

Should online discussion be assessed?: individual activity

Collection: Online teaching

Resource: Online Discussion in English Studies

Approximate duration

90 minutes

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity you will be able to make evaluative judgements about the suitability or otherwise of using formative or summative assessment in your online discussions.

Description of the activity

1. Firstly think about your use of Discussion boards in your teaching:
 - Do you use them?
 - How long have you been using them for?
 - What works and what doesn't (for you and for your students) when using discussion boards? Why do you think that might be?
 - Do you set specific tasks or just let students post whenever they like?
 - Do you teach students how to use them...netiquette etc
 - How about moderation of boards...how often do you intervene in discussions?
 - How do students learn about the expectations you may have about their contributions online?
 - How frequently do you set discussion board tasks? Do other members of your department use them too?



1 | This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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2. Next watch a video presentation from a Medievalist at the University of Manchester (Dr Gail Ashton)..talking about how she uses online discussion and what she describes as the 'Hybrid' nature of virtual talk. As you watch the presentation (20 minutes with a 4 minute Q & A) jot down the main arguments Gail mentions in favour of **NOT** assessing online discussions.
3. Do you think assessment of online discussion is a good idea? Why did Gail talk about push and pull strategies and what did she mean by them? Can you relate that to your own experiences of using VLEs?
4. Now watch another talk, this time by Heather Conboy & Kathleen Bell from De Montfort University where they are using discussion boards as a tool in drafting and reflective writing in a Creative Writing course.

How does the approach they take differ from that of the Literature module described by Gail Ashton in the first module?



[That Strange Animal, a Push-me Pull-me: The Hybrid nature of virtual talk](http://vimeo.com/18789778) (<http://vimeo.com/18789778>)



[Towards assessment: Discussion Boards as a tool in drafting and reflective writing](http://vimeo.com/23688953) (<http://vimeo.com/23688953>)

5. Finally read the chapter by Rosie Miles on why you should think about assessing discussion boards and how to go about doing it (pp 22 - 26) in *the Good Practice Guide* written by Rosie and her colleagues in the English Department at the University of Wolverhampton (see embedded link below).



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6. As a final roundup activity - summarise the arguments for and against in a reflective post to your blog or diary

Links & References

- [Assessing Online Discussion](#) - A Sydney University of Technology page discussing whether assessment should occur or not?
- [Text.Play.Space : Creative Online Activities in English Studies](#) - Innovative Online activities are discussed in this Case Study from the Subject Centre
- Online Discussion in English Studies: A Good Practice Guide to Design, Moderation and Assessment.
(<http://issuu.com/englishsubjectcentre/docs/onlinediscussion>)

Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 4:** The use of appropriate learning technologies

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>



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Resources in the Online teaching Collection

- Online teaching: introduction to the collection
- What are VLE's good for?: resource overview
 - What is a VLE and why use it?: group activity
 - What is a VLE and why use it?: individual activity
- The design of online activities in English Studies: resource overview
 - Evaluating online activities in English Studies: group activity
 - Evaluating online activities in English Studies: individual activity
- Designing learning with new media: resource overview
 - Exploring new media and its potential in teaching: group activity
 - Exploring new media and its potential in teaching: individual activity
 - Designing an online activity in English Studies: group activity
 - Designing an online activity in English Studies: individual activity
- Teaching with digital archives: resource overview
 - Teaching with digital archives: group activity
 - Teaching with digital archives: individual activity
- Online discussion in English Studies: resource overview
 - Should online discussion be assessed?: group activity
 - **Should online discussion be assessed?: individual activity (*you are here)**
- Workshopping online: resource overview
 - Designing an online Creative Writing workshop: group activity
 - Designing an online Creative Writing workshop: individual activity



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