

Assessing Online Participation CTELT 8

Presented by:
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What We're Going to Talk About

- Anatomy of a Discussion Board
- Discussion Board Activities
- Assessing 'Board' Activities

• *WebCT Discussion Board Focus*
• *Examples come from the online courses offered by the Ontario Management Development Program (OMDP) where they teach soft-skills.*

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A Little About Me

- Taught at Dubai Men's College for 4.5 years
- Currently teaching full-time online through OntarioLearn in Canada
- Developed numerous online courses specializing in interactive learning vignettes
- Masters in Education Technology
- Post-Diploma in Interactive Multimedia

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The Anatomy of an Online Discussion Board

The screenshot shows a discussion board interface with the following elements:

- Navigation: Homepage > Discussion > Main
- Discussion Messages: Main
- Buttons: Compose message, Update listing, Search, Mark all as read, Message options
- Display options: All, Unread, Threaded, Unthreaded, Select topic: Main
- Message list:

No.	Status	Subject	Author	Date
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welcome	Jane Smith (12345678)	November 17, 2003 4:33pm
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Essay Question?	Melanie Brackman (12345676)	November 17, 2003 4:34pm
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re: Essay Question?	Jane Smith (12345678)	November 17, 2003 4:34pm
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re: Welcome	Pia McCarthy (12439875)	November 17, 2003 4:41pm
- Actions: Apply these actions to the message(s) selected above. (Complete, Mark as read, Mark as unread)

PUBLIC - Can be CAPTURED / THREADED or UNTHREADED / ASYNCHRONOUS
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Assessment needs to take into account

The Board's Options

How it is organized

- Threaded or non-threaded
- Make it easy to participate
 - Good questions
 - Current topics first
- Private areas

Info Gathering Methods

- # of posts
- Search by student
- Message compilation options

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What are you assessing?

Discussion Board Activities

- Discuss topics and issues
- Journaling
- Debates
- Group work
- Q and A by students
- Value added materials

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What are you assessing?

Discussion Board Activities

Special Cases:

- Lists from Students
 - An alternative... "add a comment"
- Community Builders:
 - Introductions
 - Course Questions
 - Lounge
 - Practice Area

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Assessing
Discussion
Board
Activities

What the Literature Says:

- Ho "whether online participation assessment stimulates participation is yet to be answered with certainty."
- Herrington, et.al "Authentic settings have the capability to motivate and encourage learner participation by facilitating students' willing suspension of disbelief."

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What the Literature Says:

- Johnson & Aragon “Although the opportunity to ask questions and have interaction with the instructor is relatively equal, feedback received through physical distance eye contact, facial expressions and the personal is not present online”
- Ali & Salter “Having set opening and closing times for a discussion helps avoid information overload and keeps students focused on the task (Salter, 2000)”

What the Literature Says:

- Poole “Requiring student participation as a moderator, after providing students with a foundation regarding what the role entails, can have a positive impact on discussions.”
- Tomorrow’s Prof “Employ the Socratic Method; Ask the Right Questions; How do we show we are listening.”

What the Literature Says:

- MacKnight “...students must have a clear understanding of the activity and have the necessary social skills to...”
- Frazee “ESL students in this study....participated more online through the discussion board than they did in class.”

Discussion Rubrics

1. Think, Value, Communicate, Act
2. A/B/C/D/ Level Participation
3. Communication of Ideas / Responsiveness
4. Content Assessment / Expression / Participation / E-portfolio

What I do (or strive to do ☺!)

Assessment Strategy

- Provide expectations up front
- Early assessment then keep it regular.
- Lock the boards
- Review # of posts by each student

What I do (or strive to do ☺!)

Encourage Participation

- Provide “safe” community areas
- Organize the boards on a weekly basis.
- Provide clear direction for each discussion (within message or prior to going into discussion)
- Ask probing questions to begin with
- Private emails to inactive participants
- Public praise for active participants
- Develop effective online moderation/facilitation skills

What I do (or strive to do ☺!)

Marking the different activities

- Lists, Reflections, Value Added
- Discussions
- Debate
- Questions and Answers
- Group Work
- Community Builders

Resources

www.newmediaworkshops.com/CTELT/

Thank you
for your time!

...For my continued growth...
Please complete the assessment forms
for this presentation ☺