Higher Ed Support Staff: Serving Teachers to Find Their New Groove

Jessy Polzer
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Jessy Polzer | Construct Education | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com)

The post-COVID world not only impacts teaching faculty, but also the higher ed staff who support them. Aimed at administrative leaders and support staff embedded in university centers of technology, online learning, and teaching & learning (SoTL+), this presentation will discuss “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs” for (newly minted) online instructors in your institution, and how to best support them within the scope of your mission at each level of need - creating community, even at a distance.
Now One Foot,
Now the Other

Tomie dePaola • G. P. Putnam's Sons • New York
Bob was the one who helped Bobby learn to walk. “Hold on to my hands, Bobby,” his grandfather said. “Now one foot, now the other.”

Then Bob would sit Bobby on his knee and tell him stories. “Bob, tell me the story about how you taught me to walk,” Bobby would say.
So, Bobby went back to the room where Bob was sitting. It looked like a tear was coming down Bob’s face.

“I didn’t mean to run away, Bob. I was scared. I’m sorry,” Bobby said. “Do you know who I am?”

Bobby thought he saw Bob blink his eye.

“Mom, Mom,” Bobby called. “Bob knows who I am.”

“Oh Bobby,” Mom said. “You’re just going to upset yourself. Your grandfather doesn’t recognize any of us.”
Then, Bob stood up very slowly.
Bobby knew exactly what Bob wanted to do.
Bobby stood in front of Bob and let Bob lean on
his shoulders.
“OK, Bob. Now one foot.”
Bob moved one foot.
“Now the other foot.”
Bob moved the other.
Then Bob said, “Bobby, tell story how you teach Bob to walk.”

“Well, Bob, you leaned on my shoulders and then I said, ‘Now one foot, now the other.’ And before you knew it . . .”
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Basic Physiological
- Safety & Security
- Love & Belonging
- Confidence & Respect
- Creativity & Expertise
Basic Physiological

Problems:
- Possible food/shelter insecurity
- Basic tech access (and knowledge to use it)

Solutions:
- Provide information regarding available aid
- Provide clear instructions for tech access/use
Tech Access

- Simple log-in instructions
- Step-by-step start-up guides
- Just-in-time (and place) use instructions
- Clear contact information
Safety & Security

Problems:

● Bodily security

● Job security

Solutions:

● Flexible remote work policies

● Buddy-system teaching for risk management

● Tailored support
Tailored Support

- Survey to identify average and individualized needs
- Proactive, semi-individualized (tiers) intervention and support
- Tools for “success security”
  - Course templates in the LMS
  - Course planning and design “forms” and “workbooks” for guided decision-making
Love & Belonging

Problems:
- Feeling alone
- Mental health vulnerability
- Social distancing leads to a baseline orientation of mental disengagement

Solutions:
- Provide information regarding mental health resources
- Organize personal check-ins
- Buddy-system teaching; Support groups & Communities of Practice; Flexible options for connecting
Communities of Practice

- Assigned groups along the spectrum of Maslow’s for cross-support
- Provide a checklist for success - menu of best practices for scheduling, tech, purpose, and discussion prompts
- Coordinate peer-led professional development and repositories of knowledge

https://jessypolzer.com/rsd/
Confidence & Respect

Problems:

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of permission to fail in order to succeed
- Lack of prior channels for giving and receiving respect and influence

Solutions:

- Scaffolded, semi-tailored and individualized resources and support
- Gather and disseminate “small win” stories that exemplify courage, grit, and even mistakes
- Recruit your CoP and buddy-system coaches out of this group
Every leader must become a storyteller! Stories keep us human and call us to our best.

- Gather stories on purpose
- Disseminate stories for a purpose

https://remotespeakercoach.com/storytelling-tips-1/
# Creativity & Expertise

## Problems:
- Requires all other needs to be met
- Requires focus

## Solutions:
- Consider taking a purposeful break from personal growth - or take it easy, at least
- Redefine “success” - small wins are BIG wins
- Help to identify one growth area or problem to solve, and then to make a plan
Growth Support

- Give permission to “pause” striving-based personal growth

- For those who are ready, provide resources and support to press into growth

- Provide self-assessments for individuals to gauge and monitor their growth readiness and mental health
Temp Taking & Rollout

1. Coordinate with other support offices (Technology Services, Office of Online Learning, Teaching & Learning Center, Disability Services, Academic Library, Employee Benefits, Counseling Center, etc.).

2. Consider starting with a (scrappy) needs survey.

3. Decide which interventions, resources, and services each office will provide.

4. Push out a services intake form for individuals (perhaps like this one) - decide on a scoring algorithm and interventions triage map.

5. Tell the stories!
Checklist for Coordinating Services

- Needs analysis data
- Cross-offices services menu
- Cross-offices communications plan
- Cross-offices intake form
- Cross-offices scoring algorithm
- Email templates (publicity, outreach, interventions/resources, feedback)
- Consultation scheduling methods
- Recruit, train, and organize mentors & check-in schedules
- Organize and launch Communities of Practice
- Gather, channel, disseminate “(redefined) success” stories
- Create course structure, syllabus, homepage, and learning activity templates in LMS
- Create “Teaching Online Quick Guide” for new online instructors
- Gather self-assessment and aid resources in one place
Questions?
Tell us your feedback
Brainstorm Ideas