

# Week 5 RSI Focus

## Discussions



## Week 5: RSI through Discussions With Purpose

Dear Faculty,

As a reminder, **accreditors will be reviewing our online courses from *this* semester (Spring 2026)**. For a successful accreditation outcome, our online classes must clearly demonstrate **Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)** with students. Make Spring 2026 your **BEST ONLINE COURSE** ever and then continue that good work into ALL semesters!

This week's **RSI Focus** is **Discussions With Purpose**. One key area accreditors look at closely is **discussion facilitation**. RSI is not simply having a discussion board—it's **your active presence in it**. *Facilitation, not just participation*

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### RSI TIP OF THE WEEK

**When designing discussion prompts:**

- Require **critical thinking, analysis or reflection**
- Encourage students to **respond to and build on peers' ideas**

**At the start of the discussion:**

- Post an instructor **kickoff message** that frames the topic, clarifies expectations and models the depth and tone you're looking for

**During the discussion, actively facilitate by:**

- Responding to students throughout the week
- Replying to a **variety of students**, not just the strongest posts
- Asking **follow-up questions** that deepen thinking
- Connecting ideas across multiple student posts

- Using student names and referencing **specific ideas** from their posts
- Tying responses back to **course content** (readings, videos, assignments, or real-world examples)
- Clarifying misconceptions or **deepening understanding** when ideas are oversimplified or misunderstood
- Modeling **respectful disagreement and critical inquiry**
- Maintaining a **visible rhythm of engagement** (responses spread across multiple days)

**To close the discussion:**

- Summarize or synthesize key themes mid-week or at the end (e.g., “I’m seeing three main ideas emerging...”)

This kind of consistent, visible facilitation clearly demonstrates **Regular and Substantive Interaction** to both students and accreditors.

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**Why all of this matters:**

RSI isn’t the discussion board—it’s **your presence in it**. Active facilitation shows accreditors that meaningful instructor-student interaction is happening consistently throughout the term.

Thank you for the important work you’re doing to support student learning and to help ensure a successful accreditation review.

*CTX Staff*

*“Your partner in Professional Growth”*

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