Resource Guide

How to Create Engagement During Synchronous Zoom Sessions

How can instructors encourage meaningful engagement during online synchronous class sessions? Below are a few suggestions you may want to consider for your course:

- **Utilize Zoom's non-verbal communication tools**: Zoom's Polling tool [LINK], Non-Verbal and Meeting Reactions [Link] are great ways students can participate. Raising hands or contributing questions to the chat also offers great non-verbal communication. Start your course by using any of these tools to set expectations for how students will contribute to your course and use the same tools consistently throughout the semester.

- **Create a "housekeeping slide" to set student expectations for participation:** At the start of class, share a slide that informs students how to participate during class. An example of a housekeeping slide can be found here [Link].

- **Set norms and expectations for camera use:** Students may not want to use their camera for a variety of reasons. Students may have their camera off due to fatigue, anxiety, a need for privacy or they may lack the financial means to pay for internet bandwidth that supports using a camera. Establish clear guidelines upfront on camera use and participation. Invite students to the conversation about when it is effective to have cameras on/off. (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021)

- **Use Google Docs to create a virtual workspace:** Create a Google Doc to serve as a central place for students to post questions or to collect notes generated by students. At the start of class, invite students to contribute questions and vote on submissions that are the most important to them. You can also use a Google Doc as a "backchannel" tool for students to use during your class. A sample doc can be found here [LINK].

Resources

Castelli, F. R., & Sarvary, M. A. (2021). Why students do not turn on their video cameras during online classes and an equitable and inclusive plan to encourage them to do so. *Ecology and Evolution*, *11*(8), 3565-3576.

Bondie, R. (2020). Practical tips for teaching online small-group discussions. ACSD Express 15(16). Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol15/num16/practical-tips-for-teaching-online-small-group-discussions.aspx

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by email.