

## Techniques for improving interactions and student engagement within NILE - session planning notes

*This session will look at techniques that staff can use in their NILE site to improve interactions with students. Covering Discussion Boards, Virtual Classrooms and Self and Peer Assessments.*

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/al-holloway-richard-byles-techniques-for-improving-interactions-and-student-engagement-within-nile-tickets-47852550266>

### Session Plan

In this session we will be focusing on practical ways you can improve student inclusion through online activities.

In the first exercise we will look at 'Inclusive design' within discussion boards and virtual classrooms. And in the second we will run a paper based role play exercise on peer assessment.

By the end of this session, you will have worked with others to identify a number of helpful tips for planning 'inclusive' interactions within the VLE.

### Discussions: Introduction to discussion boards / virtual classrooms.

First, we are going to experience two ways of holding discussions in NILE; discussion boards and Collaborate virtual classrooms

Please log into NILE and view the module titled 'TLR-FBL-Inclusion'.

([https://nile.northampton.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content\\_id= 4762848 1&course id= 89855 1#](https://nile.northampton.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id= 4762848 1&course id= 89855 1#)).

### Exercise 1.1

Within the site, find the link to the discussion board in 'Module activities'. Answer the following discussion board questions: (in the demo module)

(A) What are the potential learning benefits to the students for a discussion board task?

(B) What are the potential learning benefits of students working in a virtual classroom?

(Concrete Experience)

Individually consider these questions.

- How easy was it to find the task?
- Is the task well presented?
- What is the purpose of this discussion?

(Reflective Observation)

## Exercise 1.2

Now you have experienced the task, use this activity to consider how students with accessibility issues encounter problems, and how might you can overcome these barriers to engagement?

(Abstract Conceptualisation)

Method: Think, Pair, Share (30 mins)

Consider the following possible accessibility issues:

- Audio or Visual Impairment
- Mental Health Condition
- Physical Condition
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- English as Additional Language

Think: (2 mins)

Individually consider how easy it would be students with all abilities to engage in this activity, and what may be barriers to engagement.

Pair: (3/4 mins)

In pairs discuss whether there are any actions we could take to improve these students experience?

Share: (3/4 mins)

On this Padlet there are three columns, in pairs synthesize your thoughts under each column:  
[https://uon1.padlet.org/richard\\_byles1/9f6p5lz3t7j1](https://uon1.padlet.org/richard_byles1/9f6p5lz3t7j1)

(Please mention which tool you are commenting on in the post.)

(Active Experimentation and Abstract Conceptualisation)

Exercise 1.3 & 1.4

– repeat the exercise above but using the virtual classroom software Collaborate Ultra.

Exercise 1.5 - Conclusion / Final Activity

In pairs review the posts on the Padlet and upvote your favourite points in each column, then discuss if you would like to try out either of these tools and how you could ensure it is accessible to all your students.

Group discussion: Share your own top tips for best practice and share these with the group.

(Active Experimentation)

Instructor Notes:

Purpose of activities

- Expose participants to different accessibility issues.
- Allow participants to experience new technologies.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on own experiences and relate their learning to this prior knowledge.
- To surface concerns about using technologies for online discussions.
- To identify and promote best practice.



## Exercise 2.1 - Complete a peer review task. (Roleplay)

Acting as a student, answer the question on the 'Task' card on your table. (handout) Remember you are answering as a student would, so you may wish to consider how your own students may answer this question.

On the side marked 'task': 'Write 50 words reflecting on what is a good contribution to an online discussion'.

DURATION: 5 minutes / extend to 10 if needed.

Note your card number, then pass all your table cards onto the next table to your left.

(Concrete Experience & Abstract Conceptualisation)

## Exercise 2.2 - Anonymous Peer Review

Again acting as a student, reivew the work based on the two criteria below: (the work will be reviewed 3 times in total)

Criteria 1. Insight – does the written work provide a meaningful insight into the experience of using discussion board.

Criteria 2. Communication – are these ideas communicated effectively.

3 Mins. Per feedback.

(Concrete Experience & Abstract Conceptualisation)

## Exercise 2.3 - Discussion in pairs

- How did you feel being peer reviewed?
- How did you feel being a peer assessor?

(Reflective Observation)

## Exercise 2.4 - Conclusion / Final Activity

Discuss the following points in pairs.

- How can you encourage students to peer review supportively & fairly?
- In what scenarios is peer review likely to add value to the student experience?
- What concerns do you think students may have on the use of peer review?

(Active experimentation & Abstract Conceptualisation)

## Instructor Notes:

### Purpose of activities

- Expose participants to experience peer review as a paper-based exercise.
- Allow participants to consider how it feels to give and receive peer feedback.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on these experiences and consider how planning of peer review requires careful consideration.
- To surface concerns about using peer review.
- To identify and promote best practice.

### Alignment to Learning theory

Both of these activities are designed to facilitate the completion of the four stages of Kolb's reflective cycle, however you will note that there is overlap between experience, observation, conceptualisation and active experimentation in both exercises and these do not need to take place consecutively.

Notes: What are the benefits of peer review?

Notes:

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/transforming-assessment-and-feedback/peer-review>

1. Helps students develop critical thinking skills and make evaluative judgements based on the assignment criteria.
2. Students develop skills that help prepare them for future professional practice and helps them understand the process of making academic judgements.
3. Giving feedback is a very proactive process requiring students to review and think about the assignment criteria, and make comparative judgements.
4. Peer review is an ABL activity.
5. It is important for assessment literacy.

How does it feel to be reviewed by Peers?

<http://blogs.northampton.ac.uk/learntech/2018/04/09/the-case-for-self-and-peer-assessment-in-abl/>

What does constructive feedback look like, helping students to have a supportive approach to each other.