

# CVS teachers reflect on first week in virtual setting

By: [Alex Szwarc](#) | C&G Newspapers | Published September 21, 2020



CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — A couple weeks into the new, virtual school year, and one teacher is surprised with how well the transition has gone.

In August, Chippewa Valley Schools approved its preparedness and response plan, and also elected to start the school year with remote learning — but plans to transition to face-to-face learning.

Don Kuntz, Dakota High School math teacher and math department chair, said prior to receiving the go-ahead that the year would begin in a virtual setting, the district was proactive in creating a planning team.

“I volunteered to put together resources,” he said. “We use Schoology as our interface with students, so we created groups that could be for specific classes. For my classes, I started using a smart Notebook on a smartboard with my computer, and a webcam and tablet to give the same type of lesson they would get in class.”

This year, Kuntz, who has taught at Dakota for 23 years, is teaching accelerated Algebra II and precalculus.

When assessing how the first week of virtual teaching went, Kuntz said it went really well, which surprised him.

“Today was the first setback because our internet went out at part of Dakota and they’re allowing me to work from home,” he said. “Last week was spotless and was working beautifully.”

Students in Kuntz’s classes can view his screen and him writing on the board, as if they were in class.

In the summer, he recreated lessons for the first three weeks of class, anticipating the virtual start.

“The idea was to give them lessons they could watch at their convenience, then in the virtual class, we spend the hour with me sharing my screen and working on problems,” Kuntz said.

He estimated that in the first week for five classes, maybe four students were absent.

“The kids seem excited about what we’re doing and I feel that I may carry what is being developed right now to in-face,” he said. “The idea of a recorded lesson is really growing on me.”

Kuntz said what’s nice with a recorded lesson is that students can learn at their own speed.

Instead of having the last 20 minutes of class time to interact with students, it’s now a full hour for Kuntz to work one-on-one, if necessary.

"I take attendance, and now, they've already watched the lesson and can ask me questions about it. We've been spending 30-40 minutes on that, and the rest of the hour is giving them the new assignment," he said. "They get a lot more interaction with me than ever before."

Dakota Ninth Grade Center Social Studies teacher Kara Lukens is in her 23rd year of teaching and said she's worked at being more proficient in online learning platforms.

This year, Lukens is teaching global history and AP world history.

"Before we knew it was going to be virtual, I had three sets of lesson plans I was working on: face-to-face, hybrid and all online," she said. "What I'm finding now is, I'll have an idea for the students, then I have to figure out how to execute that in the virtual platform."

Lukens said there are many resources available to teachers online, but teachers must figure out what is best.

"A lot of time is spent on something that may have taken 10 minutes in class, you're now doing a lot of research on how to execute it," she said.

Looking back on the first week, Lukens was pleased with the students who "showed up and were ready to learn."

Each hour, Lukens has a Microsoft Teams meeting with students to check in.

"I'm lecturing with them and they're breaking out into small groups," she said. "I've been very pleased. On my end it's nice, because I can see what they're doing on each of their computers."

Lukens added that she hasn't yet experienced students being as disengaged as in the spring.

"They're not being distracted by their peers in the same way they would be in a face-to-face setting," she said.

This district's first day of school was Sept. 8.