FACILITATING AND MAXIMIZING QUALITY INTERACTIONS IN HYBRID OR WEB COURSES
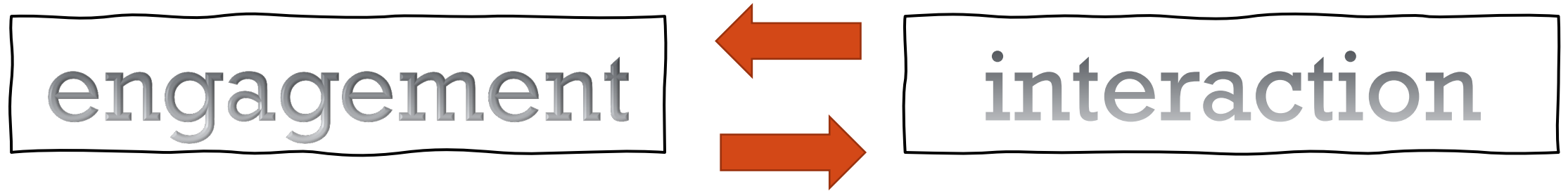
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engagement ⇄ interaction

REMEMBER (OR FIND OUT!) HOW IT FEELS TO BE A STUDENT

Explore a free course through Stanford University.

Some examples:

- https://www.edx.org/course/como-aprender-matematicas-para-estudiantes

- https://www.edx.org/course/american-prophet-the-inner-life-and-global-vision-of-martin-luther-king-jr

- https://www.coursera.org/learn/love-social-justice

- https://www.coursera.org/learn/sciwrite/

- https://online.stanford.edu/courses/xmse100-introduction-innovation-and-entrepreneurship

CONSIDER TYPES OF INTERACTIONS

- Instructor → Student

- Student → Instructor

- Student → Content

- Student → Student (individual)

- Student → Student (small group)

- Student → Student (large group/whole class)

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

TIPS

- Show all participants in grid (WebEx, Zoom, etc.)
- Synchronous discussions
  - Share clear agenda in advance
  - Make it clear how students can add/share ideas and questions (chat, etc.)
- See resources at the CUNY Hybrid Initiative: https://hybrid.commons.gc.cuny.edu/teaching/effective-practices/

CHALLENGES

- How to pair or group students in class with physical distancing parameters
- Many students have WiFi issues with their phones in some buildings

WHAT'S WORKED FOR ME

- Tell students **how** you'll be communicating with them and how often to check it
  - I use Blackboard announcements ALWAYS copied to email (choose "**Send a copy of this announcement**" under "Email Announcement")

- Be **strategic** in communication without bombarding
  - For my WEB courses, I post M, W, F

- Choose a few tools/platforms to use and be clear about which is for what purpose to **streamline** things for *everyone*
  - Consider making the most of platforms supported on campus, even if you don't like them

- Clarify what attendance and participation **mean** for course (whether f2f, hybrid or WEB)
  - I specify this, addressing more introverted personalities

FROM MY EXPERIENCE

- Remember the value of a simple **phone call**!

- Think **outside of the box**; think **creatively**
  - Connect to students' **backgrounds**
  - **Model**, and allow them to step into the world of your content (for me: speaking in Spanish)
  - Use **reflections** from former students, people in field, etc. (e.g., written, video)
  - Include **documentaries**
  - Include links to related **current events** (e.g., audio news reports, articles, interviews)

- Provide a **CHOICE** :
  - 2 or 3 options, choose 1
  - Engaged interaction, broader context for all (reading about what students didn't choose)

FROM MY EXPERIENCE

- Choose **schedule** and method of **delivery** and stick to it

- Send "**reminders**" for missing Blackboard assignments (auto-generated, fast)

- Make discussion forum participation part of **grade** for course

- Consider having students **discuss** more **via writing** than video

- Be open to the idea that interaction might be **more valuable** online than f2f!
  - Jeremy Harmer on the Power of Online Discussion | The New School for Public Engagement https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5BqduPAbJg (2:08)

EXAMPLE OF STUDENT REPLIES IN DISCUSSION FORUM

Hi …,

I really enjoyed reading your response. I definitely agree that this was eye-opening. I think your idea to use predictions would be really helpful to students. I especially think using the title itself to create a prediction would be interesting because some students may have experience with this, but some may have no idea. I think your ideas would be really helpful and interesting to students. Asking them about what they think surprised and confused them would also promote a lot of discussion in the classroom. I also think the deeper discussion would be great and students would get a lot out of that, especially when listening to other students' opinions and experiences. I really liked reading your response!

-…

Hi …!

I love your idea about having the students close their eyes and open their mind, I think that is such a good idea! I think having the students visualize it on their own first before seeing the video would really allow them to picture things in their own way. This is such a creative way to use this video, I think your ideas are very different and would be extremely helpful to not only ELLs but native English speakers also! The comparing and contrasting between their thoughts and what the video had would be really interesting, especially when hearing all of the different students' opinions and ideas about the video. I think your ideas are great and would be very beneficial!

-…

- Some quiet and/or introverted students rose to the top in the **written** discussion forums

- Many came out of their shells **recording** then posting demonstrations as compared to presenting them live

- More **plentiful and meaningful interaction** occurred between students within discussion forum (more time to reflect and provide feedback/response on their own time)

FROM MY EXPERIENCE

- Blackboard **discussion forums** (students → students)
- Blackboard **journals** (student → instructor)
- https://**menti**.com/
- https://**voicethread**.com/
- https://**edpuzzle**.com/
- https://www.**thinglink**.com/

TOOLS I LIKE FOR PROMOTING INTERACTION

Limited free use for instructors and students

Not supported on campus

- Post *first* (choose "Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.")

- *Post* by date

- *Respond* by later date

- Whose forum is it?

- Exemplars

- Scoring rubric and comments

- Sort by most recent

- Provide link to forum within content

- Use font size and graphics for ease of location

BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION FORUM

Tips and considerations

WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN FROM THIS SESSION...

"HOW TO FACILITATE GOOD INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH 50 STUDENTS PER CLASS IN A WEB-BASED PROCESS (INCLUDING HYBRID MODELS)."

- Blackboard groups

- Microsoft Teams (*feels* like a social media platform)

- WebEx breakout groups (coming in September)

- Assign rotating roles: 1 to share out to other groups

- Opinion piece from New York Times
  - https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/opinion/college-reopening-online-classes.html

"HOW TO HELP STUDENTS FEEL CONNECTED TO THE COURSE IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT."

- Tone matters

- Consistency
  - in communication
  - look and feel of course via platform

- Giving attention to little details for clarity
  - icons
  - font choice and size
  - use of bold, italics, etc.

"HOW TO IMPLEMENT STUDENT-STUDENT (PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS) INTERACTION IN A SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE CLASS USING ZOOM OR WEBEX. I'M PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE SO-CALLED 'GROUP BREAK-UP' FEATURE DURING A CLASS--IN WHICH THE INSTRUCTOR CAN 'EAVESDROP' ON SUCH GROUPS AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK AS WELL."

"IDEAS FOR FACILITATING AND BEING ABLE TO 'VISIT' SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION AMONG STUDENTS"

- WebEx:
  - Breakout rooms coming to Cortland in September!

- Microsoft Teams

- See https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/information-resources/documentation.dot
  - go to *Collaboration* for information on WebEx and Teams (WebEx breakout room details forthcoming after the feature becomes available)

- Zoom video (6:16): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkK5WEf6xgk
  - highlights features that facilitate work with large groups

"HOW TO MAKE A COURSE FEEL 'NORMAL' UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES."

- **Release** the idea that what we knew as face-to-face instruction can be replicated under these conditions
  - Do it differently
  - Believe certain aspects can even be better!

- Go back to the **tone** you want to set

- Let your students know they can **reach out to you**—and mean it! When in doubt, **reach out to them** and schedule a phone or video call.

- Explore Backward Design
  - focus on the **core** of what you want your students to gain by the end of the semester
  - find ways to convey the essence of **who you want to come across as** as an instructor
  - see https://commons.georgetown.edu/teaching/design/designing_backward/

"HOW TO MANAGE THE IN CLASS AND ONLINE GROUPS. I'M STILL STRUGGLING ON HOW TO DO THIS."

- Consider course, number of students, audience (gen. ed. vs. major/minor)

- **Teach same content f2f both days** to different groups, deliver same online content to all (e.g., a language class)

- **Use a flipped classroom model**, where "instruction" happens online then discussions, clarifications, etc. take place in classroom
  - IDEA: have X students designated to take notes each class and post (e.g., on BB) for all, so those in "other" group also get content; submission can count toward course grade

- **Stream video** of f2f meeting so other group can attend virtually
  - depends upon instructional space and available technology
  - be aware of privacy issues with students being on video

"I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN HOW I CAN EMBRACE BEST STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IF I HAVE TO MEET A PART OF THE CLASS IN-PERSON AND THE REST WOULD PARTICIPATE IN CLASS SYNCHRONOUSLY THROUGH DEVICES."

- Assign roles/teams to students
  - Release idea of trying to provide the same experience to everyone
  - Consider that more discussion could happen amongst those who are on not f2f given physical distancing parameters
- Go back to flipped classroom approach

"HOW TO MAXIMIZE INTERACTIONS IN SHORT SESSIONS AND SMALL GROUPS."

- Flipped perspective
  - have Ss do activity independently (read article, etc.) prior to meeting
  - plan discussion questions in advance
  - have students write and share a question for discussion
  - use time constructively to focus both on instructor's and students' questions
  - plan for students to share on platform (e.g., Blackboard discussion forum, Microsoft Teams, etc.)

- Consider ideas/perspectives presented in this New York Times article
  - https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/opinion/college-reopening-online-classes.html
  - be creative since we many don't have luxury of TA's, grad assistants, etc.
    - Assign roles to students and rotate
    - Ask for student volunteers who want to develop leadership roles

"I'd like to learn how to keep students interested in the discussion during a Webex/Zoom meeting."

- Rethink what it means to be synchronous: DOES NOT require 50 or 75 minutes of lecture!

- See practical ideas and research on video learning: https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/hevideolearning.pdf
  - Rethink length of lectures
  - Consider types of videos to show (it doesn't have to be you!)

- Part "lecture" followed by individual or group activities during that "synch" time

- Use breakout room features
  - Assign roles
  - Share questions to ponder before class; require students to EITHER share
    - a question
    - an "a-ha!"
    - an example from their own experience to illustrate/draw connections
    - count this toward course grade

"Data from an online MOOC covering 6.9 million video watching sessions in maths and science subjects showed that **median engagement time was at most 6 minutes**, regardless of video length. Median watching time for videos of 9–12 minutes was less than half-way through the video, **dropping to less than a quarter for those of 12-40 minutes** (Guo et al., 2014).

To address this concern over shorter length needs, videos can be offered in **segments** to overcome the challenges of processing images and integrating them with **prior knowledge** as new ones are being presented."

(Charmichael, Reid, Karpicke 12; emphasis added)

ATTENTION!

"…the challenge of **rethinking one-hour lecture content** to provide succinct podcast segments might have been responsible for students finding this more engaging than a traditional lecture divided into sections (Guo et al., 2014).

Researchers refer to '**disruptive innovation**' (Kirkwood and Price, 2013) or a '**disruptive pedagogy**', (Kinash et al., 2015); video can shift the concept of teaching from didactic approaches to **constructivist learning** with students able to control aspects of their learning"

(Charmichael, Reid, Karpicke 7; emphasis added)

RETHINKING

"IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS FOR KEEPING DISCUSSIONS ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE IN WEBEX WITHOUT HAVING TO PURCHASE ICLICKERS OR OTHER TECH."

- Polling feature

- Chat feature

- Break it up; mix it up
  - Instructor
  - Topic for chat
  - Student groups
  - Poll

"TECHNIQUES TO FOSTER STUDENT TO STUDENT INTERACTION."

- Blackboard discussion forums

- Pre-recorded presentations by students
  - Screencast-o-matic, Voicethread, etc.
  - Students watch all (if small class)
  - Group students and have all watch some (if large class)
  - Students provide feedback in discussion forum

"MY MAIN CONCERN IS TO BE ABLE TO GENERATE POSSIBILITIES FOR VERBAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE STUDENTS AND STUDENT- PROFESSOR ON A ONE TO ONE BASIS IN REAL TIME FOR A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS."

- Breakout sessions with roles
  - Interlocutors (lead speaker, listener then reverse)
  - Note takers for:
    - gist, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, general observations
  - Have students share notes in Microsoft Teams or on Blackboard discussion forums

- Scenario:
  - Give students time to practice
  - Instructor joins in to listen/observe/clarify/participate
  - Students don't know when instructor will join creating positive pressure to interact and engage
  - Consider having other students play instructor role occasionally
    - scaffold for those with higher proficiency
    - could either assign or take volunteers
    - pre-service teachers

"INCREASING MEANINGFUL AND PURPOSEFUL INTERACTION IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT"

"JUST GENERAL WAYS FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE BETTER WITH THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR, CLASSMATES AND CONTENT"

"QUALITY INTERACTIONS ONLINE"

"STRATEGIES TO KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED AND WAYS FOR STUDENTS TO INTERACT WITH EACH OTHERS DURING SESSIONS"

- Other ideas?

- Questions?

- Please post in the chat section.

Tips from the Online Teaching Group

- Assign X students per class to do X
  - share with all on platform of choice
  - count toward attendance/participation

- Hybrid classes: create partners
  - 1 in class/1 remote then share

- WebEx feature: **students** writing notes

- Have students form own teams
  - Microsoft Teams
    - access from 9-point grid in top left corner of myRedDragon
  - WebEx
    - can assign roles or "mentors" as needed
  - Microsoft Meetings: Microsoft version of Slack

FROM THE NATIONAL STANDARDS ON QUALITY ONLINE LEARNING

STANDARD C: COMMUNITY BUILDING

The online teacher facilitates interactions and collaboration to build a supportive online community that fosters active learning.

C1 The online teacher employs learner-centered instructional strategies and current practices that leverage technology for learner collaboration.

C2 The online teacher creates expectations for appropriate interaction among learners, including establishing netiquette requirements, modeling implementation, and enforcing the requirements.

C3 The online teacher develops a community among culturally diverse learners by providing opportunities for interaction that are conducive to active learning.

C4 The online teacher promotes learner-learner interaction in online groups in order to foster collaboration and promote higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation.

C5 The online teacher is able to meet the learning needs of all learners, regardless of cultural background and perspective.

https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-teaching/

*With thanks to Chris Widdall for sharing this resource in the Online Teaching Group.

- 1-1 information sharing (S→I)

- Discussion forums (S →S)

- Discussion forums (I→S)

- If students aren't interacting, reach out and schedule a phone/video call ASAP.
  - Introvert?
  - Lack of confidence?
  - Not interested?
  - Knowing the reason can help you help them move forward.

- Use free online polls at strategic times throughout course (in addition to during your synchronous and f2f meetings)
  - Consider if you want it to be anonymous or not

INTERACT

WORKS CITED

Charmichael, Michael, Abigail-Kate Reid and Jeffrey D. Karpicke. "Assessing the
      Impact of Educational Video on Student Engagement, Critical Thinking and
      Learning: The Current State of Play". *Sage Publishing*. 2018. 30 July 2020,
      https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/hevideolearning.pdf.

THANK YOU!

Shared document to continue sharing ideas and resources

Contact me: shena.salvato@cortland.edu