

TOPkit DIGEST

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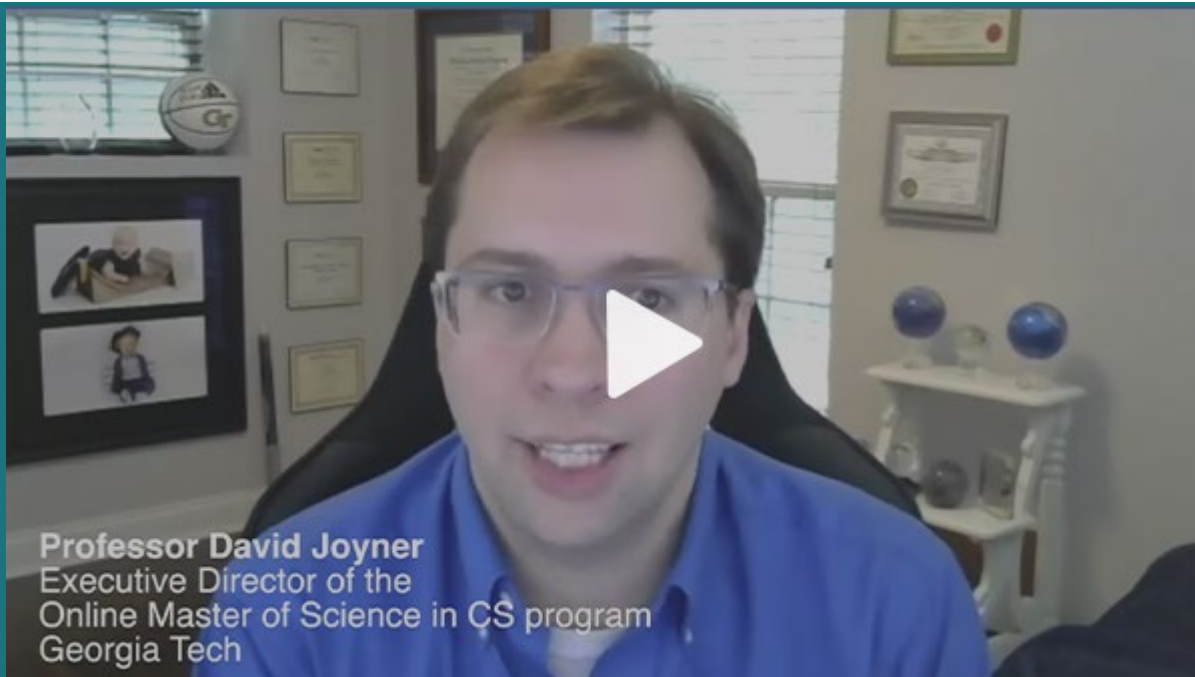
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Video Tip

Tidbits to Stay Connected

Three Ways to Build a Sense of Community for Your Students Online



Professor David Joyner
Executive Director of the
Online Master of Science in CS program
Georgia Tech

Dr. David Joyner is an Executive Director of the Online Masters of Science in Computer Science program at Georgia Tech. In this video, Dr. Joyner shares suggestions on how to build a sense of community for your students in a remote learning environment by highlighting three main points - be visible online, foster interactions online to create anchors for activity, and create a safe place for students to share current happenings in their lives to seek support.

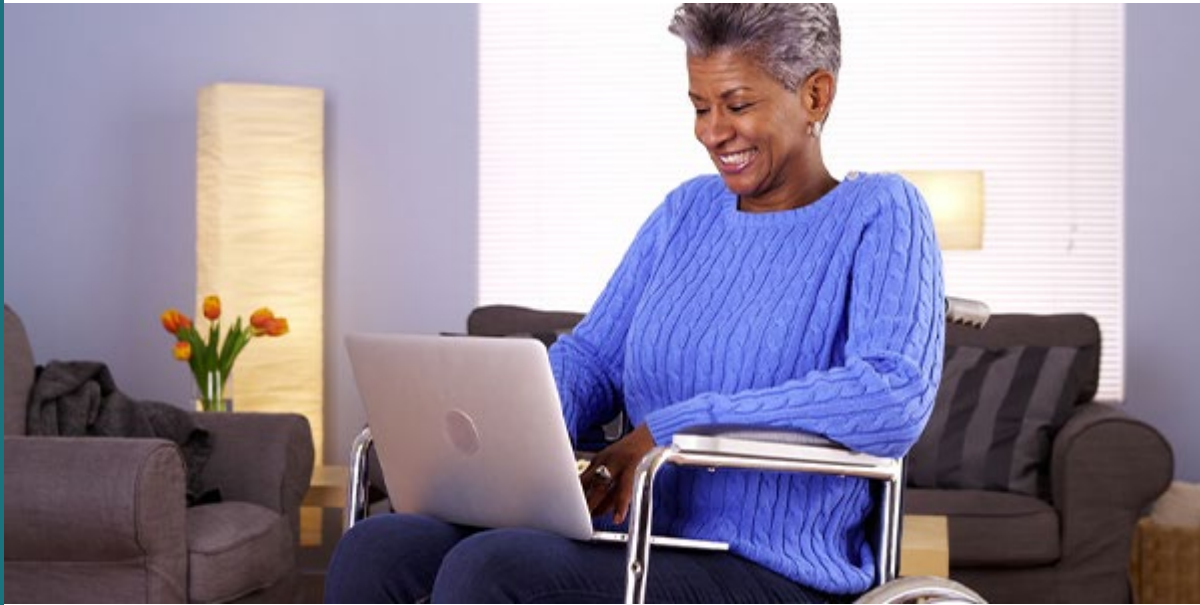
MUST-READ ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [Register for the TOPkit Workshop 2021](#) engaging, interactive, live virtual event to occur on Thursday, March 25th and Friday, March 26th. To present, [submit a proposal](#) by November 16, 2020.
- [Register to attend the Innovation Summit 2021](#). This will be a live virtual event planned for Tuesday, March 23rd and Wednesday, March 24th. [Submit a proposal](#) to present by November 17, 2020.

Top Tips

Creating A Sense of Community In Online Learning

Important Elements of a Community



Building a community in online learning is important because of the following elements: creates a sense of shared purpose, establishes criteria for being a member of that community, enforces rules and policies regarding community behavior, encourages interactions among members, and creates a level of trust, support, and respect among community members (Vesely et al., 2007) . Hence, here are some tips instructional designers can provide to their faculty to create a sense of community for their online class.

#1 - Provide prompt feedback and be available: interactions are an essential element of a community. As a result, instructors have to make sure to constantly answer questions and grade assignments and papers. In addition, professors should frequently communicate through emails and/or also conduct online office hours. This also applies to instructional designers as they have to be available to help their faculty. Creating multiple and diverse points of contact will encourage motivation and involvement.

#2 - Sufficient time and chances for interactions: it is important to design the course in a way that prompts sharing of personal opinions. Role plays, peer introduction exercises, group projects and debates are a few examples of instructional designs and strategies for the course.

#3 - Incorporate video(s) into the course: as humans, we sometimes prefer to listen and see rather than to read, and this is usually missing in online classes compared to traditional classes. As a result, instructional designers should encourage their faculty members to incorporate videos into their lectures, and also try to deliver audio/video feedback to students on their assignments, instead of delivering written notes.

#4 - Peer-review course quality process: In order to maintain reciprocity and cooperation, and improve instructional development and practice, faculty can engage in peer-review process through course evaluations, feedback surveys, or student focus groups.

#5 - Importance of time: Common instructional requirements for an interactive online class are 24-hour response rate, grading within 3-5 days, and a certain number of postings within the discussion forums. Although, these may be useful, they increase faculty's workload which then affects the quality of engagement. Instructional designers can provide better ideas and tools to manage workload and use time effectively, e.g. use of grading assistant models or conduct workshops on how to create feedback rubrics.

#6 - Instructor Modeling: students best know what is expected from them through explicit instructor modeling where the instructor sets out an example for them. For example, in order to encourage student participation in discussions, the instructor should actively participate as well and respond to students' opinions. This also applies to instructional designers when conducting professional development workshops.

Kinjal Chheda, Intern (under the guidance of Amanda Major, Ed.D., Associate Instructional Designer, Center for Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida)

From The Community

Involving Faculty to Serve Student Communities for Online Programs

Recognizing the Value of the Online Student Experience

onlinestudentcommunity

An effective practice that has worked well at Florida Atlantic University is the use of faculty-led student communities of learners. During the current global pandemic, this virtual community provides a place for learners to share ideas, interact, and build a sense of belonging.

Read more about using a phased approach to create a virtual community.

[Read More](#)

Nicole Alford, M.S., CAPM, Project Coordinator, Center for Online and Continuing Education, Florida Atlantic University

Ask ADDIE

Getting Engaged

Marrying Together Faculty and Online Student Success

Dear ADDIE,

Looking across the higher education landscape, I see a strong and growing focus on student success as a holistic approach by



faculty and staff from across the campus. At my large, metropolitan university, there are many student services and support resources designed to support students' retention, progression, academic success, and completion, both inside and outside of the classroom. In fact, when the global pandemic hit in spring, it was impressive to see how these services mobilized to ensure that

students had the resources and supports that they needed to successfully continue their academic journey.

As a newer, online faculty member, I wonder how I may be able to engage more, both with and for my students, and to support them even beyond my classroom. Do you have any tips or suggestions as to how online faculty can become more involved in serving students in online programs?

Signed,

Eager to Engage

[Read ADDIE's Response](#)

TOP COMMUNITY TOPICS

- [TOPkit Workshop Registration](#)
- [Evaluating - Checklists & Rubrics](#)
- [Developing - Tools, Techniques, and Strategies: Best Practices for Using Video in Online Learning](#)
- [Community of Practice - Share an](#)



Effective Practice

- Developing

References for Top Tips:

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Puzziferro, M., & Shelton, K. (2009). Supporting online faculty – revisiting the seven principles (a few years later). *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 12(3).

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Teaching Online Preparation Toolkit

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