

Question 8:
How do you shift your teaching practices to navigate disruptive change?

“The “how” is difficult to answer. Allow me to begin with the “why.” It is imperative that teachers modify their teaching practices during turbulent times – for reasons that emerge from our field’s rhetorical roots. In a sense, the classroom presents a rhetorical situation in which our goal is to facilitate learning with our students. Disruptive changes create new exigencies in that rhetorical situation.

That brings us from the “why” to the “how.” Changing situations require that we adapt our efforts to help students learn, but the “how” might differ depending on the nature of the new exigencies. In any case, teachers would be well served to regard teaching as a process of lifelong learning. We should constantly work to add to our pedagogical toolkits. The broader our skillsets, the better prepared we will be to address unforeseen exigencies.”

Michael Irvin Arrington, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Sam Houston State University
2013 John I. Sisco Excellence in Teaching Award, Southern States Communication Association

“Coming out on the other side of a pandemic offered great insight for permanent changes to the way that I teach. It’s forced me to rethink the utility of deadlines, and my former practice of every assignment being docked for being late. I think learning about trauma-informed pedagogy made me realize that I was taking myself too seriously as a professor. While my personality thrives on structure, deadlines, and rubrics, I have learned that I may be in a minority of people who share that perspective in my own classroom in a given semester. Disruptive change is, obviously, disruptive; offering students guidelines, support, flexibility, and paths *through* that disruption seems both humane and also personally fulfilling.”

Jonathan M. Bowman
2014 Donald H. Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teaching in Higher Education
2014 Western States Communication Association’s Distinguished Teaching Award
