

COASTLINE
COLLEGE



Utilizing a Liquid Syllabus

CRPP SYMPOSIUM, SPRING 2024

MATTHEW QUINLAN



Overview

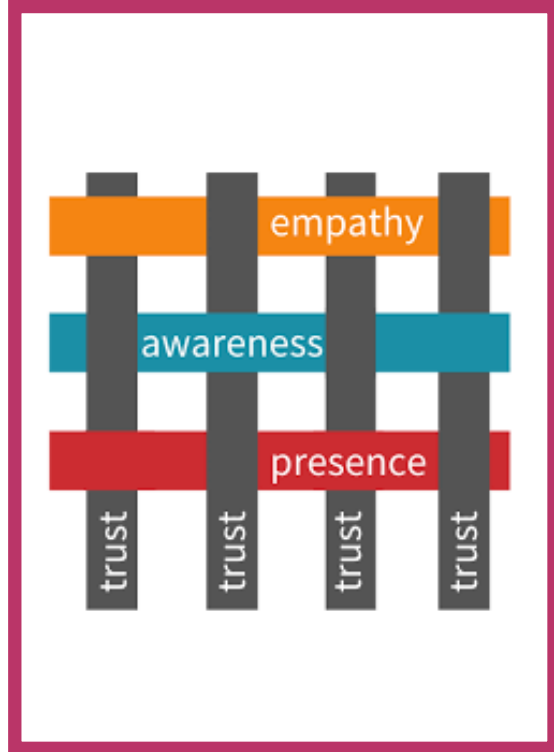
What is a Liquid Syllabus?

- Michelle Pacansky-Brock – Foothill College

Instructor Effects on Learning

Why use a Liquid Syllabus?

[PSYC 100 Liquid Syllabus](#)





What is a Liquid Syllabus?

An accessible, public website with a brief, friendly Welcome Video that provides relevant course info using student-centered language (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020)

Goal: humanize pre-course contact with instructor

- Learning is a balance between cognition and emotion
- Support non-cognitive factors without reducing rigor

Goal: remove barriers

- CC students are more likely to harbor feelings of self-doubt
- Particularly minoritized students
 - Coastline College - Black/African-Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, LGBTQ+

Instructor Influence on Online Education

Instructor factors predicting student support during online learning (Butler-Samuels et al., 2021)

- Learning support predicted by instructor preparation/organization and respectful environments
- Course/instructor ratings linked to student ratings of learning and emotional support

Intersection of campus climate and technology (Munger et al., 2021)

- Lack of access to digital devices or training on LMS can be a barrier to inclusion/belonging
- Technology can support social and academic interactions
 - Lack of access more common in minoritized groups (Cal Matters)
 - 102K low-income students
 - 145K minoritized students → Black/African-American (8%), Hispanic/Latinx (32%)

Instructor Influence on Online Education

Online student outcomes influenced by course quality (Jaggers and Xu, 2016)

- Positive correlation between quality of instructor-student interaction and student grades
- Frequent and effective instructor-student interaction = greater student commitment and success

Online students are more likely to feel isolated (Miller, 2011)

- Commonly experienced at the beginning of a course
- All students expect to complete their online courses



Why use a Liquid Syllabus?

Class begins when a student registers!

- Can be associated with anxiety, doubt
- Imposter Syndrome!

Pre-course contact can improve retention in Week 1

- Reduce anxiety for ALL students

Intentionally build your “presence” → build trust

- Welcome Video → you are a “real” person



Why use a Liquid Syllabus?

But... the Syllabus is already in Canvas!

- Easy to access → better formatting than PDF, website tools
 - No longer behind a “wall” → fewer first week emails
- Easy to share → cut and paste the link
- Easy to create → do not need technical proficiency (I did it!)
- Mobile-friendly interface → student-centered
- Inviting → demonstrates thought and consideration
 - Create a positive impression and set a tone
 - Show your personality

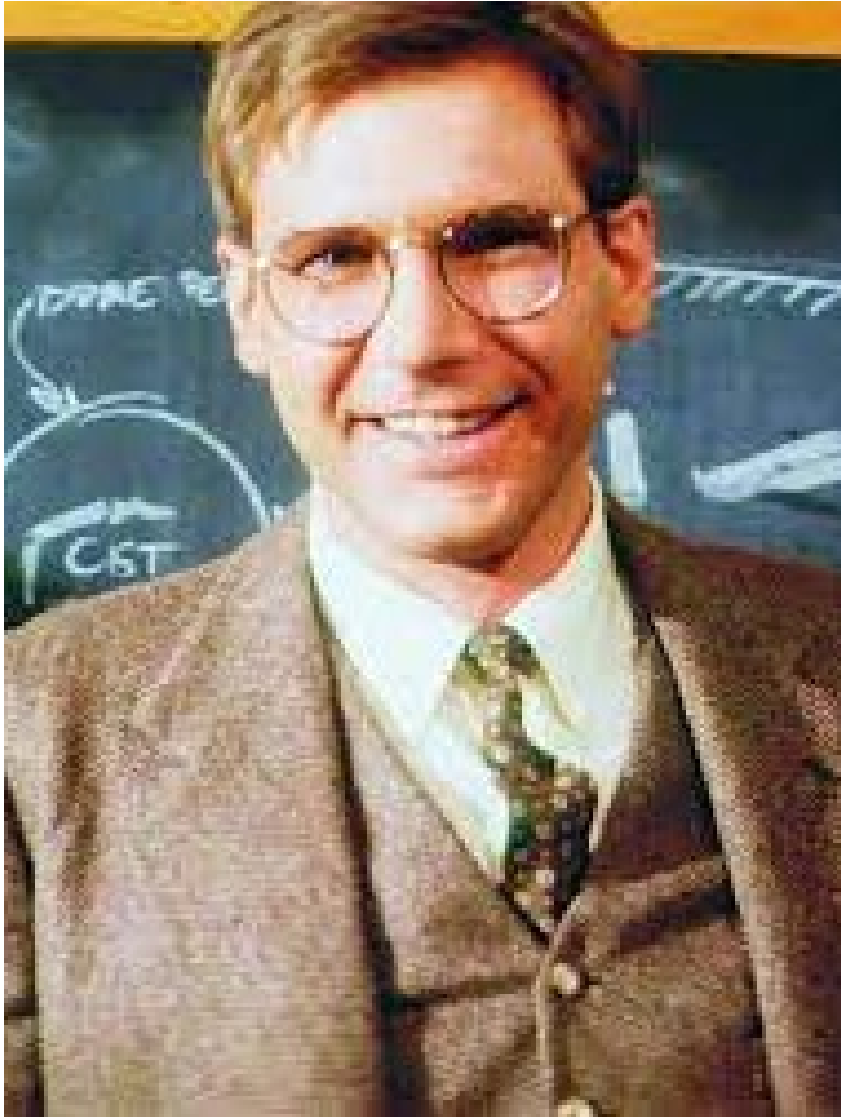
Why use a Liquid Syllabus?

Traditional Syllabus

- Based on “distrust”
- More likely to use punitive language
- More likely to be focused on rules/regulations
- Instructor is the “boss” → rigor is derived from fear

Liquid Syllabus

- Creates a sense of trust
- Uses positive, supportive language
- Focused on using trust to encourage commitment
- Instructor is humanized → rigor is derived from a supportive relationship



Do I HAVE to do a Welcome Video?

Yes!

Videos of the instructor provide several benefits (Wong, 2021)

- Higher ratings for likability, immediacy, trust
- Higher student expectations for class participation
- Students feel an immediate sense of connection with instructor and course

Links

[Michelle Pacansky-Brock's Liquid Syllabus](#)

[Humanizing Pre-course Contact](#)

[Canvas Course on how to Create a Liquid Syllabus](#)