Engagement and Community-Building Activities: Synchronous and Asynchronous Equivalents

Adapted by the Centre for Extended Learning, University of Waterloo from original:
Teaching Art and Design Online: A Toolkit for Faculty (by Ontario College of Art and Design)

Engagement activities (pp 66-72)

Engagement activity	Synchronous version	Asynchronous equivalent
Waterfall Chat	Ask a question and tell your students to type in their answer but wait before hitting send until you tell them to. This allows for students to not see each other's answers until all are shared. It will show common answers and keep your students from being influenced by other's perspectives.	Give students a question prompt through a discussion board but ask students to only share their response on a certain day and a range of time. It will resemble that the class is 'online' asynchronously at the same time.
Think-Pair-Share	If you're using a virtual classroom tool that allows students to send private messages to each other, **Think Pair Share** can easily be replicated in the virtual classroom. 1. Pose a question for students. Give them time to think about and prepare a response. Silent wait time is	Create a random list of students and have students send messages to each other based on the question prompt.

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	best. Give the students 30sec-2min. 2. Have students share their response with a partner. Students should send a private chat to the person below them in the participant list of the synchronous session. If a student is at the bottom of the participant list, they will send their chat to the person at the top of the participant list. 3. Students will be managing two chat conversations - the person they are sending a chat to and the person that is sending a chat to them. Give students 2-3 minutes to complete their conversations.	
Unofficial Starts	If a class starts at 9am, between 8:55am-9:05am ask everyone to submit an answer to a meaningful question in the chat.	Start your module with a check-in question (short discussion board, short answer ungraded quiz) or pose a weekly question or challenge in Teams.
Complete the sentence	Have slides with particular sentence starters and request students answer the question in the chat.	Give students sentence prompts in discussion boards so that they can be guided through the question and your expectations.
Assume Roles	Assign roles and responsibilities to students. Examples: moderator, question gatherer, someone to take notes.	Have certain students moderate the discussion board for the week, summarize the reading or lecture,

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		pose questions for the class to answer.
Connect before content	Ask a question at the beginning of the class. The question must connect people to each other, it connects to the purpose of why you are there, it creates choice for authenticity and vulnerability.	Ask a "question of the week" before every module.
Sketch Notes	Sketch notes are visual note-taking. Ask students to make a quick sketch note as you explain the important concepts of the week. Ask students to take a picture of their work and upload to the chat, or show everyone on camera.	Ask students to share their sketch notes through a discussion board, or student-generated LMS page.
Annotate a text/image/ brainstorm	Create a blank whiteboard link ready with the prompt. Invite students to post a sticky note.	Add a link to the LMS asking students to participate in this annotation activity.
Collaborative Documents	Share a Word document with a template/chart you'd like students to help fill in.	Add a link to the LMS asking students to fill in the template/chart.
Pass it on	Students can choose someone from the class to speak next.	Students can mention @ someone's name in a discussion board if they wanted to ask them a specific question.
Critical Uncertainties	Create a whiteboard with a line with one end as "more" and one end as "less" - ask students to indicate how comfortable they	Share this whiteboard document in the LMS and request students use an X to indicate if they understand the concept.

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	are with the concept with an X (this allows for anonymity).	
Checking in	Ask students to share how they're feeling today through the chat or a word cloud.	Check with them through an announcement or private message.
Background Effects	Tell students the theme for background effects and allow time for them to prepare this. On the count of 3, you all reveal your backgrounds.	Ask students to record their videos in a discussion board perhaps in front of a window, outside in a park, a common theme for their background.
Quick breakout rooms	Create breakout rooms of 2 people, have them answer a prompt in 2 minutes. When they return to the main room, give them the next question prompt and assign them to new breakout rooms with a new partner.	Assign different discussion groups for a series of discussion boards.
Mindful Minute	Pause for a full minute when asking a question, hearing a response, or in between portions of a lecture.	Send an announcement to students encouraging the pomodoro technique to their workload.
Guest Speakers	Invite a colleague or two to join the first part of your session and have a panel discussion.	Invite guest speakers to record a video for your LMS course.
Role Play	Present students with a challenge and use break out rooms of 3. Let them choose who will be the 'client' and who will be the 'consultants'.	Create small group activities where they share email threads of being in specific roles.

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Quick Write	Use this as a formative assessment – use a timer and have students enter their thoughts in the text chat in a few sentences.	Create an ungraded timed quiz so that students can quickly recall what they have learned. This gives a meaningful glimpse into how well students comprehend course content.
Guided Notes	Create a document with lecture notes but take out key words, phrases or concepts, leaving blanks in their place so you have a skeletal structure of your video lecture.	Create a set of questions that your students can answer sequentially while watching your video lecture.
Punctuated Lecture	Stop at various points of the lecture to ask them a question. Ask them to private message you their answer.	In a pre-recorded video, tell students to pause and comment on the question prompt that you ask. In text-based content, intersperse questions throughout.
Translate That	Stop within the various points of your lecture and randomly select a student to say what you just said in their own words through audio or chat pane.	In a pre-recorded video, insert a break at a preidentified segment and ask students to 'post a translation' in the discussion board.
Jigsaw	Identify 4-6 topics you want students to teach each other. Break them out into expert groups. Reorganize rooms so that there is 1 expert of every topic in a group. Or identify a spokesperson who will teach the topic to the whole class.	Create two discussion boards: an expert group, and a jigsaw group. Or ask for a spokesperson in the expert group to contribute to the whole group discussion board.
Fishbowl	Students participate in discussions with a small group discussing and a larger group	Create a prompt in a discussion group for the inner circle forum and one group for the outer circle

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	observing. Students in the "inner circle" engage in an in-depth discussion, while students in the "outer circle" listen and critique content, logic, and group interaction.	forum. Or for the first week the inner circle participates, the next week the outer circle participates. Leave both forums open so students can go in and out of the two groups.
Background and knowledge probe	Implement a polling option through the 'raise hands' feature - find out what students know or don't know.	Create an ungraded quiz with probes about students' prior knowledge.
TAPPS (Think Aloud Pair Problem Solving)	Give students a set of problems to solve in a time frame. Instructions could include how students alternate between problem solver and listener role, the responsibilities for each role, and sequence of steps to solve each problem.	Create a discussion board with groups of two and explain the instructions in the discussion prompt.
Lecture Engagement Log	Ask students to describe 1) how they prepared for the lecture, 2) what they did during it, 3) how they can improve their engagement for future lectures.	Create an ungraded quiz with the questions about their engagement.
Critique Seminar	Form groups of 4-5 who will share their project through email, assign a formal respondent who will provide their critique and facilitate group discussion and informal respondents to offer suggestions for revision.	Create private discussion forums for groups.

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Check for understanding	Give students their reading or content of the week and have a set up 5-10 questions to confirm their knowledge of the content.	Set up an ungraded quiz and allow multiple attempts to understand the material they are working with.
Team Jeopardy	Prepare a game grid and allow breakout groups to play. Find a [downloadable game grid here](#).	Post the PowerPoint slide template so that students can play individually or arrange a small group to meet in their own time.
Analytic Teams	Assign each student an analysis role such as "proponent, critic, example giver, summarizer, question preparer" for a reading or text to analyze. Have the team write up a team analysis and share in a whole class discussion.	Create small groups discussion forum and whole class discussion forum to have students work in these different roles.

Community Building Exercises (pp. 72- 74)

Activity	Synchronous version	Asynchronous equivalent
Virtual Energizer	Mirror me - be playful with the 'box' of the webcam display so students feel like they can 'high five' each other.	Ask students to share photos of the same theme and share in a discussion board.
The Rock	Send a private message to someone saying they are the rock, and everyone reads the nonverbal cues to call out who the rock is.	Instructor sends a message to an individual student. Everyone posts a static image to prove they're not the rock.

ALT - CV	Celebrate the things that matter – ask students to share "what are you genuinely proud of/accomplished? What are all the stuff that matters to you? What can you share about your personal growth? Share something that you can make a long-term friend, notice and recognize by others, share something to inspire others, find an unrelated shared interest (knitting, ukulele)."	Create a discussion board so students can post a textual response, creative expression that isn't formalized as an assignment.
Collaborative Storytelling	Create a Word document with a story prompt and allow students to carry this story forward with their own twists and turns.	Send a Word document and ask students to participate in an informal week-long collaborative storytelling opportunity.
Bingo Card	Have students message each other in different breakout groups or chats to ask them prompts found in a bingo card: Bingo card prompts: • a person who loves textile art • a person who loves plants • a person who likes dogs • etc.	Students can have a bingo card and send messages through their LMS inbox, email, or other platform.
Story of your Identity	Students share a story of any part of their identity and can share as much or as little as they are comfortable.	Ask this question prompt in a discussion board in the LMS.
Share an object from home	Ask students to find something in their home they'd like to share. They can go on camera,	Create a discussion board or student-generated LMS page.

	or just submit a photo in the text chat.	
Free Drawing	Ask students to free draw with paper and pencil. Some ideas here would be to have a short time limit, drawing with your non-dominant hand, drawing without lifting your pen, drawing with your eyes closed.	Ask students to do this during their free time and share with you or a partner when they're done.
Dydactic Interviews	Student pairs take turns asking questions that tap into values, attitudes, beliefs, prior experiences via phone, email or messaging chat and post summary of partner's responses.	Create a discussion board where students are paired up in groups of 2 with similar discussion prompts.

Source: https://www.ocadu.ca/sites/default/files/FCDC/Toolkit3.0.pdf