Instructors’ Perceptions of Active Learning in College Online Courses

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Essential Components of an Online Course
What is Active Learning?

Students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, or explain.
Active learning instructional strategies

- Project-based learning
- Problem-based learning /Case studies
- Concept maps
- Writing assignments
- Discussion/debate
- Gamification
  - Game-like learning
  - Role playing, simulations
Simulations, serious games, and virtual worlds
Example - simulations for nursing students

Virtual Interactive Case (VIC) system
http://pie.med.utoronto.ca/vic/index.htm

VitalSims
http://vitalsims.com/clinicalcare/

vHealthCare™
http://www.breakawaygames.com
Collaborative project-based learning

Example – research project

Collaborative research project using VoiceThread or a discussion board

Collaborative project using Google Document
Types of interactions in active learning

- Learner-Content
- Learner-Instructor
- Learner-Student
- Learner-Self
Online Community of Inquiry
(Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001)
Cognitive Presence (Learner-content interaction)

- Use video or audio to deliver content (Camtasia, YouTube)
- Add interactive elements to content (Interactive presentation tools like SlideShare, Prezi)
- Provide meaningful exercises and activities (Digital Portfolio using Weebly, Google Site, About.me, Wix, Wordpress; Drawing concept maps using bubbl.us or Popplet)
Social Presence (Learner-Learner interaction)

- Encourage dialogue, conversation, debate
- Include group projects
- Integrate ice-breakers/orientation activities
- Use social tools for collaboration and group work (Blogs, Wikis)
- Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram
- Skype, Google hangouts, VoiceThread, Google Docs
- Netiquette: Complimenting, expressing appreciation, and agreement
Teaching Presence (Learner-instructor interaction)

• Video-based course materials using Camtasia, Jing and TED-Ed
• Video/audio Conferences – Collaborate, Skype, Google hangouts (lectures using interactive white boards)
• Emails
• Announcements through a LMS
• Voice/video feedback
Introduction to our research study

The purpose of this study was to understand online instructors’ process of incorporating and sustaining active learning strategies, which potentially improve learner outcomes and satisfaction.

What active learning strategies online instructors use?

What prevents online instructors from using active learning strategies?

What evidence have online instructors seen regarding the effectiveness of interactions in active learning?
Data collection and analysis

• 14 online instructors
• Semi-structured interviews and documentation
• March-April, 2017

• Each interview was audiotaped. Verbatim transcripts were developed from each audio recording.

• Open coding and constant comparison were used to analyze the transcripts.
Preliminary Findings

The participants perceived learner-instructor interactions as very important and used various strategies to establish teacher presence – phone conversations, one-on-one synchronous meetings, emails, and feedback.

The participants incorporated learner-learner interactions through whole-class text-based discussion and case studies, but some of the participants expressed negative perceptions of (or concerns about) small group activities and presented a lack of knowledge about using appropriate technology to promote interactions between students.

The participants perceived learner-content interaction as important, so they used different types of content – objective videos, third party-created video content, publisher platforms, and simulations.

Online instructors indicated uncooperative or unmotivated students, students’ technical skills, students’ technology accessibility, and a lack of time to create innovative course activities as challenges of online interactions.
Discussion

What are your concerns about using active learning strategies in your online courses?

What are high-impact & low-risk active learning strategies in online courses?
Thank you

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