

Extra Credit Assignment Prompt

Hi Class-

I'm doing some research on how students experience an online course and their interactions with the instructor of the course.

So when you reply to this extra credit assignment, you can respond based on your experience in all online courses you've taken, not just this one.

When taking an online course...

Do you feel connected to your instructor?

What makes you feel connected to your instructor?

What does he/she do to make you feel connected to him/her?

Do you feel like your instructor is human?

Do you feel like your instructor cares?

Do you feel like you can still contact your instructor for help?

Do you ever feel like your instructor is just a robot going through the motions?

How does your instructor show he/she cares?

You do not have to address all of these questions to earn the extra credit points. These are just questions to get you thinking about how you connect with your instructor in an online course since you can't see him/her face-to-face.

Please respond to the following with a minimum of a 250 word response. A well-thought-out response of at least 250 words or more will earn 10 points extra credit.

Please let me know if you have questions :)

Best,

Jessie

Student Responses

Student Response # 1

Although limited, my experience with taking online courses has been pretty positive. All the of instructors have given multiple ways of contacting them such as email, through Canvas, or their office phone numbers. They also post the hours they are available at [the school] for help face to face. I find this to be very considerate of them. From what I can tell, they have all been very open to helping students who need help or have questions. It is better than what I had expected coming into it. So far, all of my instructors have gone out of their way to help me if needed. After submitting an assignment, they have followed up with ways to better my work such as sending links to websites with tips, or videos on YouTube. In a hybrid class I am taking we post in discussions and then cover some of the material in class. I've had questions on a topic that was not covered in class, and my instructor has sent me a message through Canvas with attachments or links on the topic, which has been very helpful. I feel that the classes are small enough that the instructor is able to give additional help where needed. This is very refreshing. When they go out of their way to help, it makes me feel more connected. So far, any time I have had to contact one they have been very quick to reply. I had always heard that college

instructors are unlike high school teachers in a sense that they do not care if you show up or try. While that may be true for some, I feel that my instructors genuinely care that I am equipped to do well in their classes, and go the extra mile if I do need help.

Student Response # 2

I have only taken one other online only class and one hybrid class besides this class. 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.

The second class I took was a hybrid class with most work done online and some done in person. This allowed a more personal touch between student and instructor. It was nice to have some face to face interaction with the instructor and the other students because it gave a connection with the names we saw online and the actual people. I did seem like the instructor cared. He was able to have a more personal relationship with the students having met us in person.

This class has been much better than the first online class I took. The constant communication you have with us posting things on the discussion board, sending and responding to emails, and asking and answering questions shows you are involved and being involved shows you care. I do feel connected to you. I know you're just an email away from answering a question I may have. 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.

Student Response # 3

I have taken quite a few online classes. I prefer the learning in online classes because I can work at my own pace. I don't really need or really even want to interact with an instructor in certain subjects especially ones that I feel I already have a good grasp on, but I just need in order to get my degree. That being said, I figure I am not the normal type student.

I don't feel connected to my instructor, but I don't really feel unconnected either. I think in this day and age of things like Facebook and Twitter people are able to feel connected with each other even without interacting on an actual face to face basis.

I do feel like I can contact my instructor for help by sending messages through canvas.

I feel that when instructors post more on the announcements page it is easier to feel connected to them. It's always good to know what is going on, and the more information the instructor gives, the more it helps

I like that the way the writing assignments are put out in this online class, and feel that it makes it seem like the instructor is trying very hard to communicate what it is that is required for the writing assignment. Instructions are in the downloadable file of instructions on all of the writing assignments, and also when it becomes an assignment the same information is repeated on that page. I like that a lot, because then I don't have to go back and search for the information from the longer file.

Another thing is when the instructor comments on the discussion questions it feels like it is more of an ongoing conversation rather than an awkward conversation between students who don't know each other and are forced to comment on something with 150-250 words.

I think one thing that would show that the instructor wasn't just going through the motions is by interacting with each class differently and not just using the same format that they've used for every class. I kind of think that is asking too much from the instructor though.

Student Response # 4

I have taken a few online classes at [the school] and they are a great fit for me. I feel very connected to some instructors more than others. I have had some instructors respond quickly and others that take days to respond or weeks to grade. Every teacher that I have had has been pretty good about specifying what they are looking for. I feel connected to my instructors when they are responsive, give feedback, and do not give redundant and unnecessary work. I do feel like my instructor is human when he or she is personable and shares a little bit about their own lives at home outside of work/school. If they just post a syllabus and call it good then it feels like I'm being taught by a robot. It is hard to tell if your instructor cares unless they are actually giving you valuable feedback and information to help you out. I always feel like I can contact my instructor for help unless they are unresponsive and take forever to get back with me. I feel that you are very helpful, quick, and responsive. When you grade my papers you explain why you did or didn't like something. I also like the links that you post to help me out. I do not feel like just another student in this class, but I have in American Politics. We never really received much feedback on our work except for on our papers. In my other classes I received a great deal of feedback and help throughout the course. This shows me that my instructor wants me to succeed.

Student Response # 5

I am currently taking two online classes this semester, PHED 214 and English 101, and I definitely prefer them to regular college classes. I really like being able to take them on my own time and I have definitely never felt that I have been disconnected from the instructors. The instructors are always quick to answer any questions I may have and they always give a lot of quality feedback on work that I have submitted. In addition, the instructors usually post office hours or will make appointments if one needs the extra help. I plan on taking as many online classes as I can from now on. They are a great fit for me.

I especially like the way this online class is set up. Everything has been very accessible and easy to navigate. There is lots of open communication, and I feel that I can get help when I need it. Our instructor really made me feel like she cared too when she had us all do personal introductions at the beginning of the course. It is also nice that we have a lot of links posted to the course that can help us and give us a better explanation on certain aspects of writing if we need it. So keep up the good work Jessie! I have really enjoyed being in the class.

Student Response # 6

Even though this is my first online class through [the school], I think it is easier than I expected. When I took my Pharmacy Tech course, it was all online and I did not have an instructor. It was a lot harder to find help when I needed it and I had to figure out a lot on my own. I have found that having an instructor is more helpful and has made me more comfortable. Starting this class, I was nervous to ask questions, because I did not want to feel like I was bothering the instructor, but now I feel more comfortable asking for help instead of spending time figuring things out on my own. The first couple discussions were nerve wrecking for me because I was not 100% sure I was doing everything that was expected of me. As the class went on, I became a lot more comfortable posting comments and with the assignments I am working on.

I prefer taking online courses because I have a very busy schedule. I enjoy doing things on my time and being able to schedule assignments that work for me. I was expecting it to be harder than my other classes and nervous that I would not be able to get all the help I needed. I have found that just because it's online, does not mean they do not care. I do feel like I am connected with the instructor and that she is like a human. I can tell just from our recent

discussions and writing assignments, that Jessie has taken the time to read each one. I'm not sure about other online instructors, but I hope they are all as active with their classes as she is. I think it is a different kind of relationship when it's online and not in person, but I feel like Jessie cares about her students and enjoys being an active instructor.

Student Response # 7

This is actually the second online course I've ever taken. The first time I took an online course, I didn't feel any sort of connection to the instructor at all. She basically gave us our task and graded it. She did not give feedback or additional help like the instructor of this course does. I came into this experience with a very grave view of online classes because of my first instructor, but this class has renewed my optimism.

It is very hard for me to feel a connection with my instructor due to the fact that I am more of a face-to-face kind of person. I do, however, feel that I am actually being taught something in this class rather than our instructor just going through the motions. I like the fact that we are given feedback on our work and given the opportunity to interact through our discussion questions every other week.

I feel like this class has given me the opportunity to try a different way of learning than I have become accustomed to over time. I really appreciate the fact that our instructor tries to keep us motivated and also helps give us resources, such as Purdue Owl and the Grammar Girl podcasts. Unlike my first online course, I can really tell that my instructor actually cares about teaching her students rather than just letting us figure it out for ourselves.

This class has been a great experience so far and I look forward to the next time I take an online class.

Student Response # 8

This is my second online course both of which were ENG courses. I really liked the freedom of the ENG 101 so I decided to take ENG 102 online as well.

I have never felt "alone" out here and that I could not get help when I needed it. I have not had too many questions but when I have they were answered very promptly by the Professor. I also have never felt that the Professor is out of touch or a robot. The comments that are added to ongoing discussions and the added questions to make us think and get more out of our own comments are very helpful. They make you expand your thought process and think outside of your normal pattern. The encouragement and constructive criticism I receive on my written assignments is very helpful and makes it feel that the Professor is in touch and cares about when I am doing.

I would recommend these classes to anyone who is planning on taking them.

Student Response # 9

This English 102 class is actually my first time experiencing an online class, and I honestly like it a lot. I feel connected to the instructor and feel as though I can ask her questions or get help whenever I may need to. One thing the instructor does that I really appreciate is commenting on our assignments and writing little side notes on papers, even though nothing is in written, paper form. The feedback really helps. Also, in my first writing assignment, my instructor told me specific things I needed to work on (especially with grammar) and even gave me links to different websites that would help explain those things to me. This was actually very helpful, and I feel like the instructor cares that all of us do well in the class. I definitely never feel as though I am being taught by a robot that just goes through the motions.

Not only do I feel that my instructor cares and is very helpful even though it is an online class, but I also like her teaching methods better than my last professor, who taught a regular, non-online class. My professor from English 101 never posted grades anywhere, did very little

commenting on our papers and other assignments and did not even give our assignments back to us until the second to last class time. I very much appreciate the way my instructor for English 102 posts grades quickly and stays involved in the assignments, making sure that we improve our writing and reading skills even without coming into physical contact with us.

Student Response # 10

When I first decided to take this online English class, I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get the help I needed via online, but I was wrong. I have nothing but great things to say about being in this class, and being involved in an online course. This isn't the first online course I've taken before. I am currently in math 095 and I'm using the math-lab and I've been a part of math-lab last semester for 090. It's a little different from taking a class that is completely online, but just like this class, I find it easy and accessible to be involved in the class and reach out to get help from my instructors. I feel very connected to my instructor. So far I've asked multiple questions from day one and not only have all of them been answered, but my instructor contacts me within hours of sending out an email, which I think is great. Every time I ask a question or give out an idea to my instructor, I get always get an answer and I also get the encouragement to ask even more questions. My instructor is very reassuring and after I submit an assignment and get a grade there is always some sort of note giving details on my writing, which personally, I like to know what I succeeded on doing and what I need to work on. I definitely feel like I'm talking to an actual person, just by how giving and helpful my instructor is, I always know I can go to her for help. Every time I have a question or concern, I straight away ask for her help. From day one I never felt like I was talking to a robot. Personally, I feel like I'm in a classroom with how I am learning and am being taught. The only difference is I'm at home instead of a room with other students. I feel like I get one on one attention from my instructor and so far everything has been going perfectly in my online English 102 class.

Student Response # 11

Going into this semester knowing I had an online class, I was very nervous and honestly did not think I would excel very well in the course. However, from what I have experienced this semester it might be my favorite English course ever! You are very easy to get hold of and make me feel like I'm in a class room and sometimes even at home. You do a really good job reaching out to students using the discussion board. The best part about this course is how fast you respond to messages on Canvas, if I need a question answered you are always there to answer it with an hour so I can take your feedback and to apply it to whatever I am doing. I really feel like you do a nice job acting as a student when you're giving feedback too, instead of the super formal emails most professors send you or vice versa, I feel very laxed and don't hesitate to reach out to you and ask questions. Obviously by writing back within a few hours you show you really care about your students and want to show them you are there for them at almost all times, even late at night when most students are trying to cram in assignments! On to the human part, I 100% feel you are human and not a robot by the constant feedback you give me, and not being the same thing every time I ask. I feel you are doing a great job teaching this course and do not need to change a thing!

Student Response # 12

This class is probably my 5th online class I have taken. To be completely honest, online classes work well for me and I do feel a bit more connected to the instructor rather than in a classroom setting. The connection with my instructor has varied on the class I was taking or the instructor that was given for the class. Most of the time it felt like my instructor was at my fingertips, and typically I would get a quick response. With some classes though, it felt as if my instructor was

not there all the time. Sometimes taking days to get back to me on something very important, even after many phone calls and emails, which can get a little stressful at times. In most cases, the instructor has shown that he or she cares and was always available for help. Especially in these ENG online course, I have always felt that instructor cared even when I did not expect it. For me, when I see the instructor does care and tries their best to help in any way that they can, that motivates me in a sense. I was never the strongest in my class when it came to actually doing the homework and staying on task, but these online classes give me that push for myself so I can do better. Although some instructors do act like they may not care, overall I am happy with my online course experience and the majority of that comes from the instructor.

Student Response # 13

This is going to be my second online class that I have taken so far during my college education; I am also in an online computer literacy class. I would have to say that this English class is going a lot better than the computers class. In my computers class the teacher is not as involved in the class as this one, and you have to go onto another website to complete a lot of the work. You also have to complete assignments in your Microsoft word and power point and submit them but the directions for submitting them are hard to understand and if you don't have enough time to contact the instructor and get told exactly how to submit them then you aren't going to be able to turn it in in time. But so far for this class I would say that there aren't as many obstacles that you come across and the teacher is more involved in the discussion questions and is faster to respond to your emails than my other class is. So I would say that it would depend on how involved your instructor gets in your course to be able to tell how your online course is going to go for you. If you have an involved instructor and he/she is there for you whenever you need assistance then your online class experience will go But if you have a not so involved instructor and only gets back to you sometimes or when it is best for them then your experience will not go as well as you might like it to.

Student Response # 14

This is my second online class. I am really enjoying the online classes. I do feel like you as the instructor care with the English 101 online course. I feel like I am connected with you when I am able to know that I can email you, and you respond to me. That is what makes me feel connected to you. I like the fact that we are able to comprehend one another's emails. Yes, I feel like you are human. I feel like you care about all of your students. I feel comfortable with you, when I always get a respond from you when needed. I know that you are always there to help me, and that you care about your students, because I can tell. I have never thought that you were a robot of any sort, because I can feel that whenever I do take an online class, I feel really connected to my instructor, because of the feedback. The instructor always makes me feel like he/she cares because of the responds. When the instructor uses my name when sending an email, that really makes me feel special.

I would recommend an online class to anyone, because it saves you time, and you can somewhat work at your own pace.

Student Response # 15

I have taken a few online courses in the past and I feel more connected to the instructor in this class than any of the other online courses I have taken previously. Like any class, I feel that what I get out of it directly correlates with what I put into it. I feel that I only need to ask a question in this class and it gets answered immediately and to my satisfaction. I like the

flexibility of an online class and how I can tailor it to my schedule a bit more than a traditional class. I have had difficulty with some of the assignment schedules in the past as far as understanding what was expected but not with this class. I really like that most online classes have examples of assignments and links to helpful websites to further assist.

I feel that my instructor is human and fully accessible whenever I have issues. I think that at least in this class I get more feedback on assignments than a typical classroom class. I almost think that the lack of face to face makes the written communication more thorough and expressive. Sometimes I think that there are more assignments in an online class (discussions and quizzes) but I think that helps bond the class and makes up for the lack of peer to peer interaction and brainstorming.

Personally for classes other than math and science, I prefer an online class and am very grateful that we have the option. I think that technology will allow for even more flexible options in education in the future. I hope to have the opportunity to take advantage of it.

Student Response # 16

I really love all my online courses, but I don't love them because of any special connection with an instructor. This is unusual because in a typical classroom setting, I would base my opinion on a class largely on how much I like the instructor. It is not like that for online classes, since I feel no real personal connection to what my instructor's personality is. This might be a good thing though. I am able to focus solely on the content of my course and not on how my instructor lectures. Some courses allow me to feel more connected with instructors. It usually depends on how they answer emails and how timely they are in their responses. If they respond genuinely then I do feel like they care and are paying attention to my work. Other classes I have zero interaction with professors, other than emailing them when I am taking my test on campus. In some classes, I do not even know the professors name (they only sign with a letter). It is kind of irritating when you can't even put a gender to the instructor! I like to be able to see a picture of my professor and I appreciate when they post announcements each week. I believe that the type of class you are taking online is a big factor. In my math class there is no interaction with my instructor or my peers. I do really love the course though, because I am able to work at my own pace and I like being on my own in it. However, that means I really feel like there is no professor at all and the computer just grades all my work! In other classes, there are discussions every week, or papers that have comments given on them by instructors, this makes my professors feel connected and human.

Student Response # 17

I have taken several online classes and of all of the ones I have taken, I would say I feel most connected to my instructor in this course than I have in previous ones. 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. I definitely feel I can contact my instructor for help. Although I have not come across any issues yet, I feel the instructor is very approachable in this class, and I think the "questions for instructor" discussion is helpful as well. I have read through some of those responses, and I think all the responses are helpful and friendly. I have had previous instructors where their responses or emails to the class were short, and sometimes come off rude. Overall I feel the discussion boards make this particular class have that "classroom feel". My previous courses were mostly, read the syllabus and do the homework and tests by the due date. I didn't have much interaction with previous instructors. However online classes are so helpful to me with my

busy schedule and I enjoy the flexibility of it so I would take an online class, whether I felt connected to the instructor or not. That connection is just a bonus. I hope more classes do this.

Student Response # 18

I have taken about 3 or 4 online courses throughout my college career, which has included a bachelor's and now (almost) a technical degree. In my opinion it is hard to feel as though you are accomplishing much in online courses because of the distant and sometimes lack of feedback from professors. I often felt that because they obviously have so much work to do in grading everyone's online work that my work didn't matter. I enjoy being able to ask questions after class that sometimes are irrelevant to other students, but aren't important enough to send in an email to an online instructor. I do feel that I can ask the online instructors for any help I need, but it just doesn't seem as personal. I am a very visual person and sometimes it is hard to feel I am getting the answer I need in order to feel attended to when the answer is provided through the computer. I also often feel as though I cannot get my point across as well in online courses when asking for help or when I have a general inquiry.

As a student I know how busy instructors are, so in answer to the question, I do not feel as connected to the instructor as much as I do in an actual classroom because I cannot see the nonverbal feedback and I cannot ask questions on a whim. What would make me feel more connected to my instructor is if there was some way they could give more in-depth feedback. When I write a paper or complete a project, I like visually seeing exactly where I made mistakes so that I can fix them and learn from them. Sometimes, I think I have made mistakes and when I get the comments back from the instructor there is no indication of anything wrong. I would rather be able to take the actual project to them and ask if what I did was correct, even though they did not comment. The more comments I get back from the online instructor, the more connected, more human, and more caring the instructor feels to me.

Student Response # 19

In the online courses that I have taken, I feel somewhat connected to my instructors. Taking courses at the college itself makes me feel more connected to my instructors, though. But, I do like online classes more. 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. I don't necessarily feel like the instructor is a robot, but it is understandable how someone could think that. Just as long as they are personable and give you help whenever it's needed, they seem very real. It's just different not being able to see them. But I enjoy being able to work at my own pace. I like when online instructors email me back fast, and comment more on things that I've done. I like when they go in detail about questions I have and make sure that I understand what I'm doing. In one class I took, the instructor just was not clear at all about what they wanted done, and what assignments count for credit and what assignments don't. I'd spend 3 hours on an assignment and it wouldn't even count for credit. It would be different if I needed it to study but I didn't. That made it very difficult. There was a point in time where I just stopped asking questions and did whatever I thought was right because they were never clear with what they wanted. That isn't how an online course instructor should be. They should make everything they want done outlined and clear.