

Tips for Establishing and Maintaining Instructor to Student Connections

When we can't see our students, we have to learn how to measure interest, confusion, and understanding in ways other than the visual cues we are so used to. This means developing a relationship of trust and open communication from the outset. Even if you won't see your students on a regular basis, it's nice to see their faces and hear their voices. Here are a few tips for establishing and maintaining connections with your students.

- Set the tone from the beginning by creating an introduction video of your own, then require your students to do the same. (You learned how to do this in Module One.)
- Throughout the term, maintain and deepen connections between you and your students by ensuring that you maintain a presence in as many ways as possible.
- Set virtual office hours, and encourage students to attend. You could even create an assignment that requires students to come to your office hours early in the term, so that they get into the habit of checking in with you in person. Or, create a "coffee hour" to encourage students to "stop by" for informal conversation with you and other students.
- Continue to create frequent reminders or update videos to communicate upcoming due dates and assignments. Depending on the length of the term, do this once a week or every other day – whatever makes sense for you. These videos are also places where you can let your human side show by injecting your personality with your own brand of creativity and playfulness. You can maintain boundaries and still show your students that you have interests outside of your work -- don't be afraid to experiment a little.