

Inside Independent Learning

Your Rights as an Instructor

Special points of interest:

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- D2L Gem: GradeMark
- Introducing: Catherine Willis
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In the recent editions of *Inside Independent Learning*, the focus has been on the rights and responsibilities of students enrolled in Independent Learning courses and your responsibilities as an IL instructor. This edition of *Inside Independent Learning* focuses on your rights as an IL instructor.

One of the main rights you have as a DCS IL instructor is the **right to be treated with respect and as a professional**. You can expect that each member of the IL team will address you in a professional manner. Similarly, you can expect each and every student enrolled in your course(s) to address you in a professional manner. If you are ever uncomfortable with the tone of communication from a member of the IL team or a student, please let Sarah know.

If a student is not addressing you in a professional manner, it is acceptable to ask the student to stay professional in all correspondence. It is also within your rights to ask Sarah to discuss the matter with a student.

You have the **right to the academic freedom to design student assignment feedback** in accordance with your own teaching philosophy. It is important that the feedback fit the

general requirements of DCS IL feedback, but within these guidelines, there is much room to personalize your feedback.

You may (but are not required to) accept assignment resubmissions. If you do allow resubmissions, please limit the number of resubmissions allowed to one per unit. (If you would like to allow for more than 1 resubmission due to extenuating circumstances, please contact Sarah about the situation.)



You have the **right to set an assignment submission maximum** for your course. As you will see in this issue, students are encouraged to submit not more than one assignment per week. However, individual courses may allow for a more rapid submission schedule without compromising the academic integrity of the course. (Sarah's German courses allow for four assignment submissions per week, or the equivalent of two weeks of work in a 15 week semester course.)

You can, and should, obtain a Wisc ID Card and activate your Net ID. This gives you access to campus resources such as a wisc email account, easy admission to the campus libraries, and use of the student union.

You have the **right to set your working week**. Students are promised email replies within 24 hours and assignment feedback within three business days. As a DCS IL instructor, you may set which five days constitute your working week, as long as your choice of working days is communicated clearly to students and Sarah. (Unless otherwise defined, the work week is M-F.)

You can, and are strongly encouraged to, use your wiscmail address for all IL communication. If you would like your IL email address to be changed to your wiscmail address, please notify Sarah.

You have the **right to ask questions and receive support from your DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator**. Please feel free to contact Sarah with any questions or concerns you may have at skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu.

**Announcing the Forth Quarterly DCS IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting:
A Working Lunch with the D2L Design & Development Team**

**Friday, August 21, 1-3 pm
Room 7045, 21 N. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715**



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Coffee with Sarah

July marks the beginning of a new networking and support program for DCS IL instructors: Coffee with Sarah.

The DCS IL Quarterly Instructor Meetings have provided an opportunity to get to know members of the IL team, learn about developments in the IL program, and engage in professional development. Unfortunately, these meetings seem to be too short to adequately address instructor questions and concerns. In addition, these meetings are scheduled at times and locations that are not equally convenient for all DCS IL instructors.

The new Coffee with Sarah program is intended to help address these issues and provide IL instructors a monthly opportunity to connect with other members of the IL team.

These meetings are optional, informal, and intentionally scheduled at different times on different days in different Madison-area locations. It is our hope that this will make attending a coffee meeting a viable option for the majority of DCS IL instructors.

Be sure to check the latest issue of *Inside Independent Learning* for upcoming

dates, times, and locations for Coffee with Sarah.

* Please note: instructors are responsible for purchasing their own coffee or refreshments for Coffee with Sarah meetings. DCS provides refreshments for the Quarterly Instructor Meetings.

This year's schedule is:

July 20, 2015—2 pm, Manna Café

August 25, 2015—10 am, Barriques MID

September 23, 2015—10 am, Cargo

October 22, 2015—2 pm, Manna Café

November 20, 2015—10 am, Beans & Cream, SP

December 21, 2015—10 am, Cargo

January 19, 2016—2 pm, EVP Midvale

February 24, 2016—2 pm, Barriques MID

March 24, 2016—10 am, Manna Café

April 22, 2016—2 pm, Barriques S. Park

May 23, 2016—2 pm, Beans & Cream, SP

June 21, 2016—10 am, EVP Midvale

The coffee shop name abbreviations and addresses are:

⇒ **Manna Café:** Manna Café and Bakery, Lakewood Plaza Shopping Center, 611 N. Sherman Ave, Madison

⇒ **Barriques MID:** Barriques, 1901 Cayuga St. # 101, Middleton

⇒ **Barriques S. Park:** Barriques, 961 S. Park St. Madison

⇒ **Cargo:** 1309 S. Park Street, Madison

⇒ **Beans & Cream SP:** Beans n' Cream Coffeehouse, 345 Cannery Square, Sun Prairie

⇒ **EVP Midvale:** EVP Sequoya, 555 S. Midvale Blvd, Madison



Assignment Submission Maximum

Each DCS IL instructor is able to set their own assignment submission maximum for their IL course(s). In the past, a popular assignment submission maximum has been between three and six units.

This flexibility is positive, because different DCS IL courses have different credit loads and different numbers of assignments.

However, this can cause confusion among instructors, administrative staff, and student service staff. In addition, students may believe that they will be able to work through their courses at an unrealistic pace, which can cause stress for students and instructors.

Beginning July 1, the official DCS IL assignment submission maximum policy will be as follows:

Students may submit one unit assignment per week unless a prior arrangement has been made with the course instructor.

This policy is intended to help students think about their course completion plan in a realistic way. In addition, the “prior arrangement” wording allows individual instructors to set weekly submission limits that are realistic for and specific to their individual course(s).

If you already have an assignment submission maximum that works well for you and you communicate that maximum to your students via D2L or a welcome let-

ter, this can count as a “prior arrangement”. (Sarah allows up to four assignment submissions per week in her courses.)

If you do not have an assignment submission maximum policy, you are welcome to discuss a realistic policy with Sarah.

It is our hope that this “one unit per week” policy will encourage students who are facing a stressful deadline to discuss their assignment submission plan with their instructor and set realistic expectations for their course workload.

If you are working with a student who has a tight deadline or an unrealistic submission plan, please notify Sarah.

Good Practice Reminder: Plagiarism

Students often struggle with the definition of plagiarism, as well as how to ensure that they are not engaging in acts of plagiarism. This can be especially challenging when writing essay responses to their IL assignment questions. When is it ok to copy sentences from the textbook or course guide, and when should they create their own text?

As an IL instructor, it is important to communicate your expectations clearly to students. This can be done when you revise your course by adding a statement about plagiarism and citation to your syllabus, as well as including clearly worded instructions in the assignments themselves. (Do you want definitions copied from the textbook? Do you want students to create their own independent examples or interpretations? Do you want students to consult another source?)

If you are not revising your course soon, there are still things you can do to help your students avoid plagiarism. Include a statement in your welcome letter about plagiarism and your expectations for how much and what kind of information students will copy from the textbook or study notes. Plagiarism.org is a useful website to share with your students. You may also want to require students to include citations in their essay assignments whenever they quote material, even if it does originate in the textbook or study guide.

If you suspect that a student has engaged in plagiarism, DCS has a plagiarism policy that you can follow:

1. If an instructor suspects academic misconduct, the instructor must submit a written report detailing the suspected misconduct and all pertinent evidence to the DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator within five days of noticing the suspected misconduct.
2. The DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator will consult with the instructor regarding the issue.
3. The DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator will inform the student of the suspected academic misconduct and the student will have the opportunity to explain any suspicious work.
4. The DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator will notify the student of any sanctions. The student may accept the sanctions or request a hearing.
5. If a hearing is requested, it may be held virtually, and will include the DCS IL instructor, the DCS IL Academic Program Coordinator, and additional DCS IL staff.

Please contact Sarah if you would like a copy of the full DCS IL Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures.

D2L Gem: GradeMark

In last month's edition of *Inside Independent Learning*, TurnItIn, the authenticity checker, was featured. TurnItIn is a timesaving tool for instructors because it checks the contents of a student's submitted assignment against information available on the internet *and also work submitted by other students* enrolled in courses that use TurnItIn. (If you have ever wondered if two of your students were copying from one another, TurnItIn can help you answer this question by automatically analyzing similarities in their work.)

Another feature of TurnItIn is called GradeMark. GradeMark is a time-saving tool for instructors who wish to make comments on student's written work.

Many IL instructors currently download student assignments, save the file, use track changes to comment on the file, and then upload the commented file.

GradeMark allows you to work

through this process at a much more rapid pace.

GradeMark can be utilized in DropBox, so there is no need to download and save student assignment files on your personal computer.

With GradeMark, you can highlight text in a student's assignment and write a custom comment about that text, or you can select from a list of common editing marks and comments. You can even create and save your own common editing comments for use with future student assignment submissions.

GradeMark also provides general information about a student's work, such as a word count and originality percentage.

GradeMark can be used with files that are saved as doc and docx, ppt and pptx, xls andxlsx, html, txt, pdf, jpeg, gif, and png. This means that using GradeMark helps ensure that you will be able to open and comment on student assignments, even if your personal computer does not have the

capability of viewing a specific file type.

The Instructional Design Team will be present at the August DCS IL Instructor Meeting, and will be happy to answer specific questions about GradeMark.

If you would like more information about GradeMark, please check out the following websites:

Instructor QuickStart:
http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/instructor-training#quickstart4

Instructor Training:
http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/instructor-training/grademark-overview

If you would like to use GradeMark in your D2L courses, please let Sarah know.

Next Coffee with Sarah:

Monday, July 20, 2 pm

Manna Café & Bakery,
Lakewood Plaza Shopping Center, 611 N. Sherman Ave,
Madison

Save the Date:

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**UW-Madison
Distance Teaching & Learning
Conference
August 11-13, 2015
Madison, WI
dtlconference.wisc.edu**

Coming Next Month: Online Exam Proctoring

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns that you think would be of interest to your IL colleagues, please submit them for future IL newsletters.

Email ideas to:
skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu



Introducing: Catherine Willis



tailor research to the answer specific questions of a community or organization, the results end up informing the actions that the group can take to solve a problem. Working with research this way has reinforced my interest in the research process and my respect for communities and

While many of the students I teach through Independent Learning are located in Wisconsin...I am not. The online format of the course works as well for me as them! I grew up in Toronto, lived in Montreal for a dozen years, and then moved to Madison to start my PhD in Sociology. I am now working on my dissertation from afar, living in Albany NY.

In my dissertation research, I use a strategy called community based research. This approach to research differs from how we usually think about research in that the source of my research questions, and key decision making on the research design, comes from community groups. I love this approach to research; when I work to help

organizations that work so hard to make meaningful changes to the world! It is exciting when I see community groups incorporate research into their planning and decision making process. I love supporting this process.

When I am not working I take advantage of the outdoors in all seasons. Living close to the Adirondack Park in New York state, my partner and I are gradually working to hike the "46" peaks. It might take us a while because we also spend our free time cross-country skiing, cycling, trail running, training and teaching partner acrobatics, slacklining, rock climbing, gardening, cooking, and eating.