

SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS STUDENTS IN HARMONY

Instructor Development Week
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AGENDA

Introduction

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

Getting Off To a Good Start

Tools

Your Experiences



INTRODUCTION

Who we are

New way to categorize our courses--Course Participation Options (No longer course format)

- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous
- On campus



SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Traditional definition:

All students meet with each other and faculty in the same time and space, which can be via web conference.

Pros of synchronous Learning

- Sense of connection with faculty and other students
- Lots of material can be presented during class

Cons of synchronous Learning

- Can be difficult for students to keep up and participate, particularly if they need time to process information and respond

How to help students succeed

- Provide opportunities for students to work in small groups through sections, office hours, [Gather Study Lounge](#) and Zoom breakout rooms
- Encourage students to watch recordings and read transcripts
- Help students understand concepts through asynchronous assignments



ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Traditional definition:

Students complete assignments that are presented online at their own pace.

Pros of asynchronous learning

- Flexibility for students
- Allows time for reflection and deeper learning

Cons of asynchronous learning

- Students must be self-motivated or need help from teaching staff to stay motivated
- Students may feel isolated

How to help students succeed

- Teaching staff communicate with students often, via Canvas Announcements, feedback on assignments and contributions to discussion boards
- Meet with students during sections or office hours
- Provide ways for students to interact with each other, by using the [Gather Study Lounge](#), discussion boards, or other [Tools to Extend Canvas](#)
- Refer to [Teaching Your Asynchronous](#) Students on the Teaching and Learning website



WE'RE UNIQUE!

Other schools

Hybrid course—all students sometimes meet synchronously for classes and sometimes all students participate asynchronously

Hyflex (HELIX)—some students in a classroom on campus and some students join the same class online (Zoom) but with no asynchronous students

DCE

Some courses have students participating different ways at the same time

HELIX—synchronous on campus + synchronous in Zoom + asynchronous

Web conference—

synchronous in Zoom + asynchronous

all synchronous

It's possible that a student may sometimes participate synchronously and sometimes participate asynchronously



GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

Start out the semester by including all students and encouraging interaction. Continue this throughout the semester.

Do this through:

- Communication, communication, communication
- Addressing what students want
- Preparation
- Getting to know each other



COMMUNICATION

Record a Welcome Video in Zoom

- Welcome both synchronous and asynchronous students
- Tell them
 - What you're excited about
 - Topics they will be learning about
 - Other benefits you hope they'll get from the course and anything that didn't fit into the course description

Canvas Announcements

- Weekly
 - The week ahead
 - What's due soon
 - What students should be thinking about and/or working on
 - Logistics they should be preparing for
- Reminders about exams, review sessions, projects, etc.
- Nudges to participate in discussions, Gather Study Lounge sessions, etc. if needed

Survey for feedback about classes

- Have students fill out a survey after attending or watching each class, and ask:
- What did you find most interesting, or what was an “aha!” moment?
- What are you still confused about?
- What do you want to learn more about?



ADDRESSING WHAT STUDENTS WANT

- To feel they are being seen and heard
 - You and synchronous students say hello to asynchronous students at the start of class
 - Mention contributions from students during class, including asynchronous students
- Interaction with you
 - Office hours
- Meaningful feedback from you on assignments, discussion posts, and other tools they're using
- Flexibility
 - Mode of attendance, assignment choice, ways of submitting assignments (video, poster session)
- Access to materials
- Knowing what they will learn and what you expect from them
- Knowing why you are having them do what you're asking
- Interacting with/learning from peers



YOUR PREPARATION

Plan Activities and Assignments

- Will students work together?
 - How will they be grouped?
 - Only synchronous with each other and asynchronous with each other, or will the populations be mixed?
 - Will you assign groups or will students choose?
 - Will you be using tools for these activities? (See [Tools to Extend Canvas](#))
- What preparation do you need to do?
- What preparation do your students need to do?
- What will asynchronous students do while synchronous students are in breakout rooms?
- Post clear instructions on Canvas

Canvas

Create a Survey in to Learn About Your Students

[Manage your notification preferences as faculty](#)

[Edit your Canvas profile](#) to keep it current



YOUR STUDENTS' PREPARATION

Your students should

- Read the syllabus
- Respond the survey about who they are if you set one up
- [Update their student profile](#) in Canvas
- Make sure their Canvas notifications are set ([How do I manage my Canvas notification settings as a student?](#))
- Participate in discussion board introductions if you have set one up



GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

It's helpful for you to know some things about your students. You can send them a survey using the Canvas quiz so you can learn:

- If they plan to attend synchronously or asynchronously? Will they sometimes switch between these?
- What time zone they are in, where they live.
- Why they are taking the course.
- Their educational and professional backgrounds.
- If they like working as part of a group, or prefer to work alone.
- Anything else they would like to share with you.

Your students will want to know a little about you. During the first class, you can tell them about your background and why you are teaching the course.

You may want your students to get to know each other by posting introductions on a discussion board. Both synchronous and asynchronous students can start to get to know each other this way. Let them know why this is important.



ICE BREAKERS

Ice breakers are important for a few reasons:

- They are a way for the students to start to get to know one another and for you to get to know them
- It signals that you expect students to be active participants in the course
- They help students start to get comfortable making contributions
- They help to start building a sense of class community

Some guidelines

- Make sure you have an ice breaker set up for your asynchronous students before your class meets
- If synchronous students are in breakout rooms working on ice breakers, instruct your asynchronous students to do the exercise you have for them during this time.

A few ideas

- Find 3 things you have in common
- Start a dialogue with someone you think you have very little in common with using the discussion board
- Team Tally



ICE BREAKER: STUDENTS FIND 3 THINGS THEY HAVE IN COMMON

Synchronous and asynchronous students together

Before class, have a list of the asynchronous students in your course. Place synchronous students in breakout rooms of 2-3 students. Have each group use a Google Doc or discussion board post to list all the things they try to find they have in common as they have a discussion in their breakout room. Add an asynchronous student to each group of synchronous students. Have the asynchronous student look at the list after class their group has produced to see if they have anything in common with the others. They can also think for things they may have in common with the other group members that haven't already been listed. The synchronous students should look at the list before the next class to see what they all have in common. During the next class, one student from each group reports back.

Synchronous and asynchronous separate

As an alternative, have asynchronous students do this among themselves instead of having them join the groups of synchronous students who made a list during class. Make sure the results from the asynchronous students are revealed during the next class.



ICE BREAKER: START A DIALOGUE WITH SOMEONE YOU THINK YOU HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON WITH

All students need to have posted an introduction on the class discussion board.

Instruct students to read through the posts and find someone they think they have little in common with. Then introduce themselves to this person and politely ask them a question. They may be surprised to find they do have things in common after all, or they may learn something new!

All students can do this asynchronously outside of class. Or, you can your synchronous students time to do this during class. When the asynchronous students come to this portion of the recording, they can do this exercise along with the synchronous students.



ICE BREAKER: TEAM TALLY

This ice breaker can be done with all students participating asynchronously, or can be started in class by synchronous students and finished by asynchronous students. You could also encourage all team members to use the Gather Study Lounge or another synchronous space to work together at the same time. It works best if you have a google doc for each group set up ahead of time.

You can create any questions you want, adding ones that delve into your topics related to your course at the end.

Instructions for students

1. In this exercise, you will work with your team to answer the questions and score points for your team.
2. Write your name on the google doc
3. Under your name, answer each question separately. Keep track of how many points you earn for each question.
4. Feel free to respond to answers your teammates have given
5. Add up your points when you are done
6. The last person to finish adds up all the points for the team.
7. Someone from the team will report back to the class during the next class meeting.



TEAM TALLY WORKSHEET WITH SAMPLE QUESTIONS

	Polly's Answers	Points
1	How many pockets do you have on the clothes you're wearing right now?	2
2	One point for each pet in your household (fish only count as one pet). If you can introduce your pet on camera or post a picture of them, you receive an extra point.	0
3	One point for naming the best class you ever took.	1
4	One point for describing a question you hope to get the answer to by taking this course.	1

Polly's Comments

- 1.
2. My hamster died last month 😞
3. Thai cooking
4. What is the meaning of life?

Raul's responses to Polly

I'm so sorry to hear about your hamster. I had to put my dog down last year and I'm still not over it.
I would love to take that Thai cooking class! What did you learn to make?
I'd like to know the meaning of life, too.



TEAM TALLY WORKSHEET FOR GROUP

Group 2 Team Members
Polly
Raul
Larsen
Rupa

	Group 4	Points
1	How many pockets do you have on the clothes you're wearing right now?	10
2	One point for each pet in your household (fish only count as one pet). If you can introduce your pet on camera or post a picture of them, you receive an extra point.	5
3	One point for naming the best class you ever took.	4
4	One point for describing a question you hope to get the answer to by taking this course.	4
	Total Points for Group	

Team comments about the exercise
We found out that we all like to cook and like animals. Three of us have taken classes about climate change and want to learn more about electric vehicles and alternative forms of energy.

GATHER STUDY LOUNGE

What it is

A Zoom room available 24/7 where you students can meet without you

Since it is integrated into your Canvas course site, only students registered in your course can enter

Ways to use it

- Provide opportunities for asynchronous students to meet synchronously with others
 - Students organize the meeting times, so they can choose times when interested synchronous students can join.
- Watch parties to view course recordings
 - You or a TA may want to stop by at the end of one or two of these to answer questions and get to know your students, particularly if asynchronous students are likely to attend
- Continue discussions or group work started in class
- Networking and socializing
- Group project meetings
- Study sessions
- Getting feedback from each other on their work

Help promote its use by mentioning it during the first class and in announcements, and help students organize the first meeting if needed

[Learn more about the Gather Study Lounge](#)



IMMERSIVE CLASSROOM

Coming soon to a course near you!

What it is and what it can do

- A tool that allows students to attach comments to a Zoom recording of a DCE class.
- Students can respond to each other's chats.
- If more than 1 student is watching at a time, they can chat with each other in real time.
- Bookmark places in the video you want to return to.

[Learn more about the Immersive Classroom](#)

Other things to know

- Developed by DCE for DCE
- More features to come
- We're currently in the testing phase

[Fill out this survey](#) if you would like to take part in the pilot



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

What skills do you want your students to develop in your course?

If you were in a classroom, what would they do? You may not be able to recreate the exact same activity online, but you may be able to redesign it so students learn the skills they need.

For help designing activities or assignments, [make an appointment for a pedagogy consult](#) .

There is often a tool that can help your students do the activity or assignment you have in mind.

Skill to be developed	Type of Tool
Work as part of a team	Annotation, discussion board, peer evaluations, collaboration
Research and write about a topic	Annotation
Ask for help from colleagues	Discussion board, collaboration



A QUICK PEEK AT SOME TOOLS

Make an appointment with the [Instructional Technology Group](#) to learn more

[Tools to Extend Canvas](#)

A list of tools we support with a brief description of each
Organized by type of tool

[Interaction Options for Your Course](#)

A more in-depth look at tools we support

- Read descriptions
- Watch videos
- Participate in demos

You must “enroll” in this Canvas course with your Harvard Key to view and test the tools



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL USE OF TOOLS

Set expectations

- Students should know how to use the tool. Show the how it works during class, link to tutorials, ask the instructional technology group how to instruct your students.
- How long will students have to use the tool for a particular assignment?

Make your presence visible

- Let students know that you're aware of the work that they're doing. This does not mean that you have to grade all participation or monitor the tools on a daily basis.
- Have your TAs review the boards and send you links to really good posts or quickly skim over the posts before class. Then during class, refer to a couple of the posts as you talk.
- Periodically comment on students' work. Asking follow up questions can be especially effective.

Make sure your grading is manageable

- If you're planning on grading participation, make sure you have a feasible plan. Make a [Pedagogy Consult](#) if you need help.



TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES

What activities have you had your students do?

What tools and methodologies did you use?

Were you able to include asynchronous students?

