Assumptions

- Learning is social

- Students do better when they have connections with their peers

- Online courses– asynchronous, especially– run the risk of being lonelier than face-to-face

Goals

- Original: Exploratory talk
  (Types of talk: disputational, cumulative, exploratory, procedural)

- Additional new goal: Socialization
  - Facilitating connections among students

An experiment with face-to-face groups for an AO course

- Course: EDUC 4408☐ Involves a significant field placement in K-12 schools

- "Old way": Group task centered around debrief discussions of field placement experiences
  - Issue
  - Insight

- "New way": Groups must arrange to meet in real time every other week

ROAR

Unforeseen benefit: Procedural Talk

- F-t-f students can do this quickly, informally, with elbow partners

- AO instructors get LOTS of email

- That semester my inbox markedly decreased!

Issue/Insight Group instructions

- Step 1: Group planning

- Deadline: 9/17/24

- Assignment: Get together as a group (by text, email, Marco Polo, Zoom, Starbucks, or whatever) and fill out your Issue/Insight plan [See "Issue/insight plan template" doc]. Make sure you each have a copy of the plan. Submit your plan on Moodle (as a group).

ROAR

Step 2: Issue/insight discussions

1. Group members submit their issue/insight to the discussion director by the group's agreed upon date.
2. Discussion director reads them and picks a few for the discussion.
3. Group meets [live; ftf or virtually] and discusses your issues and insights.
4. Discussion director turns in Discussion Director Report by Moodle calendar deadline.
5. Repeat with new discussion director two weeks later.

ROAR

What if the discussion director doesn't fulfill their responsibilities?

"You all want discussant points, so you'll need to meet anyway and wing it. Have someone compile the discussion info and EMAIL it to Suzanne, with a note that your director was unable to get it done. It might be good to submit your issues/insights somewhere that everyone can see them, in case this happens."

ROAR

Discussion Director's role

Responsibilities:

1. Reads all discussion nominations (1 issue and 1 insight per group member, per discussion) and decides what you'll talk about in your group
2. Leads the group discussion (30+ minutes)
3. Sends a report to Suzanne: who submitted an issue/insight on time, who was present and active in the discussion, a summary of what you talked about (a paragraph or two) + any questions you have left over for Suzanne to answer. [see "Discussion director report template"]
   - Please note: falsifying the discussion information constitutes academic dishonesty. Please do not put yours peers in this position by asking them to lie about whether or not and how you contributed.

ROAR

Group discussant role

1. Submit an issue and an insight each time to your discussion director by your agreed upon deadline.
2. Come to the discussions and contribute to them.
3. Don't dominate the discussion. Make sure your peers get chances to talk.

What's an "issue" and an "insight?"

- Issue = something UNRESOLVED that caught your attention, bothered you, perplexed you, etc.

- Insight = an "ah-ha" moment or something useful/cool that you saw/experienced in your placement

Necessary elements

- Structure: clear instructions, specific prompts/focus

- Room for student opinions/interests

- Preparation *before* the meetings

- Meetings in real time− face-to-face is best

Handouts for students
[folder on Google Drive]

Questions?

SMBeasterfield@isu.edu