Student-Student Interaction

Fostering Student Interaction and Collaboration in Online Courses is Vital

In a classroom setting, this interaction happens naturally, as students listen to each other's comments, ask each other questions, and build rapport through frequent contact. Instructors can also foster student-to-student interaction in an online setting, but it may require building formal and informal interaction opportunities in your course design.

Is There Evidence that Instructor Interaction in Meaningful?

There is much research that shows that online courses with high levels of instructor-to-student interaction have a positive impact on student satisfaction and learning. For example:

• Student-to-student interaction is vital to building community in an online environment, which supports productive and satisfying learning, and helps students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Kolloff, 2011).

• To prevent online students from experiencing potential boredom and isolation in the learning environment, it is essential to build activities that enhance engagement. These activities assist students in feeling connected and can create a dynamic sense of community (Martin & Bollinger, 2018).

How Do I Create Meaningful Instructor Interaction?

- Create a student-only discussion thread to foster community in an online environment.
- Create an Introduction Discussion Board and an Ice Breaker activity at the beginning of the semester.
- Start synchronous courses with a "chatter topic" foster peer-to-peer conversations that normally happen in the hallway or walking to another class.
- Assign projects that require collaborative efforts.
- Identify student moderators each week to oversee discussion board posts to ensure a safe learning space and create continuous dialogue on specific topic.
- Utilize Canvas tools such as Collaboration, Peer Review, and the Discussion Board.

References

Kolloff, M. (2011). Strategies for effective student/student interaction in online courses. 17th annual conference on distance teaching and learning.

Martin, F. & Bolliger, D.U. (2018). Engagement matters: Student perceptions on the importance of engagement strategies in the online learning environment. Online Learning 22(1), 205- 222. doi:10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092