Student Engagement and Community Building
Presenters

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Welcome

Tell us a little bit about yourself

➢ Preferred name
➢ What you teach
➢ Why did you decide to enroll in the Teaching Online Short Course?
➢ Do you have any questions before we get started?
Agenda

❖ Introductions
❖ Literature overview on the benefits of student engagement
❖ Facilitating productive discussions
❖ Using technology to enhance discussion and engagement
❖ Q&A
Literature overview on the benefits of student engagement

- Teaching presence establishes a social connection and develops a sense of community for a supportive online learning environment (Garrison, 2011).
- Intentional relationships between instructor and students inspire intellectual curiosity (Orcutt & Dringus, 2017).
- Discussions that include real-life cases and scenarios encourage reflective thinking (Kilis & Yildirim, 2019).
Facilitating productive discussions - Prompts

- Develop clear, specific discussion prompts
  - Limit the number of questions or subjects to 2-3 so that students can respond thoughtfully
  - Avoid posing only factual questions
  - Instead, concise questions that ask students to analyze, interpret, and synthesize material will facilitate active learning and deeper engagement
  - Consider asking students to put forth their own opinions, based on research and/or personal experience, as a way to allow them to connect with the course subject matter
Facilitating productive discussions - Replies

- Require students to respond to each other’s posts
  - A common best-practice is to ask students to respond to at least two separate posts
  - Emphasize that the more students engage with each other, the more dynamic the discussion will be and the more they will get out of the course
  - Clearly explain the expectations for responses in the prompt, syllabus, and/or rubric
Facilitating productive discussions - Ground Rules

❖ Everyone has the right to be heard
❖ Be respectful while still being critical
❖ No name calling
❖ Hold yourself and each other to high standards of excellence at all times
❖ Practice humility and recognize that you do not know everything and that everyone can stand to learn
❖ Recognize that everyone will start from different bases of knowledge.

(Alvarez, L. & Iturbe-LaGrave, V., (2020) citing from Salazar et.al. (2009))
Facilitating productive discussions - Rubrics

❖ Use rubrics for grading and evaluation
❖ Rubrics help students understand expectations and streamline grading
❖ Common criteria include:
  ➢ Timeliness of the initial post
  ➢ Quality of the initial post’s response to the rubric
  ➢ Timeliness of the reply or replies to other students
  ➢ Quality of the reply or replies
❖ Feel free to supplement rubrics with written comments
❖ The next slide features a sample rubric from a writing course
# Facilitating productive discussions - Sample Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion post timeliness</td>
<td><strong>5.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Excellent&lt;br&gt;Discussion post is submitted on or before the due date.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td><strong>2.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Unsatisfactory&lt;br&gt;Discussion post is not submitted on or before the due date.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis of text</td>
<td><strong>5.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Excellent&lt;br&gt;Post thoughtfully responds to all the aspects of the discussion prompt and includes specific examples from the text to support analysis. Post analyzes the text from the perspective of a writer, and considers what can be learned from the text and applied to your own writing.</td>
<td><strong>4.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Effective&lt;br&gt;Post offers suitable analysis that addresses all or most of the discussion prompt, though some analysis could be extended, deepened, or supported by further evidence from the text. Post addresses what can be learned from text and applied to your own writing, but could explore these issues in further detail.</td>
<td><strong>3.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Competent&lt;br&gt;Post offers adequate analysis of the text, but neglects to address some aspects of the prompt. Analysis could be more detailed and more specific, with further references to the text. Post only cursorily considers what can be learned from the text and applied to your own writing.</td>
<td><strong>2.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Unsatisfactory&lt;br&gt;Post is vague, general, and neglects to address most or all of the discussion prompt. Analysis is not sufficiently supported by evidence. Post does not meaningfully consider what can be learned from the text and applied to your own writing.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reply timeliness</td>
<td><strong>5.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Excellent&lt;br&gt;Replies to fellow discussion post are submitted on or before the due date.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td><strong>2.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Unsatisfactory&lt;br&gt;Replies to fellow discussion post are not submitted on or before the due date.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to other discussion posts</td>
<td><strong>5.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Excellent&lt;br&gt;Replies engage thoughtfully with other discussion posts, building on or countering the ideas of the other posts.</td>
<td><strong>4.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Effective&lt;br&gt;Replies engage with other discussion posts, though the comments could be more clear or discerning.</td>
<td><strong>3.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Competent&lt;br&gt;Replies engage only fitfully with other discussion posts. Replies mostly echo or simply disagree with other posts.</td>
<td><strong>2.0 pts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Unsatisfactory&lt;br&gt;Replies do not engage with other discussion posts, or engage only in the most basic ways (i.e. &quot;Great idea!&quot;)</td>
<td>5</td>
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Facilitating productive discussions - Online Presence

- Establishing a presence in discussion forums helps promote student-faculty learning, one of the tenets of active learning.
- You want students to take ownership of the discussion, so think of yourself as a facilitator -- don’t necessarily comment on every single post.
- Instead, choose posts to comment on that help you steer the discussion down constructive avenues.
- Or, wait till the students have all posted and then write your own post that synthesizes the overall direction of the discussion and poses follow-up questions.
### Facilitating productive discussions

<table>
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<th>Task</th>
<th>Sample Dialogue</th>
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| Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement and linking. | “Joe, Mary has provided a compelling counter-example to your hypothesis. Would you care to respond?”  
“How is that similar to what we read earlier?  
“How does your view compare to Valerie’s” |
| Seeking to reach consensus/understanding. | “I think Joe and Mary are saying essentially the same thing.”  
“What interests you about this issue?” |
| Encouraging, acknowledging or reinforcing student contributions. | “Thank you for your insightful comments.” |
| Drawing in participants, promoting discussion. | “Who has some thoughts on this issue?”  
“What stands out from what we discussed?”  
What big question still lingers?” |
| Assess the efficacy of the process | “I think we're getting a little off track here.”  
“What’s the most important value or principle we should consider here?” |

(Garrison, 2017, p.75)
Using technology to enhance discussion and engagement

- Media posts are a great way to enhance discussions and accommodate different types of learners
  - Encourage students to use the “record/upload media” button to upload a video or audio post to the discussion
- Students can also insert media, such as images, videos, or gifs to supplement written posts
  - Multimodal discussions can be more stimulating and, ultimately, beneficial to student learning
Summary

- Establish clear expectations
- Be involved
- Utilize technology
Q & A

- What questions or concerns do you have about student engagement and community building?

