Brightspace Mentorship as Learning
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Program Background

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M.A. in TESOL/BDL, online
- 80% of students are practicing K-12 educators; 20% are preservice teachers
- 15-25 students per section
- 4:4 teaching load
- Traditional fall/spring and summer session pacing

How can I leverage learning from serving as a Brightspace Mentor to improve my instruction in a fully online, asynchronous environment?

Course Changes

- Added weekly synchronous office hours via Zoom
- Increased the number of video mini-lessons and lectures (3-5 mins each)
- Added assignment overview videos to provide oral directions in addition to written
- Improved visual appeal of the "To Do List" (e.g. added lines between each step, used consistent color-code for tasks, bolded key action verbs, added 'hints' for critical learning)
- Gave students more flexibility with discussion topics and assignments (e.g. select Choice A or B, submit a video or text)
- Revisited and revised discussion topics to ensure they all had a clear purpose (e.g. highlighted major takeaways of learning, built components of final assignments, provided job-embedded applications of learning)

Results

From the students' voices:

"Your Brightspace layout was the best I've encountered in two years."

"Loved how the classwork was presented and communicated clearly and explicitly in the to-do list format. It was easy and accessible to know the expectations for the week."

"I love watching the upbeat informational videos that go with the readings."

"I really appreciated the video to introduce each week's sessions. I also appreciated the 'hints' for how we could use weekly assignments for the long-term assignments."

"Office hours helped me get caught up. In-depth videos and descriptions each week. Probably one of the best asynchronous classes I have taken."

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