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Learning and Teaching on Asynchronous Forums - Sharing Good Practice

Student Dissertation

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THU: Learning and Teaching on Asynchronous Forums - Sharing Good Practice (Anita Pilgrim)

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Cloud created by:

Anita Naoko Pilgrim
31 December 2017

http://prezi.com/sr30c3rznx_m/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

The link above is to my Prezi 'poster', advertising my upcoming presentation on ways of sharing good practice about using asynchronous forums to support learning.

 The Prezi has a full transcript provided, and within the text I have written a transcript for a video I embedded.

I have also uploaded a slideshow of the 'poster' from SlideShare. This is my 'accessible' version - it is less data-heavy than the Prezi (hopefully!)

Extra content

Using Open Educational Resources to share good practice in moderating student forums.

Using open educational resources to support discussion and dissemination of thinking about how best to use asynchronous forums to support students will allow anyone (teaching or learning), at any level of education, to access and contribute to thinking about forums.

My project focuses on Associate Lecturers (ALs) at the Open University, partly because they are my community (I am one). In addition, ALs are particularly well placed to take advantage of and to develop open educational resources. On the one hand, we have much more experience than other academic teaching staff in using online resources, both open and closed, to support learning. On the other hand, we are geographically separated – scattered across the United Kingdom and beyond; there are few opportunities for us to support each others' developing practice in face to face contact which others take for granted. Educational resources online have the potential to support our own skills development as well as being the medium through which we deliver much of our teaching.

In our day to day teaching, ALs have closed online forums built into our modules. We assume these are intended to provide students with a 'café' space in which they can check notices and

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☁ OU H818 'The Networked Practitioner' Online Conference

chat informally about their studies, but there has been no guidance provided to us about the best ways of using these. Rather we have been left to figure out our own ways of supporting student engagement on forums.

I began my project eager to continue my work looking at best ways to maximise learning on forums. However, they are not an 'open' educational resource. I therefore shifted focus to explore ways in which I might circulate findings and encourage collaborative writing among ALs about our work on forums. Rather than just looking at *open* educational resources, I want to consider closed resources too, and also face to face events. I draw on the module materials to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each. (Up til now, I have not been able to think of any useful examples of open face to face collaborative working; I am of course open to suggestions.)

As part of my project, I begin to consider the nature of academic writing. Traditionally, academic articles begin with a literature review, then may apply this to empirical data in a deductive method to see if further understanding emerges of either the literature or the empirical situation. However in looking to improve our teaching practice, ALs are interested in case study examples and practical exercises which we can copy and develop, not in the hermeneutic or philosophical basis for these. This is not to deny the importance of theory, but to elevate practice in developing *praxis* in supporting better teaching in Higher Education. I am considering writing up with reviews of literature *after* the case study.

As a corollary to this, I will think about opportunities offered by writing online compared to writing on paper – for example, hyperlinked website pages allowing readers to jump through material on different pathways.

[Anita Naoko Pilgrim](#)
11:21 on 10 January 2018

+ Add extra content

Embedded Content

Using forums to support teaching - sharing good practice

[Using forums to support teaching - sharing good practice](#)
[Accessible Alternative](#)
added by [Anita Naoko Pilgrim](#)

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Contribute

Discussion (13)	Links (0)	Academic References (0)

[Denise McDonough](#)
1:20am 10 January 2018 [Permalink](#)

Have you given up the Prezi? It looks very cool up there! The astronaut and the life line is

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Sidebar:

2018

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a very compelling message. I think you can you get a PDF export from it. Take screenshot so you can use them in Aminoto if you prefer that tool. Sway imported my Powtoons in seconds which amazed me and then I slowly edited them out to make it better. Do you have a young age group for your forums project and going for the kittens and pink clogs might exclude boys a little bit and this imagery (using Prezi or Aminoto) might be more inclusive and make them feel grown up... I asked the Cloudworks support how I could have an image in my cloud, to make mine look more interesting and it isn't possible! No jpgs or pics - but it occurs to me now I could make make a my pdf a PPT slide show and put it on slideshare so it shows like yours and it will be another technology I learned and tested! Thanks!

Denise McDonough
1:21am 10 January 2018 Permalink

Sadly the comment box lost all the paragraph formatting and put it in one block!

Anita Naoko Pilgrim
11:18am 10 January 2018 (*Edited 11:23am 10 January 2018*) Permalink

Thank you Denise!

No, my audience is grown up tutors like me :D! I will try to make some more manly material, the pink kitten video is just a fun example - to lure people to come to my presentation. I know that anything with cats in automatically gets more attention online :D

I am still using the Prezi as my poster. I also like the astronaut, lifeline thing. Particularly after many of us have struggled on H818! You can export into a pdf direct from Prezi, which allows you to produce a less dataheavy presentation. The main problem with Prezi is that it is so dataheavy that many people can't access it owing to not having the bandwidth for it. I think you used to be able to export it into a powerpoint presentation too, but that function seems to have disappeared. I'll try to find out. When I have written my (late!) assignment!!! :eeeeek:

Mr Jonathan G Brown
2:38pm 18 January 2018 Permalink

I think this is such an important issue at the moment, Anita - educational institutions are increasingly setting up their own VLEs with integrated forums, but then can't work out why the students don't seem to be using them. Have you any tips about what good practice in moderating student forums looks like? For my project, I want my learning resource to rely heavily on interaction between participants (fellow teachers, in this case) via a built-in forum; could you suggest anything I could implement from the outset that could encourage forum use, or is there anything in particular you'd avoid?

Claire Richardson
3:45pm 4 February 2018 Permalink

Hi Anita,

I am looking forward to your conference presentation as it seems to be increasingly difficult to engage students with learning in closed forums, for example those integrated into Open University courses, when learners often seem to prefer to use social media to communicate.

I wondered if you had come across Gilly Salmon's proposal for a 5 stage model (Salmon, n.d.) to support students in online learning, including forums? This is something I was going to look at again for my project on supporting learners with anxiety in online environments.

Reference

Salmon, G. (n.d.). *The Five Stage Model* [Online]. Available at http://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html (Accessed 4 February 2018).

[Denise McDonough](#)
6:50pm 10 February 2018 (*Edited 6:19pm 13 February 2018*) [Permalink](#)

Hi, any update on your Project? Did you know if you post a draft you can edit it ☺
I resist forums because they are too slow and you can't reply from the email thread - grrr. Any programmers listening? I sit at a computer all day and want to engage in a 21st century way and get quicker feedback. Likes may be to Facebookish but a thumbs up might help, or does it encourage laziness in forums?

I resist collaboration assessment but admitted pushing me to just "do it" and they have their place if limited for non urgent academic discussion. They can get noisy and I can't find (easily) where I left what. A xls or table to track was mentioned but a big ask for Learners. Perhaps I could live with pass/fail if the contribution is genuine - seems a good compromise.

What do you think?

[Denise McDonough](#)
6:50pm 10 February 2018 (*Edited 6:51pm 10 February 2018*) [Permalink](#)

Duplicate

[Anita Naoko Pilgrim](#)
9:38am 14 February 2018 [Permalink](#)

Hi **Jonathan** - I do have a lot of tips about encouraging forum use, although I couldn't include them in this project because it had to be about OPEN educational resources. I had to switch my project to 'writing on OERs about forums (which are a closed online educational resource)'. I did find your comment very helpful, as it made me realise we should find ways to share good practice about forums and other online teaching tools with people outside the institution. More soon! And I will see what I have got written up about forums, which I might be able to share with you directly.

Anita Naoko Pilgrim
9:39am 14 February 2018 Permalink

Hi **Claire** - thank you for this.

I have read some of Salmon's work, which I came across as part of the e(LATE)D staff development course I studies. Are you in FASS? If so, you could sign up for e(LATE)D - I enjoyed it so much and learnt such a lot on it. I am saving up to buy Salmon's book (among others). Partly because I like books, but also, I don't have a tablet (saving up for that too), so I find it hard to read material on a screen. Like Denise, I am on my computer 24/7, sometimes I would like to sit in an armchair and relax a bit more!

Anita Naoko Pilgrim
9:44am 14 February 2018 Permalink

Hi **Denise** - what useful feedback! which I will squirrel away for when I can get back to work on my original project, about how to get students to use forums more.

You can see here the big problem with collaborative assessment. If someone has to disappear, like I just did, it's not fair on the others. I feel really bad about just dropping in and out of the module in the way that I've done. It's not at all how I would choose to have studied it, but it was a case of Do that or Drop out. We should have a chat about what would help us keep continuously engaged, so we could do more collaborative work - that would help me a lot as I think about how to support my own students.

Denise McDonough
11:48am 15 February 2018 Permalink

From Conference chat: Denise McDonough: Anita, I think ice breakers collaboration to get students familiar and building trust the first few weeks made me much more comfortable engaging. It would have given me more confidence in engaging more right away. Especially where there is no face to face. I mistakenly thought everyone was so much more qualified (Dr.!)
This would have been a great project... It doesn't seem to happen unless organised by the tutors initially - shy? busy? not sure

Anita Naoko Pilgrim
2:43pm 15 February 2018 Permalink

I think that the role of forum moderator is under-estimated quite often in setting up forums. There's an expectation that the space is there, so students will utilise it. I find that students are shy creatures who get worried about putting up a paw and looking silly in front of all their classmates and tutor. There is a delicate art to getting students chatting on a forum - more on our forum! :D

Dr Simon Ball
10:22am 16 February 2018 Permalink

Hi Anita
Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose.

Best wishes

Simon

- would like to hear more on the postmodern feminist perspective - this type of view is part of that criticality we need
- Thanks Anita. An intriguing taster to your project. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you've been doing for your project?
- What are the biggest barriers that you've seen that might prevent students from accessing forums?
- Thanks Anita, you have encouraged me to get more into Yammer and I have started following the Mental Health thread
- I like how you collaborate yammer and Prezi into your teaching environment.

Contribute to the discussion

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