



Cognitive Overload? Group Connection? Participation?

Scaffolding

Make the discussion board easy to use

- Guidelines, deadlines, & feedback should be clear, specific & timely
- Limit the number of posts
- Summarize information on complicated posts
- Concisely summarize weekly content

Teach students how to participate

- Initial session on necessary student skills
- Use example postings, "note starters" & predefined phrases

Score posts from specific criteria/rubric

- Give extra point for posts that encourage responses
- High standards for posts will increase quality
- Emphasize conciseness and limited number of words

(Cheung, Hew & Ng, 2008; Darabi & Jin, 2013; Dennen & Wieland, 2008; Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013; Gilbert and Dabbagh, 2005; Hanover Research Council, 2009; Savery, 2005)



Build Community

Facilitate student interaction & rapport

- At the beginning and middle of the semester have the entire class -present in one setting

Utilize web-conferencing if necessary

- Provide a medium to share a biography and photo

Utilize an "All about me" thread

- Use warm-up/ice breaker postings at the beginning of the semester

Two Truths & a Lie, Create a portrait, interview each other

- Instructor should share a biography & photo

Increase visibility

- Postings & comments on the discussion board will increase engagement in the discussion

- Utilize a peer facilitation technique

- It is important for the teacher to model interaction

Utilize peer facilitation

- Students check for responses to their posts and will become disengaged if no responses

(Cheung, Hew & Ng, 2008; Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013; Gilbert and Dabbagh, 2005; Hanover Research Council, 2009; Nandi, Hamilton, & Harland, 2012; Teacher Stream, LLC, 2009)

Interesting Content

Pay careful attention to discussion questions

- Socratic questioning
- Carefully thought out questions and activities/ how to phrase question

Increase amount of discussion with limited focal questions and open focal questions (opinion) Increase level of thinking with course link, brainstorm and direct link questions (synthesis)

- Allow for reflection

Develop concise, interesting, & relevant content

- Explain the purpose and the value of discussion boards and collaboration
- All content should be strategically developed to connect to the curriculum and "real life"
- Wiki, simulation

Integrate varied design in activity

- Second life role playing
- Skype
- Jigsaw groups & other group projects
- Expert visitor
- Utilize voting & surveys
- Group work on Google docs

(Bradley, Thom, & Hay, 2008; Cheung, Hew & Ng, 2008; Chien, Davis, Slattery, Keeney-Kennicutt, & Hammer, 2013; Dennen & Wieland, 2008; Du, Havard & Li, 2005; Hanover Research Council, 2009; Hou, 2012; Kao, 2008; Prude, 2013; Teacher Stream, LLC, 2009)

Course Management - Be VOCAL

Visible Organized Compassionate Analytical Leader-by-example