

# Video Project: UC Faculty Teaching Online

Hi IDFSers,

here's a template for posting your case studies for the video example repository/FAQ we'll create, whatever we end up calling it. Let's each find instructors on our campuses (five from each would be a great goal) and just post a short synopsis along these lines. Don't worry about fully developing the video script or presentation right now. Instead, let's generate a bunch of cases and see what we've got by the time we meet in July. So...copy the questions, paste them at the bottom of this list, and add a few lines about your case.

## **CASE #1 (UCD)**

Title: Engaging Students in a Webinar

Instructor name and discipline (either faculty or TAs): Professor Arnold Bloom, Plant Sciences, and TA Lisa Auchincloss, Ecology

Name of the course: Global Climate Change

Teaching or learning problem: Students don't pay attention in a lecture/webinar, and they don't answer my questions verbally when I ask for responses. I know they are multitasking on their screens instead of listening to me or responding to each other.

How they addressed it: I started using breakout rooms and polls. I even had all the students use the status indicators in the Adobe Connect room to indicate their understanding: green check if they understood, thumbs up if they agreed, red X if they didn't understand, thumbs down if they didn't agree. I made sure each student had indicated status before I moved on. And (this was huge) I got them talking early in the session to help with their comfort level.

Issues they encountered: It was hard when not all students used headsets at first, which made an echo, but once they realized they could even use earbuds, they got better about it. Also, after I got them in the habit of talking early in the webinar session, they started to look forward to it.

How the students responded: They definitely talked more and gave more thoughtful responses, which I think was because they actually heard my questions and followed my line of reasoning. After the class ended, I had several students email me to say this was one of the most interactive classes they'd taken, and the webinars were their favorite part.

## **CASE #2 (UCSB)**

Title: Engaging Students with the Reading Before Coming to Lecture

Instructor name and discipline: Lisa Berry, Instructional consultant (Instructional Development), Lecturer (Environmental Studies)

Name of the course: Quantitative Thinking in Environmental Studies

Teaching or learning problem: Students did not complete the assigned reading prior to lecture.

How you addressed it: I used online quizzes to help motivate students to complete the assigned reading before the lecture in which the reading would be discussed and expanded upon. Students are given two attempts at the online quizzes, which provides them with an incentive to revisit sections of the reading that they did not fully understand, and gives me feedback about concepts that caused confusion; these topics are elaborated upon in lecture.

Issues you encountered: Students sometime forget when there is an online quiz due before lecture; this can be alleviated by providing an e-mail reminder or by dropping the lowest quiz score. I also try to use the quizzes sparingly to avoid monotony.

How the students responded: Students seemed to view the quiz scores as "free points" since they got two attempts, and were therefore quite receptive to the activity. Students improved their scores dramatically between the two attempts and their preparation led to much more fruitful in-class discussions along with improved mastery of difficult concepts.

## **CASE #3 (UCSB)**

(Kim notes: we may need to break the following description down and focus in on a particular blogging aspect or practice. This is a condensed description of a larger practice.)

Title: **Blogging to Criticality**

Instructor name and discipline: Dr. Jeffrey Stewart, Chair and Professor of Black Studies; TA: Azure Stewart; Course designer and consultant: Anissa Stewart

Name of the course: The History of Jazz

Teaching or learning problem: The intellectual practices of Black Studies scholarship are not generalized throughout the curriculum, which emphasizes specialization and the compartmentalization of knowledge. Therefore, students needed practice in integrating sociology, literature, anthropology, critical race theory, history, and music and thinking critically about music in a new way as an archive of knowledge about society, race and social relations in America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Blogging, then, was a way to give them consistent feedback from the instructor, TA, and their peers in thinking in an interdisciplinary way or as a Black Studies scholar would think about the history of jazz. Also, students often lack the academic writing skills to be successful in higher education.

How they addressed it: Students were required to complete readings, attend lecture, participate in section discussions and then publish weekly blogs that were constructed from their understandings of the course content. Students were prompted to answer questions based on arguments or claims made during the lecture and in the readings and asked to evaluate those critically and to construct their own interpretations of what they believe took place in jazz's history. Students were required to "follow" only blogs published by students within their same discussion sessions, allowing for each section to develop as a kind of culture of learning. Further, blogging allowed us to get more, shorter writing samples that were easily accessible by the instructor, TA, and students in each of the sections, rather than students turning in one longer paper that was read and evaluated only by the TA.

Issues they encountered: 1) Getting students to “blog” in a scholarly manner, rather than simply expressing their opinions about jazz; 2) Students not always reading each other’s blog posts; and, students not completing all the blogging assignments. (No issues with the use of the technology itself.)

The solution to the teaching or learning problem: The instructor, in consultation a graduate student in Education, created a blogging rubric that assessed the writing assignments in terms of the overall use of the blogs (300-600 words, one post each week, and one response to another student’s post), intellectual engagement with key concepts, personal response/voice, and writing quality. Students were required to “follow” other students’ blogs within their sections---urls were distributed to each student within the section and a handout on how to follow other’s blogs was distributed and discussed. *Blogger* is designed to allow students to see what posts have been published since their last log in, each time they access it.

In addition, with the shorter writing assessments, the TA evaluated the blogs quickly and gave more feedback to students on their writing over time both in terms of content, but also grammar, argument, coherence. In addition, the instructor easily accessed the posts and was able to read them and bring the discussions back into his lectures, creating a more dialogic approach to teaching and learning. And, students were able to read and respond to each other’s posts; thus, helping them develop criticality towards their own opinions and those of others. Further, blogging allowed for meeting the writing requirement set by the university in a more practical and academic way.

#### **CASE #4**

Title: Engaging students with distributed learning and peer review

Instructor name and discipline (either faculty or TAs): Jim Carey, Entomology (tenured faculty)

Name of the course: He uses this technique in his War and Terrorism course and also in his entomology courses.

Teaching or learning problem: Students need to move beyond summary, but they don’t always critically evaluate their own ideas. Also, he wants to build a sense of connection in a large enrollment fully online course so that he doesn’t have to invest the prohibitive time of a one-on-one student relationship with 200 students, so he needs them to learn from each other.

How they addressed it: He had already been doing the 25-word essay to get them to summarize carefully, but then he took it to the next level with microvoice.

Issues they encountered: Students don’t automatically know how to do effective critical peer review. Also the logistics can get really difficult when you start to scale.

How the students responded (the solution to the teaching or learning problem): We’ll see! He has tested it on a small scale last quarter and this summer and will test with 200 students in fall quarter.

#### **CASE #5**

Title: Managing student logistical questions

Instructor name and discipline (either faculty or TAs): Becky Westerdahl, Nemotology (researcher), and Arnold Bloom, Plant Sciences (tenured faculty)

Name of the course: Becky teaches Introductory Biology and Arnold teaches Global Climate Change

Teaching or learning problem (ie. students don’t pay attention in a lecture/webinar):

How they addressed it (ie. started using breakout rooms, polls, calling on students to explain, etc):

Issues they encountered (ie. not all students used headsets at first, which made an echo, but once I got them in the habit of talking early in the webinar session, they started to look forward to it):

How the students responded (the solution to the teaching or learning problem):

#### **CASE # 6 (UCLA)**

Title: Using Online Peer Review system

Instructor name and discipline: Professor Kathleen Bawn, Political Science

Name of the course: Politics and Strategy

Teaching or learning problem: Homework is graded mainly on effort (completed or not) and as a result students often do not engage with answer key as much as the instructor would like.

How it was addressed: After the due date for the homework, an answer key was posted below the assignment links. Students had to use the answer key to help review and give feedback to two papers randomly assigned to them. The idea was that by going over someone else’s work and trying to offer constructive criticism, students will engage with the answer key more closely and learn from the process.

Issues they encountered: The concern was that students may be rude and harsh, as they were giving anonymous feedback. However, by and large, students were thoughtful in their critiques. Though, they did tend to err on the polite side and at times did not provide as much critical feedback.

How the students responded: Seemed to really like the opportunity to view the answers and response of fellow students, and to receive feedback on their homework. There were instances in which students asked to have the chance to review, even though the time period to review to receive participation points was over.

#### **CASE # 7 (UCLA)**

Title: Technical issues with submitting homework

Instructor name and discipline: Professor Kathleen Bawn, Political Science

Name of the course: Politics and Strategy

Teaching or learning problem: There is a myth that all students are "digital natives" and are very technology savvy. However, when students were asked to submit a homework that was in a slightly unusual format, students had massive problems. In this case, students were asked to submit a diagram (game tree) that they had either hand drawn or created via MS Word. Many students who had hand drawn the diagram did not have access to a scanner, or did not have an understanding of file size. Many had thought that simply taking a picture with their cell phones would work. The course management system either did not accept the file format (jpg) or the image file (even as a pdf) was too large.

How it was addressed: A template of MS Word was created and made available for student. Detailed instructions for students who still wished to submit hand written homework was created and published on course website.

How the students responded: Once students were given the template that showed them how to draw the necessary figures in MS-Word, the problem was solved-- they submitted neat, readable files of an appropriate size. Before the need for a template was understood, they did not respond to requests to not submit cell phone photos, and confusion about file size problems created a lot of anxiety, albeit for a short period of time. Once they were given an example of what they needed to do, the problem basically solved itself.

#### **CASE #N**

Title (ie, Engaging students in a webinar):

Instructor name and discipline (either faculty or TAs):

Name of the course:

Teaching or learning problem (ie. students don't pay attention in a lecture/webinar):

How they addressed it (ie. started using breakout rooms, polls, calling on students to explain, etc):

Issues they encountered (ie. not all students used headsets at first, which made an echo, but once I got them in the habit of talking early in the webinar session, they started to look forward to it):

How the students responded (the solution to the teaching or learning problem):

Please copy the CASE #N questions and paste them here before adding your examples, leaving N blank for the next person.