

Want higher quality online group discussions?

Consider using self-assessment



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Definition

Asynchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time. The term is most commonly applied to various forms of digital and online learning in which students learn from instruction that is not being delivered in person or in real time.

Blackboard

The Discussion Board tool allows for asynchronous interactions occurring over extended periods of time. This allows for more flexibility, as well as reflective communication. Asynchronous communication offers convenience and flexibility to all participants.

Problematic online discussions

- Not Face to Face...So

- Lose non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions...)

- Verbal cues (nuance, idioms...)

- Timeliness of feedback

- Breadth of instant feedback

Problematic online discussions

- Learning Styles

Learning Style	Preference for information acquisition
Visual/Verbal	Prefers to read information
Visual/Nonverbal	Uses graphics or diagrams to represent information
Auditory/Verbal	Prefers to listen to information
Tactile/Kinesthetic	Prefers physical hands-on experiences

Problematic online discussions

- Effective personality types
 - Shy or introverted
 - Language difficulty
 - Ponderers/ deliberate responders
- Other personality types need more adaptation
- Reducing targeted activity... also known as The Mad Rush

Problematic online discussions

- Technological difficulties
- Q & A time
- Specialized language/ Mode of expression
- Interdependence/ Group work
- Insufficient responses

Theory behind self-assessment

Cognitive Process from Multi-dimensional model (Henri, 1992)

1. **Elementary clarification:** observing a problems, identifying elements, and observing their linkages to come to a basic understanding
2. **In-depth clarification:** analyzing and understanding a problem to come to an understanding which focuses on the values, belief, and assumptions under the problem
3. **Inference:** induction and deduction, admitting an idea
4. **Judgement:** making decision, statements, appreciations, evaluations, and criticism
5. **Strategies:** proposing actions for the application of a solution

Expected outcomes from self-assessment

1. **Knowledge:** What they are learning
2. **Ability:** What they are achieving
3. **Control:** Sharing their pedagogical space
4. **Voice:** their view of themselves as learner, their own direction and evaluation of their learning

Self-assessment as a tool

3 specific examples

1. Self-assessing every post
2. Self-assessing every 3-4 weeks on top posts
3. Self-assessing on a teacher selected day as a class activity

Self-assessing every post

- From failure to improvement
- Goal
 - start semester on right path
 - make each post meaningful
 - encourage student responsibility over grades
 - simplify grading

“Don’t forget to self-assess every post!”



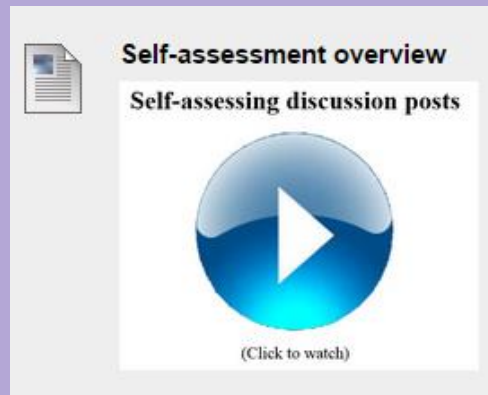
Self assessment criteria

Each post needs to be self-assessed. This means that using the rubric below, you will assign a point value to each post. Not every post has to be worth 4 points. You can have posts where you just state your agreement or ask a question. I will count your three posts with the highest score with a maximum of 12 points.

Criteria	1 point	0 points
Cites text	Uses at least 1 citation from the text or article (cite page #)	Does not include a citation from the text
Key concepts	Incorporates at least 2 concepts from the chapter (may help to make concepts in bold font)	Fails to incorporate 2 key concepts from the chapter
Additive and challenging post	Post is additive or challenging. It is not simply a statement of agreement or summary of what someone else has already written.	Post is minimally additive or challenging or simply summarizes another post.
Academic language	Post uses academic language, proper grammar and proper spelling.	Post fails to use proper grammar, spelling or academic language.

Additional Suggestions

- Give an example post
- Early on, publicly highlight how you as the instructor would grade posts
- If online, video walk-through



Benefits

- start semester on right path
- make each post meaningful
- encourage student responsibility over grades
- simplify grading

- Give valuable feedback to each student--use audio or screencast technology

Self-assessing every 3-4 weeks on top posts



- Reflection
- Quality
- Reduce frequency of feedback

Self-Assessments

General Directions and Discussion Rubric

Throughout the course, you will be self-assessing your participation in the discussion areas. The purpose for these self-assessments is for you begin to recognize how your work contributes to the group discussion and practices you might change to improve your post content and quality. It is a step towards your acquisition of self-regulation strategies.

Depending on the course, you will have 3 or 4 self-assessments (see course schedule for specifics on dates). You will assess your participation in the discussions based on the following: degree of thoughtful contribution to issues, connections to the ideas of others in the course, connections to other readings, timeliness, your position in the various discussions and how the discussions changed, enlarged, or challenged your thinking. Most importantly, you will reflect on how to improve future posts.

For these self-assessments, you will need to write a brief reflection – about 200-300 words per post you assess, although you can certainly write more. You will submit your assessments in the areas indicated in each module in your course.

Steps for Discussion Self-Assessment

Analyze your responses for the module discussions and choose two posts from each module discussion to self-assess. You will self-assess your posts based on the discussion rubric below.

As I mentioned, your self-assessment should contain a 200-300 word write-up for each post.

Write your self-assessment at the beginning. Copy the posts you have selected from each discussion used in your self-assessment and paste them after the self-assessments. When copying the post(s), please indicate the module for each post, the name of the post, and the time and date of the post. This will allow me to easily locate the post in the discussion should I have any questions. There is no need to copy responses to your posts.

	6-7	4-5	2-3	0-1
Post content/ quality	Posts are additive and/or challenging, reflecting pedagogical knowledge with support from both required reading and outside information.	Responses to posts are additive and/or challenging, reflecting pedagogical knowledge using only experiential support or information from readings. No additional references were brought into the post.	Responses to posts are minimally additive and/or challenging and/or lack support.	Responses to post are neither additive nor challenging; post shows basic agreement or disagreement.
		2	1	0
Language		Post uses academic language, proper grammar, and proper spelling.	Posts predominantly use academic language but contain spelling errors, grammatical errors, or "conversational" English that does not detract from the overall meaning.	Posts contain numerous grammatical and spelling errors and/ or uses colloquial language more than academic language.
		2	1	0
Outside Reference Use			Used outside reference	Did not use outside reference
In-class reference use		Used 2 or more references and personal anecdote	Used 2 or more references or 1 reference and 1 personal anecdote	Only 1 reference and no anecdote or 1 anecdote and no reference
Citation			Citation 100% accurate using APA style. Includes full references.	Citation missing or has one or more errors. Missing references.

Benefits

- Goal to encourage individual reflection
- Ensure high quality posts that fit rubric
- Minimize frequency of feedback from the instructor

- Really promotes reflection and invites improvement

Self-assessing on a teacher selected day as a class activity (Kayler & Weller, 2007)

Goals

- Formative evaluation
- Invite self-reflection and paths for improvement

After the completion of the first 10-week discussion, students were asked to bring in a copy of all of their postings from a specific class day. The first step had a two-fold purpose: the first was to give students another opportunity to code and analyze data and identify themes that emerged from their contributions to their discussion group. The second purpose was to allow students to see how they were transferring theory into practice and the ways in which they were contributing to others' understanding.

The next step asked students to evaluate their participation using a scale of 1–5, with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree. Students were also asked to provide evidence of their ranking with quotes from their postings or to provide anecdotal notes. Students analyzed their online postings based on the following:

1. Postings included engaging questions which lead to continued dialogue.
2. Postings demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of assigned readings.
3. Responses were not limited to “I agree” or “great idea” but were supported with examples from personal and professional experiences.
4. Postings offered different perspectives for the group to consider and encouraged dialogue within the discussion group.
5. Participation was timely and on a weekly.
6. Postings were well-written, incorporating proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.
7. Other Comments

Benefits

- Reflection on previous work
- Suggestions for how future discussions should be evaluated

Guiding Principles

- Make the assessment fit your needs and course goals
 - decide what is important
 - address concerns, modify it if needed (example in Kayler & Weller, 2007)
- Can be formative or summative
- Teacher response-guide your approach--weekly? quarterly?
- Use it to get students to think about their thinking
- Give students examples, give them feedback

Accessing the presentation

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