

CREATING BOUNDARIES WITHIN THE UBIQUITOUS ONLINE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Managing one's time and setting boundaries while teaching online are essential for continued job satisfaction and effective teaching. Online teaching offers attractive flexibility, but instructors report high teaching workloads, feeling isolated, high stress levels, and a poor work-life balance. By utilizing assumptions about online learners set out in andragogy theory, the practical application of the Community of Inquiry Framework, and considering work-life balance theories, the online instructor can effectively set boundaries that support their own work and simultaneously focus on students' success. We propose that instructors can define their work and set boundaries on the online classroom by prioritizing engagement, developing assets to help students guide themselves, managing time, and using efficiency strategies. In this practitioner-focused article, we identify common barriers to effective time and task management in online education and, based on both research and practice, we provide additional tips, tools, and strategies for preparing online courses, teaching them, and grading student assignments—all intended to assist online educators in their pursuit of work-life balance.

Keywords: online education, boundaries, work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

Managing one's time and keeping focused while working online are essential to job satisfaction and effective teaching. In higher education today, online courses have become common, with their ability to reach students anytime and anywhere and to meet the needs of adult learners who might otherwise not be able to pursue college degrees (Magda & Aslanian, 2018). As I coach, mentor, and supervise online faculty while also teaching online myself, I notice that the same flexibility afforded to students through asynchronous online course delivery can quickly overwhelm instructors who teach online because there are no natural boundaries. The term ubiquitous can be used to describe the online environment because there are unclear boundaries

and great flexibility when teaching online. Without being tied to a physical classroom or designated time of day, the ubiquitous nature of online education and its demands can seem to flood the instructor's available time and energy, making a healthy work-life balance difficult to attain.

Why Online Boundaries are Important

There are no natural boundaries to teaching online. Researchers more than ten years ago theorized that technology had already become more controlling of workers' nonwork lives than their managers while at work, due to persistent communications at all hours of the day or night via mobile devices (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007). This theory is demonstrated by online

educators who complete their daily teaching tasks but return multiple times throughout the day or night to check messages and reply to posts compulsively, as if they are expected to teach 24 hours a day. Although faculty value the flexibility of teaching online as its greatest motivating factor (Kain, 2016), online educators also experience ambiguous roles and workloads, often feeling that their work promotes “being constantly available, [with] fading boundaries between home and work life, and working seven days a week” (Bezuidenhout, 2015, p. 18). Online faculty have reported that online teaching has a higher workload, takes more time and effort, and requires more resources than traditional classes (Owens, 2015; Wright, 2014). In addition to workloads and time constraints that are difficult to define, working asynchronously leads to feelings of isolation and depersonalization due to the physical distance from students and colleagues, which promotes high stress levels and poor time management (Kennedy et al., 2015).

There are unlimited possibilities and high expectations in the online classroom. The growing number of tools with which to engage students via text, audio, video, multimedia components, apps, or features within the learning management system (LMS) can be both attractive and overwhelming to online faculty (Brown, 2016). In situations where online institutions adopt standardized courses to ensure quality in their delivery, faculty can experience intensification, a “chronic sense of work overload over time” and deskilling, the reduction of “quality instruction into separate steps that seems unrelated to the big picture,”—circumstances that lead to burn out and low work-life balance (Knott, 2014, p. 59). Evaluating student work in a timely manner with substantial, guiding comments while also participating in forum discussions can be an intense workload that makes it difficult to set priorities. In a study of faculty at an entirely online institution, 67.6% of participants reported high levels of stress related to “time constraints, technical issues, and large class sizes” (Smith, Brashen, Minor, & Anthony, 2015, p. 56). With a lack of clear boundaries, unlimited possibilities, and high expectations for online educators, faculty burnout may set in as the result of a low work-life balance.

Work-Life Balance in Online Work

Work-life balance is the way in which individuals manage multiple roles, such as in work, family, social, and other facets of life; however, a clear definition of work-life balance is elusive. It has been studied holistically, wherein individuals might be able to describe how life is “going” overall (Grzywacz, Carlson, Kacmar, & Wayne, 2007), and more recently as a complex phenomenon that may include conflicts and enhancements related to the interactions between work life and nonwork life (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Tillemann, 2011). Theories about work-life balance vary from defining work and nonwork roles as segmented to analyzing these roles for their contradictory, compensatory, integrated, and/or enriching aspects (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017). For example, the resource drain theory (Morris and Madsen, 2007) suggests that one’s resources are finite and by investing more in work, nonwork life will suffer, while the segmentation theory suggests that workers either naturally have or can elect to set boundaries between work and nonwork life, thus self-defining these as separate and distinct domains (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Lambert, 1990). Although work-life balance theories have continued to evolve, a consensus of what defines an appropriate balance is unclear in the research literature. This is likely based on role ambiguity and the fact that the concept of balance itself varies with an individual’s life circumstances, personality traits, and other factors (Lester, 2015; Wambui, Cherotich, Tumwet, & Bowen, 2017). Further, researchers have suggested that developing a strict work-life balance definition in the higher education field would unintentionally limit individual agency as one’s needs and priorities change over time (Lester, 2015).

Despite an elusive definition of work-life balance, research suggests that there are both employer-originating and employee-originating solutions to managing the blurred boundaries of personal and professional roles. Early solutions have focused on employer responsibilities, such as auditing the employer’s efforts, clearly communicating job roles and their potential impact on nonwork roles, and regularly conducting performance reviews (Wickham, Parker, & Fishwick, 2006). More recent recommendations are employer-sponsored flexible work time, shortened work hours, job

sharing, leaves and sabbaticals, and telecommuting (Igbinomwanhia, Iyayi, & Iyayi, 2012). In a recent study of higher education employees consistent with other workplace research, it was recommended that organizations are responsible to assist employees to reduce imbalances (Wambui et al., 2017), although other research noted that colleges and universities inherently struggle to make changes to either policies or culture that might effectively address work-life balance concerns (Lester, 2015). Employee-originating solutions in both general work and higher education have focused more directly on the worker's role in managing work-life balance, suggesting that segmenting one's roles through mindfulness strategies, self-reflection, and meditation, either with or without employer-provided trainings or supports, can increase workers' mental and emotional presence in both work and personal lives and reduce the interference of work-related stress (Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Isik, Isik, & Hamarta, 2016; Kiburz, 2012). Research-based solutions to work-life imbalances have been generally explored, but specific strategies to improve work-life balance in online higher education need further investigation.

Because online higher education is a field in which faculty face complex challenges that often lead to poor work-life balance, and research-based work-life balance solutions specific to online teaching have yet to be fully investigated, this article proposes ways in which individual faculty members can manage their online teaching through general research-based, employee-oriented solutions. More specifically, it presents strategies for potential work-life balance with respect to established work-life balance theories, such as segmentation theory (as described by Igbinomwanhia et al., 2012), in which one sets priorities and manages time in order to accomplish various tasks throughout the workweek and increase mindfulness and presence (Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Kiburz, 2012) and related work-management strategies. Prioritizing, managing time, and implementing efficiency tools are all aspects under an individual faculty member's control and can be more immediately applied by practicing faculty.

As individual educators consider and adopt work-life balance strategies, they can develop boundaries that help them enjoy the positive aspects of building relationships with students and

teaching them, while reducing the time spent on administrative tasks that could otherwise take the greatest proportion of time spent online. Tips, tools, and strategies shared to advance an individual's own vision of a healthy work-life balance while teaching online will also focus on the Theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1970) in the context of the Community of Inquiry theoretical framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). By focusing on theory and a framework that apply to online education, as well as work-life balance theory, educators can ensure they add value, preserve the intent of online educational processes, strategically implement interventions for maximum effect, and meet students' needs while striving to maintain a healthier work-life balance.

Throughout this article, you will gain tips, tools, and strategies you can use to identify barriers to effective time management, establish boundaries, improve online teaching, and manage other aspects of professional life that improve career satisfaction. In writing this article, I come from a place of experience having taught for more than twenty years as a full-time public-school teacher, part-time college instructor, online adjunct, and full-time online instructor, and I also worked as a course developer, doctoral student, researcher, and writer. Many of the roles I have mentioned happened at the same time and the need for boundaries became critical in my own life. My colleague and coauthor, Beth Gray, has also taught online, developed trainings and courses, completed doctoral work, and managed faculty development—often simultaneously. She will give her extensive expertise at seeking work-life balance as well. Now, we serve as directors, certified coaches, and managers in our present roles, which include concurrent online teaching responsibilities. Because of the demands we have had on our own time, we have personally sought out tools, strategies, and resources to improve our efficiency at managing time, projects, and online teaching—all while using best practices. These strategies have been implemented in our own online teaching and among many of our current faculty members. We hope these ideas will encourage you, help you better manage your students' needs, and give you an improved ability to set boundaries that will enhance your focus. In applying them, you may need to stretch outside your comfort zone and try

something new in order to become more efficient or effective, but the initial time investment will be worth the effort as you advance toward your goals for increased work-life balance.

SETTING PRIORITIES

Setting priorities can help you develop boundaries as you determine the most important aspects in your teaching activities, attend to those areas first, and better manage multiple teaching tasks. Based on andragogy theory (Knowles, 1970) and the Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000), focusing on engaging with students first and producing assets to guide them in self-management throughout your online course will make critical teaching tasks your main priority. Using time management strategies can further give limits to online teaching and connect with work-life balance theory (Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Isik, Isik, & Hamarta, 2016; Kiburz, 2012). In *Eat that Frog*, Tracy advises, “Your ability to select your most important task at any given moment, and then to start on that task and get it done both quickly and well, will have more of an impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop” (2007, p. 3). In essence, prioritizing your activities and efficiently completing tasks are essential skills that can be developed.

Andragogy Theory

Andragogy is commonly understood as adult learning theory and can help educators prioritize online teaching tasks. The term appeared as early as the mid-1800s in Germany with Alexander Kapp’s work on promoting life-long learning. Kapp’s book, *Platon’s Erziehungslehre* (Plato’s Educational Ideas) (1883), set the groundwork for other researchers, including Malcolm Knowles, who considered Kapp’s work (Henschke, 2016) and furthered it through *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (1970). Andragogy theory can inform adult education in ways that more appropriately meet learners’ needs, in contrast to pedagogy, which is a different approach more suited to younger learners (Pew, 2015). Knowles and others have established andragogy as a prominent theory to guide online educators today.

As core elements in andragogy theory, Knowles (1970) established five assumptions related to adult

learners: self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. These ideas assume that most adult learners have life experiences and maturity that give them a secure sense of self and that they bring significant prior learning and life experiences to the classroom, when compared to younger learners. In addition, adult learners are assumed to come to their education with an intrinsic motivation to learn and evaluate their learning and a problem-solving orientation to the learning process. Related to these assumptions, Knowles suggested that adult learners need self-directed learning, connections to their life experiences and understandings, and practical applications. For an online instructor working to set priorities and establish boundaries in the online classroom, understanding these assumptions can keep your teaching efforts focused where they matter most—on supporting adult students’ needs and finding practical solutions that make sense for both the instructor and the student.

The Community of Inquiry Framework

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework outlines a practical model that online faculty can use to inform their classroom activities and engagements with students by focusing on teaching, social, and cognitive presence as specific priorities (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009). Each of the three presences within the CoI model work together in an inter-related manner to support students’ holistic learning experiences. Social presence relates to the learners’ ability to engage in a comfortable learning environment that supports trust and collaborative learning opportunities (Kehrwald, 2008). Teaching presence relates most directly to the design and facilitation of the online class (Preisman, 2014). Cognitive presence is the extent to which learners are able to construct new meaning through the process of effective facilitation and engagement in the online classroom (Kanuka & Garrison, 2004). Through thoughtful classroom design and facilitation, online instructors can utilize the CoI framework to support their adult students’ learning by prioritizing critical aspects and maximizing the time spent in the online classroom.

Priority #1: Engage with Students First

Some strategies that may help you to engage with students include posting and replying early

each day, making weekly notes about your students, and backwards mapping your workload (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). The workload in online courses is generally higher because there is more to read and write since the lack of synchronous face-to-face interaction is replaced by discussion forums and other online elements and there is more work to grade (Owens, 2015; Smith et al., 2015; Wright, 2014). Because of the workload, determining where to start in your teaching tasks can be unclear. Engaging with students as your priority allows you to establish teaching presence and social presence, both of which are necessary in order to create cognitive presence where students can think critically and participate in the intellectual aims of educational activities (Swan et al., 2009). Consider starting the day by posting in the discussion forum of each class and responding to any students' messages, questions, or emails before moving onto any grading or other work.

Post early. Posting and replying early every workday in any classes that you teach ensures that you are responsive and have at least met the basic requirements of that day to provide instructor presence to your students (Kehrwald, 2008). Most institutions have some kind of minimum faculty presence requirement in online teaching and posting in discussions or replying to emails and messages is a common high priority and best practice. In my own teaching, I have noticed that if students have not yet participated in the week's discussion and I post an initial thread related to the discussion forum prompt with questions or links to help them get started, students quickly join in and are ready to engage in the dialogue. This is particularly true when my posts ask them to reflect or apply the topic to their own experiences, which ties into andragogy theory (Knowles, 1970) while building cognitive presence (Kanuka & Garrison, 2004). When teaching a course repeatedly, I suggest maintaining a collection of well-developed "starter" threads that invite further participation and applications or reflections and can be posted when students do not appear to be engaging in the discussion.

Keep anecdotal records. Just as posting early each workday is a priority to build your instructor presence, getting to know your students is a priority in applying andragogy throughout your teaching (Knowles, 1970). Recording notes, called anecdotal records, about your students can help you get to know

them, keep a record of which students have received responses from you each week of class, or recall which students have special circumstances. Your notes could include details about where students live, their backgrounds and interests, their academic major, whether they are in the military, and other pertinent details. If you write specific details about students' backgrounds, such as whether they have experience in the subject area, are in the military, or are in their first online class, these details can be part of your forum replies when relevant and guide your approach to working with specific students who may need additional help. Connecting to students' experiences and backgrounds will help them engage in your class because it appropriately addresses the needs of adult learners (Knowles, 1970). Noting your weekly student contacts is also a best practice because it enables you to identify any students to whom you have not replied recently and those students who have become inactive in the course and to follow-up with students to help them engage. Keeping anecdotal records of your contacts can also help you vary to which students you respond in discussions each week so you eventually touching everyone, and it can help you remember students you have taught long after the class has ended. You may benefit from using a notepad, Endnote, or an Excel document to make notations about students based on their self-introductions during Week 1 of your classes.

Practice backwards mapping. Some of the engagement and grading work online can be planned through a backwards mapping strategy. Backwards mapping is used in curriculum planning to look at the "big picture" goals and breaks them down into smaller tasks that must be planned in advance to reach those goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). Public school teachers use this strategy to choose learning goals and then plan backwards from the desired date that those goals will be achieved so they know when the initial work and bigger benchmarks must be started or taught. Backwards mapping is a strategy that can be implemented in planning your online teaching engagement more productively, because it is a helpful way to ensure that requirements or goals are met on time. For example, if there are 50 students in your course and you must respond to at least one third of your students throughout the week in a discussion forum, you will need to reply to at least 17 students. With

a backwards mapping approach, you can plan to post replies to at least three or four students in the discussion every weekday. By Friday, you will have met the goal and can then go back to add replies to further discussion, acknowledge students who have posted back to you, or make other contributions. Backwards mapping assignments to be graded can also help you anticipate how many documents must be evaluated daily in order to return graded work within your institution's expected grading window.

Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post in discussions early every day • Reply to messages, emails, and students' questions before other tasks • Take anecdotal notes about students from Week 1 forums • Track to whom you have replied each week • Follow-up on missing or disengaged students
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set time management priorities • Use a checklist • Plan time for each commitment on a schedule or in a planner • Backwards map your engagement and grading

Priority #2: Produce Assets that Guide Students in Self-Management

Creating a few guidance assets to lead students around your classroom and communicate expectations can anticipate needs, proactively address questions, and minimize the individual guidance you might otherwise have to give after the course has begun. Pew (2015) suggested that adults will rise or sink to the level of responsibility expected of them, a key premise of andragogic assumptions of adult learners. Using strategies that support students' learning while also building their self-efficacy will engage your students better while allowing you to balance tasks and time more effectively. Dunlap suggests, "workload reduction

starts with anticipating and proactively addressing learners' questions and potential problem areas" (2005, p. 19). Storing copies of announcements and guidance assets, or other repeatedly used materials, will save you development time in future runs of the same or similar courses.

Andragogy theory suggests that adult learners are self-directed and gain greater autonomy as they progress through the educational experience (Hagen & Park, 2016). As such, adult learners are not as interested in being told what to learn as they are in having a meaningful influence in the process of learning itself. Assets that establish teaching, social, and cognitive presence (Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009) can establish reasonable boundaries for you as an online instructor while supporting your students in meaningful learning and self-directed learning endeavors and increase efficiency and time management when they are developed for potential repeated use.

Prepare student guidance. Teaching online requires faculty members to take on the role of mentor rather than the traditional lecturer role typical of live, traditional classes (Cochran, 2015). Many online students are adult learners who have been away from college for a long time or are in their first online course, and these students will need additional guidance in order to succeed. Communication problems can be diffused or prevented entirely if you tell students how you want them to engage in the course and in the discussion forums from the start of class, and students appreciate being able to review these materials as needed (based on andragogy theory, Knowles, 1970).

Making a brief video or screencast with narration that guides students through the different areas in your classroom and explains the first week's activities is one way to provide guidance. A netiquette guide can be another guiding aspect that allows students to self-regulate by providing tone and text expectations before students post in the first week's forum discussion. Videos, tips, and other guidance assets can lead students into appropriate participation, and these assets can be used as a reference later if students fail to comply or need redirection.

Provide video guides. Consider creating a short video to help students navigate your online classroom. You may feel nervous about putting

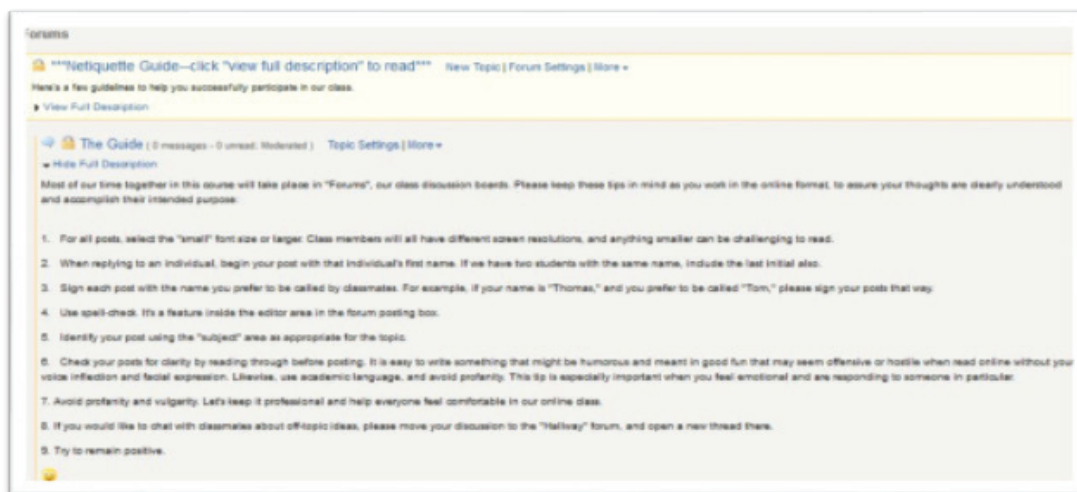


Figure 1. Example Netiquette Guide

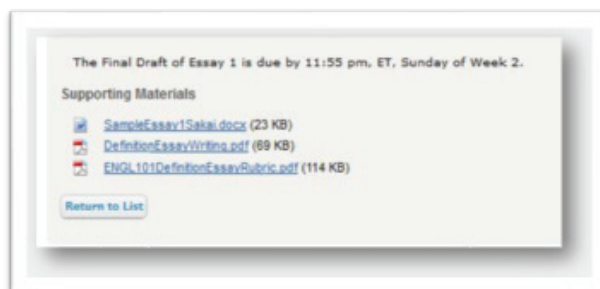


Figure 2. Example of Attached Example Assignments

your voice or yourself on the screen, but students want a connection to you and an understanding of who you are. When you include your face, voice, and presence in the video, you can effectively guide them through what they need and establish your instructor identity—which helps students trust you and participate better in your course (Kelly, 2016). When misunderstandings occur, students complain less because they feel comfortable just asking questions and reaching out to you. Jing (www.techsmith.com/jing-tool.html) is one free option, Screencast-o-matic is another (www.screencast-o-matic.com), and Camtasia is an expensive but high-quality screen-capture program (www.techsmith.com/store/camtasia).

Post a netiquette guide and examples. Before the class begins, convey clear expectations about in-class communication by posting forum guidelines or expectations in a Netiquette Guide (see figure 2). Likewise, if there are specific forum discussions or assignments you prefer submitted

in a certain format, you can post a model and explain it (see figure 3). If assignments must be formatted in a particular way, consider making a model assignment to illustrate that and attach it as an example to the assignments. Providing examples and guidance as a routine part of your teaching allows adult learners to review these tools as they need them and works well with their problem-orientation to learning and self-direction (Knowles, 1970).

Prepare announcements in advance. Preparing announcements in advance for courses you regularly teach and importing or copying these from one section to the next can save time and allow you to more fully develop this content. If you keep the content of your announcements free of specific dates, they may be appropriate for future sessions of the course and can easily be modified to accommodate any changed readings or assignments. Depending on your learning management system (LMS), you may be able to set your announcements to auto-open on the first day each week. If you

have created tools to guide your students through assignments or help them navigate the classroom, you can choose to set these up as announcements to publish automatically as well. To help set a positive tone in your online classroom, include elements in your course announcements that are friendly and personable, so that they create a student-teacher connection each week that reassures the students and anticipates questions they might have. If there are generic announcements in your class, you may be able to personalize them with your name, additional details, and encouragement.

Store repeatedly used materials. Saving and storing materials you have developed to guide and communicate with students is a great way to cut future workload demands. If you do not have a location in which to store repeated announcements or forum posts, such as your introductory and weekly wrap-up or summary posts, consider using an online storage site. Faculty Files is a free resource that allows users to set up course materials storage areas separated by class, week, and type—such as grading rubrics, forum posts, announcements, etc. (facultyfiles.com). An online storage site like this one is especially helpful if you have gaps between periods of teaching the course and want to save your work in an organized manner so it is ready for future sections of the course.

Assets that aid students' self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screencasts • Video introductions
Assets that save time and can be reused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course announcements • Netiquette Guide • Example assignments

Priority #3: Use Time Management Strategies

Managing time efficiently can help you maintain boundaries, ensure that priority items are accomplished, and have a better quality of life by keeping things in balance. Time management can assist you in your work and facilitate the primary goal of teaching, which is to establish a relationship between students and their instructor that promotes meaningful educational outcomes (Jones, 2011). In addition to developing effective teaching and learning in the online classroom, effective time management can enable you to enjoy the various aspects of an academic career and have the time to be able to enjoy a rewarding personal life.

Reviewing your time management style can be an effective way to set and work toward priorities, reflect on your effectiveness, and make an action plan to transform your time management methods. Work-life balance theories suggest that segmenting one's work and other roles can make them clearer and more fully define one's roles (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Lambert, 1990). A planning grid or checklist can give you the structure to manage your time, verify that you have met requirements for the class on a daily and weekly basis, and define your work. When you list all the tasks to be accomplished, you can mark those that are most urgent in order to complete them first and identify those that are most important so you do not neglect them. In addition to a checklist, consider scheduling your workdays on an electronic or manual calendar and block out time for each activity. Once you have met the requirements for a task, you can check it off and move on.

Teaching in online education comes with the pressure to engage students at increasingly higher levels with an increasing faculty workload (Kennedy, et al., 2015). Students now expect a more personal connection with online faculty than they have in the past (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2017). As instructors lead online courses, this work time can extend into late evenings, weekends, and early-morning hours. Because the physical boundaries of the workplace might mix with the home environment, separating work time from family and nonworking time is not easy. There are many barriers to effective time and task management for online instructors. Some of these barriers are interruptions, distractions, high student counts, and multiple courses running concurrently. Identifying the barriers that affect you most and focusing on solutions can enable you to limit and prevent them in order to set boundaries on your teaching time.

Strategies to reduce interruptions.

Interruptions seem important or urgent when they occur and threaten the focus and time boundaries needed to manage successfully online education work. Although distractions typically include those online and virtual things that threaten to pull attention away from the task at hand, interruptions can include time demanding physical intrusions such as visitors, phone calls, friends, and family members. Most interruptions come from the lack of physical or relational boundaries that accompanies

working remotely or in the home. Interruptions take much more time than multitasking (task-switching) activities and usually make refocusing afterward more challenging (Napier, 2014). Some effective ways to limit interruptions include setting up a physical workspace in which to teach online, establishing work hours, and communicating your plan to family members and friends.

Set up a physical workspace. One of the most effective ways to control interruptions is to set aside a physical workspace—an area where you can work uninterrupted. In a designated location you should be able to turn off the phone’s ringer or let voicemail answer to limit interruptions until the most important tasks are completed. While working in your designated space, letting others know that you cannot be disturbed will further establish a boundary. In my own teaching, I used to carry my laptop everywhere and log on whenever I had a spare moment to lead online classes. If you prefer to do this and it works for you, I applaud your flexibility in doing so, and research supports the idea that people with different traits or styles may successfully manage blends between work and family life (Sumer & Knight, 2001). However, over time I found that trying to be online at any time and any place as a regular practice, which led to the feeling of always working without having any mental space or personal resources left for family or other commitments. Working intermittently all day, every day, can diminish the quality of work and lead to physical and mental exhaustion (Bezuidenhout, 2015). Setting up a physically distinct work area in which you can focus and conduct online teaching activities provides physical boundaries and signals your brain that while you are working in that location your focus is in the online environment.

Establish work hours. Interruptions can be further mitigated by establishing work hours when you expect to complete your main online teaching activities. Setting boundaries on your work time, personal time, family time, and time for other things that are important to you, including self-care, combats the temptation to be online 24 hours each day, seven days a week, and it provides nonwork time during which you can relax and focus on your other priorities without guilt. Just as setting up a physical workspace can indicate to others that you are “at work” while on the computer, designating specific work hours for online teaching can also

provide time-bound limits to your work and make time available for other activities.

Communicate your plan. Communicating your workspace and work hour plans to your family members and friends enables others to support you in your online teaching efforts. As you communicate and carry out your plan, this gives you and others in your life boundaries. You will be able to approach the work with more focus and energy, establish a healthy work-life balance, anticipate time for other pursuits, and further define your online teaching work. Planning a physical space and set time to conduct online teaching can define the otherwise ubiquitous nature of teaching online, and communicating your plan to the important people in your life will strengthen your resolve to adhere to your plan.

Limit-setting strategies. Distractions are virtual intrusions that can come in the form of emails, social media messages, news pop-ups, and anything that interrupts the focus of teaching tasks. Although multitasking is tempting, because moving between browser tabs or programs is easy on most devices, neuroscience research suggests that multitasking is actually task switching that briefly interrupts one’s focus. Interrupted focus takes time to repair and leads to mistakes, lost time, and depleted energy (Napier, 2014). Some effective ways to manage distractions include planning work sessions and breaks, using a timer, and using limiting apps or programs.

Plan work sessions and breaks. Defined work sessions with planned breaks reassure you that although you must focus intently at a given time, a break is coming. Planning predetermined breaks into your online teaching schedule can increase efficiency and reduce distractions, and the break itself refreshes you for the next work session. The Pomodoro Technique, a time management tool developed by Francesco Cirillo (2018), suggests intervals of 25 minutes for focused work with five-minute breaks between sessions. After four sets of these focused sessions and related short breaks, you can take a longer break of up to 30 minutes to pursue other activities, have lunch, take a walk, or otherwise focus on something other than the work itself. It is important to stop the task at the end of the planned work period and take a break or stand and stretch. Sitting for extended periods without breaks for physical movement can cause you to feel “general

lethargy, fatigue, and demotivation” and over time can lead to a “down” mood or depression (Gilson, Burton, van Uffelen, & Brown, 2011, p. 2). Not only will breaks allow you to focus more intently during work sessions, but they also promote general health and well-being. If you are interested in developing a strategy to include Pomodoro sessions in your workday, visit <https://francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique> for details about how the strategy is easily implemented and how individuals in various professions apply the strategy.

Use timers. Faculty members may be concerned that they are missing something in the classroom or that there is a student “in need” who is not getting his or her attention as a result of taking a break. Timers allow you to set real boundaries on your time so that you can ignore distractions without devoting any attention to the time management itself and turn your entire focus to the task of teaching and supporting students effectively and efficiently. In essence, timer strategies promote mindfulness and presence, a research-based work-life balance solution (Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Kiburz, 2012). To use a timer to manage your work, calculate how long it will take to complete tasks, then set a countdown timer to add a time-related boundary, and work to complete the task. At the end of the session, you can decide how much time you will also devote to that task in a later work session or the following day and stick to it rather than staying on the task for an indeterminate period. Failing to stop at the timer’s alert subconsciously makes you lose focus in future timed work sessions because you cannot trust that you will actually have a break, which makes it more difficult to fully invest in the focused work.

If you use the timer to regulate online teaching activities, once a timer is set, all of your efforts can focus on engaging in teaching-related tasks to work without distractions. Cirillo (2018) recommends using a physical timer that requires manual winding because it physically conditions you to associate the winding and clicking of the timer with a state of flow or mental focus. However, if a manual timer is not available or not your preference, there are online timers and apps available at no cost, such as the basic Tomato Timer (tomato-timer.com/) or Bomb countdown timer (www.online-stopwatch.com/bomb-countdown/).

Use limiting programs or apps. Limiting

programs or apps can reduce distractions, promote focused work, and help you avoid task switching, while applying a degree of work-life balance segmentation theory to your approach by separating work and other aspects of life for a time. There are many limiting programs now widely available that are free, by subscription, or for purchase to use with smartphones, tablets, and computers. The two programs described here not only illustrate this type of program but are also suggestions for your use. Keep Me Out is a distraction-limiting website (www.keepmeout.com) that allows users to bookmark various web pages and provides warnings for visiting a site too frequently, which reduces addictive site checking and interruptions. The Stay Focused app can block websites and interruptions, notify you when it is time to take a break, and open programs or folders for upcoming tasks (www.stayfocusedapp.me/). Stay Focused also provides reporting features to help you determine how time was spent during the workday so that you can reflect on your productivity and set future improvement goals. Planned breaks and timers can promote increased attention while limiting distractions also promotes focused work.

Barriers	Potential Solutions
<p>Distractions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan work sessions and predetermined breaks • Pomodoro Technique details: francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique • Online Pomodoro® Timer, tomato-timer.com/ • Bomb countdown timer, www.online-stopwatch.com/bomb-countdown/ • Limiting programs or apps • Keep Me Out, www.keepmeout.com • Stay Focused, available from www.stayfocusedapp.me
<p>Interruptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a physical work space • Establish work hours for online teaching • Avoid answering the phone during work sessions • Communicate and stick to your plan

Task	Monday 12/31/2012	Tuesday 1/1/2013	Wednesday 1/2/2013	Thursday 1/3/2013	Friday 1/4/2013	Saturday 1/5/2013
DAILY REQUIREMENTS						
E-mail Checked <i>must be checked every 24 hours</i> SP						
Messages Checked + Responded SP						
Forums Read + Responded-3/day -POSE QUESTIONS IN THE FORUMS & SHARE EXPERTISE						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP/CP Initiate higher/critical thinking that applies to students' real lives, jobs, etc. SP/CP Connect conversations between posts/weeks/activities... relevant dialogue on task SP Establish a supportive community environment 						
MINIMUM ATTENDANCE IN THE CLASSROOM						
MINIMUM GRADING TIME						
GRADING TASKS						
Forums Graded/Announcement Posted/Gradebook Checked "0" TP						
Written Assignments Edited, Graded						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use "track changes" for every assignment Return in PDF format / Return in a TIMELY manner 						
Weekly Quiz set up & check/"0" marked in gradebook for previous wk.						
HOUSEKEEPING: ANNOUNCEMENTS, NOTES, & WRAP-UP POSTS						
Week 1 Private Message (check) & Video Screencast Tips TP						
Before-Week Announcements <i>minimum 1 main contact per week</i> TP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly communicate important course topics & relationships between posts/assignments/quizzes and the course objectives Give CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS for how to participate & due dates/time frames Include SCREENCAST to create perception of you as "real" 						
Mid-week Announcement (as needed)						
Wrap-Up Announcement/Friday Note						
Forum Wrap-Ups Posted <i>TP: forum wrap-ups required weekly</i>						
Non-participants/Previous week's forums contacted TP						
Non-participants/Previous week's QUIZ TP						
Non-participants/Previous week's ESSAY TP						
OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES						
Research/Scholarship time						

Figure 3. Sample Schedule for Online Teaching Activities in One Class

Considerations While Teaching an Online Class

Maintaining your priorities before, during, and when concluding an online class takes planning, communication, and reflection. Planning during the course preparation phase as well as during each week may further minimize time wasting, especially when moving from one task to the next, by allowing you to be fully present in each task mindfully. One part of your plan might include implementing designated work areas in your virtual space, such as virtual desktops for different specific tasks, which reduces the time needed to resume tasks when multitasking and improves clear thinking (Jeuris & Bardram, 2016). Regardless of your additional strategies, communicating your plans and availability to your students throughout the course adds valuable teaching presence and reassures students that someone is there to guide them throughout their learning process (Preisman, 2014).

Planning your work schedule. To plan your work schedule before the course begins, consider how many instructor-led activities are included in the class and how frequent grading tasks will need

to be completed and backwards map your work (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). With these aspects in mind, you may be able to draft a work plan using a spreadsheet, calendar, or other scheduling device (see figure 1). This type of plan might include how often and on which days you will post in discussion forums, on which days you will grade work, and on which days you will do other tasks like making videos and other assets. Including minimum teaching performance requirements for your institution, such as grading deadlines or the quantity of instructor forum posts, may ensure that you are able to meet or exceed existing expectations while focusing on the quality and relationships that bring satisfaction from teaching. Writing it down and following the plan will help you manage the workload and ensure critical tasks are completed on schedule throughout the course. The scheduling plan illustrated here is an example of my own management schedule, with a few indicators to remind me where teaching, social, and cognitive presence activities occurred throughout my teaching. Noting the Community of Inquiry presences (Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009), I

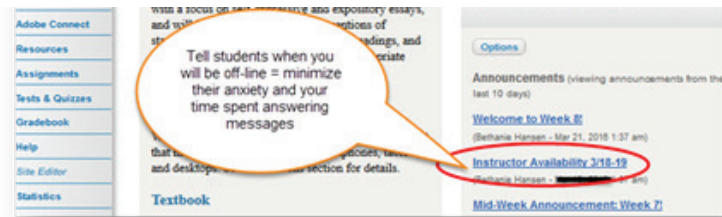


Figure 4. Instructor Availability Announcement

focused on priorities and attended to core aspects of teaching first.

Just as you might communicate your work schedule to family and friends to prevent interruptions, you can plan ahead to let your students know which days you will be online and when they can expect responses to their questions or messages and post this in a well-written course announcement to post during the first week. As simple as that may seem, most students' complaints come from the panic they feel when they do not receive an immediate response from their instructor. By telling students in advance what to expect in terms of your responsiveness, you can put them at ease and diffuse the panic before it happens, which lets you focus on both students' needs and work-life balance.

Office hours and instructor availability.

Students are reassured of your instructor presence when you communicate your availability and when you can be contacted during a virtual office hour. If you have provided your contact information and a preferred communication method somewhere in your course, take the time to check that communication method regularly—whether it is phone messages, classroom messages, a chat room, or emails—to ensure that you respond as promised. If your institution provides a collaborative tool like Blackboard Collaborate, Adobe Connect, Zoom, or Skype, you may choose to provide a specific day and time each week when you can be visited in your “virtual office” or allow students to contact you by appointment for office hours. If you do choose to sit for a virtual office hour and students do not attend, you might consider video recording yourself in the meeting room and sharing it with your students later as a way to lecture on a given topic that may be challenging during the course. If you would like to stimulate students' interest to attend office hours, consider hosting specific office hours on a topic or

assignment with which students typically struggle (Griffin et al., 2014). Communicate when you will be online or available for quick messages, and let your students know about your schedule changes as needed. In addition, if you will be offline during a time you are typically online, communicate about your availability to let students know (see figure 4). Even if your students never take advantage of the opportunity to meet with you, making yourself available is in itself reassuring.

EFFICIENCY STRATEGIES

Boundaries in online teaching can be improved as you plan time for preparation, teaching, and grading, follow your plan, and reflect on and adapt it. Little by little, you can explore new tools and strategies to make these tasks more effective and efficient to avoid being overwhelmed in your exploration of these options. As you schedule your preparation, teaching, and grading time, be sure to set aside regular time to work on your professional interests—like research, writing, or proposing and presenting at conferences, if these aspects fuel your professional passion. In addition to purposefully planning teaching and professional endeavors, taking at least one day offline each week can refresh your mind and rejuvenate you for the week to come and allow clear segmentation between work and other roles, which is part of helpful work-life balance theory (Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Isik, Isik, & Hamarta, 2016; Kiburz, 2012; Lambert, 1990).

One approach toward managing a single online course is to break routine online tasks into three major parts: preparing the classroom, teaching the course, and grading. Taking the time to prepare each class fully and plan ahead to anticipate what your students will need to be successful will save you time while teaching the course. Although some of these steps may seem detailed, I encourage you to try them. Stretch outside your comfort zone if

needed. In doing so, I believe you will experience a much calmer run of each class with less time spent “putting out fires,” fewer student questions and concerns, and more available time to dialogue with students about the subject matter.

Everyone has a schedule that works best for themselves and others in their life. In our work environment, and under normal load circumstances, we are privileged to be able to set our work schedules to some degree because of online teaching’s most attractive asset—flexibility (Kain, 2016). Whenever possible, I suggest maintaining your optimal schedule by working when you have the most energy each day. Some people work well early in the day, and others are more productive in the evening. Whatever your preference, planning your work time around the time you know you will be most productive will likely yield results. When sitting for long periods, take frequent breaks and be sure to stretch and move your arms, wrists, and neck to avoid strain. As you set your schedule, it may be tempting to try to work while also spending time with family members or sitting in front of the television, blurring the distinction between work and family or other roles. Doing this will make work completion more difficult, introduce distractions and interruptions, and leave you feeling as if you never have a break. Try to protect your time teaching online and set boundaries between work and other roles to avoid working too long and to enable yourself to set it aside when the work is done.

After the workday or week is over, reflect on your plan and adjust for the next day or week to help you stay on top of things. Consider keeping a notebook where you record your thoughts about your own teaching practice, write about things you would like to try in the future, and list your own best practices. Reflection is the most important practice to keep improving your strategies and to recognize when you are doing well. Acknowledge and reward yourself for maintaining your time management as part of your reflection. When you set limits on your time and manage it effectively, you can more fully enjoy your personal and/or family time because you do not have things pressuring you to get back online after your workday (applying work-balance theory, as described by Bosch & Rexroth, 2014; Iginomwanhia, Iyayi, & Iyayi, 2012; Isik, Isik, & Hamarta, 2016; Kiburuz, 2012). It is easier to avoid

burnout and stay energized about your teaching and professional endeavors when you define and set boundaries, maintain them, and reflect on your process.

As you regularly take time to explore the strategies and tools shared here, and others you may later discover, your efficiency will improve and you will have more time to build relationships with students throughout your teaching. Although these tools and strategies take time to learn, I have discovered through using them that they pay off in time saved in the long term. Managing your time, trying new strategies, and keeping your workload under control can create solid boundaries in the ubiquitous online world and likely improve your job satisfaction as well.

Preparing for Classes

Prior to teaching an online class, there are many things you can do to plan ahead, anticipate needs, and set boundaries within the online classroom. Determining your work schedule is one aspect of advanced planning that will help you anticipate and backwards map your workload of teaching and grading before the course begins, and communicating your general schedule to students helps them plan communications with you once the course is underway. A review of each course you teach and its syllabus can be a good starting point to preparing your online classroom. Check the syllabus for changes, ensure that course links work, and review the various parts of your classroom to ensure that they are present and ready for students. This can prevent time wasted later fixing things or addressing student concerns. If there is a place to provide your contact information and virtual office hours, be sure to include them so that students know how best to contact you during the class and how often you check messages. If your course is standardized, review it for changes and updates each time you teach. Many instructors include a clearly defined late policy in the syllabus, in a course announcement, and on assignment descriptions, and you may find this kind of clarity helpful in working with your students as well.

Teaching Classes

While some people mistakenly think that grading is the entire “job” teaching online, the teaching itself takes place much more through other areas, especially the discussion forum, and through the development of teaching, social, and

cognitive presence (Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009). For this reason, I previously suggested that engaging with students first is a priority. When thinking about teaching through discussion forums, I suggest considering what you can share with students throughout the dialogue about the subject area that they cannot learn from any other instructor. Sharing your knowledge, expertise, guiding questions, and illustrative examples with students helps to build inquiry and critical thinking in them. In managing teaching, always choose the high priority and time-sensitive tasks first. As suggested earlier in this article, these tasks include posting first in the forum discussion, then answering messages, and then grading work.

Framing Forum Discussions

Just as in a live class, the discussion is where students are greeted coming into the “room” for class and where all three Community of Inquiry presences can be established together online (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Swan, Garrison, & Richardson, 2009). In discussion areas, you might consider leading, moderating, or facilitating discussion and dialogue, then “shaking their hands” as students exit each week with a culminating summary or wrap-up comment. This beginning, middle, and ending approach frames a discussion and establishes a strong teaching presence. In addition to planning your discussion engagement approach, consider building social presence by creating a friendly and welcoming instructor bio forum post to share during week 1 to humanize your online classroom and make connections with students early in the course (Kehrwald, 2008).

The beginning of your week might consist of an initial instructor post welcoming students into the week’s dialogue, introducing the topic, and sharing thoughts, links, videos, or other elements that invite participation and pave the way for the forum. If you post this initial posting on day 1 of the week, it helps students to post early in the week because they see your presence and start anticipating it. This early posting approach is a lot like greeting students at the door when they come into a class. Initial posts can be well researched or brief and used in repeated sections of the course.

The middle of your week may include replies and posts to individual students and the entire class that further the discussion. Respond to students

throughout the week and return to acknowledge that they have replied to you, just as you ask them to do. Vary your approach to keep your engagement fresh and prompt students to think critically by using guided anchors, a strategy suggested by Johnson (2014). Guided anchors are responses that “acknowledge a student’s post in some manner,” “nurture their development by being supportive when responding,” “prompt critical thinking about the subject,” “highlight important points in the course materials,” “take an organized approach to the development of the responses,” “include research and/or supplemental sources to strengthen the response,” and “create a springboard or post that prompts further discussion by concluding with a follow-up question” (p. 1). Trying several approaches to engage with your students in ways that develop cognitive presence and academic discourse can be challenging, but, with practice, having many approaches makes engaging easier and saves time.

The end of your discussion week’s engagement might include a closing or summary post that helps students understand the most important part of the week’s learning, recognizes specific insights students might have shared, invites further exploration on the topic, and mentions the topic for the next week to help students transition. Well-written wrap-up posts in the online class are a lot like saying “goodbye” to students at the end of a live class meeting. Alternatively, asking designated students to write the concluding wrap-up post each week applies andragogy theory (Knowles, 1984) by giving students the opportunity to apply their learning and add further value to the discussion, while lightening the instructor’s workload in this area.

Managing Extensions

If your institution has a procedure that allows you to grant official end-of-course extensions for students who still need to complete course work, it can be time saving to develop some specific approaches to extension management. For example, when a student requests an extension, making sure there are many ways to communicate with the student to help pave the way for success. If you accept an official course extension request, mark your calendar in advance to remind you of various points in the extension when you need to check into the course and monitor the student’s progress.

The midpoint of the extension period and one week before the end date are good dates to mark on your teaching schedule. On these dates, send the student a reminder email or make a phone call to the student to prompt course activity and support the student as the extension closes. If you reach out and do not receive a response from the student within 72 hours, I suggest asking for support from your institution's advising department or student services to reach the student—this helps to avoid last minute scrambling!

Grading Student Work

Planning ahead for grading activities will help you keep grading under control, provide information that students need in order to learn and improve their performance, and manage the time grading will take. Without a plan, grading can easily take over the entire online teaching role, leaving little time for discussions and conversations to take place and threatening your work-life balance. Grading forum discussions, assignments, and other items can be efficiently handled by grading early, using rubrics, and using efficiency tools.

Grading early. Two different kinds of early grading may assist you: early forum grading and early assignment grading. Using two computer monitors to display work to be graded and the rubric or grading page in your institution's learning management system (LMS) can make the process easier and more efficient, as can a mixture of strategies and tools.

Early forum grading. First, grading forum posts early allows you to handle them only one time as you engage in the discussion. For example, when you reply to a student's initial post in the discussion forum, if your forum-grading breakdown allows it, provide the comments and scoring breakdown for that initial post separately in your gradebook area and save it. As students reach the number or substance of their peer responses near the end of the week, you can then add the remaining feedback and scoring breakdown for those elements without having to review and reread all of your students' initial posts as well. At this point, you will be able to finalize the forum score and publish it along with your detailed comments just after the end of each discussion week. This allows you to complete prompt forum grading without spending many hours on the grading all at one time.

Early assignment grading. Second, grading

early assignment submissions as they come in, before the assignment due date, reduces the workload for grading weeks. If you focus on grading early assignments before the due date and work through them, then after the assignment due date passes you may have only half of the submitted assignments left to grade. If there are fewer assignments to grade after the due date, you can begin evaluating them the next day and divide the remaining items up across several days and make your grading workload light. Managing grading tasks by tackling them early and spreading them out can remove the pressure of grading many assignments all on one day and feeling overwhelmed when the grading deadline approaches.

Using rubrics. Rubrics are helpful in grading students' assignments because they illustrate how the students' score was derived and provide additional support to the score earned. Rubrics can also help you check your grading practice to avoid inflation or deflation and grade work more objectively. Using rubrics in grading and providing marked rubrics back to your students along with your grading comments can minimize students' complaints about and disagreements with your grading methods and can further guide them in improving their work for future assignments. Developing well-crafted grading rubrics takes time but is worth the investment (Dawson, 2017), and using them in your grading is even easier if your institution already provides rubrics ready to use. For illustrations and sample rubrics, visit Rubric Samples for Higher Education (rubrics.kon.org).

Using efficiency tools. Feedback is considered a core aspect in online education and is correlated with improved student performance and satisfaction (Espasa & Meneses, 2010). Students prefer and benefit most from feedback embedded in their written assignments rather than summarized at the top or bottom of their work (Wolsey, 2008). Providing detailed feedback directly on assignments using some method of tracked changes can illuminate errors right where they occur and gives students effective guidance that tells them what was done well and where improvement is needed (see figure 5).

If your institution subscribes to Turnitin (www.turnitin.com) as its plagiarism checking service with access to Grademark in the feedback suite, you can comment directly on students' written

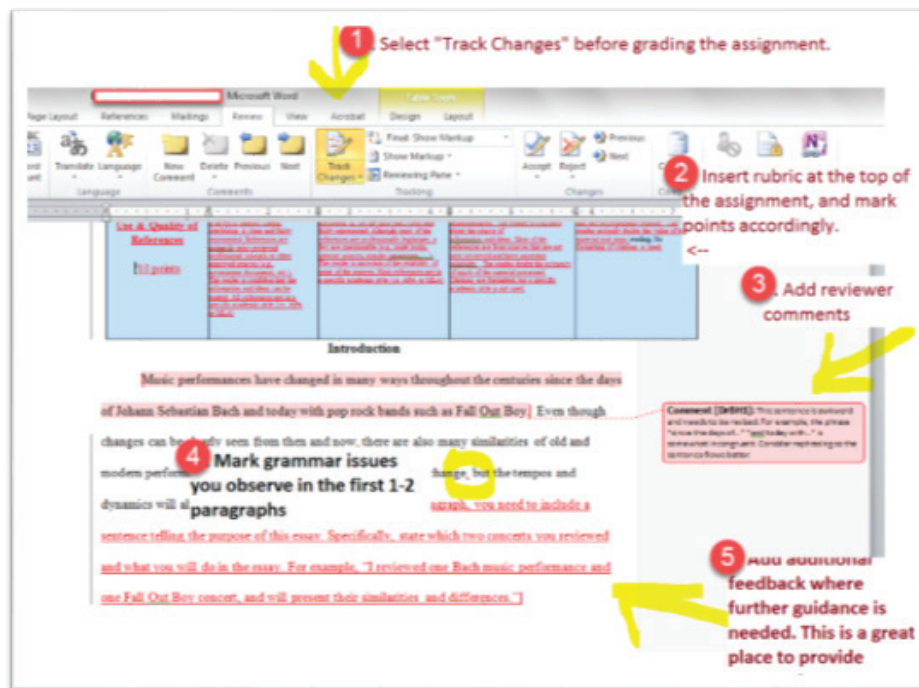


Figure 5. Example of Feedback with Tracked Changes, Reviewer's Comments, and a Pasted-In Rubric

work through this interface and provide summary text or voice comments, but giving your students step-by-step instructions to access your feedback in Turnitin will be necessary. The voice comment capability of Grademark can easily add teaching presence to your feedback, which provides your tone and personalization as well as building community for your students (Ice, Curtis, Phillips, & Wells, 2007).

If your feedback method includes downloading students' work, commenting on it, and then uploading the marked-up document to return it to the student, I recommend several time-saving tools that make this process more efficient. Consider trying the GradeAssist toolbar add-in for Microsoft Word (www.educo360.com/). Another option is a text expander program or using Dragon Naturally Speaking dictation software (www.nuance.com/dragon.html) to speed up the insertion of your comments. Free tools include the AutoText and AutoCorrect features within Microsoft Word, which enable automated corrections and insertions. I also suggest saving the marked-up document as a .pdf rather than in .doc or .docx format to ensure that your students are able to view the feedback as it was intended and do not miss the markup.

To grade assignments using a method of downloading, adding tracked changes, and applying efficiency tools, consider the following tips:

- 1) Set the document to Track Changes in Microsoft Word so your comments appear obvious to the student.
- 2) Add in-text comments and/or reviewer's comments in Word directly on the assignment. Reviewer's comments appear as bubbles to the side of the text and in-text comments are typed within the text itself.
- 3) With the track changes setting on, run the spell-check/grammar-check tool to quickly mark any significant writing errors within the assignment.
- 4) Have the rubrics for each of your classes saved with comments you can copy and paste to the essays for more common errors when providing feedback. If there are several selections for each category, just include the one that applies. Consider inserting entire rubrics into AutoText within Microsoft Word.
- 5) Post the rubric to students as part of your feedback along with specific comments that note something the student has done well and something specific to work on for the future.
- 6) If using the GradeAssist toolbar add-in

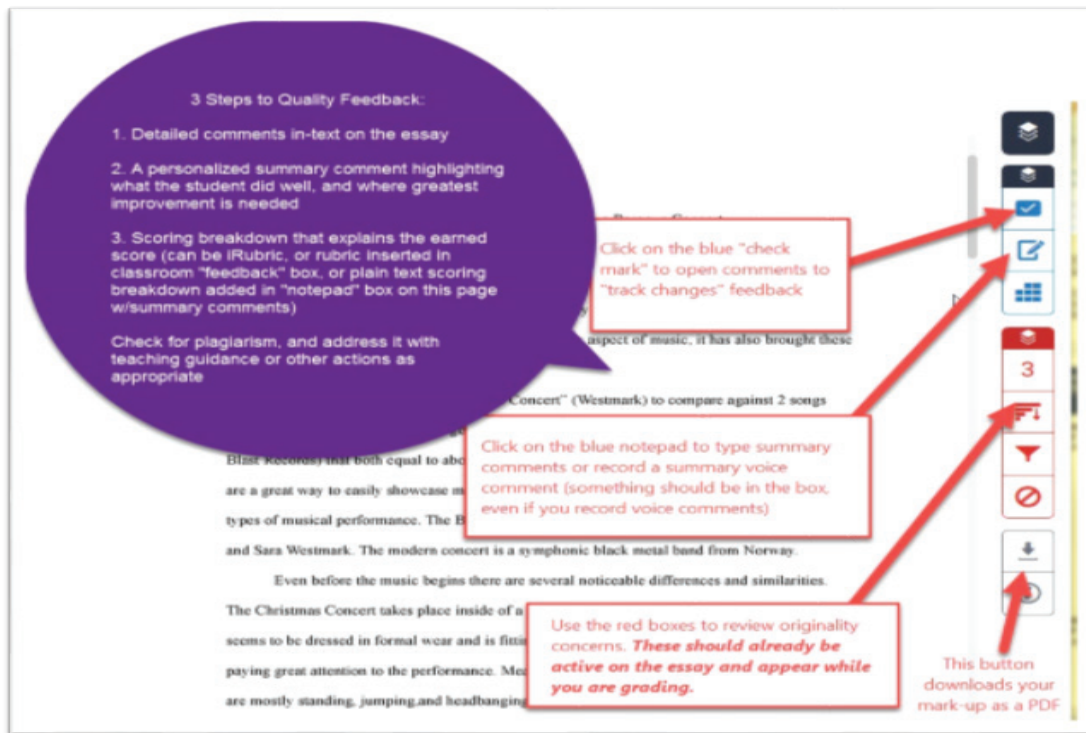


Figure 6. Illustration of how Comments can be Added to Students' Work in Grademark (www.turnitin.com)

for Microsoft Word, select appropriate comments through the toolbar to add onto the assignment.

7) Consider using a text-expander program for comments and phrases you type repeatedly. Some examples include: Typeitin (www.wavget.com/typeitin/), Pasteitin (www.wavget.com/pasteitin/), ActiveWords (www.activewords.com), and TextExpander (textexpander.com).

8) Consider using a dictation program like Dragon Naturally Speaking (www.nuance.com/dragon.html) to allow you to narrate your comments into students' assignments faster than they can be typed. Most people can type up to 60 words per minute but speak about 120–140 words per minute, so dictation saves a lot of time when regularly using it.

9) If you are not using a bulk or batch upload feature, save each student's essay by placing the grade/score at the front of the file name (be sure student's name is in the file) and then upload it to the student's assignment feedback. When you attach the document, the grade is displayed on your screen and you can enter the grade in the LMS without going back to reopen the paper if you

become distracted and forget the student's grade.

CONCLUSION

The online classroom naturally has no boundaries, which can make teaching and managing it difficult and lead to a poor work-life balance. In order to manage the workload, promote your own job satisfaction and work-life balance, and develop a high quality of teaching and learning throughout each course you teach, setting priorities and using efficiency strategies can help. Consider work-life balance theory in how you separate or blend your work and life roles. Using andragogy and the Community of Inquiry framework to focus on best practices and students' needs will help you identify barriers to time and workload management, implement strategies to manage teaching tasks and focus on managing time incredibly well. Adding new strategies and tools to your online teaching practice takes an initial time investment, but it can yield significant results as you add one thing at a time, strictly manage your priorities and boundaries, and reflect on your process. In addition to developing effective teaching and learning in the online classroom, effective time management

can enable you to enjoy the various aspects of an academic career and a rewarding personal life. As Randy Pausch said, “Being successful does not make you manage your time well. Managing your time well makes you successful” (2007, p. 5).

CRITICAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

General:

- What are your biggest challenges teaching online?
- What takes most of your time and effort when teaching an online course? Does this area reflect your priorities?
- What limits or boundaries to online teaching tasks could help you shift your time to make it available where you see the greatest needs?
- What strategies do you already use to manage online teaching tasks?
- What strategy or tool would likely support your work and improve efficiency for your teaching?
- How will you know when you have achieved a work-life balance in online teaching that suits your own needs and teaching and learning priorities?

Institutional Context:

- What are the expectations at your institution for grading and feedback?
- What expectations exist for your engagement with students each day, week, and course?
- How is your teaching evaluated?
- What do students expect from you as their instructor in terms of the frequency of your engagement, promptness of replies and feedback, or other aspects of your online presence?

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