What is Asynchronous Teaching?

Asynchronous learning means that the instructor and the students in the course all engage with the course content at different times (and from different locations). The instructor provides students with a sequence of units which the students move through as their schedules permit. Each unit might make use of assigned readings or uploaded media, online quizzes, discussion boards, and more. The instructor guides the students, provides them with feedback, and assesses them as needed.[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Advantage | Disadvantages |
| * **Comprehension:**Recorded sessions allow students time to digest the session content and/or conduct further research before posing questions in a discussion group. This is better for more deliberate thinkers and also, in some cases, for students whose first language is not English. * **Time flexibility:**Students can access the course content, and initiate or respond to interactions with the instructor and their peers, when it best suits their schedule. * **Access to replay:**Students can re-watch recorded sessions to deepen their learning, or to review content prior to a final exam. Students can likewise review threads in discussion groups long after those discussions have taken place. * **More democratic:**during a live session, only a small number of students will be able to ask questions; in an online discussion group all students can pose questions or make comments. * **Unforeseen circumstances:**Allows students to work around unanticipated challenges such as falling sick for a week, or dealing with a family emergency. | * Students might feel less connected to an instructor when they are watching a recorded session. * Students might feel less connected to the course overall when they do not see their classmates. * Students might put off engaging with a recorded session because they can always “do it later.” * Asynchronous learning requires significant task initiation skills since none of the class time is scheduled, only the assessment deadlines. * Asynchronous learning requires a higher level of commitment and independent learning skills. |

<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-learning>

Recommended steps when designing and teaching an asynchronous class:

* What is the class about and what are the expectations from the students? Explain the process clearly via video or text.
* Openly state the benefit to the students from this session (in the spirit of transparency while teaching).
* Include a link to the available material (where can students find the material/files/recording?)
* Have many videos of short duration e.g. 7-8 minutes each, instead of one long video.
* Clearly define how the student will be assessed on the material (For example through a quiz in the next synchronous session etc.)
* Web link to the recording should be available in Canvas.
* Asynchronous sessions should be placed in Canvas under modules so that students view the lectures after necessary requirements and pre-requisites have been met.

1. Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning. 13 July 2020, uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-learning.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)