Learning. Anytime. Anyplace: Online Small Group Teaching & Learning

Cool Fun Stuff

Objectives

- Identify best practices for facilitating synchronous online teaching and learning in small groups.

- View a demo of technologies for reaching learners anytime, anyplace for small group activities.

- Discuss which technology best fits your circumstances.

Best Practices in Small Group Learning

- **Flexibility** – variable, dynamic, responsive – respond to group learning as it develops

- **Interaction** – repeated iteration of responses and ideas. Formative feedback from instructor and other students.

- **Reflexivity** - celebrate what went well, but equally think hard about what might have been better.

- **Engagement** - Ideally, it nurtures participation and an authentic sense of engagement within the group. At best it transcends the teacher-learner hierarchy, and becomes a process of learning together.

Best Practices in **Online** Small Group Learning

1. Web Classes Go Fast: Leave plenty of time for process and for questions.

2. Tech Problems Happen: Technical issues with some participants are inevitable, and may slow things down and hinder the efficiency of the live meeting time.

3. Pay Attention to Timing: Open the Web meeting 15 minutes early to give everyone the chance to log-in (and encourage students to do so). Always start and stop the meeting on time.

4. Post an Agenda: Always post an agenda for the meeting at least a day in advance in your learning management system, or another digital means.

5. Take Turns: Always go down the list of all students in the meeting asking for questions or comment.

Best Practices in Small Group Learning

6. Stress Community and Logistics Rather Than Content: Synchronous meetings serve a very important community building and logistical purpose. Do not try to cover too much curriculum or do too much teaching during this time.

7. Be Inclusive: Successful web based synchronous class meetings include comments, questions and ideas from everyone present.

8. Less Is More: synthesize the previous week and look ahead to the next week using a concise slide deck/material.

9. Maintain a Firm Hand: It may become necessary to (gently) cut someone off, to make sure the agenda is covered and everyone has a chance for input.

10. Continuously Learn: Always make time for a postmortem with other faculty and staff about what worked well and what did not, so adjustments can be made quickly for subsequent meetings.

A Few Teaching Methods

- Case Study

- Critical Incident-- learners are asked to describe an important incident related to a specific aspect of their lives. This is then used as the basis for analysis.

- Debate-- A presentation of conflicting views by two or more people or groups

- Observation -- After an individual or group systematically observes and records an event, they analyze and discuss their findings.

- Video prompt with questions and discussion following

- Games

Oma Morey, Scholars in Education, 2016

Skype for Business/Lync

- Up to 250 people can join a meeting – not ideal for small group
  - Ideal small group is 5-8 no larger than 10
- Share screen
- Whiteboard
- Polling feature

Skype for Business/Lync – short demo

- https://youtu.be/7sb3EdLp_Dw

- UTMB help site - http://www.utmb.edu/sfb/

Google Hangouts – short demo

- g.co/hangouts

Google Hangouts – short demo

- Can share YouTube videos
- Chat option
- Share screen
- No whiteboard – workaround: share screen and all be working on Google doc at same time
- Must have Google account

Application to Your Circumstances

- Group reflection and discussion