

Recommendations for Improvement of RSI at Crafton Hills College

Substantive Interactions

- It would be helpful for the Academic Senate to define “substantive interaction” and engage faculty in dialogue about what this means at Crafton Hills College, hopefully culminating in a policy developed by faculty.
- Generally speaking, substantive interactions support student learning meaningfully and are directly related to the course content.
- Examples of substantive interactions
 - Feedback on assignment submissions
 - Written comments
 - Audio/video comments (Canvas has these tools!)
 - Written annotations on the submitted document (Canvas has great tools that allow the instructor to “mark up” the student’s submission).
- Feedback won’t count as substantive feedback if it’s just an encouraging “good job” or a brief critique, “respond to another student next time for full credit”, etc. To be substantive, the feedback should help the student better understand the course content in some way.
- Participating in Canvas discussions can be a great method of establishing substantive interactions, particularly if the instructor participates in the discussion and meaningfully guides the conversation and/or helps students understand the course content.
- Identify tools that facilitate regular interactions between faculty and individual students.
 - The tools should allow two-way communication (announcements, for example, can be sent regularly but are unidirectional).
 - Office Hours - office hours held weekly with clear ways students can participate (physical location/Zoom link) are a great way to demonstrate that the instructor provides information and responds to questions.
 - Assessment Feedback - Feedback on assignment submissions, if done regularly throughout the semester, can effectively demonstrate regular interactions and is part of the ACCJC rubric. However, autograded assignments don’t count even if the publisher’s site interacts with the students virtually.
 - Canvas Discussions are designed for this purpose, and can be an effective methodology, but they are not the only method.
 - If Canvas Discussions are used, the instructor is ideally a visible, regular participant in the discussions. Having only students respond to other students is the lowest “initial” rubric option. Setting a higher standard here may considerably help meet RSI because it’s a way for students to regularly interact with their instructor, visible to a peer reviewer. The Academic Senate policy described below under “regular interactions” could address how often instructors are expected to participate in each discussion. Should an instructor respond to every student post? One out of every five? Consider how prescriptive you feel you need to be initially.

- Other tools that integrate with Canvas might be useful for some disciplines:
 - Voicethread
 - Flipgrid
 - Harmonize
 - Etc.

Regular interactions

- Determine how frequently Crafton Hills College believes instructors should interact with individual students each semester, and develop a college policy, ideally through the Academic Senate.
 - This policy can be shared with a visiting team so that they can determine if the online course sample provided meets the college's internal standards.
 - This policy can be used to create/update training materials for online educators. It sets a benchmark against which regular interactions can be measured and against which faculty can develop.
- The ACCJC rubric emphasizes having policies, clearly stated in the syllabus, that articulate how often an instructor will interact with students and by which methods.
- Other policies that can be used to meet regular interactions include those that explain to the student how their academic success will be monitored and measured.
- Announcements are not explicitly listed in the ACCJC rubric, but if used routinely, they are one method of being present in the course.

Other observations

- Variable course design
 - The organization of the DE sample courses reviewed varied widely.
 - Syllabi were in different formats and locations, and of variable quality
 - Some instructors utilized the home page effectively, while others went to the modules
 - There didn't seem to be any theme to how modules were used, and it wasn't always clear to me where to find information (and I develop in Canvas, so presumably I'm better equipped than a student would be!).
 - Hiring an instructional designer to help create templates that faculty can model their courses after can work well. At CCSF, we have a dedicated instructional designer who conducts training and builds templates using [CidiLabs](#). However, CidiLabs is not need to create user-friendly templates!
- Variable instructor readiness to be an online teacher
 - In some cases, it's clear that more training is needed, and in others, it seems clear that teaching in an online modality is not something that an instructor is suited for
 - This problem is not unique to Crafton Hills College - it's been true for us at CCSF and other colleges, based on the Academic Senate Presidents I have spoken to at other colleges.