

Students Share Skills To Support Content Conversion | ITLS

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Dr. Kristy Bloxham

The responses and contributions of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences volunteers to the Covid-19 response were numerous and diverse.

ITLS faculty member Dr. Kristy Bloxham said 27 faculty, staff, students and alumni immediately responded to a March 12 email request to assist with the rapid eLearning transition efforts, never suspecting that they would get paid. These individuals took the challenge as an opportunity to help whatever Utah State University's Center for Innovation Design and Instruction (CIDI) needed.

"We have seen the world turn to, and depend on, those who know how to develop and deliver online learning," Bloxham said. "They have become the heroes of the day!"

Members of the ITLS Covid-19 support team specifically assisted with USU's face-to-face category 4 courses, which were identified as very difficult to do at a distance such as labs, practicums, etc. ITLS students stepped up and worked through the weekend to contact instructors, discover their specific needs, and to brainstorm with them about options, Bloxham said.

"Many volunteers just jumped in, spending a tremendous amount of time, to help instructors with little projects," she said. "Their timeliness and willingness to help relieved a lot of stress for USU's instructors." By Tuesday night on March 17th, the eve of USU's complete flip to remote courses, all requested needs were taken care of or were in an ongoing help status.

Some of the following ITLS student experiences were reported:

- Fred Poole saw a need for the Linguistics department and volunteered to reach out to them and help them with best practices for how to take their courses online.
- Crystine Chipman worked with a math instructor to help them do online math exams involving symbols, diagrams and formulas.
- Megan Hamilton worked with a Chemistry instructor to help get virtual labs set up for his courses.
- Roxie Christensen worked with an art instructor to find resources and help to get his courses online.
- Glorya Toloso worked with Human Development and Family Studies to specifically find ways to move their practicum and student teaching online while maintaining academic rigor and assisting parents at home. She taught them how to use discussion groups online and helped them get everything set up in Canvas.
- Many of our students jumped right in to help, even if they didn't know how to do something. They just dug in and figured it out and then taught the instructor, Bloxham said.
- Several students went right to an instructor's office and taught them/helped them with Canvas. They also remained available to them to answer any questions that they had.