Seven Ways of Engaging the Online Learner to Develop Self-Regulated Learning Skills

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Abstract: This article provides several strategies for using a learning management system to engage online students and to promote the development of self-regulated learning skills in a 4-week accelerated summer course.

Keywords: online engagement, asynchronous discussions, Canvas, accelerated courses.

Engaging students in an online course can be challenging without the verbal and visual interactions that take place in face-to-face classes. Although research has demonstrated that online students can be as successful as students taking analogous courses in a face-to-face modality (Means et al., 2013), much of students' success in either modality can be attributed to effective course design and student engagement. Accelerated courses, or courses that cover the same material as a traditional 15-week semester in a condensed 3- to 6-week semester, can present particular challenges to students due to the intense workload in a shortened time period. For traditional-aged college students taking courses in the summer, competing obligations, such as summer employment, family commitments, and recreational activities, can make focusing on an online course particularly challenging. However, despite these competing interests, online summer courses provide an excellent opportunity for many students to earn additional credits toward graduation or to stay on track if they faced academic challenges during the regular academic year.

In this article, I discuss several strategies that I used to engage my students in a 4-week, fully online course offered in Summer 2019 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), an urban research university of approximately 26,000 students. The course was Women's & Gender Studies (WGS) 302, which had a specific focus on the study of masculinities. Primarily a discussion-based course, the enrollment was capped at 25 undergraduate students, most of whom were WGS majors or minors interested in gaining additional credits in the field to apply toward graduation. As a prerequisite, students were required to complete at least one introductory-level course in WGS, and students had various levels of experience taking online courses. The range of participation in online course taking was a major contributing factor for me to incorporate strategies in the course that not only helped students stay engaged and active but also promoted the development of self-regulated learning skills that would benefit them in the course and beyond. The specific strategies I used in this course included the Canvas Syllabus tool, checklists, and badges; context-based readings; recursive quiz design; escalating discussion prompts; video-response shout-outs; in-video quizzing; and reflective student surveys.

UWM's Transition from Desire2Learn to Canvas

In 2018, UWM began the transition from the Desire2Learn to the Canvas learning management system (LMS) as part of a wider University of Wisconsin System initiative, and as of Spring 2020, all UWM courses that use a learning management system are offered in Canvas. Desire2Learn and Canvas share many of the same features common to LMSs, including digital spaces for content delivery, online quizzes, asynchronous discussions, and student grades. However, the subtle

differences between these systems provided a serendipitous opportunity to rethink how I could develop my course, particularly given the online modality. Although the same learning objectives can be addressed and the same basic pedagogical tasks can be performed in both systems, I found that the transition to Canvas revealed potential new ways of knowing, thinking, and performing. Instructors using an LMS over the course of several years grow accustomed to its features, even in light of upgrades and updates, but at the same time, such comfort can lead to a lack of innovation that can stymie student success. While no single LMS has a magical set of tools that performs every pedagogical need to its fullest, the act of "reseeing" the course through the lens of a new LMS can help instructors engage students in fresh and perhaps unorthodox ways. Informed by this campus- and system-wide transition to Canvas, I discuss how Canvas provided the impetus to search out and address different strategies for engaging my students and helping them develop self-regulated learning skills. Although this accelerated, fully online course had a relatively small enrollment cap, was humanities focused, and employed the use of the Canvas LMS in particular, the strategies examined in this article can be applied to multiple modes of course delivery, to many disciplines within the academy, and to most contemporary LMSs.

Self-Regulated Learning in Online Courses

Self-regulated learning skills are vital to the success of students taking courses in all modalities. In *Creating Self-Regulated Learners*, Linda B. Nilson (2013) defined self-regulated learning as "a total-engagement activity involving multiple parts of the brain. This activity encompasses full attention and concentration, self-awareness and introspection, honest self-assessment, openness to change, genuine self-discipline, and acceptance of responsibility for one's learning" (p. 4). The ability to concentrate, to self-reflect, and to take ownership of one's learning can greatly inform students' rates of success, particularly in online courses, where the work of the course takes place in environments with a high potential for distraction. In the relatively isolated classroom space of a face-to-face class meeting, instructors and students have greater control over distractions and the ability to complete activities and discussions with focused minds; in an online course, by contrast, students' attention must compete with social media, streaming services, video games, and other digital diversions, so they must be incentivized to participate via grades and by their own sense of self-motivation. Through course design and effective engagement, instructors can help students improve these self-regulated learning skills so that they are successful in the online course and beyond. Modeling specific strategies in a transparent way can draw attention to those skills and encourage students to develop them throughout the course of lifelong learning.

Seven Ways of Engaging the Online Learner

To engage the learners in my WGS 302 online course, I used seven specific strategies that were chosen in light of my prior experience teaching online courses and the feedback students expressed in midterm and final evaluations in previous semesters. In addition, I drew upon my extensive work as a teaching and learning consultant in UWM's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, where I have worked with hundreds of instructors who have experienced similar challenges engaging students and cultivating self-regulated learning skills. While these approaches are primarily experimental in nature and are not directly informed by the pedagogical literature related to online teaching, they attempt to address particular needs driven by several converging factors within the online teaching modality.

Syllabus, Checklist, and Badges

In higher education, the purpose of the syllabus has been interpreted in many ways: as a contract between students and the instructor, as a set of guidelines and policies, and as a loosely developed set of objectives and assessments to be negotiated between students and the faculty member; these approaches are not necessarily exclusive of one another. Fundamentally, however, instructors at colleges and universities are required to provide their syllabi to both students and administrators—in the case of the former, to give students a sense of the expectations of the course, and in the case of latter, for accreditation and quality control purposes. Syllabi are usually distributed during the first week of the semester and can vary in length depending on discipline, institutional policies, and instructor preference. The syllabus thereby represents a thought process about the course that happens before an instructor meets with their students—either virtually or in a face-to-face class— which means that the specific skills and needs of the students enrolled in the course cannot be initially taken into account. Instructors need to be flexible in how they approach the syllabus because the syllabus can—and does often—change. Most often, changes to the syllabus are meant to address minor errors or oversights or, more importantly, to help students be more successful in a course. Syllabi are very often published within the LMS in a Word or PDF format, which produces a seemingly authoritative document that is easy for students to print. However, syllabi published in these formats become fixed documents, and providing changes to policies, readings, or assignments requires instructors to post addendums and updated schedules, which can easily lead to confusion.

  Providing a single, one-stop digital space for students to access course information is vital to their success. Students chose to enroll in my course to learn about masculinities, not to spend time figuring out how to navigate a course site, so instead of uploading a PDF version of my syllabus in the traditional fashion, I provided it using Canvas's Syllabus tool. In Canvas, the Syllabus tool contains two parts: a rich content editor for developing an HTML page, and a course schedule that aggregates all of the due dates within the LMS. While the use of this tool may not seem particularly profound or innovative, it provided me with one space to include course policies and assignments while also giving me the flexibility to make live changes throughout the course when they were needed. One criticism of any lengthy document such as a comprehensive syllabus is that it can be difficult to quickly find key information; this is especially true in a PDF, where students would most likely scan through pages to find what they needed or, potentially, use the search function with a PDF reader. With a small piece of HTML code, however, I provided a table of contents in the Syllabus tool that hyperlinked to the key headings in the syllabus, such as "How to Be Successful in this Class" and "Grades" (Figure 1).
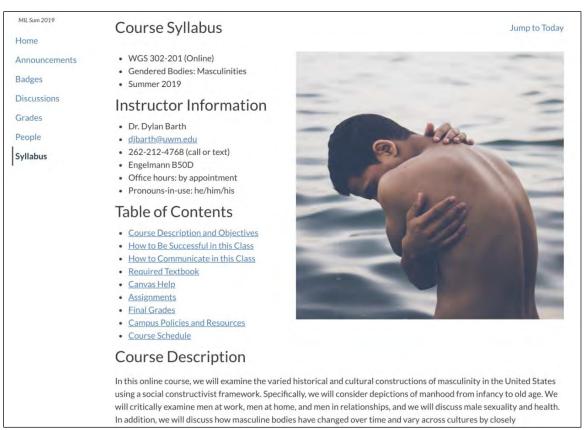
Figure 1. The Syllabus tool in Canvas. The table of contents provides easy access to essential elements of the syllabus.

While a search of the page in the browser could achieve a similar effect, this small addition both highlights key aspects of the course and provides students with quick and easy access to those spaces. Also, because the course schedule defaults to the bottom of the syllabus page, the table of contents gave students quick access to the entire course schedule at a glance. While not all LMSs provide the functionality for instructors to aggregate dates into a course schedule, all contemporary systems allow for users to develop HTML pages that can be used to similar effect.

Although not part of the Syllabus tool, a checklist-like feature exists in Canvas to provide students with an easy and effective way to keep track of their progress in a course. In Canvas, the checklist can be developed within a module by assigning requirements to that module and indicating how students meet those requirements. For example, I required as part of my course that students complete readings, take a quiz, and post to discussions on a daily basis. If students met all of the requirements, they received an in-course digital badge using the open platform Badgr. In an accelerated course where it is easy for students to fall behind, a comprehensive and adaptable syllabus, combined with a modular checklist and a badge to indicate when the work of that module was completed, provided my students with the tools to be successful not only in my course but potentially in other courses as well.

Context-Based Readings

Students in face-to-face courses benefit from having instructors contextualize content and readings within the rich medium of the classroom. Such contextualization can improve student learning by

helping them zero in on what the most important concepts, ideas, or passages for a required reading or text are. This need is especially important for courses in which the assessments are inextricably tied to the specific content of the readings; it is therefore critical to narrow the scope of concepts to what students truly need to meet the learning objectives.

In WGS 302, I used Canvas pages to incorporate context-based readings into my course and to help students acclimate themselves to the key concepts of each module. While it is common for instructors to simply upload PDFs of scanned course readings for students to access, many LMSs, including Canvas, prevent instructors from assigning due dates or providing framing contexts when directly uploading files, yet due dates and context are essential components related to student success and self-regulated learning skills. For each of the daily readings, I incorporated the same three headings in a Canvas page (Figure 2): "Textbook Reading," "What You Need to Know," and "Additional Resources." In addition, I always included the estimated time for the readings. These four headings were used to help students manage their workload in the accelerated course and pay attention to what was most important from the lengthy and often challenging readings. The "Textbook Reading" heading indicated to students which pages from the textbook they should be reading as well as a link to any additional articles they would need to analyze. "What You Need to Know" was a key element in the course because it gave students in one to two paragraphs a sense of what the key issues and questions were that they should examine as they read. In a face-to-face class, this can be easily managed with a short conversation, and while many textbooks include chapter objectives and overviews, they do not often align with what instructors expect from students. Therefore, "What You Need to Know" oriented students to the reading assignment and to the main ideas of that day. "Additional Resources" included videos, images, and links to supplemental materials that would help students gain a fuller, more comprehensive understanding of the reading.

Exploring Masculinities: 67-74, 89-93, 100-120

To-Do Date: Jun 27 at 11:57pm

Textbook Reading

Please read the following from *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity and Change* by C.J. Pascoe and Tristan Bridges:

- Reading 2: "Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man—Introduction" by John F. Kasson (p. 67-74)
- Reading 4: "Clothing and Gender in America: Children's Fashions, 1890-1920" by Jo B. Paoletti (p. 89-93)
- Reading 6: "Breadwinners and Losers: Sanctions Against Male Deviance" by Barbara Ehrenreich (p. 100-106)
- Reading 7: "Guyland: Gendering the Transition to Adulthood" by Michael Kimmel (p. 107-120)

Estimated time: 3 hours.

What You Need to Know

These four readings provide a range of historical examinations related to white men's bodies, to children's fashions at the turn of the twentieth-century, to masculine "breadwinning" in the 1950's, and to gender in young people. As you read, you might think about how the analyses can inform our understand of masculinities in a more recent context. How do these historical examinations reflect contemporary gender constructions? How have things changed? How have gendered power structures remained the same?

Additional Resources

John Kasson's reading looks at three specific historical figures: strongman Eugen Sandow, escape artist Harry Houdini, and author Edgar Rice Burroughs. Because Kasson focuses on the white male body, I have included images for each of these figures below.

Figure 2. Context-based readings in Canvas pages. Headings direct students to details and context for assigned readings.

Many of the chapters referenced popular culture artifacts, so I embedded those videos or images into this single page so that students could quickly access them—and therefore better learn—

without having to search for such artifacts on their own. "Estimated time" gave students a general sense of how much time they should expect to spend on the reading and the assessments for that day. While this is highly dependent upon the individual, reminding students to set aside a significant amount of time to accomplish these tasks—particularly in an accelerated course such as WGS 302—helped them manage their time and work.

Recursive Quiz Design

Using quizzes to determine if students have a baseline understanding of course content is a common strategy in online courses. Quizzes keep students accountable for the reading in an online course. If students choose not to read the assigned material in a face-to-face course, they risk public embarrassment when they show up to class unprepared; online students face no such risk. Instructors rely on students' understanding of the fundamental concepts of course content so that they can use that understanding to engage in higher order learning. When students are quizzed only once over certain content, however, it becomes easy for them to ignore the growing body of knowledge that emerges throughout the semester. If they are not reminded, or do not remind themselves, of the content from previous weeks, they are less likely to apply that learning to future activities or assignments in the course.

To address this concern, I required students to take daily, 10-question quizzes. Students had 10 min to complete each quiz and were given an unlimited number of attempts to earn their desired grade. Students were encouraged to reference the readings and to do an internet search to find the answers if they did not know them; the rationale for this approach was twofold: If students could easily search the internet for an answer, then it was a poorly written question, and if students spent their time reviewing the readings to perform better during the quiz, then they received another touch point with important course material. Each quiz included eight questions from a randomized pool of 15–20 questions about the readings for that particular day; however, each quiz also included two questions randomly selected from a pool of previous questions. By including two questions from previous quizzes, I reinforced to students the importance of drawing upon previous knowledge to understand new content, which is an essential aspect of self-regulated learning—one must know what one knows to know what one needs to know.

Escalating Discussion Prompts

Asynchronous online discussion forums are one significant way that students exchange ideas and build community in an online course. Instructors can situate online discussions using a variety of methods, but one common approach is the "one-post, two-response" formula, which requires a lengthy initial post followed by one or more response posts to other students. This framework has its advantages: It provides students with clear guidelines on how to interact with one another; it provides a scaffolded structure that prevents initial posts and responses from being pushed against a single deadline; and it sets the expectation that students should read, interpret, and respond to one another. Yet, the "one-post, two-response" approach can come across to both instructors and students as seemingly meaningless or inauthentic exchanges among students (Gao et al., 2013). Response posts in particular run the risk of encouraging students to uncritically and unreflectively agree with their classmates to avoid conflict or simply to complete the assignment quickly. While it can be easy to romanticize face-to-face discussions as being *more* authentic and more meaningful, it is not possible to see into students' minds, so if they are not actively participating in face-to-face conversations, instructors do not know how they are understanding their classmates' ideas or if they are even paying attention to the discussion. In online discussions, however, instructors can incorporate escalating discussion prompts

to solicit new insights into an ongoing conversation about course texts and gain insights into students' thinking.

Escalating discussion prompts refer to prompts in online asynchronous discussions that require students to bring new information, readings, or context to an ongoing discussion. In my course, I employed the "one-post, two-response" model, asking students to submit initial posts of 300 words or more to address very specific questions that I indicated in the prompt. As mentioned above, this approach is typical and effective in many online courses; however, for the prompts that addressed the two response posts (Figure 3), I required that students incorporate new readings, material, and content into their responses to other students.

Discussion 5 | Response Posts

To-Do Date: Jul 9 at 11:59pm

Read through all of the initial posts in Discussion 5 and choose at least two to respond to. For each response, write at least 150 words in which you extend, challenge, or elaborate on the post by incorporating ideas from today's readings, both of which reference Pierre Bourdieu. In particular, use at least one concept from Bourdieu to reflect upon the writer's artifact and analysis in their initial response. In other words, how might terms like *habitus*, *field*, and *capital* help the writers understand their posts in new ways?

Your initial post and your response posts will be evaluated using the Discussions Rubric.

Estimated time: 1 hour.

Figure 3. Discussion response post prompt. This prompt asks students to apply Bourdieu to previously posted discussion responses.
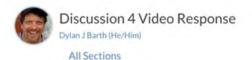
Students could not simply post an agreement statement to other students; they needed to provide new insights into their peers' initial posts. This rhetorical move required students to truly understand their classmates' initial posts and also to situate their own thinking about that post in what they had just read. The readings students needed to incorporate into the response posts were strategically identified by me and assigned to all students so that they could successfully share and incorporate these new ideas. Aside from promoting more effective engagement with other students' ideas, escalating discussion prompts invited students to be better self-regulated learners by modeling what academic and disciplinary conversations look like: Students were required to make connections between their peers' ideas, course texts, and their interpretations of course texts in ways that go beyond agreement or disagreement. This level of self-awareness reinforced the essential learning skills that could extend beyond the course itself.

Video-Response Shout-Outs

Students engaging with one another in discussions is critical for sharing ideas and learning new ways of seeing the course material, particularly in a course focused on gender, the subject of which has a perpetual, daily effect on their lives. One way that students learn about gender is by hearing about and studying how others perform gender. However, the content expertise and scholarly perspective of the instructor is important for correcting or addressing potential misunderstandings, steering students toward additional resources or ideas, and helping elevate their thinking in new and unexpected ways. Plus, students have a need for instructors to provide feedback on content- or task-related posts in particular (Lee & Martin, 2017). In the LMS, however, it is easy for students to overlook the contributions that instructors make to discussion forums once students have made their own posts; unless there is an incentive to go back and look at discussions, many students choose not to do so. This conundrum is complicated by how and when an instructor chooses to post: if one posts too early

in a discussion forum, then students may become intimidated by the authoritative voice; post too late, and students may never see those contributions, or they may interpret them as being too little, too late.

While there are several potential ways to attend to the issue of students not seeing or not valuing instructor comments in online discussion forums, I addressed it using video-response "shout-outs." At the conclusion of every discussion, I recorded a one-take video of 5–7 min that provided a summative overview of what I noticed—and often submitted—in the discussions (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Video response example. Videos posted in the Canvas Announcements area provide students with a summative response to discussions.

I posted this video in the Announcements area in Canvas, which served two purposes: One, students would receive a notification when it was posted and were more likely to review it than to go back into a discussion forum for which their participation had formally ended; and two, students were divided randomly into two groups for each discussion, and because Canvas does not allow instructors to provide universal access to both groups once the discussion has ended, the Announcements space incorporated the thought processes and contributions of both groups, creating a greater sense of class cohesion.

Posting summative comments about an asynchronous online discussion in an Announcement, however, does not fully address the problem of students ignoring these comments, since there was no grade incentive to engage with the videos. Therefore, I provided shout-outs to particular students

while recording the video; by calling out students—and more importantly their contributions—by name, I gave them the incentive that was lacking. Students wanted to hear when their posts and ideas were being described. Because of the video format, students could not simply scan a text document for their name; they had to watch the short video if they wanted to see if they received a shout-out and for what ideas they contributed. Video-response shout-outs, therefore, reinforced the importance of paying attention to the connections that instructors make in online courses. While such summative comments happen frequently in face-to-face classes and may be taken for granted in that space, students in online courses have the potential to miss out on these important connections and ideas. Video-response shout-outs provided a needed incentive for students to do what they should be doing for their learning; seeking out connections wherever they may be. Developing such videos is easy to do in Canvas and other LMSs, making the process for instructors to create them and students to access them simple and intuitive. While these videos served a different purpose from video overviews of the week's material and were not be expected to be used again in a future semester, their low-fidelity nature had an additional advantage: They cultivated a sense of instructor presence in the course.

In-Video Quizzing

Weekly overviews provide important context for students in online courses, and many online instructors use videos as the vehicle for such overviews. Weekly overviews can, of course, be incorporated without rich media but with text and images only; however, the use of video can significantly increase a sense of instructor presence in the course, which is critical for helping students feel supported. Videos should be chunked and recorded at an appropriate length so that students are more likely to watch them and comprehend their meaning (Doolittle et al., 2015). Given the time constraints that many students face, particularly in an accelerated summer course, instructors need to make weekly overviews significant to students so that they believe that the time viewing them is well spent. In addition, developing incentives for watching overview videos can nudge students toward reviewing the material while also framing the importance of contextualizing information for students' self-regulated learning skills. Guiding students to core course concepts helps them understand that *not all* information in a course reading or textbook is essential, which is a strategy for learning that they can apply to all courses in their academic careers.

One way to incentivize video watching is to use in-video quizzing: quizzes that automatically pause a video to allow users to answer questions about the content. Khan Academy and other content distributors have popularized this form of engagement, and the technical barriers for instructors to create in-video quizzing have been significantly reduced with new tools and integrations. While the pedagogical benefits of asking students to pause, predict, or reflect on their learning have far-reaching implications, I used a relatively banal approach to in-video quizzing as a method for ensuring that students viewed the videos to completion. For each weekly overview, I incorporated a different image into the voice-over PowerPoint presentation; the first week, I added four slides of unicorns, for example. The in-video quiz at the end of the video asked students how many unicorns they saw over the course of the 7- to 8-min video. Students earned credit if they answered the question correctly. I concede that quizzing students on the content of the material would be far more pedagogically effective for understanding what students know and what they are struggling with, but considering that other, nonvideo quizzes addressed the content of the course, and because the weekly overviews were designed to share with students the broad strokes of the unit, I chose to provide a simple incentive for completion. Although Canvas does not have the native functionality to add in-video quizzing, UWM leverages a UW system-wide license of Kaltura, which integrates into Canvas and allows users to create in-video quizzes, even for YouTube videos. With the open standards that accompany Canvas and other LMSs, such approaches can be more easily and more effectively used to

engage students and bring awareness to key concepts within a given online course. Furthermore, with transparent expectation setting, incentives become more than a way to hold students accountable for a checklist of activities and tasks; they become a way to help learners understand what it takes to be better learners.

Reflective Student Surveys

Asking students for feedback about the course is a common and useful way to evaluate the effectiveness of an online course. Institutions typically require end-of-semester evaluations for all courses, but such instruments do not help those particular students in that specific course; they are useful for the instructor to make changes in a future semester. Therefore, instructors often use surveys distributed within the LMS to solicit feedback from students during the semester to address their students' specific needs and concerns. Questions range from Likert statements about satisfaction, workload, and engagement to open-ended questions asking for qualitative feedback about the course. While such midterm surveys can provide instructors with the necessary information to make course corrections that help students be more successful in the semester, they can also be an excellent opportunity for students to reflect on their own experiences and learning.

      In WGS 302, I augmented a traditional midterm survey about the course with questions of a more reflective and metacognitive nature. In this 4-week course, I concluded each weekly module with a survey that asked for this type of feedback. For example, I used a Likert statement that invited students to reflect on how well they worked that week: "I am satisfied with the work I did this week." The purpose of posing this question of students was to remind them of their own agency within the course and to encourage them to reflect upon how they performed and how much time and effort they were able to impart in the course. Such questions help guide self-directed and self-regulated learning because students can both consider and reinforce the importance of their role in learning.

      On each survey, I also asked three open-ended sets of questions about their learning: "What is the most significant thing you learned this week? How was it significant to you?" "What is one specific concept or idea you learned this week that you could apply to or inform your personal life? How so?" and "What is one concept or idea from this week that you are still struggling with?" For the first two questions, which were required, I asked students to write at least 100 words to receive credit for completing the survey. The purpose was to gather evidence of their learning beyond the course assessments as well as to have them demonstrate how their learning might impact them beyond their lives in the course. A course focused on analyzing the social construction of gender and masculinities is perhaps well situated for real-world applications, since gender inescapably surrounds and infuses my students in terms of their identity constructions, but these are precisely the kinds of questions that learners should be asking in all of their courses. They should be considering the larger implications of what they know, what they do not, and why it matters. Survey tools and the means to solicit this type of feedback are available in contemporary LMSs such as Canvas; Canvas in particular gives instructors the ability to provide a graded survey to incentivize the survey process for a greater number of submissions. Reflective student surveys ultimately invite students to explore the course, and their learning, in ways that are not exhibited by traditional assessments or even online discussion forums.

Student Success and Feedback

Students had a high success rate in WGS 302, especially for a condensed, online summer course. Of the 24 enrolled at the end of the semester, 22 (92%) earned passing grades and stayed fully engaged throughout the term. In addition, students indicated strong satisfaction with the course on end-of-semester evaluations; each of the responses on all nine Likert statements, which used a scale of 1–5,

had a mean of between 4.57 and 4.71. In the qualitative comments about the course, students were positive about the course and implicitly addressed the strategies discussed in this article. For example, one student wrote that "the instructor had the course set up in Canvas was user friendly and easy to navigate as the course went on [sic]. He provided feedback and provided insight through his videos, discussion posts, and short videos which was helpful for me. It was encouraging to see that he made a big attempt to stay connected with us even though it was an online course. I've taken a lot of online courses and I have not witnessed many instructors be as involved as he was!!!" This student specifically referenced the short video-response shout-outs as being helpful for their learning. Another student wrote: "I enjoyed that we weren't just reading the textbook and answering questions; we were watching videos or looking at websites while engaging in interesting discussions with our classmates." While this student references the variety of readings and texts in the course, they specifically mentioned the online discussions, which used escalating discussion prompts to engage them in effective ways. While these data can be interpreted in numerous ways, students were, on the whole, successful in the course, and they provided very positive feedback about their experiences and their learning.

Conclusion

Online students need proactive instructor support to help them be successful, particularly in shortened or accelerated courses. Because much of the learning and interaction in an online course takes place in an LMS, the LMS serves as the hub for instructors to explore ways to both engage students and help them develop the self-regulated learning skills that are vital to learning in any modality. Without time management, self-discipline, and strategies for effective studying and reading, students can quickly fall behind or become lost in an online course. In this article, I have discussed many strategies that I used in my WGS 302 course to help students be successful. While not all strategies would be useful in all courses or all pedagogical situations, I employed these techniques to develop a comprehensive approach to helping my students. This approach was in part derived from a change in our LMS from Desire2Learn to Canvas. While online instructors at other institutions are unlikely to be working under the conditions of an LMS transition, all instructors can thoughtfully evaluate the tools available in their LMS to develop an effective and comprehensive plan for supporting students and promoting their self-regulated learning skills.

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