

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Continuing Education

Facilitating Effective Online Discussions

Category: Pedagogy/Teaching

Instructor: Jen Geary

RFM, RSW, Ass. ABA, Ass. LSNSW, MSW, M Soc Policy, MEd, M Distance Ed.

Telephone: 1 (403) 678-2918

Facsimile: 1 (636) 216-0941

Email: gearyj@ucalgary.ca

Instructor Jen Geary
Location <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/>
Dates/Time October 28, 2008 to December 18, 2008
Email gearyj@ucalgary.ca
Required Text Salmon, G. (2002). *Etivities. The Key to Active Online Learning*. London: Routledge Falmer
Optional Text Magnan, S.S. (2008) *Mediating Discourse Online (AILA Applied Linguistics Series 3)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company.

A SKETCH OF THE COURSE

Online discussions are the main staple of interactions in online learning environments. This course will help you develop your skills and techniques to design and facilitate effective online discussions. The main focus will be on using asynchronous discussion tools that are found in most e-learning platforms and threaded discussion boards used today on the Internet. Assessment and evaluation strategies of discussion based activities will also be examined.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

To:

- 1) Introduce you to varying approaches to facilitating online communications.
- 2) Provide opportunities for you to recognize and discover issues linked to online communications which could arise for you as a professional.
- 3) Enhance your skills and knowledge to facilitate online discussions.
- 4) Offer opportunities for you to develop skills in a computer-mediated learning environment as:
 - 4.1 A contributor.
 - 4.2 An aspiring "e-moderator" (Salmon, 2002, p. 38).
 - 4.3 A member of an online course.
- 5) To encourage you to be creative and to add to innovative practices in e-learning.

Overall it is anticipated that you will develop awareness about:

- 1) Contextual factors in e-learning environments.
- 2) Linkages between online discussions and e-learning.
- 3) Flaming and ad hominem arguments.
- 4) Relationship building and sharing online communications.
- 5) Learning styles.
- 6) Reflective learning activities. Please refer to <http://breeze.ucalgary.ca/p18669134> for a brief audiovisual presentation which is linked to these objectives.

Learning Materials

Required Text Salmon, G. (2002). *E-tivities. The Key to Active Online Learning*. London: Routledge Falmer

Optional Text Magnan, S.S. (2008) *Mediating Discourse Online (AILA Applied Linguistics Series 3)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company.

Study Guide.

Course Web Pages including,

Discussion Board.

Required Readings.

Optional Readings.

OUTLINE OF ASSESSMENT

Assignment 1 20%

Learning Activity (LA) One - Introductory Message

LA Two – From My Desk

Assignment 2 30%

LA One – Learning Styles

LA Two - Modules

Assignment 3 50%

LA One – Participation

LA Two – Learning Journal

This course encompasses learning activities, a reflective journal, short answer questions, internet inquiry, asynchronous mini lectures through Breeze and online discussions. Students are encouraged to visit the discussion board regularly and to make posts there.