



# OLA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 27, 2020 | No.5



## COURSE SPOTLIGHTS

### ENGL 191 - Communication in the Engineering Profession

This week, I have been wrapping up my previous projects. I am looking forward to starting a new technical writing assignment. Additionally, working on the newsletter with my team has been a bright spot for me. I always look forward to our collaborative brainstorming sessions and reading insightful tips written by my peers. As an OLA, I am continuously enjoying learning everyday! - **Jessica Macri**

### Renison University College

This week, I have been creating announcements to provide ELS/EMLS students with useful information for Fall 2020. For example, I made an announcement about essay writing to promote the Writing and Communication Centre. This announcement will be pre-scheduled for release during the middle of Fall term, when students are likely to be working on essays and writing assignments. I am looking forward to writing more of these announcements as I would find this type of content helpful from a student's perspective. - **Hannah Fritchley**

### Senior Online Learning Advisor

As the term has progressed, my role as a SOLA has become more managerial. I have learned a lot about 'leadership awareness', which has helped me stay up to date and become more conscious of expectations of my superiors, the tasks of other SOLAs and their teams, and the projects and expectations of my OLAs. Going forward, I will continue to implement my learnings, host efficient meetings with my team, and keep my superiors informed. I'm looking forward to the next few weeks! - **Matthew Olsen**

## ASYNCHRONOUS GROUP WORK

OLAs are trained in asynchronous group work best practices. Our team has researched various softwares to support instructors in providing students with a seamless online learning experience. Reach out to an OLA if you have questions related to accessibility.



### LEARN Groups

Fostering successful group work in an online learning environment is essential for optimal learning. LEARN allows instructors to streamline communication between students by creating groups. Groups will help students connect and engage with one another while collaborating. **Find more information about creating and working with groups on LEARN by clicking here.**

### Teamwork and Organization

Coordinating group projects online can be difficult for students. Instructors can provide students with guidance on using Microsoft Teams to simplify collaboration.

Microsoft Teams is an online communication software that supports sending messages, sharing files, and video and voice calls. Instructors can create channels for each student group, add files to each channel for collaboration, and then review the files' version history to assess students' individual contributions. The following resources provide instructors with tips on using Microsoft Teams in their courses:

- **Create a Microsoft Team through the University of Waterloo**
- **Create a channel on Teams**
- **Video Tutorial: Using Microsoft Teams to support student group projects**
- **Add files on Microsoft Teams**

### Planning and Scheduling Group Work

Facilitating group work in online courses can be challenging. To help students plan and schedule their group work, instructors can:

1. Establish a group contract. This increases accountability and allows students to understand their individual roles and responsibilities. **For more information and group contracts templates, click here.**
2. Encourage students to track and organize the progress of their group project on softwares such as Trello. Trello is a collaborative online organization tool that uses a Kanban-style framework to help teams manage tasks. **Find more information about Trello by clicking here.**

## OLA TIDBIT

### OLA Tidbit: The Art of Taking Action

As an OLA, I have stumbled upon situations where I spend hours thinking and planning a project, only to find that I have little time left to take action to complete the project. I have realized that the immediate act of 'doing' will always surpass the delayed act of 'thinking'. Iterative imperfection is always better than delayed perfection - there is no point in worrying about small missing pieces because projects tend to evolve and come together over time. The longest gap in the world is between 'thinking' and 'doing'. Once you start taking action, you're already halfway there. - **Rency Luan**

