

Humanizing Online Learning Summer 2020

Jesse Bishop, Ed.D.
Georgia Highlands College



Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Recall concepts related to humanizing online learning
- Identify strategies for implementing humanizing practices
- Anticipate and recognize barriers when implementing humanizing practices
- Discuss the importance of humanizing online learning



Why should we care about humanizing online learning? Or: Expectations vs. Reality



“College in Your PJs,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14Kv-KYpD10>



https://www.reddit.com/r/Pure_Skill/comments/11lpmf/juggling_chainsaws_in_a_ring_of_fire/

What does it mean to “humanize” learning?



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Humanizing \cong
Student Engagement + Aspects of Personalized Learning + Critical Pedagogy

Maybe?

Humanizing as Equity Practice

Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice



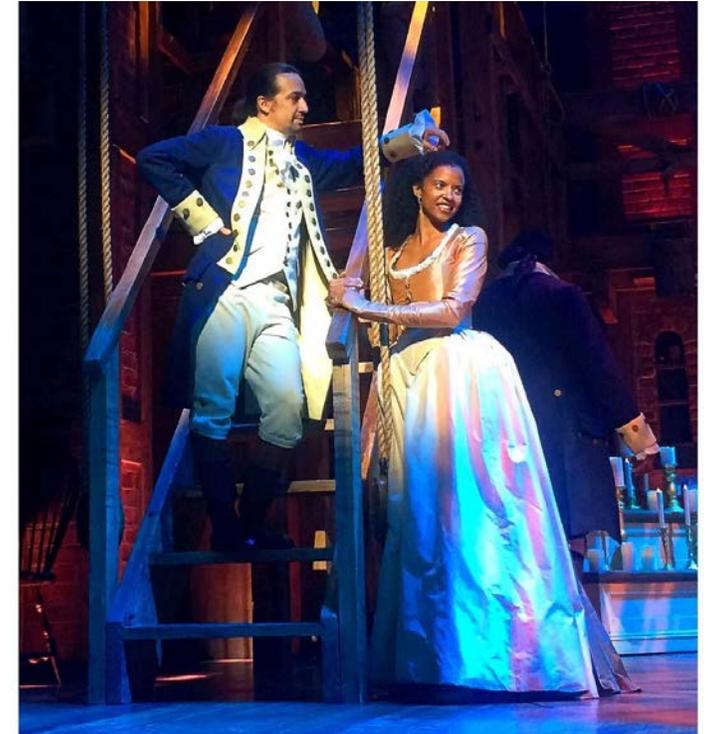
All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

“Instructor-student relationships lie at the heart of humanizing, serving as the connective tissue between students, engagement, and rigor. Humanizing strategies use welcoming visuals and warm asynchronous communications to establish positive first impressions, trust between the instructor and students, and a culture of care in the online environment.” (Pacansky-Brock & Vincent-Layton, 2020)

7 Principles?

- Encourage contact between students and faculty.
- Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
- Encourage active learning.
- Give prompt feedback.
- Emphasize time on task.
- Communicate high expectations.
- Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987)



Chickering & Gamson, c. 1988
in my mind
(not really though...)

Humanizing as Equity Practice, The Chickering & Gamson Remix

“Instructor-student relationships lie at the heart of humanizing, serving as the **connective tissue** between students, **engagement**, and **rigor**. Humanizing strategies use **welcoming visuals** and **warm asynchronous communications** to establish **positive first impressions, trust between the instructor and students, and a culture of care** in the online environment.” (Pacansky-Brock & Vincent-Layton, 2020)

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is

1. Students' time + energy
2. Institution's resources, curricula, and activities that support learning (NSSE, 2020)



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“Institutional resources”...not a single person in the mix...and not a thing faculty members can control individually...

Is Humanizing an Evidence-based Practice? Or: Cotton Candy vs. Real Food



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“Students learn best and most easily when they feel they are in a **safe, low-stress, supportive, welcoming environment** (Ambrose et al., 2010; Doyle & Zakrajsek, 2013).

They are more likely to achieve the learning outcomes of the course, develop higher-order thinking skills, participate in class activities, behave appropriately, be motivated to learn, and be satisfied with the course, whether classroom based (Cornelius-White, 2007; Granitz, Koernig, & Harich, 2009) or online (Lundberg & Sheridan, 2015).”

--*Online Teaching at Its Best* (Nilson & Goodson, 2018)



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Takeaways?



Be Present

Three types of Presence

(Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)

- Social
 - Create connections
 - Respect students as people with complex lives
 - Present ourselves as people with complex lives
- Teaching
 - Sum of behaviors used to direct, guide, and design learning experiences
 - Conveyed first through course design and second through delivery
- Cognitive
 - Support, mentor, and guide students' growth, ideas, and challenges



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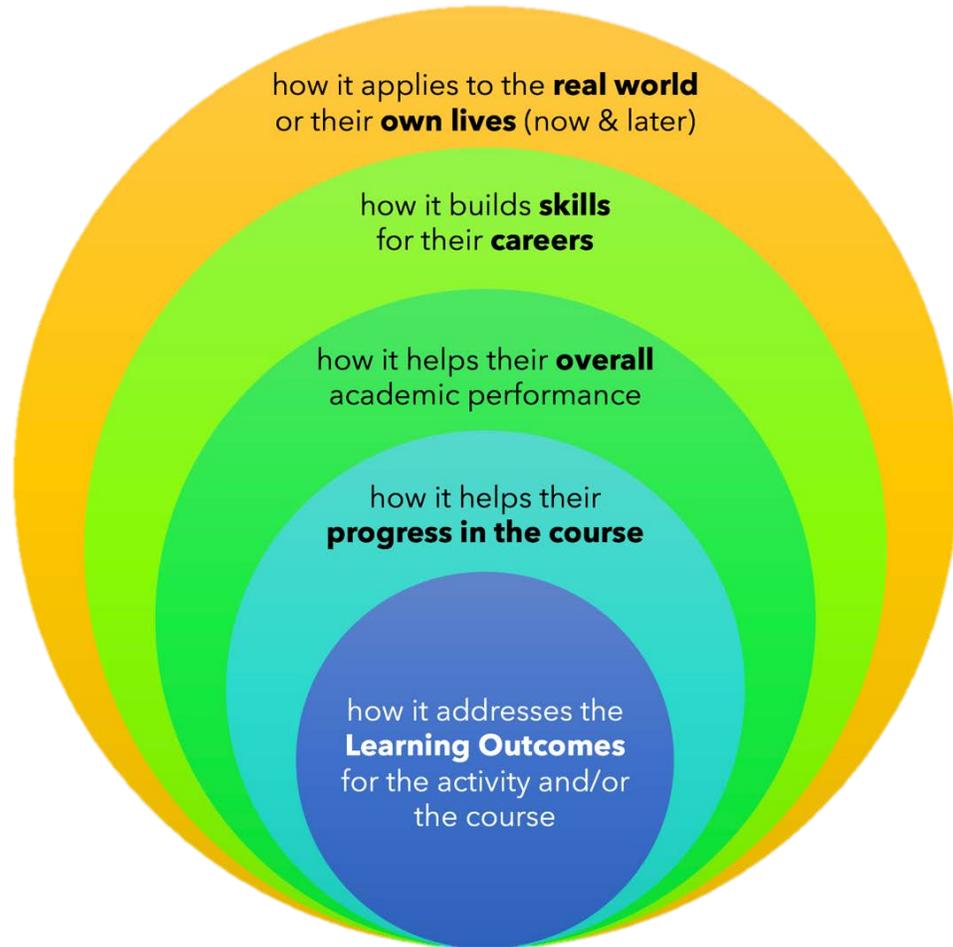


Be “Student-Centered” and Transparent

- Use language that helps students navigate the processes of college and your class
- Demystify and eliminate jargon when you can
- Make your syllabus learner-centered
- “Student Hours” vs. “Office Hours”
- Ask for data about your students (if you don’t already have it)

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT)

- Humanizing Equity practice
- Breaks down barriers for students
- Three key elements: Purpose, Task, Criteria
- Purpose is *MOST* important to humanizing aspect



Communicating the Purpose of Your Assignment
(McRae, Smitherman, Cofer, Hendricks, Domizi, & Bishop, 2017)



Find out more about TILT through the USG
Faculty Development webpage!

Learning "Spaces" David Thornburg (2004)

The Campfire



Photo by [Mike Erskine](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The Watering Hole



The Cave



Photo by [Joshua Sortino](#) on [Unsplash](#)

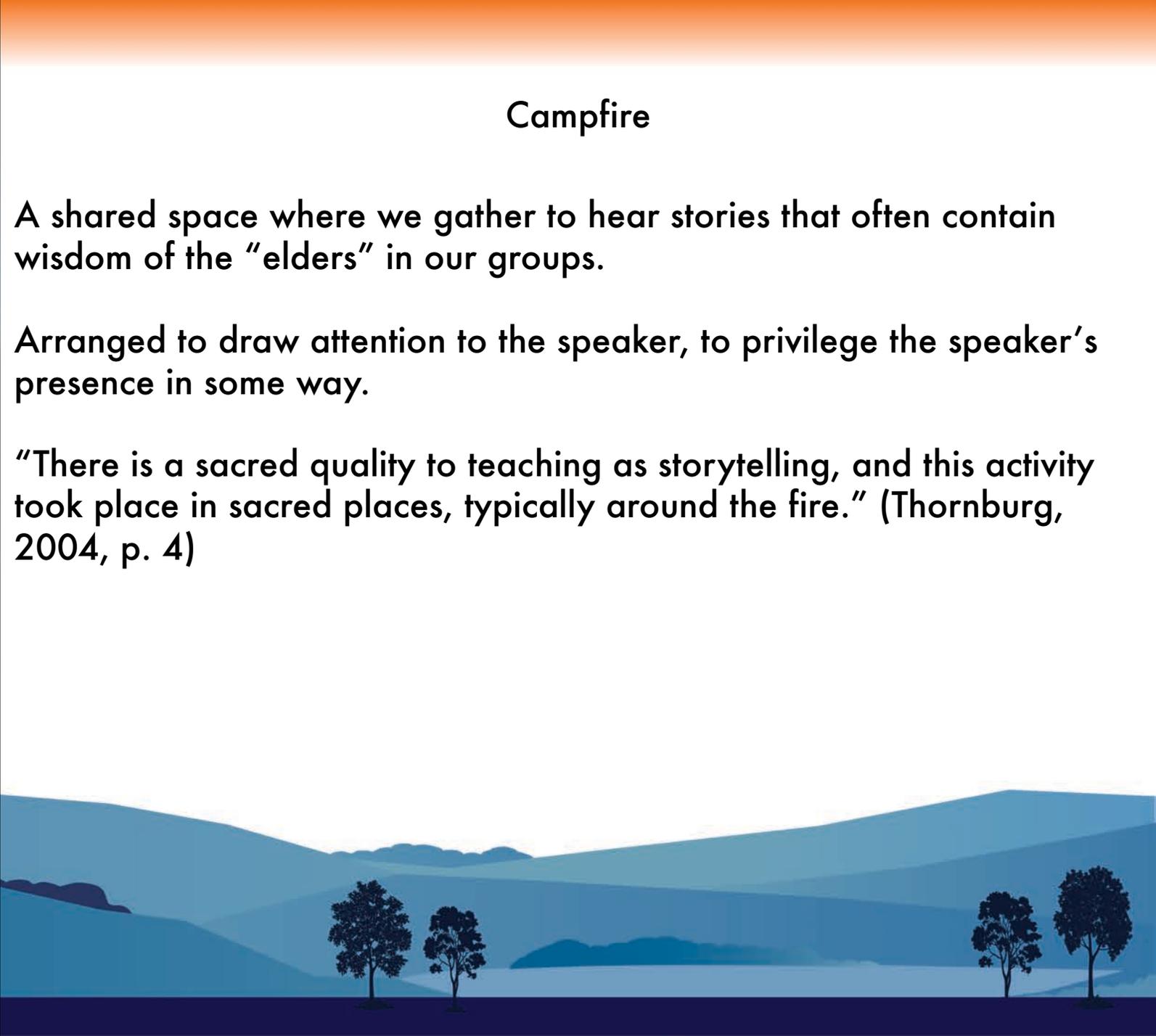


Campfire

A shared space where we gather to hear stories that often contain wisdom of the “elders” in our groups.

Arranged to draw attention to the speaker, to privilege the speaker’s presence in some way.

“There is a sacred quality to teaching as storytelling, and this activity took place in sacred places, typically around the fire.” (Thornburg, 2004, p. 4)



Watering Hole

“The watering hole became a place where we learned from our peers—where we shared the news of the day. This informal setting for learning provided a different kind of learning community...It was peer teaching, a sharing of the rumors, news, gossip, dreams, and discoveries that drive us forward.” (Thornburg, 2004, p. 4)

Informal, but consistent in structure

Discussion organization:

1. First impressions,
2. prior knowledge,
3. recall & understanding, and
4. analysis & application





Cave

Caves are about personal learning through deep consideration, "isolation," or private thinking time. It offers a chance to analyze, synthesize, and reflect.

Can appear in many formats, but focuses on the individual.

"Where we come in contact with ourselves." (Thornburg, 2004, p. 5)

But also... Plato, anyone?



In the Chat window, share some thoughts with us!

What “spaces” have you built or are you building in your online courses?

Does your course tend to lean toward one of these spaces more than others?

How might this aspect of course design and delivery being impacting student engagement in your courses?



“Spaces” (Or at least how I conceptualize/practice them)

Campfire	Watering Hole	Cave
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synchronous interactive lectures• Asynchronous recorded lectures• Publisher content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion boards/forums• Small group synchronous chats• Group texts or sms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal reflections• Essays• Exams• 1:1 meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal/Informal



20 Questions and Personalizing Learning

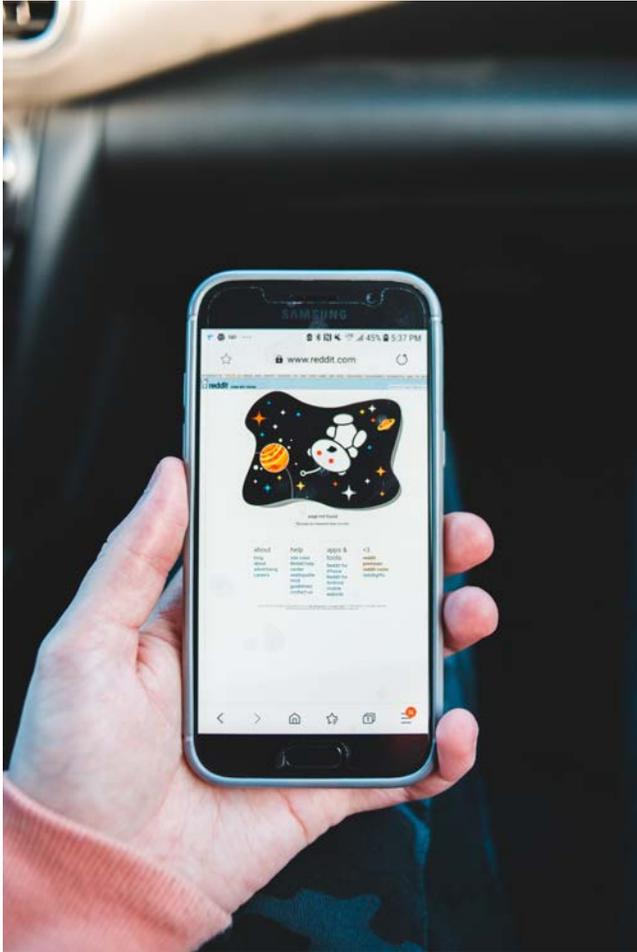


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- Use a short survey to get to know your students (20Qs)
- Incorporate questions about their major, their goals, their experiences with your subject/discipline, etc.
- Ask about their interests (music, films, books, hobbies, etc.)
- Tailor the content when you can. Example: Struggling student likes a particular kind of music or a sport. Can you find a way to make a connection?
- Ask WHY! Find out, as best you can, why they are taking YOUR class in this particular format.
- Let them ask you questions and *answer them*... Reddit AMA style response...(WMP warning!)
- Ask for data from your IR office (as long as you're being ethical in your use and consideration of the data)

Student Voices

- Student voice and decision-making is essential to a humanized learning environment.
- Consider how to collect and use student input in your work.
 - SGIF (Small Group Instructional Feedback)
 - CATs (Classroom Assessment Techniques, Angelo & Cross, 1993)
 - Mid-Course Evaluations

Pro-Tip: If you collect data from your students, use the data! Students will see through any attempt to collect data or input and then not using that information to make changes.

Other Strategies?

- What strategies have you used before or thought of along the way today?
- How might you facilitate a group conversation at your institution about humanizing practices in online learning?
- How might you incorporate student voice into this work? How might we engage them as partners in the learning experience (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014)?

Threats and/or Obstacles to Humanizing Online Learning

1. The Banking Concept
2. Lack of Authenticity/Passion
3. Inadequate Interdisciplinarity
4. Fear



Avoiding the “Banking Concept”



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Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970, 1993), introduces the idea of the “banking concept” of education.

- Students are often viewed as little banks that must be filled with knowledge/information like a child’s piggy bank is filled with coins.
- Reduces to students to passive consumers not learners
- Transactional instead of transformational
- Promotes memorization over critical thinking

“The LMS is set up to be the primary source of information in a course, and the teacher is assigned as the expert” (Boyd, 2016, p. 175)

Lack of Authenticity/Passion

- Be you.
- You became an expert in your field because you care about the field.
- hooks (1994) argues there is a “dualistic separation of public and private, encouraging teachers and students to see no connection between life practices, habits of being, and the roles of professors.”
- Show students who you are, what you care about inside, outside, and connected to your discipline(s).

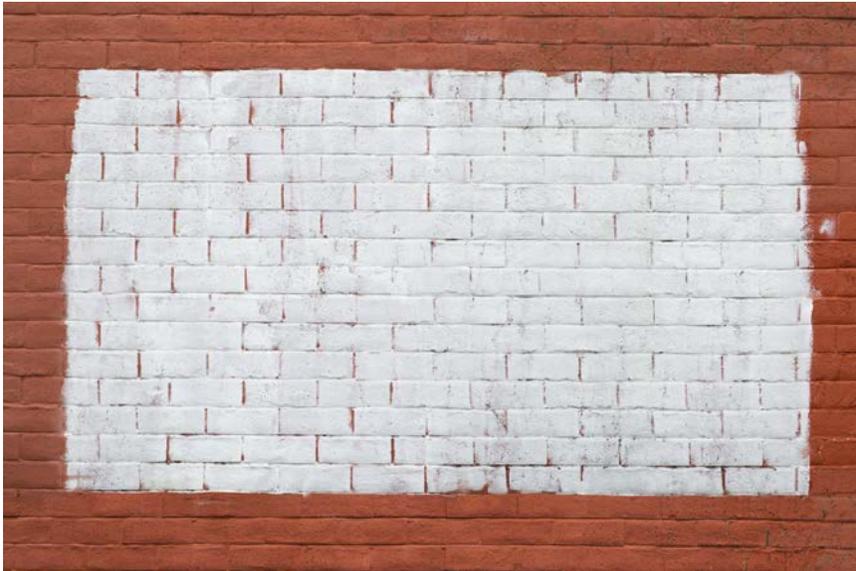


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Inadequate Interdisciplinarity

- Be able to explain how the concepts and content you cover connect(s) to the “real” world.
- Get excited about ways that you see classroom concepts in everyday life.
- Share examples with your students.

How can you connect your field to YOUR students?





Fear: the most dangerous barrier

- Be willing to take a risk (but protect yourself).
- Be professional, but be human.
- Be flawed and make mistakes.
- Demonstrate a growth mindset. Lots of us are teaching in ways we never planned to; embrace the uncertainty and novelty of these circumstances and show your students how to learn through adversity or failure.
- Students desperately need/want to connect, especially online and during these times.

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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

Jesse Bishop
jebishop@highlands.edu

