Online community spaces provide educators with more transparency and insights into how their students are thinking and engaging with content and one another. Establishing teacher presence and cultivating a community of learners is essential in online and blended learning. In addition to individual connections between teacher and learner, we also need to use discussion boards and other collaborative spaces to promote peer to peer learning.
HELPFUL HINTS for putting standard into practice

- Establish teacher presence. (e.g. Say each student’s name during online meetings; Provide specific, individual feedback; Offer one-on-one help via office hours; Share about yourself)
- Create shared norms and revisit them often. Here is an example of a protocol adapted for online by Holly Steele, OCDE, Educational Services
- Incorporate SEL practices and culturally responsive teaching.
- Address the unique needs of your learners. (e.g developmentally appropriateness, access to technology, accessibility, home life)
- Involve parents/families as partners. Communicate directly with individuals and their families often.

RESOURCES to support standard use (mostly practical)

- Create a welcome video to share about yourself (establish a human connection and teacher presence) and ask students to create their own “About Me” video to share with you and their peers. Use Flipgrid or ask learners to add the video in a discussion board in your LMS.
- Give learners opportunities to share about themselves, their strengths and their opportunities for improvement. (e.g. Empathy Maps, Superpowers Slidedeck)
- Communicate often and in a variety of ways (options include: email, phone, text, online office hours, discussion boards, etc). It is important for students to know you are present even though you are not together in the same physical space. Also, send positive messages home as part of cultivating a culture of gratitude.
- Intentionally and explicitly weaving of SEL into the fabric of our everyday learning and life is critical. 3 SEL Practices Teachers Can Use Every Day
- Give each student multiple opportunities to share what they know and are able to do in a variety of ways (speaking, text, response tools, etc.) and provide frequent, high-quality feedback in a variety of ways.
- Utilize discussion boards to provide all learners a voice and give you better insight into their thinking.
- Use Inquiry-Based Learning to Keep Students Engaged
- Stay focused on Community of Inquiry by establishing and maintaining Teaching presence, Social presence, and Cognitive presence. (Briefly discussed in this episode of Adventures in Online Education at 11:44)

Author/Organization Bio

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