

**Enhancing the First-Year Curriculum
Pedagogy, Interaction, Technology and Development**

**Project Coordinator
Virgil Renfroe
Lecturer, UNST Analytical Reasoning**

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Lessons Learned:

These are the conclusions and lessons learned, based on the results of a student survey administered at the end of the summer project on creating synchronous online learning communities in courses.

- Students feel they have a greater opportunity to learn when using synchronous collaborative forums on a regular basis.
- Students feel they have a greater opportunity to learn when having access to audio recordings of lecture.
- A majority of students who used collaborative sessions on a regular basis felt they would continue relationships with group members in ways both social and academic settings. This community building has implications for retention.
- There remains a low level of writing among some eReading Room student participants.
- Faculty can build banks of knowledge by recording lectures, and these lectures may be accessed for learning reinforcement for upcoming semesters, indefinitely.
- Tools are adaptable to individual faculty needs: group presentation recordings, addressing the class after class ends.
- In high-enrollment courses, monitoring online group discussions is very time-consuming. Opportunities exist or can be created to alleviate the extra load placed on the professors.
- All campus computer labs are not equipped with the software to use synchronous forums, but need to be to minimize student problems and maximize SI benefits.
- Technological problems on campus are wide and various, including but not limited to getting students on Blackboard, accessing server space for hosting video files, and communication with IT.

Next Steps:

- Address issues with computer labs. This includes installing software and also training computer lab employees.
- Design and hold eReading Room workshops.
- Design and hold TOOB Lecture workshops.
- Collaborate with DWI courses whose professors attended SI training over the summer. Invite them to attend TOOB Lecture and eReading Room workshops.

- Work with retention coordinators in the Center for Academic Excellence and in the schools and colleges. Aim at networking with them to find the appropriate professors across schools and colleges to initially implement synchronous learning in their classes.
- Create PPT user manuals for hosting files, for creating interactive innertoob.com files, for linking such files to Blackboard, for creating groups, etc. Supply professors with these for installation into Blackboard shells. Tracie Lewis may be willing to help install materials for professors who are less savvy with Blackboard.