



How do L2 student moderators facilitate a peer-led discussion forum?

Dr. Qunyan Maggie Zhong & Howard Norton
Senior lecturers
Unitec Institute of Technology



Overview

1. Context of the study
2. Current study
3. Results
4. Discussion
5. Conclusions & implications



1. Context of the study

- 🖨️ A joint business degree articulation
- 🖨️ English academic skills at level 5
- 🖨️ Blended learning: online quizzes and forum discussion



1. Context of the study

Features of the online forum discussion

- 🖨 in small groups
- 🖨 a minimum of 3 contributions (240 words)
- 🖨 3 questions to team members
- 🖨 2 resources to be shared
- 🖨 student-facilitated
- 🖨 7% of the overall course assessments
- 🖨 the same topic for a group oral presentation worth of 15%



2. Current study

Research Questions:

1. What roles do the student facilitators perform in a student-led online discussion forum?
2. What strategies do the student facilitators employ to accomplish these roles?



2. Current study

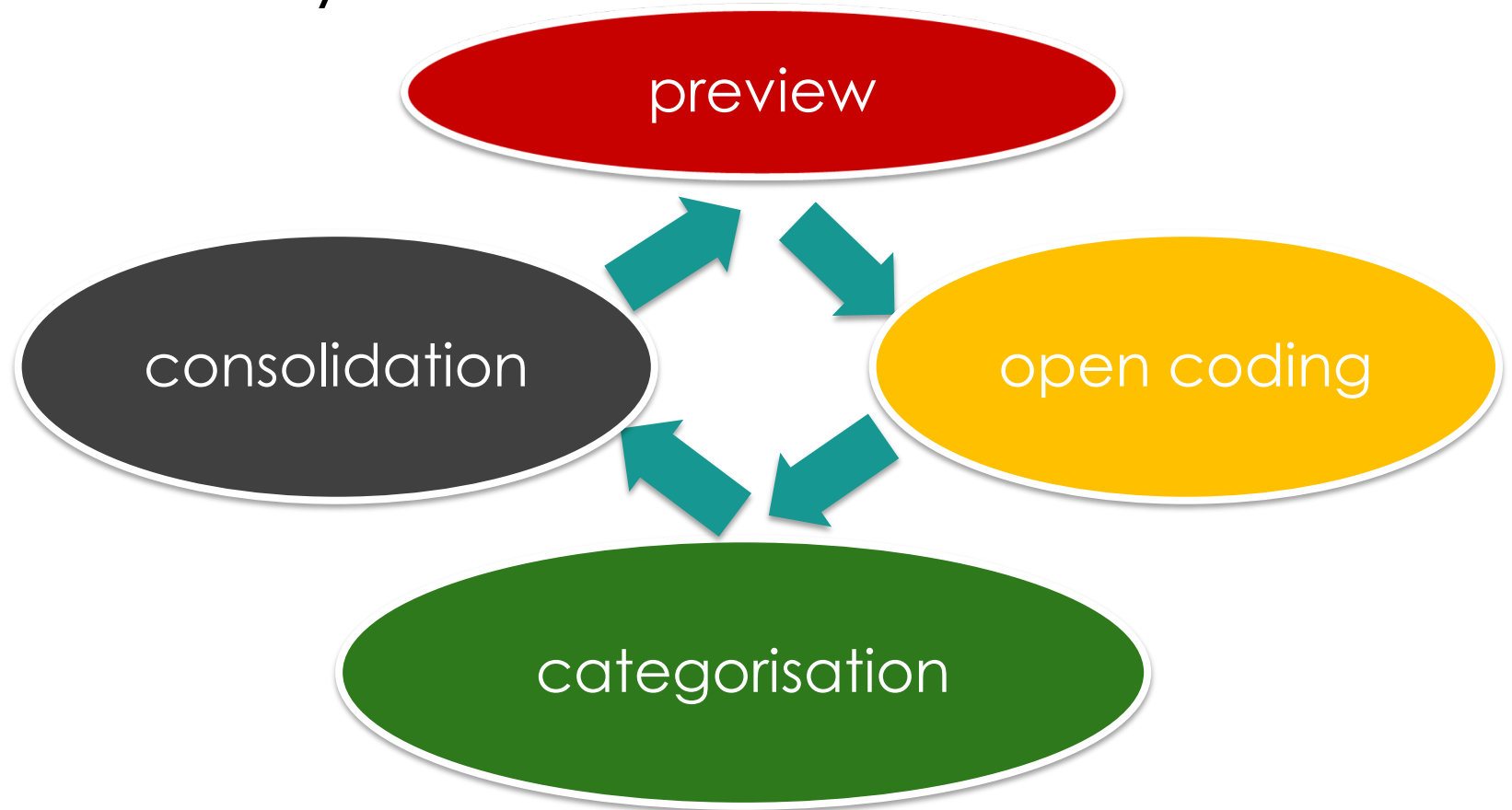
Data collection

- 7 student moderators
- 59 archived messages (approx. 6,880 words) over a period of two weeks



2. Current study

Data analysis





3. Results

1. Knowledge constructors (=61 units)
2. Team builders (=59 units)
3. Motivators (=37 units)
4. Organisers (=25 units)



3. Results

3.1. Knowledge constructors

Strategy	Frequency
1. Responding to questions and giving own opinions	31
2. Self-initiated contributions to the discussion topic	22
3. Sharing resources with team members	21



3. Results

3.1. Knowledge constructors

I don't think so. In my opinion, the purpose of enterprises existence is not just to make a profit and the company needs to perform social responsibility. I think that corporate social responsibility for the continuing operations of an enterprise is very necessary, although corporate social responsibility must be established on the basis of the company's long-term development goals. So only we associate the social responsibility with the interests of all parties, can companies carry out social responsibility and have realistic foundation and possibility (Participant 7).



3. Results

3.1. Knowledge constructors

[Enterprises and factories] have been causing so much pollution by producing more production or doing more works so that they can do more transactions to get more money. For making money, they are selfish to care about their benefit (Participant 5).

[T]he government should deliver more policies about CSR because the attitude of government is one of the main drives of the Chinese CSR growth as many companies pay more attention about government's policies in China (Participant 4).



3. Results

3.2. Team builders

Strategy	Frequency
1. Using inclusive language	91
2. Set up team goals	4
3. Creating a team slogan	1
4. Introducing selves and calling team members by their name	26
5. Acknowledging and appreciating team contributions	19
6. Apologising	2



3. Results

3.2. Team builders

We will communicate with each other online to share new ideas, leading to create a **fantastic** group presentation (Participant 2).

Our team slogan is **Making amazing miracles forever** (Participant 3).



3. Results

3.3. Motivators

Strategy	Frequency
1. Inviting & eliciting contributions and views from team members	25
2. Using praising, encouraging language	12



3. Results

3.3. Motivators

Can we get something good from it when we do CSR?

I'd like you to provide me with more examples of bad CSR practices.

How **valuable** the question is you have asked.

Continue **refueling**!

You all have done **pretty well**.

I'm looking forward to your **fluent** speech on next Tuesday.



3. Results

3.4. Organisers

Strategy	Frequency
1. Introducing the discussion topic and sequencing discussion orders	6
2. Initiating new subtopics to move the discussion forward	12
3. Assigning additional tasks for the discussion	2
4. Summarising the discussion	3
5. Allocating tasks for the subsequent group oral presentation	8



3. Results

3.4. Organisers

As at today, we have said a lot of information about CSR. **Let me to make a summarize.** We talked lots of internal stakeholders (e.g. employees and their family members , shareholders and enterprise). And we also list many companies or organizations like Google, Nike , Lock&Lock and P&G to approve the benefits of CSR. We also said some bad of influence of CSR. **In a word I think we should talk something about the external stakeholders of CSR.** Just like we have already said the environment. Right? I am searching some information about the external stakeholders, **did you have some idea about the aspects of the external stakeholders?** (participant 1)



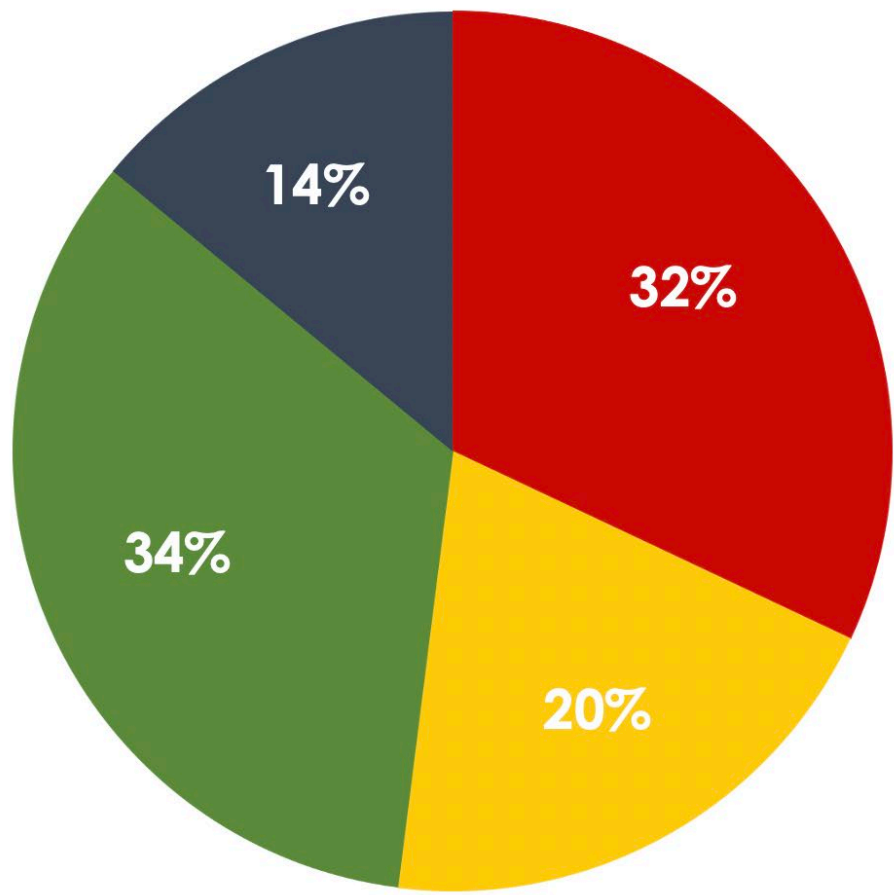
3. Results

3.4. Organisers

Yesterday we haven't got the chance to practice our PPT in class due to limited time. However, **we still need to spare some time practicing it and modifying our PPT. Could you please send me your reference links as soon as possible? Could you send your contents to Jiang at the same time as she will reference them to introduce us.** I'm looking forward to your fluent speech on Next Tuesday, but Do you agree with me?
(participant 2)



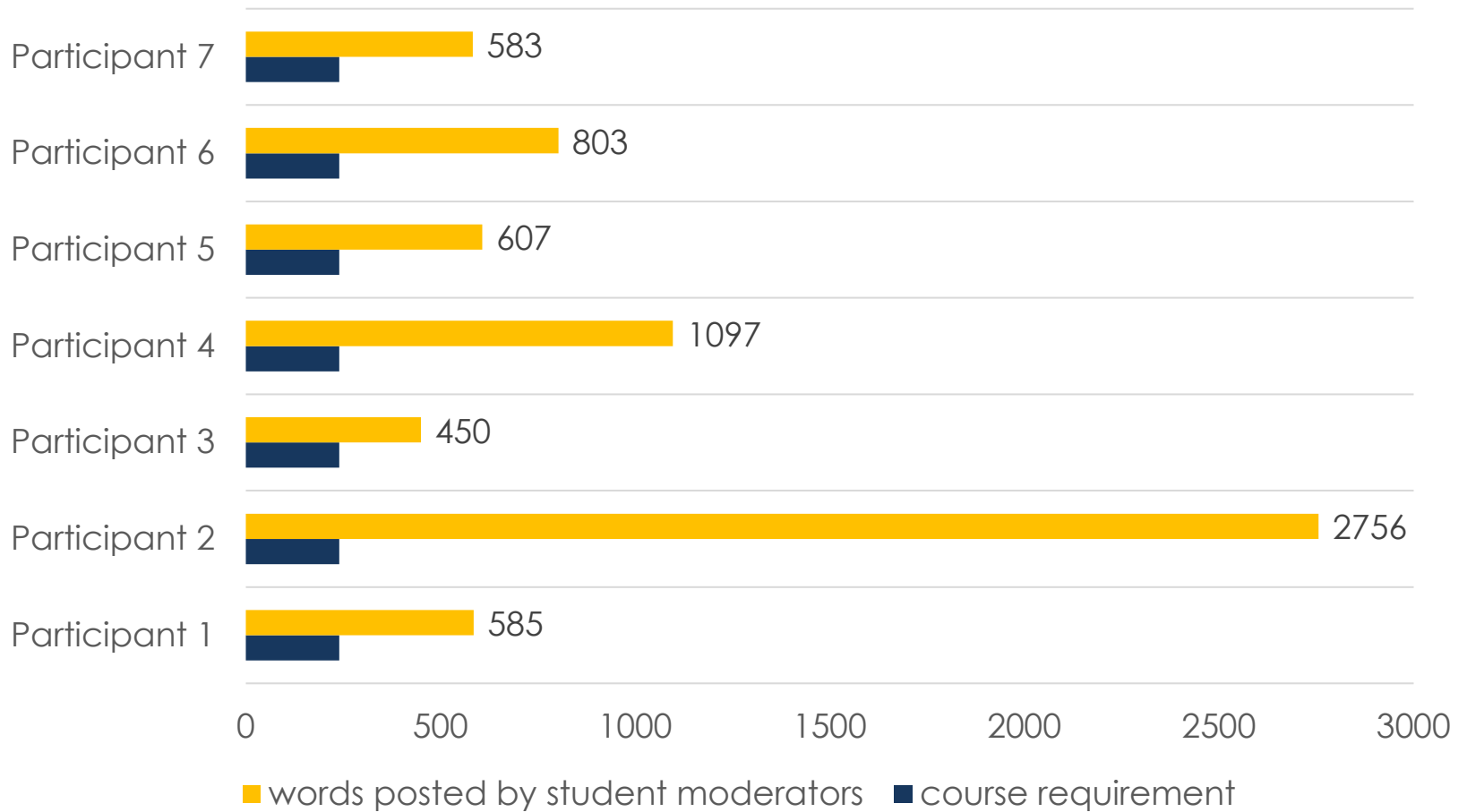
4. Discussion



■ Team builders ■ Motivators ■ Knowledge constructors ■ Organisers

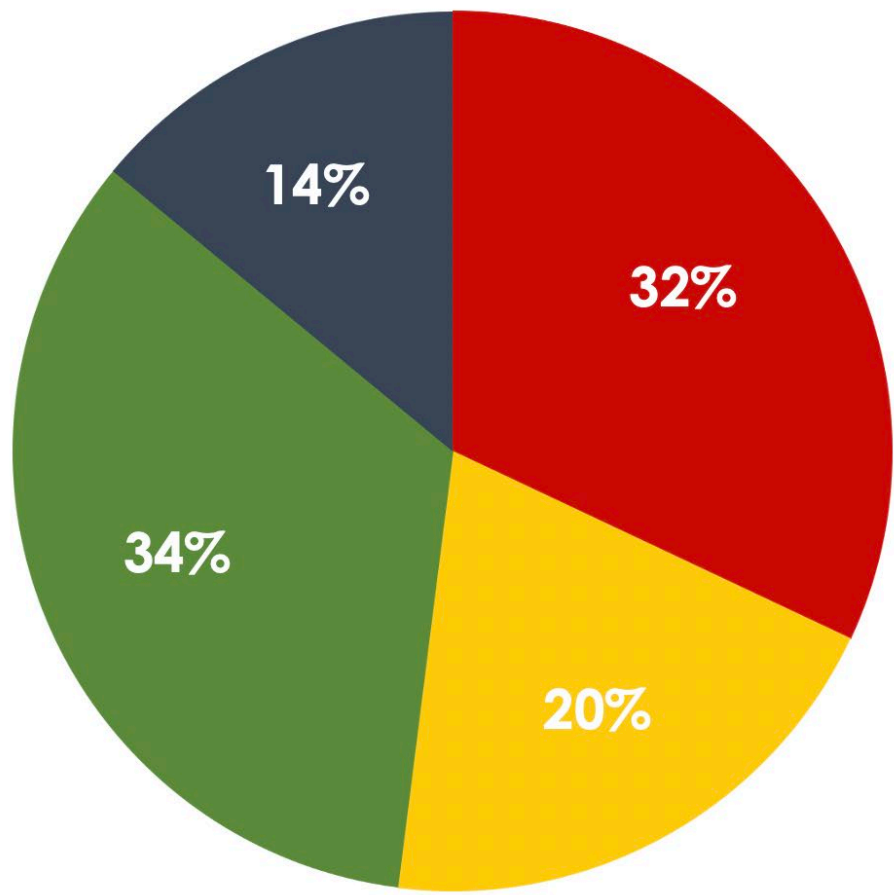


4. Discussion








4. Discussion



■ Team builders ■ Motivators ■ Knowledge constructors ■ Organisers





5. Conclusions & pedagogical implications

-  Student-led online discussions can be a viable and effective alternative even for L2 learners.
-  The allocation of facilitating roles can empower learners, particularly those learners who lack the confidence or skills to lead.
-  Every student to be given opportunities to take a leadership role in a discussion activity.



5. Conclusions & pedagogical implications

Factors to consider

-  Ways to assign a student facilitator
-  Possibility to train student facilitators and to organize trial facilitating sessions



ISSN 2185-3762

Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal
<http://sisaljournal.org>

Exploring the Roles and Facilitation Strategies of Online Peer Moderators

Qunyan Maggie Zhong, Unitec Institute of Technology,
Auckland, New Zealand

Howard Norton, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland,
New Zealand

Publication date: December, 2019

To cite this article

Zhong, Q. M., & Norton, H. (2019). Exploring the roles and facilitation strategies of online peer moderators. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, 10(4), 379-400.



References

- Barran, E., & Correia, A. P. (2009). Student-led facilitation strategies in online discussion. *Distance Education*, 30(3), 339-361.
- Belcher, A., Hall, B., Kelley, K., & Pressey, K. (2015). An analysis of faculty promotion of critical thinking and peer interaction within threaded discussions. *Online Learning*, 19 (4), 37–44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24059/olj.v19i4.544>
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.
- Buckley, F. (2011). Online discussion forums. *European Political Science*, 10(3), 402-415. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10-1057/eps.2010.76>
- Çelik, S. (2013). Unspoken social dynamics in an online discussion group: the disconnect between attitudes and overt behaviour of English language teaching graduate students. *Education Technology Research Development*, 61(4), 665–683. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11423-013-9288-3>
- Chang, H. H & Chuang, S. (2011). Social capital and individual motivations on knowledge sharing: Participant involvement as a moderator. *Information & Management* 48.1 (2011): 9-18.
- Chen, Y., Lei, J., & Cheng, J. (2019). What if online students take on the responsibility: students' cognitive presence and peer facilitation techniques. *Online Learning*, 23(1), 37-61.
- Cho, H. (2016). Under co-construction: An online community of practice for bilingual pre-service teachers. *Computers & Education*, 92, 76-89.
- Correia, A. P., & Baran, E. (2010). Lessons learned on facilitating asynchronous discussions for online learning. *Educacao, Formacao & Tecnologias*, 3(1), 59–67.
- Clarke, L. W., & Bartholomew, A. (2014). Digging beneath the surface: Analyzing the complexity of instructors' participation in asynchronous discussion. *Online Learning*, 18(3).
- Curry, J. H., & Cook, J. (2014). Facilitating online discussions at a manic pace: A new strategy for an old problem. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 15(3), 1-11.
- De Backer, L., Van Keer, H., & Valcke, M. (2012). Exploring the potential impact of reciprocal peer tutoring on higher education students' metacognitive knowledge and regulation. *Instructional Science*, 40(3), 559–588. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11251-011-9190-5>
- De Oliveira, L., & Olesova, L. (2013). Learning about the literacy development of English language learners in asynchronous online discussions. *Journal of Education*, 193(2), 15-23.



References

- De Smet, M., Van Keer, H., & Valcke, M. (2009). Cross-age peer tutors in asynchronous discussion groups: A study of the evolution in tutor support. *Instructional Science*, 37(1), 87-105. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11251-007-9037-2>
- Demmans Epp, C., Phirangee, K. & Hewitt, J. (2017). Student actions and community in online courses: The roles played by course length and facilitation method. *Online Learning*, 21(4), 53-77.
- Dzubinski, L. (2014). Teaching presence: Co-creating a multi-national online learning community in an asynchronous classroom. *Online Learning*, 18(2), 1-16.
- Hew, K. F. (2015). Student perceptions of peer versus instructor facilitation of asynchronous online discussions: Further findings from three cases. *Instructional Science*, 43(1), 19-38.
- Garrison, D. R., & Arbaugh, J. B. (2007). Researching the community of inquiry framework: Review, issues, and future directions. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 10, 157-172.
- Ghadirian, H., & Ayub, A. F. M. (2017). Peer moderation of asynchronous online discussions: An exploratory study of peer e-moderating behaviour. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(1), 1-18.
- Ghadirian, H., Salehi, K., & Ayub, A. F. M. (2018). Exploring the behavioural patterns of knowledge dimensions and cognitive processes in peer-moderated asynchronous online discussions. *International Journal of E-Learning & Distance Education*, 33(1), 1-28.
- Gilliland, B., Oyama, A. & Stacey, P. (2018). Second language writing in a Mooc: Affordances and missed opportunities. *TESL-EJ*, 22(1).
- Klisc, C., McGill, T., & Hobbs, V. (2012). The effect of instructor information provision on critical thinking in students using asynchronous online discussion. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 11(3), 247-266.
- Lai, K. (2015). Knowledge construction in online learning communities: a case study of a doctoral course. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(4), 561-579. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.831402>
- Loncar, M., Barrett, N. E., & Liu, G. (2014). Towards the refinement of forum and asynchronous online discussion in educational contexts worldwide: Trends and investigative approaches within a dominant research paradigm. *Computers & Education*, 73, 93-110.
- Lu, J., Yang, J., & Yu, C. (2013). Is social capital effective for online learning? *Information & Management*, 50, 507-522.
- Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Qualitative research methods*, Vol. 16. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Norton, H. (2014). *Digital storytelling in an L2 context, and its impact on student communication, engagement, and motivation*. Master of Education (unpublished Master thesis), The University of Waikato.



References

- Phirangee, K., Epp, C. D., & Hewitt, J. (2016). Exploring the relationships between facilitation methods, students' sense of community, and their online behaviours. *Online Learning Journal [OLJ]*, 20(2), 134-155.
- Reinders, H., & White, C. (2016). 20 years of autonomy and technology: How far have we come and where to next? *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(2), 143-154.
- Rourke, L., & Anderson, T. (2002). Using peer teams to lead online discussions. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1(1), 1-21.
- Salmon, G. (2000). *A model for CMC in education and training. E-moderating. The key to teaching and learning online*. London, UK: Kogan Page.
- Salmon, G. (2011). *E-moderating: The key to online teaching and learning* (3rd ed). New York: Routledge.
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing and Health*, 23, 334-340.
- Saqr, M., Fors, U., Tedre, M., & Nouri, J. (2018). How social network analysis can be used to monitor online collaborative learning and guide an informed intervention. *PloS One*, 13(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0194777>
- Smith, C. P. (2000). Content analysis and narrative analysis. In H. T. Reis & C. M. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (pp. 313-335). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Snyder, M. M., & Dringus, L. P. (2014). An exploration of metacognition in asynchronous student-led discussions: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 18(2), 29-47.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sull, E. C. (2009). The (Almost) complete guide to effectively managing threaded discussions. *Distance Learning*, 6(4), 65-70.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Xie, K., & Ke, F. (2011). The role of students' motivation in peer-moderated asynchronous online discussions. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 42(6), 916-930. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2010.01140.x>
- Xie, K., Yu, C., & Bradshaw, A. C. (2014). Impacts of role assignment and participation in asynchronous discussions in college-level online classes. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 20, 10-19. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2013.09.003>
- Xie, K., Lu, L., Cheng, S., & Izmirlı, S. (2017). The interactions between facilitator identity, conflictual presence, and social presence in peer-moderated online collaborative learning. *Distance Education*, 38(2), 230-244.



References

- Zha, S., & Ottendorfer, C. L. (2011). Effects of peer-led online asynchronous discussion on undergraduate students' cognitive achievement. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 25(4), 238-253.
- Zhong, Q. (2013). Understanding Chinese learners' willingness to communicate in a New Zealand ESL classroom: A multiple case study drawing on the theory of planned behaviour. *System*, 41(3): 740-751.
- Zhong, Q. and Norton, H. (2018). Educational affordances of an asynchronous online discussion forum for language learners. *TESL-EJ*, 22(3).
- Zingaro, D., & Oztok, M. (2012). Interaction in an asynchronous online course: A synthesis of quantitative predictors. *Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 16(4), 71-82.