



Building Excellence in NP Education: Teaching and Learning in the Synchronous Virtual Classroom

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Purpose

Despite the rise in the number of institutions offering virtual classrooms, there is a lack of evidence related to best practices for teaching and learning in the virtual environment. While there are similarities to the face-to-face classroom, the technological and pedagogical roles and responsibilities of faculty managing virtual classrooms are unique. The purpose of this poster is to describe lessons learned by FNP faculty who transitioned from a face-to-face environment to a robust online learning platform by blending live synchronous sessions in the virtual classroom with customized asynchronous material.

Lessons Learned

- Unique aspects of synchronous time
 - Time moves differently in the synchronous classroom environment
- Many moving parts – chat box, notes page, polling
 - Multimedia is engaging to students of the Millennial generation
 - Faculty comfort with the multimedia
 - Need for training
 - Need for support
- Classroom norms may be violated
 - Faculty role
 - Student behavior

Best Practices

- Set clear expectations regarding classroom norms and behaviors
- Structure synchronous session (introduction, timed activities, wrap-up)
- Engage learners in a variety of activities (reflection, discussion, debate, case studies, games)
- Ensure active pedagogy and avoid lecture
- Challenge learners to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create
- Give everyone an opportunity to participate
- Summarize discussion or take away points

Roles and Responsibilities

Instructor

- Demonstrate proficiency with technology in the synchronous classroom features
- Prepare classroom in advance with poll questions, uploaded documents, breakout rooms
- Establish classroom norms and expectations
- Design activities that allow higher order thinking
- Facilitate active learning through exploration, reflection, analysis and application of knowledge
- Maintain a collegial, supportive and respectful classroom climate

Learner

- Adhere to technological requirements for synchronous sessions (internet connection, audio)
- Complete asynchronous activities (readings, viewing webcasts and videos) prior to synchronous session
- Be prepared to apply new knowledge to case studies, group activities and poll questions
- Share prior knowledge and experiences as appropriate
- Actively communicate and seek clarification as needed
- Maintain appropriate respectful classroom behavior at all times

Synchronous Virtual Classroom Features

- A polling feature gives faculty the ability to identify knowledge gaps anonymously and in real-time
- Utilization of break out sessions provides an added dimension for collaborative work
- Teaching materials are easily uploaded to enhance discussion and share resource
- Notes taking feature allows students and faculty to create and disseminate shared notes from class sessions
- Screen sharing with students provides opportunity to collaboratively explore websites, review documents
- Break out sessions allow for small group collaboration
- Sessions are recorded and may be accessed by students and faculty
- Live technology support is available at all times

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