Communication and Interaction Plan Template

Adapted from

Strategy #1 - Clearly define the preferred communication methods and channels so that students and instructors can communicate.

- Look at your alignment grid and see if you will need to include special communication strategies for your students based on your assignments and assessments.
- How will you plan to have regular contact with your students about assignments and course announcements? Will you use the messaging system, announcements, and/or external email?
- Will any of your assignments require additional communication strategies?
- Are you teaching a hybrid course? How will you communicate the expectations and schedule for the online and F2F pieces?
- Some canvas tools you might consider are:
    - The messaging system
    - Announcements
    - Discussion forum FAQ boards
    - Weekly chat or virtual office hours
    - Skype
    - Wimba or something similar (See Vogh)
    - Gradebook feedback & other tools
- Consider which tools you can use for confidential communication versus public communication & open communication.
- Clarify your communication plan in your syllabus.

Strategy #2 - Support each other and learn in a social environment.

- Did you include an icebreaker or introduction activity so students can learn a little about each other and feel comfortable interacting with each other?
- What strategies can you use to help students see the online course as a social environment so they do not feel isolated in cyberspace?
- Course structures that are social: Brainstorm – discussion board, peer review editing, breakout groups, group assignments or projects,
- Do you plan to release content so students stay together as they move through the course, or is it a self-directed course?
- Is it important for you to have students interact and share?
- Will you use peer assessment or student-to-student feedback on any of your assignments?
- How else could you set up a social learning environment based on the particulars of your course?

Strategy #3 - Take the time to lay out the rules for online teaching and learning so that students will know what to expect.

- Have you included a section in your syllabus about expectations for participating in an online course?
- Will students take an online learning readiness survey?
- Do you need to use a pre-course survey to determine student levels of knowledge or expectations before coming into this course? This is more difficult to determine in an online environment.
- Do you need to include a netiquette blurb or activity to teach students about online expectations (may depend on your students)?
- Are you clear on grading deadlines? How will you handle late assignments?
- Will you be providing examples of student projects for your students?

Strategy #4 - Provide opportunities for community building where students regularly interact with other students, materials and the instructor(s).

- Did you provide opportunities for students to get to know each other before jumping into the course content?
- How are you requiring students to communicate with each other (in discussion forums, in groups)?
- Are you planning to use groups? How will you form groups? How will students use groups? Will you grade as a group? Include individual grades?
- Will students be sharing experiences and opinions?
- Are you requiring they respond to each other in the discussion forums?
- Will students be only using materials you provide, or will you require they contribute materials and resources to the course and share with peers?
- How informal or formal will you be as an online instructor?

Strategy #5 - Make it clear to students where to turn for technical support.

- What type of resources are you providing in your course to help students navigate in the course?
- Do you need to provide additional resources such as library resources, e-reserves, technical tutorials, writing resources?
- How will students contact you if they have a problem?
- Have you offered multiple means for discussing problems (email, Skype, in person)?
- Have you provided phone, email and website info for TLT or the help desk? Is it in your syllabus?