Creating Community in the Classroom

Monday, November 2, noon
Facilitated by Tim Arner & Joyce Stern
Agenda

• Brief framing presentation on Classroom Community
• Some student feedback
• Breakout discussions with faculty, staff, and students
  • Reflect on lessons learned from Fall term 1
  • Discuss strategies for developing community in Fall term 2
Why classroom community

- Challenges of forming, maintaining community during remote learning
- Social and intellectual activities need to be intentional in a virtual classroom
- First- and second-year students are less likely to have established relationships and shared experiences with other students in a course
- Research has identified that learning communities have many positive effects for students
  - Higher student engagement, development of cognitive skills, greater respect for diversity, increased motivation, greater satisfaction with learning experience (West and Williams, “...a proposed framework for defining learning communities,” pp.1569-70)
Defining Learning Communities

(West and Williams, p.1571)
Building trust

• Different instincts at work in a virtual classroom
• How does trust develop between instructors and students?
• How do students better trust each other?
• Relationship between social environment and intellectual work
  • Need to feel respected and safe
  • Willingness to take risks, ask questions
• Importance of rules and norms (Major, Teaching Online, p.248)
Student feedback on particularly valuable practices

- Incorporate social (less formal) time
- Group work
- One-on-one time with the instructor
- Focus on quality rather than quantity of interactions
“7 Activities to Build Community and Positive Classroom Culture During Online Learning,” *New York Times*, Aug. 2020

Bordreau, Emily. “A Place of (Remote) Belonging: How educators can create a welcoming classroom community during distance learning,” *Usable Knowledge*, Harvard Graduate School of Education, April 2020

“How Build Community in Your Online Course,” Harvard University

Krause, Caitlin. “How to Forge a Strong Community in an Online Classroom,” *Edutopia* April 2020


Questions for discussion

What were positive classroom experiences and interactions from Fall term 1?

How can instructors help build a sense of classroom community?

What role do students play in creating classroom community?