

Opportunities for Social Interactions with Your Online Students

Instructor-Student

Communication

- Make initial contact at the start of semester, but remember to consistently communicate over the term!
- Prompt responses, but set boundaries of reasonable response times
- Use friendly, positive language in emails, announcements, and feedback
- Consistent (at least weekly) announcements
- Check-ins for disappearing students

Feedback

- Purpose is to focus on helping students increase their cognitive skills, performance, learning efforts, and provide support
- Audio/Video—overall class performance and/or individualized
- Announcements can include general observations of students' work
- Bubble-wrap/compliment sandwich style of communication

Are you available to your students?

(This helps with feelings of isolation, feeling anonymous)

- Consider virtual meetings, synchronous online office hours, review sessions
- Post office hours on your Overview page
- Good times to get in touch with you

Participation

- Discussion forums—provide a starting point and then fade out
- Your physical presence enhances connectedness (video and audio means)

Encouragement and Continuous Support

- Frequent and Positive communications
- Welcome Messaging
 - Introduction/Orientation Videos
 - Virtual Office Hours

Student-Content*

*rated as most important by online students

Relies on course design

- Your site needs to be intuitive, it must be easy to access materials, submit assignments, navigate, etc.
- Students need direct guidance—how to videos for site navigation

Visualization of instruction

- Narrated lectures—share personal experiences, real-world examples
- Skill building videos/How-to videos (i.e., answering test questions, creating a bibliography or references page for a paper, etc.)
- Seeing/hearing instructor=physical presence and creates strong instructor presence
- Remember to keep videos at 10 min (or insert breaks—activities, concept checks)

Engagement with materials

- Are their assignments relevant to their career path or daily life? Relevance increases engagement and critical thinking skills
- Sharing experiences and reflections
- Use active learning process

Student-Student

Discussions

- Social environment to exchange ideas
- Content based prompts--enhanced through debate, structured and engaging

Groupwork

- Brainstorming activities
- Reflections/Sharing information and/or experiences
- Peer reviews/critiques

Collaboration/Teamwork (instructor may pop in when necessary)

- Helping each other to understand material
 - Helping each other to understand instructions on assignments
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Additional Resources

[Preparing to Teach Online](#) resource page

Social Presence Information

- [Tips for Instructor Presence in Online Courses \(PDF\)](#)
- [Impact of Educational Videos on Student Success \(PDF\)](#)

Tools for Providing Social Presence in Online Classes

- Information about the [Sakai Meetings tool](#)
- Information about the [Warpwire tool](#)
- How to [Narrate PowerPoints and Share them on Warpwire \(PDF\)](#)
- [Best Practices for Making Videos \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sakai Help for Students](#) (videos and handouts you are welcome to use in your classes!)

Need more information about teaching with Sakai? Visit go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-instructors to learn more!