

Webinar Demo Book

WEBINAR DEMO BOOK

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Steel Press
Madison, WI



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A Few Strategies to Promote Productive Online Student Behaviours
Jessica O'Reilly

INTRODUCTION

This is where you can write your introduction.

PART I

MAIN BODY

1.

CHAPTER 1

A filler paragraph.

This line of text will import into Pressbooks as an H2

A second filler paragraph. A filler paragraph. Another filler paragraph.
Yet another filler paragraph
It is very cold in Montreal.¹

Blockquotes

Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.

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Notes

1. Headquarters of Pressbooks.

CHAPTER 2: COLUMNS

Columns

You can make your paragraphs display in two columns or three columns.

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with:

“I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy.”

“We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes,” said her mother resentfully, “since we are not to visit.”

“But you forget, mamma,” said Elizabeth, “that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long promised to introduce him.”

“I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of

her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her.”

“No more have I,” said Mr. Bennet; “and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you.”

Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply, but, unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.

“Don’t keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven’s sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.”

“Kitty has no discretion in her coughs,” said her father; “she times them ill.”

“I do not cough for my own amusement,” replied Kitty fretfully. “When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?”

“To-morrow fortnight.”

“Aye, so it is,” cried her mother, “and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for

her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself.”

“Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to her.”

“Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?”

“I honour your circumspection. A fortnight’s acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself.”

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, “Nonsense, nonsense!”

CHAPTER 3

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

“What’s happened to me?” he thought. It wasn’t a dream. His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls. A collection of textile samples lay spread out on the table – Samsa was a travelling salesman – and above it there hung a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and housed in a nice, gilded frame. It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer.

Bulleted list example:

- First item
- Second item
- Etc.

Gregor then turned to look out the window at the dull weather. Drops of rain could be heard hitting the pane, which made him feel quite sad. “How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense”, he thought, but that was something he was unable to do because he was used to sleeping on his right, and in his present state couldn’t get into that position. However hard he threw himself onto his right, he always rolled back to where he was. He must have tried it a hundred times, shut his eyes so that he wouldn’t have to look at the floundering legs, and only stopped when he began to feel a mild, dull pain there that he had never felt before.

“Oh, God”, he thought, *“what a strenuous career it is that I’ve chosen!”* Travelling day in and day out. Doing business like this takes much more effort than doing your own business at home, and on top of that there’s the curse of travelling, worries about making train connections, bad and irregular food, contact with different people all the time so that you can never get to know anyone or become friendly with them. It can all go to Hell!” He felt a slight itch up on his belly; pushed himself slowly up on his back towards the headboard so that he could lift his head better; found where the itch was, and saw that it was covered with lots of little white spots which he didn’t know what to make of; and when he tried to feel the place with one of his legs he drew it quickly back because as soon as he touched it he was overcome by a cold shudder.

He slid back into his former position. “Getting up early all the time”, he thought, “it makes you stupid. You’ve got to get enough sleep. Other travelling

NEXT CHAPTER HEADING

It was not until it was getting dark that evening that Gregor awoke from his deep and coma-like sleep. He would have woken soon afterwards anyway even if he hadn't been disturbed, as he had had enough sleep and felt fully rested. But he had the impression that some hurried steps and the sound of the door leading into the front room being carefully shut had woken him. The light from the electric street lamps shone palely here and there onto the ceiling and tops of the furniture, but down below, where Gregor was, it was dark. He pushed himself over to the door, feeling his way clumsily with his antennae – of which he was now beginning to learn the value – in order to see what had been happening there. The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and he limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning – it was nearly a miracle that only one of them had been – and dragged along lifelessly.

It was only when he had reached the door that he realised what it actually was that had drawn him over to it; it was the smell of something to eat. By the door there was a dish filled with sweetened milk with little pieces of white bread floating in it. He was so pleased he almost laughed, as he was even hungrier than he had been that morning, and immediately dipped his head into the milk, nearly covering his eyes with it. But he soon drew his head back again in disappointment; not only did the pain in his tender left side make it difficult to eat the food – he was only able to eat if his whole body worked together as a snuffling whole – but the milk did not taste at all nice. Milk like this was normally his favourite drink, and his sister had certainly left it there for him because of that, but he turned, almost against his own will, away from the dish and crawled back into the centre of the room.

Through the crack in the door, Gregor could see that the gas had been lit in the living room. His father at this time would normally be sat with his evening paper, reading it out in a loud voice to Gregor's mother, and sometimes to his sister, but there was now not a sound to be heard. Gregor's sister would often write and tell him about this reading, but maybe his father had lost the habit in recent times. It was so quiet all around too, even though there must have been somebody in the flat. "What a quiet life it is the family lead", said Gregor to himself, and, gazing into the darkness, felt a great pride that he was able to provide a life like that in such a nice home for his sister and parents. But what now, if all this peace and wealth and comfort should come to a horrible and frightening end? That was something that Gregor did not want to think about too much, so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room.

Once during that long evening, the door on one side of the room was opened very slightly and hurriedly closed again; later on the door on the other side did the same; it seemed that someone needed to enter the room but thought better of it. Gregor went and waited immediately by the door, resolved either to bring the timorous visitor into the room in some way or at least to find out who it was; but the door was opened no more that night and Gregor waited in vain. The previous morning while the doors were locked everyone had wanted to get in there to him, but now, now that he had opened up one of the doors and the other had clearly been unlocked some time during the day, no-one came, and the keys were in the other sides.

It was not until late at night that the gaslight in the living room was put out, and now it was easy to see that his parents and sister had stayed awake all that time, as they all could be distinctly heard as they went away together on tip-toe. It was clear that no-one would come into Gregor's room any more until morning; that gave him plenty of time to think undisturbed about how he would have to re-arrange his life. For some reason, the tall, empty room where he was forced to remain made him feel uneasy as he lay there flat on the floor, even though he had been living in it for five years. Hardly aware of what he was doing other than a slight feeling of shame, he hurried under

the couch. It pressed down on his back a little, and he was no longer able to lift his head, but he nonetheless felt immediately at ease and his only regret was that his body was too broad to get it all underneath.

THE BUG

He spent the whole night there. Some of the time he passed in a light sleep, although he frequently woke from it in alarm because of his hunger, and some of the time was spent in worries and vague hopes which, however, always led to the same conclusion: for the time being he must remain calm, he must show patience and the greatest consideration so that his family could bear the unpleasantness that he, in his present condition, was forced to impose on them.

Gregor soon had the opportunity to test the strength of his decisions, as early the next morning, almost before the night had ended, his sister, nearly fully dressed, opened the door from the front room and looked anxiously in. She did not see him straight away, but when she did notice him under the couch – he had to be somewhere, for God’s sake, he couldn’t have flown away – she was so shocked that she lost control of herself and slammed the door shut again from outside. But she seemed to regret her behaviour, as she opened the door again straight away and came in on tip-toe as if entering the room of someone seriously ill or even of a stranger. Gregor had pushed his head forward, right to the edge of the couch, and watched her. Would she notice that he had left the milk as it was, realise that it was not from any lack of hunger and bring him in some other food that was more suitable? If she didn’t do it herself he would rather go hungry than draw her attention to it, although he did feel a terrible urge to rush forward from under the couch, throw himself at his sister’s feet and beg her for something good to eat. However, his sister noticed the full dish immediately and looked at it and the few drops of milk splashed around it with some surprise. She immediately picked it up – using a rag, not her bare hands – and carried it out. Gregor was extremely curious as to what she would bring in its place, imagining the wildest possibilities, but he never could have guessed what his sister, in her goodness, actually did bring. In order to test his taste, she brought him a whole selection of things, all spread out on an old newspaper. There were old, half-rotten vegetables; bones from the evening meal, covered in white sauce that had gone hard; a few raisins and almonds; some cheese that Gregor had declared inedible two days before; a dry roll and some bread spread with butter and salt. As well as all that she had poured some water into the dish, which had probably been permanently set aside for Gregor’s use, and placed it beside them. Then, out of consideration for Gregor’s feelings, as she knew that he would not eat in front of her, she hurried out again and even turned the key in the lock so that Gregor would know he could make things as comfortable for himself as he liked. Gregor’s little legs whirled, at last he could eat. What’s more, his injuries must already have completely healed as he found no difficulty in moving. This amazed him, as more than a month earlier he had cut his finger slightly with a knife, he thought of how his finger had still hurt the day before yesterday. “Am I less sensitive than I used to be, then?”, he thought, and was already sucking greedily at the cheese which had immediately, almost compellingly, attracted him much more than the other foods on the newspaper. Quickly one after another, his eyes watering with pleasure, he consumed the cheese, the vegetables and the sauce; the fresh foods, on the other hand, he didn’t like at all, and even dragged the things he did want to eat a little way away from them because he couldn’t stand the smell. Long after he had finished eating and lay lethargic in the same place, his sister slowly turned the key in the lock as a sign to him that he should withdraw. He was immediately startled, although he had been half asleep, and he hurried back under the couch. But he needed great self-control to stay there even for the short time that his sister was in the room, as eating so much food had rounded out his body a little and he could hardly breathe in that narrow space. Half suffocating, he watched with bulging eyes as his sister unselfconsciously took a broom and swept up the left-overs, mixing them in with the food he had not even touched at all as if it could not be used any more. She quickly dropped it all into a bin, closed it with its

wooden lid, and carried everything out. She had hardly turned her back before Gregor came out again from under the couch and stretched himself.

GREGOR & HIS SISTER

Gregor's sister rushed to his mother and put her hand on her forehead. Her words seemed to give Gregor's father some more definite ideas. He sat upright, played with his uniform cap between the plates left by the three gentlemen after their meal, and occasionally looked down at Gregor as he lay there immobile.

"We have to try and get rid of it", said Gregor's sister, now speaking only to her father, as her mother was too occupied with coughing to listen, "it'll be the death of both of you, I can see it coming. We can't all work as hard as we have to and then come home to be tortured like this, we can't endure it. I can't endure it any more." And she broke out so heavily in tears that they flowed down the face of her mother, and she wiped them away with mechanical hand movements.

"My child", said her father with sympathy and obvious understanding, "what are we to do?"

His sister just shrugged her shoulders as a sign of the helplessness and tears that had taken hold of her, displacing her earlier certainty.

"If he could just understand us", said his father almost as a question; his sister shook her hand vigorously through her tears as a sign that of that there was no question.

"If he could just understand us", repeated Gregor's father, closing his eyes in acceptance of his sister's certainty that that was quite impossible, "then perhaps we could come to some kind of arrangement with him. But as it is ..."

"It's got to go", shouted his sister, "that's the only way, Father. You've got to get rid of the idea that that's Gregor. We've only harmed ourselves by believing it for so long. How can that be Gregor? If it were Gregor he would have seen long ago that it's not possible for human beings to live with an animal like that and he would have gone of his own free will. We wouldn't have a brother any more, then, but we could carry on with our lives and remember him with respect. As it is this animal is persecuting us, it's driven out our tenants, it obviously wants to take over the whole flat and force us to sleep on the streets. Father, look, just look", she suddenly screamed, "he's starting again!" In her alarm, which was totally beyond Gregor's comprehension, his sister even abandoned his mother as she pushed herself vigorously out of her chair as if more willing to sacrifice her own mother than stay anywhere near Gregor. She rushed over to behind her father, who had become excited merely because she was and stood up half raising his hands in front of Gregor's sister as if to protect her.

But Gregor had had no intention of frightening anyone, least of all his sister. All he had done was begin to turn round so that he could go back into his room, although that was in itself quite startling as his pain-wracked condition meant that turning round required a great deal of effort and he was using his head to help himself do it, repeatedly raising it and striking it against the floor. He stopped and looked round. They seemed to have realised his good intention and had only been alarmed briefly. Now they all looked at him in unhappy silence. His mother lay in her chair with her legs stretched out and pressed against each other, her eyes nearly closed with exhaustion; his sister sat next to his father with her arms around his neck.

"Maybe now they'll let me turn round", thought Gregor and went back to work. He could not help panting loudly with the effort and had sometimes to stop and take a rest. No-one was making him rush any more, everything was left up to him. As soon as he had finally finished turning round he began to move straight ahead. He was amazed at the great distance that separated him from his room, and could not understand how he had covered that distance in his weak state a little while before and almost without noticing it. He concentrated on crawling as fast as he could and hardly noticed that there was not a word, not any cry, from his family to distract him. He did not turn his head until he had reached the doorway. He did not turn it all the way round as he felt his neck becom-

ing stiff, but it was nonetheless enough to see that nothing behind him had changed, only his sister had stood up. With his last glance he saw that his mother had now fallen completely asleep.

PART II

SECTION II: DEMO FUN!

7.

OER CONVERSATIONS

OER at UW-Madison

- The Educational Innovation initiative at UW-Madison has identified OER as a priority for the university. EI's "Open Educational Resources" page provides an overview of OER principles and a detailed strategic framework document for UW-Madison.
- Steel Wagstaff's *Medium* article, "Publishing Open Textbooks at UW-Madison," provides an overview of OER progress in 2017 and goals for 2018. It includes a discussion of how the Canvas-Pressbook integration works at a technical level.
- "Core Principles For An Open Authoring Tool" — Steel's 2016 article discusses the objectives that led UW to identify Pressbooks as a primary authoring tool.

Open Pedagogy and OER Principles

- Maha Bali and Suzan Koseoglu's 2016 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, "Self as OER," discusses how a commitment to OER principles shaped their teaching philosophies and practices more broadly.

Organizations

- SPARC – (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) is an organization committed to open research principles and pedagogy, including OER.

We welcome contributions to this list!



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8.

OER EXAMPLES

Have you found any open projects that you find particularly exciting or interesting? Please feel free to add a project link and description in the shared suggestions document below and we'll update this list to include it.

The American Yawp

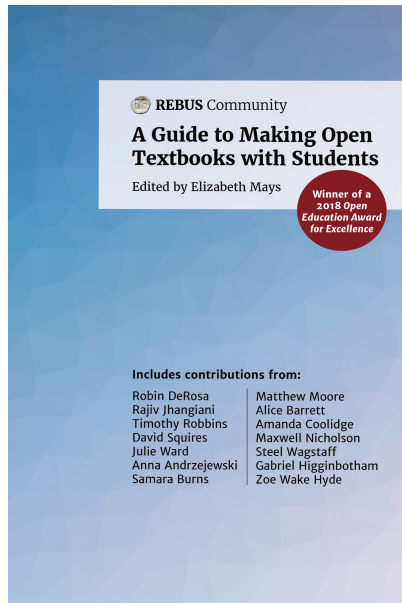
A Free and Online, Collaboratively Built American History Textbook



The American Yawp

This open, multimedia textbook results from a wide-ranging collaboration of authors from an impressive range of universities. *The American Yawp* provides both a primary source reader and thematic overview of American history.

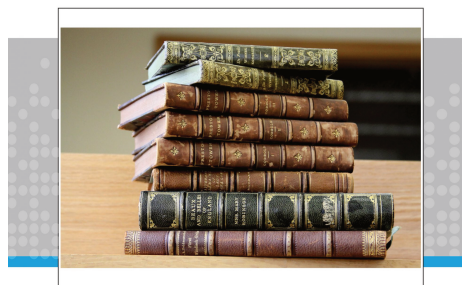
Many of the contributors are from the University of Wisconsin, including Stephen Kantrowitz, Jesse Gant, James McKay (an ongoing contributor to UW's OER and Pressbooks efforts), Simon Balto, Megan Falater, Margaret Flamingo, Erin B. Kramer, and Naomi R. Williams.



A Guide to Making Open Textbooks With Students

A Guide to Making Open Textbooks With Students is a handbook for faculty interested in practicing open pedagogy by involving students in the making of open textbooks, ancillary materials, or other Open Educational Resources. Steel Wagstaff of Learning Support Services and Anna Andrejewski, professor of Art History at UW-Madison, were two of the contributors to this text.

English Literature: Victorians and Moderns



B.C. Open Textbook Project
open.bccampus.ca

BCcampus  OpenEd

English Literature: Victorians and Moderns

English Literature: Victorians and Moderns provides annotated teaching editions of commonly taught texts from Victorian and Modern poetry, fiction, and drama. It also provides a series of guided research casebooks which make available numerous published essays from open access books and journals as well as several reprinted critical essays from established journals (shared with the permission of the authors and editors). Designed to supplement the annotated complete texts of three famous short novels, (Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*), each casebook offers cross-disciplinary guided research topics which will encourage majors in fields other than English to undertake topics in diverse areas, including History, Economics, Anthropology, Political Science, Biology, and Psychology. Selections have also been included to encourage topical, thematic, and generic cross-referencing. Students will also be exposed to a wide-range of approaches, including new-critical, psychoanalytic, historical, and feminist. Finally, the open text contains 3 practical appendices: a glossary of literary terms, detailed instruction in writing about literature, and thorough guidance in documenting the research paper in accordance with current MLA guidelines.

This is part of the BCcampus Open Textbook Project. Dr. James Sexton is the primary author of this text, but multiple other editors and contributors took part in the composition process.

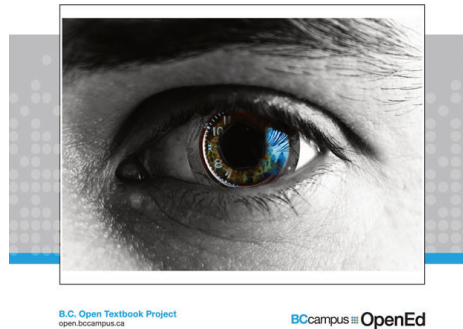


Environmental Science Bites (Vols. 1-2)

Environmental Science Bites Volume 1 and *Environmental Science Bites* Volume 2 are great examples of Open Pedagogy in practice.

These texts were written by undergraduate students at The Ohio State University (OSU) who were enrolled in the class Introduction to Environmental Science. The chapters describe some of Earth's major environmental challenges and discuss ways that humans are using cutting-edge science and engineering to provide sustainable solutions to these problems.

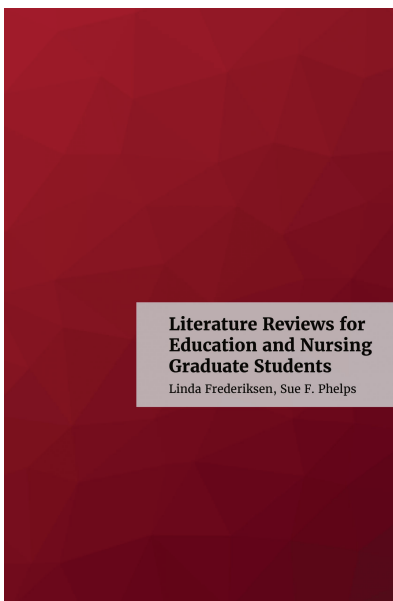
Research Methods in Psychology: 2nd Canadian Edition



Research Methods in Psychology, Second Edition

Research Methods in Psychology is part of the BCcampus Open Textbook Project and was co-authored by Rajiv S. Jhangiani (Kwantlen Polytechnic University) and I-Chant A. Chiang (Quest University Canada) Paul C. Price, Rajiv S. Jhangiani, and I-Chant A. Chiang.

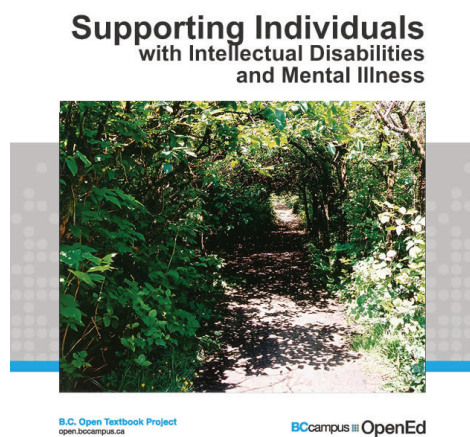
One of the noteworthy aspects of this resource is the way that the authors describe the adaptation process that the text has undergone from its initial publication to its current form. You can find this account by navigating to the cover page of the *Research Methods in Psychology* text and scrolling past the table of contents section to the “Book Information” section.



Literature Reviews for Education and Nursing Graduate Students

Literature Reviews for Education and Nursing Graduate Students is designed for students in graduate-level nursing and education programs. This text guides readers through the process of developing a research question to locating and evaluating sources to writing a sample literature review using appropriate publication guidelines. The book was produced by Linda Frederiksen and Sue F. Phelps in collaboration with members of the REBUS Open Textbook Authoring community. It has been peer-reviewed by seven subject experts.

One of the noteworthy aspects of this text is the inclusion of an accessibility assessment page.

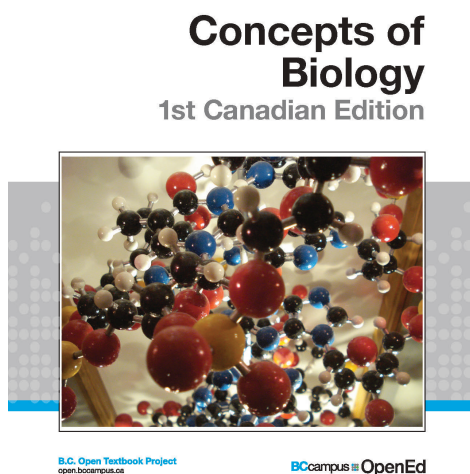


Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities & Mental Illness: What Caregivers Need to Know

Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities & Mental Illness is a multidisciplinary resource that develops topics of interest to those who care about and for individuals with co-occurring intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Each chapter presents current evidence-informed practice knowledge. Each topic is also presented with audio-enabled text boxes emphasizing ‘Key Points for Caregivers.’ For those who are interested in background knowledge, the authors provide a comprehensive literature base. For those interested mainly in ‘what to do,’ the authors provide text box summaries that can be accessed in print and audio formats. This is part of the BCcampus Open Textbook Project.

One of the noteworthy aspects of this text is the way in which its authors have produced a multimedia resource that can function in multiple formats—(print, epub, pdf, and web). For an example of their

use of audio interaction symbols and QR codes, visit the first chapter, “Support Work: The Fundamentals.”



Concepts of Biology (1st Canadian Edition)

Concepts of Biology was curated by Charles Molnar and Jane Gair and is intended to be a survey text for college students not (currently) planning to major in biology. This is a richly multimedia textbook.

Two of the noteworthy aspects of this resource:

- It is an adaptation of an OpenStax OER textbook by authors within the BCcampus Open Textbook community
- In addition to providing content for students to interact with, Molnar and Gair include powerpoints and videos for instructors and students to adapt for their own purposes.



Simulator Laboratory

The Simulator Laboratory (SIMLAB) book was created by to provide ancillary resources for Thermodynamics and Thermal Power Plant Simulator courses. It is intended to act as a collection of exercises to help students merge the theory covered in the classroom with the practice performed in the labs.

One of the noteworthy aspects of this text is the way in which it pairs with free, online simulator tools. (For instance, this steam pressure simulator tool.)

We welcome contributions to this list!



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- Supporting Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Illnesses Cover Image
- Concepts-of-Biology-1st-Canadian-Edition-cover-image

9.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE EDITOR

Music around the world

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn

- How to recognize the major musical traditions of the world
- How to identify some of the primary differences in rhythm and instrumentation

There **are** many *musical* traditions in the world.¹

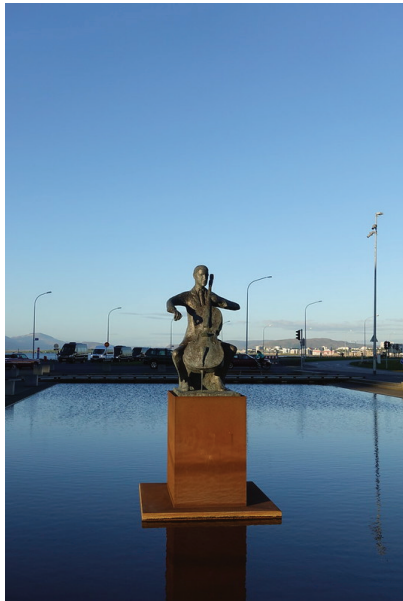
- list item 1
- Bulgaria
- China
- Mozambique



Reykjavik Harpa
Music Hall

Music of Scandinavia

$$x^2 + y^3 = z - a$$

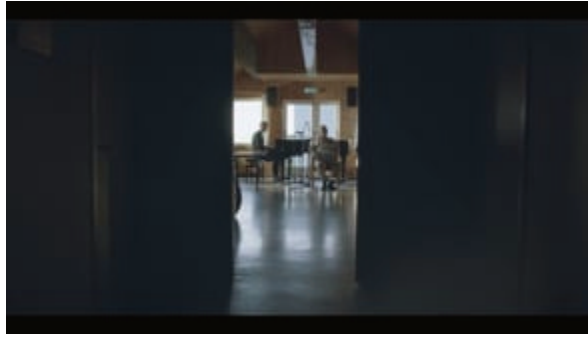


There are many countries in Scandinavia, all with unique musical traditions.

Example: Iceland

Björk!

- First
- Second



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Key Takeaways

Type your key takeaways here.

- First
- Second



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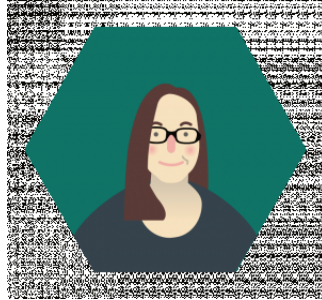
1. I'm a footnote!

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BE KIND ONLINE

A Few Strategies to Promote Productive Online Student Behaviours

Jessica O'Reilly



This patch is a preview of **The Digital Pedagogy Patchbook** slated for future release.

by Jessica O'Reilly, Cambrian College

Online courses have infiltrated the post-secondary landscape, and there is no sign that this trend is slowing. However, it is yet to be determined if online learning will lead to the revolution or devolution of post-secondary education. Opinions about online learning are about as varied – where some students love the flexibility that an online course can provide, others will readily admit that they struggle to succeed in what can feel like an isolated, barrier-fraught dystopia. Online instructors confide that they feel disconnected from their online students, suspicious of the efficacy of online courses, concerned about online students' academic integrity, and nervous about their ability to teach effectively within the online mode. All of these feelings can be supported by recent research, which comes to incredibly incongruous conclusions about the effectiveness of online learning.

The question I face almost daily is what is my role within this complex climate? As an Instructional Designer supporting faculty at a small college situated in Northern Ontario, I too am caught up in the tensions between increased demand for flexible, student-centered delivery modes, tight budgets and aggressive timelines, the desire to incorporate established and emerging best practice into course development processes, and the reality that most of our educators are subject matter experts, not necessarily pedagogical or technological aficionados.

I tend to work with faculty tasked with the development and / or delivery of fully online courses. When I follow-up with faculty after they've taught an online course for the first time, I notice that regardless of subject area, a few key themes emerge. Here are three concerns that I hear from online instructors time and again:

- Students are far more demanding and even blatantly rude within the online environment when compared to in-class
- Students assume the online course is a “bird course” and are upset when they learn that the time required to successfully complete an online course is as much or more than the time required in a fully face-to-face environment
- Faculty strongly suspect that online students are engaging in various types of academic dishonesty to a greater degree within online courses than in-class

Well alrighty then! Since these problems are not unique to my college and are not new, there is a wealth of information available to online instructors that is intended to mitigate these issues. I'm going to try to avoid the more common strategies in favour of ones that I've personally applied successfully in my own online courses.

PROBLEM #1: STUDENTS ARE DEMANDING AND EVEN RUDE ONLINE

The major issue with the online environment, is, well, it's online! The norms of polite, professional discourse tend to disintegrate online, and as a result, online interactions that feel like social media will inevitably look like social media, replete with emojis, internet slang, abbreviations, and incomplete sentences that can tidily fit into a Tweet but don't fulfill your discussion forum requirements. And I've not even touched on the bullying, abusive, down-right rude troll-like behaviours that some students exhibit (we've all got our stories).

A strategy that really changed the tone of my online courses is a 1-1 video or audio call with each student, very early in the semester. Granted, my online courses are relatively small so I can connect with each student during week one of the course without it causing me undue stress, and so I make this connection the first mandatory course activity and use the LMS to help me schedule individual phone calls with each enrolled student. I'm open to using Skype, FaceTime, Lync or plain old telephone calls for this session, but each student must converse with me within the first week of the course (sometimes this bleeds into week 2 if I have late enrollments or students reschedule). I have a basic script for this phone call. I introduce myself and invite the student to tell me about him/herself. We discuss the course generally and I probe into any areas of concern. I wrap up by directing the student to my Netiquette expectations quiz and asking that s/he complete it prior to posting in the course. I usually say something like:

"I know that in an online environment things can feel fairly informal, particularly discussion forum posts and emails. Please keep in mind though that this is not only a post-secondary course, but it is a post-secondary communications course. Please write in complete sentences, avoid slang and jargon terms, and craft your emails professionally. Remember that your peers and I can't read your tone of voice or body language, so we only have your words to create meaning. We all need to be extra careful with our wording so that we don't accidentally come across as rude or abrupt. Now that I've spoken with you I can tell that you're an awesome person, so please make sure that comes across online and via email as well!"

Sounds corny maybe, but honestly these brief phone calls have totally changed the tone in my online courses, and this extends beyond netiquette. I strongly suspect that my students are more forgiving of my mistakes and are less likely to squabble over marks / appeal grades because of this simple connection made early on.

PROBLEM #2: STUDENTS GET MAD WHEN THEY FIGURE OUT THE ONLINE COURSE WILL ACTUALLY REQUIRE EFFORT

There are many examples of "bad" online courses which are basically correspondence courses that use email. Students have been conditioned to blow through the online course, paying attention only to activities that are mandatory and assessed, and ignoring the rest. While this can feel like a direct insult to a course developer who has spent countless hours fine-tuning the online environment, I really don't think it's meant to be personal. Students have many competing priorities and often the online course is hidden away, out of sight and out of mind. I spend time in the first week "strongly encouraging" (forcing) students to make time for their online course. I tell them that to succeed in the course they will need to spend at least four hours a week working through content, activities and producing the evaluated components of the course. I can say this with confidence because I've had previous students track their time spent on assignments, and I can leverage LMS analytics to see how long students work within the course. I tell students how long it will take, and the first written assignment in my course asks students to articulate exactly when and where they will work on the course, and what their contingency plans are should

something come up unexpectedly. This opens up a conversation about effective study habits, time management strategies and related course policies and seems to, at the very least, negate some of the passive-aggressive “this course is too hard” grouching that I’d see within some of the discussion forums.

PROBLEM #3: ONLINE STUDENTS CHEAT MORE (?)

I don’t believe that the above statement is true, but certainly if any student is provided with the opportunity to cheat, s/he may take it, regardless of whether the course is offered in-class or online. When I talk to academics convinced that online students cheat more than in-class students do, I ask them what they think would happen if, during an in-class test or exam, the instructor announced, “Okay folks, so I’m just going to leave the room for the next two hours. No cheating!”

While every course has its unique requirements and constraints, in my online courses I assume that students are going to use course resources, each other, Google, mom, and any other resource they can think of / afford in order to complete the required assignments. I make sure that my written assignment criteria are overwhelmingly context-specific, so that Google hits aren’t relevant or integrate into the text in a disjointed, easily recognizable manner. I start with smaller written products and heavily scrutinize any suspected collusion or plagiarism. For example, I’ve been known to check document properties and, if the document author name does not match the name of my student, I ask the student who “John Smith” is and ask if “John Smith” wrote the document. I’m fairly brutal at the outset of the course so that students smarten up for the later, weightier assignments. There’s no magic fix-all when it comes to academic integrity, but fair and explicit success criteria mixed in with a fairly punitive approach to suspected plagiarism certainly doesn’t hurt.

MAKE THE CALL

As a final thought, if your online students aren’t behaving appropriately, consider making a personal connection via telephone or video conference call. This format tends to add more intimacy to a conversation than can be achieved via email, and while you *may* lose the ability to easily document what was said, I’ve found this practice can really turn things around in a short amount of time.



Featured image: “A dash of carrot, a dollop of stick” created by Christopher Cook, third year Graphic Design Student, Cambrian College

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