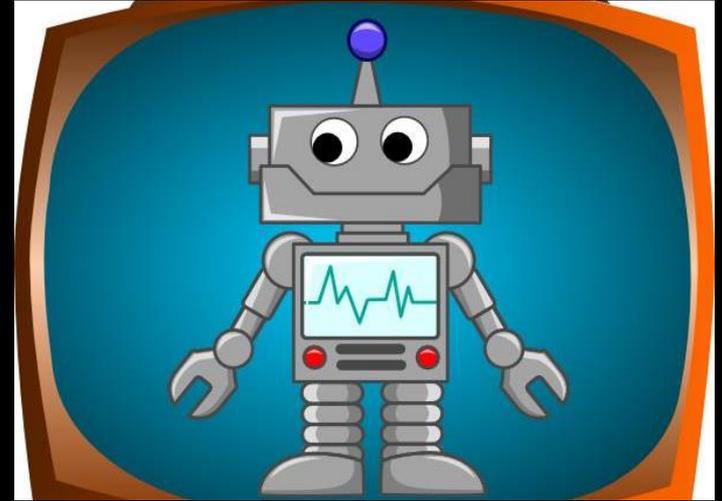


Stop Being a Robot!:

***Luring Student Interaction
and Fostering a Sense of
Community in the
Online Writing Classroom***



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Stop Being a Robot!: Luring Student Interaction and Fostering a Sense of Community in the Online Writing Classroom

In *Teaching Writing Online: How & Why*, author Scott Warnock argues: “Writing Teachers have a unique opportunity because writing-centered online courses allow instructors and students to interact in ways beyond content delivery. They allow students to build a community through electronic means...these electronic communities can build social and professional connections that constitute some of education’s real value” (xix). Speaker 1 will build upon this concept of the “electronic community” arguing that being honest with students and sharing one’s personal struggles with writing, in all areas of the classroom, encourages more student dialogue and interaction, which enables a sense of community within the context of the classroom (OWI Principle 11).

This speaker will discuss how using personalization in the online classroom allows instructors to be viewed as human, not just a computer responding to student work. She will discuss how elements such as tone and use of visuals help students feel more relaxed in the spaces they inhabit in the online classroom, and she proposes that this prompts students to start a dialogue with the instructor and each other about their writing struggles (OWI Principle 5). Further, she will suggest that instructors strive to interact with students more as they would in a traditional classroom (with empathy and an “I’ve been there” attitude), this kind of interaction encourages them to open up and see the instructor as more accessible throughout the course.

*Principles and Example Effective Practices
for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)*

*The Conference on College Composition and Communication
Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction*

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CCCC/OWIPrinciples.pdf>

Online writing teachers should retain reasonable control over their own content and/or techniques for conveying, teaching, and assessing their students' writing in their OWCs.

OWI Principle 5

Rationale for Principle 5

- ❑ College has responsibility to keep you (as instructor) in the loop
- ❑ Addresses tension that exists between institutional/programmatic instructional requirements and outcomes
- ❑ Suggests that online writing teachers should have some freedom to develop their online writing courses; they do better work when they do
- ❑ Highlights issues with institutions with large numbers of online writing courses and restrictive/standardized course shells
- ❑ Relies heavily on teachers having received the training, professional development and assessment described in OWI Principle 7

Online writing teachers and their institutions should develop personalized and interpersonal online communities to foster student success.

OWI Principle 11

Rationale for Principle 11

- ❑ Instructors should try to create a community in their online writing courses
- ❑ Students motivation and investment to learn is improved by a sense of connectedness to others
- ❑ Online writing courses should create a community between students and instructors
- ❑ Community should be inspired by both instructor and institutional involvement and commitment to quality
- ❑ Include instructional pedagogy focused on student-centered evaluation of course work/learning.



Did you say you had questions?

Use pictures
of your family
or your
animals

Course Admin Gradebook Email Live Doc Sharing Dropbox Journal Weblogography Tech Support Help

Course Author

Course Home

Syllabus

Academic Expectations

Academic Resources

Questions for the Professor

Instructors' Resources*

Readings and Assignments

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

Week 2 Begins!	Jessie Borgman	2/27/2014 12:00 AM
Posting with Integrity	Jessie Borgman	2/27/2014 12:00 AM
Late Work Guidelines	Jessie Borgman	2/20/2014 12:00 AM
Digital Bookshelf	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM
Earning an A in the Discussions	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM
AIO Library	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM
Office Hours and Contact Information	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM



Use your favorite Artwork on the homepage

Course Author

Course Home

- Syllabus
- Course Project
- Policies
- Student Resources
- Student Software Store
- Turn It In!
- FOR FACULTY*
- Faculty Resources*
- Tutor Source
- Print On Demand

Week 1

- Objectives
- Assignments
- Lecture
- Discussion
- FOR FACULTY*
- Profile Process Piece*
- Connect Live

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

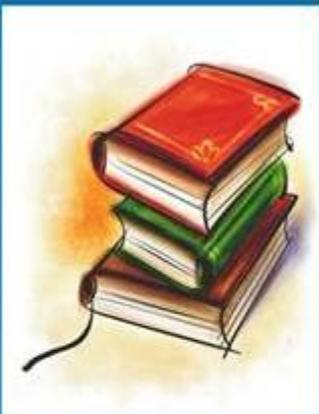
Week 7

Week 8



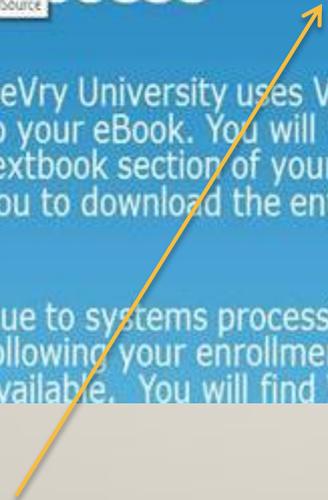
Welcome!	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM
VitalSource	Jessie Borgman	2/13/2014 12:00 AM

VitalSource and eBook Access



DeVry University uses VitalSource to provide access to your eBook. You will find VitalSource in the textbook section of your syllabus. VitalSource allows you to download the entire electronic book!

Due to systems processing, please allow several days following your enrollment for your eBook to be available. You will find VitalSource information in the



Use visual announcements

Course Welcome



Use a picture of yourself doing something you love to do on the homepage or welcome page

Hi Everyone! Welcome to English 1050 online at WMU! My name is Jessie Borgman and I'll be your instructor for the course!

ENGL 1050 is a 4-credit Freshman level course in which students develop their understanding of the ways that literate activity is situated through



One account. All of Google.

Sign in to continue to Gmail



[Need help?](#)

Use your picture
on your email
account

[Sign in with a different account](#)

One Google Account for everything Google



Hello Everyone!

My name is Jessie Borgman. I love my job and I love learning about and teaching college writing. I entered the field and became an instructor because writing was always difficult for me. I struggled in both high school and college with writing and with getting my thoughts into coherent texts. I tend to write like I talk, which is all over the place!

As my career has grown, I have had great opportunities to teach multiple sections of college writing both face-to-face and online at several different universities. In a few years, I would like to pursue a PhD in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, but before I do that, I would like to get a few more years of teaching experience both in the traditional classroom and online, as well as, a few more years of researching the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Going back to school takes a lot of dedication, time and effort and I'm not sure I'm ready for that :)

I am fully invested in figuring out ways to teach writing that do not solely focus on rules. In my own experience learning to write and through my experience teaching others, I am always turned off by the emphasis on rules in writing, so I would like to put my energies towards writing beyond the rules. I am also extremely interested in the process of composing...that is, how do we get thoughts from our head on to the page? Most recently, my interests include those places where writing and technology intersect and how the use of technology is influencing the way we compose and what we write.

In my free time, if I ever have any, I like to spend time with my husband and my dogs, (both Scottish Terriers) Gus and Zoey. I also enjoy watching NFL football, college basketball, cooking great food, trying new recipes, being outside and working out.

I'm looking forward to working with all of you this term!

Please don't hesitate to contact me for help :)

Best,
Jessie



Spend some time on your instructor bio and make sure you represent yourself as an academic and a real person with real hobbies/interests. Be personal and share things like the stuff in red here in this example.

Student Communication Examples

There are two files posted next to this presentation on the website.



Listen to your students!



Here's what a few of mine had to say about instructor presence in an online writing classroom.

“I feel the introduction discussion played a big part in this. First, it was nice to learn about the instructor and get a little background on interests and activities outside of class to get an idea of what the instructor is like, which I feel makes the instructor more relatable. With the student introductions, I enjoyed the fact that every student was responded to, with personalized questions or comments to show that each response was read and I feel that extra step was taken to get to know each student. I enjoyed that, which I also think makes the instructor seem "more human" vs just a robotic response. “

“The first class I took online was Political Science and I did not feel connected with that instructor. It did seem as if the instructor was a robot just going through the motions of checking the work done. I did not have much communication at all with the instructor. It did not seem like the instructor cared because there was no personal communication between us. There was a discussion board that forced the students to communicate between each other but the instructor never really posted anything to it.”

“I like that you have a picture of yourself posted because that puts a face to your name. It makes you seem more like a real person and it's easier to connect to you. I have not once felt that you were a robot on the other end of the computer. I think the most important thing to make the connection between student and instructor, and to feel that both parties care, is communication.”

“I feel really connected to my instructor because of the feedback. The instructor always makes me feel like he/she cares because of the response. **When the instructor uses my name when sending an email, that really makes me feel special.**”

“I feel connected to the instructor when they send personal emails to me, going over me with things that need to be worked on for a particular assignment, instead of just handing out grades. I do feel like the instructors care; whenever you ask any questions they respond very quickly and they are willing to help.”

Pay Attention to Research on Online Instruction

The following are key success factors that help students persist in online courses

- ❑ *Frequent interaction and availability of the instructor*
- ❑ *Personalization of the classroom (makes instructor seem approachable)*
- ❑ *Quick responses (email, questions thread, course messaging system)*
- ❑ *Organization: a well-planned course (having information/assignments available)*
- ❑ *Inclusion of an introductory discussion/ice breaker activity (instructor participation a must!)*
- ❑ *Including student's name in communications and gradebook feedback*
- ❑ *Direct not canned feedback; students want instructors to comment on their work*

“Writing Teachers have a unique opportunity because writing-centered online courses allow instructors and students to interact in ways beyond content delivery. They allow students to build a community through electronic means...these electronic communities can build social and professional connections that constitute some of education’s real value.”

Ways to Stop Being a Robot!

- ❑ *Personalize the classroom and your email*
- ❑ *Include video, even if it's just for instructional purposes*
- ❑ *When communicating with students: acknowledge that you are both human*
- ❑ *Let email replies percolate; don't feel the need to respond immediately*
- ❑ *If you have the ability be somewhat flexible with 1 or 2 late assignments.*
- ❑ *Don't underestimate the power of a phone call*
- ❑ *Personalize your instructor biography to illustrate interests beyond the course/being an instructor*
- ❑ *Inspire student interaction through modeling to encourage a sense of community*



Further Reading:

Teaching Writing Online: How & Why, Scott Warnock, 2009

Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction: Principles and Processes, Beth Hewett and Christa Ehmann, 2004

A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI), 2013:

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CCCC/OWIPrinciples.pdf>

Grade Change: Tracking Online Education in the United States, 2014:

<http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradechange.pdf>

Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States:

<http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf>

Sloan-C Effective Practices: <http://sloanconsortium.org/effective>

Sloan-C Five Pillars: <http://sloanconsortium.org/5pillars> and [http://sloanconsortium.org/Quality Framework Narrative 5 pillars](http://sloanconsortium.org/QualityFrameworkNarrative5pillars)

A Predictive Study of Student Satisfaction in Online Education Programs, March 2013:

<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/1338/2416>

Faculty Actions that Result in Student Satisfaction in Online Courses:

<http://sloanconsortium.org/jaln/v14n4/faculty-actions-result-student-satisfaction-online-courses>

Seven Ways to Improve Student Satisfaction in Online Courses: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/distance-learning/seven-ways-to-improve-student-satisfaction-in-online-courses/>

Strategies for Increasing Online Student Retention and Satisfaction:

[http://www.gaston.edu/docs/Strategies For Increasing Online Student Retention.pdf](http://www.gaston.edu/docs/StrategiesForIncreasingOnlineStudentRetention.pdf)