

A blue spiral-bound notebook with a silver metal spiral binding at the top. The cover is a solid, textured blue color. The title and author information are printed in white text on the front cover.

Developing Online Learning Communities

Jay Melton
Prefectural University of Kumamoto

Introduction

- **Computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Kern & Warschauer, 2000)**
 - **asynchronous (email, discussion forums)**
 - **synchronous (chat)**
- **Which to use?**
- **How to use it?**

Introduction, cont.

- **Look at literature on communities using CMC (Caverly & MacDonald, 2002; Pena-Shaff & Nicholls, 2004; Preece, 2000; Sheard, 2004).**
- **Pena-Shaff and Nicholls → communities support social constructivist learning theories.**
- **Use the CMC to build communities.**

Introduction, cont.

- Discovery benefits learning (Davis & Thiede, 2000).**
- Students may not learn for the sake of learning.**
 - Real-world tasks should be developed (Warschauer, 2001).**
- CMC, Communities, Japan**

CMC

- **Mediated communication**
 - **cf. two tin cans and a piece of string (Wood & Smith, 2001)**
- **Advantages**
 - **speed**
 - **asynchronous allows convenience, contemplation**

CMC, cont.

- Synchronous disadvantages**
 - presence, limited numbers**
- Discussion forums over email**
 - centralization, searching, threading (Preece, 2000; Sheard, 2004)**
 - managers (teachers)**
 - logs revealing (Preece)**

CMC, cont.

- **What technology?**
 - **Preece (2000) says: “program it yourself, glue it together, become a Web homesteader”**
 - **Fourth alternative: Open Source software**

Communities

- **What kinds of communities are there?**
- **Learning communities**
 - **constructivist principles**
- **Preece (2000) observes four essential elements:**
 - **people, a shared purpose, policies, computer systems**

People

- **Learners, teachers, & managers (Preece, 2000)**
 - **face-to-face? anonymous? (Caverly & MacDonald, 2002; Preece; Sheard, 2004; Wood & Smith, 2001)**
 - **closed? open? growth? mortality?**
 - **allow for the shy and the technophobic**

People, cont.

- Don't forget the teachers, moderators, and managers (Sheard, 2004)**
- Maintain policies, keep systems running, discussions progress (Preece, 2000)**
- Maintain a presence in the discussions**
- Answer forum messages before email (Sheard)**

Shared Purpose

- ❑ **This is critical (cf. recent interests in religious and political online communities).**
- ❑ **Make the goals clear (Preece, 2000)**
- ❑ **gathering and sharing knowledge**
- ❑ **asking and answering questions**

Shared Purpose, cont.

- **The creation of knowledge**
 - **Social constructivists (Pena-Shaff & Nicholls, 2004)**
- **Learners are more likely to ask and answer questions of/from peers (Sheard, 2004)**
- **An ultimate goal**

Policies

- **Guidelines and rules help to minimize problems**
 - **offensive language, personal attacks, adequate content, protection of copyrights, clear penalties**
- **Educational perspective**
 - **teachers' expectations, # of messages/replies, how often, and types of content**
- **Moderators should model the rules**

Computer Systems

- Look at what you need**
- Use emoticons to reduce ambiguity/
misunderstandings (Preece, 2000)**
- Registration & leaving?**
- Browser considerations?**
- Editing of messages?**

Computer Systems, cont.

- **Security (Preece, 2000)**
 - **ensures privacy**
- **Offer templates**
 - **models for success; builds confidence**
- **Multilingual capabilities?**
 - **depends on the system & teaching/
learning environment**

The Japanese Context

- **Japanese students are highly socialized (Escandon, 2002).**
- **Lecture-based English courses (junior high, high school, and college)**
- **Students are not used to exploiting their socialization in English.**
- **Use communities to bridge this gap.**
- **Acculturation may be necessary (cf. Trojan horse).**

Communities at PUK

- **People**
 - **53 science students in two courses**
 - **closed, hybrid course**
 - **mortality (2 students)**

Shared Purpose

- List of topics**
 - chosen by teacher/students**
- Students put into groups**
- share knowledge on relevant & interesting topics**

Possible Discussion Topics

During the next eleven weeks you all are going to join two discussion groups. One group topic will be related to your course of study here. The other group topic will be some other topic you are interested in. Look at the list of topics below and choose five from each group that you are interested in. Give each a number from 1 (your favorite) to 5 (number five on your list). Then write three other topics you are interested in under each list. Number these 1 (your favorite) to 3. Please write your choices on moodle; use the example as you write your choices. I will then assign you to two groups. I will do my best to put you in your favorite groups, but I cannot make a promise.

Environmental and Symbiotic Science Topics

Architecture
Design
Rural Planning
Urban Planning
Transportation
Water
Air
Recycling
Oceans
Forests/Plants
Cooking
Nutrition

Other topics

Movies
Music
Traveling
Reading (extensive readers)
Computers
Japan
Sports

Policies

- **list of expectations**
- **leaders**
- **# of messages/
replies**
- **content**

This week we will start with the Discussion Groups. In your class Thursday or Friday, Mr. Melton will give you the assignments for the Discussion Groups (if you missed class, please come to Mr. Melton's office). Please note that you will be a member of TWO groups, so you will need to read and write in both of them.

First week

The first person in each group will be the leader for the first two-week session. This person is in charge of the group for two weeks. The leader will post a message on the topic by Wednesday evening. This message should be 150 words or more and should include information about the topic, any links to Web sites in English about the topic and two or three questions to ask your group members.

Each member in the group then has one week to add at least one message to the discussion. The messages should be at least 100 words and should add useful information to the topic. You may also ask a question if it is related to the topic.

Second week

At the beginning of the second week, the group leader will post a message of 100 words or more on the topic, along with a question or two. This message should add to the discussion.

Each member then has one week to add at least one message to the discussion. The messages should be at least 100 words and should add useful information to the topic. You may also ask a question if it is related to the topic.

Notes

You will be evaluated on how well you add to the discussion. Posts that add useful information will get more points. Posts that come early in the discussion (and not at the end of the week) will get more points. Posts that show you have spent some time reading your group members' posts will get more points. You will get points for your two groups only; there is no need to post in another group.

Please do not copy any information from another source like a Web page. Use your own words to write your posts.

As always, if you have any questions, ask them in **Questions and Answers** or come by my office. I am looking forward to learning a lot from you all. 😊

Computer Systems

- ❑ **discussion forums (moodle—Dougiamas, 2005)**
 - ❑ **emoticons, registration, browsers, security**
 - ❑ **multilingual capabilities**
 - ❑ **editing limitations**

Computer Systems, cont.

- **Templates**
- **Guidelines for writing**

You will be doing a lot of writing on moodle this semester. This is a quick lesson with some tips for writing on moodle. It may change as more information is added, so listen to your teacher if he has made any changes.

First, you should put in a **space** after most punctuation:

GOOD: Here is a sentence. Here is the second sentence.

NOT GOOD: Here is sentence.This sentence needs a space before it.

The same goes for numbers, like from a *Basic Vocabulary in Use* exercise.

1. There is a space after the number one.
2. Number two also has a space.

Next, please use the RETURN (or ENTER) key only when you want a new paragraph (put in two returns, please). moodle will automatically wrap the sentences for you.

GOOD:

This is going to be a paragraph just to show you an example of how moodle will automatically wrap all of your sentences. You do not need to add a return after each sentence in a paragraph. Just let the software do the job, and you will be fine.

Here is a second paragraph following the first one. Notice that it has two returns, so you can see clearly that it is a new paragraph. This is the way to format your writing on moodle.

NOT GOOD:

After you write one sentence, do not hit the return key.

It is much easier to let the sentences flow.

This is more difficult to read as well.

Please use the example above this one as your guide.

The Setup

- Register and explore
- Introductions to start
 - Learn the system
 - Meet each other
- 13 groups of 4—x2
 - group names
 - two-week sessions

-  Discussion Groups
-  Session Schedule
-  Team Global
-  Team Health
-  Team Dinner
-  Team Ando
-  Team Earth
-  Team Planet
-  Team Environment
-  Team Habitat
-  Team Housing
-  Team Ecology
-  Team Food
-  Team Conservation
-  Team Lunch
-  Blue
-  Red
-  Green
-  Orange
-  Purple
-  Black
-  Brown
-  Yellow
-  Pink
-  White
-  Gray
-  Ruby
-  Turquoise

	Replies
Transportation	18
Air☆"	18
Wildlife	12
Recycling	7

	Replies
Recycling!!	19
Supplements :-)	29
☆Foreign Food☆	17
Cooking	14

	Replies
☆☆Food Additives☆☆	25
Health Food	23
Diet	19
\(^.^\)/ Cooking \(^0^\)/	25

	Replies
Transportating	4
Deforestation	9
Rein forest	5
The ocean	5

Science Topics

	Replies
Pets	9
Driving	17
About Movies	23
Reading books	20

	Replies
☆☆Traveling☆☆	16
Sports	29
Part-time jobs	21
Animal	10

	Replies
Music	19
Movies	24
Japan	6
Sports B-)	9

	Replies
Eating!!	13
TV :-)	11
Winter Sports	9
Music	8

'Other' Topics

Feedback

- ❑ **Feedback should be maintained throughout (Preece, 2000)**
- ❑ **Prompt feedback given**
 - ❑ **low points**
 - ❑ **increased in the second session**

Session 1 Grades

Due date: Wednesday, November 10 2004, 11:55 PM (201 days 15 hours)

Maximum grade: 10

This is where I will make a report and give a grade for your work during Session 1. You are going to be evaluated for:

Timeliness (writing messages in a timely manner)

Messages (the number of messages you write)

Content (writing meaningful messages, with a good number of words)

Communication (showing that you are reading and responding to your group members' messages)

Extra (I have not decided this yet. 😊)

Session 2 Grades

Due date: Wednesday, November 24 2004, 11:55 PM (187 days 15 hours)

Maximum grade: 20

This is where I will make a report and give a grade for your work during Session 2. You are going to be evaluated for:

Timeliness (writing messages in a timely manner)

Messages (the number of messages you write)

Content (writing meaningful messages, with a good number of words)

Communication (showing that you are reading and responding to your group members' messages)

Extra (This is based on your overall performance.)

Caveats

- One community or two?**
- groups of six or more would have been better**
- Based on Melton (2005, in press)**

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