

TEACHING ELEMENTS: STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTION ONLINE

TECHNOLOGIES FOR ONLINE STUDENT INTERACTION

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Research has shown that designing online courses to ensure a high level of student-to-student interaction has a positive impact on learning. Providing students with a range of methods to interact can increase their satisfaction and their learning. When selecting tools to support student-to-student interaction, it is important to ensure the tools are well aligned with the course objectives and desired learning outcomes. The following taxonomy can help you align the technology tools with the teaching and learning goals of the course (Koszalka & Ganesan, 2004):

Tool	Overview	Value for teaching and learning
<p><b>Shared workspace</b> Available in myCourses and Confluence Wiki</p>	<p>Tools to allow groups to share work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages sharing responsibility among team members</li> <li>• Allows tracking of work throughout project cycle</li> <li>• Facilitates teamwork</li> <li>• Provides shared space to store and discuss team assignments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion space</b> Available in myCourses</p>	<p>Public electronic forum for discussions with all students or defined student groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages students in ongoing social interaction</li> <li>• Allows “traceable” path of conversation</li> <li>• Allows students time to think about response</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chat room</b> Available in myCourses</p>	<p>Same-time (live) text conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates same-time, live social interactions</li> <li>• Encourages spontaneous interplay of ideas</li> <li>• Creates a sense of community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Audio conferencing</b> Available with Adobe Connect</p>	<p>Same time (live) audio conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates same-time social interactions</li> <li>• Fosters rapport building</li> </ul>

Tool	Overview	Value for teaching and learning
<b>Student presentation area</b> Available with Adobe Connect	Allows students to share information they have created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps build social peer community</li> <li>• Allows students to learn from one another</li> <li>• Allows students to demonstrate mastery of course concepts</li> </ul>
Shared whiteboard Available with Adobe Connect	Same-time (live) drawing and diagramming as a social exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompts collaborative editing</li> <li>• Supports interaction</li> <li>• Facilitates sharing of individual points of view</li> </ul>

Depending on your goals for the course and the individual activity or assignment, you may consider using the following RIT supported academic technologies to encourage student-to-student interaction in online courses.

### Discussions

- myCourses Discussion forums
- Adobe Connect audio conferencing and/or Adobe Connect chat room

### Team work

- myCourses Chat
- Confluence Wiki
- Adobe Connect audio conferencing and/or Adobe Connect chat room

### Peer review

- myCourses PeerEval
- Confluence Wiki
- Adobe Connect audio conferencing and/or Adobe Connect chat room

## REFERENCES

- Koszalka, T. A., & Ganesan, R. (2004). Designing online courses: A taxonomy to guide strategic use of features available in course management systems (CMS) in distance education. *Distance Education*, 25(2), 243-256.