*Enhancing Online Interactions*
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**Instructor–Student Interactions**

A key part of student engagement in an online asynchronous course is *instructor-student interactions*. The following methods are designed to foster an inclusive, supportive, and engaging climate for learning in an online asynchronous course.

*Use frequent communications:*
- Send consistent announcement messages to the class.
- Write frequent individual check-in emails for students.
- Provide students with multiple opportunities per semester to share their situations or concerns through an online survey. This format allows students to reach out without composing an email, making some students feel more comfortable with sharing their situations or concerns.


Example of Reflection Activity

*Create weekly welcome videos*
- Explain assignments by delivering clear expectations.
- Review the previous week's discussions and incorporate reflection points to enable students to reflect on the current week's discussion further.
- Explain how the previous week's theme is related to the current week's theme to help students understand how the two themes are connected.
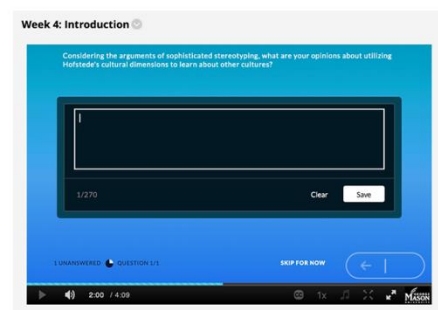
*Offer individual consultation meetings, office hours, and optional online synchronous classes*
- Schedule individual consultations or check-in meetings with each student once or twice a semester:
  - Check-in with each student and ask whether they need any support or have any concerns.
  - Provide feedback on their assignments and explain expectations for coursework, such as the final group project or individual assignments.
- Provide optional online synchronous classes
  - Offer a short lecture in an online synchronous format for students who need additional explanations of the learning contents.

**Student–Student Interactions**

It is not uncommon for students to not know each other in an online asynchronous course, even after spending an entire semester together. To avoid this situation, I created various opportunity for students to engage with each other.

- Weekly or bi-weekly discussion boards

- o Require students to not only submit a written response, but also a video response to the Discussion Board to increase visibility.
- Bi-weekly pair discussion activities
  - o Require students to engage with each other outside of the class to discuss course materials.
    - ▪ Although I require students to submit a video response to other students' threads, I wondered how I could increase their presence and sustain their motivation and effort. In spring 2023, I began to design my course to have bi-weekly discussion board activities and bi-weekly pair discussion activities. For example, students engage with the discussion board in Weeks 1, 3, 5, etc., and have pair discussion activities with one classmate in Weeks 2, 4, 6, etc. After completing the current week's pair discussion activity, students must reflect on the previous week's pair discussion activity (e.g., students need to reflect on the Week 2 pair discussion activity in the Week 3 module).
- Group projects
  - o Require students to engage with each other through group discussions on current events and through a final group project.
  - o Some online students have other obligations outside of the class (e.g., full-time jobs or taking care of family members). The group contract assignment plays an important role in enhancing peer support and developing a mutual care environment for group projects. It is designed to ensure that students can accomplish the following:
    - ▪ Discuss each group member's obligations outside of the class, expectations, and group work preferences and styles.
    - ▪ Develop communication plans.
    - ▪ Establish meeting plans.
    - ▪ Identify foreseeable group challenges and possible solutions to them.

The strategies for Instructor–Student Interactions and Student-Student Interactions are designed to enhance students' interactions with course content and to foster mastery and application of course materials.