



# Teaching Cloud Campus students: Tips for teaching online



## ▲ Break the ice

It's easier for students to connect with you and each other when they know who they are talking to.

- Share a bit about yourself.
- Balance the personal and professional.
- Invite students to share something about themselves and what they hope to get from the unit.

## ▲ Be present, but not too present

Encourage students to engage in discussion forums by being active yourself and asking them to add to your responses.

- Reduce the frequency of your posts once students start sustaining discussion themselves.
- Prompt responses by partially answering questions and asking students to share their perspectives.
- Don't try to respond to everything but make sure you reply promptly to any posts that need your attention!

## ▲ Get together

Hold synchronous sessions for interested students to discuss their learning with you and their peers using Bb Collaborate or Skype for Business.

- Make sure the recording is available for students who cannot attend.
- Consider setting up a forum or thread to allow the discussion to continue.

## ▲ Say it again

Students will interact with the learning materials at different times, so you'll probably get asked the same question in the discussion forum more than once. Encourage students to check the thread in case you've already answered their question but remember that this may not be practical, especially if the thread is long or the question was asked a while ago.

## ▲ Reach out

Check in with students every so often, especially at key points in the trimester.

- Ask how they're going with an assignment, or whether they understand the feedback they've received.
- Let them know that they can contact you directly if they don't want to share concerns in the discussion forum.

## ▲ Film it

Videos build your presence as an educator and can be much more engaging than just reading a post.

- Create short videos to provide updates and share information about things like assessment tasks.
- They don't need to be fancy – just talk to your webcam.
- Provide the information as text as well for any students who cannot watch the video.

## ▲ Set the standard

Students will follow your lead, so model the interactions you wish to see in discussion forums.

- Set guidelines: What is ok to share? What belongs in which thread? When can they expect to get a response from you?
- If the thread's getting off-track, step in and gently redirect things - some students disengage from discussion forums if they appear unmoderated or too social (Krause & Armitage, 2014).

## ▲ Walk in their shoes

Cloud Campus students tend to be particularly time-poor, so it's vital that they are able to find the information they need quickly.

- Provide as much information about assessments and unit requirements as you can, as early as you can.
- Try to make it as easy as possible to interact and engage in the ways that best suit them.

## ▲ Set the tone

Keep the tone conversational.

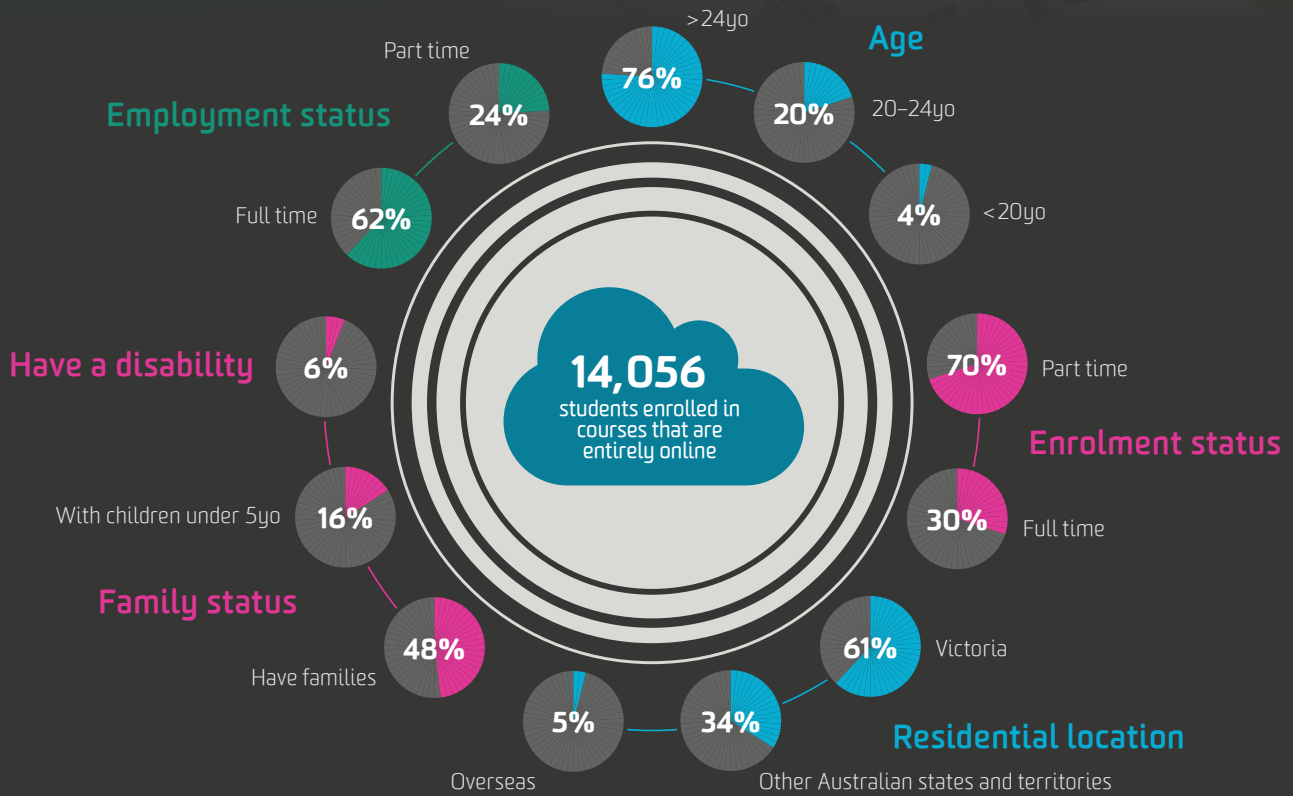
- View the discussion forum like a classroom discussion.
- Use emojis to clarify your tone. Don't overuse them though, and if you're tempted to try something new, make sure you know what it means!

## ▲ Break it down

Offer students the chance to join smaller learning groups – assign 4 – 6 interested students to each group and encourage them to collaborate and discuss their learning via their preferred social media platform.



# Who are Cloud Campus students?



## What Cloud Campus students say

One subject has been fantastic – repeating questions asked in recorded lecturers, writing notes to off campus students and it has felt very inclusive.

I would really like all material to be available upfront (rather than uploaded on a weekly basis). I travel a lot overseas and can use my time to get all the lectures upfront and go through them as I get time.

A phone session at the start with tutor would greatly break down the anxiety barrier. I still feel that I may not be across the online learning page as well as I might be.

I wouldn't mind somebody from my course checking in with me occasionally (twice a semester, not weekly or anything) to make sure I'm doing the correct things.

Get an online specific staff member for each course that you can ask for help.

## Find out more

### ► FOR YOU

Access the Sessional Staff Professional Learning modules via D2L. Check out the guides on the TeachAssist website. Contact the Cloud Campus team at [cloudcampus@deakin.edu.au](mailto:cloudcampus@deakin.edu.au).

### ► FOR YOUR STUDENTS

If your students need further advice and support, direct them to Student Central (13 DEAKIN or +61 3 9244 6333) or the help section in DeakinSync.