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Are synchronous technologies
the answer to poor online
engagement?

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Question 1

- ❖ Do you think that the delivery format (e.g. seminar discussions or the use of online lectures) is appropriate for the modules you teach?

Group feedback

- ❖ Available technology can determine what we do
- ❖ Forums work when linked to assessment
- ❖ External motivators help
- ❖ Affective content
- ❖ Hard to design engaging asynchronous discussions
- ❖ Asynchronous can be boring
- ❖ Format factor for mobile is important

Group feedback

❖ Asynchronous discussion forum

- Appropriate for distance learning – time/place flexible
- Generate tutor presence
- Learner presence more problematic
- Written record
- Writing is cognitively a higher level task than speaking (not necessarily always the case or in synchronous discussions)
- May allow easier engagement by ‘shy’ or other first language students

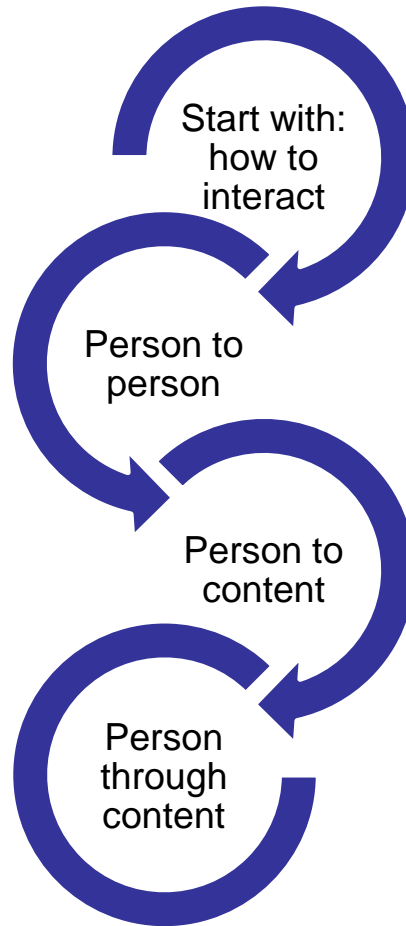
Group feedback

- ❖ Synchronous lecture delivery (with recordings)
 - Recording allows some flexibility to access in various time/space
 - Tracking use is possible
 - There is a time limit on the 'engagement' with the resource

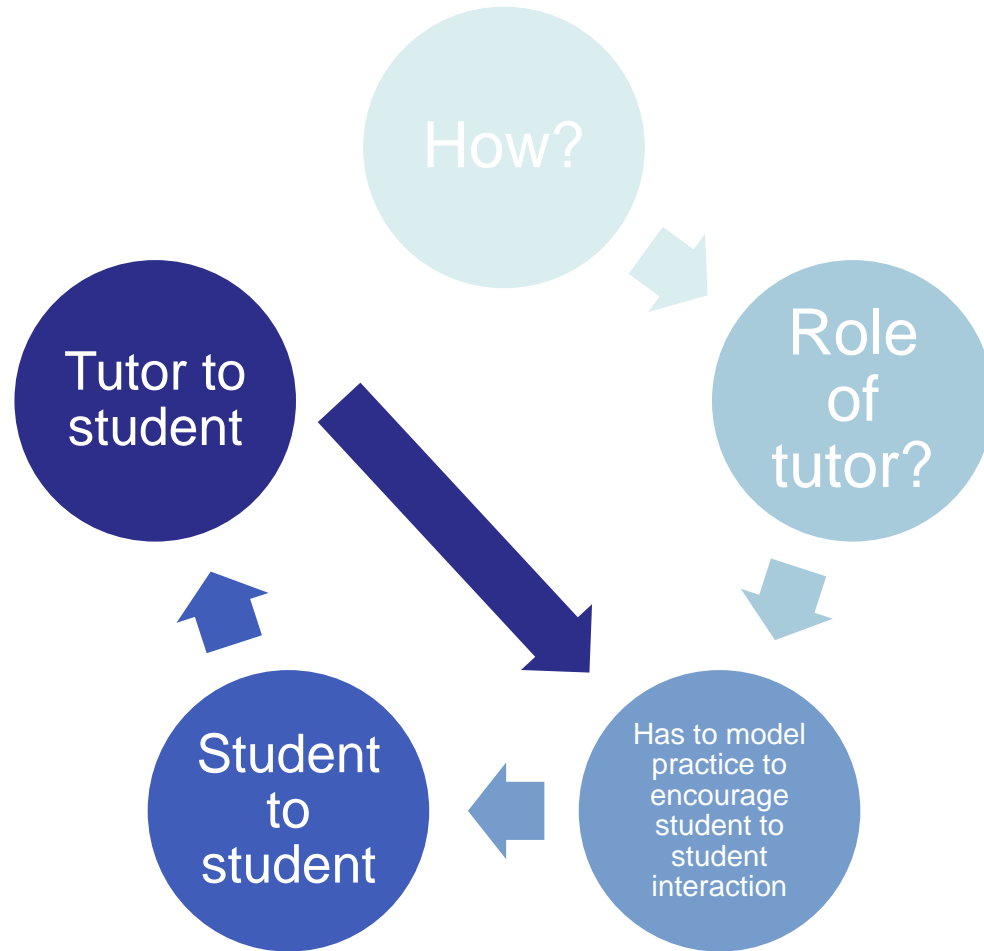
Question 2

- ❖ Does your programme use both synchronous and asynchronous online learning opportunities to encourage student interaction?

Group feedback



Group feedback



Group feedback

❖ Yes but...

- Key question: Why do the people need to be together at the same time?
- Useful to arrive at decisions synchronously
- Synchronous is good for brainstorming
- Simultaneous voice conferencing and Google doc capturing of ideas is highly productive for brainstorming and processing group organisation
- Different learners prefer different modes
- 'Is Twitter synchronous? – No – consecutive asynchronous

Question 3

- ❖ What do you think constitutes a good online learning experience?

Group feedback

- ❖ 'Charismatic' and enthusiastic teacher role
 - How does this work online?
- ❖ Participatory
- ❖ Authenticity
 - Depends on subject
 - Target group of learners
 - Activities, discussions relevant to 'real life'
- ❖ Balance of different modes of delivery
 - Subject area, Professional practice, Community of practice

Group feedback

- ❖ Variety is everything
- ❖ Consistency
- ❖ Support to find your way in online environment
- ❖ Quality of content (tutor created/flagged – student created)
- ❖ Non-failure of technology
- ❖ Ease of use

Group feedback

- ❖ Social constructivist practice where there is 'equality' of status between learners and teachers (asynchronous is easier to foster this)
- ❖ Modes of interaction have been used appropriately (don't waste my time!)
- ❖ Contributing to real learning – co-constructing knowledge
- ❖ Synchronicity related to autonomy, used out of need and stimulation

Group feedback

- ❖ Synchronous can support 'back channel'
- ❖ SMS/phone not synchronous but nearly so
- ❖ Clear perception of 'advantage' to me in each activity I am asked to do