



QUOTE of the Issue

“In order to create an engaging learning experience, the role of instructor is optional, but the role of learner is essential.”

Bernard Bull (President of Concordia University-Nebraska)

2021

August

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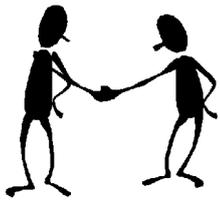
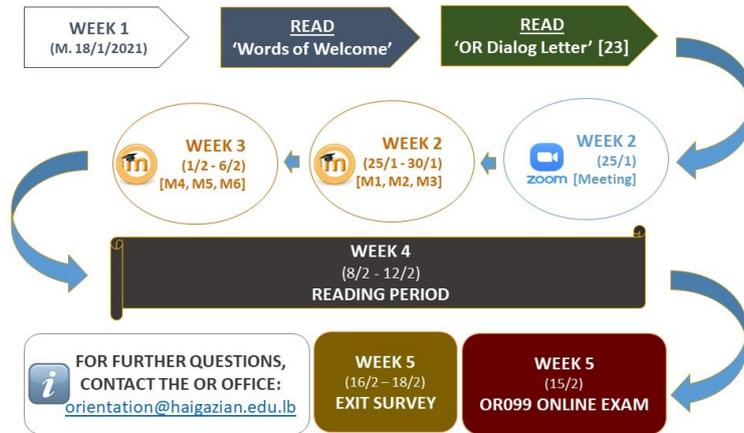


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Online Orientation Roadmap [SP2021]

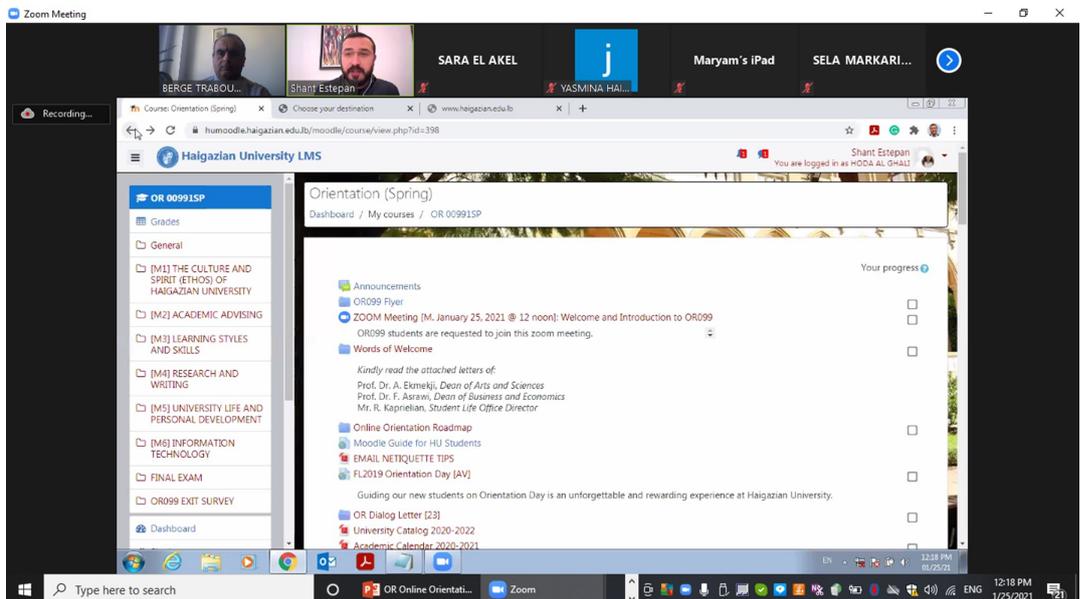


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HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

OR Dialog Letter

An e-publication for a better university life



The Importance of Reading

Having taught English as a second or third language for over a decade, I have often had students inquiring about how they could become more fluent in the language. I often, with no hesitation, would suggest that they choose any article that interests them and start reading. And then read some more. And then make reading a part of their daily lives.

I do understand that it is difficult to adopt a love of reading if a person has not had any exposure to the pleasures of engaging with a text early on in life. However, there is no right age to pick up the habit.

As an educator, I often advise students to read to comprehend and not just to mark pages. Reading is more than skimming through sentences. Reading requires engagement. The idea that you can bring to life a piece of text scribbled by someone perhaps last week, last year, a decade, or even a century ago is what makes this human privilege truly magical. It is important to understand that it is as much about the words on the page as it is about relating to the content, reflecting upon it, approaching it critically, and increasing knowledge; it is not just comprehension but rather analysis that matters.

When reading, mental muscles are at work, enabling you to imagine, enhance understanding, acquire diction, and even release tension by drifting from mundane and stressful moments.

Most importantly, reading encourages you to have a voice, to express yourself, and to respond. It helps turn your passive stance into an active one. These are very important qualities that we need to acquire as modern-day humans.

If you have read this piece, then let it encourage you to read a little; it may start with a few sentences (Facebook posts don't count!) or with a few pages – but do invest in this habit in order to fully engage with the world and become more receptive and understanding.

MS. ANITA MOUTCHOYAN (MA), English Instructor & OR Faculty

Active Reading Strategies

Questioning

Questioning is when you ask yourself questions about things that confuse you.

- What does that word mean?
- Why is that important?
- How does this compare to...?

Connecting

Connecting is when what you are reading reminds you of something that has happened to you, something you have read, something you have seen, or something you have heard of.

- This makes me think of....
- This reminds me of....
- This is very similar to....

Predicting

Predicting is when you stop occasionally and guess what might happen next.

- This is going to tell about....
- I bet this will be about....

Reviewing

Reviewing is when you stop once in a while to determine what you know, what you think you know, and what has changed about what you thought you knew.

- Oh, I get it. This is about....
- Before I read this, I thought.... Now I think....
- I could tell from the beginning, this is about....

Evaluating

Evaluating is when you make judgments about what you're reading.

- I like the way the author....
- This was hard to understand because the author....
- The part about... was really easy to understand because....
- It was helpful when the author....

Visualizing

Visualizing is when you can picture in your mind what you're reading.

- What do you see?
- When I close my eyes, I picture....
- I can imagine....

Source: <https://cacilhassandwichwest.weebly.com/reading.html>

ACADEMIC METACOGNITION FOR ENHANCED ONLINE LEARNING

NIZAR EL MEHTAR (PhD), *Assistant Professor of Education & OR Faculty*

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on Higher Education in virtually all aspects of its operation. The pandemic has particularly transformed the learning ecosystem in Higher Education Institutions, accelerating a paradigm shift to online modes of teaching and learning. Although considerable advantages have been increasingly attributed to those modes (e.g. flexibility, convenience of access to miscellaneous resources), many students noticeably struggle in virtual learning environments at the levels of motivation, engagement, and achievement. While students' success in such environments essentially relies on the caliber of their academic metacognition, university students, in general, seem metacognitively incompetent with inadequately developed learning autonomy and self-regulation. Accordingly, it may be reasonably argued that university instructors ought to heed the significance of metacognitive scaffolding and its representation in online pedagogical structures and learning experiences.

Metacognition, often referred to as *thinking about thinking*, is an internal mechanism that empowers students to take ownership over their pursuit of learning. This mechanism activates and sustains a number of competencies enabling students to be more strategic in planning, monitoring, and assessing their mental activities towards attaining significant goals or handling complex situations. A number of theorists organize metacognitive skills into two complementary processes, namely *knowledge of cognition* and *regulation of cognition*. *Knowledge of cognition* involves the knowledge of factors influencing one's own performance, different strategies to be used for learning, and conditions for employing a certain strategy in a specific learning situation. *Regulation of cognition* encompasses a number of regulatory skills and refers to all actions and cognitive endeavors through which students control their learning.

Academic metacognition is thought to have a constructive influence on meaningful learning commonly associated with conceptual understanding, knowledge transfer, and problem solving. Different lines of evidence emerging from relevant research confirm that metacognition empowers learners to develop related knowledge and skills in comprehension, argumentation, reasoning, and various forms of higher order thinking. When it comes to online education, recent studies reveal that acquisition of metacognitive strategies correlates positively with management skills and learning performances. Using metacognitive strategies, students would manage to allocate their time to garner the learning gains of different facets of online pedagogy (synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid), and juggle academic demands and non-academic obligations. Noteworthy findings also show that metacognitive awareness advances learners' ability to profit from the online culture as they work collaboratively, think creatively, study independently, and sculpt their own learning engagements to meet their individual needs.

Admitting metacognition to a physical or virtual classroom is far from a spontaneous initiative. Purposeful pedagogical schemes are needed to foster students' knowledge and regulation of cognition. Crucial to the success of these schemes are the diversity and complexity of the learning contexts. Metacognitive faculties are phenomenally cultivated when students, frequently and sufficiently, get involved in (a) challenging, meaning-making, and inquiry-based tasks with multiple representations of concepts and opportunities to identify and resolve conceptual conflicts, (b) social milieus to share, deliberate upon, and refine their own ideas about subject-specific topics, and (c) extended reflections on procedures and outcomes of learning experiences. Importantly, students should be assiduously guided to profoundly comprehend the purpose and scope of any metacognitive strategy while it is being taught, for this should put them in a better position to generalize the strategy to novel situations.

In conclusion, online learning modes present students with various challenges, the most serious of which pertains to the higher demands on learning autonomy and self-regulation. In view of that, the prudent, systematic, and calibrated deployment of metacognition in Higher Education curricula emerges as a substantive requirement for rendering students' online learning more prosperous and rewarding. University level instructors need to look into different ways of integrating and facilitating the acquisition of metacognitive skills among students. Furthermore, Higher Education institutions are requested to establish and implement various professional development channels for training, encouraging and supporting course instructors to become – based on their backgrounds and areas of expertise – more cognizant, versed, and versatile in metacognition-related pedagogy.

MOHAMMAD KARNIB (PSY): “The COVID-19 pandemic which widely invaded the globe in 2020 has forced humans to adapt to new lifestyles. Many companies started working remotely, food markets introduced online services where goods are delivered to the doorstep. Similarly, universities had to switch to online learning which comes in two forms, dependent and independent learning, i.e., synchronous, and asynchronous sessions. Synchronous sessions consist of live lectures in virtual classes in different platforms (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, etc.) provided by the instructor, whereas in asynchronous sessions students independently work on the material. Over the course of four semesters of online education at HU, I found asynchronous sessions more beneficial than live lectures. The fact that we should frequently write short essays reflecting on documentaries we watch and articles we read, have significantly improved my academic and learning skills. Moreover, I managed to grasp more knowledge than in live Zoom sessions because I independently worked on searching, reading, and analyzing the material. Also, asynchronous learning helped in improving my time management skills which is a challenge for many, and indeed is essential to the future work life. Thus, asynchronous learning is significantly important for students, for it can cultivate their learning skills.”

CHRISTINE BOYAJIAN (PSY): “Switching from the traditional classroom to online learning was a challenging experience for me. Instructors tried to use various methods to manage their online classes. However, the passive style was always prevalent, putting both teachers and students under stress.

Using both synchronous and asynchronous learning styles proved to be quite effective. The former enhanced my listening skills especially during discussions and debates despite some minor problems pertaining to electricity and internet, or day-dreaming during some zoom sessions, or the lack of understanding of certain material. The latter improved my reading, writing, and comprehending skills at my own pace and place. The asynchronous learning assignments took me some extra miles in my learning journey; I had to read articles and watch lectures, talks, and documentaries on YouTube, and later, grasp the material in a deeper level while writing analytical and critical essays. This was done at my own time, pace and place.

Finally, attending on campus classes can be livelier and more sociable; however, necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes can be acquired in a non-traditional manner, especially when the faculty member and the student collaborate on the preparation for after graduation professional life, by providing the student with the necessary resources, irrespective of the learning style, whether it be synchronous or asynchronous, on-campus or online.”

ALAA MOUKALLID (CSC): “Self-education is an important skill that can be acquired through asynchronous learning. Throughout my experience, I found asynchronous sessions to be quite challenging at first as it was a new educational method. Nonetheless, it is a necessary process that allows us as students to improve and to widen our skill set. Asynchronous sessions can bring many advantages to the table such as flexibility. A student is no longer obliged to follow a certain schedule or instructor; he or she can now work at his/her own pace comfortably. Moreover, asynchronous sessions internalize the newly found information due to the efforts put in by students towards the assignment. Furthermore, the completion of asynchronous sessions not only improved my comprehensive and analytical skills, but it also significantly improved my writing. Challenges tend to bring with them opportunities, and asynchronous learning is no different. It is through these tough times that we learn self-education, a skill that should not be underestimated in our careers and future endeavors.”

LILAS CHEHAB (EDU): “I wasn’t very familiar with the term ‘asynchronous education’. However, I recently learned using this type of education and I have to say; it was a game changer. Asynchronous education is all about switching the education process from a teacher-centered one to a student-centered one. This means that instead of having the instructor give lectures where students don’t always listen, the student has to learn alone. The students should look for answers to posed questions by themselves (of course the instructor is there for further clarification if need be). Because I have now tried it, I can safely say it’s far more efficient than the ‘normal’ way (synchronous). By reading or watching videos to find answers, I was given the chance to develop analytical skills. It was a challenge, I won’t lie, because we are used to the synchronous style more. But it’s a challenge worth undergoing because the results are profound. As a future educator, I will definitely be implementing this method.”

LEEN AL RASAMNI (NSD): “The asynchronous-synchronous sessions were a new experience for me this semester. Regarding the asynchronous sessions, they were an efficient way to learn the material for this course and provided an opportunity to improve my reading, writing and analytical skills. The material provided to solve the assignments were up-to-date and organized to match each topic we were studying (social ethics, leadership ethics, business ethics, political ethics and bioethics); in addition, the time provided for each assignment was sufficient and flexible. As for the synchronous sessions, they were complementary to the asynchronous sessions since they provided more information about the topics learned and feedback for the assignments and tests. Both types of learning are important, but asynchronous sessions presented a unique and advantageous education experience.”

The Orientation Program cooperated closely with the IT Department in order to solve all technical issues that both OR099 faculty and students face during this online journey.

Tracking Student Progress & Engagement in Moodle

SHANT ESTEPAN (MBA), Instructor in Computer Science & OR Faculty

When teaching is done remotely, it can be challenging for both students and instructors to maintain track of their academic progress. Students may doubt their ability to estimate the work required to accomplish the intended learning goals and wonder if they have grasped the subject matter adequately. It can be difficult for instructors to check if everyone is on track. Do the students behind the screen need more guidance and support?

The answer was discovered by Haigazian University's IT Department using Moodle's Learning Analytic Measurements. What is Learning Analytics, and how does it work? It is the process of gathering, analyzing, and reporting data about learners and their environments in order to better understand and optimize learning and the environments in which it takes place. Learning analytics can help students arrange their studies and keep track of their progress. It can also help instructors deliver timely assistance to students who require it. There are numerous digital technologies for measuring and analyzing student actions; nevertheless, it is critical that the student activities are intended to generate log data and digital traces, such as completed coursework and assignments.

Instructors can request reports from HU's Moodle that show which resources and activities in a course have been accessed, when, and by whom. Moodle generates a variety of reports, including:

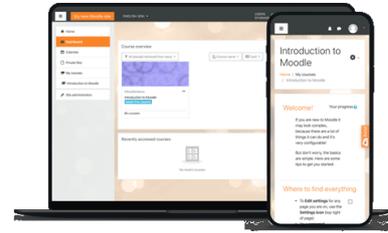
Logs generates a filtered report showing information about a particular activity or student.

View activity report generates a simple unfiltered report showing all activity in the course that you can sort by column header.

View course participation report provides a sortable list showing all class members, with details about a particular resource or activity. You can see who has viewed a resource or submitted an activity.

Activity completion generates a list of all participants and displays whether or not they have completed activities.

Statistics generates a graph and table of activity filtered by class role (e.g., Instructors and Students) over a specified period.



Time	User full name	Affected user	Event context	Component	Event name	Description	Origin	IP address
30 Apr. 08:09	Mr. Brown	-	Forum: Poetry discussion	System	Course module updated	The forum module with instance id 40 was updated by user with id 12	web	86.130.123.176
30 Apr. 08:07	Mr. Brown	-	Forum: Poetry discussion	System	Course module created	The forum module with instance id 40 was created by user with id 12	web	86.130.123.176
27 Apr. 13:11	Ms. Wilson	Jacques Barbat	Assignment: Summer Poem	Assignment	Grading form viewed	The user with the id 2 viewed the grading form for the user with the id 5 for the assignment with the id 40.	web	86.130.123.176

Logs

Time	User full name	Affected user	Event context	Component	Event name	Description	Origin	IP address
30 Apr. 08:09	Mr. Brown	-	Forum: Poetry discussion	System	Course module updated	The forum module with instance id 40 was updated by user with id 12	web	86.130.123.176
30 Apr. 08:07	Mr. Brown	-	Forum: Poetry discussion	System	Course module created	The forum module with instance id 40 was created by user with id 12	web	86.130.123.176
27 Apr. 13:11	Ms. Wilson	Jacques Barbat	Assignment: Summer Poem	Assignment	Grading form viewed	The user with the id 2 viewed the grading form for the user with the id 5 for the assignment with the id 40.	web	86.130.123.176

Activity Report

Dashboard / Courses / Psych Cine / Reports / Course participation

Activity module: Course discussion | Look back: 5 Weeks | Show only: Student | Show actions: All actions | Go

Groups: Group BM

Forum Views
Forum Posts

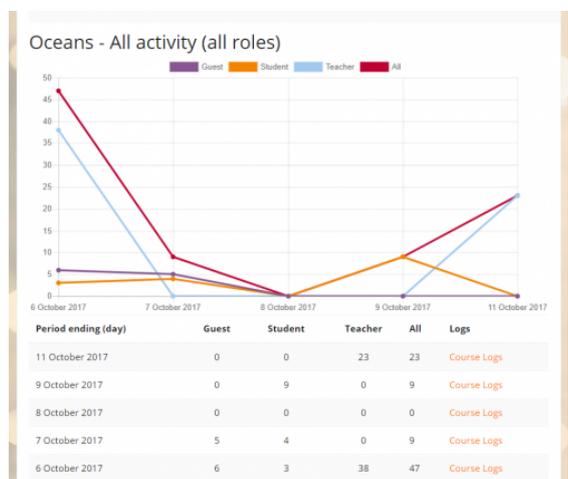
3

First name / Surname	All actions	Select
Brian Franklin	No	Select
Martin Blackforest	No	Select
Frances Banks	No	Select

Deselect all 'No'

With selected users: Choose... Send a message

Participation Report



Statistics

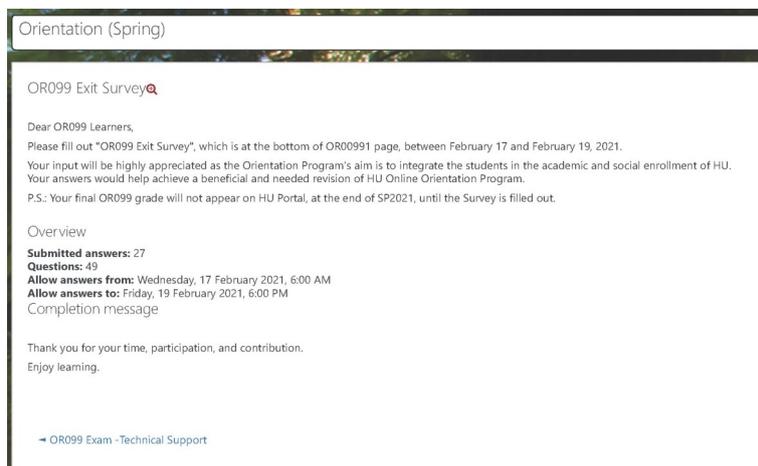
Photo Credit: <https://docs.moodle.org/>

The OR Office conducted the OR 099 Exit Survey during SP2020-2021 semester and gathered information about the learners' experiences, achievements, challenges, needs and problems in order to better serve and orient HU learners in the future.

NB: The Exit Survey Questions were prepared by Dr. Berge Traboulsi, Ms. Sahar Hamzeh, and Dr. Najoié Nasr.

Report on OR 099 Exit Survey SP 2020-2021: Main Results

Najoié Nasr, DBA (OR Faculty)



Twenty-seven students answered the OR 099 Exit survey for the Spring 2020-2021. The survey consisted of 49 questions divided into 6 sections. 32 students were registered in OR099 for the Spring semester and 27 (84.375%) students responded to the survey.

Section 1: Classification Questions

- 52% of the students are from Arts and Sciences.
- 55.5% Sophomore
- 59.26% joined OR099 during regular registration.

Section 2: General questions about OR099 online presence and course organization.

- The majority found Moodle OR099 Page well-organized (70.37%) and 29.63% found it moderately organized. None found it poorly organized.
- Most of the students (40.74%) read some of the welcoming words, and 37% read all of the welcoming words.
- The mostly read document by OR099 students was the flyer (92.59%) followed by the OR Dialog Letter (81.48%).
- A vast majority of 88.89% of students checked the Orientation content on HU website.
- 77.78% of the students watched Moodle Guide for HU Students.
- On a scale from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, 62.96% of the students agreed and 25.93% strongly agreed that OR099 Moodle platform was user-friendly.
- Around 77.78% either agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives of OR099 were clearly stated.
- Around 77.78% agreed or strongly agreed that they got a clear idea on how to start OR099 course.
- Around 62.96% agreed or strongly agreed that OR099 online course was easy to navigate.
- Around 66.67% agreed or strongly agreed that the instructions concerning the online assignments were clear.
- Around 77.78% of the students found that the OR099 Workload was in general moderate.

Section 3: Learning Experience and Modules

*In agreement = Agree + Strongly agree

	[M1] Culture	[M2] Advising	[M3] Learning	[M4] Research	[M5] University Life	[M6] IT
The module content was valuable. (5-point Likert scale)	77.78% in agreement*	66.67% in agreement*	81.48% in agreement*	74.07% in agreement*	77.78% in agreement*	77.78% in agreement*
The concepts were clearly explained in the learning material. (5-point Likert scale)	81.48% in agreement*	66.67% in agreement*	88.88% in agreement*	74.07% in agreement*	85.185% in agreement*	85.185% in agreement*
The asynchronous learning assignment was (easy, moderate, difficult)	59.26% moderate	62.96% moderate	51.85% moderate	59.26% moderate	48.15% easy and 44.44% moderate	55.56% easy and 44.44% moderate
The time allocated for the asynchronous assignment was (enough, not enough)	88.89% enough	81.48% enough	88.89% enough	85.185% enough	81.49% enough	88.89% enough

- OR099 helped students overcome difficulties they have in the following areas: Critical thinking, writing, analytical thinking and reading.
- Upon the completion of OR099 they still have difficulties in understanding the following aspects (none)

Section 4: OR099 Online Exam

- 85.185% found the online exam to be fair.
- 74.07% found that the time allocated to the exam was enough
- The majority (40.74%) did not face problems while taking the exam. However, 33.33% faced internet problems.

Section 5: Preferred form of Sessions

- 59.26% preferred the sessions to be given in both synchronous (zoom) and asynchronous form (learning assignments on Moodle), followed by around 26% preferring asynchronous and 15% synchronous mode.

Section 6: Recommendations and experience in OR099

Do you have any recommendations for improvement in HU Online Orientation Program?

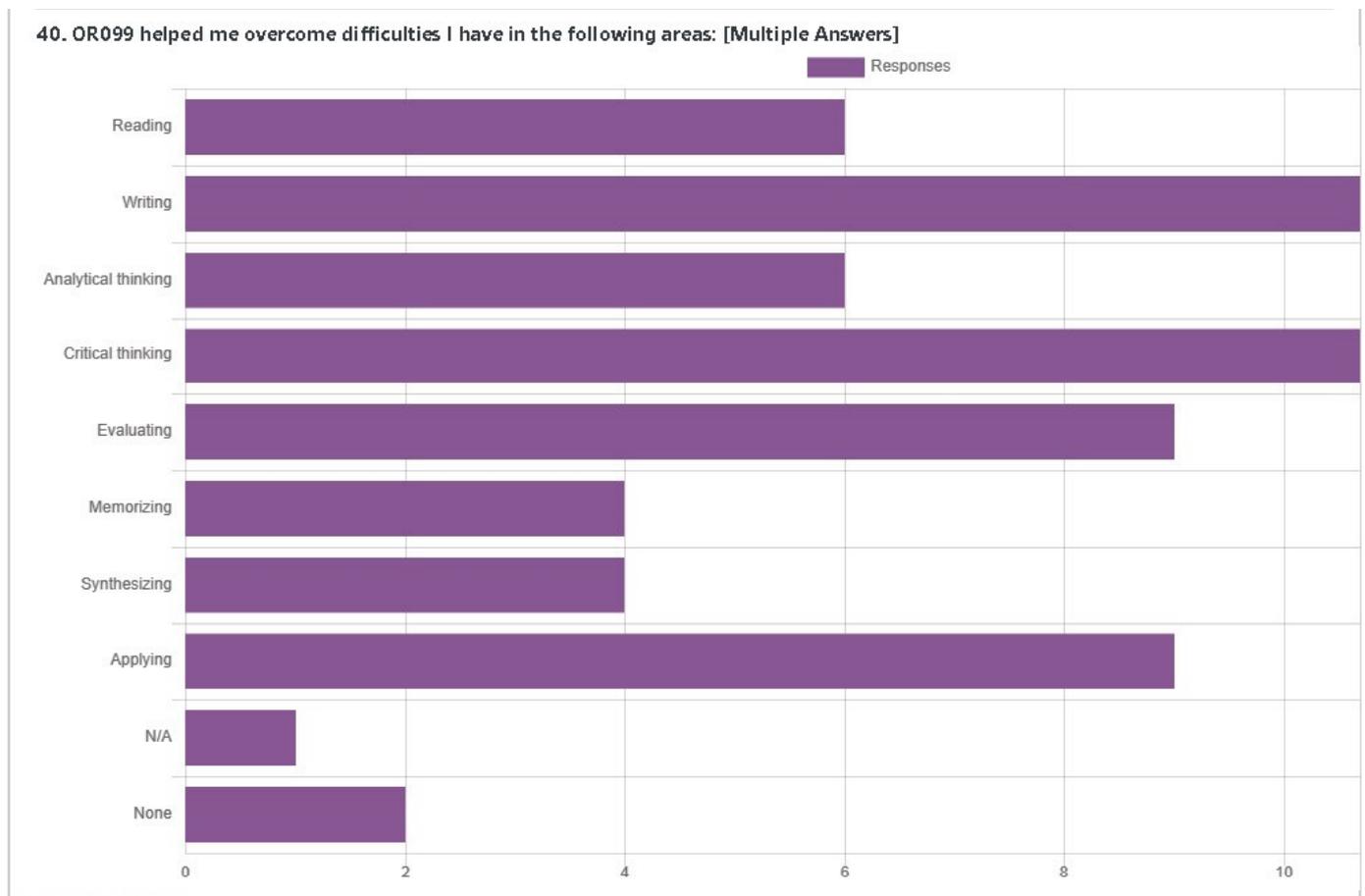
- 59.26% did not recommend any improvements. Few students recommended more time for assignments, more interaction and communication with instructors through zoom sessions, and a combination of Zoom and LMS sessions.

Describe in one sentence your personal experience in OR099.

- Overarching answer is that it was a good and beneficial experience and they learned a lot about Haigazian University.

Use 5 keywords to describe 'HU Online Orientation Program' to a new student.

- Helpful, informative, interesting, guiding and inspiring were the most used words.



← (Click on the cover in order to download the issue.) →

Dear Friend of the OR Dialog Letter
 You are welcome to write about your academic experience at HU; we will be glad to publish your short article (max. 300 words) in the forthcoming issue.

<http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/admissions/orientation/or-publications/>





[Online Learning Could Change Academia - for Good](#)

T. Dewitt

[TED, 2020]



[Rethinking Online Education](#)

M. Schaible

[TEDx, 2021]



[4 Lessons the Pandemic Taught about...](#)

P. McCord

[TED, 2021]



[COVID and Education](#)

B. T. Long

Harvard, 2021]



[The Healing Power of Reading](#)

M. Kuo

[TED, 2018]



[What Reading Slowly Taught me About Writing](#)

J. Woodson

[TED, 2019]



[How to Have a Constructive Conversations](#)

J. Dhar

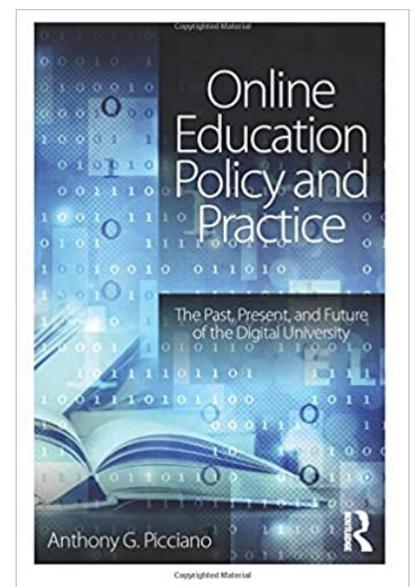
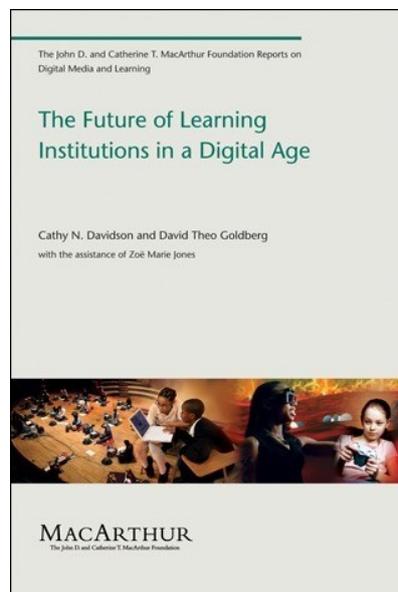
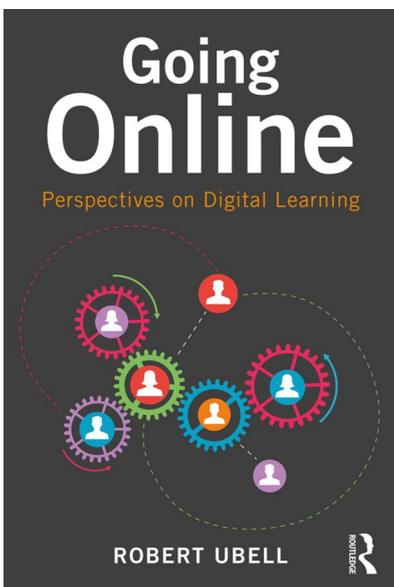
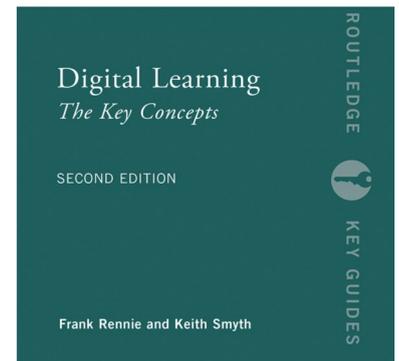
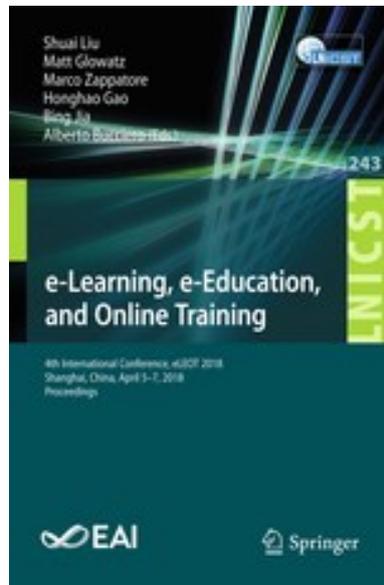
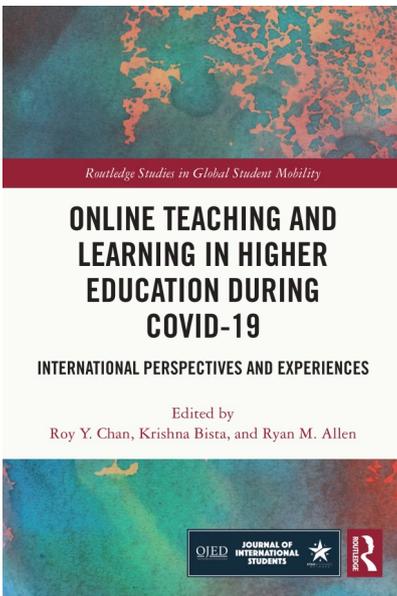
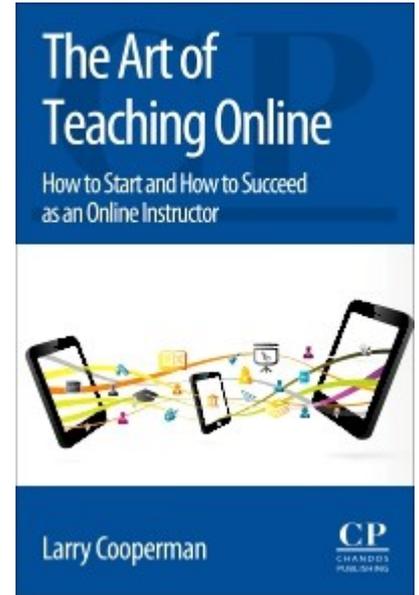
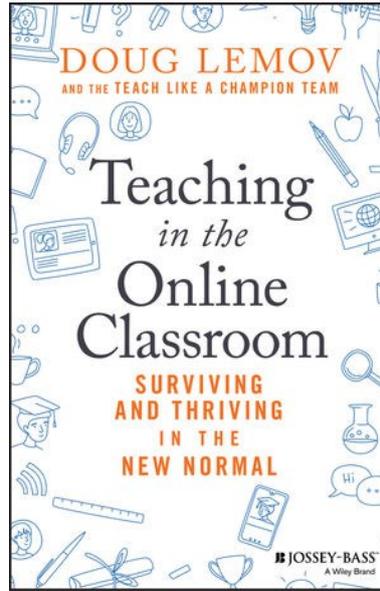
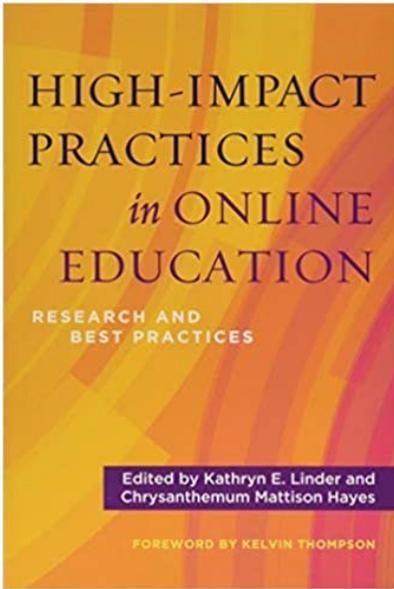
[TED, 2020]



[How to Have a Good Conversation](#)

C. Headlee

[TEDx, 2015]





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- Ms. Sahar Hamzeh [OR Faculty] for her editing of this OR Dialog Letter issue

IMPORTANT ORIENTATION LINKS

The Orientation Program (Mission, Goals, and Services) <http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/admissions/orientation/>

OR099 <http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/admissions/orientation/or-099/>

OR099 FAQ's <http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/admissions/orientation/or-faqs/>

OR Announcements <http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/admissions/orientation/or-announcements/>

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