Setting the Tone: Engaging Students on Day One (in the online environment)

Let's Talk about Teaching

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Outline:

- Territorial Acknowledgement
- Introduction & Activity
- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Introductions & Ice-breakers
- Community Agreements
- Inclusive Environment
- Wrap-up
- Questions

Territorial Acknowledgement

- [Welcome to WSANEC territory](#) – by John Elliot
- Personal Statement – set the tone by sharing your journey in higher education, your passion for your subject/for teaching, offer a more personal connection to the territorial acknowledgement. Include this in the:
  - Syllabus
  - Instructor template in Brightspace
  - An Introductory video

Brainstorm and sharing

Ways to contribute to brainstorming and sharing

- Please raise your hand to <u>verbally</u> contribute or

- Write a response in <u>chat</u> or

- Write on <u>whiteboard</u> – at the top of the screen, click on "view options," pick annotate, and you will see a menu of options: choose T to write text, then click on whiteboard to write.

- Any questions on how to do this?

Whiteboard discussion - icebreaker

- What brought you to this session today?

- What are some concerns that are top of mind about creating engagement in your course, especially in the early days?

- Why do we want to foster engagement and inclusion?

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session, you will:

- recognize ways to use ice-breakers in an asynchronous and synchronous environments
- identify ways to co-create a community agreement with your class
- select strategies to create an inclusive learning environment in your online course

Reflect and Discuss – breakout rooms

- In your breakout session: please take a minute to reflect on this question and share with your small group.

- Please assign someone to summarize and share back with the larger group.

Think about a time when, as a student, you were

able to engage fully in a course. What was that like, and

what helped you to engage?

Using Ice-breakers

- Ice-breakers? Should you use them?
- Social Presence and Engagement:
  - Icebreakers can promote social presence in an online course. When students feel connected to their instructor, classmates, TAs, they are more likely to feel connected, stay in the course, and feel motivated to learn.
- Set the stage for engagement: model through your own introduction
- Think about your goals for the icebreaker
  - What might be some of your goals?
- How to use them in an asynchronous or synchronous environment?
  - Discussion posts in the asynchronous environment
  - Synchronous environment – use the whiteboard, breakout rooms, polls

Using Ice-breakers

- Example of open and general ice-breakers
- Ice-breakers that relate to your course as an opportunity to get students thinking about the course content and to gauge their expectations for the course:
    - For example:
        - Art History: Who is your favourite artist or style of art?
        - Exercise Science: What does being healthy mean to you?
        - Engineering: What is one think you use all the time that you think is designed well and what is one thing you use that not designed well and you would like to change?
        - Literature: What is your favourite novel or written work?
    - Activity: Based on these examples, using chat please list some examples you could use for your course?

Developing a shared class agreement

Creating safe(r) space for working together – a community agreement

1) What is a community agreement?

   - An agreement co-created with the class to formalize and make transparent community expectations.

2) Why do this?

   - Being clear in a community agreement about expectations help to establish a good faith process among students about conduct. This also helps students feel motivated and take ownership of the learning process.

Developing a shared class agreement

1) How might you approach this?

   - What would help us work best together?

   - Facilitate a discussion on hopes and concerns about how we work together

   - Make sure to clarify what we mean – e.g. being respectful – what do we mean by this and what does it look like?

2) How can you support a community agreement throughout the course?

   - refer back to it

   - check in with class if something needs to be added

What happens if a community agreement is broken?

- Take the time to reflect and point out the issue – without shaming, blaming, or calling some one out

- Use it as a teachable/learning moment

- Consider using the **Open the Front Door** communication technique
  - Observe – state in clear, unambiguous language what has occurred or what you see/notice happening.
  - Think – express what you think about what you observe – it is okay to phrase this as what you assume is happening.
  - Feel – express how you feel about the situation you observed/noticed – use "I" statements
  - Desire – state the concrete action you would like to have happen.

Example

Suppose someone in your class made a comment about COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus"

Start by expressing what you are observing

I see that you referred to COVID -19 as the "Chinese virus." I think this phrase comes from certain media sources who may not fully understand the implications of this reference. I feel unsettled when I hear this phrase because it suggests that one particular community is responsible for the pandemic. I am concerned that these types of phrases fuel discriminatory behaviour perpetrated against Asian community. I would like us to refer to the Coronavirus and COVID 19 by their widely accepted scientific terminology.

Be prepared

Challenging conversations may come up:

- Lots of student anxiety given the changes from the pandemic
- Lots of concerns about diversity, systemic racism, Indigenous rights, and Black Lives Matters

Fostering an engaged and inclusive culture will help to support a healthy learning environment.

Reflect and Discuss

- Based on some of the ideas discussed in this session
  - What are 2 or 3 things you might plan to do to foster community, engagement and inclusion in your course? – raise your hand icon, put comments in chat
    - *(if time permits – breakout rooms)*

Summary

- Setting the tone in your syllabus – adding UVic relevant policies
- Adding the territorial acknowledgment – extend this by adding your personal connection
- Adding an instructor position statement – introductory video
- Using course design that incorporates universal design principles
- Building community through co-constructed online classroom guidelines – facilitate a discussion on creating a safe(r) space for learning
- Encourage self-care during learning and researching

Q&A

Remaining thoughts, questions, respond verbally or pose in chat