# Helpful Ideas

# Getting Interactive in Big Courses

Traditional online course models most often incorporate discussion as the main vehicle to have students interact with the teacher, other students, and the content. These discussion activities can be extremely powerful and lead to all sorts of positive outcomes – especially building of community and deep engagement with content. But they are typically only practical in small cohort courses (20-30 students). Unfortunately, this kind of model does not scale well to larger courses. But there are some strategies that work in large courses.
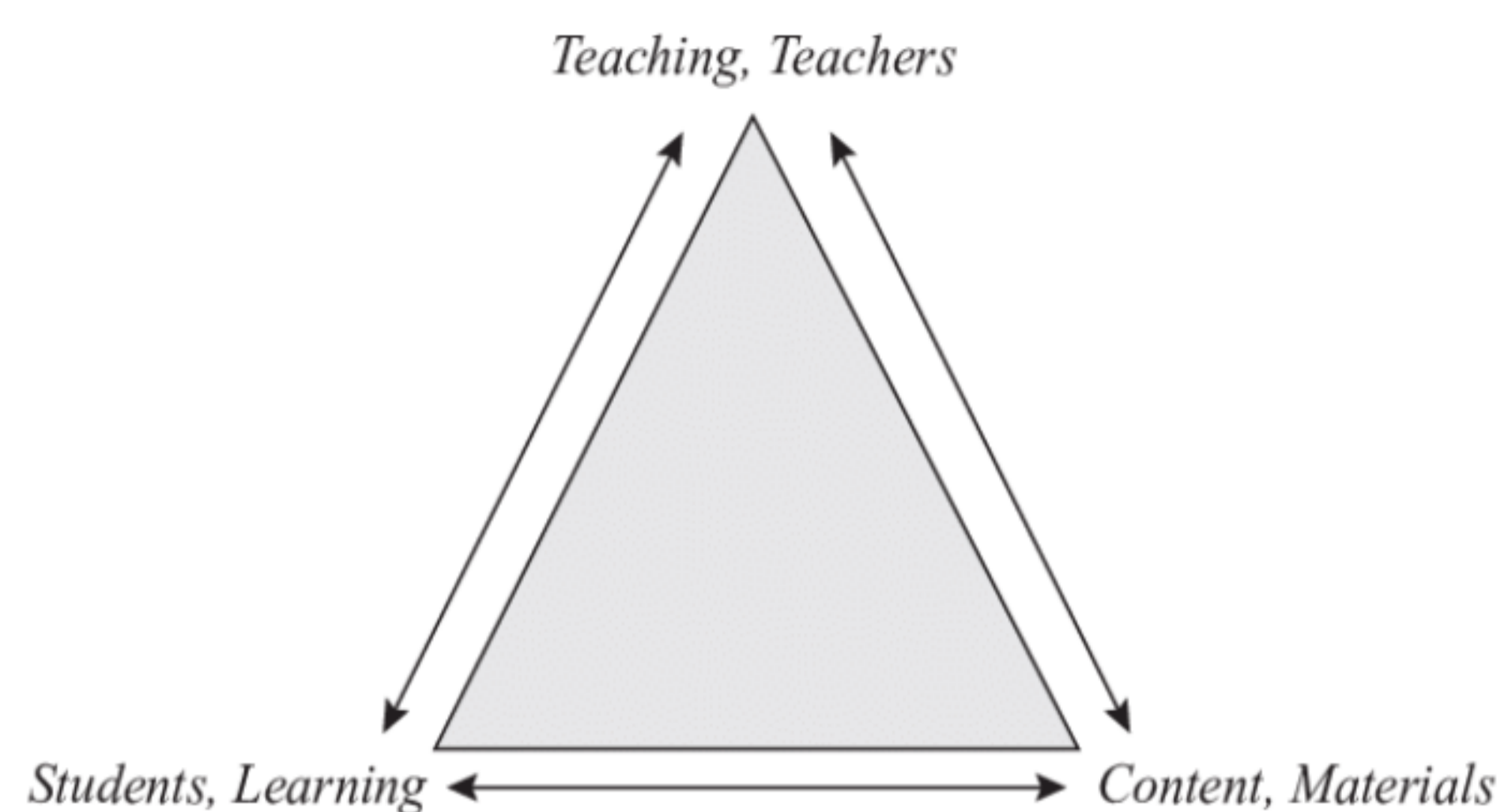


## Teacher to Student

In very large courses, Teacher-to-Student interactions will more be in broadcast mode than the back and forth conversational dialogue that is possible in smaller classes. The faculty member's time and attention are a limited resource so we should focus on interactions with as many students as possible at a time.

## Small Sync Interactions

In Zoom or Collaborate sessions we can monitor the student chat area for questions. We can use the built-in polling functions to ask students about lecture pace, concepts that need to be clarified, have them make predictions, or ask questions to activate learning from previous sessions. Other polling tools can also be used like Kahoot, Mentimeter, and Poll Everywhere. This can add back some of the classroom like interactions that we lose online

## Student to Content

You need to choose between a synchronous or asynchronous mode of delivery (we recommend a mix). Both modes have their own particular mix of advantages and disadvantages. What is right for you, your students and the course will vary. There have been many student comments for the preference for live sessions.

## Bigger Sync Activities

With Breakout rooms you can easily facilitate great activities online - the activities need to modified from F2F to have clearer deliverables and pre-breakout tasking before you send students into breakout rooms. You also need clear instructions on how the activity will be debriefed when students are brought back into main room. Detailed instruction on how best use breakouts room are available on the CIS website in the extended resources section.

## Student to Student

Faculty members attention is a scarce resource, so we want to leverage student to student interactions if we can. Students talking with other students (think-pair-share), notes review pauses, peer teaching moments, and peer review are all great ways to leverage this. These interactions can be harder in large online courses, but there are a few techniques like Peer Review that scale quite nicely.

## Peer Review

One way to increase the amount of feedback students get without overloading the instructor is to use student peer review. In peer review, students review and provide feedback on each other's work. There is peer review functionality built directly into Canvas that lets you anonymously and randomly assign a specific number of peer reviews to each student.

## Access to Additional Resources

✓ CIS Website - cis.apsc.ubc.ca/best-practices-2020

Ask Centre for Instructional Support for Help - learning@apsc.ubc.ca