

# RSI Information

## **RSI – Regular and Substantive Interaction.**

RSI refers to meaningful and consistent engagement between students and instructors in distance education courses. It distinguishes distance education, which is eligible for federal financial aid, from correspondence education, which is not.

More information about RSI can be found on the CTL Website:

<https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Resources/RSI.html>

If you have any questions or need help with RSI in your Distance Education course, please contact us at [online@mclennan.edu](mailto:online@mclennan.edu)

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## **Examples of RSI**

The following are good and bad examples of RSI. These are just some of the activities that count as RSI.

### **Instructor Feedback**

#### **Good Example**

Thank you for submitting your essay on the impact of social media on interpersonal relationships. I've reviewed your work carefully and have some detailed feedback to help you improve your writing and argumentation skills.

Strengths:

1. Your thesis statement is clear and concise, effectively setting up your argument.
2. You've incorporated relevant statistics to support your points, which strengthens your argument.
3. Your paragraph structure generally follows a logical flow, making your essay easy to follow.

Areas for Improvement:

1. Introduction: While your hook is interesting, consider connecting it more directly to your thesis. For example, you could mention how the anecdote about your friend's social media use relates to broader trends.
2. Body Paragraph 2: Your point about social media's impact on face-to-face communication is compelling, but it needs more development. Can you provide a specific example or study that illustrates this effect?
3. Counterargument: Your essay would be stronger if you addressed a potential counterargument. For instance, you could discuss how some argue that social media actually enhances relationships for long-distance friends or family.
4. Conclusion: Your conclusion summarizes your main points well, but try to end with a stronger call to action or thought-provoking statement about the future of interpersonal relationships in the digital age.
5. Citations: Remember to use in-text citations for all statistics and studies you mention. This adds credibility to your argument and avoids plagiarism.

### **Bad Example**

Good job on your essay. It was well-written and made some good points about social media. There were a few grammar mistakes. Please fix these and resubmit.

### **Why is the good example considered RSI?**

1. **Timely and Detailed:** The feedback is comprehensive and specific to the student's work, demonstrating that the instructor has carefully reviewed the assignment.
2. **Personalized:** The feedback addresses the student by name and references specific aspects of their essay, showing individualized attention.
3. **Constructive and Instructional:** It provides both positive reinforcement and areas for improvement, offering specific suggestions for enhancing the essay.
4. **Content-Focused:** The feedback directly relates to the course content and learning outcomes, discussing argumentation skills, essay structure, and proper citation methods.
5. **Encourages Critical Thinking:** By suggesting the inclusion of counterarguments, the instructor prompts the student to engage in higher-order thinking.
6. **Refers to Course Materials:** The feedback mentions previous lessons (e.g., citation methods), connecting the assignment to broader course content.
7. **Offers Additional Resources:** The instructor points out specific comments in the document, providing extra guidance.
8. **Invites Further Interaction:** By mentioning office hours and the possibility of a one-on-one video call, the instructor encourages ongoing dialogue and support.

9. **Sets Expectations:** The feedback clearly outlines what is expected in the revised essay, guiding future work.
  10. **Promotes Academic Growth:** By providing detailed suggestions for improvement, the instructor supports the student's academic development.
  11. **Demonstrates Instructor Engagement:** The depth and quality of the feedback show that the instructor is actively involved in the student's learning process.
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## Discussion Facilitation

### Good Example

#### Initial Instructor Post:

Welcome to our discussion on cognitive biases! This week, we'll explore how these mental shortcuts influence our decision-making. To start, please read Chapter 7 in your textbook and watch the linked video on confirmation bias.

Initial Discussion Question:

Describe a situation where you've experienced or observed confirmation bias in your own life. How did this bias affect the outcome of the situation? What strategies could be used to mitigate this bias?

Instructor Follow-up Posts:

1. **Response to Student A:**

Great example, Alex! Your experience with confirmation bias in political discussions is quite common. I appreciate how you connected it to the concept of echo chambers we discussed in last week's lecture. Have you considered how social media algorithms might amplify this effect? This ties into our upcoming unit on technology and cognition.

2. **Response to Student B:**

Interesting perspective, Jamie. You've touched on an important point about how confirmation bias can affect scientific research. Can you think of any specific safeguards that researchers use to counteract this bias? (Hint: Consider our reading on the scientific method from Week 2.)

3. **General Comment to Class:**

I'm seeing some excellent discussions about personal experiences with confirmation bias. To deepen our analysis, let's also consider its potential positive aspects. Can anyone think of a situation where confirmation bias might

be adaptive or beneficial? Remember to support your ideas with concepts from our readings.

4. **Wrap-up Post:**

Thank you all for your thoughtful contributions this week. Your examples have beautifully illustrated how pervasive confirmation bias can be. As we move into next week's topic on decision-making heuristics, keep in mind how these biases might interact. Don't forget to complete the reflection quiz by Friday!

## **Bad Example**

### **Initial Instructor Post:**

This week we're talking about cognitive biases. Please read Chapter 7 and answer the following question:

What is confirmation bias?

Instructor Follow-up Posts:

1. **Response to Student A:**

Good answer.

2. **Response to Student B:**

Please refer to the textbook for the correct definition.

3. **General Comment to Class:**

Remember to post your responses by Friday.

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## **Announcements**

### **Good Announcement**

**Subject:** Week 5: Diving into Cellular Respiration - Key Concepts and Upcoming Activities

Dear Biology 101 Students,

Welcome to Week 5 of our course! This week, we're exploring the fascinating world of cellular respiration. Here's what you need to know:

Key Concepts:

- The stages of cellular respiration: glycolysis, citric acid cycle, and electron transport chain
- ATP production and energy transfer in cells
- Comparison of aerobic and anaerobic respiration

This Week's Learning Activities:

1. Readings: Chapter 7 in your textbook, focusing on sections 7.1-7.4
2. Video Lecture: "Cellular Respiration: Powering Your Cells" (available in the course module)
3. Interactive Simulation: "ATP Production in Mitochondria" (link in Module 5)
4. Discussion Forum: Share your thoughts on the evolutionary significance of cellular respiration

**Upcoming Deadlines:**

- Wednesday, 11:59 PM: Quiz on Glycolysis
- Friday, 11:59 PM: Lab Report on Yeast Fermentation
- Sunday, 11:59 PM: Discussion Forum initial post due

**Office Hours:**

I'll be holding extended virtual office hours this Thursday from 2-4 PM to address any questions about cellular respiration. Feel free to drop in!

Pro Tip: As you study this week, try to connect the concepts of cellular respiration to your daily life. For instance, consider how your cells are constantly performing these processes as you read this announcement!

Looking forward to our engaging discussions this week. Remember, understanding cellular respiration is key to grasping how our bodies function at the molecular level.

Best regards,

Dr. Martinez

**Bad Announcement**

This week we're covering Chapter 7. Make sure to do the readings and complete all assignments on time. There will be a quiz on Wednesday and a lab report due on Friday. Let me know if you have any questions.

Prof. M

**Why is the Good Announcement Considered RSI?**

The good announcement example qualifies as effective Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) for several reasons:

1. **Comprehensive Content:** It provides a detailed overview of the week's topic, key concepts, and learning activities, giving students a clear roadmap for their studies.
2. **Clear Expectations:** The announcement outlines specific deadlines and requirements, helping students manage their time effectively.

3. **Multiple Interaction Opportunities:** It mentions various ways for students to engage with the material and the instructor, including readings, video lectures, interactive simulations, and discussion forums.
4. **Instructor Availability:** The announcement highlights extended office hours, encouraging students to seek one-on-one help if needed.
5. **Relevance and Application:** By suggesting students connect the concepts to their daily lives, it promotes deeper understanding and engagement with the material.
6. **Personalization:** The instructor's tone is friendly and encouraging, creating a sense of connection with the students.
7. **Preview of Content:** It provides a brief overview of the key concepts, helping students prepare for the upcoming material.
8. **Motivation:** The final paragraph emphasizes the importance of the topic, motivating students to engage with the material.

This announcement goes beyond simply listing tasks and deadlines. It actively engages students, provides context for the learning, and offers multiple avenues for interaction, all of which are crucial elements of effective RSI in online courses.

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## Office Hours

### Good Example:

Professor Smith's Virtual Office Hours:

- Scheduled twice a week: Tuesdays 2-4 PM and Thursdays 10 AM-12 PM
- Conducted via video conferencing platform
- Students can book 15-minute slots in advance or drop in

During a typical session:

1. Professor Smith greets the student warmly: "Hello Maria, it's great to see you. How can I help you today?"
2. Maria expresses confusion about a recent lecture on photosynthesis.
3. Professor Smith pulls up relevant slides and explains the concept, using the whiteboard feature to draw diagrams.
4. He asks Maria questions to check her understanding: "Can you explain why the light-dependent reactions are important?"
5. They discuss how this concept relates to the upcoming lab experiment.
6. Professor Smith provides additional resources: "I'll send you a link to a simulation that really helps visualize this process."

7. Before ending, he asks: "Do you have any other questions about the course material or assignments?"
8. They schedule a follow-up session for next week to review Maria's lab report draft.

### **Bad Example:**

Professor Jones's Office Hours:

- No set schedule, students must email to request a meeting
- Conducted via email only

A typical interaction:

**Student:** "I'm confused about the assignment. Can you help?"

**Professor Jones:** "What part don't you understand?"

**Student:** "The part about cellular respiration."

**Professor Jones:** "Read Chapter 5 again and let me know if you still have questions."

### **Why the Good Example is Considered Effective RSI:**

1. **Regular Scheduling:** Set times each week make it easy for students to plan and engage consistently.
2. **Accessibility:** Virtual format and flexible scheduling options (booking or drop-in) increase accessibility.
3. **Personalized Interaction:** The professor greets the student by name and focuses on her specific needs.
4. **Content-Focused:** The discussion centers on course material (photosynthesis), directly supporting learning objectives.
5. **Multi-modal Teaching:** The professor uses various tools (slides, whiteboard, verbal explanation) to address different learning styles.
6. **Active Learning:** By asking questions, the professor encourages the student to engage actively with the material.
7. **Contextual Learning:** Connecting the topic to the upcoming lab helps the student see its relevance.
8. **Additional Resources:** Offering extra materials shows a commitment to supporting the student's learning beyond the session.
9. **Open-ended Support:** The professor invites questions about any course-related topics, not just the initial query.
10. **Continuity:** Scheduling a follow-up session ensures ongoing support and interaction.
11. **Substantive Engagement:** The interaction goes beyond simple Q&A, involving explanation, application, and critical thinking.

This approach to office hours demonstrates the instructor's active involvement in the student's learning process, provides regular opportunities for interaction, and offers substantive, course-related support. These elements align closely with the requirements for effective RSI in online education, making it a strong example of how office hours can be used to meet RSI standards.