

Engaging Students in Large Classes for Remote Delivery

Recommended Practices and Examples

Recommendations

1. Establish two-way communication, with efficiency

- Instructor to student:
 - Use announcements, FAQs, polls, and auto follow-ups to engage students (Lemke, n.d.)
 - Use intelligent agents to provide auto-feedback based on performance, i.e., excellent or poor exam score (Massiah & Howard, 2014) which can be pre-populated with tailored messages and can be personalized (Berry, 2009; Elison Bowers. Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011)
 - [Using the Intelligent Agents Tool in myCourses](#)
 - [Ryerson guide to e-mail intelligent agents \(D2L\)](#)
 - Hold targeted online office hours focused on a particular topic or exam question of concern (Massiah & Howard, 2014)
 - Consider using the [myCourses Class Progress Tool](#) to check on student activity trends such as participation in discussion forums; however, time/login should be interpreted with caution as it cannot be directly equated with engagement.
 - Humanize with narrative, your professional experience and by [sharing your profile on myCourses](#) so students have a sense of who you are from the start of your course (Elison Bowers. Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011)
- Student to student:
 - Student introductions (Elison Bowers. Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011)
 - Think-Pair-Share discussions in fixed or flexible activities (Lemke, n.d.)
 - Groupwork collaboration, with rationale explained (Elison Bowers. Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011)
 - Peer review for feedback on draft of multi-stage assignment (Kelly, 2013; Lemke, n.d.)
 - Discussion forums, however “use threaded discussion judiciously”: A discussion thread does not have to be 1:1 replacement of class discussions (Kelly, 2013)
- Student to content:
 - Knowledge checks for self-assessment (Lemke, n.d.) can be interspersed in a myCourses module between content.
 - During a lecture, ask and invite questions (can use hand raise function or polling or breakout rooms to discuss) (Cantillon, 2003).
 - Provide guidance for students on how to approach readings or topics; what is the ‘entry point’, why did you select these readings, what questions should they be able to answer after?
 - Encourage students to connect content to their experiences, future career goals or current events.
 - Consider case-based learning.
- Content to content:
 - How does the content relate within the course as a whole, within the program?

2. Promote a sense of belonging

- Create discussion sections: Breakout rooms or small discussion groups (myCourses).
- Hold office or Brown Bag lunch hours.
- Administer an introductory survey.
- Share your story (Berry, 2009).

3. Provide meaningful assessment and feedback

- Introduce low-stakes assignments.

- Provide opportunities for no-grade knowledge-checks that students can use to practice and apply content with automatic feedback (Elison Bowers, Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011).
- Build in flexibility so students have agency and can choose most meaningful assignments.
- Use polling.
- Give feedback to the entire class,
- Lead a discussion to allow for deeper learning and opportunities for clarification around feedback.
- Provide clear expectations for course participation (Elison Bowers, Sand, Barlow, & Wing, 2011).

Examples from the [Teaching Online Pedagogical Repository \(TOPR\)](#)

Discussions Large Classes (Sugar, DeNoyelles & Chen, 2015)

<https://topr.online.ucf.edu/discussions-large-classes/>

- **Example from English Department** course with 175 students
 - Group size of 8-10 recommended
 - Post - response - response-to-response structure
 - Can be about a reading prompt – which are provided a week in advance
 - “[...] posts should not be informational or just summaries but need to take a position, develop an argument, or provide insight” (Sugar, deNoyelles & Chen, 2015).
 - Links provided in TOPR to example artifacts for this case including:
 - Instructions on the discussion activities
 - Rubric
 - Reading prompts

Using A Guided Approach to Support Critical Thinking in Online Discussions

(Jowallah, deNoyelles & Nkansah-Dwamena, 2019)

<https://topr.online.ucf.edu/using-a-guided-approach-to-support-critical-thinking-in-online-discussions/>

- **Example #1 from Introduction to Africana Studies** course (class size unknown)
 - Focused on contemporary issues
 - Discussion video brief by instructor for motivation and to frame the discussion
 - Rubric provided
 - TOPR link provides sample of
 - Discussion Rubric
 - Discussion instructions
 - Student sample

References

(References with an * are key resources for review and examples.)

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