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The Social Arena of the Online Synchronous Environment

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Abstract

Ongoing changes in technology are restructuring the way we live, work, learn and interact. The rapid development of synchronous online venues available for distance education has greatly increased the need for enhanced application of theory to inform practice in ways that permit more effective use of these “live” collaborative learning venues. This paper is directed to university faculty members who are already teaching synchronously online or who would like to begin teaching synchronously online. Broadly framed by theoretical constructs from social constructivism, this paper delineates a range of best practices, ideas, tips, and tricks, as well as insights intended to help promote successful learning experiences online. It shares the view that online synchronous teaching should not merely replicate traditional campus-based instructional activities.

Biographical Statement

Zeina Nehme is currently employed at Prince Mohammad University in Saudi Arabia, and starting undertaking study for this paper whilst a visiting scholar in the Center for Distance Education at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Her research examines best practices to enhance Synchronous Online Instruction, and is informed by her experiences teaching Mathematics and Arabic language courses via distance education modes, as well as in training and assisting faculty and students in the effective use of synchronous and asynchronous tools. *Correspondence:* Math Faculty, Prince Mohammad University, 966 5005 16972, Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia. Email: znehme@pmu.edu.sa