

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



OLA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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COURSE SPOTLIGHTS

ENGL 193 - Communication in the Sciences

This week, I have been analyzing student experience survey results from two sections of ENGL 193. Using statistical formulas such as relative frequency and measures of central tendency, I have consolidated these calculations into a comprehensive report. The survey results have been insightful as the survey findings will help improve user experience components for ENGL 193 in Fall 2020. Additionally, I am comparing assignments between both sections of ENGL 193 to create a final comparison report. - **Rency Luan**

ENGL 191 - Communication in the Engineering Profession

Currently, I am re-developing an assignment for ENGL 191. Prior to transitioning into an online learning environment, ENGL 191 students were required to write a manual on how to solve brain teaser toys. To convert this assignment for online learning, I explored Minecraft Education, a free online software that allows users to code in languages such as Python and Javascript to build objects. Additionally, I am developing a tutorial on how Mac users can create a Gantt Chart on Excel. I have asked other OLAs to review the tutorial and will be using their feedback to make improvements for Fall 2020. - **Mayuri Punithan**

St. Jerome's University

This week, I've been busy with a myriad of projects. Creating the St.Jerome's LEARN page and associated drop-in sessions has been a rewarding task. Building question banks, gradebooks, and other LEARN content has been rewarding as well. I've especially enjoyed my video calls with different instructors - it's great to put a face to the names of the instructors with whom I've been working with. - **Philip Zuidema**

PRODUCTIVITY TIPS

OLAs are trained in productivity best practices. Our team has researched various productivity tips to provide students with a seamless online learning experience. Reach out to an OLA if you have questions related to video recording.

Productivity and Time Management

Motivation is essential for productive remote work. Both instructors and students can make working from home more rewarding by setting tangible weekly goals and maintaining an updated task list. Additionally, instructors can use a 4 month agenda to assist with long-term planning for each academic term. Planning ahead promotes time management and limits procrastination. **Click here to view a LinkedIn course that provides more time management tips.** Login to LinkedIn using your UWaterloo email to get full access to LinkedIn courses.

Organization and Planning

Students, especially those who have never taken online courses before, may find navigating course shells on LEARN difficult at first. Instructors can help ease students' transition to online learning by posting weekly announcements that contain an overview of upcoming assignments, quizzes, essays, and more. Instructors can embed images and videos into announcements to further support student engagement. By combining this announcement method with weekly emails, instructors can maintain frequent correspondence on readings, due dates, and assignments. This allows for a streamlined form of communication between instructors and students. **Click here for more information on uploading announcements to LEARN.**

Planning Tools

Remote work and online learning have changed how instructors organize and plan for their courses. The following softwares can help instructors with organizing tasks and scheduling:

- Microsoft To Do is an app that lets users organize and customize tasks by setting reminders, deadlines, and recurrence. Tasks can be added to lists and shared with other users, as To Do is linked to Microsoft accounts (including UWaterloo accounts). **Click here to find out more about Microsoft To Do.**
- Outlook Calendar and Google Calendar allow users to set up reminders, send invitations, and track your scheduled meetings and appointments by using one of these calendars. **Click here to find out more about Outlook Calendar, which is linked to Microsoft accounts (including UWaterloo accounts).** **Click here to find out more about Google Calendar, which is linked to Gmail accounts.**
- Notion is an organizational app that has comprehensive, multi-purpose tools: users can create and share documents, lists, schedules, databases, and more. When signing up, use your UWaterloo email to get free access to the Personal Pro Plan (Education). **Click here to find out more about Notion.**

OLA TIDBIT



OLA Tidbit: Online Learning

Throughout my undergrad, I've had the opportunity to take a variety of online courses and learn what I like and dislike about online learning. In my experience, an effective online course is one run by an engaged instructor who is interested in providing an interactive environment. Offering content in many formats (such as videos, transcripts and interactive games) demonstrates that instructors are keeping in mind that students have different online preferences. When such considerations are made, online courses become memorable: students can better retain course information and may be able to recall assignments or readings years later. As an OLA, I have learned more about the work involved in making online courses engaging. My role has helped me understand that getting direct feedback from students can go a long way in how you can transition and improve courses to an online setting. - **Gabriella Sutarno**