

Collaborative Learning Patterns in Online Environments: Group Communication, Message Type, and Class Attendance

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The Virtual-University is a Web-based groupware designed to support collaborative learning. Several university courses were taught entirely online using the software. Transcript data, usage statistics, and interview with selected participants were used to collect information on patterns of online interaction and to investigate collaborative tasks in asynchronous mode.

Communication patterns among students and with the instructor are investigated in regard to frequency and type: how often student communicated, how often they accessed the online classroom and their group tasks, what type of messages they used to communicate: text only, text + hyperlinks, text + multimedia, text + hyperlinks + multimedia.

Transcript analysis supported by usage statistics provides a framework for understanding the functioning of the online classroom. Findings are triangulated with interviews with instructors and selected students.

This poster discusses the emerging patterns of interaction in online classrooms and identifies collaborative learning models used in three university courses in Business, Arts, and Applied Sciences.