



Activity: Consider the following figure describing the development of cohesive online learning, based on discussion board postings. After reviewing the tables describing characteristics and considering these stages, what are some criteria for effective student performance in asynchronous postings?

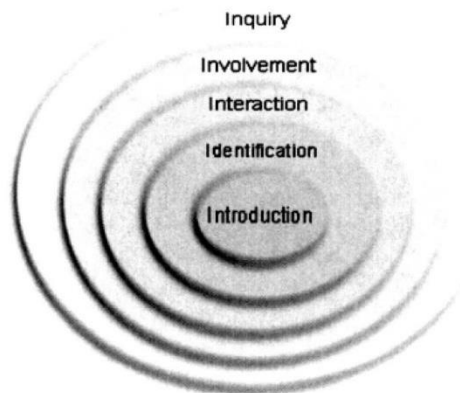


Figure: 1. The evolution of online group development: from Introduction (stage I) to Inquiry (stage V).

Selection from Waltonen-Moore, S., Stuart, D., Newton, E., Oswald, R., & Varonis, E. (2006). From virtual strangers to a cohesive online learning community. Journal of technology and teacher education. 14.2, 287-311.

Table 1: Introduction

Personal/professional disclosure related to background (instructors and learners)
Strong affective component noted (enthusiasm, anxiety, fear, eagerness, frustration)
Heavier reference to the technology utilized to access course than other stages
Learner expectations for course verbalized
Messages stated in first person
Branching* nonexistent between learners
Content of messages not reflective of course material

Table 2: Identification

Learners/instructors identify with and/or relate to one another
Connections are made to others (instructor-to-learner or learner-to-learner)
Thoughts/feelings as expressed by peers are acknowledged
Language is more inclusive ("like so many of you," "like the rest of you")
Learners/instructors are reading/"listening" to one another's postings, but not directly branching/replying to messages
Content of messages does not reference course material

Table 3: Interaction

"Sparks" of interaction occur; the first semblance of a conversation/dialogue begins
Rapport development continues among learners, yet remains somewhat tentative
Messages reflect course content with learner placed as subject matter expert relating experience with course content
Self-imposed goals for learning are expressed
Learners read/"listen" to others' messages, and may reflect this through branching
Branching begins between learner-to-learner yet is limited to one reply to a specific post

Table 4: Involvement

Learners are engaged with one another and operate in a task-oriented mode
Atmosphere exudes trust, comfort, and respect
Learners are interactive, cooperative, collaborative, cohesive
Knowledge and comprehension of course objectives are expressed in the form of ideas, concepts, and questions about course content
Learners seek guidance and professional opinions of peers
Appreciation of one another is expressed
Branching is frequent; usually only one reply to a specific post

Table 5: Inquiry

Inquiry is guided by the desire to apply learning to real-life
Learners seek opinions of peers in the application of course material
Application includes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation
Dialogue is balanced, an active give-and-take among learners
Branching is interactive and the most voluminous to date



Activity: Consider the following list of asynchronous tools and commonly cited learning skills associated with online learning.

Step 1: Write in the second column which skills potentially apply to a given tool. Commonly cited skills include: critical thinking, collaboration, synthesis and judgment, autonomy, self-assessment, reading and writing skills

Step 2: Add to third column some instructional design factors that support that outcome

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Activity Design</i>
(a) Email		
(b) Listservs		
(c) Discussion boards		
(d) Wikis		
(e) Blogs		
(f) Recorded webinars		
(g) Archived lecture slides (plus audio/video)		