

# HSC4233: PATIENT HEALTH EDUCATION

Department of Health Education and Behavior  
University of Florida

Fall 2023 | Class # 14296 | 100% online (asynchronous)

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## **INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Garcia-Guettler**

Dr. Tina Garcia-Guettler, Ph.D.

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## **Department Chair: Dr. Maldonado-Molina**

Dr. Mildred Maldonado-Molina, Ph.D.

Office: Florida Gym (FLG) #5

Email: mmmm.ufl.edu

## **COURSE LOGISTICS**

Class Meeting Days/Times: 100% online (asynchronous) | Course Website: <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Course Teaching Assistants: TBA

Office Hours: Tuesdays 6:00pm-7:30pm ET (FLG 128)

Wednesdays 8:00am-9:30am (via Zoom); alternate days/times by appt.

## **COURSE CORRESPONDENCE AND EMAILS**

- Using CANVAS email is the **BEST** way to contact me.
- Emails are read and responded to between 8:00am-4:00pm ET, on weekdays.
- Email inquiries received Mondays through Thursdays will usually receive a reply within 24 business hours of receipt; however, if you have not received a reply within 48 hours, please resend your inquiry. Emails sent after 4:00pm on Fridays and/or during the weekends will be replied to the following Monday. See “Course Email Etiquette” on page 6 for more information.
- Please check Canvas emails and announcements regularly (daily). You are responsible for all information sent using these lines of communication.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Patient Health Education will introduce you to the practice of patient education, with particular emphasis on behavior modification (i.e., the use of teaching, learning, and motivational theories to support patient adherence and outcomes). This course will focus on the role of the health educator in teaching patients to maintain optimal health and become independent in self-care activities. Course content will address the basic foundations of the health education process, the unique needs and characteristics of learners in the patient role, a survey of instructional strategies appropriate for health educators (i.e., teachers) and patients (i.e., learners), patient health literacy and its implications for health education programming, and health education evaluation methodology.

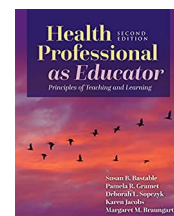
## **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Each module in this online course contains a series of student learning objectives adapted based on the following Responsibilities and Competencies for Health Education Specialists:

- ✓ Responsibility I: Assess Needs, Assets and Capacity for Health Education
- ✓ Responsibility II: Plan Health Education
- ✓ Responsibility VI: Serve as a Health Education Resource Person
- ✓ Responsibility VII: Communicate and Advocate for Health and Health Education

## **COURSE TEXTBOOK: REQUIRED**

Bastable, S. B., Gramet, P. S., Sopczyk, D. L., Jacobs, K., & Braungart, M. M. (2019). *Health professional as educator: Principles of teaching and learning*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Learning. (ISBN: 978-1284230819)



## **COURSE TEXTBOOK (continued)**

This course is aligned with this specific edition of the textbook to ensure we engage with the most up-to-date information. If you choose to purchase/rent/study a previous edition of this text, do so with the understanding that your content may be outdated and could affect your ability to study for/take course assessments. All other required and supplemental readings will be provided on Canvas.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS: ACCESSIBILITY**

- Reliable Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable).
- Access to University of Florida's E-Learning System, Canvas <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>.
- Webcam and some type of speakers & microphone (for office hours & Honorlock test proctoring)
- Google Chrome browser (for Honorlock test proctoring).

## **COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESS**

This course uses a combination of web-based video material and lectures, online student engagement, discussion, & reflection activities, and assigned readings. In addition to the required textbook readings, you also will be responsible for reading multiple scholarly publications. All supplemental readings are available through the course website. UF's Canvas will be the official course management system for this course.

**Patient Health Education** is an online-delivered asynchronous distance education course.

Asynchronous means that you will interact with the course material online on your own schedule during the time that has been allocated for this coursework. With this flexibility comes the demand for tremendous self-discipline and awareness of your work habits. Distance education courses can be deceptive in the time required to complete assignments in an exemplary manner by the stated deadlines.

Students commonly underestimate the time needed to complete the assigned readings assignments, and assessments within the posted time frames and deadlines. Part of this underestimation stems from the lack of regular face-to-face contact with me and with your classmates. Without this contact, some students seemingly "forget" they are enrolled in a course. If you have never taken a distance education course, let me know this is your first online course. I'm here to help but part of my ability to help involves communication from you.

## **To achieve the most success in this course:**

1. Take ownership of your education and learning experience. Online courses are easy to ignore, so keep up with readings, video lectures, and assignments.
2. Familiarize yourself with all course due dates - don't wait until it's too late to submit.
3. Complete readings and watch video lectures ***before*** submitting assignments. Doing so will give you a better foundation for making meaningful contributions to course discussions and prepare you for the quizzes and exams.
4. Be an active and engaged participant in class discussions and activities. Plan to be online five to seven times each week.
5. Use a word processor when typing your discussion posting and other assignments instead of typing them directly into the course website. This will enable you to save your work in case of any unexpected technical glitches. You also will be able to use the spelling and grammar checkers before you submit your work. (**Note:** Word documents are required for submission of Case Study activities.)
6. Inform me whenever (a) a problem related to the class arises; (b) you feel the need to clarify questions; (c) you desire to further explore topics of particular interest.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, & GRADING**

The final grade for this course will be based upon the cumulative point/percentage total of the following:

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
1. a. Course Orientation: Canvas & Zoom Profile Photo/Image/Graphic	1 point
1. b. Course Orientation: Peer Introductions	10 points
1. c. Course Orientation: Syllabus Quiz	5 points
1. d. Course Orientation: HonorLock Familiarization Quiz	4 points
2. Readiness Assessment Quizzes (RAQ's: 11 @ 5pts each and 1 drop permitted)	50 points
3. Discussion Forums (DF's: 11 @ 8pts each and 1 drop permitted)	80 points
4. Student-Generated Exam Questions (SGEQ's: 11 @ 3pts each and 1 drop permitted)	30 points
5. Patient Fact Sheet	50 points
6. Case Studies (CS's: 4 @ 25pts each)	100 points
7. Exams (Midterm = 100 points   Final = 100 points)	200 points
<i>Course deadlines can be found within the Syllabus link of our Canvas Course Website.</i>	<b>= 530 Total Points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

<b>A</b>	93% - 100%	
<b>A-</b>	90% - 92.9%	
<b>B+</b>	88% - 89.9%	
<b>B</b>	83% - 87.9%	
<b>B-</b>	80% - 82.9%	
<b>C+</b>	78% - 79.9%	
<b>C</b>	73% - 77.9%	
<b>C-</b>	70% - 72.9%	
<b>D+</b>	68% - 69.9%	
<b>D</b>	63% - 67.9%	
<b>D-</b>	60% - 62.9%	
<b>E</b>	0% - 59.9%	

#### **Please note:**

Students who have a very low grade and do not drop/withdraw from this course nor explain his/her situation to the instructor on or before Friday, 06/10/22 will be given an "E" (Failing grade), NOT an "I" (Incomplete grade).

*It is unethical and a violation of the UF Student Honor Code to request an unjustifiable grade adjustment (UF Student Honor Code: "Conspiracy to Commit Academic Dishonesty"). Please understand that 89.99999% equals a "B+" semester grade. Under no circumstances will I give extra credit assignments, extra points, nor fractions of extra points, so please do not ask.*

### **Descriptions of Course Requirements**

#### **1. Course Orientation Assignments (20 points)**

- a. Canvas and Zoom Photo/Image/Graphic Upload to personal profile (1 point)
- b. Personal Introduction & Peer Replies (10 points)
- c. Syllabus Quiz (5 points)
  - The course syllabus is considered THE mutual agreement between me (the course instructor) and you (the student). The Syllabus Quiz is to ensure that you fully understand the policies, procedures, and expectations of this course.
- d. Honorlock Familiarization Quiz (4 points)
  - Honorlock will proctor your exams this semester. Honorlock is an online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. You DO NOT need to create an account, download software or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock is available 24/7 and all that is needed is a computer, a working webcam, and a stable Internet connection.
  - This "Familiarization Quiz" is designed to provide you with an opportunity to try/test HonorLock on your electronic device. This way, if any HonorLock issues arise which need attention, it/they can be taken care of prior to your Exam 1.

**2. Readiness Assessment Quizzes “RAQ’s”**

**(Modules 1-11; 11 @ 5 points each with 1 drop permitted = 50 points)**

- Modules 1 – 11 RAQ’s are brief, open-book quizzes based on the reading assignment for that module. These quizzes may include multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer type questions. RAQ’s are designed to be completed **prior** to the corresponding module’s Discussion Forum so that your comprehension of the readings will be demonstrated in your posts.

**3. Discussion Forum “DF’s”**

**(Modules 1-11; 11 @ 8 points each with 1 drop permitted = 80 points)**

- Please see rubric below prior to developing your Discussion Forum (DF) posts so that you will earn the greatest number of points. Supplemental information provided in Appendix A.

<b>Rubric for your DF Personal Posts (8 pts)</b>		
<b>Great Job, that’s exactly what I was looking for! (5pts)</b>	<b>Not too bad, it’s close to what I was looking for. (2.5pts)</b>	<b>Uh oh, what happened here? Let’s revisit this. (0pts)</b>
Reflects good understanding of related textbook reading; posts factually correct information, reflective and substantive contribution; advances discussion and meets minimum word requirement.	Posts information that is factually correct; however, lacks full development of concept or thought. Does not meet minimum word requirement by 10-20 words.	Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion. OR Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion. OR, no initial post submitted. Does not meet minimum word requirement by 20+ words. Late discussion posts also receive 0 points.

<b>Rubric for your DF Peer Replies to peers (2 replies per discussion topic required, 1.5 points per reply = 3pts)</b>		
<b>Great Job, that’s exactly what I was looking for! (1.5pt)</b>	<b>Not too bad, it’s close to what I was looking for. (0.75 pts)</b>	<b>Uh oh, what happened here? Let’s revisit this. (0pts)</b>
Demonstrates analysis of others’ posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts and meets minimum word/sentence requirement.	Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation. Although close, does not meet minimum word/sentence requirement.	Posts shallow contribution to discussion (e.g., agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion. Only 1-2 sentences provided. Posts no follow-up responses to others. Late reply posts also receive 0 points.

**4. Student-Generated Exam Questions (SGEQ’s)**

**(Modules 1-11; 11 @ 3 points each with 1 drop permitted = 30 points)**

- Developing exam-like questions based on your assigned readings helps to improve your understanding of the course material and assist me in evaluating and assessing your learning of the module content. For these assignments, upon the completion of each module, you will submit two (2) multiple choice questions, and one (1) true/false question, with their corresponding answers and answer references (textbook page and/or lecture slide #). 20-25% of questions on each exam will come from SGEQ’s. Specific formatting guidelines are provided in Canvas.

**5. Patient Health Education Fact Sheet (50 points)**

- You will research a specific health condition and create a fact sheet designed to serve as a teaching resource for health educators or a learning tool in a population in a specific stage of development. Your fact sheet will be unique (your own creation, based on appropriate, credible sources that are correctly cited) and address a specific health condition or issue. You will submit your topic and preferred population request in Module 3 – instructor will review for approval.

## 6. Case Studies (CS's): (4 @ 25 points each = 100 points)

- Case studies are assignments where a specific situation is analyzed, in our case real-life patient health education scenarios, and then we research and explain how the elements and complexities of that situation relate to theory. By applying your knowledge of theory learned in various modules, you will derive solutions to problems and/or recommendations for future action related to these situations.

## 7. Exams (2 Exams @ 100 points each = 200 points)

- There will be 2 non-cumulative, open-book, open-note exams for this class: the Midterm will cover Modules 1-5 and the Final will cover Modules 6-11. Material presented on each exam is formulated to assess your comprehension as well as applicability of information learned. Exams will consist of questions using various formats such as: multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, & essay.
- Honorlock proctoring service will require you to download their extension via Google Chrome at <http://www.honorlock.com/extension/install>.
- Make-Up Exams: If you have an emergency or life event (including but not limited to, a new medical diagnosis or death of a loved one), please contact the Dean of Students Office ([www.dso.ufl.edu](http://www.dso.ufl.edu)) and follow the DSO Care Team procedures for documentation and assistance (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>).
  - Should a student miss an exam due to an unexcused reason (e.g., overslept, mixed up the exam time, etc.), the exam can be taken with a 20% penalty if taken within 24 hours of the original exam time or with a 40% penalty if taken within 48 hours of the original time.
  - You are absolutely not permitted an exam schedule adjustment or make-up for personal travel/vacations, so please make your travel arrangements accordingly.

## COURSE POLICIES

1. **Special Accommodations:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protections for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with documented disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability that affects your ability to learn, you are encouraged to register through the Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) in the Dean of Students Office at 352-392-1261, or [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc). You are encouraged to provide your accommodation letter and make your needs known to the instructor as soon as possible..
  - If you did not register formally, but you know you have behavioral or learning disabilities, or other issues, that might affect your performance in the course, tell me and I will do what I can to help you.
2. **Academic Honesty:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask.

3. **Grade Appeals:** It is your responsibility to review your graded assignments/quizzes/exams when they are returned. After a grade is returned/released, students have one week to appeal the grade with me. After one week, a grade will not be changed. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.
4. **Assignments:** It is assumed that students will put forth their best effort on all course assignments to get the best results from the course. Module assignments have deadlines of 11:59pm ET, unless otherwise stated, on the date specified in the syllabus/schedule. **Assignments will not be accepted late** unless documentation for a University-approved excused absence is provided (see below). You are advised to make back-up copies of all work and submit your work early to prevent technical issues from precluding successful submissions.  
*NOTE: Requirements for class assignments, discussions and other work in this course are consistent with university policies found at [catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx).*
5. **Online Course Evaluation Process:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
6. **Course Email Etiquette:** Professionalism is expected of all students. Thus, you should use proper etiquette when sending emails. This includes an appropriate "Subject" heading stating your course number and topic of message, a proper greeting/salutation, grammatically correct message body, a proper closing, followed by your first and last name.

**For example:**

**Subject Heading:** HSC4233 - Module 2 RAQ Inquiry

**Greeting/Salutation:** Hello, Dr. Garcia-Guettler,

**Message Body:**

I think Question 2 on my Module 2 RAQ it may have been graded incorrectly. On page ##, paragraph ##, it reads "[insert textbook information here]." I believe this supports why my answer selection of "True" is correct. Can you kindly review this question on my Module 2 RAQ and let me know your thoughts?

**Closing:**

Thank you!

**Name:**

Your first and last name / HSC 4233, Fall 2023

*Please note: Inappropriate emails or messages that lack proper etiquette will be returned with a request to revise and resend.*

7. **Technical Issues:** Due to the online nature of this course, faulty Internet connections WILL NOT be accepted as an excusable reason for any missed/late assignments, activities, quizzes, and/or exams.

- Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues must be accompanied by the ticket number received from eLearning Support (phone: 352-392-4357 | email: [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu)) when the problem was reported. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. Students must contact the instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if they wish to request (and be considered for) completion of a make-up assignment. The timestamp of the eLearning Support ticket number should be prior to the actual assignment deadline.
- If you find yourself in an area with limited Wi-Fi access, please know that eduroam, the on-campus Wi-Fi network, is available nationally and internationally. UF students can access eduroam free with their GatorMail login credentials. The eduroam network is fast and secure and has more than 10,000 wi-fi hotspots in 106 countries and territories worldwide. Visit <https://getonline.ufl.edu/> for additional information.

- 8. Preferred Pronoun and Name Change in Canvas:** It is important to the learning environment that you feel welcome and safe in this class; and that you are comfortable participating in class discussions and communicating with me on any issues related to the class. If your preferred name is not the name listed on the official UF roll, please let me know as soon as possible by e-mail or otherwise. I would like to acknowledge your preferred name, and pronouns that reflect your identity. Please let me know how you would like to be addressed if your name and pronouns are not reflected by your UF-roster name. I welcome you to the class and look forward to a rewarding learning adventure together.

You may also change your "Display Name" in Canvas. Canvas uses the "Display Name" as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as "Ally" instead of "Allison." To update your display name, go to [one.ufl.edu](http://one.ufl.edu), click on the dropdown at the top right, and select "Directory Profile." Click "Edit" on the right of the name panel, uncheck "Use my legal name" under "Display Name," update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click "Submit" at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records. Click [HERE](#) for a quick tutorial video for how to change your preferred pronouns in Canvas.

- 9. Title IX:** University of Florida has zero tolerance for sexual discrimination, harassment, assault/battery, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. Students are encouraged to report any experienced or witnessed occurrences to law enforcement and/or one of UF's Title IX Coordinators. Students can report incidents or learn more about their rights and options by contacting Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at 202 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1261; or visit:

- [www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/incident-report/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/incident-report/)
- [www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/victim-rights/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/victim-rights/)

- 10. Respect Policy:** *"All individuals, regardless of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, physical or mental ability, political affiliation, or any other perceived generalized differentiator, is welcome in this course. It is expected that we treat each other with respect and as equals. Treat one another as you want to be treated so that we can have valuable discussion in this course. Intolerant, inflammatory, or insulting behavior or speech is not acceptable and may lead to dismissal from the course."* (Copied from Dr. Suzanne Murphy's, University of Florida, HSC4232, Fall2021 Course Syllabus).

- 11. Class Recordings:** Per the House Bill 233 Intellectual and Viewpoint Diversity Act, you are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are:

- (1) For personal educational use.
- (2) In connection with a complaint to the university.
- (3) As evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.

**All other purposes are prohibited. You may not publish recorded lectures without my written consent.**

As defined in the bill, a “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the university, or by a guest instructor, as part of a UF course.

This does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

**Publication without my permission is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.**

Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

**12. Policy on Recommendation Letters:** I will consider preparing recommendations for graduate programs, professional schools, internships, scholarships and for jobs if and only if ALL the following requirements have been met by you:

- Have COMPLETED at least one course with me and received an “A” grade. (Recommendation requests will not be considered for any student who has not fully completed an entire course)
- Were/Are actively engaged in discussions forums and/or other related activities and assignments
- Attended ALL class meetings (unless excused absence was noted)
- Have engaged with me personally either during office hours or by appointment at least TWICE during each course to share about yourself (graduate school interests, career goals, general health education inquiries, etc.),
- Are willing to waive your right to review the letter of recommendation,
- Provide your recommendation request to me verbally (in-person or virtually) and via email at least 5 weeks prior to the date the recommendation is due.

**CAVEAT:**

*The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*



## University Resources:

- **Online Computing Help Desk:** <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>  
The UF Computing Help Desk is available to assist students when they are having technical issues.
- **Career Connections Center:** <https://career.ufl.edu/>  
Career assistance and counseling services.
- **Online Library Help Desk:** <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>  
The help desk is available to assist students with access to all UF Libraries resources.
- **Disabilities Resource Center:** <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>  
If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability, please visit the DRC.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>  
Visit the counseling and wellness center to speak to a counselor about any personal problems.
- **Dean of Students Office:** <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/>  
Visit the Dean of Students site for help resolving a conflict or for student code of conduct inquiries.
- **Office of the Chief Diversity Officer:** <https://cdo.ufl.edu>  
The Office of the CDO works in concert with other key offices on campus to ensure that inclusion and a sense of belonging are realized for all members of the Gator Nation. They focus on UF's Core Values <https://www.ufl.edu/about/core-values/>.
- **Student Health Care Center:** <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>  
Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need.
- **GatorWell Health Promotion Services:** <http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu>  
Health Education for the Gator Nation. GatorWell Health Promotion Services supports student success by providing excellent, accessible, and relevant health information, programs and services to UF students about health and wellness topics relevant to the college experience.
- **U Matter, We Care:** [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu)  
Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.



## Appendix A

### **Supplemental Information about Discussion Posts & Replies: by Elle O'Keefe**

<http://www.rasmussen.edu/student-life/blogs/online-learning/creating-the-perfect-discussion-post-for-online-classes/>

- The discussion area is the foundation for two-way communication with your instructors and classmates. The discussion forum is the heart of the online course as it serves as a platform for learning and engaging.
- As an online learner, you hope that your post will draw other students' attention to validate your opinions, add insight, and build a stronger learning experience. Classmate feedback can be priceless to your learning process as an online student. After you make such an investment, it can be discouraging to see that nobody responded to your discussion post.
- There are a few things online students can do to make your discussion posts stand out to your peers and to your instructors in order to get more responses and help increase your grades. This article will highlight some great tips for creating the perfect discussion post for your online college courses.

#### **Content**

- **Make sure that your posts facilitate comments.** Sometimes in a discussion forum the questions can be worded so that everyone's responses are similar. In this case, you will want to go the extra mile by adding a question at the end of your post so you are facilitating a question and answer-type conversation among your classmates and instructor.
- **Beyond answering just the questions, incorporate your experiences with a related subject matter.** People love to read stories, because it helps them feel an emotional connection to the content.
- **Current events are an effective way to get people involved in discussion forums.** Local or national news stories may tie in perfectly content discussed in your online classroom's forum. For example, an article about mortgage fraud might be beneficial in a discussion forum about ethical decision making.
- **Don't be afraid to intertwine the course content learned in different courses to supplement your discussion forums.** Learning is funny: even though we might just think that all courses are taught in isolation, they all really combine as pieces of a larger puzzle.
- **Ask a thought-provoking question or taking a controversial stand.** After you learn the material, you can step back and look how you can apply it in a difficult situation where your original answer might seem counter-intuitive. Don't be afraid to ask the "Yeah, but what if..." questions.
- **If you say the same thing everyone else says, you can expect the same results.** Add something different, something of value, and look at the changes to your response rate.

#### **Formatting**

- **If your post is easy to read, it is likely that more people will read and respond.** In such case, if everyone is using single spacing, use single spacing. If everyone is formatting the text to the left, format it to the left. If everyone uses size 3, use size 3. If everyone is using a specific font and color, use the specific font and color. You want to avoid any distracting colors, fonts, or awkward spacing, or other odd formatting. Take a look at your posts, to see how similar they are to your classmates' posts. If they are quite different, then change them.
- **Avoid spelling or grammatical errors.** You lose credibility and your instructors and fellow students may discount the quality of your posts if your posts are riddled with errors. Don't let the reader try to interpret what you are saying: say it clear and precise.
- **Replies.** If you want to maximize the amount of responses, respond to several peers each week. First, identify a group of peers whose opinions you value (by judging the quality of their posts and responses to other classmates) and make sure to respond to at least one of the members of that group each week.
- **Try to respond to every one of your classmates throughout the course.** When you show that you value your classmates' contributions, they will value yours. Remember the saying; the best way to make a friend is to be one. Well, the best way to be responded to in the discussion forum is by providing good responses to your classmate