Tips for distance learning using audio conversations

Jimena Alvarado

www.everydaysocialjustice.com

The Magic of conversations:

Flipped classroom origin

SELF Reflection

Critical thinking

Dialogue

Verbal processing

Fast exchange - feedback

Spacing: timing, digesting. Nothing big, lots of nibbles

Choice of materials: easy to digest, ownership, simple

language

Everybody prepped!

The Setup

Informed consent: multiple notifications before term

Sending out syllabus

Including introductory video describing course

Open course a few days early

Doodle poll: 6am -11pm, 7days/wk

Poll due 2nd day 3pm – hard deadline

Multiple notifications of deadline

Warn folks to check email VERY often M-Th

Create groups evening second day, notify

Quiz end week 1 – conditional release wk2:

confirming logistics and committing to routine.

Create discussion board for group connection. Suggest introduction

Complex setup, runs easy once established

"Take this quick poll to let me know the ALL the times you could meet with your group each week. Pick ALLLL the days you could possibly meet, then I'll play matchmaker and find folks to connect you with. The more days you have available, the easier it is for me to match you. The more availability you list, the more support you're showing for folks who are in a tough spot with childcare and inflexible bosses. The times and dates are NOT for THIS specific week, they would be the times you'd meet EVERY week. These meetings will be virtual, you just need a phone or computer with a good connection. Think of a time each week that you can consistently meet after having reviewed all of the written and video materials for the week. I have put in 3-hour time slots, even if you're not available for all 3 hours, mark the slots that have a match with your schedule."

Assessment Strategy

Committed to making conversation priority

Individual preparation is mandatory - can't participate otherwise

Spacing – due 24h before

Self-report: 1st Q - on time?

Grade: 44% individual work, 35% conversations, 10% self grade,

15% Signature assignment

Identical weeks, steady routine

Individual work posted in discussion: allows for peer "feedback" (no

replies required)

Low stakes grading: individual work is about warm-up, not perfection

Low feedback: 1st individual, then conversation, then a weekly review

video

How it's gone:

Unusually high completion

Specific feedback praising conversations as learning tools

Some resistance early in term, some drops

I'm happy to help you if you want to try a version of this, just reach out! Jimena.alvarado@pcc.edu

Syllabus and info on my site: www.everydaysocialjustice.com → Behind the Scenes → Teachers → conversations

Matchmaking – excel Sudoku:

- 1. Doodle poll 6am-11pm (3hr), 7days
- 2. Beg for lots of flexibility, recognize it as Social Justice issue
- 3. Multiple nags and a hard deadline (drop you)
- 4. Export to excel
- 5. Search and replace OK=1
- 6. Do auto sum for each row
- 7. Sort by sum results (fussiest at the top, most flexibility at the bottom)
- 8. Visual matchmaking: start with the fussiest person, group with top 4-5 matches
- 9. Try for groups of 4-5 (account for attrition)
- Prefer groups LATER in the week, avoid M-Tu-W
- 11. Highlight with a color in excel (hold CTRL to select multiple rows and columns)
- 12. Every once in a while do data-sort by cell color, shows the unmatched students easily.
- 13. Trickier toward the end of group, may need to shift a couple to get groups of 4. Sometimes resort to 3s
- 14. Once you have everybody in groups, send a group email message, ask them to connect right away to set up logistics: conference call? Skype? Hangouts? Messenger?
- 15. Mandatory Quiz week one: logistics and schedule, conditional release wk2
- 16. Groups that are set for early in the week may decide to work a week "behind" or do a double conversation the first week (ask for 48 hour spacing, no back-to-back
- 17. Remind/offer flexibility for first week deadlines

