Planning an Online Discussion

The goal of this activity is to develop a plan for an online discussion based on the Zull reading. Imagine that this is the beginning of the semester and this is the first online activity you will be introducing to the class.

1. Read the passage below from Zull (2002).

2. As a group, decide which framework you will use to plan and design this first online discussion (refer to the Frameworks for Collaborative Online Discussions handout).

   The Learning Goal for the discussion is to:
   Extend and apply concepts and ideas introduced in course materials through real-world applications or further exploration / clarification of topics.

3. Anticipate students’ responses so you can develop targeted probing prompts/questions and successive prompts. Write prompts on the white butcher paper to share with the other tables. As you are developing these prompts, annotate them to indicate the purposes (pedagogical or communication) of the prompts.

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Emotion and Learning

We are born with the capacity for fear and pleasure, but not necessarily with knowledge of what to fear or what gives pleasure. We learn most of those things. Looking at learning emotions helps us see the connection between emotion and cognition.

   Think of sensory experience. We feel something that hurts, and that triggers the fear system. Or we feel something good, and that triggers the pleasure system. We only need to be burned once to fear heat, and we only need to taste sugar once to want it again. These tools for survival are also powerful learning tools. Learning what we should fear and what we should love is essential for survival.

   As with the fear and pleasure systems, our cognitive brain also learns what gets results. Success in thought generates understanding, and understanding allows survival. If we could not understand our world and plan for our future in it, we could not survive. It is not surprising then, that cognition also triggers our internal reward system. We enjoy real learning, and we want to learn. In order to survive we had to want to learn.