Techniques for Facilitating Effective Online Discussions

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Tips/Ideas

- Get to Know Your Classmates
- Debates
- Feedback on Assignments
- Use as Additional Examples
- Use as a Study Guide/Review
- Group Project/Discussion

Introductory Discussion

- Example: Get to Know Your Classmates!
- Tip: Create a comfortable learning environment
  - Monitor responses for appropriateness from the beginning!
  - Make students aware you are there, but do not overtake the discussion

Debates

- Example: Early Stimulation Debate
- Tip: Make instructions/assessment for each discussion clear
- Responses
  - NOT: "I agree" or "Here's what I think…" regardless of or without reading the previous post
  - INSTEAD: Support or refute with evidence; make it clear their responses will be graded on quality, not just quantity

Feedback on Assignments

- Example: Create a Toy
- Tip: Allow them to be creative and apply the class material in a fun wa
- Responses
  - NOT: "That's a great idea!"
  - INSTEAD: Critique and include improvements that also apply to class material

Use as Additional Examples

- Example: Newell's Model examples
- Tip: Try to avoid the "just answering because I have to post-er"
  - Apply to their current/future personal/professional lives
  - Use other forms of technology (makes it more fun and applicable!)

You Tube

Use as a Study Guide/Review

- Example: What is your "muddiest point"?
- Tip: Give students more responsibility and gives them more resources/practice
- Responses:
  - NOT: "Chapter 8"
  - INSTEAD: Be specific!

Group Project Discussion

- Example: Discussion Component from a Group Project
- Tip: Give students more responsibility – have students be the facilitators!
- Responses:
  - NOT: "Do you think…?"
  - INSTEAD: Develop meaningful, open-ended questions that allow students to critically think about the material