Chapter XI

Asynchronous Content Design for Flexible Learning:
The Macro and Micro Level of Frameworks to Share Knowledge Online Between Professionals and Community

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Introduction

Gradually, more institutions around the globe are becoming involved in dynamic change over a long period to provide time- and location-independent asynchronous e-learning opportunities. With the potential of network-based technologies, asynchronous e-learning has become a powerful, global, interactive, economic, and dynamic as well as democratic tool of virtual learning (Khan, 1997). Asynchronous e-learning provides an opportunity to build flexible online programs for sharing knowledge with virtual educa-
tional contents. To generate cogent asynchronous e-learning opportunities, however, it is important to analyze the principles, ethics, and pitfalls of sharing knowledge online between professionals and community. Therefore, asynchronous content must be designed carefully based on macro- and micro-level frameworks, which provide us with elaborating open, flexible, and distributed virtual learning milieus.

Asynchronous content must be designed based on democratic and multicultural curriculum understandings and approaches for diverse racial, ethnic, economical, political, educational, and cultural groups. It also must investigate the principles, ethics, and pitfalls that professionals (all online workers, such as online designers, policy makers, virtual workers, online learners, etc.) and community members (all stakeholders, such as parents, siblings, administrative personnel from outside organizations, knowledge workers in other organizations, etc.) can combine—the learning philosophy, concepts, and resources for multicultural theory and praxis—to share knowledge online.

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the design principles, ethics, and pitfalls of asynchronous contents in e-learning systems, and also to introduce macro- and micro-level frameworks on how to share knowledge online between professionals and community members. The developed frameworks will acquire learning roles for educators who integrate distance online activities in their traditional courses, and online workers who design, deliver, implement, and evaluate asynchronous course content. Moreover, these frameworks can provide useful assessment methods and techniques for e-learning providers and producers to improve their understanding of the cutting-edge technology applications into asynchronous milieus. Finally, these frameworks can encourage professionals and communities to plan and manage their learning activities with a high degree of personal control and autonomy, to reflect on their personal learning experiences and incorporate new information on how to share knowledge and work together online.

Theoretical Background of the Study

There is a need to investigate clearly how asynchronous e-learning content actually features collaboration between professional and community (Lessing, 2001). Also, focusing on how virtual learners can negotiate the meaning and usability of e-content by themselves is very important to assess their understanding, founded on culturally shared procedures for constructing meaning in online contexts. Online knowledge sharing to construct new schemas and revised existing ones in individuals’ minds must offer virtual participants a wide range of viewpoints to reverence individual cultural differences and give more attention to diversity issues in the new millennium.

These frameworks help online workers and learners understand how they manage their tasks, how they keep a diverse attention, and how technology features in their activity in asynchronous online content. Finally, in this chapter conducted within these frameworks, the researchers largely focus on categorizing collaboration, interaction, and communication according to degrees of shared knowledge with the principles, ethics, and pitfalls of asynchronous content design.
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