

There are many activities that can be integrated into course content to help learners succeed in an online environment. Some of these include:

Reflect on a photo.

Share a photo in Blackboard or in a collaborative space and have students share their thoughts about it and connect their ideas to topics or content they are learning. Students can also comment on classmates' responses.

Reflect on a question.

Use a Discussion Board in Blackboard or a collaborative app like [Webjets](#) or [Padlet](#) to have students respond to a higher-order thinking question. Students can also comment on each other's contributions.

Brainstorming.

Learners generate ideas which are recorded in a collaborative space such as a [Google Doc](#) or a Webjets/Padlet board. You might use the prompt "Tell me everything you know about...". Student contributions may be organized into categories. The main rules of brainstorming are to acknowledge every contribution by writing it down and save any critiquing until after the idea generation time is over.

Jigsaws.

Students work in small groups to explore content that has been organized into sections. Each student in the group reviews one section of the material and then shares that information with the rest of their group. As they explore and share information, they refer to prompts such as: what do you think each idea means? What is the big idea? What questions do you have about what you read? What do you agree/not agree with? Students can use a collaborative document such as a Google Doc or Slide or Groups in Blackboard to share their learning.

Polling.

Having students respond to poll questions or share their thoughts anonymously about a topic, followed by opportunities to see the results and discuss their ideas with peers leads to greater learning and engagement with the material.

Mind-mapping.

Ask students to create a mind map to visually organize their understanding of a topic.

Pro-and-con grid.

It lists advantages and disadvantages of any issue and helps students develop analytical and evaluative skills. It also encourages students to go beyond their initial reactions, search for at least two sides to the issue, and promotes critical thinking skills. Students can create individual pro and con grids or by groups using a collaborative document.

Debate.

Ask students in advance to choose a side of the debate. When some students refuse to choose one side or the other, create a middle ground and invite their reasons for choosing it. Before concluding, ask a few volunteers to summarize arguments for each side in a collaborative document. Use a tool like [Flipgrid](#) for asynchronous debate where students can share short videos and respond to others. Organize videos by side of the debate.

Video/audio reflection.

Give students the opportunity to reflect with video and audio and share their learning and impressions with the class. Use a tool like Flipgrid where student can record short videos and share them with the class. Classmates can respond to others' video as well as the instructor.

One-minute paper.

Ending a topic or module with short writing assignments is a powerful way to assess student understanding. You might ask: What was the most important thing you learned in this module? What questions remained unanswered? Summarize the main point of this topic. This will give you some insights as to how you might need to modify the content or support individual students.