

WISE Excellence in Online Teaching Award Recipients Best Practices – 2007

Mary Minow
San José State University
Seminar in Contemporary Issues: Digital Copyright



Best Practices: I've had a series of small doable assignments, so that students were actively doing, rather than just talking and reading. For example, I had them actually apply for copyright registration (optional, pay \$45 and send to Copyright office). I had them create a creative commons license and attach to a work that they created online (most used Flickr, one put the license on a song he composed and uploaded to the Internet Archive), I had them use the new Stanford Copyright Renewal Database to check the copyright status of books

What Professor Minow's students say: "Professor Minow is passionate about the subject matter, and truly is focused on student learning. It is evident that she enjoys teaching this course! She was readily available via discussion board or email and responded promptly to questions. In addition, we had weekly synchronized chat sessions where students were encouraged to raise additional questions about the course material. Copyright, especially in the digital age is a crucial topic for librarians to be aware of, and not only did we learn about the law today, we were encouraged to participate in discussions for pending revisions to copyright law, and given resources to use to keep current with future changes."

Ian MacInnes
Syracuse University
Electronic Commerce



Best Practices: My highest priority in an online class is to foster a high level of discussion. Students answer questions posed by me as well as ask their own and follow up on the comments of others. I design initial questions for each thread and follow-ups so that they involve gray areas and foster debate. There is rarely a single correct response. I avoid providing answers to my own questions because many students would then put greater weight on those and perhaps forget many of the valuable contributions made by others. I incentivize this discussion with a heavy weight in grading toward intellectual contribution as well as regular individual feedback throughout the course. I also explain my method in orientation phone calls with each student at the beginning of the semester.

What Professor MacInnes's students say: "This course met and exceeded my expectations, providing an introduction to electronic commerce. It was very different from other online courses I've taken, particularly in the extent of the discussions. The high standards and the constant feedback provided--through email, telephone and the discussion board--made it a truly interactive learning experience."

Ellen Detlefsen
University of Pittsburgh
Applications for Medical Informatics



Best Practices: My expectations for myself are to be readily accessible in person and by email, to keep my syllabi up-to-date, using very current examples from medical practice. I also try to maintain a sense of humor, and to remember that my students are adults with lives outside the classroom and lecture hall. I value diversity and inclusion; my syllabi always include these two statements: Gender-inclusive language is required in all course work. The use of respectful language in any situation is not a matter of political correctness but one of simple courtesy [and] I value equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. Be assured that I will promote a safe and conducive environment for learning.

What Professor Detlefsen's Students Say: "Her online teaching style was great. The course video was helpful, and made the class more of a "real class" experience. The assignments and discussion were relevant and easily usable in the online forum. From an online poster session to brief papers submitted electronically, Professor Detlefsen took full advantage of the technologies available for the work we submitted and the topics we covered. She was always very helpful and willing to answer questions. I enjoyed the topics we covered, Professor Detlefsen's enthusiasm about the topics, the supportive online environment, and the additional relevant readings and notes that were incorporated throughout the course."

Judah Hamer
Rutgers University
Information Seeking and Using: Understanding how young people use information



Best Practices: Students have told me that my threaded discussions are very active compared to other online courses they've taken and that they benefit from these a great deal. Early in the semester I share expectations about participation in threaded discussions. I participate regularly in these myself, and I ask the same of class members. In addition, students receive a grade and a brief feedback paragraph about their participation in the threaded discussions three times a semester.

What Professor Hamer's students say: "Judah Hamer is the kind of instructor who makes every student strive to do his or her best, not out of fear or intimidation, but from inspiring a deep excitement of and current awareness in the material he teaches as well as giving encouragement in various ways, being a role model and wealth of information, and by being approachable, available and always willing and able to assist a student through concrete and scholarly information, inspiration and example."

Tomas Lipinski
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Legal Issues for Library and Information Managers



Best Practices: "I like to use a pattern of CEAC (concept-example-application-critique), whereby I introduce a legal concept to students explaining the 'what' and 'why' if possible of it, then offer an example, a case or controversy to illustrate the concept. The first part is my job, but during the example phase, students begin to integrate the information into their personal knowledge. Students are encouraged to seek clarification if necessary. The next phase is 'application' where the concept, through observation and discussion, is applied to new instances supplied by both students and instructor. The emphasis is on the library setting and the practical experience and exposure of each student. This phase allows students to anchor the concept in their own knowledge-experience.

What Professor Lipinski's students say: "What stood out to me was his willingness to participate in online threaded class discussions, and make himself available for video chat every business day. I came into a master's degree program as a mature adult, and wanted the opportunity to dialog with the experts, my professors. With Prof. Lipinski, I felt I got that."

Linda Braun
Simmons College
Technology and the School Library Media Center



Best Practices: I use multiple information and media formats to distribute course content. This includes weekly podcasts that provide an overview of the content of the week, bi-weekly Skype conversations in which students (in small groups) talk with me and each other about course topics, screencasts that show how to use various pieces of software, and wiki content that provides details about the course and enables a student's ability to interact with content. By including multiple formats for course content, a student is able to work with the course in the way that best supports her particular learning style.

What Professor Braun's students say: "She was inspiring on so many levels: her endearing (and humorous) personality, her comprehensive knowledge of social network technology, and her ability to facilitate awesome brainstorm sessions among her students. She had us exploring collaboration and instruction potentials using Skype, Twitter, blogs, wikis, Second Life, and Google Docs. I honestly feel like the knowledge I gained from her course has made me more hireable upon graduation."

Carisse Berryhill
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
WISE+: Theological Librarianship



Best Practices: Because creating online community is very important, from the beginning I ask the students to reflect on what online behaviors might encourage or discourage class community while appreciating diversity. During the first semester that the course was offered, the season of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, I began the practice of starting class with two minutes of audio silence where students could list on the course chat the names of friends or family who were missing or in distress. The Quiet List has remained a permanent feature of the course. It offers the opportunity to be attentive to the whole person.

What Professor Berryhill's students say: "Carisse made an incredible effort at forming an online community for the students of this course, encouraging active participation and real engagement in learning. The frequent live interviews with professionals in the field gave an unparalleled view of how lessons in class could be applied in the real world. She was always available to answer students' questions and gave excellent feedback."