Evaluate Sessions and Win!

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

**Five (5) $25 gift cards** will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
Background
Synchronous Education: A Study

Online Master’s program in United States

33 student participants

Impact of videocasting in synchronous virtual classroom

Synchronous learning assisted in improving students’ perceptions of instructor’s co-presence

Han, 2013
Synchronous Education: Benefits to Students

Stable means of communication

- Experience better task completion rates
- Students stay more on task
- Larger sense of participation
- More meaningful interactions with instructors

Chen & You, 2007; Mabrito, 2006; Hrastinski, 2010
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoyment</td>
<td>• Technological problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Real time gives personal touch</td>
<td>• Glitches and sound connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility/convenience</td>
<td>• Difficulty engaging students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfort of own home</td>
<td>• Lack of body language cues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foronda, Lippincott, 2014; Evans et al 2014
Tips for Teaching in Distance Education

1. Prepare to effectively lecture
2. Use support staff
3. Schedule for technology downtime
4. Set classroom ground rules
Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education’s Definition of “Synchronous”

• Activities required for degree completion, not study groups or virtual office hours

• Accomplished online or in a non-University setting, where students are synchronously learning course material under the supervision of and in learning sessions that are facilitated directly by program faculty
Methods
Survey Development

• Developed through an iterative process with faculty fellows and Wiley Education Services staff
• Developed using “skip logic”
• Vetted through Wiley Education Services’ survey team
Survey Implementation

• Implemented via Wiley’s virtual survey tool
• Conducted between March 12 and March 26, 2018
• Link sent to approximately 225 Program Directors at Wiley partner institutions
• Two reminders sent (March 15 and March 21)

Survey of Synchronous Activities in Online Learning

Thank you for agreeing to provide feedback about synchronous activities at your institution.

Wiley Education Services and Wiley Faculty Fellows are conducting this survey of partner colleges and university program directors. The purpose of this survey is to assess current practices in the application of synchronous activities in online degree programs in order to better understand the motivation for or against using synchronous activities.

Our definition of synchronous activities in the context of this research refers to required activities for degree completion, not option activities such as study groups or virtual office hours. These synchronous components can be accomplished online or in a non-university
Faculty Fellows Focus Group: Data Collection & Analysis

• **Data Collection**
  - 1 lead interviewer, 1 co-investigator
  - Four groups with 4-5 members per group
  - Groups comprised of a mix of Faculty Fellows and Wiley Education Services staff
  - 2 open-ended questions proposed for small group discussion
  - Debrief held as a large group
  - Notes taken by co-investigator and individual group representatives

• **Data Analysis**
  - Constant Comparative Analysis
  - Sorting and Categorizing
  - Key themes/concepts
  - Thematic content analysis
  - Saturation
Qualitative Interviews: Data Collection

- Sample – 4 faculty participants (Varying degrees of synchronous usage), MBA, MHA, Nursing
- Recruited through Wiley Program Outreach
- Media – Zoom
- 1 lead interviewer, 1 co-investigator, 1 interviewee
- 30 minutes in lengths
- Semi-structured interview questions prepared and utilized
- Standardized approach to interviews
- Managing Researcher Bias
- Informed consent
- Permission to record received
- Recordings transcribed through Zoom Software
- Researcher notes
- Summary back to interviewees - Validity
Qualitative Interviews: Data Analysis

• Constant Comparative Analysis
  o Substantive coding – open coding
• Sorting and Categorizing
• Key themes/concepts
• Thematic content analysis
• Saturation
Survey Response

• 42 respondents (approximately a 19% response rate)
• 18 Colleges/Universities represented
• 28 different graduate and undergraduate degrees represented
  o 12% MBA
  o 7% RN-BSN
  o 5% MSN
  o 5% MSW
  o 5% MS/MA in Organizational Leadership
Online Degrees Including Synchronous Component

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
Mandated vs. Non-mandated Synchronous Activities

- Of those that reported having synchronous components in their programs, 76% of participants said that synchronous activities were NOT mandated by an outside accrediting body.

- The top reasons given for including NON-mandated synchronous activities in online programs were:
  - Providing opportunity for faculty and students to connect
  - Increasing overall engagement in courses

- Number of synchronous hours varied widely, from less than 5 to more than 20 for non-mandated programs.

- All programs with mandated synchronous activities required over 20 hours per program.
Type of Synchronous Activity

- Webinar/real-time lecture: Non-mandated
- Class discussion sessions: Non-mandated, 5
- Group project collaboration: Non-mandated, 4
- Live project presentations: Non-mandated, 6
- Practice focus groups: Non-mandated, Mandated
- Other: Non-mandated, 3
Perception of Value of Synchronous Activities

- **No value**
- **Low value**
- **Neutral**
- **High Value**
- **Very High Value**

**Non-mandated**

**Mandated**
Qualitative Findings: Wiley Fellows Focus Group

What is your perception of the value proposition for requiring synchronous activity in Programs, and the impact on admission and retention (positive/negative)?

- There is a perception that required synchronous may be a barrier to recruitment
- Students tend to find value in synchronous components once in the program
- Required synchronous sessions can be a barrier to instructor/adjunct faculty recruitment

Are there particular competencies or subject areas where you believe synchronous activity adds the most value to the online learning experience? What are those activities that can help achieve these competencies?

- “Soft” skills
- Expanding communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Facilitation and negotiation skills
- Live Capstone presentations with Q & A
Qualitative Findings: Interviews

**Do you use synchronous activities in your online program/ course(s)?**
- Yes (3), No (1)

**If no, have you ever used synchronous activities in an online course previously? Perceptions? Why have you never them?**
- Not in established way/Not in syllabus
- Tried meet and greet, low response from students to participate
- Nursing program – 12 hour shifts, need for flexibility and can be deterrent
- Great value from teaching perspective
- Finance as prior student – Open office hours; physiology course (Informal)

**If yes, can you describe your experience?**
- Programmatic – Orientation
- Informal – Skype, Phone calls
- Mandatory sessions
- 20-25 student maximum
- Optional – Richer discussion
- 120 CAHME requirement, 5 hours per course, maintained after standards changed
Qualitative Findings: Interviews cont.

Are synchronous activities essential in online education? Why/why not?

- Improved learning environment – Flipping classroom
- Discussion on theory/application
- Interactive in real time
- *Visual identity – Bonding/Community/Personal
- State/Accreditation requirement
- *Verbal ques, tones, behavior
- Informal Feedback and Evaluation

What synchronous activities are most effective in online environments? Explain why.

- Group activities (Off-line)
- Team activities (On-line)
- Communication activities using technology (Conference calls/Zoom)
- Mandatory Discuss and Apply (Recorded as well)
- Providing IPADs to all students (1 interviewee)
Qualitative Findings: Interviews cont.

Are there specific competencies that are better met with synchronous activity? Name them. Explain why you feel so. Provide examples if possible.

- *Relationship Management and Networking
- *Communication Skills, i.e. Interviewee 1 - “group of physicians and nurses triage and calls from across the country in our country, helping do Telehealth supporting other practitioners in an ICU” – Oral/Presentation
- *Leadership Soft Skills (Affective) – Emotional Intelligence
- Professionalism
- Quantitative Analysis

Interviewee 2: “The law or the more asynchronous. You go to lower on Bloom's Taxonomy”
Describe any positive outcomes from synchronous activities that you feel could not be achieved from asynchronous activity.

- Virtual Open Houses
- *Building a Sense of Community
- *Networking and Building Relationships
- Practicum/Field-based learning
- Virtual Classroom
- Forces Introverts to Engage
- Peer Context and Reflection
- Interviewing skills
What are the challenges, if any, you’ve experienced in implementing synchronous activities in your online course/program?

- Technology, i.e. connection, speed, software installation
- Time Zones
- Maintaining Flexibility for students
- Background/Lighting
- Faculty/Student End-User Ability

Interviewee 2: “Faculty lack of willingness/participation is a myth”
Preliminary Conclusions and Next Steps
Preliminary Conclusions

• Those Program Directors that have utilized synchronous activities in their programs have found value in specific instances of their implementation

• People “don’t know what they don’t know”– qualitative feedback suggests that those that do not utilize synchronous activities may see less of a value in it

• High satisfaction with optional synchronous activities may partly be because faculty (and students) self-select into them
Preliminary Conclusions cont.

• Data suggests that synchronous activities support:
  o Affective domains and higher taxonomy attainment
  o Quantitative analysis
  o Networking and professional development
  o Building campus community

• Asynchronous activities support:
  o Self-directed learning (What students are looking for - andragogy)
  o Knowledge attainment
  o Cognitive domains

• Participants largely agreed that students enjoy synchronous activities as long as flexibility and options are provided, but expressed divergent perspectives on faculty willingness and desire to facilitate synchronous activities
Study Limitations

• Limited sample (Wiley partner Program Directors)
• Self-report
• Potential lack of knowledge of optional synchronous activities occurring in some programs
• Definition of “synchronous”
Ideas for Future Research

- Do well-timed synchronous activities save faculty time later on as the course progresses?
- What topic areas or skill building opportunities do students find most valuable when taught using synchronous sessions/activities?
Questions, Reflection, & Discussion
Questions for Reflection

• What are key considerations for overcoming barriers for faculty in online programs with synchronous components?

• How do you overcome students’ perceived burden around synchronous sessions when recruiting for online programs, knowing that most students report enjoying the sessions once they are taking classes?
Evaluate Sessions and Win!

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

**Five (5) $25 gift cards** will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
References


