

# Faculty Seminar on Remote Communication-Intensive Teaching

## Asynchronous Day 2

# Day 2 Overview

## WRITING- AND SPEAKING-TO-LEARN TO GENERATE ENGAGEMENT

- What are writing- and speaking-to-learn?
- What are some best practices for operationalizing these strategies in online courses, whether synchronous or asynchronous?
- How can we keep the grading load manageable?
- Other than writing- and speaking-to-learn, what are some other strategies for generating engagement, participation, and community in online courses?

# Writing- and Speaking-to-Learn

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE TO DEEPEN LEARNING, RETENTION, TRANSFER

- Focus is on fostering deep learning of disciplinary content
- Purpose is to process, reflect, question, brainstorm, synthesize
- Focus is not on grammar and mechanics, nor on higher order skills like structure, argument, rhetorical genre conventions
- These activities are often short, and can take place synchronously or asynchronously
- For more, see our Very Short Guides on Writing to Learn and Speaking to Learn:  
<https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/blsci/files/2019/08/6-Writing-to-Learn.pdf>  
<https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/blsci/files/2017/11/7-Speaking-to-Learn.pdf>

# Writing- and Speaking-to-Learn

## INFINITELY ADAPTABLE ACTIVITIES

- **Focused free-writing/speaking** (e.g. “define these three terms in your own words;” “describe something that confused you;” “write a few sentences to synthesize the fiscal data;” “describe what aspects of this painting strike you as most different from what we’ve looked at so far”)
- **Reading journals** (e.g. summary, quote, paraphrase on left page; response, analysis, questions, counterarguments on right)
- **Learning logs** (e.g. continuously maintained notes serving as pre-writing)
- **Think, Pair, Share** (e.g. independent writing, conversation with partner in whatsapp or zoom, whole-class discussion board)
- **Reading summaries** (e.g. students deliver these orally or in the chat window at the start of synchronous sessions, or in discussion board asynchronously)
- **Dialogue writing** (e.g. two opposing theorists, you and a friend)

# Writing- and Speaking-to-Learn

## SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS

- Provide multilingual students opportunities to “translanguage”
- For low-stakes writing or speaking, don’t expect error-free work
- At most, focus on intelligibility rather than correctness

# Writing-to-Learn in Online Courses

## ADAPTING THESE ACTIVE LEARNING TOOLS TO REMOTE TEACHING

How can you adapt these practices to the online course context?

- Assign them during synchronous sessions when you want to focus students for whole-class discussion or small-group work
- Ask students to complete private writing with no share-out
- Prompt all students to copy their writing into the chat window or request volunteers to share
- Assign them as discussion board prompts in asynchronous sessions
- Collect them at the end of the semester as part of a portfolio

# Speaking-to-Learn in Online Courses

## ADAPTING THESE ACTIVE LEARNING TOOLS TO REMOTE TEACHING

How can you adapt these practices to the online course context?

- Ask students to post audio or video to the LMS
- Put students in small groups with required phone or video chatting, consider occasionally joining
- Use breakout rooms in synchronous sessions
- Give students explicit instructions to practice speaking without seeking a deliverable
- Collect a portfolio of short audio or video reflections at the end of the semester

# Keeping the Grading Load Manageable

REGULARITY DOES NOT HAVE TO MEAN ENDLESS READING OR RESPONDING

With writing- and speaking-to-learn activities, you can:

- Not collect them
- Collect them but use them for attendance or simple ✓, ✓+, ✓-
- Read or listen through for whole-class patterns and report back to the class
- Seek one or two responses to be shared via chat or discussion board to ground discussion, or facilitate comprehension check
- Ask small groups to produce weekly discussion notes, perhaps with a rotating note-taker, to consolidate writing due
- Require them on your LMS via conditional release
- Create small groups that read and respond to one another, e.g. on discussion board

# How Does This Generate Engagement?

## HOW DO THESE WRITING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES BUILD COMMUNITY AND FACILITATE PARTICIPATION?

- Engaging deeply with content generates motivation and increases engagement
- Writing- and Speaking-to-Learn activities provide opportunities for students to prepare for class discussion, enabling them to participate more fully and confidently
- They provide opportunities for student-student interaction, through paired activities or group work
- They provide opportunities for students to see their peers thinking and to engage in a community of learners
- They give students access to model student work, not just model academic work, helping them see that they are indeed ready to join the conversation

# Writing- and Speaking-to-Learn

## A PAUSE FOR INDEPENDENT REFLECTION

Pause the video and take some notes. Thinking about your past and future courses:

- What writing- or speaking-to-learn activities do you already use? What do you hope they accomplish for students?
- How do you plan to adapt these strategies for the online context?
- Identify one or two new kinds of writing- or speaking-to-learn activities that you'd like to incorporate into your class this semester. What might they look like in the context of your online course?

# Generating Engagement and Participation

## GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Find alternatives for personal engagement (e.g. surveys, video intro, bios)
- Consider optional synchronous office hours
- Record video/audio check-ins
- Consider optional hang outs to simply build community
- Assign students to peer review partnerships or small groups
- Seek feedback in anonymous surveys and share trends and action plans
- Maximize repetition, patterns, and predictability

# Generating Engagement and Participation

## SYNCHRONOUS STRATEGIES

- Establish co-authored agreements for engagement
- Prepare prompts and class plans with even more deliberation than before
- Shorten your blocks of time (e.g. split class into smaller cohorts that meet for a fraction of whole-class time; plan 5-10 minute "chunks")
- Share content in advance (e.g. narrated slides) and use class time for Q&A, targeted reflection, small-group work, and interpersonal contact
- Utilize breakout rooms and provide transparent guidance, consider worksheets or graphical organizers
- Utilize the chat feature
- Assign rotating roles: chat monitor, note-taker, opening and closing summary presenters

# Generating Engagement and Participation

## SYNCHRONOUS STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

- **Use polling** (e.g. for comprehension checks as well as casual check ins)
- **Use some time for more casual check ins** (e.g. in the first five minutes of class check in with students who haven't spoken up recently, use an icebreaker, or ask all students to respond to a casual prompt in the chat)
- **If appropriate, consider guest speakers or facilitators to infuse new energy**

# Generating Engagement and Participation

## ASYNCHRONOUS STRATEGIES

- Require some kind of peer-to-peer interaction, likely through discussion boards
- Know what your purpose is with discussion boards and share that transparently
- Consider multiple discussion board types (e.g. "this week's reading;" "responses to lecture;" "Q&A;" "Checking in")
- Consider multiple content-based discussion boards that students opt into
- Consider having students draft discussion questions and ask peers to answer
- Consider shared team projects with clear guidance, deliverables, and roles

# Generating Engagement and Participation

## ASYNCHRONOUS STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

- Embed "attendance questions" into your slides or lectures
- Embed treats into your slides or lectures (e.g. a funny video; a personal anecdote or visit from your cat/dog/child/tomato plant; extra credit assignments)
- Make your presence known

# Day 2 Asynchronous Activity Part 1

## IN ADVANCE OF SYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION 2, PLEASE THINK ABOUT AN UPCOMING COURSE

Focus on one thing you'd like to do differently, and draft a plan. Maybe it's:

- Taking your notes from our earlier Pause for Independent Reflection and fleshing them out – what are the actual prompts, and what will you do with them?
- Developing a new strategy to support the multilingual students in your class during low-stakes communication activities
- Building new opportunities to generate engagement and participation, such as a video bio, a co-authored agreement for engagement plan, or discussion board options.

# Day 2 Asynchronous Activity Part 2

## POST ON BLACKBOARD

On your Cohort's Blackboard Discussion Board, write a short post explaining what you drafted.

- What is it?
- Why this thing?
- What challenges were you trying to resolve?
- What did you do to resolve those challenges?

# Day 2 Asynchronous Activity Part 3

## READ AND COMMENT

On your Cohort's Blackboard Discussion Board, read some of your colleagues' posts. Post at least one reply, using this as an opportunity to think about how your own students might engage with similar kinds of work.

# Resources

- Borgman, Jessie, and Casey McArdle. *Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors. Practices & Possibilities*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado, 2019.
- Conrad, Rita-Marie, and J. Ana Donaldson. *Engaging the Online Learner: Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Darby, Flower, and James M. Lang. *Small Teaching Online: Applying Learning Science in Online Classes*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2019.
- Davidson, Cathy. "The Single Most Essential Requirement in Designing a Fall Online Course." *HASTAC*, 5/11/2020.

# Resources

- Linder, Kathryn E., Mattison Hayes, Chrysanthemum, and Kelvin Thompson. *High-Impact Practices in Online Education: Research and Best Practices*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2018.
- Nilson, Linda B., and Ludwika A. Goodson. *Online Teaching at its Best: Merging Instructional Design with Teaching and Learning Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2018.
- Schiano, Bill. "Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities in Online Case Teaching: Insights from Two Case Teaching Experts." *Harvard Business Publishing Webinar*, 6/3/2020.
- Vai, Marjorie, and Kristen Sosulski. *Essentials of Online Course Design: A Standards-Based Guide*. Second edition. New York: Routledge, 2016.

# Resources from Baruch Colleagues

- The Center for Teaching and Learning: See especially the many resources in “Teaching in the Time of Covid-19” and their popular Zoom workshops.  
<https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/ctl/>
- The Writing Center’s Online Teaching FAQs:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-WPkkCYMGKHZKs2Nsl-t0rUGuZHMJnWqncaOv3iZZQ/edit>