

**Teaching Students Who Aren't There:
The Challenge and Promise of Teaching ALP Online**

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THE TECHNOLOGY PIECE

Because students are diverse in terms of computer literacy, I found the following practices helpful:

- **“Orientation Phone Calls”**- during the first week of classes, if possible
 - Course “walk-throughs” on the phone or in my office
 - Weekly Online Office Hours- to answer any technology or content related questions
- **Browser Checks**- Make sure students set up their browser for compatibility
- **Computer and Word Processor Availability**- You can't do the course from a smart phone!
- **Withdrawal Recommendations**- If students don't have regular access to a computer and word processor or don't feel comfortable on the computer, success is not as likely...

WHAT I MIGHT TWEAK IN THE FUTURE:

- Orientation Activities for the Discussion Board and Assignments features will be included in the course and will be mandatory in the first unit
- Discuss a better description in the course catalogue and an online orientation for students PRIOR to registering for the course
- Can you engage a student who isn't there, from the very beginning? Not so much. I'm working on coming to terms with this concept.

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So many students are engaged in a juggling act-- trying to manage school, work, children, finances and a variety of other activities can be challenging. It can help for students to understand their resources. I developed the following activities to address affective learning:

- **Web Links-** Links to all resources available to students at CCBC
 - Interactive Videos- Financial Aide and Completion Agenda
 - Financial Aide- FAQ's and contact info; links to Green Cards on new FAFSA rules
- **Research Essay on Prescription Drugs-** After a brainstorm on the discussion board of pressing issues, students chose prescription drugs (antidepressants and Benzodiazepines) as a pressing issue worthy of research
- **Research Essay on Student Loan Debt-** We posed the question, "Is a college education worth more than student loan debt?"

WHAT I MIGHT TWEAK IN THE FUTURE:

- Add a link for Mortgages and Interest Rates and Home Loansvb
- Find an app to help students calculate their credit scores

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SOCIAL INTERACTION

That social aspect of learning is crucial to student success, but implementing that component can get tricky online. I created many opportunities for students to interact with me and with other classmates. The following ideas worked best:

- **Random Lists and Pics-** an ice breaker where students shared 10 random facts about themselves and posted pics of themselves on the discussion board
- **Online Office Hours Happy Hour-** On Sundays from 5-6pm, I was available online, live. Students got extra credit for showing up during this time to discuss the “Question of the Week.”
- **The Photo Narrative Essay-** Students wrote a narrative essay about a person, place, thing, or event depicted in a personal pic. Students shared three pics and voted to determine which pic their classmates would write about.

WHAT I MIGHT TWEAK IN THE FUTURE:

- Devise Happy Hour groups and have them decide the Question of the Week
- There is a blog feature that I am wondering how to implement...