Facilitating and Assessing Asynchronous Learning: Concept Mapping, Digital Libraries and the LIS Learning Showcase

By

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Abstract

- The characteristics and nature of asynchronous learning, in a graduate level, core course, <u>Knowledge Structures I</u>, are first discussed in the context of digital libraries, the twenty-first century learner, and a professional program of study. Strategies used to facilitate and assess asynchronous learning such as *concept mapping* and the *Learning Showcase* are introduced and examples shown.

Digital Libraries

- Several definitions exist (DLF, D-Lib, ARL)
- Heterogeneity (Diversity) is at the heart of what defines a Digital Library (DL)
- A DL
  - Contains diverse <u>content</u> in heterogeneous *forms* (*genres*) and *formats* (digital, print)
  - Provides diverse <u>services</u> (*information uses*) for diverse <u>users</u>

Twenty-first Century Learner

- Distance learner
- Self-motivated; Self-directed; Engaged
- Life-long learning is a goal
- Has or is comfortable with diverse learning styles
- Demographics: young old adults
- IT-proficient (communication, writing, etc.)

Professional Study

- SIRLS is a graduate program in Library & Information Science

- Not just a Library School!

- Training in *Information Work* for the *Information Environments*
  - Traditionally this has been libraries, archives, museums
  - Automation and more recently, the WWW and increasing pace of IT advances are changing this; for example, Information Architects (information space, digital document, web designers)

Asynchronous Learning

- Knowledge Structures I, Fall 2001
- No on-campus meetings; WebCT course
- No virtual meetings; asynchronous interactions
- Course format:
  - Lectures (Posted weekly as Microsoft Powerpoint slides with lots of images)
  - WebCT Discussions (Weekly Managed Discussion Topics)
  - Digital Libraries - *Linked Active Content* (Bi-weekly experience + reflect + write)

Facilitation & Assessment of Learning

- Concept Mapping (assessment)
  - Informal; Optional and One-time (students asked to submit a concept map of what they learned)
    - http://rani.sir.arizona.edu/~sirls/fall01/501/
- LIS Learning Showcase (engagement)
  - Publishing experience; Optional and One-time (students asked to submit their final project for 'publishing')
    - URL: http://rani.sir.arizona.edu/
- Digital Libraries (facilitation)
  - Ongoing; Somewhat mandatory (students forced to experience the diversity of electronic resources)

The End!

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- URLs:
  - Presentation:
    - http://sir.timon.arizona.edu/faculty/coleman/aer
  - LIS Learning Showcase:
    - http://rani.sir.arizona.edu/
  - Concept Mapping
    - http://rani.sir.arizona.edu/~sirls/fall01/501/