Guide to Assist Community Building

1) **Identify Your Modality:** Communities today have a very strong online presence. Because of this, there are many suites and options that you have available. Here is a list to a few, but not all.
   a. Canvas
   b. Yellowdig
   c. Microsoft Teams
   d. Slack
   e. Discord

2) **Design:** Depending on the modality you choose; you will need to make stand out. Canvas this means developing a well-designed home page and resources. Investment in a community building is important.

3) **Introduction:** Introduction is the most important step that you can do to being your community. Here are some important things to have in your introduction.
   a. **A video:** If you can, a video of you introducing yourself is best practice. This helps humanize you in your course.
   b. **A picture:** If you can't do a video/do not want to a picture of you is important. You can then type out your introduction.
   c. **Establish Your Background:** Describe your experiences in the discipline that you are teaching. This establishes trust that you are a subject matter expert and what the students will be learning from you.

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d. **Establish Who You Are:** What are your hobbies? Do you have pets? What are personal interests you have? Things of that nature. This humanizes you further which is very important.

e. **Your Personal Endeavors:** Often times students see professors as figures of authority that have not had to overcome their own challenges. By stating things that you have done that were difficult/are difficult for you, this helps the student relate to you. Humanization in a community is key.

f. **Ask Open Ended Questions:** Ask the students questions that can be used as conversation starters as well as diagnostic and formulative assessment. Examples include:

    i. Do you believe that hybrid/online courses are as strong or weaker than normal courses? Why?

    ii. What are some things that you hope to get out of this class?

    iii. Do you have any worries going into this course? If you do, what are they?

g. **Course Autonomy:** Allow the students to choose how they can respond. Video. Pictures and text. This allows them to have a part in the community creation process and not seeing them as purely assignments.

4) **Sustaining Your Community:** It is important that you stay active in your community and keep things fresh. Your community will be centered around education and should be your primary focus. But there are other things that you can do. Here are some ideas.

a. **Create Community Guidelines:** You can google many different suggestions. This allows you to reference them if a student/students behavior is in question.

b. **Create Moderators:** Your best choice would introduce your TA's as moderators. Have them make sure all discussions match the Community Guidelines.

c. **No Judgment:** Allow students to ask all questions. Make sure they understand that they will not be judged for the questions they ask. These are teachable moments.

d. **Discussion Topics:** Have topics that are not purely academic. Some types are:

    i. Pets

    ii. Hobbies

    iii. Interests

    iv. Current Events in the Discipline You are Teaching

e. **Offering Synchronous Sessions:** Depending on your course size that you have, you may be able to offer multiple synchronous sessions for feedback and discussion. Make sure with larger courses you have multiple offerings or allow your TA's to take over a few.

f. **Reply Times:** Make sure to have a consistent schedule of checking your community and replying to e-mails. You want your students to have a good idea how long it will take for them to hear back from you.

g. **Feedback:** If you see a misconception that your students have in a large majority give them feedback via the community. Allow them to ask questions about topics. This shows that you are invested in your students success.

h. **Send Personalize Messages:** If it is the holidays, wishing your students "Happy Holidays" or talking about current events is important.

5) **Ask for Feedback:** If you enjoy community building and it works for you, make sure to ask your students what they think. Every semester will be different personalities and individuals. No community will be the same. Listening to what individuals liked and didn't like will help you create more successful communities.

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