if it keeps them off technology for a while, what a win! Keep doing what you are doing, it seems to be working great! Do not forget to do some self-care of your own! :)

Nicola C

Top of Form

Leslie, you are killing it. Your kids are so lucky to have someone to make a schedule for them and they will benefit from it. Have you been able to include them in developing their activities and whatnot?

You (and all parents right now) deserve an award.

Aidan H

Top of Form

I had a really fun opportunity to come back and help give an outdoor ed lesson to the class I interned with! Of course, this happened a bit before "social distancing" but I thought it would still be worth mentioning. We set up camps across a large park, with different groups operating the camps . . . the groups consisted of students who were role playing as the Hudson Bay company, the North West Company, and different Indigenous groups. The goal was to traverse the huge park, and trade with other groups to acquire certain items outlines on their lists. Whoever could trade for all of their items first would win! It was really interesting watching alliances form, strategies get carried out, and getting a crazy workout from running through the snow. I was lucky enough to join the game as a "surprise faction" who would compete against the other teams for resources. We all debriefed afterwards about everything that took place, and the students completed some classwork related to the activity at a later date! All in all, it was a great experience and was so nice to see the students again. If I could relate this to something I learned in class, it would be the value of place-based education. If you are an individual who has not experiences or experimented with this form of education, I would highly recommend it.

Hailey B

Top of Form

One teaching ideology that has been heavily taught and redefined for me throughout this term is Community Education, learnt within a section of ECUR 411. Throughout that class, I have come to realize that education is about more than just myself being the teacher. Education should actively engage student parents and families, community members, and community programs into the lessons my students, as well as myself, learn throughout the school year. Through this, education becomes a community effort and students learn through holistic, authentic experiences.  However, once this self-isolation began, I have come to realize that my understandings of Community Education have been redefined once again. Throughout these uncertain times, through social media posts and over-the-phone conversations, I have come to understand that our students' education is now a community effort. Parents are now taking on the role of educator in some cases, with technology being the main connection between students and their learning. Parents have turned to teachers to ask for resources and advice to get through these uncertain times, which teachers seem to happily supply. Through Facebook groups, as well as other social media outlets, teachers from around the world have been coming together to share resources, help with technology issues, and be a support system for other teachers, students, and families. For myself, among completing assignments and participating in online lectures, I have found myself helping with my niece and nephew's education, as their parents come to me for advice, resources, and understandings. I have found that through my FaceTime torturing [*?tutoring? JL*] sessions, that both students and their parents want to learn, they both want to further develop their understandings the best way they can. However, I have also come to realize that Community Education also involves how we view our social isolation. Introverts are teaching extroverts how to be comfortable at home. Extroverts are teaching introverts how to be actively engaged with the people they love, even if it is only through FaceTime or phone calls.

Through all of this social isolation, chaos, and uncertainty, I come to understand that education is a community effort and everyone is currently participating in the Community Education process. Through our communities, everyone can learn how to become a teacher (if only for a short time), teachers can learn how to effectively teach their students through online methods and resources, and families can learn how to reconnect with one another through communication and time well spent.

Nicola C

Top of Form

I have been incredibly proud of the resilience I have seen from my peers, my friends and family, as well as myself during the chaos of a global pandemic. I went into education because I knew the best thing I could do with my mind and body was to put them to use educating the youth so they could work with wonder and innovation in their educational endeavours.  I have often looked around me and wondered why there was not innovation actively taking place in areas such as recycling, repurposing, and green technology. Alas, these areas have been much overlooked as areas of progress as the expense may outweigh the possible profits (as we operate in a capitalist and conservative society here in Saskatchewan). I have done reading on settler discourse (land as resource, essentialism, etc.) in social studies curriculum and just this semester completed a research project with a group of peers in which we analyzed Saskatchewan's biology curricula from 1992 and 2016. The both curricula are steeped in settler discourse and lack discourse to encourage activism. This quarantine has reminded me of the core reason I became an educator: access to multifaceted implementations of education and community without penalty should be a basic human right and serves to prevent (or minimize) future catastrophes while supplying citizens with the knowledge necessary for self care, discipline, and innovation.

Mostly though, I have been making sure I run often and cook good food. Self care always comes first.

Take care out there.

Stephen K

Top of Form

Hello all. I hope everyone is staying safe.

In these unprecedented and uncertain times, I, like others, have found isolation to be trying at times. The inability to visit with and see friends or family, especially around holidays like Easter has been difficult for me personally. That being said, there is lots I have been doing to combat this frustration and difficulty. In my third year, I took an Ed Psychology class and a Pedagogies of Place class, both of which taught me different ways to understand, process, and learn from the world around me. In the Pedagogies class, we frequently went to the spaces around us and explored them in order to learn from them, rather than simply staying in a classroom for every lesson. I have been adapting this idea to my own situation by taking opportunities to get outside and experience nature (from a safe distance to others, of course) and have been making more time for learning opportunities such as this. While I haven't necessarily been learning anything in relation to a curriculum, I have been learning about how to process the new situations I find myself in. The Ed Psych class from my third year also had something to teach me during this period of change. Much of the class was focused on mindfulness and learning to process thoughts. Practicing the methods and lessons from this class has also helped me to understand these trying times.

Karlee J

Top of Form

Hi all!

I hope you are all well and staying grounded during these times!

Much to my parents' delight, my two brothers and I have moved home to ride this out! The house is a lot louder and busier, but it has been nice. We are gearing up to start seeding soon so that will keep me busy after things slow down with my exams.

In my 411 class this term, we focused on how to successfully maintain and monitor one's well-being. Due to the circumstances we find ourselves in, I find myself checking in with others frequently to see how they are doing and offer support in any way that I can. Lately, it has been Facetiming my younger cousins to help them with their math homework! Also, the techniques and resources shared throughout the course of 411 have helped me stay balanced and manage stress in a healthy way.

Lastly, my family brought home a new puppy to our farm and we are in love! Hard to be stressed with that adorable face staring up at you!

Wishing you all the best.

Renzie D

Top of Form

During this crazy time at home, I began experimenting with my cooking skills. I used my mother's cookbook to surprise them and make a meal for the family. With a large amount of redundancy, it was very difficult for me to understand her writing and her instructions. By the end of the recipe, I was not sure if I made lasagna or spaghetti. My main take away is that without proper instruction and guidance. It is very difficult for a student to succeed when the instructor does not provide the needed tools or the proper scaffolding to achieve the goal. I plan to use this experience with my future lesson planning to help avoid this in my classroom. I am improving in cooking slowly but surely!

Abigail W

Top of Form

I have been applying my Education training by helping my brother. I am helping him with English. It is not his strongest subject and it now being an online class gives more challenges for him. I have taken quite a few ELA Methods classes that covered students who struggle with reading and writing and now I am putting it to use.  Bottom of Form

[*Final post, Friday April 7, 2020; SK total deaths: 4.*

*This document will end by returning to my group messages, starting with the end section of the one from March 25.]*

**ECUR 291 Trying to adjust.** *[Sent as a group e-mail, and also posted in Announcements, on March 25.]*

When this all started, my first thought was that you would be able to continue fairly easily with this course just because it is online. But I later realized that ECUR 291 is only one part of your educational load, and the upheaval caused by your other courses trying to adapt to the new realities will spill over into how you handle this one. The student I mentioned at the beginning asked for an extension on the discussion forum whose deadline is Friday, two days away. I’ll address that in a minute.

I further realized that your educational load is only one part of your life overall. Many of you have work to consider as well, which has to be really stressful now, whether it’s because you have to find time to do that work, or because the work has stopped. You are also concerned, of course, with maintaining your own health while caring for your family and friends. That should always be your first priority: family comes first. This is just a class.

In the light of all that, let me try to adjust, and suggest some changes to the way the course will continue. I have no control over the final exam, but imagine the plan is still to have you write that online on Saturday, April 18. I will write later about that separately. In terms of the discussion forum, I have already opened all three of the final modules for those of you who have the ability, desire and need to work ahead. My view on accepting posts to a module after the Friday deadline has always been to say no – as a couple of you have found out! – mostly because no one else would read a post after the deadline had passed. But, in these circumstances, I will accept any post on any Module 9-11 activity until the day before the final exam. I will still send out my usual message on Saturday or Sunday about Module 9, but I’ll check periodically to see if any posts show up after that, and I’ll mark them as usual.

Similarly, I will allow everyone a no-penalty extension for your final Assignment 3, the lesson plan, until Friday, April 17. I would prefer you to be spending your time instead on reviewing for the exam in the last week or 10 days, but I will leave that up to you.

If anyone one has other concerns, please send me a message.

Look after yourselves and the people important in your lives. This is just a class.

Try to find something **cheerful** on the internet! Like many of you, I’ve been enjoying the Pluto videos:

<https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2020/03/20/montreal-dog-cheering-people-up-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>

and marvelling at how much she looks like Trudeau, with his recent facial hair. Another dog video (yes, we have a dachshund, though not like Rolo) is here:

https://nypost.com/2020/03/23/dog-sprains-tail-from-too-much-wagging-during-owners-coronavirus-quarantine/

Trying not to be that guy who sends you all those lame links,

John

**ECUR 291 The final days *[****Sent as a group e-mail, and also posted in Announcements, on April 15.]*

Hi, everyone!

That subject line is not meant to sound like some apocalyptic movie – real life is doing that for us anyway. No, I’m just talking about the countdown to Saturday. I hope you’re all keeping your heads above water. A few of you are still working away on the discussion forum – which will be open till midnight on Friday. Just one comment on the practice exam if you didn’t already get it in my comments on your recent posts: If you submitted it to PAWS, I don’t plan on responding to that, but if you have any questions about what the techies called the “functionality”, please let me know.

Speaking of which, I had a question just now from one of you:

*I have never had a closed book online exam before, and with online exams that have long, short, or essay questions, I have always typed it out on a word doc and then copied and pasted my answer into the exam. This is because I have had issues in the past where my answer does not save, or I lose internet connection and cannot save my answers unless I paste them onto a word doc. Is navigating away to use word doc not allowed?*

That seemed an excellent question to me, but I hardly need tell you that I had no clue how to answer it. So I asked our tech guy, who said this:

*I would not discourage a student from writing in MS Word and copying and pasting only their answers for short answer and essay type questions. The student can always select the Save Answer button (this is done automatically by the system every 5-10 seconds) and that way they will know if they have lost an internet connection. If a student is inactive in the test window, they may get timed out, but they can log back in again if time permits. Logging in/out does take a few minutes so the student must be willing to risk that time if they are writing in a word document, but I would not tell students that they cannot do that as I think it could be a good practice if they are worried about losing their work for short/long answer types. The discouraged practice would be students opening other windows etc. to look up answers.*

And Lisa also chipped in with this:

*Although it shouldn’t be an issue on the case study question at the end, students may run out of lines copying text to the* ***other*** *short answer boxes. I purposely set those boxes to 6 or 8 lines because I don’t want them telling us everything they know. They need to be direct and concise.*

So I hope that helps.

A quick word about what happens **after** the final exam: I will try to mark these and calculate final grades as soon as possible, and you will eventually see those numbers on PAWS. I think it said five days, so that would be by Thursday. I cannot give a mark of INC; the system wants the raw meat of real numbers these days, so if I have given you an extension on your lesson plan then your grade may not reflect that mark. Of course, as soon as I get that missing material, I will send in an upgraded mark, and you will be notified.

If anyone has a reason for needing their grade urgently, for employment or anything else, please let me know. One final comment: Your marks for the exam may not appear on Grade Centre (this is the first time for me with the online final, so I don’t know) and your final mark certainly won’t. You can try and do some math to calculate the exam mark when grades show up next week – remember it counts for 30% of your total grade. You can take the four other marks (each of which you will know by then) from the total to find your mark on the fifth component: the final exam. Don’t forget that if you get to 36 marks on the participation, you’ll now get 16.36% instead of the original 15% maximum. But don’t worry about any of this now!

The very best to everyone for your future teaching!

Stay well and brainy for Saturday,

John