Engaging Students
Through Community-Building

Matt Parcon
Instructional Support Specialist
UH Information Technology Services - Academic Technologies

March 1, 2011

What we’ll be covering

• Strategies for community-building
• Communication/Interaction ➔ Engagement
• Overview Laulima’s communication tools
  – Mail
  – Discussion boards
  – Chat Room / Meetings*

What we’ll be covering

• Strategies for community-building
• Communication/Interaction ➔ Engagement
• Overview Laulima’s communication tools
  – Mail
  – Discussion boards
  – Chat Room / Meetings*
Questions to consider

- Do you and your students know each other by name?
- Are your students comfortable engaging each other in discussions?
- Do discussions occur inside and outside the instructional context?
- Do you and the students have similar goals in the course?
- Is there a sense that the classroom environment is a safe environment for learning?
- Do the students display a shared sense of responsibility?
- Have you and your students made an emotional commitment to the course?

Building a community

Camaraderie is the goal!
Community-building strategies

- Explicitly (and optimistically) state expectations for course participation

- Post introductions / conduct ice-breaker
  - ask to provide additionally particular information
  - include pictures
  - discussion board works well (can use blog, Roster)

- Hold synchronous session (e.g. chat, webconference)

Community-building strategies

- Integrate interactive activities early
  - get students in the habit
  - create momentum

- Reply to each student (as needed early on), and do so in a timely manner
  - maintain sense of inclusiveness

- Encourage students to talk to each other and to question one another
Community-building strategies

• Communicate frequently in the course
  – people like to see new information

• Provide an area for non-instructional-related interaction

Community-building strategies

• Link discussion topics to learning outcomes

• Have students contribute discussion questions
Interaction ➔ Engagement

High interaction ➔ Learner-centered strategies ➔ Engagement

Teacher-centered vs Learner-centered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-centered</th>
<th>Learner-centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer knowledge from instructor to students</td>
<td>Elicit students’ discovery and construction of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors primarily lecturers</td>
<td>Instructors primarily designers of learning methods and environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on the instructor</td>
<td>Focus on instructor and student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor talks; students listen</td>
<td>Instructor models; students interact with instructor and each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor evaluates student learning</td>
<td>Students evaluate their own learning; instructor also evaluates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Create directed learning opportunities in an independent learning environment

but

"An independent learning environment is not an isolated learning environment."

How will you communicate?

one-to-one  or  one-to-many
Laulima’s Mail Tools

- Messages - internal mail client
- Mailtool - sends mail
- Email Archive - message repository for entire class to see

Laulima’s Discussion Boards

- Discussion and Private Messages
- Forums

- Discussion - no longer supported
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D&amp;PM</th>
<th>vs</th>
<th>Forums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visual</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Linear threading of msgs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Outline formatting of msgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scheduling feature</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Granular permission settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Private messages</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Richer statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• User profiles (avatars)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• No user profiles (no avatars)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading**

- **By Forum**
  - grade how well students respond

- **By Topic**
  - grade how well students contribute
Contact & Resources

itech-l@lists.hawaii.edu
or
“Request Assistance”

manuals/tutorials
http://www.hawaii.edu/talent

Upcoming Workshops

Mar 8: Assessment Tools
Mar 15: Testing and the Gradebook Tool in Laulima
Mar 29: Laulima Tips & Tricks
Apr 5: Wrapping up a semester and preparing for the next in Laulima

http://www.hawaii.edu/training
http://www.hawaii.edu/talent