Design for Learning 4 - Community
Strategy for Your Community
(Week 3 Lesson)

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Welcome to Week 3!

This lesson includes:

- Advance Organizer for Week 3 (video)
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- Strategies and Netiquette (video, with challenge question)
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- Summing Up Week 3 (text)
- Additional Resources (list)

Advance Organizer for Week 3

Video Transcript:
“D4L Community Week 3: Advance Organizer”
https://youtu.be/QvaHMz_YmXE

Here we are in Week 3! How’s it going?

I’ve tried to give you some opportunities to explore, but now we’ll direct you back toward your ID plan, to work on some revisions with community strategy in mind. This week will provide you with more presentations and exercises to help you apply all these ideas to your own project.

First we’ll take a quick look at some models for a community lifecycle, and then we’ll focus on the early part and what you need to do to get your learning community off to a good start. We’ll look back to your learning objectives and think about some community oriented strategies to reinforce them. We’ll take a closer look at your potential learners. Then you’ll work on developing a code of conduct or netiquette guide for your learning community.

Hopefully the content for this week will have you thinking back to the Diversity module and continuing to work on how you will create an inclusive learning environment. Lots to think about this week – let’s go!
Strategy

Video Transcript:
“D4L Community Week 3: Strategy”
https://youtu.be/y7oCg92ES5o

This is Arden Kirkland. Let’s get started with our videos for week 3 of the D4L Community Module.

There are several different interesting models for an online community lifecycle, and I’ve shared some of them on the Additional Resources page. Here’s one that’s more generally about team formation but is easy to remember: “Forming, storming, norming and performing” from Bruce Tuckman. This week we’re focused on the Forming part: how to get an online learning community off the ground – we’ll get to storming, norming, and performing next week. This model has a beginning and end, but the same ideas also translate into a more cyclical model.

This is my own adaptation of the several different models I’ve consulted and shared with you, with a cyclical, ongoing approach. As one section of our instruction may end, we often continue to teach a unit over and over, and sometimes continue to keep in touch with our former students. Again, this week we’ll focus on the early stages, for Inception and Creation, with an eye to what to expect in the later stages so our early planning can be proactive for later stages.

Before we really get into forming this community, we need to return to your learning objectives. Here’s an example of the breakdown for a SMART objective – remember these from the Foundation module? This example is applied to an objective from the Diversity Module. This activity could be conducted and assessed in a more private way, but we chose to do it as a discussion forum submission, so that you all could learn more from each other in addition to your own evaluation.

Which of your objectives can you assess related to social activities within the community? Use this as a guide to adapt some of your existing learning objectives into SMART objectives for your learning community.

There’s space in your workbook for 5 different objectives, but you may have more or less than that – it will all depend on the subject of your capstone project. Try to examine at least 2.

If you’re having any trouble with objectives, because let’s face it, they are HARD - it can be helpful to use the 5 whys technique. Have you heard of this before?

It’s a common mistake to list something as an objective when what you’re really looking for is something deeper. So, as you refine your objectives, ask yourself, “why?” and write down your answer. Then ask yourself why again! Continue until you really feel like a 4 year old and you’ve
asked yourself “why” 5 times. By then, you should really be at the heart of the issue. This may help you to find alternative activities, including multi-modal activities, that get you to your true learning objectives, usually better than your original ideas. In this example, I start with the objective of getting students to post in the forum, but I dig deeper into why.

The real objective is for students to consider diverse perspectives! So, maybe forum posts aren’t the only way to get community members to share different perspectives with each other – what are alternative activities that could achieve the same goal? Along with Universal Design for Learning, can I offer a few different kinds of activities for learners with different needs and preferences to achieve this objective?

Along with these ideas of looking deeper, I’m also going to have you reflect in your workbook about your mission and vision for how your project fits into the bigger picture. How does your instruction fit in the mission of your library? What long term impact will it have on your learners? We’ll stop here for you to reflect.

**Challenge yourself!**

1. Match the examples below to which part of a SMART objective they represent.

   A. Students will have one week to respond before their responses are noted; then we will move on to another question.

   B. Statistics for a similar course showed that 60% of students both posted and replied, but our expectations are lower for a new class. 75% of students already have Facebook accounts.

   C. In addition to evaluating a single resource privately, we want students to consider additional resources by reading the evaluations of their peers.

   D. at least 50% of enrolled students will both post and reply about their evaluations in a Facebook group.

   E. Facebook group analytics tool will count the number of posts per student.

   1. Specific
   2. Measurable
   3. Achievable
   4. Relevant
   5. Time-based
Reflection

Go to your workbook to answer these questions:

Five years, from now, how will people look (back) at your online instructional unit and the community within it?

What is your vision for how it will have impacted their lives?

What is the mission for the larger institution/group through which you will be providing instruction? (often there is a formal statement that you can just copy and paste here).

How does your stated Instructional Goal from your ID plan fit with this Vision and Mission? Revise it if you need to make it a better fit.

Which of your learning objectives would be enhanced by community interaction? List or revise them, and add SMART details. If you’re struggling with any of those objectives, apply the 5 Whys technique.

Community Members

Video Transcript:
“D4L Community Week 3: Community Members”
https://youtu.be/bxeMpbIG_LE

Hello! This is Arden Kirkland back again with another video for week 3 of the D4L Community Module. Let’s talk about your community members and their identity online.

What about you? Are you a lurker? Or a Superuser? Or something in between? Maybe you lurk in one community but you’re a superuser in another. How carefully do you craft how you appear online? How is your presence online different from your face to face presence, or from one community to another?

I’ve shared a link to a helpful feature in the New York Times a couple of years ago titled “Who Are You Online?” with a guest author from the organization Common Sense Media. It’s written more from a perspective of lesson plans for K-12 students, but I found it very thought-provoking even for adults. From the Additional Resources page you can take a look at that, and please click through the various links within the article to other helpful resources. For example, I’ve included one image here from a slideshow of portraits of people in real life next to their online avatars. Some look very different in real life than their avatars, as in the example here, but others look very similar. Why choose to be the same or different online?
This is can be an added challenge or an added opportunity vs. a face to face setting. Regardless of how learners present themselves, you need to get at what they’re really learning. I’d like you to reflect in your workbook about your own persona(s) online, but then you need to think about your potential learners.

As an exercise, I’m going to have you create “personas” – imaginary people who represent characteristics of real people in your community, like the examples shown here. Of course, if you know real people who will be a part of your community, you can represent them here as themselves. Try to give them a face – make a drawing or find an image or make a collage of images to help visualize this persona. Fill in some details about them, so you can think about their learning needs and what you’ll need to do to help them reach your learning objectives. This is a good place to imagine diversity – of age, gender, class, cultural background, educational background, comfort with technology, physical and cognitive abilities, any aspects you can think of that may affect their learning in your community.

Be careful not to stereotype your hypothetical learners! Visualize them as the unique people they truly are. It may help to think back to the identity chart exercise you did in the Diversity module. You’re not just your gender or race or prior education, you’re all of those things and more in a specific combination unique to you, and it’s the same with your students. You’re trying to imagine a full range of needs here, and visualize them in a concrete way. In visualizing this potential diversity you will be better prepared to provide differentiated instruction - activities that meet different learners’ needs. Really take some time with this exercise.

**Reflection**

Who are you online? How do you present yourself online in different communities, including the community for this class?

Here are some details to think about: Do you use different pictures in different communities? What personal information have you shared? What kind of tone do you use? Think about how you changed your introduction from the context of the Orientation Module to the context of the Diversity Module, and think more generally about what you learned in the Diversity module, and the identity chart you created. What communities are more welcoming to diversity; do you change your representation of yourself accordingly?

Take some notes in your workbook about all of the above.

Next, think about the identities of your Community Members: Who do you hope to engage in your online learning community? Think also about who will not be included in this scope.

In your notebook you’ll create “personas” – imaginary people who represent characteristics of real people in your community. Make a drawing or find an image or make a collage of images to
help visualize this persona. Imagine diversity – of age, gender, class, cultural background, educational background, comfort with technology, physical and cognitive abilities – but no stereotypes!

**Strategies and netiquette**

**Video Transcript:**
“D4L Community Week 3: Strategies and Netiquette”
https://youtu.be/w-zM-ka1Ny0

Hi there! This is Arden Kirkland and we’re moving on with another video for week 3 of the D4L Community Module to talk about netiquette and the importance of a code of conduct.

In choosing how you present yourself online, there are a few dangers to consider. It’s important to be conscious of being a good digital citizen. We’ve probably all encountered people who aren’t good digital citizens – especially people who hide behind anonymous usernames while they post inappropriate or even offensive content. In a closed, password protected class environment there’s a certain degree of privacy and safety, and the use of real names provides a level of responsibility for all that is said.

But for communities that congregate in more public platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, even more care is required to think before you post. I’m sharing an article in our Additional Resources with a few examples where people didn’t think long and hard enough before they posted some inappropriate content, and that content ended up coming back to haunt them in some serious, life-changing ways.

It’s also important to consider some critical viewpoints of how online interactions have changed our interactions in general. An interesting voice in that conversation comes from Sherry Turkle, a psychologist and sociologist who has spent over 30 years studying the affect of technology on identity, relationships, and behavior. Her book Alone Together explores some of this in depth, and I’ve shared a link to her TEDTalk around the time that book came out, which summarizes some of her thoughts.

So, how do we deal with some of these dangers?

Well, let’s pick up with the Tuckman model and how to deal with the stage when your community starts storming. Even when you’re just at the forming stage, you need to anticipate that the storm may come, and be prepared for it.

Conflict can be ok - healthy debate can actually be a great sign of community engagement, especially in an instructional setting that encourages critical thinking. You just want to make sure conflict doesn’t interfere with participation.
When you create a code of conduct and share it with your learners from the beginning, that’s your guide for what kinds of conflicts cross the line and require you to step in. If it’s a problem with a small group or partner situation, you may need to re-group your participants. If it’s a problem with posts in a forum discussion, you’ll need to establish, depending on the nature of the posts, whether it’s more appropriate to approach those in conflict in the forum itself, or to approach them privately. Again, establishing this beforehand with a code of conduct can make your life much easier if that time actually ever comes. Particularly offensive behavior may result in a participant being banned from the community. But many debates may just be a healthy way for community members to get to know each other and learn to agree to disagree.

As Millington points out, “Communities where everyone agrees and gets along are dull.” You need to define the structure in which community members can safely express disagreement – that kind of discussion can be an important part of their learning process.

Remember to keep an eye out for the entire group, instead of just reacting to a vocal minority. If you have a plan in place from the beginning to keep an eye on your plans for assessment of your SMART goals it will be easier to be proactive instead of just reactive.

This ranges from simple “netiquette,” a term for etiquette on the internet, which guides simple aspects of how conventions of style and formatting equate with polite interaction online, to more serious “codes of conduct” which attempt to protect community members from harassment within the community. I’ve provided some links to examples of each – they’re also on the Additional Resources page. When you join a new online community, take a look to see if they have a specific code of conduct or guide to netiquette, so you can make sure you comply with it. When you’re the one managing the community, you may feel the need to provide such guides.

Sometimes you’ll want to post your guidelines in a style guide, or welcome guide, or guide to netiquette – it may be helpful to think that this is a more of a guide of what TO do while a code of conduct, community constitution, etc. is a little more about what NOT to do – or perhaps you can create a document that is somewhere in between. This can be most effective when you let your students have some input and it’s developed by the community, for the community. I’ve shared a few examples of each of these in the Additional Resources.

The Ada Initiative recommends that a code of conduct include 3 aspects: a list of behaviors that are not ok, directions for reporting violations, and a process for handling complaints. The first part on its own is not enough.

You may also need to supplement your code of conduct with a social media policy that addresses potential issues with specific social media platforms. What specifically isn’t allowed? How can people report issues? What will your process be for responding? Your institution may
already have a social media policy in place, but if not, or if you need to revise it or make it more specific, I’ve cited a couple of guides here that you may find helpful.

Of course you need to imagine worst case scenarios - how will you respond to bullying, profanity, or (on public platforms) negativity from outsiders? But you also should consider your best case scenarios - what kind of tone/voice do you want to project? How will your values be represented in your content and approach? I’ve shared some guides in the Additional Resources that may help you to figure out some of the do’s, and not just the don’ts.

**Challenge yourself!**

2. Which of the following describes the features that are important to include in a Code of Conduct?

A. A list of behaviors that are not considered acceptable, directions for reporting violations, and a process for responding to violations.
B. A list with examples of inappropriate posts, reminding students not to make any posts like that.
C. Contact information for the instructor, in case there are any concerns from students.

**Reflection**

In your workbook, list any considerations for this community that might require policies to help members feel comfortable participating in discussions.

What behavior is not acceptable?

What behavior/style is encouraged?

Does your institution already have a social media policy in place? If so, make sure you have a copy of it. Does it cover the type of social media usage you have in mind? If you need to develop a policy or add to the existing one, what will you include?
To finish your work for this week:

This week I’ve tried to give you several different exercises in your workbook that will lead you toward ways of revising your instructional design plan for a better sense of community among your learners. You’ll have more of the same next week.

After you look through the additional resources on the next page, you can complete this lesson and go back to the main course page.

Then the only remaining task for this week is to revisit your workbook exercises and post a summary of them for this week’s forum.

Additional Resources

For this week’s instruction, you may find the following resources helpful.

Reading

**Netiquette, Codes of Conduct, Social Media Policies -**


Code of Conduct. (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from [https://online.berklee.edu/about/code-of-conduct](https://online.berklee.edu/about/code-of-conduct)


Discussion Rubrics:


Videos

All of this week's videos are available on a playlist at YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw6HBD7UyT3nq5FwezE3G0IH74tbm_b-e

References

Here are citations to sources mentioned in this lesson:


**Visuals**

Here are citations to visual resources mentioned in this module:


**Answer Key:**

1. A-5, B-3, C-4, D-1, E-2
2. A - All 3 are necessary to be prepared for situations of inappropriate behavior.