



**EXCELSIOR
UNIVERSITY**

FACULTY PLAYBOOK

**Teaching Expectations
and Best Practices**

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Purpose

Welcome distinguished faculty of Excelsior University!

It is our pleasure to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each one of you. Your dedication to fostering academic excellence and your unwavering commitment to our students' success form the cornerstone of our prestigious institution. This playbook symbolizes our collective journey toward creating an enriching educational environment. It is a testament to the collaborative spirit that defines our university and a reminder of the transformative impact your expertise and passion have on the lives of our students.

Instructors of a course may include department chairs, full-time faculty, and part-time faculty. The terms faculty and instructor are used interchangeably when discussing teaching and learning.

Excelsior University Teaching Philosophy Statement

In conjunction with Excelsior University's mission, vision, values, and CARES credo, Excelsior has established a university-wide teaching philosophy and corresponding tenets that convey the institution's core belief that effective teaching is the cornerstone of student success.

Excelsior University's Teaching Philosophy

At Excelsior University, we believe in fostering a student-centered learning environment that elevates students to a new career and promotes critical thinking, broad and integrative knowledge, collaboration, and creativity. Our commitment to excellence is rooted in the belief that education should be inclusive and accessible to all learners. By embracing diversity and equity, we strive to empower students to reach their full potential and become career-ready, lifelong learners. Our approach to teaching at Excelsior University is built upon the principles of experiential learning, innovation, collaborative learning, and continuous improvement of our pedagogy. We aim to inspire curiosity, passion for learning, and a growth mindset in our students. We create a dynamic educational experience that prepares students for success in a rapidly evolving global society through personalized instruction, holistic student support services, and cutting-edge technology. Excelsior students are uniquely positioned and encouraged to take risks and consider new, diverse perspectives.

Excelsior University's 6 Tenets of the Teaching Philosophy:

- 1. Pursue Excellence:** We are committed to promoting a culture of academic excellence, encouraging our students to strive for their best while providing the necessary resources, services, and personalized support to help them succeed.
- 2. Embrace Diversity:** At Excelsior University, we value and celebrate diversity in all forms, fostering an inclusive and supportive community for all students, faculty, and staff members.

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3. **Foster Innovation:** Excelsior University thrives on innovation and creativity, pushing boundaries and redefining the educational experience, and optimizing technology and innovative teaching methods grounded in pioneering research, creative exploration, and evidence-based practice.
4. **Promote Integrity:** Upholding strong ethical values and integrity is essential at Excelsior University, guiding our actions, decisions, and relationships within our community.
5. **Career Ready:** Whether entering the workforce for the first time, upskilling for a promotion, or embarking on a different career path, Excelsior University develops competent, capable, work-force-ready employees equipped with the latest knowledge and skills.
6. **Serve Society:** With a commitment to social responsibility, Excelsior University aims to empower our graduates to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond, creating a better world for all.

Effective Teaching Requirements and Best Practices

Sharing Your Expertise: Active Engagement In the Course

A. Preparation for Day One

- ▶ **Requirement:** Utilize Salesforce to accept or decline teaching invitations and sign contracts for upcoming terms within three days of receipt and at least one week before the start of the course when possible. For late teaching invites, accept invite and sign contract ASAP after receipt.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Review the syllabus, textbooks, and related learning resources and course materials at least five days prior to the start of the term whenever possible and confer with the department chair if there are questions or concerns about course content or requirements. Report any broken links or course content problems to the department chair. Use the provided preterm checklist to make sure you are prepared for the start of the course.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Post a welcome video announcement and populate the Instructor Information area with a bio, contact information, and availability for office hours or individual synchronous meetings.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Excelsior University does not provide faculty with textbooks. Review the textbook list sent out before term start to assure you have access to any materials. If a course has required materials, instructors must secure their own desk copy or instructor access code for ebooks from the publisher as soon as possible and request that any physical textbooks be delivered directly to their home address. If a publishing company will not mail the desk copy to your home, have it mailed to Excelsior in your name and the school will send it to your home address. Contact the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at clas@excelsior.edu or the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at cnhs@excelsior.edu with any difficulties in acquiring a copy of the learning materials.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Review and populate your profile in Canvas—add an image, set preferred pronouns, and add a brief bio—and select your preferred notification settings.
 - Preload reusable weekly announcements, including any reusable video announcements, and set the announcements to release at the appropriate time and date.

B. Discussion boards

- ▶ **Requirement:** Post multiple substantial posts on at least three different days per week in every week where the course has an online discussion forum.
- ▶ **Requirement:** If there is a Welcome & Introductions area of the course, respond to each student's introduction post during week 1 to welcome all students to the course and share points of commonality.

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► **Best practices:**

- Respond to each student throughout the term. To do this, reply to different students in the forums each week, as much as possible. Create an inclusive and welcoming environment in which every student receives attention from the instructor.
- Engage often in the online discussion forums in the LMS. Discussions are one of the primary modes of instruction and student-instructor and student-student interaction. Use these forums accordingly to share your expertise and guide student conversations.
- Read every student post in the online discussion forum each week.
- Substantial responses should include significant feedback, suggestions, questions, or added information to demonstrate your expertise.
- Praise in public, redirect in private. In most cases, avoid criticizing a student publicly or point out shortcomings in their writing or participation in a discussion that can be observed by others. This type of redirection and feedback should be saved for the privacy of the grade center feedback.
- Provide an “exemplar” discussion post for students to read and emulate.
- Use students’ preferred names to address them in all interactions.
- Ask follow-up questions to individuals based on the content of their discussion.
- Ask follow-up questions to the whole group on the topic at hand to drive the conversation in new directions throughout the module.
- Quote an insightful point from an individual student in a reply to them.
- Provide links to articles, videos, and resources from the course readings or one or two outside sources with additional information on the topic at hand. Consider excerpting a quote or main idea from these outside resources to highlight it.
- Role model appropriate citation and academic integrity practices—use in-text citations and APA references to cite any sources you refer to in your posts or presentations.
- Make links between students’ posts to help students see connections between ideas within the online discussion board and form relationships (i.e., John and Jane, you both explored X, but what do you think about how this relates to Y).
- Synthesize common themes that emerge from the discussion near the end of the module.
- For team discussions, read all team discussion posts, intervene as necessary, and contribute follow-up questions as necessary to the team project.

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C. Announcements

- ▶ **Requirement:** Post a minimum of one substantial announcement with a video each week. Video announcements must include the faculty member appearing on camera (not solely a screencast or voiceover) directly addressing students. Each video should include at least 30 seconds of the instructor visible on screen to establish presence and connection. Refer to this tip sheet on how to create and post video announcements.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Substantial announcements should add additional tips, resources, and information related to the week's topic, not be a simple copy/paste from the module pages.
 - Post announcements to address [upcoming university activities](#) or synchronous class meetings, encourage use of resources and support services, clarify expectations, remind students of major upcoming assignments, and respond to common student questions.
 - Aim to keep the videos short (less than five minutes) and include closed captions or a written transcript. Consider [screensharing videos](#) to walk students through the course navigation and expectations for the week. Remind students of the importance of viewing your videos. To save time, these videos can often be reused from term to term.
 - If more than one student asks a question, it is likely that many students have the same question. Record a video announcement where you screenshare the course pages or a whiteboard to explain the answer.
 - Record video announcements after major exams to provide group feedback and review difficult content areas.
 - Create a document of standard or reusable announcements to copy/paste and set to the correct upcoming dates for each term.

D. Other online course engagement

- ▶ **Requirement:** Course attendance: Demonstrate a clear understanding of the Course Engagement policy. Review the weekly attendance report, verify its accuracy, handle student requests for excused absences and, if approved, note "Exception" in the LMS. Report any concerns about suspected "AW fraud" to the department chair.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Course Q&A/Course Help forum and students' announcement replies: Students may also ask questions and seek additional information in the Course Q&A/Course Help discussion board or by replying to an instructor's announcement. Faculty should subscribe to the Course Q&A/Course Help forum to be sure not to miss any posts and change notification settings to see announcement replies. Faculty should reply to questions in both areas within 48 hours. If the post is of a personal nature, faculty should respond to the student that they will follow up privately via the inbox.

Personalized and Timely Grading Feedback

A. Timely grade submission and grade center management

- ▶ **Requirement:** Grade all assignments and discussions within four calendar days of the assignment due date for 8-week courses and seven calendar days of each assignment due date for 15-week courses.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Submit all final grades by 5 p.m. ET on the fifth calendar day after the end of the term.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Aim to return grades and feedback on Module 1 assignments and discussion boards in fewer than four calendar days to help set expectations for upcoming work.
 - Keep grade book current; fill in 0s for missing work.
 - Use the *Notes* function in the grade book to keep track of late work requests and other pertinent information about students, like preferred names.
 - Review your Canvas notification settings to assure you receive notifications when students post comments within Speedgrader or in reply to a grade center comment.

B. Use of the provided rubric

- ▶ **Requirement:** Always use the provided rubric to assess student learning.
- ▶ **Requirement:** If the rubric contains ungraded program or university learning outcome assessment rows, complete these rows as indicated for all students who completed the assignment.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - If the rubric includes columns with a possible range (i.e., 1–10 points), include an explanation within the rubric for why the score is on the higher or lower end of that range.
 - Communicate with the department chair if the rubric contains errors or does not provide accurate scores for the assignment.

C. Grading written assignments, team projects, and discussion board posts

- ▶ **Requirement:** Provide each student with timely, individualized, substantial feedback on all assignments and discussion board posts that contribute to the final grade.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Use Speedgrader to mark up all written assignment submissions that are more than one page in length (highlighting, comments, etc.) with specific, individualized comments on their work.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - While pasting common feedback items from a comment bank can save time, all students must also receive feedback that is individualized.
 - Provide summary comments in the grade center comments box for all assignments and discussion board posts.

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- Use students' preferred names to address them in grade center comments.
- Focus most feedback on [higher-order skills \(argument, use of evidence\) vs. lower-order skills \(formatting, grammar, APA\)](#) in Speedgrader markup and summary comments.
- Ideal comments on significant assignments include at least one item of positive feedback, two or three key takeaways or areas for improvement, and links to resources such as the [OWL](#), Library, and tutoring (linked on left tab in the course), as needed for each individual student.
- The “sandwich method” is a helpful way of making sure to provide all students with positive feedback that includes acknowledging strengths and areas of growth. Additional teaching methods to provide both encouragement, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for growth through feedback include the SBI Model, COIN Model, GROW Model, and CEDAR Model. [Review descriptions of these concepts here.](#)
- Focus most of your feedback on the content of the student's work or discussion posts and not just logistical issues (timeliness, number of posts, etc.).

D. Turnitin and academic integrity

- ▶ **Requirement:** Review all students' Turnitin reports for all assignments where Turnitin is embedded. Review both the similarity score (indicated by the flag color in the grade center) and the AI score (which can only be seen by opening each individual report).
- ▶ **Requirement:** Report all academic integrity incidents to CLAS and CNHS via the [Academic Integrity Reporting form](#). Follow guidance provided by the colleges for the current AI score thresholds to report as an academic integrity incident.
- ▶ **Requirement:** After submitting the reporting form and receiving guidance from CLAS/CNHS, communicate directly with the student about the academic integrity incident and next steps, including allowing for a rewrite for any teachable moments. Provide the student with a link to the [Academic Integrity policy](#).
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - When communicating with the student about an AI incident, ask questions about the student's writing process and any editing tools they may have used. If necessary, discuss the issue further with the student via Zoom or a phone call and record notes about the conversation in the Canvas Inbox.
 - Academic integrity best practices, especially as it relates to artificial intelligence usage, change over time so make sure to follow the latest guidance around AI usage and the reporting process from the department chair and University.
 - Uphold a culture of academic integrity in the classroom by modeling appropriate attribution and citation in your own work and discussion board posts, providing resources related to citation and academic integrity, and answering student questions about academic integrity without judgment.

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E. Extensions

- ▶ **Requirement:** Adhere to the [Course Extension policy](#) guidelines and timeline. Input a final grade of “I” for any student with an extension and alert ORR@excelsior.edu.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Provide students completing extensions with deadlines and checkpoints along the way. This will allow time to grade each assignment to provide feedback to use on the following assignment and will prevent the student from waiting until the last day of the extension to complete the work.

F. Late work

- ▶ **Requirement:** Instructors should be familiar with and uphold the [Late Course Work policy](#).
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Instructors have the discretion to accept late course work without penalty based on their assessment of a student’s extenuating circumstances.
 - If you are asking a student for documentation of an extenuating circumstance, direct the student to submit the documentation to studentsupport@excelsior.edu.
 - When unsure of how to handle an individual student’s late work needs, contact the department chair or full-time faculty mentor for input.

G. Other graded elements

- ▶ **Requirement:** Some courses include additional graded elements in third-party tools like labs, textbooks, and other publisher resources. Follow guidelines from the department chair on required engagement and any individual student grading feedback required for these course items. Contact the department chair about faculty expectations in a particular course activity or tool.

Communication and Responsiveness

Direct communication with all students in the course is an essential component of effective teaching. Instructors should plan to communicate directly with each student in the course at least twice per week. These communications should be substantive and may include formative or summative feedback, praise and encouragement, support, and/or direction to resources. This communication may occur through the inbox, grade center, office hours, or scheduled one-on-one meetings. More information about each of these channels is described below.

1. Inbox communication

- ▶ **Requirement:** Use the inbox tool within Canvas for student communication. Respond to student inbox messages within a maximum of 48 hours. Refrain from deleting any student messages in the inbox in case documentation is needed for an appeal.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Aim to respond to student questions in the inbox within 24 hours, especially if the questions relate to an upcoming assignment.

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- Review your notification settings in Canvas to make sure you have inbox messages set to alert you to new messages, whether by mobile alerts or forwarding to your email address.
- Avoid using “text speak” when communicating by inbox.
- If engaged in a heated discussion over email, take a few hours or the evening to respond, allowing everyone to take a moment and de-escalate. Video announcements must include the faculty member appearing on camera (not solely a screencast or voiceover) directly addressing students. Each video should include at least 30 seconds of the instructor visible on screen to establish presence and connection. In-person discussions should also remain civil and professional. Review the de-escalation techniques provided on Faculty Connects.

2. Synchronous individual meetings (office hours) and synchronous group meetings

- **Requirement:** Post information about your availability for synchronous individual meetings in your welcome announcement and in the Instructor Information area in the course.
- **Requirement:** Conduct a minimum of one regularly scheduled office hours (synchronous individual meeting availability) per week. Give notice if the office hours are rescheduled or canceled. Alternatively, clearly state in the Instructor Information area of the course that synchronous individual meetings can be scheduled by appointment and note your weekly times of availability.
- **Best practices:**
 - Synchronous tools can be extremely effective for one-on-one communication with a student who has questions or needs additional help. Aim to use a tool that allows screenshare or a whiteboard as needed (i.e., Zoom or Brainwave) to proactively address tough or confusing course topics or help students with navigational or course content questions.
 - If communicating with a student by phone or a synchronous tool, document any decisions made via the inbox afterward (i.e., *in our phone call today we discussed an extension until Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. to submit the assignment*).
 - Hold synchronous group meetings using a university-supported tool (Zoom, Teams, or Brainwave) and record any group meetings for those who cannot attend. Some topics to cover in these synchronous group sessions include:
 1. An overview of the course navigation, syllabus, and expectations in week 1.
 2. A session covering tips and tricks for an upcoming major assignment or exam.
 3. A session covering a difficult topic that students are struggling with or have frequent questions about.
 4. A midpoint check-in session to set up students for success in the second half of the term.

Student Success Collaboration

A. Individual outreach to struggling and absent students

- ▶ **Requirement:** Outreach to individual students to promote student success is a fundamental component of instruction. After a week ends, an instructor should reach out via the inbox to offer support to all students who were absent, participated inconsistently, struggled significantly with the work, or are displaying inconsistent behaviors.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Reach out to all students who scored poorly on the previous week's major assignment or exam.
 - Follow up on struggling student outreach with synchronous phone calls or Zoom sessions with individual students as needed (see above).
 - If the student is unresponsive to outreach or needs additional interventions, collaborate with the student's academic advisor by raising a flag (see below).

B. Collaboration with Academic Advisors: Raising flags

- ▶ **Requirement:** In addition to midpoint feedback (see below), instructors should also “raise a flag” in Salesforce when students need intervention from their academic advisor.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Instructors should raise a flag when a student is absent or participating inconsistently, struggling significantly with the work, or needs additional outreach around personal issues or referrals to college resources. When raising a flag, make sure to provide context for the student's academic advisor on what specific issue the student is having, what intervention you have already taken, and what you would like the academic advisor to do (i.e., call the student and remind them to participate in the upcoming module, etc.). Instructors will be alerted by email notification when the flag has been resolved.
 - Raised flags can be especially effective as a means of early intervention support for struggling students in weeks 1–3 of a course to give a student time to change their participation habits or work with their instructor to get caught back up and succeed.

C. Leveraging student data: Using the teaching and learning dashboard

- ▶ **Requirement:** Student data in the teaching and learning dashboard should be reviewed by instructors at regular intervals for student risk factors, including low grades, missing work, and absences. Instructors should then use the data to drive decision-making about individual student interventions and communicate interventions that are working or not working to other relevant stakeholders, including the academic advisor and the department chair.

D. Participation in Student Success Collaboration meetings

- ▶ **Requirement:** Full-time faculty will come prepared to participate in regular student success collaboration meetings to individually review student progress data to determine and deploy interventions for students in their classes.

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► **Best practices:**

- Student success collaboration meetings offer an opportunity for all faculty to better understand trends and data impacting their students and courses and to build productive, collaborative relationships with academic advisors. All faculty are strongly encouraged to participate in synchronous meetings and asynchronous information gathering.

E. Midpoint feedback

- **Requirement:** Instructors should submit [midpoint feedback in Salesforce EXCELeRate](#) for every student enrolled in their course(s) between weeks 3 and 6 for 8-week courses and between weeks 7 and 9 for 15-week courses. Midpoint feedback should include the student's course average, attendance and participation, assignments, and discussion.
- **Best practices:**
- Instructors should leave constructive midpoint feedback specific to each student.
 - In addition, instructors should recommend resources from a list provided in the midpoint feedback system. The list includes the library, bookstore, OWL, accessibility services, ComPsych, Brainfuse tutoring, and Career Readiness.
 - Instructors should select "needs an intervention" in the midpoint feedback system to create a flag for the academic advisor.

F. Other cross-university collaborations

- **Requirement:** When necessary, instructors should be available to collaborate with other units at the university to aid in their students' academic success, including advising, accessibility services, tutoring, the writing lab, the bookstore, and others.
- **Requirement:** Accessibility services staff will provide instructors with accommodations documentation for any students in their course who have a documented disability. This communication will be sent in an email during the first week of the term. The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates that instructors uphold these accommodations and maintain the student's right to privacy. Instructors should contact the Student Support team (studentsupport@excelsior.edu) with any questions or concerns.

G. Student behavioral issues, conflict, and appeals

- **Requirement:** Report all student behavioral issues like bullying or aggressive responses to others to the department chair and take a screenshot of the posts before asking the student to modify the posts or deleting them, depending on the severity of the issue.
- **Requirement:** Review and follow the plan of action for students with mental health issues and immediate crises.
- **Requirement:** Students may submit a complaint or appeal about faculty, grade, or course. Faculty are expected to provide information and communication regarding the student and their activities and be a part of the resolution process, if appropriate.

Outside Of Your Course— Engagement with the Excelsior Community

A. University-wide preterm meetings

- ▶ **Requirement:** All full-time faculty and all part-time faculty teaching in an upcoming term are expected to attend the preterm meetings, offered three times per year, the week before the Fall I, Spring I, and Summer I term start. The preterm meeting provides university updates, reports from various departments, and departmental breakout sessions. Those who cannot attend the live sessions are expected to complete the preterm meeting course in Brainier by the end of the first week of the new term.

B. Department and college meetings

- ▶ **Requirement:** Unless you are told otherwise, your department chair is typically the primary point of contact for most questions and student/course issues that arise during the term. Faculty are expected to be in communication with their department chair whenever needed and reply promptly to emails from the department chair.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Full-time faculty are expected to attend all departmental, school, and college meetings.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Part-time faculty may also be invited to attend periodic departmental, school, or college-wide (CLAS and CNHS) meetings. Departmental meetings offer the opportunity to engage with other faculty members who teach in a similar field, share best practices, and address issues of common concern.

C. Professional development opportunities

- ▶ **Requirement:** Full-time faculty are expected to attend nine professional development activities within an academic year. At least six sessions should be internal workshops and at least three should be external sessions. Full-time faculty are eligible for conference and professional development funding. Faculty should track their own professional development for performance evaluations.
- ▶ **Best practices:**
 - Excelsior part-time and full-time faculty are role models for lifelong learning. The university offers many internal and external professional development opportunities.
 - Faculty should plan to attend and/or watch recordings of professional development demonstrations on new procedures or tools that impact their courses.
 - Full-time faculty are encouraged to seek professional development in their field. Approved funding is available to support faculty development opportunities.
 - Part-time faculty are required to attend or watch a recording of at least nine hours of Excelsior-sponsored professional development sessions each academic year.

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D. Excelsior rope teams, committee service, and other opportunities

► Best practices:

- All faculty are encouraged to engage in opportunities to interact with students, faculty, and staff outside of the classroom.
- Committee service: Faculty may be recruited by the dean or designee to participate on university committees, including curriculum committees, university governance, advisory, and ad hoc committees.
- Faculty are encouraged to interact with students and other faculty and staff on areas of common interest in any of [Excelsior's identity/allyship rope teams](#).
- Faculty are also encouraged to interact with students and the university via social media channels (e.g., [Excelsior Student Group](#), [Excelsior Graduate Students](#)).

E. Additional requirements and best practices for clinical faculty

► Requirement: [Review the Clinical Faculty Playbook](#).

Appendix A: Who to Contact

TOPIC/QUESTION	INDIVIDUAL/OFFICE
Teaching assignments and contracts in Salesforce	CLAS and CNHS: CLAS@excelsior.edu CNHS@excelsior.edu
Academic Integrity	CLAS and CNHS, and complete the Academic Integrity Reporting Form: CLAS@excelsior.edu CNHS@excelsior.edu Reporting Form
Course Issues (i.e., broken links, content issues)	Department chair
Student Support: Outreach for absent or struggling students	Raise a flag in Salesforce EXCELeRate for the student's academic advisor.
Brainfuse Online Tutoring	learn@excelsior.edu
Online Writing Lab	owl@excelsior.edu
Library Services	library@excelsior.edu
Accessibility Services	Office of Accessibility Services studentsupport@excelsior.edu
Student Complaints/Appeals	Department chair and student support@excelsior.edu
Issues related to payments, benefits, and human resources forms	Human Resources odhr@excelsior.edu
Technology problems with the website, logins, courses, and Salesforce	Technical Support Help
All other questions and issues	Department chair

Appendix B: Best Practice Examples

The following are examples from various Excelsior instructors used to illustrate the best practices described above.

Examples of effective discussion board posts by instructors

Role model appropriate APA in discussion posts



Nov 28, 2018

Interesting take, Jacob and Byron! There's been a lot of research done into the concept of the "summer slide," which refers to the loss of learning that happens during kids' summer vacation. Research conclusions have been mixed on it, according to a post from the Brookings Institution ², but learning loss or "summer slide" seems to be worse for kids from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Quinn & Polikoff, 2017).

In my own experience with three kids, there does seem to be a lot of time spent catching up and reteaching at the beginning of every school year. Maybe the idea of year-round public education isn't bad (although my teenagers would strongly disagree)! As you mentioned, Jacob, there's no need for us to follow the old-fashioned, farming-based school calendar that was normalized a couple of centuries ago. And it would certainly ease the burden on parents having to find and pay for child care for 10 weeks every summer!

References

Quinn, D. & Polikoff, M. (2017). *Summer learning loss: What is it, and what can we do about it?* Retrieved on Nov. 28, 2018 from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/summer-learning-loss-what-is-it-and-what-can-we-do-about-it/> ²

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Quote insightful points by students in reply to them



Aug 28, 2018

Jessica, I love this quote in your post: "Our goal in college should not just be to be experts in our chosen fields but to be well rounded individuals." I'd love to hear thoughts on this from others.

Ask questions of individual students when replying to them



Aug 28, 2018

Daniel and anyone else who's interested in responding --- do you see value in general education courses beyond their applicability to the "real world" and career paths? For example, is there an inherent value as a human being in studying history, philosophy, art, literature, etc.?

Ask questions of the whole group to consider in their replies



Oct 30, 2018

Hi, all. Every term, this discussion question gets me thinking.... especially because there are so many military service members or veterans in our course.

Questions for you all to ponder:

1. If you are (or were) in the military, did the educational benefits influence your decision to join up? (I ask this because in one of my previous terms of this course, one of my students was a recruiter. He stated that the topic of free college tuition "accounts for about half of all of the people that walk in my door or that I talk to.")
2. In addition to the option of joining the military, what if there were more alternatives for public service that offered free college tuition or student loan forgiveness? (An example you might have heard of is [AmeriCorps](#) [®].) Would you seek out these programs, or encourage your own kids to do so?

Reply and share your thoughts below, if you are so inclined!

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Ask questions of the whole group to consider in their replies



Sep 27, 2018

Micheleen, I definitely get your frustration with building research and writing skills you won't use beyond an academic context. But, beyond academic paper writing, can you see value in the broader skills of information literacy like understanding credibility and bias of the information you consume outside of school?

In the last few years with the rise of digital media and fake news we've seen a lot more talk about the value of information literacy in helping people understand that not all pieces of information are of equal value - in making an argument a journal article by a scientist with a doctorate about climate change should not be weighted equally with a blog opinion piece, for example -- but we frequently see this kind of thing happen on social media and beyond. It's not a new problem, but I think educators have a particular duty to teach critical source analysis in this era especially.

I am in the middle of reading a new book called *Why Learn History (When It's Already on Your Phone)* that grapples a lot with this problem. Here's [an article](#) ^e that talks about the claims in the book and an excerpt below with bolding on some striking points in case you don't feel like reading the whole thing:

"Today's students might be 'digital natives,' but that doesn't make them responsible consumers of digital information. Between January 2015 and June 2016, Wineburg's research team evaluated thousands of American students' ability to judge web sources. What they found was 'bleak,' writes Wineburg. **Eighty-two percent of students 'couldn't distinguish between an ad and a news story,'** and less than 10 percent of college students could identify partisan leanings on websites. **Even more disturbing was the finding that teachers, too, sometimes unintentionally directed students to faulty or biased online resources.** In one instance, California middle school teachers handed out a document for an assignment that came from an anti-Semitic, Holocaust-denying Australian website."

Synthesize common themes and ideas emerging from the conversation by the end of the week



Oct 7, 2018

Thanks for all of the thoughts on this! We might even go so far as to say if a course in higher education is not refining students' critical thinking skills in some way it does not belong at the post-secondary level. Nothing at this level should be just rote memorization, there should always be elements of thinking critically, synthesizing information, and applying it. I hope you all find that to be the case as you go through your coursework here or elsewhere.

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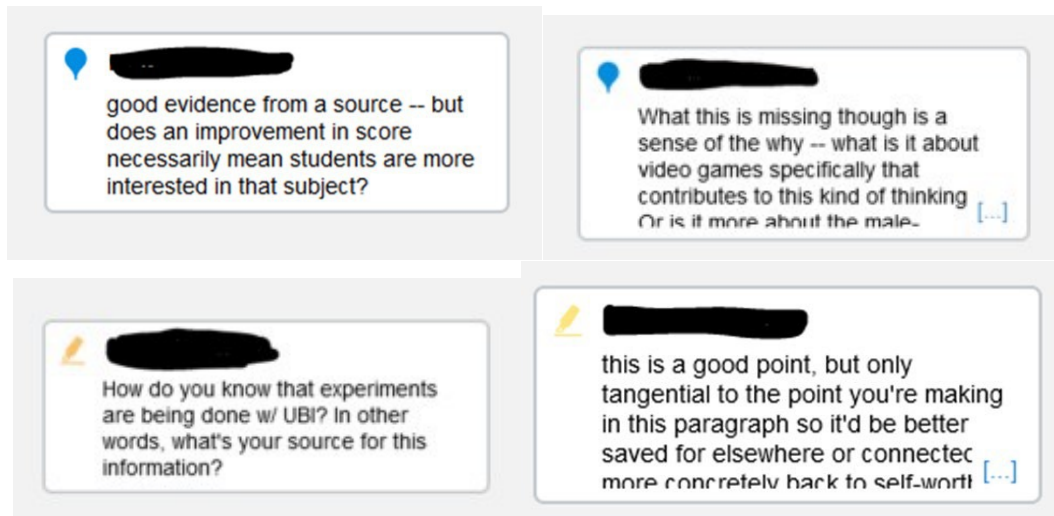
Examples of effective grading feedback

Providing descriptive narrative feedback inside the rubric

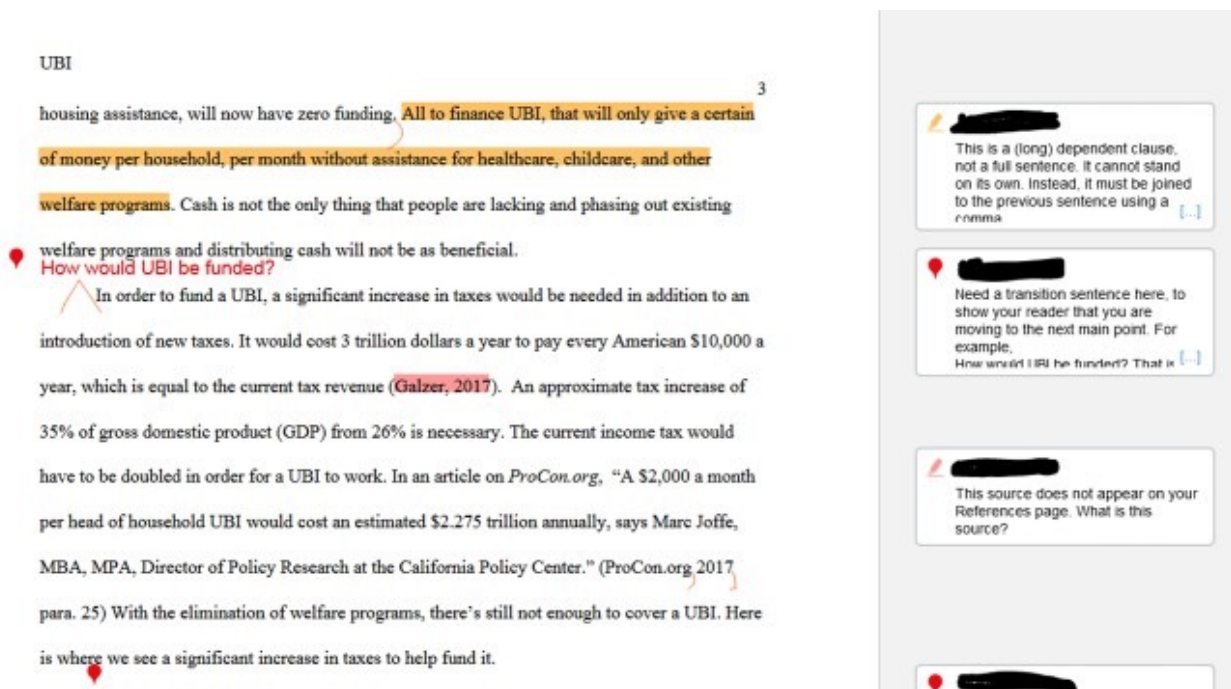
Grading				
AD Nursing Discussion Question Rubric (3)				
Criteria	Ratings			
Relevance and Depth (50% of grade)	50 pts Letter Grade of A (45-50 points) Post fully addresses all components of the discussion assignment. Accurate interpretation of all content results in clear expression of information. Applies all content to provide safe, quality nursing care. Supports content of post by primary use of paraphrasing. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	44 pts Letter Grade of B (40-44 points) Post fully addresses all components of the discussion assignment. Accurate interpretation of most content results in clear expression of information. Applies content to provide safe, quality nursing care. Supports content of post by use of limited direct quotes; also uses paraphrasing. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	39 pts Letter Grade of C (35-39 points) Post addresses at least one but not all components of the discussion assignment. Accurate interpretation of some content results in an unclear expression of information. Attempts to apply content to provide safe quality nursing care but some inaccuracies exist. Supports content of post by use of only direct quotes; paraphrasing not used. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	34 pts Letter Grade of D or Less (0-34 points) Post does not address any components of the discussion assignment. OR Inaccurate interpretation of content results in an unclear expression of information. OR No attempt to apply content to provide safe quality nursing care. OR No or limited original thought posted; post is mainly copied and pasted work of others. OR No post is submitted (0).
	39 / 50 pts Hi Student, The post demonstrates accurate interpretation; however, only direct quotes are utilized in your initial post. For a top score, paraphrasing is preferred. Additionally, sources listed at the bottom lack corresponding in-text citations. It's important to incorporate in-text citations to attribute information to its source. For instance, distinguishing between your original contributions and paraphrased information from the listed source is crucial. Crediting the author/source within your writing is essential to academic integrity. I included some APA tips in my replies to students on the discussion board.			
Quality, Relevance, and Depth of Response Posts (40% of grade)	nursing care. Supports content of post by primary use of paraphrasing. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	care. Supports content of post by use of limited direct quotes; also uses paraphrasing. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	apply content to provide safe quality nursing care but some inaccuracies exist. Supports content of post by use of only direct quotes; paraphrasing not used. (Paraphrasing demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and apply concepts related to safe, quality nursing care.) Resource(s) is/are from current course materials and/or related professional resource(s). Resources need to relate to nursing but may be from a related profession. Resources other than nursing are acceptable when applicable.	content to provide safe quality nursing care. OR No or limited original thought posted; post is mainly copied and pasted work of others. OR No post is submitted (0).
	39 / 50 pts Hi Kately, The post demonstrates accurate interpretation; however, only direct quotes are utilized in your initial post. For a top score, paraphrasing is preferred. Additionally, sources listed at the bottom lack corresponding in-text citations. It's important to incorporate in-text citations to attribute information to its source. For instance, distinguishing between your original contributions and paraphrased information from the listed source is crucial. Crediting the author/source within your writing is essential to academic integrity. I included some APA tips in my replies to students on the discussion board.			
Writing Mechanics and Netiquette (5% of grade)	40 pts Letter Grade of A (36-40 points) Response elaborates on the ideas of others by adding substantive and relevant content related to the components of the discussion as appropriate to provide safe, quality nursing care. AND Introduced new idea(s) and an effective meaningful quality question to promote discussion as well as introduce(s) new related idea(s). AND Response to two peer initial postings.	35 pts Letter Grade of B (32-35 points) Response elaborates on the ideas of others by adding substantive and relevant content related to the components of the discussion as appropriate to provide safe, quality nursing care and by posing a thought provoking question. AND Response to two peer initial postings.	31 pts Letter Grade of C (28-31 points) Response elaborates on the ideas of others by adding substantive and relevant content related to the components of the discussion as appropriate to provide safe, quality nursing care. If a question is asked, the question is not thought provoking. (Examples: "Do you agree?", "What do you think?") AND Response to two peer initial postings.	27 pts Letter Grade of D or Less (0-27 points) Response is mostly a summary of others' comments and lacks substantive, original thought. OR Response is just a summary of peer's initial post. OR Response does not address components of discussion assignment. OR Response relies entirely on short statements like "I agree with..." or "Great idea". OR Response to only one initial peer posting. OR No response post submitted (0).
	31 / 40 pts Thank you for responding to two classmates in a timely manner. Please include a thought-provoking question in your responses to classmates. This will help promote the discussion dialogue. A question should be included within a minimum of two responses.			
APA Format for In-text Citations and Reference List (5% of grade)	Letter Grade of A (5 points) Rare spelling and grammar errors throughout each post. AND Each post is organized with a clear and logical beginning, middle and end; message is clear. AND Posts include professional, courteous, and respectful language.	Letter Grade of B (4 points) Occasional spelling and grammar errors throughout posts. AND Each post is organized with a clear beginning, middle, and end; message is clear. AND Posts include professional, courteous, and respectful language.	Letter Grade of C (3.5 points) Repetition of one or two error types (spelling or grammar). (Examples: "do" rather than "due", "there" instead of "their", they "is" instead of they "are") OR Limited organization throughout posts results in a questionable message. AND Posts include professional, courteous, and respectful language.	Letter Grade of D or Less (0 or 3 points) Demonstration of any of these performance behaviors will result in a score of 3: Wide variety of spelling and grammar errors are often repeated. OR Lack of organization throughout all posts results in an unclear message. Posts including unprofessional, discourteous, and/or disrespectful language will result in a score of zero (0). No response submitted will result in a score of zero (0).
	5 / 5 pts Your posts were well-organized and thought out. Your thoughtful response to Karon demonstrated professionalism and expertise in Dialysis.			
APA Format for In-text Citations and Reference List (5% of grade)	5 pts Letter Grade of A (5 points) Reference(s) and in-text citation(s) are formatted correctly using APA guidelines. AND The source(s) is/are within discussion posts and on reference list.	4 pts Letter Grade of B (4 points) Reference(s) and in-text citation(s) are formatted with minor format errors using APA guidelines. (Examples: spacing, commas, italicizing, etc.) AND The source(s) is/are within discussion posts and on reference list.	3.5 pts Letter Grade of C (3.5 points) Reference(s) and in-text citation(s) have major format errors using APA guidelines. (Examples: missing components of reference or citation, references not in alphabetical order, etc.) OR The source(s) included in the reference list has/have not been cited within the text of the discussion post. OR The source(s) of an in-text citation within the discussion post has/have not been included on the reference list.	0 pts Letter Grade of D or Less (0 or 3 points) No reference(s) and no in-text citation(s) were/are used.
	3.5 / 5 pts Page numbers should be included within the in-text citations when using direct quotes. Review is needed on the placement of a period at the end of sentences when using an in-text citation. Excelsior offers an Online Writing Lab (OWL) as a resource to help students improve their writing skills and formatting knowledge. I have included a link below that can help guide you in APA formatting. https://owl.excelsior.edu/citation-and-documentation/apa-style/apa-references/			

Continued on next page

Using Speedgrader comment bubbles:
focus primarily on content and argument (higher-order skills)



Using Speedgrader features:
highlighting, writing on the doc, drawing, etc.:



Continued on next page

Grade center summary comments: including areas of growth, including links to resources for help

Comments



[Redacted Name]

Oct 22, 2018 at
8:05pm



[Redacted] nice work on this, I can see the improvement in your thinking on this topic over time. There are a few areas to work on for the future as noted on the document in my comments -- first, there are places where you need a citation or evidence from a source to support your point and one place where a direct quote from a source is not inside quotation marks. There are a few points where you lose a sense of argument and are mostly conveying information -- make sure in this kind of paper the emphasis is on 'proving' your argument to the reader throughout the paragraphs.

-- that's frustrating! Here is what you can do to improve your grade: 1. If you continue to have trouble with the library web site, or opening up journal articles or e-books that you found there, please contact the EC Library directly (Toll free: 877-247-3097), and/or contact our Tech Support team (Toll free: 877-842-8324). 2. It's not clear to me that you went through the "Evaluating Sources" tutorial that was linked in the assignment, so I strongly

Continued on next page

**Grade center summary comments: identify areas of strength and growth during the term.
Point to 1–3 overarching areas to improve for the next submission (summarizing the feedback inside Speedgrader)**

Student Comments

[Redacted], this is a great start with some great evidence and an engaging hook to start your intro. Take a look at my comments on the doc for what to adjust from here. I would focus on the following:

- 1) Make sure your thesis still takes the format of the webtext - Main argument because A, B, and C. The A, B, and C should be the supporting points covered in your body paragraphs. So the topic of lessening the burden of healthcare workers should be integrated into your thesis. Sub out the idea that it has expanded, which is just descriptive information about the past.
- 2) In your counterargument section, make sure the evidence points to the topic sentence counterargument. It's ok to also acknowledge the point - i.e. telemedicine can't replace all in-person visits, but counterargue the idea that you can't get personal connection via a computer as false.
- 3) Review some minor APA details in your reference list and make sure that your sources include a URL that shows that the source came from the library. One from outside the library is ok if you need it, but make sure you scrutinize the source to make sure it's scholarly and credible and not just a news website.

With these adjustments, you should be in great shape to build a paper around this outline!

Student Comments

[Redacted] you set the stage for your topic very well in your intro and thesis statement and your body paragraphs are clearly organized around your argument, which is great! I can see that you incorporated feedback from prior drafts which strengthened this end result as well! See my comments on the doc here, for future papers I would focus on: make sure that each paragraph is making a distinct point with new evidence to support it. Introduce quotes as we learned in M4 to set up the argument, and explain afterwards, and make sure all arguments you make are supported by evidence and not conjecture. Good work on this!

Examples of effective announcements

Video announcement examples (with screenshares)

- ▶ **Module 2 of Cornerstone: Screenshare of DAACs and Cornerstone Writing Refresher:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQ2CRyDhcTg>
- ▶ **Video walk-through of an ideal discussion post:**
<https://www.screencast.com/t/vzsJFTpZ>

Make an announcement to walk through a concept when multiple students are struggling with the same issue or there are common questions

- ▶ **Using the library's citation generator:**
https://youtu.be/teAfZT3Ef5A?si=sajgMf-7YOnnA_8o&t=149 [start at 2:29]
- ▶ **How to post video files to a discussion board:**
<https://youtu.be/DbxkNwQq4VY?si=GSLj-w2ZKLwEGqKA&t=189> [start at 3:09]

***Please Review Our Sample Annotated Bibliography ***

May 15 at 7:32pm

All Sections

Students,

Many students don't take a look at our sample and don't follow the correct format for the annotated bibliography, which results in a point deduction.

Please review our sample, and you won't go wrong:

<https://owl.excelsior.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/AnnotatedBibliographyAPA.pdf>

Remember also what purpose the annotated bibliography serves. This is important.

Each 150- 250-word (1- 2-paragraph) annotation should include:

1. A brief summary of the information and argument in that source.
2. A brief evaluation of the quality of the source's information and argument.
3. A brief evaluation of how the source is useful for your paper and how it fits with your other sources. (For example, does it offer an opposing perspective to another source? Does it fit with the same school of thinking as another source?)

Let me know if you have any questions. I am here for you!

You got this!

Continued on next page

Announce upcoming Zoom workshops or office hours

 Join Me For a Zoom Hour on Thursday, May 23rd@ 1:00pm EST to Discuss The Literature Review! Click to Read Why.

All Sections

May 21 at 10:21am

Students,

The literature review is the most challenging milestone of the essay; it is the very *foundation* of your paper! However, once you have the literature review down, it's smooth sailing! I want to host an hour on Thursday to create space and time for you to bring your questions to me, and I can also be available to review a rough draft. Of course, call or text me anytime. I am always available to you! Literature reviews are also very unique. I've never read one like another, and I want to help you understand what one is.

Please join me! This is optional of course. I hope this is helpful!



See you Thursday @ 1pm EST! Bring your coffee, your questions, and your puppies & cats!

Providing additional clarification or examples for an upcoming assignment

 Example Literature Review

Jul 16, 2023 at 6:13am

Hi all,

As you submit your lit. review or revise it (M4.4), check out the sample final project template I will post tomorrow under Announcements earlier. Seeing this literature review section should really help you to see how it fits into your project. You will complete your literature review for M4.4, and then it will become a part of your Global Problem Research Project (7.3). It should be written in essay form with in-text citations and full references at the end, just as the example paper literature review section has. **Also, I have attached here a stand-alone literature review example, too, so you can see exactly what M5.5 should look like.**

Make sure you don't confuse a lit. review with an annotated bibliography, which you just did. An annotated bibliography is just a list of references with a paragraph after each one discussing them. A literature review looks like an essay and brings the sources together more. See attached!

Hope this helps!



 Example Literature Review.docx

Using an announcement for a midpoint check-in opportunity

 Midpoint check-in: how are you doing?

Feb 1 at 12am

12 12

Hi all, now that we've passed the halfway point of the course, let's check in with one another. How are you doing? What is going well? What is difficult or confusing? Feel free to reply to this announcement with your thoughts, or reach out to me privately if you have any questions or concerns.

This is the time in the term where things can start to feel tough, so let's rely on each other for some support and encouragement to power through the next few weeks!

Continued on next page

Using announcements to connect the week's topic to the real world, share additional content, and share your area of expertise



Week 2/Ukraine War and WW1

Hi, all,

Looking forward to seeing everyone in the course this term.

I wanted to pass this article along from today's (March 5) New York Times: "This Is What Trench Warfare on the Front Line Is Like"

The article contains many references to World War One, so it seemed relevant:

https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/europe/trench-warfare-ukraine-frontline.html?unlocked_article_code=AFzAfQaOLPQad

Celebrate their success with a last day of the term announcement



Thank you and good luck!

Aug 20, 2023 at 12am

You did it! Today is the last day of the term! Remember that everything in the class needs to be submitted by tonight if you have any outstanding work left to complete.

Congratulations on finishing your first term at Excelsior University. I know all of you have the tools and mindsets needed to succeed. I can't wait to see all of your names come up on the list of graduates someday soon!

If you ever have questions or just need a friendly ear, please feel free to email me anytime at @excelsior.edu.

Good luck!

Appendix C: Faculty Checklist

Visit the [Faculty Checklist Hub](#) in [Faculty Connects](#) for the most up-to-date information.



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