

Every online class requires rich interaction and regular opportunities to practice. Students learn best in an environment where they can engage with the course instructor, their fellow students, and the course materials. When and how will you ensure this takes place? Read through the questions in each area and review some of our suggestions.

### Communication Plan

- *How will you check in with students?*
- *How will the instructor communicate expectations and administer the course?*

**Syllabus.** Your syllabus is central to communicating your expectations for an online class. You may want to add in some additional sections you wouldn't usually include, like time commitment, instructor availability, technical requirements (e.g. hardware, software, internet), netiquette and, of course, your communication plan!

**Weekly email.** Consider providing a regular email to all students that sets up the week, reminds them of any deadlines, and articulates any changes. This may also be a channel for providing feedback to the class as a whole. Teaching tip: save these emails in a folder, and you can tweak them again next year!

**Moodle Announcements.** The forum at the top of your Moodle page can be used just like a weekly email. Set up the week, summarize the learning outcomes, link to additional resources. Make this a regular routine and ensure you tell your students to check this space. They won't check without your reminder. You may want to combine the announcement with the email.

**Video feedback.** If you want something more personable, consider creating short videos. You can create and post these to your Moodle site, or you can provide a link to them in another communication like an announcement or email.

**Moodle calendar.** Insert important deadlines into the block called Moodle calendar. This is a great way to help organize and remind students about when they need to submit work.

**Moodle main page.** The first topic in Moodle is always visible. If you want to ensure that students don't miss an urgent piece of information, add it as a temporary label at the top of the page.

## Instructor Presence

- *How will the students engage with the instructor?*
- *How will the instructor be present to students throughout the learning process?*

**Welcome message.** Consider providing a welcome message where you introduce yourself to your students in the Moodle site. This can take the form of an email, a Moodle page, an audio file, or a video. Make it a little bit personal so that the students see you as a real human behind the screen. Pictures or video of yourself can be really helpful!

**Office hours.** Host your office hours privately in a virtual space like BigBlueButton. Consider having confidential conversations in a Breakout Room so that no other student can accidentally interrupt the conversation by joining the room.

**Lecture videos.** Consider creating short videos introducing the learning outcomes, demonstrating a procedure, or providing a high level overview for the week. These videos add a personal touch while also showing your expertise or proficiency in the field.

**Virtual facilitation.** Lead your students in conversation in real time in a space like BigBlueButton or asynchronously in a discussion forum. Take the time to post in the forums and respond to ideas that are strong and/or off base. This reminds your students that you are monitoring the space and encouraging them along the way.

**Feedback.** Provide regular, timely feedback on your students' progress throughout the course. This can happen individually, in groups, and with the class as a whole. Rubrics and checklists are a good way to communicate feedback on formative and summative assessments.

**Check-ins.** Consider sending out individual emails to students who are struggling or who are being quiet in the virtual space. You can also check in with your students by soliciting feedback on how the course is going. Use that feedback to tweak the rest of the course.

## Social Presence

- *How will the students engage in learning together?*
- *How will the students build community and collaborate with one another?*
- *How will expectations around behaviour be moderated?*

**Classroom Norms and Expectations.** In your syllabus and on Moodle, communicate your expectations for communicating with one another. Students may need to meet virtually, may need to use microphones, or engage in live chat. Consider working with your students to collaboratively generate what the expectations should be for students to work together.

**Netiquette.** You may want to include a statement on your expectations for student behaviour in a virtual space. Again, these expectations could be developed independently by the instructor, or it could be collaboratively created with the students early in the term.

**Forums.** Create avenues for students to talk to one another and get help if they need it. You may even consider creating a space just for them to do things like organize groupwork or group study time.

**Peer Review.** Consider asking students to provide feedback on one another's work. This can happen using a rubric or other pre-set tool or survey. You can do review of writing assignments in Moodle using Workshop.

**Group Work.** Consider assigning one or more opportunities for students to collaborate together. You may need to assign the groups. Take into consideration student availability and time zone. Students may need to be able to complete their own component somewhat independently, or they may need opportunities to share asynchronously instead of getting together at a set time.

## Visible Learning

- *What ways will the students see their learning represented in the course site?*
- *In what ways will the students engage with and receive feedback within the course site?*

**Presentations.** Have student share what they have learned with one another in a live presentation or demonstration. You can also ask the students to do this by video.

**Forums.** The forums are an excellent space for students to see how their learning has developed. Ask them to review old posts and summarize patterns that they have seen. You can also use this space for students to share work they are proud of, or use it to solicit peer feedback on in-progress work.

**Wiki.** Have the students collaboratively develop a resource on a given topic. Wiki is a powerful way to demonstrate research, advice, documentation, and more.

**Database.** Have the students work to generate a repository of information based on a given topic. As the database grows, students will see the evidence of their growth and knowledge.

**Shared Documents.** Keep it simple! Use document sharing so that students can work in the space document at the same time. Collaborative writing can be a fun and engaging experience. Start with Microsoft Word or OneNote.

**Learning Portfolio.** Ask your students to collect evidence of their learning throughout the term. Then, at the end, they can share their final projects with the class.