EBSN
Professional
Development
Series

Emoderation Guide

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT TO PILOT COURSES

Top Tips for eModerating Online Courses

MOTIVATE - and encourage students throughout the course. You can do this by posing questions or starting dialogue on the community forum, as well as by responding to participants' posts.

GUIDE - new members of a course may be unfamiliar with the technology or topic and will need guidance, especially in the beginning. Post an FAQ section for frequently asked questions, and contact information.

SUPPORT - ensure that your online learning environment is well structured and clear. Give an overview of the weeks ahead, and ensure that resources and assignments are clearly laid out.

RESPOND TIMEOUSLY - while you shouldn't check the forums every 5 minutes, it is important for you to be visible and respond to concerns as soon as possible (within 1 working day), to ensure participants are not discouraged.

WAIT - before you respond to a post - particularly an emotionally-loaded one. Pause and consider the context before you reply.

LISTEN - "you have two ears, and one mouth" - listen to others and read their posts and comments twice before responding.

BUILD ON STRENGTHS - most online communities attract a range of people, from experts to enthusiastic amateurs. Don't underestimate the value of this diversity - encourage all members to contribute.

COLLABORATION - encourage collaboration by asking students to assist and respond to each other on the forums.

REMINDERS - because your participants might be working professionals, it is an excellent idea to send them regular reminders. In small courses, don't forget to check your participants' list to see when last they logged in, and encourage absentees to join in.

DON'T FEED THE TROLLS - occasionally, negative or contentious posts are submitted by 'trolls' or people who purposefully disrupt online communities. If someone is creating a toxic online environment, don't engage with them directly on the forum.
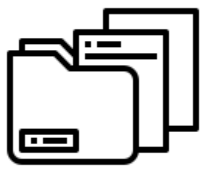
Communication Strategies

☐ **REGULAR COMMUNICATION** is key in keeping your MOOC alive, and the Updates page is an excellent place to provide updates and encouragement, as are weekly emails.

☐ **Q&A FORUMS** - are an important element for any online course. Use this space to address students' questions and concerns about the course content or assignments.

☐ **ONLINE PRESENCE** - consider scheduling a regular time slot indicating to students when you will be available on Skype or via instant messaging. If desired, set up a course account rather than using your personal one.

☐ **FEEDBACK** - while it is not feasible to give feedback to students on assignments in MOOCs, you can provide short feedback videos at the end of each week that address the main concerns and questions students have.

Key Tasks for Maintaining Forum Discussions

	Harvest	Keep track of key points in discussions and assignments as the discussion progresses over the weeks. This process ensures that interesting points and action items are not buried in a myriad of comments.
	Weave	Find shared elements in posts and weave them together to show an underlying pattern. By doing this you are contributing to a new way of viewing the topic which will benefit learner engagement.
	Summarise	Compile the posts on the same topic into a short summary to provide an overview for both new participants and those who wish to revise content.
	Archive	Your weaves and summaries can be useful during the piloting phase of the programme. Consider how they can be archived and reused in subsequent course runs.
	Triggers	Finally, if your forums are quiet you can always use learners' individual comments or a weave of several comments to stimulate a debate or spark a discussion.

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This guide has been adapted from D Marquis @ TU Delft by N Wylie @ SETU CC-BY-NC-SA