

# Effective Online Teaching



Kingsborough Center for e-Learning (KCeL)



# The Research

- Students who do not log in during the first 10 days of the course are unlikely to be successful.
- Between 10-20% of students will begin to appear disengaged by week 3 or 4.
- Instructor presence in an online course is one of the factors known to have a direct impact on student success.
- Encouragement builds community.



# What do you think?

Based on the research on online learning, what do you think are some of the best practices?



# Best Practices

1. Create a clear communication plan and let students know about it
2. Develop a routine for course activities
3. Be strategic and timely with feedback
4. Use quality course materials that convey your course content
5. Match your course materials/activities to your learners
6. View your course through the eyes of your learners
7. Build community to encourage success
8. Display a sense of helpfulness and flexibility

# Best Practice 1: Create a clear communication plan & let students know about it

Let your students know your plan for communication. For example, you might say that you will

- Respond to a question within 48 hours on weekdays
- Respond to emails Monday-Friday from 9-5 but from 8-10 on the day you have an assignment due



# Best Practice 2: Develop a routine for course activities

Create a constant pattern for communication, assignments, and activities. For example

- First day of the class week: Weekly announcement (using the BB feature that sends announcements as email): In these announcements, you can include:
  - Learning outcomes for the week
  - Due dates for assignments, quizzes
  - How long it will take students to complete the week's work
- Tuesdays: Assignments are due
- Wednesdays: Discussions are due
- Fridays: Quizzes

# Example of a Routine

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday- Sunday
<b>Instructor Task(s)</b>	Send out an announcement that wraps up previous week and introduces an overview for the coming week, noting the learning outcomes, materials, and assessments	Review discussion board questions to see what students are thinking; perhaps pose more questions	Grade the short answer questions and provide overall feedback via an announcement with “send as email” feature selected	Give feedback on discussion board	Grade reflections
<b>Student Learning Activities</b>	View a short video on the topic and begin the weekly reading	Complete the weekly reading		Review instructor’s feedback on the discussion board	
<b>Student Submissions</b>	Develop questions on the topic and post these on the discussion board	Respond to short answer questions based on the video and reading	Students post responses to to discussion board questions	Summarize learning in a reflection and submit	

# Best Practice 3: Be strategic and timely with feedback

- Stay away from “time drain” grading by designing assessments (i.e., assignments, exams) based on your course outcomes.
- Use rubrics to simplify grading so that you can spend more time interacting with students
- Schedule assignments/exams so that you can grade and return in 48 hours
- Update students on work they have not done and find out why
- If you see a common issue cropping up in student work, send all students an announcement
- Create a word document of responses you can reuse
- Consider audio feedback as this may save you time
- Convey emotion in your feedback:



# Example of a Discussion Board Rubric (modified from Purdue.edu)

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Points	4	3	2	1
<b>Timeliness and quantity of discussion responses</b>	Three to four postings; well distributed throughout the week	Two to three postings distributed throughout the week	Two to three postings not distributed throughout the week	One to two to postings not distributed throughout the week
<b>Responsiveness to discussion topic and demonstration of knowledge and understanding from assigned readings</b>	Readings were understood and incorporated into discussion as they relate to topic	Readings were understood and somewhat incorporated into discussion as they relate to topic	Little use made of readings	No use made of readings; postings have questionable relationship to discussion questions and/or readings; they are non-substantive
<b>Ability of postings to move discussion forward</b>	Two or more responses <b>add significantly</b> to the discussions (e.g, identify important relationships, offer a fresh perspective or critique of a point, offer supporting evidence)	At least one posting <b>adds significantly</b> to the discussion	At least two postings supplement or <b>add moderately</b> to the discussion	Postings do little to move discussion forward

# Best Practice 4: Use quality course materials that convey your course content

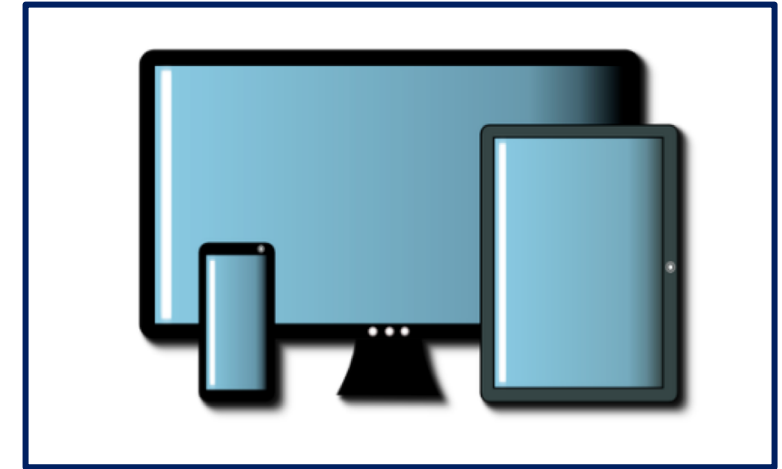
Search for quality materials that already exist rather than creating your own. Ask your colleagues or search online for:

- Video and images
  - YouTube
  - Education division of your professional society
  - Khan Academy
  - Merlot
  - TedTalks
  - Wikimedia
- Readings
  - Open Educational Resources
  - Other material in the public domain



# Best Practice 5: Match your course materials/activities to your learners

- Technology considerations
  - Consider the devices students have available
  - Consider whether they have high speed, stable internet connections
- Cognitive load considerations
  - Vary activities to address different learner abilities
  - Consider mini lectures and mini assignments
- Accessibility considerations
  - Use short videos that are closed captioned
  - Make materials accessible for all

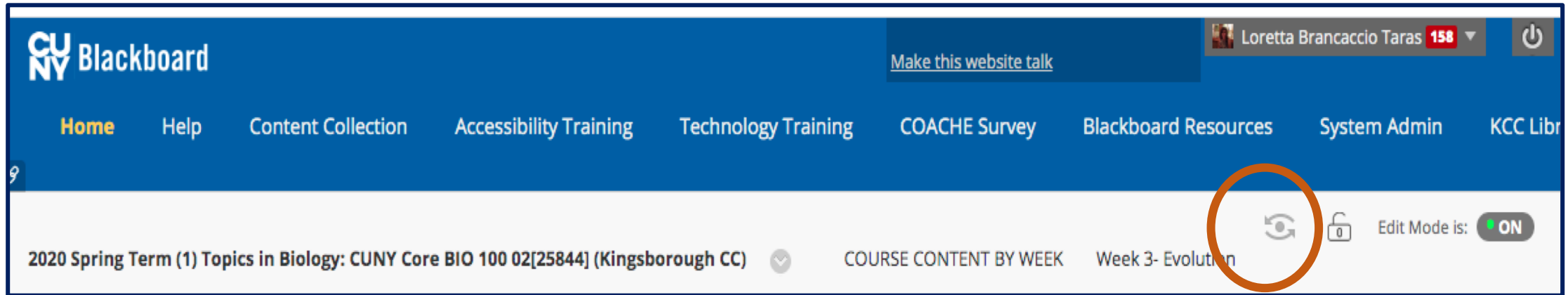


# Best Practice 6: View your course through the eyes of your learners

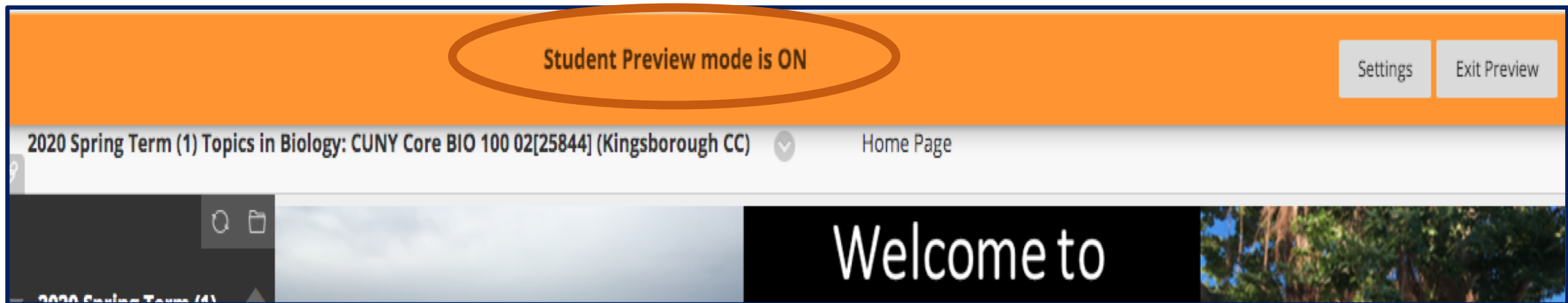
- Be realistic about the amount of work you assign and let students know how long it will take them to do it.
- Ask students for feedback after a few weeks so you know what's working and what's not



# The Actual Student View in Blackboard



This screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Blackboard system. The header is blue with the 'CUNY Blackboard' logo on the left. On the right, there is a user profile for 'Loretta Brancaccio Taras' with a red '158' badge and a power icon. Below the header is a white navigation bar with links: Home, Help, Content Collection, Accessibility Training, Technology Training, COACHE Survey, Blackboard Resources, System Admin, and KCC Libr. Below this is a white bar containing the course name '2020 Spring Term (1) Topics in Biology: CUNY Core BIO 100 02[25844] (Kingsborough CC)', a dropdown arrow, 'COURSE CONTENT BY WEEK', 'Week 3- Evolution', and an eye icon circled in orange. To the right of the eye icon is a lock icon and the text 'Edit Mode is: ON'.



This screenshot shows the student preview mode banner. The banner is orange and contains the text 'Student Preview mode is ON' circled in orange. To the right of the text are two buttons: 'Settings' and 'Exit Preview'. Below the banner is a white bar containing the course name '2020 Spring Term (1) Topics in Biology: CUNY Core BIO 100 02[25844] (Kingsborough CC)', a dropdown arrow, and 'Home Page'. Below this is a dark banner with the text 'Welcome to' and a background image of trees.

# Best Practice 7: Build community to encourage success

- Set up a discussion board for students to help students
- Set up a FAQs discussion board for you to answer questions about content
- Model what online students should do...
  - Participate in discussions
  - Send emails
  - Be timely in your responses
  - Share your own experience



# Best Practice 8: Display a sense of helpfulness and flexibility

- Demonstrate as much patience and flexibility as you can without giving away the store!
- Reach out to students who have disappeared



# In short...

- Engage in regular and clear communication
- Develop a routine for course activities
- Develop a routine of prompt feedback
- Build content from preexisting materials
- Match your course materials to your learners
- See your course through the eyes of your learners
- Build community to encourage success
- Convey a sense of helpfulness and flexibility...and compassion!

***Good teaching does not spring naturally from a particular modality. A good course on campus is not good because of the location or traditional brick and mortar ambiance. Likewise, a weak online course is not weak because it is delivered via the internet. Good teaching in any learning environment requires careful attention to course design and facilitation***

Riggs, 2019 Thrive Online: A New Approach for College Educators

