Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

WHAT IS SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING?
Synchronous Learning is any activity in an online course that happens in real-time, like Teams, Zoom or Webex meetings. Use synchronous activities to facilitate student interaction and build teacher presence.

WHAT IS ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING?
Asynchronous Learning is all the other activities in an online course that students can complete on their own schedule. Use Asynchronous Activities for course activities that benefit from students taking the time to carefully consider and analyze content and engage in constructive exchanges.

WHEN TO USE SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Lectures and podcasts longer than 20 minutes
- Readings
- Check in with students and clarify difficult concepts and misunderstandings
- Practice problems, discussion questions and other activities

WHEN TO USE ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Office hours
- Group analytical activities
- Group presentations
- Quizzes, assignments and application
- Video demonstrations and worked problems, etc

THING TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR CLASS

ADVANTAGES OF SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Provides opportunity for asking & answering of questions in real time, as they come up
- Provides opportunity for spontaneous interaction and exchange between students and with the instructor
- Provides opportunity for instructors to get feedback on student learning
- Adds the "human" element
- Builds the classroom community
- Increases the number of "social" interactions (interactions not related to course content)

DISADVANTAGES OF SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Synchronous learning can widen the divide for learners with:
  - Certain disabilities
  - Unstable Internet access
  - Inequitable access to device and other equipment
  - Caregiving responsibilities
  - No access to a suitable space to participate
  - Time zone differences

ADVANTAGES OF ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Students can complete work on their own timetable (a huge advantage in today's context)
- Students have the opportunity to take the necessary time to digest, and repeat/reread content that is difficult in order to deepen understanding
- Students have time to compose and revise responses in asynchronous class discussions, increasing access to those with language and other barriers.

DISADVANTAGES OF ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING
- Without proper motivation, it is possible for students to put off completing weekly work and fall behind
- Students can feel isolated or disconnected from the instructor and other students