



OLA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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COURSE SPOTLIGHTS

ENGL 210F - Genres of Business Communication

Recently, ENGL 210F students completed a Student Course Survey and provided feedback on different aspects of the course. I created a report which analyzed students' responses, summarized highlights of the course's current structure, and suggested potential improvements for future iterations of ENGL 210F. I am also supporting ENGL 210F's business simulation assignment by creating an employee orientation handbook. This handbook will provide students with relevant information for their assignment and imbue them with a greater understanding of their roles for the simulation. - **Gabriella Sutarno**

ENGL 192 - Communication in the Engineering Profession

Currently, I am reviewing past ENGL 192 instructors' assignments. In particular, I am comparing the structure of two similar assignments, each created by a different instructor. I am identifying the similarities and differences between these assignments and will be developing a course module or lesson to support a consolidated assignment in Fall 2020. I have also had the opportunity to work on a variety of tasks, such as creating course banner widgets, completing a course comparison project, and writing an expertise and engineering user experience report. - **Krishani Puveendiran**

ENGL 109 - Introduction to Academic Writing

To prepare for ENGL 109's online revision, I have been proofreading and creating course materials. I have also completed training in PebblePad and am applying my training by creating PebblePad workbooks for students to use in ENGL 109. I am currently finishing constructing PebblePad workbooks and transferring course materials onto this platform. - **Christina Piruchta**

USER EXPERIENCE AND BRANDING

OLAs are trained in user experience best practices for online courses. Our team has researched various techniques to support instructors in providing students with a seamless online learning experience. Reach out to an OLA if you have questions related to user experience and branding.



LEARN TEMPLATES

Building a course from scratch can be difficult. The Centre for Extended Learning offers a "Templates for Remote Teaching" course on LEARN to help simplify course creation. This course provides instructions on how to add a full course template to your LEARN shell.

Find more information on registering and using "Templates for Remote Teaching" by clicking here.

DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE SHELLS

While LEARN course shells aren't available until seven weeks before the term starts, you can request a development shell on LEARN at any time to get a head start on course creation. Development shells allow you to store templates, quizzes, gradebooks and any other content and to easily transfer this material to the LEARN course shell. To request a development shell, email learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca.

COURSE BRANDING

User experience and branding are far from superficial add-ons: they are crucial to course design. Indeed, the biggest obstacle to supporting a successful online learning experience is poor design - cluttered widgets, endless links to webpages, and unintuitive aesthetics. To deliver a seamless user experience, centre your course branding around professionalism and thoughtful visuals.

Branding does not need to be time-consuming: **click here to access the University of Waterloo's well-designed brand resources and guidelines.**

Find out more information about how to create visually appealing online courses by clicking here.

DISCUSSION POSTS ON LEARN

Discussion forums can quickly become overcrowded, making it difficult for students to locate important information and share their thoughts. To improve LEARN discussions:

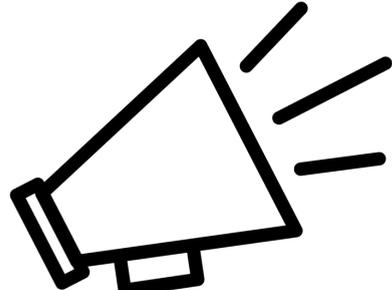
1. Post discussion questions in the forum.
2. Outline expectations for discussion posts: word count, required references, number of response posts, and deadline.
3. Remind students about discussion posts through LEARN announcements.
4. Create a separate "Ask the Instructor" forum on LEARN for general queries.

Find more information here:

- **Online Discussions: Tips for Instructors**
- **Communicating with Students**
- **Online Teaching: Do This, Not That**
- **How to Host a Successful Online Discussion Forum: University of Oregon**

OLA TIDBIT

OLA Tidbit: LEARN Formatting



Having taken several online courses at the University of Waterloo, I have found that LEARN is the most important resource for students' remote learning. Since students frequently use LEARN to ensure that they are up to date with course content, instructors can support their class by creating a simple, one-page course schedule. Additionally, it is important to keep content on LEARN consistent and clear to minimize the potential disconnect during remote learning. Overall, keeping courses well organized on LEARN can create a better user experience for students. - **Jessica Macri**