10. Imagine Discussions as F2F Conversations in Class

- Always ask yourself: *What is the objective of this discussion?*

    - Imagine prompting students in class and before anyone can speak or share a thought we tell everyone that they have to speak in perfect English, say 3-5 sentences, no fragments, full APA/MLA citations of any claims made… LOL.

        - If your Objective is to get students collaborating, chatting, align your rubric.

- Expect (and share your expectation of) different reactions to discussion posts.

    - Compliment – I like that, I appreciate that…

    - Comment – I agree because, I disagree with your claim that…

    - Connect – I also thought about this other concept…

    - Question – This made me wonder why…

        - A new framework that gets us away from "I agree."

- Expect responses that *advance* the discussion*.*

    - *"You can restate and affirm all day if you want to,"* Speer (ID from Wichita State) said. *"I'm not giving credit for that."*

- Discourage "cluster posting" (posting rapidly and repeatedly before leaving the discussion, or posting right before the due date.)

9. Have students write the discussion questions

Guidelines:

- Can't post the same question as someone else again

- Then, respond to one question that *doesn't* have a response yet.

- Next, respond to one post that you *don't* agree with.

- Assessing/rubricking:

    - Did they pull a thoughtful/meaningful question from the reading?

    - Did they "care for" their discussion question?

- BONUS: you build a discussion question bank.

8. Offer differentiated ways of submitting.

- Responses don't always have to be written (check in with **10.** first…)
  - o Allow students to post:
    - ✓ Images,
    - ✓ Gifs
    - ✓ Found videos
    - ✓ Original videos
    - ✓ Tweets
    - ✓ Links

7. Ask students to find and share a YouTube video or TedTalk that further develops a concept from the week, chapter, or module.

- It requires that they engage with a ton more content than we provide…
- They'll likely look at more than one video before choosing one
- They can't post the same video as someone else (we aren't just getting the top YouTube result)
- BONUS: You get an incredible repository of videos covering concepts in your course. Embed them, show them in in-person classes, use them to flesh out your OER content…

6. Provide a Menu of Prompts to Respond to

- We wouldn't go down our roster and ask the same question of every student in an in-person class… some students answer some questions and some student answer others.
- Ask students to respond to one of three or four prompts, and then respond to a peer who answered a different prompt than they did.

5. Split your Due Dates

- Set the initial post due on Wednesday, and responses to peers due at the end of the week.

4. Make it Playful

Invite students to an RPG (role playing game):

- assume the perspectives of different people in history, a case study, a novel, or any situation (defendant, judge, advisor, the novel's protagonist/antagonist, teacher, immigrant…) and jump in on one another's posts…
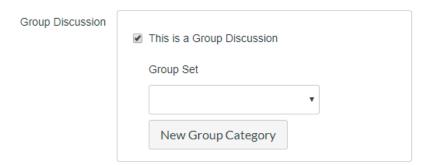
- make a video explaining the concept-at-hand to someone who totally doesn't get it as if they are a tutor or teacher…

- play "what-if?" *What if Earth's gravity was 2x what it is now? What if the US had not involved itself it WWII? What if prices just keep rising? What if sunlight suddenly became scarce?*

3. Use Canvas Groups

In a large class, holding a meaningful online discussion can be…unwieldy. As the number of comments grows and grows, both you and your students may find yourselves suffering from fatigue as you attempt to keep up.

To combat this issue, consider breaking your class up into groups with a separate discussion thread for each group. Within these small groups discussion can be more focused, and you will have an easier time reviewing the comments and keeping track of the flow of discussion. Canvas makes this easy:

1. create a group set, either manually or automatically divide your students into small groups (try 4-5 members), and
2. check the "This is a Group Discussion" checkbox when setting up your discussion to assign it to the groups you have created.

Group Discussion

☑ This is a Group Discussion

Group Set

▼

New Group Category

2. Assign Roles

Another effective practice, which can be used either jointly with group discussions or by itself, is to assign roles.

- one student will be the initial commenter;
- a second student will respond to this first comment;
- a third student will summarize the direction of the debate in his/her comment; and so on.

Having an assigned role helps students to move past their initial uncertainty about "what should I say?" and can help set the discussion on a productive path.

If you use roles, rotate them periodically so that every student has a chance to fill all of the roles.

Some fun roles or categories include:

Last names A-J: create an initial discussion question. Last names H-P: respond in the 3CQ format. Last names Q-Z: summarize discussion or debate thus far.	Favorite animal is a mammal: share a video that explains this concept in a new way Favorite animal is a bird: respond with a link to a related and useful resource Favorite animal is a fish or reptile: direct us to the page or module in our course that covers this	Birthday is Jan-April: create a discussion question. Birthday is May-August: respond in the 3CQ format Birthday is September to December: summarize discussion or debate thus far.

1. You don't have to have one EVERY week.

- If you're burnt out, they're burnt out.
- If you *insist* on it, have a check-in not about content.
- The ACCJC says we should have opportunities to interact on a basis "**commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency"**
  - This can mean often enough to offer ample opportunity to discuss concepts
  - Could be very other week…

Contact the Distance Education Coordinator for additional ideas and online teaching support!

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