Assessing Asynchronous Online Teaching

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Session Outcomes

- Review key activities associated with asynchronous learning
- Identify and prioritize criteria for asynchronous projects
- Begin to plan an activity and assessment method
Why this topic?

Asynchronous activities are “the second most commonly used capability for online education,” after email (Kearsley, 2000, p.30). In promoting a high level of reflective interaction, these activities can be “a powerful tool for group communication and cooperative learning.” (Rovai & Jordan, 2004, p. 2).

These kinds of references and more can be found on the National Science Foundation’s Information Technology bibliography at:
http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind02/c8/c8b.htm
History and Defining our Terms

One piece: standardized educational content
History and Defining our Terms

- The other piece: peer-based learning
Asynchronous tools

- Email
- Listservs
- Discussion boards
- Wikis
- Blogs
- Recorded webinars
- Archived lecture slides (plus audio/video)
Strengths & weaknesses of this model

- Strengths: just-in-time learning principles, diverse student access, interactive, content available anytime and anywhere

- Weaknesses: course development costs, instructor workload, technological infrastructure

* Instructors often report feeling a lack of support for faculty development, particularly with assessing student projects
Longitudinal study: Penny & Murphy (2009)

- Evaluation of 50 standard rubrics of asynchronous activities in postsecondary contexts
- Identified four core categories as follows:
  (a) cognitive (44.0%) \{reasoning, reflection, argumentation\}
  (b) mechanical(19.0%) \{language, mechanics, style\}
  (c) procedural/managerial(18.29%) \{frequency, engagement\}
  (d) interactive(17.17%) \{feedback, connections, responses\}
Activity: Free-write

• Independently consider an online activity you would or have implemented that is asynchronous. Briefly describe.

• Consider Penny & Murphy’s emphasis on core skills (see below). Which ones will be emphasized in your activity? Briefly describe.

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Activity: With a partner

- With a partner, discuss the handout about stages of building a cohesive asynchronous online community

(a) What are the goals and stages of developing a cohesive and asynchronous online activity (in this case discussion boards)?

(b) Review the descriptions of stages with your partner. How might some of these statements become criteria for your example activities?
Some useful resources

- Faculty focus

- Sloan Foundation’s *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*
  http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/jaln_main