



eLearning ACUMEN

February 2018

a newsletter from the Office of Online & Extended Learning at MSUM

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Invitation to Dream

by Julie A. Zaloudek, Ph.D.

Imagine.

Imagine yourself.

Imagine yourself, an educator with

No limits. No boundaries. No constraints.

Possibilities as expansive as

your creativity, passion, intelligence, kindness, vision, care, ambition, wisdom.

What would that look like for you, for you here, if you were totally free?

I am bringing some of you to my mind, to consider this and speculate.

Would you

walk about the grounds with a gaggle of students, as Aristotle? Tirelessly lingering there, and here to work out the logic of an argument, debate a moral premise, test a physical theory, compose poetry?

Would you

create a system of education and assessment that is so orderly, succinct, coherent, and clean that it makes you want to weep with the bright starch perfection of it?

Would you

sit under a hoary tree, as I imagine Confucius, communing with disciples and transmitting wisdom of the ancients into writing?

Would you

be bold and fierce and adored and despised, Simone de Beauvoir, at Café de Flore teaching and learning about human existence with a sensuous and audacious flair of human authenticity?

Would you

sit until midnight in the student lounge, Maya Angelou, daring students to dream and shine and love and take a stand – listening, learning, co-creating with them a new and more just narrative?

And how would we be learners if we were totally free?

If our students expressed their radically liberated wishes for how to learn, how would that look?

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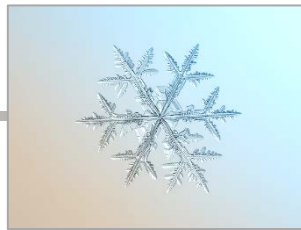
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I believe that
the best possibilities are embedded in our liberated imagination.
Wishes are the midwife of our most ingenious solutions.
Unconscious minds curating innovative resources,
ripe and bounteous,
collectively expansive and diverse and lavish enough to overwhelm any challenge.

What would happen if
we released our dreams without suppression,
eagerly listened to the dreams of our students and each other without judgment,
connected them with our present opportunities and challenges,
and co-created a mosaic of us and our dreams
vitaly transformed into the changes we need to be
to transform our world?



QM Tip: Standard 1.8 ... *A Step toward Building Instructor Presence*

by Catherine Artac

Specific Review Standard (SRS) 1.8 states, "*The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.*" *

Providing an introduction of yourself to your students is an easy thing to do in preparing your online course. While it may seem like a simple gesture (and one that is often overlooked), it turns out this is an important part of building the foundation for instructor presence in your online course.

Why is instructor presence important?

A wealth of information about creating instructor presence in online courses exists. Simply conduct an online search for "*instructor presence in online courses*" and you'll discover a treasure trove of research.

For our purposes, we'll define instructor presence as how you, as the instructor, insert yourself into the course; it is "a comprehensive concept that includes instructional design, instructor roles and style, and specific behaviors and interactions" (Richardson et al., 2016, p. 84). It is how you enact "the process of facilitating, designing, and guiding the cognitive learning processes in a meaningful way" within your course (Budhai & Williams, 2016, p. 76). It is making known your existence and voice in the course, guiding students through the learning process.

Instructor presence creates a connection with your students, helping them to connect cognitively to the course (Stavredes, 2011, p. 151). Connection means they are more willing & ready to learn from you and the materials and activities you've carefully selected for your course.

What should I include in my self-introduction?

There are a lot of ways to build instructor presence into your course design and in how you facilitate your course. Meeting SRS 1.8 with a self-introduction is a simple way to begin the building process. A self-intro should include the basics such as:

- Name
- Title
- Field of expertise
- Contact info (email, phone, and times you're typically reachable online or by phone)



These basic details should also be included in your syllabus!

It's also helpful to add information to help students get to know you, such as:

- Your teaching philosophy
- Professional or research experience
- Personal information such as hobbies/interests, family/pets, other interesting tidbits
- A photo of you! (*or something that represents you well, but honestly, students want to see you*)

The amount and type of details you share must match your personality – some of you are more formal, and some more casual in nature. Keep in mind, whatever you choose to share, this introduction will contribute to setting the tone of the course and your relationship with your students.

How & where should I include my self-introduction?

Your self-intro can be provided as text or video and can be placed in a variety of areas within your course site in D2L Brightspace. Whether you choose text or video, you can introduce yourself to students in one, or a combination of locations:

- As an Announcement on the course home page (*text & photo or a video*),
- As the first thread in the Introductions discussion where students also introduce themselves to you & each other (*text & photo or a video*),
- As a document (*text & photo*) or link (*video*) in your first module in Content.



Creating short videos is simple with [Kaltura MediaSpace](#). As a Minnesota State employee, you already have an account! This tool allows you to create webcam recordings and screen captures that easily embed into D2L. If you're new to creating videos, please keep these [best practices for course videos](#) in mind. (<http://bit.ly/2GumfIO>)

However you choose to include your self-intro, remember: it's an easy but meaningful way to support instructor presence in your course, and a gesture appreciated by students!

References:

Richardson, J., Besser, E., Koehler, A., Lim, J., & Strait, M. (2016, June). Instructor's perceptions of instructor presence in online learning environments. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(4), 83-104. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1108404.pdf>

Budhai, S., & Williams, M. (2016). Teaching presence in online courses: Practical applications, co-facilitation, and technology integration. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 16(3), 76-84. https://www.uncw.edu/jet/articles/Vol16_3/Budhai.pdf

Stavredes, T. (2011). *Effective online teaching: Foundations and strategies for student success*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

★ As with each of the QM Standards, be sure to read the Annotations provided in the QM Rubric Workbook to make sure you have a clear understanding of the Specific Review Standard before proceeding.

If you don't have a copy of the QM Rubric Workbook Fifth Edition (2014), request a copy by sending an [email](mailto:support@mnstate.edu) to support@mnstate.edu.

D2L Brightspace: New Features

by Brandyn Sauer

In November, 2017, D2L rolled out their third maintenance release which included fixes as well as new features. Two new features are the ability to shuffle questions within a quiz and the ability to “hide” an assignment folder.

Shuffling Quiz Questions

To shuffle the order of your questions, check the box that reads “**Shuffle order of questions at the quiz level**” above your question list. Doing this means each student will see the questions in a different order, and the option has been created for instructors who wish for every student to see every question. The option to randomize question pools remains the same.

Hiding Assignment Folders

To hide a submission folder from students, all an instructor needs to do is:

Go to Edit Submission Folder → Click Restrictions → Check the box next to “**Hidden from users**”.

Doing this will override the start date of the folder, and students will not be able to view the folder until the box has been unchecked.

Hidden from users

More information about these and other features is available in PDF form on the [OEL blog](https://collaborate.mnstate.edu/public/blogs/itsblog/files/2017/11/MR3-Highlights.pdf):
<https://collaborate.mnstate.edu/public/blogs/itsblog/files/2017/11/MR3-Highlights.pdf>

Quiz Questions

Questions per page: Apply ?

Paging: Prevent moving backwards through pages ?

Shuffle order of questions at the quiz level
Also shuffles order of sections existing at the quiz level

Add/Edit Questions Edit Values

Page	Name	Type
1	Q1. Which of these bones is in the axial skeleton?	MC
1	Q2. Bones produce only white blood cells.	T/F
1	Q3. Select the types of bone found in humans	M-S



PD Opportunities

Light up your learning!

Workshops, Webinars & More

OEL and FDC Workshops

- Rubrics for Consistent, Efficient Assessment
 - February 2, 2018, 2:00pm, LI 124
- Group Projects in an Online Environment
 - March 21, 2018, 1:30pm, LI 124
- Creating Multimedia Content
 - April 20, 2018, 2:00pm, LI 124
- Humanizing your Online Course
 - May 1, 2018, 2:00pm, LI 124

Watch your email and Dragon Digest for information on how to register for OEL & FDC workshops.

QM Workshops

Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR)

April 10, 2018 – April 24, 2018

This online, asynchronous, 2-week workshop is QM's flagship workshop. It is intended for those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the QM Rubric and process of course review.*

Improving Your Online Course (IYOC)

February 13, 2018 – February 27, 2018

The IYOC is a 2-week online, asynchronous workshop. It explores the QM Rubric, examining 21 essential standards. Participants come away with a plan for course improvement.*

Prerequisite: must have an existing online course to examine during the workshop.

*Contact our campus QM Coordinator, [Catherine Artac](#), for registration details!

MOQI Webinars

- Increase Student Engagement Using Discussion Boards
 - February 14, 2018, 12:00pm

- Accessibility, UDL, and You
 - February 21, 2018, 12:00pm
 - March 28, 2018, 12:00pm
- Learning Objectives: What, Why, Where & How
 - February 28, 2018, 12:00pm
- The ABCs of Assessments
 - March 7, 2018, 12:00pm
- Lights, Camera, Action... Recorded Lectures
 - March 21, 2018, 12:00pm
- MediaSpace for Recorded Lectures
 - April 4, 2018, 12:00pm
- Tips to Improve Navigation, Usability, & Organization in Your Online or Blended Course
 - April 18, 2018, 12:00pm

All MOQI webinars are one hour long, free, and open to any MinnState employee.

[Webinar details:](https://tinyurl.com/y759dmtz) <https://tinyurl.com/y759dmtz>

Conferences

STAR Symposium

February 9, 2018, Online



The STAR Symposium is a virtual conference that focuses on topics related to quality initiatives and best practices (teaching, design, faculty support, etc.) for face-to-face, blended, and online courses and/or programs.

[STAR Symposium](https://bit.ly/STARSymposium) details: bit.ly/STARSymposium

D2L Connection: Minnesota Edition

April 13, 2018, Bloomington, MN

Sessions will feature topics such as teaching design and instruction, innovation, inclusivity and engagement, as well as support, training and administration.

[D2L Connection: Minnesota Edition](https://www.d2l.com/events/regional/minnesotaconnection/) details: <https://www.d2l.com/events/regional/minnesotaconnection/>

Minnesota eLearning Summit

August 1—2, 2018, St. Paul, MN

The Summit will feature concurrent sessions focused on eLearning tools, resources, services, and best practices

[MN eLearning Summit](https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-elearning-summit) details:

<https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-elearning-summit>



Using Checklists to Keep Your Students on Track

by Jane Melander

As I was searching for appropriate articles on the topic of using checklists as an aid for teaching and learning, I kept running across references to a book penned by Dr. Atul Gawande, surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Gawande's book, *The Checklist Manifesto*, is an insightful read into the way some professions in industries such as aviation, building construction, and medicine break down complex tasks into bite-size checklists to reduce the potential for human error.

As Dr. Gawande's book points out, even the most skilled and knowledgeable person is fallible. Forgetting even a very minor step in a complex process could mean injury or loss of life under some situations. Eventually, pilots, builders, and medical professionals incorporated checklists into their processes. Now, even the most experienced pilot goes through a pre-flight checklist before leaving the gate.

You may ask, "What does this have to do with teaching and learning?" Missing a step in a course isn't a matter of life or death. But if you consider that a missed assignment has the potential to lead a student to fail a course or program, perhaps it is that vital.

As Kristin Marino points out in her TeachThought article, "How a Simple Checklist Can Improve Learning"...

"Checklists can benefit students in the following ways:

"For younger students, simple, task-based checklists can help them become accustomed to following steps, adding order to the relative chaos of learning, and offering a pathway to accomplishing complex tasks. For older students, they can do all the above, and serve as memory aids as they work on unfamiliar or complicated tasks.

"Checklists help students feel in control and hold them accountable by removing obstacles to success such as "I didn't know we were supposed to do that," or "I forgot to do that part."

"Checklists keep students on task. Rather than losing focus and forgetting where they left off or abandoning the task all together, they always know where they are in a task or project. (Or should know.)"

Many instructors use a course schedule as a form of checklist so the students know what is due and when. Your students can either go low-tech (paper list) or high-tech (digital task managers).

One option available to instructors using D2L Brightspace is the Checklist tool.

Mary-Alice Muraski, Professor Emeritus from the University of Wisconsin River Falls, presented a webinar for D2L Brightspace in August 2017 about her students' success and feedback as she incorporated the Checklist tool in her Computer Science and Information Systems courses. As she explained, one of her courses was very complex, with



three textbooks and a number of assignments with varying due dates. The course met once a week and then the students worked independently for the rest of the week. Muraski found she was duplicating information in numerous places in her courses, yet the students remained confused. It wasn't until she created checklists as a standalone tool that students were more able to stay on track and meet their due dates.

A checklist is a student-centered tool. Muraski creates a checklist for each week of the course. This provides a single location to list explanations, links to other tools such as quizzes and discussions, set due dates, and provide additional readings and files. The advantage of using the Checklist tool is it allows the student to physically check a box once they have completed the activity. The "type A" students in Muraski's class appreciated the checklists and they provided a tool for the other students to keep on task.

This sounds like a lot of work and I can hear many faculty thinking "I don't want to overhaul my entire course to offer my students a checklist!"

I agree. I would suggest starting small.

Do you have a complex assignment, like a paper with many milestone dates, where students often become confused about what is due and when? If so, create a checklist for the assignment. Dr. Atul Gawande offers suggestions for creating checklist items in a follow-up to his book, "A Checklist for Checklists". His advice is to keep your checklist simple and use action words.

We have provided suggestions and steps for creating your own checklists on the Office of Online & Extended Learning web site at [Checklists](https://tinyurl.com/yco88gsu) (<https://tinyurl.com/yco88gsu>).

References:

Gawande, Atul (2009). *The Checklist Manifesto*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books. (<http://gawande.com/the-checklist-manifesto>).

Gawande, Atul. *A Checklist for Checklists*. Project Check. (<http://www.projectcheck.org/checklist-for-checklists.html>)

Marino, Kristin. *How a Simple Checklist Can Improve Learning*. TeachThought. (<https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/simple-checklist-can-improve-learning/>)

Houston, Natalie (2011). *Why Checklists Work*. Chronicle of Higher Education. (<https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/why-checklists-work/35331>)

Muraski, Mary-Alice (2017). *Check that off my list! Engaging Students with Checklists*. D2L Teaching & Learning Community webinar. (<https://www.d2l.com/resources/webinars/check-off-list-engaging-students-checklists/>)



"[MSUM Online] provides a personalized learning program tailored for individual goals and based on experience. It also gives an innovative platform for courses in an online format, which gives flexibility for those who may be working, off site, or mobile."

-Jennifer Noble

National Distance Learning Week

In November, MSU Moorhead's office of Online & Extended Learning celebrated National Distance Learning Week (NDLW) with a contest boasting the hashtag #MSUMOnline. The tweets using the hashtag that received the most likes and retweets were awarded with \$20 Target gift cards!



"Being able to attend online courses made my dream possible as I could maintain my full-time employment and retirement. In fact, completing my degree online was the only way I could have fulfilled my goal."

-Carol Roth

Stay tuned for details about NDLW 2018, which will be November 5-9, 2018!

To learn more about NSLW, visit USDLA.org.

All [of my professors] were approachable, easy to communicate with, and I knew all my questions would be answered in a timely manner. I have continually felt that my success is their top priority.

-Michelle Schoenecker

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