Facilitating Asynchronous Student Interaction with Remote Instruction

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Emily Boehm, Center for Faculty Excellence
Bob Henshaw, CFE and ITS-Teaching and Learning
Doug James, Center for Faculty Excellence
Marla Sullivan, ITS-Teaching and Learning
Session Objectives

Become familiar with basic principles for designing effective forum assignments.

Learn more about asynchronous interaction tools available to you at UNC.

Learn from other participants!
Let us hear from you!

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Asynchronous Online Discussion

Disadvantages
• Less dynamic
• Less social presence
• Requires more planning

Advantages
• Accommodates student schedules
• Everyone can participate
• More time for students to reflect
• Record of discussion
Synchronous vs. Asynchronous
Asynchronous Interaction Options
Assignment design – Discussion prompts

Key attributes

Activities should be closely linked with course learning objectives.
Backward Design

1. Identify Desired Results.
   - Big Ideas and Skills

2. Determine acceptable evidence.
   - Culminating Assessment Task

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.
   - Learning Events

CFE Course Development Institute

- Articulate and align course- and module-level learning objectives
- Plan learning activities which support each learner’s successful completion of course assessments/assignments
- Compare how various aspects of course design contribute to equitable learner outcomes

Upcoming Institutes are scheduled for:

December 14, 16, & 18, 2020 (M/W/F, 8:30am-12:30pm)
Assignment design – Discussion prompts

Key attributes

*Activities should be closely linked with course learning objectives.*
Appropriate level for students...challenge them!
Assignment design – Discussion prompts

Key attributes

Activities should be closely linked with course learning objectives
Appropriate level for students...challenge them!
Open-ended, higher-order questions require more thought.
Bloom’s Taxonomy

- **Remember**: Recall facts and basic concepts
  - define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state
- **Understand**: Explain ideas or concepts
  - classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate
- **Apply**: Use information in new situations
  - execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch
- **Analyze**: Draw connections among ideas
  - differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
- **Evaluate**: Justify a stand or decision
  - appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh
- **Create**: Produce new or original work
  - design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

Image source: Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University
Assignment design – Discussion format

Community-building
Idea generation/brainstorming
Debate
Role play
Scenario/case study
Review
Multi-part/use in combo with other course activities
Assignment design – Discussion prompts

Key attributes

Activities should be closely linked with course learning objectives.
Appropriate level for students...challenge them!
Open-ended, higher-order questions require more thought.
General vs. specific
Assignment Design – Extending Discussion

Effective facilitation

Choose from multiple simultaneous discussions

Rotating participation

Example: One group participates in the online discussion, the other group members summarize the discussion.

Smaller student groups (Sakai groups)
Assignment design - Group size

Optimal: 8-13 students

- Level of participation
- Knowledge construction
- Critical thinking

Afify, 2019
Baker, 2011
Seo, 2007
Reonieri, 2006
Sakai Groups
Sakai Groups

Automatically create topics for groups.

- Create one topic
- Automatically create multiple topics for groups

An instance of this topic will be created for each group selected below. Permissions are configured automatically. (More?)

- Group 1
- Group 2
Assignment design – Participation structure

Frequency

Avoiding “cluster responses”

Spaced participation examples: Post at least one response to an instructor question before Wednesday, and at least 2 replies to student responses by the end of the day Saturday (OR) Participate 3 times throughout the week, every 2-3 days.

Length of post

Writing quality

Minimizing bias (“I agree with what she said!”)
“Post before reading”
Assignment design - Promoting participation

Clearly articulate expectations.
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Post</td>
<td>Appropriate comments: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of other’s postings.</td>
<td>Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to other's postings</td>
<td>Responds, but with minimum effort. (e.g. &quot;I agree with Bill&quot;)</td>
<td>No posting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance of Post</td>
<td>Posts topics related to discussion topic; prompts further discussion of topic</td>
<td>Posts topics that are related to discussion content</td>
<td>Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks</td>
<td>No posting.</td>
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<td>Contribution to the Learning Community</td>
<td>Aware of needs of community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic</td>
<td>Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely</td>
<td>Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops</td>
<td>No feedback provided to fellow student</td>
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</table>

Source: University of Central Florida
Assignment design - Promoting participation

Clearly articulate expectations.
Make the case for why it matters.
Make topics relevant to student interests.
Integrate with exams and other assessments.
Assigning participation points
Assignment Design - **Grading**

Simplifying the grading process
Rubrics
Sakai discussion forums
Enter points.

Enter points into the grade entry column.

Add Comments.

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<th>Authored</th>
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<th>Percent Read</th>
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Instructor Roles

Communicating expectations
Encouraging students to participate
Summarizing
Acknowledging and complimenting student contributions
Steering discussion towards questions that generate more discussion
Adding arguments and extending thinking
Identifying areas of agreement/disagreement
Working toward consensus
Clarifying or correcting
Student Roles in Online Discussions

• Facilitator
• Summarizer
• Devil’s advocate
• Others?
Voicethread (unc.voicethread.com)

People add comments whenever they want, there's no scheduling.
VoiceThread Benefits

Supports wide range of media
Direct interaction with media
Richer, nuanced communication (e.g. tone of voice)
Contributes to community building

Versatile

• Introductions
• Projects presentations
• Video blogs
• Audio-based grading
• Voice over Powerpoint
MS Teams vs. Google Docs

Reasons to consider MS Teams

- All data in Teams considered secure
- Fully supported on campus
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