

- 1 • Outcome oriented task design
- 2 • Explicit Communicative Strategies
- 3 • Interactional scaffolding by the lecturer
- 4 • Clear expectations for student participation

Learning Outcome(s):

Students will:

1. Describe your proposed research topic
2. Discuss reasons for choosing the research topic
3. Introduce themselves to the Unit Coordinator and other students
Provide feedback to other students on their research topics

Task (authentic):

Students enrol in *RSCH20001 Fundamentals of Research* to help them prepare for their Confirmation of Candidature (CoC) which is the first milestone in their Research Higher Degree. The suite of four assessment items are scaffolded to build on each other until the final assessment which is equivalent to Section A of the CoC submission.

This first assessment task provides background information to the Unit Coordinator. Students will upload their first assessment into the Discussion Forum as a way of introducing themselves to each other. All students in this unit are Distance students and many do not know any other RHD students. The objective is to get the students to comment on each other's proposed research projects to build engagement among the students. This is something that would happen naturally if all RHD students shared the same workspace.

The students are encouraged to make comments and provide feedback on each other's assessment task.

What is the 'controversial' element, issue, problem to solve?

Providing a forum for RHD students located across the country to form bonds with other RHD students who are at a similar stage of their enrolment. It is hoped that forming these relationships will reduce the loneliness that new students sometimes face when embarking on their RHD.

Anticipate / prepare for when you expect students will need steering ...

Guidance as to how to provide constructive feedback to other students. Helping the shy students to feel confident about commenting on other students' work.

What communicative strategies will students be using?

- Naming
- Acknowledging
- Re-stating
- Extending on ideas

Explicit instructions for student participation:

Assessment 1 - Preliminary research topic: is due on the Friday of week 2. It requires you to fill out a proforma which will provide me with information about your enrolment, your supervisors and your proposed research topic. Though this is a brief assessment (< 2 pages) I would still expect you to send it to your supervisors for their feedback and for you to engage with their feedback BEFORE you submit it for marking.

I will also be requiring you to post some of this information onto the Q&A Forum as a way to introduce yourself to the other students in the course. More information about this will be sent in Week 2.

When making comments and suggestions on other people's work please use the following communication strategies:

- Address the person(s) you are responding to by name(s).
- Acknowledge what they have written in some way by complimenting (e.g. something that has impressed you, such as an idea, an experience, etc); or supporting / agreeing with something they have written.
- Re-stating: this is to rephrase, clarify or refine an idea which may also reflect your perspective.

Planning for participation: Your own? How will you organise discussion structure to suit your class?

Posting messages on Moodle News Forum to encourage students to read and comment on other students' assessment.

After task has been submitted pick out some of the relevant comments and suggestions and post them on the News Forum and write about my perspective of those comments.

Make constructive suggestions for how to improve the on-line discussions for the next task.