

Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

Name of pattern

Concept Chat

Quick look

Concept Chat is intended to identify and discuss course key concepts. Students in small groups, using synchronous messaging systems: such as Twitter, Nurph or Today's Meet, summarise the key concepts that have been covered during the lecture.

Rationale

Concept Chat gives students the opportunity to enhance their understanding of key concepts and ideas.

Learners/Context

Concept Chat has been devised to visually associate and improve student understanding of key concepts. It is set in the context of an online synchronous learning event which takes place during lecture/tutorial time. The activity is suitable for most types of learners beginning to explore a new topic space.

Related patterns

Fishbowl, Fast feedback.

Related category

Online collaboration, Academic skills, Personalisation, Active learning.

Alignment

Concept Chat gives students the opportunity to assimilate jargon and reflect on key concepts in a lecture or tutorial.

Instructions/Process

Pre-lecture

1. Decide on the messaging system to be used. For example, in-built to Blackboard (Bb), Twitter (using a hashtag or set up a suitable space using Todays Meet or Nurph) to allow recovery of messages (preferably able to be displayed or accessed via the web/Bb).
2. Set up the groups to be used in advance and have these listed on the web or in the course page of Bb.

Mid-lecture

3. Ask each member of the group to identify a concept or new word that they heard during this lecture
4. Ask each group to decide which concept/word will post into the messaging system.
5. Display the messaging system stream live on the lecture theatre or tutorial screen
6. From the screen, select three concepts and write these into pre-prepared interlocking shapes on a screen/whiteboard. For example, set up a blank diagram on PPT slide or other editable and visible means:



The green shapes are filled with a word/phrase denoting a concept from the message stream. It is also possible to vary the number of concepts if the educator is prepared to draw the shapes in real time.

7. Ask the groups to identify the connecting theme or concept. They may write it down or present it in the messaging system as time allows.

EXTENSION

Students are given a choice of 3-5 concepts and can vote using a polling system: Poll Everywhere
<https://www.polleverywhere.com/>

Gamification

Peer Grading in MOOCs

<http://mooconewsandreviews.com/massive-mooc-grading-problem-stanford-hci-group-tackles-peer-assessment/>

This activity lends itself to a competitive element with more work on the part of the educator. Points can be awarded for the group identifying the connecting concept first, most successfully over time, by using the number of contributions as a measure of engagement and active learning. However, this will turn this activity from a quick task within a lecture to a more formal activity, requiring the educator to track message streams and identify group contributions.

Post lecture

The educator can review the message stream to assess student understanding and to create a focus for subsequent tutorial discussions.

In the case of very large groups of students it may be desirable to cut/paste the message stream into a word document and use colour coding to identify common themes. This may not be practical as a synchronous activity. However, it would make a suitable task for students during a post-lecture tutorial session for reflection and active learning to recall main concepts.

MORE EXTENSION

Ask students to post the messages to the Blackboard or other space (simple word processing documents, for example).

In a subsequent tutorial, or for self-study, ask students to go over the message streams from groups other than their own to identify key concepts (or misunderstandings). The streams for study can be within a single cohort or across several cohorts over a week of study.

8. With larger numbers of learners, split students into groups, allocate a concept to each group – which may be the same for all groups or contain slight variations. Once the sets of definitions are created, groups can compare definitions between themselves.
9. Develop criteria or rubrics for a competitive element: introduce peer grading and rewards.
10. Formal gamification strategies such as the awards of points and/or badges could be adopted if this is used as a formative activity and to provide a further motivational element.

Conditions

Knowledge of suitable messaging system via mobile devices.

Knowledge of Blackboard.

Knowledge of setting up groups in Blackboard.

Resources/Technology

RMIT Teaching with Technology

<http://www1.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=vv8s8jmap03wz0>

Peer Marking PeerMark in Turnitin

<http://www1.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology/turnitin>

Teaching practice at RMIT

<http://www1.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=7x1v5wb0hmif>

Today's Meet

<https://todaysmeet.com/>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/>

Nurph

<http://nurph.com/>

Identica (open source microblogging)

<https://identi.ca/>

Poll Everywhere

<https://www.polleverywhere.com/>