Overcoming asynchronous online learning limitations

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Overcoming Asynchronous Online Learning Limitations Overcoming Asynchronous Online Learning Limitations Introduction Many online learners find asynchronous learning more convenient than synchronous learning for several reasons. Asynchronous learning or offline learning refers to student-centered learning process which allows time viability and information sharing feasibility to learners. To be more specific, in asynchronous learning process, a teacher and a student do not have to be online at the same time, and it surpasses the geographical constraints as well. However, this convenience at the same time limits the scope for live tutor-learner interaction; and this is often noted as the major disadvantage of asynchronous learning too. This paper will discuss the major limitations and challenges of asynchronous learning and the possible strategies to overcome those issues in short time. Limitations As mentioned above, one of the major limitations of asynchronous learning is the limited scope for live interaction. In this offline learning, learner and tutor reply to each other or transfers files anytime according to their convenience; and therefore, answering to someone’s query or responding to another person’s information can seem impersonal. Moreover, the lack of immediate feedback tends to affect the learning interest of the student and thereby the outcome. Student would feel disconnected from a group since there are no real time activities so as to encourage their learning activities. The student’s sole scope for interaction is with some amount of content matter on various electronic sources. The major challenge with asynchronous learning is that it requires learner to take the responsibility of learning, reflection, and all thought processes despite the time flexibility and other advantages. Some other limitations of

asynchronous learning noted by Rachmel, Zorman, Ben-Yehuda and Stossel (2005) are that students often need technical support to access the resources on the web but have little chance for getting assistance. This learning method also demands much time investment, self-discipline, and computer skills. The absence of ‘ actual labs and experiments’ also limit the outcome of asynchronous learning (p. 39). Since there is not deadline or time constraint for the completion of a task, learners may postpone the particular activity, which in turn would impede their learning progress. How to overcome the issues Though creating a collaborative learning environment in asynchronous learning is a much difficult task, learning providers have to apply the best possible tactics and tools to achieve this goal. It requires effective and efficient course management strategies. And moreover, the instructor has to be competitive enough to pace with the technological applications and to meet learner needs. An effective learning strategy will incorporate various learning styles and important learning resources so as to enable self assessment as well as peer appraisal. Undoubtedly, an institution that develops asynchronous learning system “ utilizes human resource, develops innovative programs and advanced computer applications, generates new knowledge by research, and strengthens the quality of learning resources” (Nasseh, 2000, p. 224). Asynchronous learning is vulnerable to relationship breakdown and hence, all cognitive questions and topics must be introduced only after developing the online relationships. As Anderson (2009) suggests, the instructor should frequently respond to the learner, and intervene the discussion forum but only to ensure that the ‘ discussion is on track’. Anderson (2009) also points out that the online

learning environment created should ensure high levels of learning; and this can be assessed only by testing “ the levels of learning achieved within the discussion using an appropriate methodology”. According to l Lund, Halvorsen, Goebel & Plagemann (n. d.), another strategy that can be used to support asynchronous learning is the use of Interactive distance learning (IDL), which facilitates students to regain and play back information and lectures stored whenever they want. Multimedia database system (MMDBS) will store the data from electronic class rooms. Also when self-paced courses are offered, institutions must provide experts to answer learner’s queries on time. Developing a discussion group will also improve the scope of learner satisfaction and retention. In addition, it is advisable to give students online access to experts through chat or discussion. Conclusion In asynchronous learning, quality learning, student satisfaction, and faculty preparedness are often challenged to a great extent. Asynchronous learning requires higher efforts to be effective in terms of course management, technological applications, interactive activities, and overall learning outcomes. Despite the numerous advantages like time freedom, asynchronous method involves many challenges and limitations. Though many strategies have been applied, factors like the swiftness of feedback, timely intervention, preparedness of both the learner and tutor, and learner’s self-discipline determine the success of asynchronous learning. Since every learner requires some sorts of external motivation, system developers must pay higher attention to meet this need by adding sufficient interactive programs. References Andresen, M. A. (2009). Asynchronous discussion forums: success factors, outcomes, assessments, and limitations. Educational

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