


Student Peer Interaction and Networking (SPIN)

SPIN is one of three evidence-based strategies developed and tested by the Postsecondary Teaching with Technology Collaborative in online STEM courses. This document provides an overview.

Instructors can incorporate SPIN activities to support students' **motivation** by helping them feel a greater sense of belonging in the class and comfort to use the applied learning process of seeking help. There are two related SPIN activities:

1. An introductory questionnaire administered during the first week of class
2. Collaborative activities at least twice during the course.



SPIN activities build students' sense of belonging and help seeking skills. Online students report feeling disconnection and reluctance to seek help from peers. SPIN activities support motivational and applied learning processes. SPIN activities encourage students to use these processes.

Instructors using SPIN activities report they help students connect with each other and ask for help when needed.

- **SPIN Activity 1: Introductory questionnaires** ask students to share nonacademic information to showcase students' strengths and provide opportunities to connect with one another. Keeping in mind students' comfort levels and privacy, instructors can share responses and encourage students to connect. Instructors may choose to share their own answers and use the questionnaire data to inform other instructional activities, including creating groups.
- **SPIN Activity 2: Collaborative activities** include two ways for students to work with peers on an academic task. To foster productive group interaction, instructors share a *rubric* listing effective group processes at the beginning of the task and then ask students to complete a summative *reflection* on how well they collaborated after the task. The materials provide options for integrating collaborative activities into synchronous and/or asynchronous courses.

SPIN Examples	Student Skill
<p>Introductory questionnaire questions:</p> <p>What are your hobbies? Do you work outside of school? What time of day do you usually do schoolwork?</p>	Develop sense of belonging
<p>SPIN collaborative activity ideas:</p> <p>Jigsaw activity or concept mapping activities where students contribute to group understanding of course content.</p> <p>Threaded discussion groups where students can share resources and pose questions to peers.</p> <p>Online synchronous breakout groups where students review a homework assignment question or solve practice questions.</p>	Develop sense of belonging Support help seeking



The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305C210003 to SRI International. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

To learn more about the Postsecondary Teaching with Technology Collaborative, visit the website at <https://postseccollab.org/>.