

# Evaluating online activities in English Studies: group activity

Collection: Online teaching

Resource: The design of online activities in English Studies

## Approximate duration

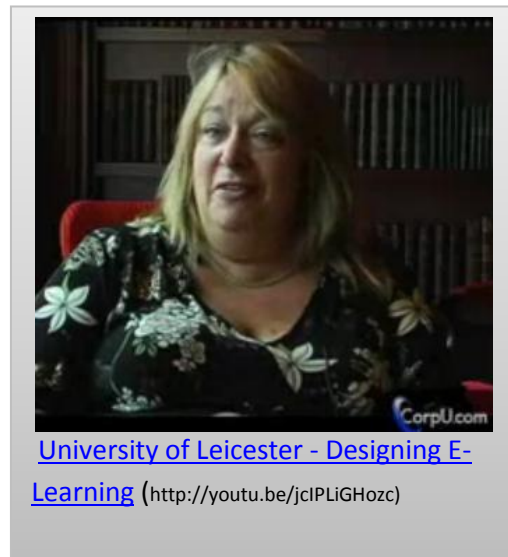
90 minutes

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity participants will be more aware of the types of online activities they might design for their students. They will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of an online activity by considering a range of criteria including fitness for context, assessment, learning outcomes, comprehension and clarity. Students should also gain a wider appreciation of the means by which online activities can be delivered (structure, presentation etc).

## Introduction

This exercise involves a fair bit of discussion in groups hence the room will need to have the ability to reconfigure easily. Each group will evaluate one online activity from a selection of 5 'exemplar' online activities in English studies. These activities have kindly been made available by colleagues in the English subject community. These resources have been chosen to stimulate discussion rather than be prescriptive templates.



In a three minute video clip (<http://youtu.be/jcIPLiGHozc> or see embedded clip below) Professor Gilly Salmon from the University of Leicester talks about why designing E-learning experiences is beneficial. You might find this video useful as an introduction to the activity.

Each group member requires at least one copy of their task. I also find it worthwhile to have a copy of each activity available to give the students at the end of the session - they always ask for them. Alternatively you could save paper and put them onto the VLE or shared document folder (e.g. [DropBox](#)) as a follow-up.

It may also be useful to have the Word documents displayed on a screen (with a data projector) or an Interactive whiteboard (if you are lucky enough to have one). Interactive whiteboards also allow groups to annotate the handouts directly whilst discussing aspects of the exercise in question with the whole class in the plenary session.

## The activity

1. Organise the class into groups of three (or another suitable configuration).
2. Distribute enough copies of **one** activity from the 'materials' section below to each group (make sure each group has a different online activity to evaluate).
3. Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson who will summarise the discussion and report back to the group as a whole.
4. Each group then reads their activity (5 minutes) then discusses the following:
  - What do you like or dislike about the activity? Consider its creativity, presentation and overall teaching concept.
  - Does the resource provide an opportunity to actively engage the student in the material?
  - Could you adapt and use this activity in your own classes?
  - Evaluate the potential quality of the resource as a student learning experience?
  - Does it include an appropriate form of evaluation or assessment?



**2 |** This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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- What is the benefit of doing an exercise like this online rather than in the classroom?
5. After about 20 minutes bring the groups back together and let each group report back with a brief overview of the online activity they looked at (in enough detail for all to understand) and a summary of their thoughts about the activity.

\*\* A variation on the task could be to regroup after the initial discussion to form three or four new groups with a representative of each of the activities. Groups then explain the activity and what their group thought about it to the other group members.

\*\* This activity might lead to another one in this section of The Pool: Designing learning with new media

## Materials for this activity

- [Example online activity 1: Session A - Wilde's Trials](#)  
This activity, developed by Rosie Miles, takes place in the online discussion forums of the Fin De Siècle Online Experience (FOE) at the University of Wolverhampton
- [Example online activity 2: Critical Diary \(Blog\) on Children's Literature](#)  
This blog activity, developed by Chris Ringrose, took place on the Children's Literature module at the University of Northampton
- [Example online activity 3: Pre-Raphaelite Image Collection](#)  
This activity, developed by Rosie Miles, is an online discussion forum activity that takes place on the Victorian Vision Online course at the University of Wolverhampton Teaching Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*
- [Example online activity 4: Finding and using early modern texts through subject keyword searches](#)  
This online exercise handout, developed by Matthew Steggle, is a worksheet that helps students to navigate the advanced search facilities within the [EEBO](#) (Early English Books Online) archive.
- [Example online activity 5: Editing Jonathan Swift's 'A Description of a City Shower' \(1710\) and 'Death and Daphne: To an Agreeable Young Lady, but Extremely Lean' \(1730\)](#)



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This wiki/reflective log task, developed by Peter Hinds, takes place on the Research Methods and Current Debates in Eighteenth Century Culture Course.

## Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 4:** The use of appropriate learning technologies

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

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## Resources in the Online teaching Collection

- Online teaching: introduction to the collection
- What are VLE's good for?: resource overview
  - What is a VLE and why use it?: group activity
  - What is a VLE and why use it?: individual activity
- The design of online activities in English Studies: resource overview
  - **Evaluating online activities in English Studies: group activity (\*you are here)**
  - Evaluating online activities in English Studies: individual activity
- Designing learning with new media: resource overview
  - Exploring new media and its potential in teaching: group activity



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- Exploring new media and its potential in teaching: individual activity
- Designing an online activity in English Studies: group activity
- Designing an online activity in English Studies: individual activity
- Teaching with digital archives: resource overview
  - Teaching with digital archives: group activity
  - Teaching with digital archives: individual activity
- Online discussion in English Studies: resource overview
  - Should online discussion be assessed?: group activity
  - Should online discussion be assessed?: individual activity
- Workshopping online: resource overview
  - Designing an online Creative Writing workshop: group activity
  - Designing an online Creative Writing workshop: individual activity



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