

**Subject:** Looking for resources to improve your distance education courses?  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 8:54:09 AM Central Daylight Time  
**From:** Brian Hinote  
**To:** Faculty  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png

Good Morning, Colleagues –

Below please find the next installment of MTSU Online’s weekly resources, tools, and tips for distance education. MTSU Online is happy to support the great work unfolding in your programs and departments, so be sure to let us know if you have specific needs, questions, etc.

**This week’s e-mail includes information on discussion forums and crisis-informed pedagogies.**

Covid-19 has all of us preparing for a fall semester unlike any we’ve ever seen. Online teaching is front and center again, but remains underexplored terrain for many faculty members. Learning how to use online class-discussion forums to their best advantage is probably the smartest, and easiest, thing you can do to improve your online teaching and your students’ learning.

Take a look at this article ([The Secret Weapon of Good Online Teaching: Discussion Forums](#)), where veteran distance educator Flower Darby discusses six ways to lead meaningful class discussions in an online forum, including:

- Take part in the discussion.
- Be strategic about your participation.
- The better the question, the better the debate.
- Ask students to write about something that they find interesting.
- Structure the online conversation.
- Aim for organic, authentic conversation.

I’ll also include an informative piece on [Crisis-Informed Pedagogy](#), which outlines 12 ways to help us best support students as they (and we) navigate uncertain times. Many of our students are anxious, depressed, frustrated and, in some cases, angry. Stress, social isolation, uncertainty, and trauma can severely and adversely affected their educational performance and ability to learn.

Attention, memory, cognition and a capacity to plan and regulate emotions all suffer when students are under overwhelming stress, hindering their ability to focus, process information, organize their time or cope with frustrations and disappointments. These comments helped me think about how we can best support students as they return to our on-ground and virtual classrooms.

Finally, please feel free to contact me or Cindy Adams ([Cindy.Adams@mtsu.edu](mailto:Cindy.Adams@mtsu.edu)) anytime, and be on the lookout for future messages including other useful information. Best wishes for a great semester!

BH

**Instructional Design Faculty Drop-Ins with Kim Godwin**

Wednesday, Aug 26, 9:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://mtsu.zoom.us/j/8680531679>

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