

# Remote Teaching Webinar 5: Creating and Managing Your Community

## Learning Communities

A learning community is a group of individuals with the same or similar learning goals, grouped together for the purpose of achieving those goals.

The rationale for creating and participating in learning communities stems from an underlying assumption that knowledge is actively constructed by learners and that learning is a social activity. There is a fuller description of [Social Constructivism on the Berkeley Graduate Division](#) site. When we talk about managing learning communities, a large part of that means (but is not limited to) facilitating online asynchronous discussions.

## Creating Community

### Tools

The easiest way to do this is to use the forum tool in the platform supported by your institution. See the links for instructions.

Platform	Set up and use
Moodle	<a href="#">Adding a forum activity Using a Moodle Forum</a> (more advanced)
Canvas	<a href="#">Creating and using a Canvas forum</a>
Blackboard	<a href="#">Creating and using a Blackboard forum</a>
Google Classroom	<a href="#">Create a discussion in Google Classroom</a>

Google classroom, EdX and FutureLearn also make space for comments on articles or assignments which can be a helpful alternative. In the example we'll look at in the webinar, we used a Q and A forum in Moodle. This is the same as a normal forum but students cannot see anyone else's post before they post their own. You can achieve the same thing in Canvas in the settings for all forums. There are advantages and disadvantages to this approach. What might these be?

### Discussion Tasks

Forums are a space for challenging, erudite discussion, and therefore different from other online spaces where students are used to chatting together. This should be reflected in the depth and complexity of the tasks set and in the quality and quantity of contributions expected. What is important also is to create an immediate reason for reading each other's posts. See Webinar 3: Keeping the conversation going for more detail on 'reason for listening'. Clear staged instructions are vital as you will not get a chance to quickly rectify misunderstandings. We will explore an example of this in the webinar.

## Grouping Students

As with breakout rooms in live events, students benefit from being in smaller groups for asynchronous activities.

You can do this on [Moodle by creating groups at the course level](#), you can then make activities or discussions only available to certain groups. In the example below, students are grouped by College.

The discussion forum is then replicated by the number of colleges and each College group is given access to only one of these.

Separate groups All participants

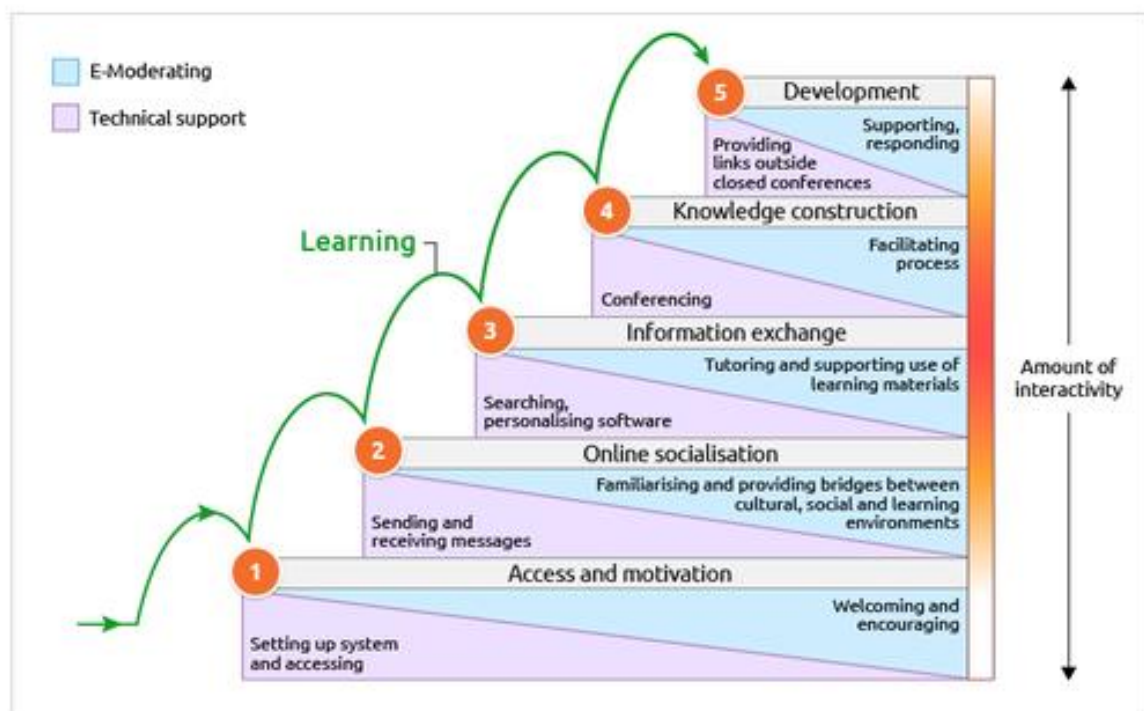
Add a new question

Discussion	Started by	Group	Replies
Being the supervisor	Lisa	NH	4
Being the supervisor	Lisa	Q	13
Being the supervisor	Lisa	DOW	7
Being the supervisor	Lisa	CHU	15

Once you have created all your forums and made them available to the appropriate group, you can add your pre-written question and send to all groups simultaneously.

On Canvas you can [create groups manually](#) or [create groups automatically](#). You will then need to create your discussion or assignment and [assign the activity to a particular group](#). There is a [similar process on Blackboard](#) but on Google Classroom you would need to create separate classrooms for your subgroups.

## E-Moderation



[E-moderation](#) in online courses means ‘promoting human interaction and communication through the modelling, conveying and building of knowledge and skills.’ The best way to describe how this is

done is through [Gilly Salmon's 5-stage model](#), which goes through the activities learners engage in as they progress through the course and the complementary roles the e-moderator plays throughout.

## Being part of a community

Managing our own continuous professional development can feel like a part time job on top of our day jobs, particularly now where change has been so. There is a vast amount of information available that may be useful/relevant/effective/appropriate to context that needs to be sorted and being part of a community can help with that. This can be done on an individual, institutional and global levels. More on this in the session.

Work with a colleague to peer review each other's course outlines, session plans, observe live sessions or watch recordings and give and receive feedback.

Locally, be part of your institution's online community to support remote teaching. In Cambridge, this is on Yammer but will differ for other universities

## Reading

Top tips for effective online discussions

<https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2018/11/10-tips-for-effective-online-discussions>

(5 minutes) This is a great selection of simple ways to success from the beginning. A clear winner for me was in point 5

Incorporating e-tivities

<https://itlc.science.ku.dk/english/papers/model/>

(15 minutes) A clear detailed account of how to get started successfully with Salmon's 'e-tivities' in your class

Facilitating Online Discussion

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/cdtl/docs/default-source/professional-development-docs/resources/facilitating-online-discussions.pdf>

(20 minutes) An excellent treatment of the topic from the National University of Singapore. For examples of discussion tasks see pages 11-12

Engineering specific advice

(5 minutes) <https://ep.jhu.edu/files/discussion-tips.pdf>

## Pre-Session Survey

Please fill in the [pre-session survey](#) to help guide the direction of the upcoming session.