

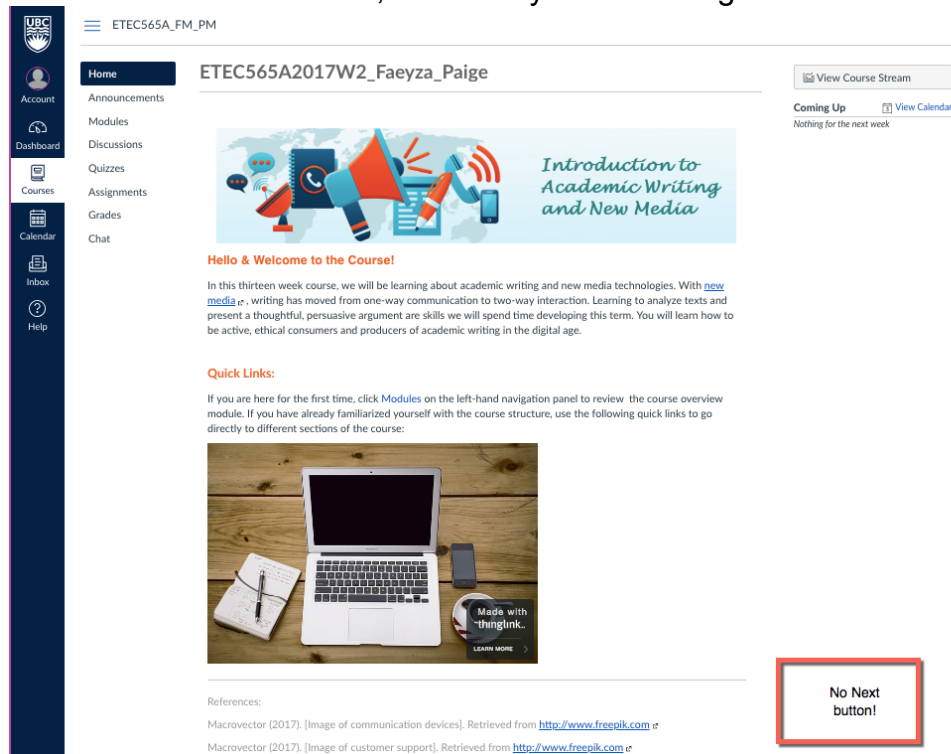
Hi, my name is Paige, and my partner and I created a Canvas course called Introduction to Academic Writing and New Media. Since Canvas is a new system for UBC, there were quite a few glitches we had to solve for. However, we recognize that no system is perfect, so it's important to modify and not get too attached to one way of doing things. I've decided to compile the Top 10 Things you should consider when developing a new Canvas course. Many of these items will work for other LMSs, too, as they reflect online learning pedagogy and theory. My intention is to show you these considerations through examples on my own Canvas site, as well as how to apply them.

## Top 10 Canvas Considerations

### 1. Think about the structure of your modules from the start.

How will students move from the course introduction to the modules? Do they need guidance? If possible, give someone who has never seen the course a couple different commands and see how they manage. If you need to move around the sections, go to Settings and then Navigation to easily move around parts of the course.

- Initially, we created a Home page for students to start from. Home pages do not have a Next button, which may be confusing for students.

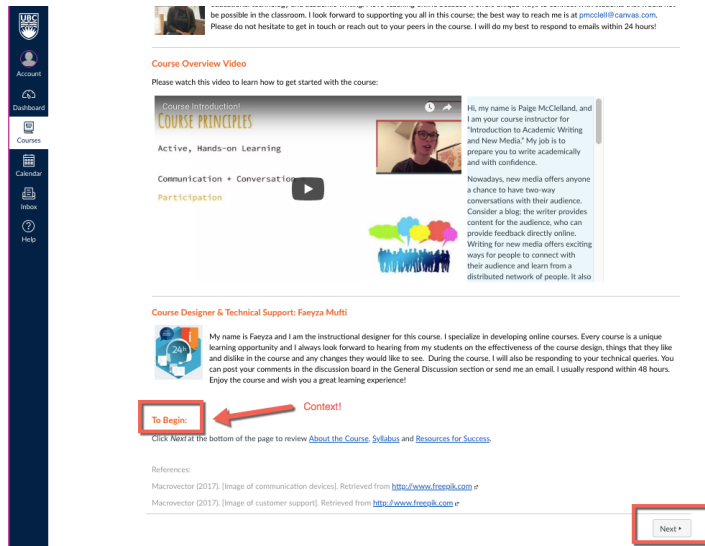


The screenshot shows a Canvas course home page. On the left is a dark blue navigation sidebar with icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and Help. The main content area has a header with the course ID 'ETEC565A2017W2\_Faeyza\_Paige' and a 'View Course Stream' button. Below the header is a banner image with the course title 'Introduction to Academic Writing and New Media'. A 'Hello & Welcome to the Course!' message follows, with a paragraph of introductory text and a 'Quick Links' section. Below the quick links is an image of a laptop on a desk with a 'Made with thinglink' watermark. At the bottom right, a red-bordered box contains the text 'No Next button!'. A 'References' section at the very bottom lists two sources from freepik.com.

This home page was actually replicated as the first page in our module, which was redundant. Based on our instructor's feedback, we decided to remove quite a bit of material from the Home page and just have it as a reference point for students to use when they wanted to quickly jump to a section of the course. The Modules would then contain the course

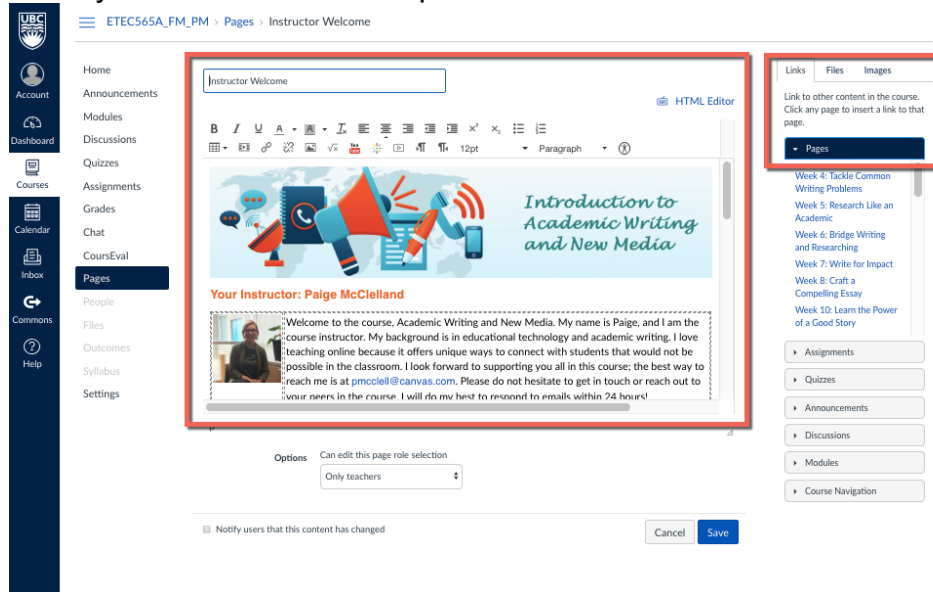
introduction and other important introductory material with no unnecessary overlap.

- Consider how students will move from one module page to the next. Module pages have built-in Next buttons. We included some prompts and explanations in the assignment and discussion pages, because we noticed it was jarring to move from module page to discussion with little explanation. To create a module page, go to Modules and then add whatever you want to quite easily in the edit mode.



## 2. Personalize the online experience for students by using announcements and media such as video and point out the most important elements of the online class.

It is easy to insert content; all you have to do is go to edit and then write content directly in the Editor Box or upload media off to the side.



- For videos, it's important to include a script, which my partner created in HTML. It's also possible to use Camtasia and put the text directly underneath the video being screened.

### 3. Provide an overview of the course overall.

Adult learners benefit from knowing what they are about to learn, as well as the scope of work and time commitment expected from them. Many students may not be familiar with an online course, and each online course is different, so it's important to dedicate a section to the course overview.

- We provide all important information students will need to be successful in this course.
- We used grey bars to split up content on the page.
- Make sure you test all external links before the site goes live.

The screenshot shows a Canvas LMS course page for 'Introduction to Academic Writing and New Media'. The page is titled 'About the Course' and includes a navigation sidebar on the left. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Course Audience', 'Course Goals', and 'Learning Objectives'. A red box highlights the 'Course Goals' section, and a red arrow points to the text 'Break up content'.

**Course Audience:**  
This English course is designed for students who are interested in learning the fundamentals of academic research and writing as well as utilizing digital technologies to expand on and share their work. Undergraduate students from any discipline can enroll in this course; the only prerequisite is English 30 or

**Course Goals:**  
The overarching goal of this course is to provide hands-on experience with academic writing and a range of technologies, including:

- Online communication tools
- Content management
- Collaboration tools
- Multimedia and video production

You will gain experience in self-editing and peer review by applying what you learn in each module. You will research, write, and publish an academic digital essay and present your research and application of new media tools.

**Learning Objectives:**  
At the end of this course, you will be able to


- Research and critically assess articles and writing
- Engage with a community of academic writers
- Write effectively using the conventions of academic writing
- Utilize new media tools for multimedia production
- Adopt a process for writing
- Cite sources using APA style
- Create a bibliography
- Craft essays for old and new media

### 4. Consider different types of interaction.

We really emphasize student-student interaction in our course, but we also know that student-teacher and student-content interaction are important, so we considered all forms of interaction from the beginning.

- Student-student: From the course schedule, students can view when they are expected to engage in discussions and peer reviews. They also engage in an ice breaker activity early on.
- Student-teacher: Having pre-built ways for the instructor to engage with students, such as video, helps free up time during the course. Providing summaries and checklists also create a presence for students to stay on track.
- Student-content: In the module 1 overview, we lay out what to expect in the overall module by using a graphic, module objectives, required readings, and the required activities.

Module 1: Overview




**Plan for Week 1 & 2:**

This first module on Writing in the Digital Age spans over two weeks. In the first week, we will learn about academic integrity and copyright. In the second week, we will review the APA style and practice citing sources and creating references.

**Module Navigator:**

While you are encouraged to follow the module sequentially, you can directly go to specific sections of the module using this module navigator:



**Module Objectives:**

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Adopt the essentials of academic integrity and the school policy
- Assess your own skills for academic success
- Differentiate between copyright and academic integrity

## 5. Use colours and images in a consistent way.

We decided to use orange and blue colours, a consistent heading, and the honeycomb design so students could familiarize themselves with the layout.

- My partner created the honeycomb design in PowerPoint, and then we saved these as images for the course and video presentations. Using different colours in Canvas is simple, however we did have some issues with using images, as the link always broke. We had success when we uploaded images used a browser other than Google Chrome.

ETEC565A\_FM\_PM > Pages > Week 1: Practice the Policy: Academic Integrity

Home

Announcements

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Week 1: Practice the Policy: Academic Integrity

HTML Editor

**Resources for Writing with Integrity**

**Note Taking:**

Whether you are in class, listening to a lecture, finding sources, or reading an article at your desk, effective note taking techniques help you capture and record the main ideas and use them later for your assignments and reflections. While there is no single or perfect method to take notes, and every student is welcome to adopt a strategy that works best for them, following well-known formats helps master this skill with ease.

Here are resources that will help you learn more about effective note taking:

The Basics	Common Formats
<a href="#">Process overview</a> <a href="#">Note taking 101</a> <a href="#">Tips &amp; Tricks</a>	<a href="#">The Cornell Method</a> <a href="#">Mind Maps</a>

While you can take notes on your laptop, taking notes by hand is a preferred approach. Please read this article in the *Scientific American* magazine to understand the difference.

**Citation Management:**

Citation management software allows you to maintain all your citations electronically in one place and in a

Options Can edit this page role selection  
Only teachers

Notify users that this content has changed

Cancel Save

Links Files Images

Link to other content in the course. Click any page to insert a link to that page.

Pages

- Week 4: Tackle Common Writing Problems
- Week 5: Research Like an Academic
- Week 6: Bridge Writing and Researching
- Week 7: Write for Impact
- Week 8: Craft a Compelling Essay
- Week 10: Learn the Power of a Good Story

Assignments

Quizzes

Announcements

Discussions

Modules

Course Navigation

## 6. Use basic HTML to chunk content and make it more engaging for learners. You're going to have to get a little familiar with HTML if you want to reformat glitches.

- For instance, some of our tables had a grey outline that was distracting, so my partner figured out that each table needed to be a separate <div> container.

The screenshot shows the Canvas LMS Rich Content Editor interface. The page title is "Week 1: Practice the Policy: Academic Integrity". The editor contains HTML code for a page with a grey background and a table. A yellow highlight is visible on a YouTube embed code. The right sidebar shows a "Pages" list with items like "Week 4: Tackle Common Writing Problems", "Week 5: Research Like an Academic", "Week 6: Bridge Writing and Researching", "Week 7: Write for Impact", "Week 8: Craft a Compelling Essay", and "Week 10: Learn the Power of a Good Story". Below the editor are "Options" for user selection and a "Notify users" checkbox.

## 7. Use follow-up activities to test knowledge and provide practice for learners, such as a personal learning plan.

Although we couldn't use all of the tools we would've liked to, we did use a Google Slides scenario, a Quizlet, and a digital story to build formative understanding of key concepts in Module 1.

- It was easy to embed these tools directly into the HTML editor. Our intention with using these tools was to engage students right away and then provide supplemental resources when they needed them. If the technology goes down, they can easily be sent to students as static resources.

## 8. Test out different software and tools to see if it's going to serve your purposes for the course and have the right look and feel.

Committing to the tool before the learning is a surefire way to cause disconnect between the learner and the activity.

- If a tool needs to be embedded, such as this Quizlet, I would see how it looks in the actual course before committing to it, because you never know how it will look exactly before you insert it.

**Follow-Up Activity: Quizlet**

Using the Quizlet below, put what you learned about citing and referencing in the Chapter 9 reading to practice. Before "clicking to flip" and showing the answer, first read the task and try to answer the question yourself. This will aid you later on when you have to construct paraphrases, summaries, and reference entries. After you have flipped the flashcard to view the answer, use the blue arrow to move on to the next question.

As you work through the Quizlet, be sure to read the task carefully and view the sources, so you have the proper information to create the in-text citation or reference entry. Feel free to use the supplemental APA resources below at any point to help you construct your answers.

Source: [https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2012/ZUR286/um/22759680/Jenkins\\_Henry\\_-\\_Convergence\\_Culture.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2012/ZUR286/um/22759680/Jenkins_Henry_-_Convergence_Culture.pdf)

Task:  
Quote 1 sentence from the paragraph, taken from page 3 of the source:

"The term, participatory culture, contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands. Not all participants are created equal. Corporations--and even individuals within corporate media--still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers. And some consumers have greater abilities to participate in this emerging culture than others."

**Quizlet!** View this study set Choose a Study Mode

**Supplemental Resources**

You may notice that a single APA resource may not provide you with all the answers you need to create an in-text citation or reference entry. This is because one guide cannot anticipate all sources that students will use. Thus, you will likely have to consult multiple resources on APA. This is just part of being a digitally literate academic, who can use their critical thinking and research skills to seek out information that is going to help them cite their sources with style!

Read: [OWL Purdue APA](#), [APA Blog](#), [APA Libguide](#)

Watch: [APA Basics](#)

## 9. Always consider UDL principles.

For example, instead of writing, "view the article here," provide context for the reader and say, "View the plagiarism article." It is easy to attach a link by first highlighting the word or phrase and then attaching the link.

Home > ETECS65A\_FM\_PM > Pages > Week 2: Cite Sources with Style: Citations & References

HTML Editor

**Activity: Reading**

Let's learn the basics of citing and referencing. As you move forward, remember that citing is much more than just putting the pieces of the APA puzzle together. Citing is about giving credit and weaving your own narrative or argument together with what other people are saying on a given topic.

First, please read pages 19-30 of *They Say, I Say*, to learn key ways to analyze texts and make meaning. Then, review Chapter 9 from the online book *Writing for Success*. If this is your first encounter with APA, I recommend reading the whole chapter. If you are familiar with APA, I would suggest going over the basics to make sure you are prepared for the follow-up activity, Module 1 Quiz, and future assignments!

As you move through the reading, ensure you can answer the following questions:

1. How do students avoid plagiarism?
2. What are the APA rules for formatting in-text citations?
3. What are effective strategies for paraphrasing and summarizing material?
4. What are strategies to integrate in-text citations into a paragraph?
5. What are the APA rules for formatting reference entries?
6. How does one structure a References page?

**Follow-Up Activity: Quizlet**

Options: Can edit this page role selection  
Only teachers

Notify users that this content has changed

Cancel Save

## 10. Consider assessment from the start.

It's fairly straightforward to set up assessment.

- The matching activity was difficult to set up, because none of the answers can be italicized. You have to be careful about using a matching activity, because you have to be familiar with the structure first before you design the question. For example, I didn't realize the matching boxes couldn't

contain italicized words, so we had to change our strategy. Watch out for that!

- We found that we couldn't ask all of the questions we wanted to in the quiz, so we added a follow-up skill building activity (or quest) for students to complete. We created a discussion and then added it into the appropriate section.

The screenshot shows a Canvas LMS quiz interface. On the left is a dark blue sidebar with navigation icons for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, Commons, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Matching questions' and shows a 'Matching' question worth 1 point. The question text asks the user to identify parts of a journal article reference. The reference text is: 'Kommalage, M. (2012). Analytical essay writing: A new activity introduced to a traditional curriculum. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 36(1), 54-57. doi:10.1152/advan.00050.2011'. Below the question is an 'Answers' section with a grid of input fields. The first row has 'author' on the left and 'Kommalage, M.' on the right. A red box highlights the 'author' field, and a red arrow points to it with the text 'Matching questions have limited features'. Other rows in the grid include 'year of publication' (2012), 'article title' (Analytical essay writing: A new activity introdu...), 'journal name' (Advances in Physiology Education), 'volume' (36), 'issue' (1), and 'page numbers' (54-57).

Overall, Canvas is a simple framework, and it's easy to move sections around. I liked the options of seeing all of the course pages, or how they appear in the modules. What I have learned, though, is to always consider the theory or the "why" behind your course design before using the features of any LMS.

UBC  
Account  
Dashboard  
Courses  
Calendar  
Inbox  
Commons  
Help

- Home
- Announcements
- Modules**
- Discussions
- Quizzes
- Assignments
- Grades
- Chat
- CoursEval
- Pages
- People
- Files
- Outcomes
- Syllabus
- Settings

View Progress + Module

Course Overview		✓	+	:
Instructor Welcome		✓	:	
About the Course		✓	:	
Syllabus		✓	:	
Resources for Success		✓	:	
#ENG101MeetAndGreet		✓	:	
Summary Checklist and Next Steps		✓	:	
Module 1: Writing in the Digital Age		Complete All Items ✓	+	:
Module 1: Overview		✓	:	
Week 1: Practice the Policy: Academic Integrity		✓	:	
Week 1: Learning Plan	0 pts	✓	:	
Week 1: Practice the Policy: Copyright		✓	:	
Week 1: Writing Challenges		✓	:	
Week 2: Cite Sources with Style: Citations & References		✓	:	
Week 2: Quiz: Writing in the Digital Age	5 pts   Submit	✓	:	
Week 2: Skill Building Discussion: The Quest for Informed Content		✓	:	
Module 1: Summary Checklist		✓	:	