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LCC International University Guide for Online Course Instruction



Welcome

We are pleased that you, as an online instructor, will be promoting student learning through our distance education platform. The world of online learning is brimming with educational opportunities and we are excited to make our own contributions on behalf of Lithuanians, Eastern Europeans, and others. We hope this teaching experience enriches your life as we are sure it will enrich the lives of the students you meet during your courses.

This guide is an introduction to online instruction at LCC International University. Its purpose is to answer as many questions as possible about the technical, social, pedagogical, and managerial functions associated with online learning. It is not exhaustive but it should help align your expectations with those of LCC and your students.

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A Special Vision for Online Learning

It goes without saying that there are differences between face-to-face (f2f) and online learning facilitation. Although the goals for both methods are the same - improving student competencies in communication, analysis, critical thinking, and research skills - the online learning environment calls for special attention to building a collaborative community where students are invited to create and share their knowledge discoveries. Therefore, the conditions for building this community become very important and an essential task of the online facilitator.

We agree with researchers Palloff and Pratt (2007) that there are six elements that are important for promoting community and the success of your online course. They are:

- Honesty – honest and respectful feedback engenders trust among the group;
- Responsiveness – knowledge is shared and honed when students and instructors frequently interact with each other in a timely manner;
- Relevance – allowing students to connect life experiences with course material enlivens the learning experience;
- Respect – equality and confidentiality are the cornerstones of respect in the community;
- Openness – safety, trust, and the belief that there is no retribution for sharing honestly promotes openness;
- Empowerment – the process of learning should be affirming and invite students to discover new paths of learning now and throughout their life.

The overriding assumption of distance education is learner-centricity. Although the same may be said of f2f classroom learning, the learner necessarily becomes the star around which the constellation of course objectives, curriculum, technology, and facilitation revolve. This is not meant to devalue the contributions of the course instructor as a subject expert but it does recognize that online learning relies extensively on the self-motivation of the student to collaborate, listen and share. How will you create conditions in your course to enable students to make the best use of their motivation to learn?

Advantages of Online Learning

Learning through technology-mediated sources has advantages over the traditional f2f classroom, which should not be undervalued. You may discover other benefits but here are a few to consider as we reflect on this idea. (Source: White, 2008)

- Students tend to be less inhibited in an online classroom. This tendency can promote more intimacy among the students and the instructor, opening up creative space to explore ideas within the course.
- Status differences do not play the same role in the virtual classroom. The teacher is not “the boss” as much as she is “the guide,” prompting and encouraging students to self-discovery. The status difference between students is also diminished because the technology gives everyone an equal “voice” regardless of their occupations, incomes, or previous education. The computer has a leveling effect on the “classroom.”
- Interactions among the students are more equally distributed. Every student has the ability to comment and contribute to a topic because of the asynchronous nature of the program. Where some students may shy away from entering a f2f conversation because it is not in their nature to do so, every student may contribute at a time and at a pace that is most convenient to him.
- Learning is self-paced and respects the schedule and other obligations of the learner. Technology-mediated learning allows students and instructors to access the course at their convenience within prescribed timeframes. This kind of access leaves the onus for learning with the student, increasing her freedom and control and resulting in higher quality student contributions.
- Here are some other advantages of teaching online:
 - Students can track their progress in the course by viewing your gradebook;
 - Your syllabus and schedule are publicly available;
 - Course materials are available for easy reference when studying for quizzes, tests, or conducting research;
 - You can receive assignments through a virtual drop box;
 - You are able to track student participation more effectively;
 - Access to the instructor is improved.

Technical Support from LCC

LCC Helpdesk Contact: <http://www.lcc.lt/helpdesk/>

LCC pledges to ensure that you have timely and quality technical assistance for:

- Setting up a new course
- Enrolling students into courses
- Answering questions about student access problems
- Trouble shooting issues with the course management system (Moodle)

- Providing periodic updates to the software

Please keep the following considerations in mind when contacting the Helpdesk:

- Provide a detailed description of the problem
- Provide a specific course description (e.g., ENG 500 – Teaching English as an International Language)
- Are others having the same problem?
- Include a full description of the error message(s) received.
- Provide your full name, contact information and times that are most convenient to reach you.

When seeking advice about the use of educational functions or modules within the course management system or about course design, please speak with an online learning mentor or review the sources of information located in the Frequently Asked Questions section below.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Where can I find more information about the technology that drives the course management system, Moodle?

Many of your questions about Moodle will be answered by navigating to www.moodle.org. When you are using Moodle and have a question about the functions used there, you may click on the link at the bottom of the page called “Moodle Docs for this page” and you will be taken directly to a relevant page at www.moodle.org.

2. Where can I learn more about how to set up a course and manage it?

Please go to <http://eclass.lcc.lt/> to view short videos on important functions of Moodle and for text instructions about setting up a course and managing it.

3. I don't see the course that I am supposed to teach. What do I do?

Contact the IT Helpdesk (helpdesk@lcc.lt) and ask them about the registration of your course. Please keep in mind that your course may only be available a certain number of weeks before the course is scheduled to begin. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

4. What is the maximum file upload size?

The maximum file upload size is 8 MB.

5. Where is the course management system located and will that affect my access?

Moodle is located on LCC campus servers in Klaipeda, Lithuania. Instructors and students have remote access to these servers and barring any unforeseen circumstances, access should be unfettered and reliable.

6. In what time zone will my course be taught?

The time zone for online courses is local time in Klaipeda, Lithuania, which is GMT +2 or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in North America.

7. Who can I speak with to learn more about how to use the features in Moodle?

Please speak with an online learning mentor for assistance with Moodle features. Check out www.moodle.org for an explanation of all the standard features available in our version of Moodle. Click here to view these features:

<http://moodle.tokem.fi/mod/book/view.php?id=16397&chapterid=4445>

or

<http://docs.moodle.org/en/Category:Teacher>

8. Where can I get more information on how to use the gradebook?

Please go to the following link for a step-by-step explanation of setting up a gradebook in Moodle -

http://docs.moodle.org/en/Gradebook_1.9_Tutorial.

9. Where can I learn more about how to teach online using Moodle?

Please go to http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher_documentation to view a list of contributions from other teachers using Moodle.

Meeting the Needs of Different Student Learners

Adults learn differently than children. When we are young, we depend on others to tell us what is important to learn because we lack experience and maturity. As we grow older, this dependency wanes, and we become more autonomous learners, seeking out books, courses, and mentors that provide us with the information we believe important for career building or understanding the world.

Malcolm Knowles (1998), an accomplished thinker on adult learning theory, recognizes this difference and lays out six guidelines for successfully facilitating adult learning.

1. *The need to know*: “Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it. . . . Consequently, one of the new aphorisms in adult education is that the first task of the facilitator of learning is to help the learners become aware of the ‘need to know’” (p. 64).

2. *The learners’ self-concept*: “Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept, they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them” (p. 65).

3. *The role of the learners’ experiences*: “The richest resources for learning reside in the adult learner themselves. Hence, the emphasis in adult education is on experiential techniques—techniques that tap into the experience of the learners, such as group discussions, simulation exercises, problem solving activities, case methods, and laboratory methods instead of transmittal techniques. Also, greater emphasis is placed on peer-helping activities” (p. 65).

4. *Readiness to learn*: “Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations” (p. 67).

5. *Orientation to learning*: “Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situation. Furthermore, they learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations” (p. 67).

6. *Motivation*: “Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like)” (p. 68).

To increase understanding of how adults might make the best use of the six learning principles, Knowles introduces three predominant learning styles with which most adults identify. Perhaps your course can be designed in such a way that it attempts to address the needs of all three learning styles by incorporating learning modules that will appeal to each style.

Here is a description of these three learning styles:

1. “Goal-oriented learners use education for accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives. These individuals usually did not make any real start on their continuing education until their middle 20s and after. . . . The continuing education of goal-oriented learners occurs in episodes, each of which begins with the realization of a need or the identification of an interest” (Knowles, 1998, p. 55).

2. “Activity-oriented learners take part because they find in the circumstances of the learning a meaning that has no necessary connection—and often no connection at all—with the content or the announced purpose of the activity. . . . It was social contact that they sought and their selection of any activity was essentially based on the amount and kind of human relationships it would yield” (Knowles, 1998, p. 55).

3. “Learning-oriented learners seek knowledge for its own sake. Unlike the other types, most learning-oriented adults have been engrossed in learning as long as they can remember . . . and they choose jobs and make other decisions in life in terms of the potential for growth that they offer” (Knowles, 1998, p. 55).

If you have these three learning styles in your course, how could you accommodate these kinds of learners as you teach online?

How Can Instructors Meet the Needs of Different Students in an Online Setting?

Dianne Conrad (2003) invites us to think about three instructor functions that may help create learning conditions where all learning styles may be best addressed.

An excerpt of the article text is quoted below.

The teaching function

The literature on online learning makes clear that didactic, hierarchical presentations of material do not work well in this medium. The best approaches

are represented by collaborative, constructive models of teaching where activities are geared towards communal knowledge construction through the exchange of thoughts, ideas, questions and suppositions. Instructors working to promote interaction and encourage knowledge building can benefit from:

1. **Being creative and innovative.** The logistics of online learning render impractical and undesirable the didactic presentation of huge chunks of content. Curricula can be presented in ways that encourage participation, multi-directional interaction, critical thinking and problem solving. Case studies, role play, debate, structured discussion and problem-based tools are effective approaches.
2. **Being adaptable and receptive to change.** Adapting our teaching styles is difficult as we tend to teach in ways that "fit" us due to our own learning histories or because of past successes. Collaborative constructivist teaching, however, invites shared knowledge building. Whereas not as appropriate in some content areas as in others, online instructors are challenged to relinquish traditional lecture formats and explore ways to give learners more control of their learning.
3. **Being comfortable with levels of ambiguity.** Regardless of your teaching strategies, your separation, in time and space, from your learners will render your sense of control "looser" than you might be used to. Silences in the online medium can cause novice instructors alarm: What is the class doing? What are they thinking? Do they understand? A level of faith and confidence (and course design features) must replace normal avenues for visual and oral feedback.
4. **Working with and responding to "teachable moments."** Concomitant with and arising from the issues listed above, the flow of online teaching and learning is considerably different. Learners' most important insights may not come from their reading of your online material on Topic A but from, instead, an online group discussion of Topic B. As an adaptive and flexible instructor, you pick up the ball on Topics A + B and continue to march up the learning curve with the group. You recognize that you cannot control occasions of insightful discourse.

The management function

A certain amount of management accompanies all university teaching. Instructors do "housekeeping" at the beginning of classes and outline procedural expectations in course syllabi. The managing function inherent in online teaching is heightened, and its importance correspondingly magnified, because students cannot see instructors in order to read their body language, hear the humorous inflection in their voices, or indicate, by their own raised eyebrows or audible gasps, their reactions to instructors' announcements. The time-space gap of online learning raises the possibility of miscommunication and misunderstanding and consequently invites undesirable levels of anxiety and/or correspondence.

The following behaviors will help online instructors minimize potential management difficulties:

1. **Being present.** Online teaching requires not only instructional time but also management time. Your regular and frequent presence on the course site is as desired by learners as it is essential for the timely management of whatever issues may arise.
2. **Being prompt.** Online learners, stumped by an assignment or by a question blocking their progress, will contact you during their online worktime, which is more likely to be 11 at night than 10 in the morning! Most will still anticipate answers to their questions as quickly as if they had asked that question of you directly, in class. In the style of email, the immediacy of the medium breaks down time/access barriers associated with traditions such as office hours and voice mail.
3. **Being organized.** Each course detail should be accurately spelled out at the beginning of online courses. Learners carefully check over details of assignments and due dates to solidify their schedules. It is important to your credibility, the credibility of the course, and their level of comfort that the course be well-organized and clearly laid out.
4. **Being knowledgeable.** In addition to knowing content areas, online instructors should be reasonably comfortable with the technology housing their courses. Whereas most universities provide a level of tech support, instructors are on the front line and the ability to troubleshoot small problems goes a long way in ensuring smooth course flow. (Fortunately, online software, such as WebCT, is not very difficult to master.)
5. **Being flexible.** You are working in a new medium that represents changed parameters for traditional learning roles. You are the connector between learners and the institution in a new way, your role heightened by the lack of the usual comforting touchstones – other learners who can be seen and experienced, classrooms, scheduled lectures, coffee breaks. As a result, instructors may feel the need to assume more ownership of learners' "process needs."

The support function

The literature on online learning stresses the importance of support systems in online success. Learners often find their support in each other and in their personal lives, from family and friends, but online instructors can also provide essential levels of learner support by:

1. **Being empathic.** Online learners, already often feeling fragile or isolated, can easily misunderstand instructors' intentions, as they have access only to the written medium.
2. **Being respectful.** The archival nature of online learning transactions is one of its strongest features in that it preserves accurate and complete records of all exchanges among group members. Conversely, many

- learners feel inhibited about committing their thoughts and words to a permanent record. In light of such fears, it is especially important that instructors respect their students and that instructional responses demonstrate that sense of respect.
3. **Being encouraging.** More so than for F2F learners, again because of their possible sense of isolation or discomfort with technology, online learners praise instructors who are explicitly encouraging. Instructors should make it clear that they recognize that this form of learning can tax the learners' motivation, independence, and organizational skills.
 4. **Being tolerant.** Nurturing students as they ramp up to online learning prowess can be an intensive process. Woods (1994) identified 12 steps of acceptance that learners grappling with new technologies undergo. Initial fright and distrust is eventually replaced by confident acceptance (in most cases!)

(Source: <http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/Teaching/>)

An Online Learning Priority: Building Community

You have been introduced briefly to adult learning styles and the essential functions of an online instructor. It is now important to introduce the critical ingredient that brings students and instructors together for learning that is meaningful: community building. The traditional classroom offers the benefit of f2f interaction where a community is developed over the term. An online classroom requires deliberate activities to create the conditions for open and collaborative interactions among the students. With a spirit of collaboration moving among the participants, where students feel safe and connected, the goal of transformative learning, with its emphasis on clear communication, critical thinking, sound analysis and research acumen, is attained.

How can a collaborative online community be built quickly and effectively by an instructor? Palloff and Pratt (2007) suggest the following ideas.

1. Require the students to post a personal biography to introduce themselves to the class. Encourage the students to comment on these biographies and ensure that you, the instructor, have commented on each of the biographies as a method of connecting with and affirming each student.
2. Try negotiating course guidelines with the students. This may include what is considered appropriate communication etiquette among the students, setting course learning objectives, identifying weekly and periodic assignment deadlines, and the frequency of instructor feedback on posts to forums.

3. Where appropriate form teams among the class and have the teams negotiate guidelines for how their work will be assessed by each other and the instructor. These guidelines could include expectations for contributions (quality and quantity), timeliness, discussing disagreements, appointing a team leader, secretary, devil's advocate, etc.
4. Encourage the students to search for real life examples in their assignments and discussions. This invites students to share from their own experiences and expertise with the goal of producing comfortable learning spaces.
5. Encourage the use of real life scenarios for collaborative decision-making and problem-solving skill development among and within groups.
6. Use dialogue as a form of inquiry by inviting students to dig deeper into their understanding of the material by asking probing questions. This invites students to uncover new understandings without being told. Encourage the students to do the same with each other by modeling it as positive behavior.
7. Share responsibility for the facilitation of a topic with your students. Rotating the role of facilitator of a discussion, process observer (commenting on group dynamics), content commentator (summarizing the group's learning), or presenter of a topic, book, article or area of interest are some possible ways to share responsibility.
8. Facilitate feedback among the students to identify knowledge gaps, helpful critiques, and a plurality of views to improve understanding. Invite students to offer direct feedback to other students in ways that are honest and respectful.

What are some assumptions we have about online learning?

The complexity of our environment necessitates that we exclude and prioritize the data of our world. When we think about designing our online learning curriculum we make assumptions about what is more and less important. What are some of these assumptions? Check these items against your own understanding of what is important for an online course. What will you emphasize and value as you design your course?

Here are some assumptions we may have about online learning (Palloff and Pratt, 2007):

- It is learner focused and instructor facilitated;

- It is community oriented with emphasis on collaboration among the students;
- Social presence and coalescence should be encouraged;
- Norms of behavior should be established at the beginning of the course;
- Conflict will occur in your course – Do you have norms for managing it?;
- Asynchronous approaches are preferred to synchronous approaches – synchronous learning is difficult in online courses because it tends to favor the fast typers and the extroverts;
- Online courses may actually take more time than a f2f course – prepare your students for a significant work load;
- Larger groups should be broken down into smaller groups to facilitate opportunities for feedback on assignments, posts, papers and rotation of leadership roles within the group;
- Do not assume participation from students – set the expectation for participation and measure against the expectation.

Tips for Effective Teaching Online

Online teaching is maturing as a discipline and many authors are contributing to a list of “nuts and bolts” techniques that are working well in the digital classroom. Teaching is an iterative project that moves and shifts with the needs of each class; however, there are a number of tips that can be gleaned from the literature that may help you standardize your facilitation of online learning communities.

Course Activities Available in Moodle

The software we use, Moodle, is rich with functions that may be used to complement your class instruction. Many of these functions may be added to your course by turning the edit feature on and choosing a function from the “Activity” drop down menu. (For a demonstration of how to do this, please see the video guide located at <http://eclass.lcc.lt/>).

Forums – This is the most important and useful tool in the repertoire of activities available to instructors and students. Forums are where most of the sharing and therefore most of the community building will take place. Using the forum function effectively will be the most important activity of the instructor. Many instructors recommend that you use several forums to help direct the learning and discussions of the students most productively. Below is a list of forums and their purpose, which you may want to include in your course.

Student Introductions Forum – Reserve a forum at the beginning of the course for student biographies to be shared. Encourage each student to

submit their biographies, promoting personal reflection on past education and formative experiences, and to comment on other students' biographies. This will help with building community among the students.

General Administrative and Course Management Forum – This is a place for students to ask questions about the operation of the course from technology use to assignment requirements to instructor contact availability. Students should be encouraged to use this forum for administrative questions because the answer to their question may benefit other students in the course.

Notes and Suggestions for Improving the Course Forum – Students should have a place to provide feedback on how to improve the course – additions, modifications, or filling gaps that will benefit future students. It also becomes an area where all students can affirm or disaffirm the suggestions being made by others.

Social Forum – In many classes the students will form a tight-knit community and wish to connect about any number of things not necessarily related to the course or the current topic. In this case, it is important to have a forum where tangential discussions may be initiated in a place that will not distract other students and the instructor from the topic under discussion at the moment. It would be wise to point students to a “lounge area” on the site for these kinds of discussions.

Topic Forums – This is probably the most popular and important forum available to students because it is where the instructor will initiate topic-related discussions. Usually instructors will require students to make at least one posting to the weekly topic forum and respond to a minimum number of other student postings. This will ensure that a vibrant discussion is ignited throughout the class for a full exploration of the weekly topic.

Synchronous chat – There may be times when you want to have the class meet at the same time to listen to attend a discussion. Moodle allows you to add a chat room where students may gather at a prescribed time and type their questions and responses in real time. There are obvious advantages to this feature but also considerable disadvantages, most notably the possibility that some students may not enter the conversation or write something that no longer is relevant because the conversation has moved on while they were typing.

Podcasting – Post a lecture or encourage your students to submit an audio file of their research and findings through the forum function in Moodle. Activate the RSS feeds within the forum and students or instructors can stream audio to the rest of the class. For instructions, please click [here](#) or visit www.moodle.org site.

Blogs – Each student has personal blog capabilities through their Moodle profiles. When logged into a course, a student may click on the “blog” tab in their profile and add a new entry. The blog function allows each student to title her entry, add text and attachments, tag with key words, and choose publishing preferences (usually to the class). A blog may be a useful journaling tool to capture students’ thoughts and provide other students with opportunity to respond to those thoughts. (<http://docs.moodle.org/en/Blogs>)

Wiki – A wiki is a public collaborative space where students and instructor can contribute to an ongoing project. The advantage of a wiki is that everyone has the opportunity to add and modify the content being contributed, making it truly a community effort that saves the efforts of the group as they move towards completion of a project or an assignment. It is possible to set up a wiki for separate groups within the class so that students only have access to their own wiki or may have read-only privileges for other wikis. The instructor always has viewing and editing rights in a wiki.

Glossary – Moodle offers learners the opportunity to contribute to a list of important terms associated with their discipline. These terms may then be linked to text used throughout the course to help students learn jargon. Instructors may wish to assign the search and definition of new terms for the growing glossary and grade those submissions for quality.

Choice – This feature allows instructors to receive timely and quantitative feedback from students. By adding this feature to a topic or a week during the course, an instructor may, for example, gauge whether the material was helpful, whether the students require more information about a topic, or whether they wish to head in a new direction. Choice is a “listening” tool to get a reading on the class psyche and needs.

Course Activities Available From Elsewhere

Flashcards – Remember terms and their definitions by building a deck of cards that can be shuffled and modified on the screen.
(http://docs.moodle.org/en/Flashcard_module)

Games – Integrate concepts, issues, subjects into games like crosswords, hangman, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?
(http://docs.moodle.org/en/Game_module)

Skype or GoogleTalk – Students and instructors may communicate synchronously by voice or by chat with these free voice over IP services. Voice and video options are available. Instructors may want to use these services to facilitate “office hours” with students.

<http://www.skype.com/intl/en/> and <http://www.google.com/talk/>

Google Groups and Docs – These collaborative applications are helpful for connecting students who are working in teams and who require unfettered access to editable platforms for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information for class assignments.

<http://groups.google.com> and <http://docs.google.com>

Active Learning Exercises (White, 2008 & notes from Bonnie Straight)

Microlectures

Microlectures are short talks that have a duration of 60 seconds to three minutes. They are useful for introducing key concepts of a new subject without excessive verbiage and it quickly transitions students to active learning exercises that encourage learner-centered analysis and reflection. This form of instruction redirects the emphasis from “talking head” to collaborative engagement. Using a microphone and a Web camera, any instructor can create a microlecture and post it to the course management system. To learn more about microlectures and how to create them, go to this [link](#) at chronicle.com (Volume 55, Issue 26, Page A13). [Windows Media Maker](#) or free software such as [Audacity](#) may be used to produce audio only or audio/video lectures.

Virtual Field Trip – Six or Seven Day Excursion

The purpose of a field trip is to explore online resources as a team or pairs after receiving an introduction to a new topic. The instructor may begin the field trip with a lecture or an article that introduces a new concept to the students. A unique itinerary with tasks and assignments is given to each team who begin to explore online material with the objective of preparing and submitting a report of what they have discovered. The first three days is dedicated to a search of Web sites and a progress report is submitted as an assignment. By day six or seven the team submits a three-paragraph summary of what they have learning, which could be responses to instructor questions.

Scavenger Hunt – Four or Five Day Exercise

This form of activity may be used to expose the students to online resources that would be beneficial for their ongoing academic needs in the course or the program. The instructor could begin with a lecture and provide 20 questions on a topic where the answers could be found from instructor suggested Web sites and the balance from Web sites found by the students. This exercise could be done individually or in

groups and it could be competitive, scoring students on their ability find the answers quickly. A progress report on findings could be submitted by day three and a final report on day five could include a statement on what the students learned during the hunt. Another source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_scavenger_hunt

Webquest.org

A webquest is similar to a scavenger hunt and virtual field trip. It is a structured internet search designed to improve students' knowledge of a topic while inviting them to hone critical thinking, synthesis, and analytical skills. Webquest.org is a well-organized website that helps instructors construct a high-level educational tool that uses resources on the world wide web to enhance learners knowledge about assigned topics. Webquest.org has a database of finished quests and offers instructors templates for creating new quests (a small fee may apply to get registered for access).

Fish Bowl

Students and instructor share roles in this activity by having two groups of students (or one group of students and the instructor) engage in a discussion or an exercise while another group of students watches the exchange without participating. This allows some students to practice a skill or articulate ideas while another group of students looks in on the interaction for the purpose of providing feedback at a later stage. Another iteration of the fish bowl is to divide the class into groups, have it discuss or practice a skill, and have it comment on the interactions in one other group. This allows for timely comparisons and an exchange of views that may deepen the learning for both groups.

Pro and Con Listing

Ask students to list the advantages and disadvantages of a recently introduced idea or issue. This can help students hone their analytical skills by evaluating both sides of a concept.

Formative Quizzes

Using the quiz function in the online learning software, instructors can use non-graded quizzes to collectively, with students, uncover areas of knowledge that may require more attention or just simply as review in preparation for other assignments.

Debates

Split the class into “for” and “against” groups and have them debate a new concept introduced in the course material or lecture. The debate teams can spend time collectively researching and preparing their arguments and then presenting their arguments synchronously or asynchronously. A third student group could monitor the debate and provide a summary of the two positions and offer a conclusion.

Student Presentations

The students are offered a number of concepts to be developed and presented throughout the course. The class is divided into teams and each team receives one concept to present during the course. The team researches the concept and prepares a presentation (written or PowerPoint) and posts it to the forum early in the week. Other class members discuss the concept with prompting questions, which is lead by the presenting team. The final assignment could be a summary of the discussion and a capture of new learning that emerged during the week.

Netiquette – Appropriate Online Behavior (White, 2008; Palloff and Pratt, 2007)

1. Keep posts to the forums brief and to the point. Where more extensive text should be shared, remember to use short paragraphs, which are easier to read.
2. Encourage students to limit their comments and responses to the subject associated with a particular thread or classroom discussion. Questions about course administration, grades, or general inquiries should be routed through a special forum for these questions. Occasionally, there will be a class that likes to “talk” about many things not directly related to the subject or the discussion thread. In these cases you may want to consider setting up a separate forum for “side discussions” to take place.
3. When replying to a previous posting, quote the relevant text (or summarize it) at the beginning of the new posting for those who may have missed it. This is important because unnecessary space and computer memory is used when whole passages are pasted in responses.
4. Never publish private email without permission. Sometimes the whole class should see the response to a private email and in this case the student should give permission for this response to go public or be encouraged to post the question to a public forum.

5. Discourage students from responding with short quips like “Me too” and “I agree” – it clutters up the discussion board and does not contribute to the discussion substantially.
6. Do not type in all capital letters because this is the equivalent of shouting online and it could be misinterpreted by other readers. The exception may be when marking essays and assignments electronically and you want the student to see your in-text notes.
7. Remind students to remember copyright and plagiarism rules when submitting posts to forums. Students may not quote or paraphrase without giving credit to their source.
8. Humor should be encouraged but not at the expense of others. The use of emoticons and other punctuation emotions (e.g. :) & :P) help to ensure a humorous message is received appropriately.
9. It is important to read first and write later. Read the posts from your fellow students and instructor responses before adding your thoughts to the discussion thread. This is paying respect to your classmates and ensures that you will not restate or misstate ideas that have been mentioned by others.
(<http://online.uwc.edu/Technology/onlEtiquette.asp>)

Grading Rubrics for Online Assignments (notes from Bonnie Straight)

Please refer to the links below for different discussion forum grading rubrics that may meet your needs and preferences.

[Student Feedback Form](#): This form may be used to provide specific feedback to each student after applying one of the rubrics listed below.

[Grading Rubric One](#): This is a five-point rubric grading for quality, timeliness, and interaction.

[Grading Rubric Two](#): This is a twenty-point rubric grading for quality, timeliness, and interaction.

[Grading Rubric Three](#): This is a twenty-point rubric grading for quality, timeliness, and interaction but reorganized for a different grading preference.

Other Resources and References

Moodle.org – There is a worldwide community of Moodle users who contribute to the development and improvement of this important open source learning tool. Most questions about Moodle have been asked and answered in the discussion forums hosted on this site. Here is a list of popular links that may be helpful from time to time. (You may log in as a guest when prompted.)

Demonstration Site – Check this page for ideas (or reminders) about how to incorporate activities and resources into your course - <http://demo.moodle.org/>

Using Moodle – <http://moodle.org/course/view.php?id=5>

Teaching Strategies - <http://moodle.org/mod/forum/view.php?id=41>

Teaching Tips and Tricks - <http://moodle.org/mod/forum/view.php?id=702>

Building Online Communities - <http://moodle.org/mod/forum/view.php?id=2735>

Moodle Manuals - http://docs.moodle.org/en/Moodle_manuals

Moodle Book (free download) - http://download.moodle.org/download.php/docs/en/using_moodle_2e.zip

Helpful Teacher Documentation Links about Moodle – http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher_documentation

You Tube – You may search for dozens of videos on how to use Moodle on You Tube. LCC has produced its own suite of videos for basic instruction but you will find a more extensive list at You Tube.

Bibliography – For further reading from resources that are readily available through LCC's library or the internet, please see the list below.

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Appendix – Grading Rubrics

Student Feedback Template

BUS 410: Special Topics: Cultures and Organizations – Spring 2009

Discussion Grading Form

Student:

Discussion:

Here are my comments on your contribution to this discussion, based on the course discussion grading rubric.

Quality (2 points possible): Points earned:

Timeliness (1 points possible): Points earned:

Interactivity (2 points possible): Points earned:

Overall grade (5 points possible): Points earned:

Student:

Discussion:

Here are my comments on your contribution to this discussion, based on the course discussion grading rubric.

Quality (2 points possible): Points earned:

Timeliness (1 points possible): Points earned:

Interactivity (2 points possible): Points earned:

Overall grade (5 points possible): Points earned:

Grading Rubric One – Five-Point Scale

BUS 410: Special Topics: Cultures and Organizations

Instructor: Bonnie J. Straight, Ph.D.

Points	Discussion Rubric Criteria	Points Earned
1.6 – 2.0	<p>This rubric was adapted from one created by the Instructional Design Team at Indiana Wesleyan, adapting in part materials from Dr. Stella Porto and other Internet resources. Note there are 5.0 possible points for the discussion, two each for quality and interaction, and one for timeliness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality-The student’s postings are well developed (at least a full paragraph) and their answers provide clear evidence of critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, or application). Their questions or observations add greater depth to the discussion by introducing new ideas. 	
1.1 – 1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality-The student’s postings show some development and their answers some critical thinking is evident. Their questions or observations add to the discussion by expanding the ideas of others. 	
0.6 – 1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality-The student’s postings show nominal development and only the beginnings of critical thinking. Their contributions (questions and observations) do not clearly add to the discussion. 	
0.0 – 0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality-The student’s postings show no development and are mostly a reiteration of what the textbook or others have said. Their questions and observations detract from the discussion. 	
0.9 – 1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness-The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by Thursday of the class week. Their follow-up contributions are made while the discussion threads are active and flowing, and others can profit from the information, before Sunday morning. 	
0.6 – 0.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness-The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by Friday of the class week. Their follow-up contributions are made while the discussion threads are active and flowing, and others can profit from the information, before Sunday evening. 	
0.3 – 0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness-The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by Saturday of the class week. Their follow-up contributions are made when discussion threads are no longer active and the information is minimally useful to others, only on Sunday evening. 	
0.0 – 0.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness-The student does not respond to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity or responds on Sunday or later. Their follow-up contribution is of negligible value because others have moved on to other discussions, after Sunday. 	
1.6 – 2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction-The student responds to a minimum of two students and/or the facilitator when applicable. The student is clearly collaborative by taking the initiative to respond to other student’s questions, providing clarification and insight on issues raised in the discussion. The student shows initiative in leading discussions. 	
1.1 – 1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction-The student responds to one other student and/or the facilitator. The student has been collaborative in some situations. The student has shown some initiative in workshop discussions. 	
0.6 – 1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction-The student responds to one other student or the facilitator. The student has shown little initiative in workshop discussions and their presence was not collaborative. 	
0.0 – 0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction-The student does not respond to the postings of others in the discussion. They take no initiative in workshop discussions and any posting(s) are isolated and of negligible value in building a collaborative discussion. 	
	<p>Total points earned of a possible 5.0</p>	

Grading Rubric Two: 20-Point Scale

Discussion Rubric: This rubric was created by the Instructional Design team at Indiana Wesleyan, adapting in part materials from Dr. Stella Porto and other Internet resources.

POINTS	CRITERIA
16 - 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality – The student’s postings are well developed (at least a full paragraph) and their answers provide clear evidence of critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, or application.) Their questions or observations add greater depth to the discussion by introducing new ideas. • Timeliness – The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 5 of the workshop. Their contributions are made while discussion threads are active and flowing. • Interaction – The student responds to a minimum of two other students and the facilitator. The student is clearly collaborative by taking the initiative to respond to other student’s questions, providing clarification and insight on issues raised in the discussion. The student shows initiative in leading discussions.
11 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality – The student’s postings show some development and in their answers some critical thinking is evident. Their questions and observations add to the discussion by expanding the ideas of others. • Timeliness – The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 5 of the workshop. Their contributions are mostly made when discussion threads are active and others can profit from the information. • Interaction – The student responds to one other student and the facilitator. The student has been collaborative in some situations. The student has shown some initiative in workshop discussions.
6 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality – The student’s postings show nominal development and only the beginnings of critical thinking. Their contributions (questions or observations) do not clearly add to the discussion. • Timeliness – The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 6 of the workshop. Most contributions are made when discussion threads are no longer active and the information can be useful to others. • Interaction – The student responds to one other student or the facilitator. They have shown little initiative in discussions and their presence was not collaborative
0 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality – The student’s postings show no development and are mostly a reiteration of what the textbook or others have said. Their questions and observations detract from the discussion. • Timeliness – The student does not respond to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity or responds by day 7 or later. Their contribution is of negligible value because others have moved on to other discussions. • Interaction – The student does not respond to the postings of others in the discussion. They take no initiative in discussions and any posting(s) are isolated and of negligible value in building a collaborative discussion.

Grading Rubric Three: 20-Point Scale Differentiated

Discussion Grading Rubric – Reformatted by Bonnie J. Straight, PhD

POINTS EARNED	CRITERIA
	<p>Quality (0-8 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s postings are well developed (at least a full paragraph) and their answers provide clear evidence of critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, or application.) Their questions or observations add greater depth to the discussion by introducing new ideas. (7-8 points) • The student’s postings show some development and in their answers some critical thinking is evident. Their questions and observations add to the discussion by expanding the ideas of others. (5-6 points) • The student’s postings show nominal development and only the beginnings of critical thinking. Their contributions (questions or observations) do not clearly add to the discussion. (3-4 points) • The student’s postings show no development and are mostly a reiteration of what the textbook or others have said. Their questions and observations detract from the discussion. (0-2 points)
	<p>Timeliness (0-6 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 5 of the workshop. Their contributions are made while discussion threads are active and flowing. (5-6 points) • The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 5 of the workshop. Their contributions are mostly made when discussion threads are active and others can profit from the information. (3.5-4.5 points) • The student’s initial posting to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity is made by day 6 of the workshop. Most contributions are made when discussion threads are no longer active and the information can be useful to others. (2-3 points) • The student does not respond to the question or topic assigned in the workshop activity or responds by day 7 or later. Their contribution is of negligible value because others have moved on to other discussions. (0-1.5 points)
	<p>Interaction (0-6 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student responds to a minimum of two other students and the facilitator. The student is clearly collaborative by taking the initiative to respond to other student’s questions, providing clarification and insight on issues raised in the discussion. The student shows initiative in leading discussions. (5-6 points) • The student responds to one other student and the facilitator. The student has been collaborative in some situations. The student has shown some initiative in workshop discussions. (3.5-4.5 points) • The student responds to one other student or the facilitator. They have shown little initiative in discussions and their presence was not collaborative. (2-3 points) • The student does not respond to the postings of others in the discussion. They take no initiative in discussions and any posting(s) are isolated and of negligible value in building a collaborative discussion. (0-1.5 point)
	<p>Total Points (0-20 points)</p>