SHENA DRISCOLL SALVATO
LECTURER III: TESOL

Easing Course Navigation for Students

February 4, 2020
SUNY Cortland

A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

- LAO TZU

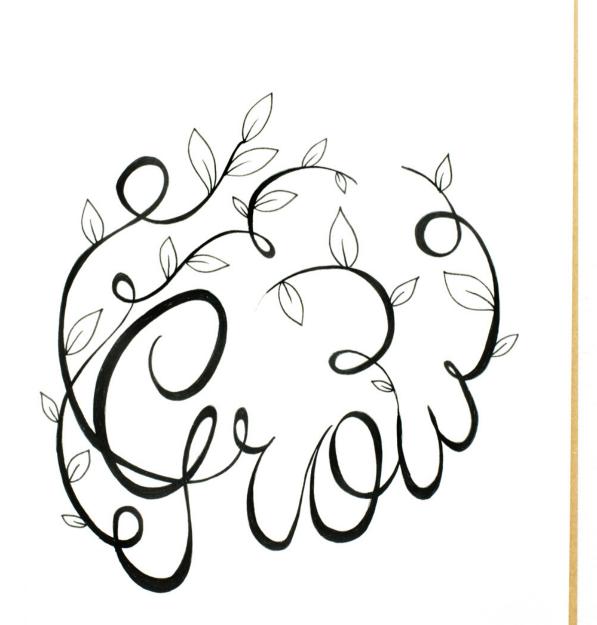# WHERE ARE YOU & WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS?

- students who have

  - **never used** Blackboard

  - used Blackboard for **F2F classes**

  - taken **hybrid** or **online classes**

Shena Driscoll Salvato | 2020

RESOURCES

- meet with your **instructional designer** in person

- ask **students** for **feedback**

- ask **colleagues** to see their pages and/or share tips

- use **Blackboard help** (locally and at https://help.blackboard.com/)

MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES TO ALLOW FOR PRACTICE & FAMILIARITY

- upload ungraded **assignment**
  - information sheet
- take a **quiz** unlimited number of times
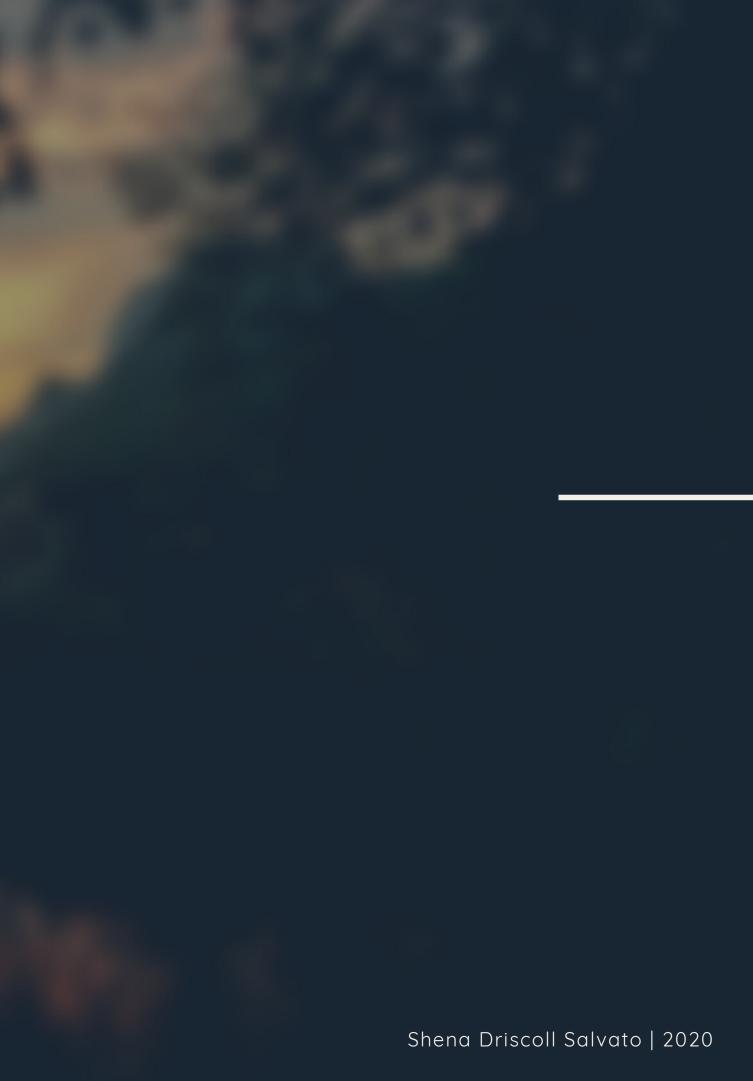 - content of syllabus

CREATE

ENCOURAGE
PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS

- managing self

- identifying quality questions

- taking action by asking

  questions

WHAT I'VE LEARNED ALONG THE JOURNEY

Shena Driscoll Salvato | 2020

IN GENERAL

- organize and present clearly and consistently

- show only what students are ready to see

CHOICES

- ENTRY PAGE
  - specific to course

- TEACHING STYLE
  - banner
  - buttons
  - color scheme

- MODULES VS. FOLDERS
  - use student view to decide

TOOLS

MENU ON LEFT

- buttons
- subheadings
- dividers

SET REVIEW STATUS

- per item for students and instructor

SUBSCRIBE TO DISCUSSION FORUMS

- critical for notification
- button is not obvious

FOLDERS

- add text for clarity

Shena Driseoll Salvato | 2020

TIPS

- **"set as external grade"** on grade center
- **"send copy of this announcement"** to email ALL announcements
- make attachments open in a **new window** (preferably **.pdf**)
- use **reverse chronological order** (content, discussions) to eliminate unnecessary scrolling
- add **graphics**
- vary your text
  - change font and **size**
  - <u>underline</u>, **bold**, *italicize*
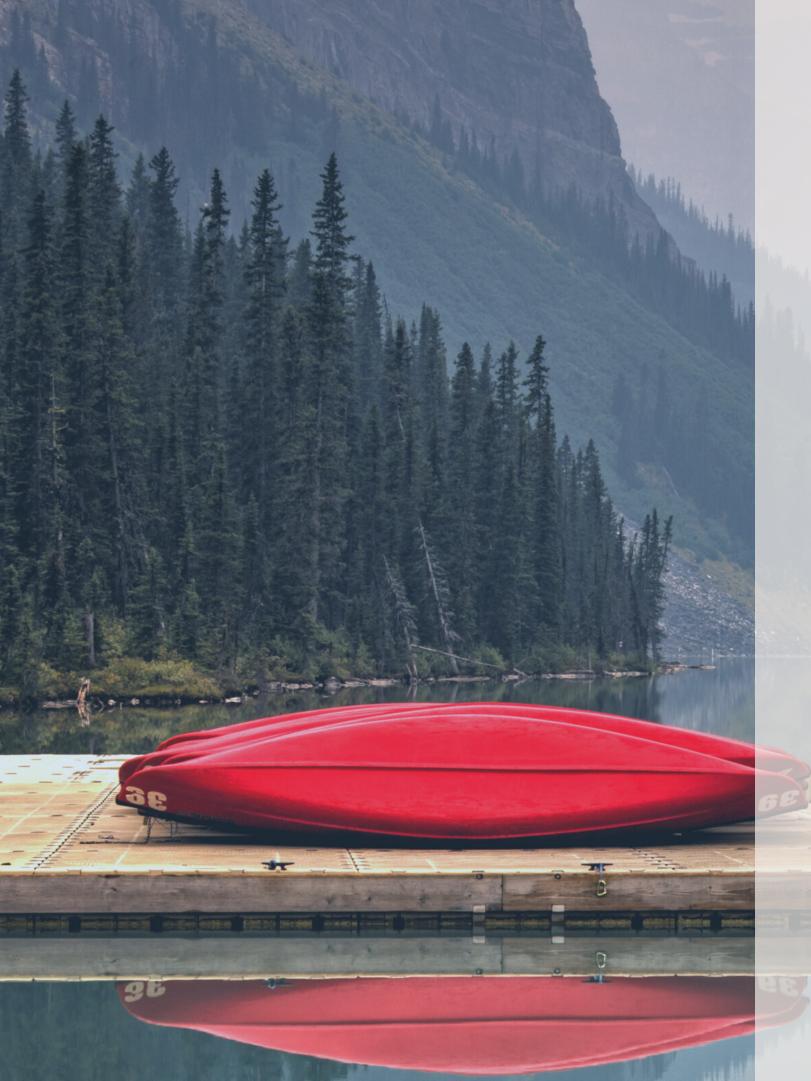 - use bullets and add color (be mindful of students who are colorblind)

SUGGESTIONS

- make a **Q&A discussion forum** (be sure you and students **subscribe**)
- walk students through how to view **scoring rubrics** (don't assume they know)
- **organize** by class or week with dates
- include **instructions in discussion forum** (links, etc.) so students don't need to search for them

CHALLENGES

- NO SEARCH FEATURE ON BLACKBOARD

Ideas for a workaround?

- TRACKING ACTIVITIES THAT STUDENTS COMPLETE BUT DON'T SUBMIT

- OTHERS?

EXPERIENCE YOUR COURSE FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

"Enter Student Preview"

"I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT YOUR ONLINE COURSE IS VERY EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND USE. IT DEFINITELY MAKES A DIFFERENCE COMPARED TO OTHER ONLINE CLASSES I HAVE HAD. I DON'T FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO SEARCH ALL OVER YOUR WEBSITE FOR THE ASSIGNMENTS BECAUSE THEY ARE ALL IN ONE SPOT WITH HELPFUL AND DESCRIPTIVE INSTRUCTIONS. THAT HELPS A LOT AND I WISH THAT ALL MY ONLINE CLASSES HAD A FORMAT LIKE THIS."

Unsolicisted student comment shared on Thursday of week 1, Spring 2020

What else do you do to ease course navigation for students?

CONTACT INFORMATION

OFFICE

Old Main room 227-D

PHONE

(607) 753-2033

EMAIL

shena.salvato@cortland.edu