**ONLINE PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP
PART III: EFFECTIVE INTERACTIONS IN ONLINE COURSES**

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Online Pedagogy Workshop Series

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- Part I - Strategies for successful online teaching (May 8, 2015)
  - This session provided strategies for successful online teaching, which included planning process, course design, organization, time management, expectations for online students, a sense of community, communication channels, etc.

- Part II - Using multimedia for the engaging and dynamic learning environment (Oct. 14, 2015)
  - This session will demonstrate best practices of using multimedia to make online courses more engaging and dynamic. Selected multimedia software (e.g., Jing, iSpring, Adobe Connect Pro, etc.) and concrete examples of their usage in the online learning context will be introduced.

- Part III - *Today!* Effective interactions in online courses (Nov. 18, 2015)
  - This session will cover effective ways to manage online discussion, one-on-one student advising, student assignments, and group projects in online courses.

What Research Says about
Interaction in Online Learning is…

Interaction in Online learning

- "Interaction is a key variable in learning and satisfaction with distance education courses" (Wanstreet, 2006).

- "For students studying in an online environment, social interaction with peers and educators can often be an exercise in frustration" (McInnerney & Roberts, 2004).

Hirumi's (2006) three levels of planned e-learning interactions

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Continued…

- Learner – Human Interactions
  - Learner – Instructor: Communications between learner and instructor before, after and during instruction.
  - Learner – Learner: Communications between one learner and another learner alone or in group settings.
  - Learner – Other: Communication of learners with other people who are not part of learning environment in order to acquire, interpret and apply information.

- Learner – Non-Human Interactions
  - Learner – Content: Accessing audio, video, text and graphic representations
  - Learner – Tool: Using telecommunication tools such as email, discussion forum and chat
  - Learner – Environment: Visiting locations or working with resources outside computer environment

Categories of Students' Messages (Fung, 2004)

Categories	Explanation	Illustrative examples
Academic	Ideas or questions directly on or related to the course content and its assignments.	• What do you understand by the term 'complexity theory' and do you agree with Fullan's point of view? • What kind of material should I include in TMA1? Anyone know any further development in the S4-5 mathematics curriculum?
Building relations	Statements which introduce oneself or convey greetings	• Hello, my name is XX[1], we can form a study group. • Hello, hope to meet you in the coming tutorial.
Support	Asking for support or providing support to others	• I have just started to read the course… hope to be familiar with other students to get support. • I hope we'll be doing well in the course.
Appreciation	Acknowledgement of information or answers to questions	• Thanks a lot for the background information on sociology. Your help is very much appreciated. • Thank you very much for explaining the meaning to me. You make me feel clear now.
Others	Concerned with administrative or technical issues	• Where can I find the article? • Have you received my TMA?[2]

Interaction Patterns (Fung, 2004)

Pattern	Explanation
Isolated	One message posted by one participant eliciting no responses
Single response	One message eliciting only one response
Cyclic interaction	A dialogue set up between initiator and one respondent
Chained interaction	One message eliciting a series of response messages forming a chain
Branching interaction	One message eliciting two or more response messages at the same time
Complex interaction	One message eliciting multiple responses forming complex patterns

- Main factors discouraging students from participating in online discussion were:
  - Time availability
  - Their preference to spend time on reading, rather than on online discussion
  - The mutual effects on each other's involvement
    - Lack of interesting questions from others
    - Lack of active participation from others (Fung, 2004)

Feeling of "Isolation"

- An important criterion for student satisfaction with the web-based online course; Often based on the physical separation between student and instructor (Daugherty & Funke, 1998).

- "Support for distance learners should not be overlooked when planning distance programs (as) … Students… want to be part of a larger (learning) … community" (Galusha, 1997).

- Participants who expressed extreme frustration with isolation and technical programs also:
  - were extroverts,
  - were visual learners,
  - lived near campus,
  - had some serious technical problems, and/or
  - were inexperienced computer users… (Cereijo, Young & Wilhelm, 2001, p. 37).

Three Protocols to Aid Online Social Interaction (McInnerney & Roberts, 2004)

- The use of synchronous communication
  : The implementation and operation of synchronous communication via the use of software tools is likely to enhance social interaction within the online course.

- The introduction of a forming stage
  : The forming stage is a warm up period, designed to assist the formation of a "sense of community".

- The adherence to effective communication guidelines
  : Clear instructions and communications from the educator to the students are needed. Instructions regarding both course requirements and communication protocols should be placed on the course website. They then need to be reiterated at the beginning of term in a message sent to all students emphasizing their importance.

What I've Learned from My Online Teaching is…

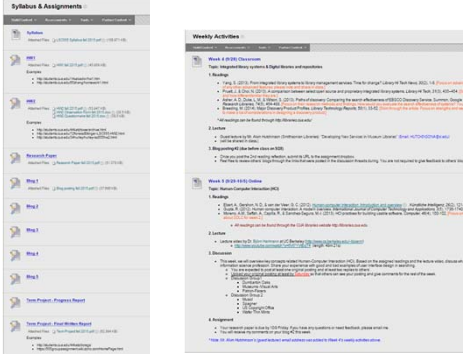## Combination of online sessions and classroom meetings

- Classroom meeting vs. online session
  - Blended (6~7 online sessions + 7-8 classroom meetings)
  - Online & Weekend Learning (8 online sessions ~ 4 classroom meetings)

- Maximize the benefits of each of the different formats
  - Online sessions
    - Readings and lectures that require self-reflections
    - Guest lecturing from remote locations
  - Classroom meetings
    - Forming groups for team project
    - Hands-on exercise
    - Lectures that need further explanations (e.g., technical concepts) or involves active discussion
    - Guest lecturing or panel discussion by local professionals – good for students' networking

Communicating with students (1)

- Face-to-face meetings
  - for course activities
  - for one-on-one advising/personal questions (before, during, after the class)
  - for group assignment
  - out of classroom in-person meeting

- Course materials should be unambiguous and well-organized.
  - Course syllabus, assignment descriptions, weekly activities, lecture slides, etc.

Communicating with students (2)

Communicating with students (3)

- Online discussion
- Announcements
- Grade book - points and comments
- Comments on paper
- E-mails/ phone meetings
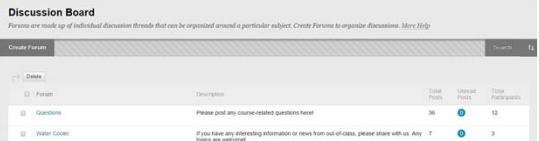
Managing online discussion (1)

- Create an interesting discussion question
- Provide clear expectations
  - You are expected to post at least one original posting and at least two replies to others.
  - Please create a NEW post for your original posting.
  - Upload your original posting at least by Thursday and regularly check your discussion threads.
- Divide discussion groups if the class size is too large.

  - W6: Systems evaluation (Group 1)
  - W6: Systems evaluation (Group 2)
  - W5: Human-Computer Interaction (Group 1)
  - W5: Human-Computer Interaction (Group 2)

Managing online discussion (2)

- Use "Subscribe" function

- Q&A
- Water Cooler

Student-Student Interaction

- Online discussion
- Group project
- In-class activities
- Before- or after-class conversation

Managing group projects in online courses

- Have students form a group in their first classroom meeting to discuss communication channels (email, cell phone, wiki, Google hangout, etc.), availability and plan for the project
- Progress report
- Peer-evaluation in the end of the project
- Provide support technology (e.g., BB wikis, etc.)
- Allow them to discuss group project in the end of each classroom meeting (about 15 mins). It provides them opportunities to communicate with their group members and the instructor in person, and helps them move along.
- Flexibility in assignment requirements

Student-Other Interaction

- Guest lecture (via classroom or synchronous online session)
- Panel discussion
- Students' course activities outside of classroom (e.g., visit an organization, interviews with professionals)
  - Provide a letter of request on behalf of a student or a group of students

Questions and Discussion