

# Managing interactions in a live-online class session

## Pedagogical tips

- **INFORM STUDENTS OF EXPECTATIONS FOR USING THE CHATROOM IN THE BEGINNING:** By establishing guidelines and norms, students are aware of how they are expected to participate in the online class session. **Sample guidelines for online interaction and netiquette can be found on the next page.**
- **MAINTAIN AS MUCH FLEXIBILITY AS YOU CAN:** Students will experience some degree of technical trouble at some point during an online course.
- **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION:** Through the use of HorizonLive's online learning tools, the instructor can stimulate learner participation and interaction. Breakout rooms, polling activities, and private message exchanges are some of the options that can encourage participation. For example require students online to use the polling tools to respond to your questions just as you would have students in class raise their hands. Acknowledge the student's responses as they are submitted during the class session.
- **DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH TOO SOON:** It is often difficult to be articulate in the short messages used in an online chat room. Expect students to begin by responding with one or two major points relating to the lecture rather than paragraphs of text which will be difficult to read and become lost in the chat room.
- **PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE MATERIAL FOR REFERENCE:** Upload lecture notes into WebCT's course content area. When students in the chat room ask for clarification or repetition of lecture topics, the in-class assistant can remind them to refer to the notes available online.

- **REQUIRE CONTRIBUTIONS:** Chat logs for any class session can be made available to the instructor. Read the chat logs to determine how much and how often student interaction occurs in the chat room.
- **INVITE VISITING EXPERTS:** Guests can join students in the chat room to interact about course material, discuss lecture topics, and answer questions. The HorizonLive online classroom extends the classroom by eliminating geographical barriers.
- **REQUEST RESPONSES:** Even though you are unable to hear the students, they can hear you, address the students by asking questions as you would of the students in the class. Be patient and allow for a delay in responses.
- **FACILITATE INTERACTIVITY:** While it is important for you to remain focused on the delivery of course content, it is also important for you to address the students online and give them a sense that you acknowledge their existence.

## Social tips

- **USE INTRODUCTIONS:** By asking the students to introduce themselves to other students online and those in the classroom, you can begin building a sense of community among the students. Try asking for simple responses that can be answered by using HorizonLive's interactive polling features such as "how many of you are geography majors?" Follow simple questions with more specific questions that can be answered in the chat room.
- **PRAISE AND MODEL APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:** Encourage students to continue courteous and helpful interactions in the online classroom.

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## Tips & Tricks

**Use other technologies** to support the loss of interaction. Invite students to exchange postal addresses, e-mail addresses, and or telephone numbers.

**Pair students in the class** with students online for interaction and one-to-one support.

**Use strategies that personalize the classroom setting** such as calling online students by name which may help the students in class see them as human beings.

**Plan ways to monitor group discussion** and guide those who block effective communication into more constructive roles in the online class.

**Begin the semester by having students call in and introduce themselves to the class** and encourage them to call in to ask questions at any time during the semester.  
**NOTE:** Students must have an additional phone line available and will call 898-6868 or 1-800-780-4837.

## Sample chat room guidelines:

Chat is for academic purposes and allows students and faculty to interact regarding course content as well as for students to receive technical assistance during class sessions.

The primary use of online chat room is for students to ask questions of the instructor and other students in the online classroom and respond to questions raised of others.

**Be brief.** Keep your messages short and focus on a single topic or idea. When multiple ideas or topics are to be discussed, use a separate message for each.

The chat room is not for discussing personal issues that do not pertain to class. This kind of chatting is distracting to the students that want to participate in the class discussion.

**No harassment.** All students in the online chat room should be given the opportunity to express ideas relating to course content and discussions raised in the class session.

The instructor has the ability to review all comments made in the chat room during class and can make discussions available to students on an as needed basis.

Your grade could be affected if you do not choose to use the chat room for the purposes designated here.

- **DO NOT TOLERATE DISTRACTING BEHAVIOR FROM ONLINE STUDENTS:**

Students causing distractions or disturbances can be frustrating to other students viewing the class session. The instructor and in-class assistant have the ability to remove students from the online classroom.

- **CREATE AN OPEN ENVIRONMENT:**

Encourage opinions, ideas, and information to be shared so that students become comfortable interacting with each other and with the instructor. When you are building group cohesiveness among students, the main goal should be social. **Once students get to know each other, other tasks can be accomplished.**

- **BE RESPONSIVE:** When a student asks questions or posts responses to course material, respond to them timely and repeat the questions so that in-class students can follow the conversation. The in-class assistant will help track student comments

## Managerial tips:

- **USE BREAKOUT ROOMS:** It is very common for instructors to break students into small discussion groups during class sessions. With HorizonLive's breakout rooms, it is possible for instructors to break online students into groups as well.

**NOTE:** When students enter breakout rooms, they will no longer be able to see or hear the video portion of the lecture so it is important to set parameters such as a time that students need to return to the class.

- **SETTING A GOOD CLIMATE FOR ELECTRONIC INTERACTIONS**

- Start with a welcome message to students both in-class and online
- Reinforce students' early attempts at participation
- Reinforce students' responses in your lecture by identifying their questions or comments to the class
- Model expected behavior.

- **FACILITATING THE CHAT ACTIVITIES**

- Keep the main discussion on track by providing leading questions.
- If the discussion starts to get off track, the instructor or in-class assistant can refocus the group

## Netiquette

- Remember that your messages are being posted in a public chat room. Even though students cannot hear or see each other, they can all read the messages as they are posted.
- Don't say things you wouldn't say in public.
- Don't address comments to individuals unless you want them to know what you are telling that person.
- Don't share confidential information in the public chat room
- Read your message before you send it. Once it's out there, you can't change it.

- It is beneficial to summarize online discussion topics occasionally during the lecture for the students in class.

## Chat room ideas:

- Help students get over their initial fear of chat room interactions by asking for simple responses such as introductions. Students can also exchange this information by using the bulletin board in WebCT outside of class.
- Have the students introduce themselves at the beginning of class and ask them to comment on issues that you know are relevant to their backgrounds/majors.
- As students log on and participate, send them private messages commenting on their contribution.
- Summarize the chat discussions occasionally, especially if it becomes lengthy.
- If you have not heard from a student in a while, send them a private message urging them to take part in the discussion.
- To help students understand proper etiquette, provide them with examples of appropriate electronic communication.
- Provide learning-friendly instructions.
- Simplify instructions and then simplify them some more.
- Repeat instructions often.
- Focus on the learning environment rather than the teaching environment or the technology itself.
- Deliberately make use of the computer in assignments so that students become familiar and comfortable with technology.