

Learning Activities that Foster Interaction

The charts in this document show examples of activities that you can do with your students in online classes. They are divided into the three “tenets” of online learning: Student-Instructor Interaction, Student-Student Interaction, and Student-Content Interaction. If you are looking for ideas for lesson plans, those can be found in the Student-Content Interaction section.

Please note that the list of methods of interaction below is not comprehensive. It represents only some of the more popular methods.

Student-Instructor Interaction

All courses shall include regular effective contact between students and the instructor.

Methods of interaction	Description
Email	The instructor will initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Students will be encouraged to email the instructor with questions about the content, structure, grading, etc., of the course. Replies will be made as soon as possible.
Class discussion board	The instructor will facilitate discussions in the class discussion board. While it's impossible to reply to every student posting, the instructor will read each one and reply to selected postings. Replies will be substantive.
Announcements	Announcements will be posted to the class regularly. Announcements might include information on when assignments are due, changes in the syllabus, and exam schedules.
Chatroom	The instructor will use chat to interact with students, textually and/or graphically, in real-time. The instructor will use a chatroom to conduct virtual office hours.
Webconferencing	The instructor will use webconferencing to interact with students in real-time, over the Internet and with an audio connection. The instructor will use webconferencing to conduct virtual office hours and to deliver content live to students.
Blogs	Blogs will be used as an interactive writing tool for the instructor and students to publicly discuss and give feedback on topics relating to the course.
Journals	Journals will be used as an interactive writing tool for the instructor and students to privately discuss and give feedback on topics relating to the course.
Video	The instructor will create short video clips to initiate private and public interaction with students. Video will be used to also provide feedback on assignment submissions.
Social networking	A social network will be set up for the course so everyone can communicate on any topic.
Social bookmarking	Instructors and students will share helpful web sites with one another.
Virtual worlds	Instructors and students will communicate with one another in a virtual world, which gives the sense of being together in the same place.
Telephone	The telephone will be used to interact with students individually to answer questions, review student work, etc.
Face-to-face meetings	Students can come to campus during face-to-face office hours to discuss any facet of the course.

Listservs	The instructor will communicate with all students simultaneously via an email listserv. Student and instructor responses can also be emailed to everyone in the class.
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Student-Student Interaction

Regular interaction among students is necessary to design a collaborative, student-centered environment in which a community of learners is created.

Methods of interaction	Description (add specifics for your course)
Email	Students will be encouraged to email each other to ask questions about the course, including assignments. They will complete at least one assignment in which they use email to facilitate a peer-editing lesson. An example assignment is...
Class discussion board	Students will post to the discussion board in each module, answering questions posed by the instructor. They will also reply to each others' postings. An example assignment is...
Group work	Students will work in teams to complete a group project. This project will then be shared with the rest of the class in the discussion board. An example assignment is...
Blogs	Students will use blogs to discuss topics in the course. They will also use blogs in a writing assignment in which groups collaborate to write a paper. An example assignment is...
Chat	As an adjunct to the group discussion board, students will use the class chatroom to discuss their group project in real-time. An example is...
Peer-editing/critiquing	Students will use Google Docs for a peer-editing assignment. They will edit another student's paper and give feedback directly on the document. An example assignment is...
Social networking	A social network will be set up for the course so everyone can communicate on any topic.
Social bookmarking	Students can share helpful web sites with one another.
Wikis	Wikis allow students to work collaboratively to build a web site. This can be particularly useful when groups have to create a product to share with the class. An example assignment is...
Chatroom	As an adjunct to the group discussion board, students can use the class chatroom to discuss their group project in real-time.
Virtual worlds	Students can communicate with one another in a virtual world, which gives the sense of being together in the same place.

Student-Content Interaction

All student activities, including assessments, should be aligned to the outcomes of, and objectives within, the course. Activities should also be designed to meet the needs of students with different learning styles. The content must cover all of the content detailed in the course outline of record.

Methods of interaction	Description (add specifics for your course)
Class discussion board	Each module will contain at least one class discussion relating to the topic(s) of the module. Students will be required not only to post their opinions, ideas, and experiences, but they will also be required to reply to their classmates' posts. The instructor will pose questions relating to the textbook, online presentations, web sites, etc. An example assignment is...
Group work	There will be at least one group project during the semester. Students will collaborate in private groups to solve problems,

Methods of interaction	Description (add specifics for your course)
	become experts on certain topics, etc. They will then present their findings to the class in the class discussion board. These presentations will be in the form of writing, PowerPoint presentations, or web sites. An example assignment is...
Written papers	<p>Papers will be written on various topics. Prior to students submitting their work, papers will be checked by an anti-plagiarism service to ensure that no plagiarism is involved. There will be short papers on...</p> <p>There will be a term paper on...</p>
Internet research	Students will use the Internet to research questions, problems, events, etc. Prior to students submitting papers, those papers will be checked by an anti-plagiarism service to ensure that no plagiarism is involved. An example research assignment is...
Quizzes, tests/exams	<p>Quizzes will be used in each module to make sure students completed the assigned reading and understood it. These quizzes will be "open-book", but the questions will be randomized so different students get different questions.</p> <p>Tests and exams will include short answer and essay questions that will require higher-order thinking, along with supporting factual knowledge. The questions will be randomized so different students get different questions. Time limits will be set, backtracking will be prohibited, and students will be forced to complete the exam in one sitting. A typical exam question is...</p>
Practice quizzes	Practice quizzes will be given periodically throughout the course so students will be able to gauge their understanding of the content. Specifically, these ungraded practice quizzes will be given prior to the midterm and final exam. These quizzes will include only objective questions so they can be graded by the computer, enabling students to gain immediate feedback.
Journal writing	Students will maintain a journal to record reactions to topics being studied and to record personal reflections. In their journals, students will write...
Mini-lectures	<p>Written lecture material will be divided into short, readable ("chunked") sections with links to subsequent pages, if necessary. For example, four mini-lectures, each with two short paragraphs per page, will be posted on the topic of...</p> <p>PowerPoint presentations—with or without audio narration—will be up to 5 minutes in duration but no longer than 10 minutes. Each module will contain one narrated PowerPoint presentation that covers the main points of the module. Deaf students will have access to the narration via a text transcript. An example presentation will cover...</p> <p>Podcast lectures will be chunked and up to 5 minutes in duration but no longer than 10 minutes. Each module will contain one podcast that covers the main points of the module. Deaf students will have access to the podcast via a text transcript. An example podcast will cover...</p>
Mobile learning	Mini-lectures and other content can be processed so students can download them onto their mobile devices in order to learn wherever and whenever they want.
Simulations	Simulations can be used by students so they can participate in, and learn from, processes that might otherwise be less available because of danger, expense or logistical difficulties. An example simulation for this course is...

Methods of interaction	Description (add specifics for your course)
Video	<p>Video can be used to demonstrate procedures and to help students visualize concepts. These clips increase the modalities of learning offered to students and meet the needs of those who learn best by seeing and hearing content.</p> <p>You can utilize online videos in various ways, including: 1. Pose a question at the beginning of the video to give students an idea of what to expect, what to look for, and what might be worth thinking about; 2. Present videos in an outline-like structure using short, descriptive links to different segments that include running times of each segment; 3. Include a short quiz or practice quiz at the end of each video; 4. Use the video as a springboard to a whole-class discussion; and 5. Assign multiple short videos, then have students identify, compare, and contrast the concepts presented in each.</p> <p>Deaf students should have access to the videos closed captioning.</p>
Virtual field trips	Students will “attend” virtual field trips to places on web sites that are either too far away or too costly to visit in person. These field trips will be followed by activities, such as discussions. An example field trip and corresponding activity are...
Games	Games will be used as review activities to reinforce previously learned material and to prepare for exams. Jeopardy!-style games, crossword puzzles, flash cards, etc., will be created for online delivery. Games will be used to review for...
Brainstorming	Brainstorming will be used to promote creative thinking via free association of ideas at the beginning of specific lessons. This will be done in the discussion board. It will work best in the chatroom, but because the class is asynchronous, students will better appreciate it being done in the discussion board. An example brainstorming activity will be...
Projects	Students will complete a capstone project that demonstrates the mastery of an outcome(s) of the course. This project will be submitted either as a written paper, a PowerPoint presentation, or a web site. An example project is...
ePortfolios	Examples of student work can be uploaded to ePortfolios for each student. You can use ePortfolios to assess student work. Students can use them to show their work to prospective employers. Google Sites can be used to create ePortfolios.
Peer-editing/critiquing	Students will work in pairs to edit each other’s paper and give feedback in order to improve their writing. Email or Google Docs will be used as the tool to accomplish this. An example assignment is...
Blogs	Students will use blogs to discuss topics in the course. They will also use blogs in a writing assignment in which groups collaborate to write a paper. An example assignment is...
Polling/surveys	In order to begin a discussion on a controversial issue, students will be polled to determine their stances. This will be done in the form of a survey. Results will be shared with students in an announcement or in the discussion board prior to the discussion. An example poll will be...
Debates	Debates will be used to expand upon both sides of an argument. Assigned students present their arguments, and fellow students respond to them and to each other. Each reply will acknowledge a point made by a student and will respectfully refute it, citing factual sources. Debates will take place in the discussion board.

Methods of interaction	Description (add specifics for your course)
	An example debate is...
Case studies	Working in groups, students will evaluate real-world problems, situations, etc. They will then present their cases to the class in the discussion board for analysis. An example case study is...
Role-playing	Students will be divided into groups and assigned roles to “play” in a real-world situation. Each group will have its own discussion board, and students will “speak” by typing on behalf of their assigned role. This type of role-playing, obviously, will be discussion-based. An example activity is...
Student presentations	Students will prepare, and present, a mini-lecture on a topic being studied. These presentations can be in the form of PowerPoint presentations or web sites and will be posted in the discussion board for other students to view, question, and discuss. An example activity is...