

Suggestions for Using Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication

Purpose: This document is to provide some suggestions to support dynamic discourses when using synchronous (Adobe Connect) and asynchronous (D2L email discussion forums) communication in our Werklund School of Education online and blended programs.

Synchronous Communication – Adobe Connect Session

Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script the discussion – prepare and post discussion the agenda and/or questions in advance. • Prepare a visually appealing PowerPoint that will be used to navigate the session, share questions, and present content. • Plan various learning activities, so that each one does not exceed 12 to 15 minutes.
Audio Set Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the microphone checks 10 to 15 minutes before the class is to start. Encourage students to log in before the session to ensure their microphones are working. • If the class is more than five people, you are encouraged to switch the audio to single speaker for the large group portions of the class.
Start of the Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the recording just as you begin the session. • Greeting: Welcoming and provide the agenda for the session. • Warm-up activities: Use an icebreaker activity to help people feel comfortable using the microphone and/or responding using the technology (e.g., raise hand or polling tool).
Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the activity every 12 to 15 minutes. • When presenting content, speak no longer than 12 to 15 minutes. Provide visually appealing slides to complement the verbal message. • Ask open-end questions to engage the students in discussion of the topic. • Restrict the use of bandwidth-intensive tools (i.e. sharing your webcam, Prezi presentations), as they may affect negatively users with low Internet capabilities. • Concluding remarks that may include a final round of comments and questions.
Breakout Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear directions for the small group activity before putting students in breakout rooms. • Ask each group to assign a recorder/reporter. • Post the question and/or directions for the activity in the breakout rooms prior to moving students into the group rooms. • During the small group activity, visit each room. Listen to the discussion and respond to questions. • Notify students when the breakout room activity is about to finish. Ask them to disconnect their microphones, as it may help prevent problems when students return to the main room. • When students return to the large group, ask the reporter of each group to share their work. When possible, ensure visuals are available to support the speaking.

Asynchronous Communication

<p>Setting up Discussion Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully plan <i>what</i> will be discussed and <i>how</i> it will be discussed. • Discussions occur best when managed. How will you manage the weekly discussions? • Determine the schedule of the asynchronous discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly, bi-weekly, etc (What will be the start date?) • Large or small groups? • Instructor-selected groups, student-selected groups, or a combination? • Provide clear and detailed guidelines for students with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and when you expect postings. • Nature of the post (e.g., citations, connections to course work, etc). • Length of the posting. • Expectations for referencing citations. • Are postings allowed after the end date for a particular discussion forum? <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Example of expectations for online discussions:</p> <p>Throughout the course, issues and topics will be discussed within the online forum. For this course, a Monday a.m. to Sunday p.m. weekly cycle will be used for the discussions/activities. You are expected to log into D2L a minimum of twice per week and read what peers and instructor have posted. You are expected to post a minimum of one substantive response per topic in the discussion forum for each week. This initial posting is to be in direct response to the question or activity posted by the instructor or seminar group. In addition, you are expected to respond to postings from your colleagues. This second posting to the topic should contribute to the point or points raised by your colleagues during the week. It is important that you respond to questions in D2L early within the week and that you use the remainder of the time to respond and to extend the discussions with your colleagues.</p> <p>This is designed to be an online discussion, which allows everyone in class to discuss, question, and debate the various topics and extend their learning experience. Postings should be concise and focused on a specific topic. A discussion message should be a maximum of 3 - 4 paragraphs. Ensure that citations are reference at the end of the posting using APA.</p> </div>
<p>Discussion Postings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help with the flow of the online discourse, it is best to use threads. • In your responses, model the practice you expect to see by students (e.g., provide an example, extend the discussions through thought-provoking questions, make connections with experiences and other course content, and provide citations using APA). • At the end discussion, it is helpful to provide a summary of key ideas or clarification. This helps to bring closure to the discussion. • Provide a space where questions and discussion not directly related to the weekly discussions can occur. This might be called the <i>café</i> or <i>staff room</i>. This allows for course-related questions to be asked without impacting the flow of the discussion for the content.
<p>Facilitating Discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an ongoing presence in the online discussion forums. • As a facilitator of a discussion, it is important to ask questions that extend or deepen the discourse, as well as, to help focus the conversation on the topic. • Encourage students to make connections and see the relevance of the topic in relation to life experiences. This may occur through sharing of real life examples. • Model and encourage netiquette. • Create and support a learning environment that is open and respectful.

Resources

Bonk, C. (n.d.). Video Primers in an Online Repository for e-Teaching & Learning.

Retrieved from http://www.indiana.edu/~icy/media/de_series.html

Note: Great list of videos on such topics as discussion forums, providing feedback, online interaction, etc

Collison, G., Elbaum, B., Haavind, S., & Tinker, R. (2000). *Facilitating Online Learning: Effective Strategies for Moderators*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Lehman, R. & Conceicao, S. (2014). *Motivating and Retaining Online Students: Research Based Strategies That Work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mason, R. & Rennie, F. (2008). *E-Learning and Social Networking Handbook: Resources for Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.

Palloff, R., Pratt, K. (2013). *Lessons from the Virtual Classroom: The Realities of Online Teaching* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palloff, R., Pratt, K. (2011). *The Excellent Online Instructor: Strategies for Professional Development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palloff, R., Pratt, K. (2005). *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ragan, L. (n.d.). *10 Principles of Effective online teaching: Best Practices in Distance Education*. Magna.

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http://www.mnsu.edu/cetl/teachingwithtechnology/tech_resources_pdf/Ten%20Principles%20of%20Effective%20Online%20Teaching.pdf

Tu, C.H. & Corry, M. (2003). Designs, management tactics, and strategies in asynchronous learning discussion. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 4 (3), 303-315. Retrieved from

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