

Student Wellbeing Classroom Resource

Non-course Related Discussion Thread

Developed by:

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Social
Connectedness



Accessible for
reserved students



Foster supportive
classroom environment



Quick & Simple

Description

Setting up a non-course related discussion thread provides students with a forum to socially connect and engage with one another outside of course work. Facilitating social connections is highly valuable for students who may otherwise feel disconnected from their peers and teachers, particularly in online environments. Embedding wellbeing-related prompts in these forums can also provide a soft entrance into discussions on mental health and wellbeing, fostering a supportive classroom environment where students feel they can seek help if required. More information provided in the [Healthy University Course Convenor Manual](#).

Implementation

- Create a TEAMS channel or Moodle discussion forum that is explicitly for non-course related content
- Post a prompt question each week that invites student to engage (e.g. “3 things that I’m doing for self-care this week are... What are 3 things you do for self-care?”, or “What is the funniest kid video you have seen recently?”).
- Helpful Tips:
 - Posting your own responses to the prompts and encouraging tutors to engage with discussion can help students get to know you better
 - Invite students to initiate their own discussion threads to promote a sense of autonomy and community
 - Encourage the posting of memes and GIFs. This can help lighten conversation and help to ease the anxiety that students may be feeling.
- Example discussion thread prompts:
 - Working from home is tough, post a picture of your workspace and/or view from your work space
 - Today to balance these things I am: (1) Pleasure: baking bread, (2) Achievement: taking an online yoga class, (3) Social connection: calling my dad and trying to teach him how to make coffee art. What are you doing today to maintain balance?

Evidence of effectiveness

- Vibrant discussion in the thread
- Create a sense of community

Dr Jenny Richmond is a member of the Education Focussed Student Wellbeing Community of Practice (CoP). To find out more about the CoP, please contact the EF Team: EF@unsw.edu.au