Online Threaded Discussions: Promoting Discussion and Identifying Quality Indicators for Assessing Student Performance

This section will address best practices for the use of online threaded discussions in higher education. As online education continues to grow it is imperative that educators begin to think critically about what constitutes a "good" threaded discussion. By exploring two recent and relevant studies, presenters will explore quality and assessment in online threaded discussions, as well as the relationships between student demographics, online group development, social ability and motivation, and community in the online classroom. Data from focus groups, individual interviews, and a questionnaire will be shared and contextualized in terms of both the student and faculty perspective.

Suggestions derived from the results of the aforementioned studies will be shared with audience members, paying special attention to how individual instructors can promote effective online threaded discussions in their respective learning environments. Recommendations include tips for building community in the online classroom including pre-assessment strategies designed to evaluate student's motivation and abilities. In addition, presenters will address techniques for promoting discussion and social engagement as well as identify quality indicators for assessing student performance in online discussions.