**DESCRIPTION**: Great group discussions can be essential in any classroom, regardless of modality. Consider how your own teaching practice regarding group discussions can adapt, grow, and change this year from modality to modality: What principles should you keep? What do you need to learn? What do you expect from students? To learn more about active and engaging group discussions in in-person (including hy-flex), asynchronous, and synchronous virtual sessions, check out this document and also watch these short video segments, which correspond to the document. Hosted by Faculty Fellows in the Center for Teaching and Learning, this session will affirm that you are capable of adapting your group discussion techniques to different modalities, give you new and specific tips to try in your classes, and provide important pedagogical frameworks to meet students' desires for meaningful engagement with their peers.

[**OPENING REFLECTION**](https://streaming.mu.edu/Watch/g9LAb6d4)

1. What are active group discussions?
   1. Brainstorm ideas with participants
   2. Share experiences
2. What are engaging group discussions?
   1. How do you know?

Stop/start/continue

* 1. What do they feel like? Etc.

In different “modalities”:

* General approach to each modality
* Examples of what these activities look like

**MODALITY #1:** [**In person, with potential live-streamed**](https://streaming.mu.edu/Watch/e9R3Axm8) **component (hosted by Jenna Green)**

1. PARS Method

2. UX

* See these resources: <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/practice/pars/> and <https://www.owicommunity.org/>

● PARS Method

■ **Personal**

■ **Accessible**

■ **Responsive**

■ **Strategic**

* Focus for this session on **Strategic**, in masked and social distanced classroom, it is harder to read social cues and engage in spontaneous conversation. Deliberate and strategic about questions and learning outcomes
* UX/Student-centered mindset
* “We tend to apply user-centered practices to our online courses because we too feel that “In user-centered learning, the focus is not on what is being taught but rather on how students are being engaged. A user-centered mindset returns students to the center of the conversation, energizing and improving professional development in which teachers and students, not technology, shape learning experiences” (Greer & Harris, 2018, p. 23)
* Greer, M., & Harris, H. (2018). User-centered design as a foundation for effective online writing instruction. Computers and Composition, 49, 18-24.
* Strategic and focused questions and prompts for discussion. More direct questions.
* Pauses to review texts and time to free-write a response to specific question or prompt
* Pair up-talk with those around you (think, pair, share)

**Teams Chat/Streaming Students**

* Teams chat box for all students (masked and streaming)
* Notetaker (or minutes) role (Streaming or f2f students) to post summary, notes and questions of the day to be more included and less passive
* Review and revisit the questions after class (Sample from 9/30 class)

**MODALITY #2:** [**Asynchronous Group Discussions**](https://streaming.mu.edu/Watch/p6QYi27K) **(hosted by Sheena Carey)**

* Discussion rules/etiquette
* Discussion prompts – related to the course readings requiring a post that incorporates students’ own experiences with the concepts and demonstrating an understanding of those concepts
* Initial posts are due the same day each week, responses to at least two classmates’ posts due two days later (same day each week)
* Instructor joins in the discussion through responses to posts or starting a new thread that offers new information and additional questions to consider.
* Colleague has students’ post original memes in response to the course discussion topic.
* Even in this modality, deep discussions can be achieved. Often times it is easier because students have time to think about their contributions and provide thoughtful commentary on the material and its applicability to their own experiences.
* <https://edservices.wiley.com/asynchronous-learning-environment-tips/>
* <https://onlineteaching.umich.edu/facilitating-asynchronous-online-discussions/>

**MODALITY #3:** [**Synchronous Virtual Sessions**](https://streaming.mu.edu/Watch/n2RGb95Y) **(hosted by Melissa Shew)**

* **Different elements of group discussion engagement**
  + Function of chat, channels, files, raise hands
  + Outside elements: Mentimeter, Kahoot, student-generated websites and multimedia elements
  + Reflection elements: Can use no technology at all for these and require students to engage in a topical or Ignatian reflection. Students can work in groups on these, even, to write reflectively and then compare notes in channels and then report back to the class.
* **Group discussion engagement through chat**
  + Greetings, conversation about presentations, questions about class, etc.
  + Can include “fun” elements, like GIFs and emoticons
  + Students can ask and answer each other’s questions in chat
  + Tip: If it is a large class, have one student (or co-teacher) monitor the chat while someone else talks and holds oral discussions
* **Group discussion engagement through channels**
  + Different kinds: Daily, topical, collaborative on-going projects, etc.
  + Different things to do: Meet for short periods and “report back” (but ask specific questions); have students source materials/examples online; ask students to create a one-slide presentation; assign roles for in-class discussion; type/keep a transcript in the channel.
  + Consider holding different kinds of channel sessions
    - At the beginning, middle, or end of the class session
    - With one partner
    - With a small group, in a timed way
      * Tip: Say a specific time that students should return (“please return at 12:35”) instead of saying, “please return in 10 minutes.”
      * Tip: Ask students to make or do something very specific in groups. Give guided questions, problems to solve, scenarios, quizzes to take, etc. Especially at the beginning of a term, do not leave it open-ended too much.
    - On-going collaborative projects: Can be designed to check in with students regularly.
      * Can designate parts of entire class sessions for students to meet in their groups.
      * Instructors can make the rounds and visit different groups or wait in the main Teams site and have students come with questions.
* **Group Discussion Engagement: Other Elements**
  + Tools like the “raise hand” function and Teams files are not only for instructors. If students are presenting, raising hands, dropping GIFs, and responding in the chat are all appropriate kinds of student engagement.
  + Students can share and upload files in their group channels. They can also take and record notes there.
  + Links to shared documents (Word, PowerPoint, etc.) can be used in the channels to enhance student connectivity.
* **Group Discussion Engagement: Reflection Components**
  + Ask students to move around, put their heads down, stop looking at the screen and just listen sometimes.
  + Ask students to do some reflective writing and then meet in their channels/with peers to exchange ideas.
  + Ask students to create reflective questions on a scrap of paper and hold them up. Students can engage in group discussions from those shared handwritten images.
* **Other…?**

[**CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**](https://streaming.mu.edu/Watch/f4C2Tpc8)