



# How (not) to construct ALN course questions that encourage student participation in peer collaboration and knowledge construction

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... but questions are questions, surely - *what is different about online settings ?*

- 1 raised hand = 20 emails
- Negotiating the meaning of question may take several iterations
- Physical isolation leads to inertia (lurking) – need peer thought leaders to generate momentum
- Greater potential for reflection and deeper debate over a longer time period, lets exploit that



# Know your cohort

- Domain knowledge (Achilles tendon)
- Need to identify thought-leaders
  - Facilitation, moderation, reconciliation
  - Challenging
  - Social facilitation
- Balance between democratic debate, clique behavior and tumbleweeds
- Identification with group aims and behavior

# Good , bad or average ?

Question	Good	Average	Bad
How do we plan to use IS, taking into account business pressures, organizational responses and supporting critical response activities? What are the most critical things to consider, in planning for IS? What issues and elements have caused you problems, because you failed to anticipate them? When discussing this, think especially on the distinction that I made between IT systems and Information Systems.			
Read: Carr, N. , 'IT Doesn't Matter' & Champy, J. 'Technology Doesn't Matter - but Only at Harvard' - I'd like your own insights and (informed) opinions about whether IT does matter.			
What type of Travel Industry firms do you think will survive, and which will dominate the travel industry in years to come? Why?. If you ran a travel agency, what would be your critical success factors for the future and how would you use IS to support these?			
Read: Peter Drucker: "The Next Information Revolution" and "Beyond The Information Revolution." I'd like to hear from you about: (i) what do you think are the main points that Peter Drucker is making and do you think he is right? (ii) Do you have any IS-related examples of these phenomena, from your own experience?			
How do we manage the chicken-and-egg situation of changing business processes vs. changing IS use?			
What are the technical problems of integrating information services and IT systems and can a corporate information or data portal solve some of these problems?			

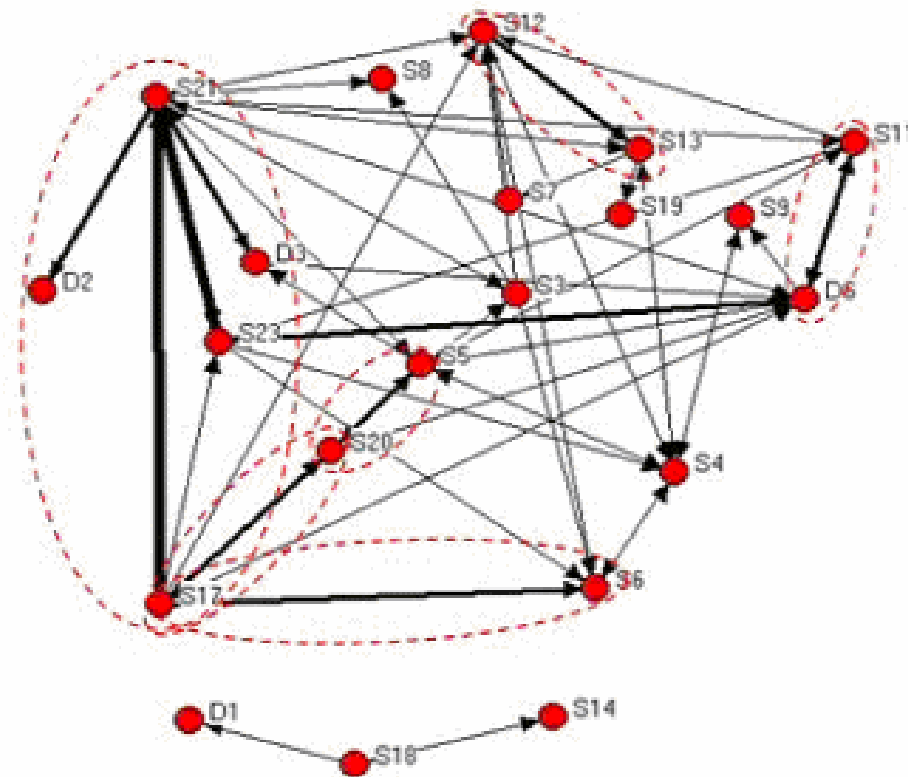
# Good , bad or average II

Question	Good	Average	Bad
How do we plan to use IS, taking into account business pressures, organizational responses and supporting critical response activities? What are the most critical things to consider, in planning for IS? What issues and elements have caused you problems, because you failed to anticipate them? When discussing this, think especially on the distinction that I made between IT systems and Information Systems.			X
Read: Carr, N. , 'IT Doesn't Matter' & Champy, J. 'Technology Doesn't Matter - but Only at Harvard' - I'd like your own insights and (informed) opinions about whether IT does matter.	X		
What type of Travel Industry firms do you think will survive, and which will dominate the travel industry in years to come? Why?. If you ran a travel agency, what would be your critical success factors for the future and how would you use IS to support these?		X	
Read: Peter Drucker: "The Next Information Revolution" and "Beyond The Information Revolution." I'd like to hear from you about: (i) what do you think are the main points that Peter Drucker is making and do you think he is right? (ii) Do you have any IS-related examples of these phenomena, from your own experience?	X		
How do we manage the chicken-and-egg situation of changing business processes vs. changing IS use?		X	
What are the technical problems of integrating information services and IT systems and can a corporate information or data portal solve some of these problems?			X



# Good Question

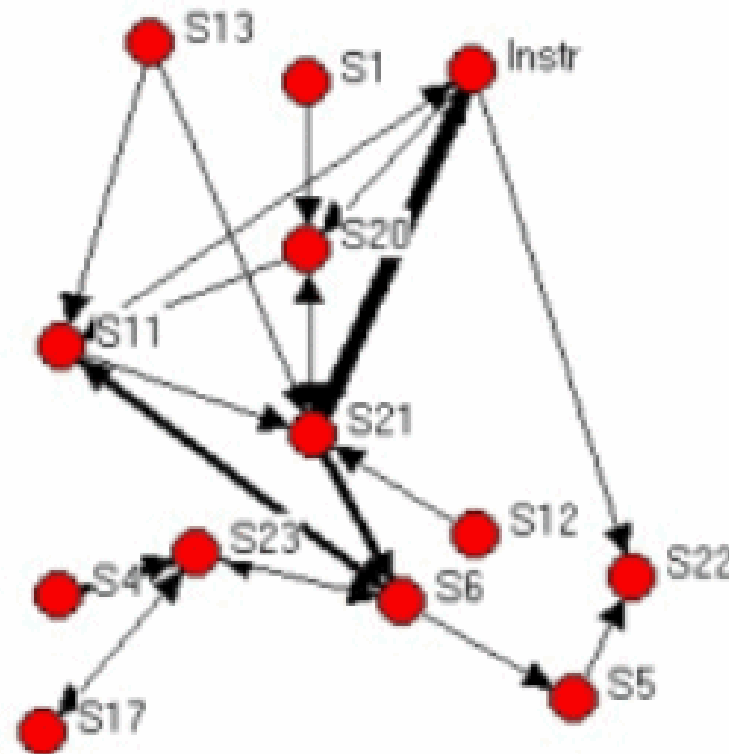
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Posts 108, Posters 21, No of sub-threads 13, Week 1: Question 1

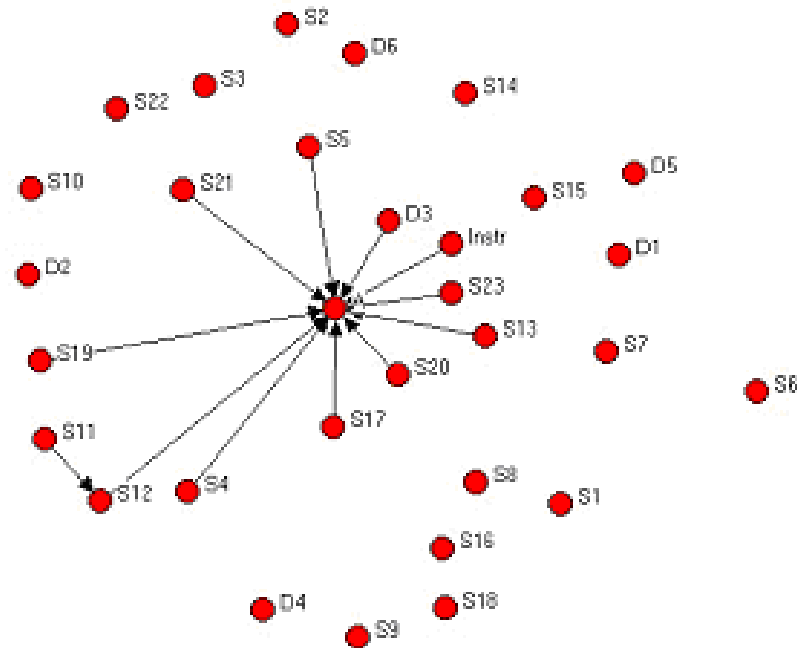
# Average Question

What type of Travel Industry firms do you think will survive, and which will dominate the travel industry in years to come? Why?. If you ran a travel agency, what would be your critical success factors for the future and how would you use IS to support these?



# Bad Question

How do we plan to use IS, taking into account business pressures, organizational responses and supporting critical response activities? What are the most critical things to consider, in planning for IS? What issues and elements have caused you problems, because you failed to anticipate them? When discussing this, think especially on the distinction that I made between IT systems and Information Systems.





# Good questions tended to be

- First question in the week
- Early weeks better than later weeks
- Open questions but bounded
- Permitted students to call upon their personal experience with IT or organizations
- Permitted many ways to approach the issues.

# Bad questions tended to be

- Following a highly-interactive question
- Cognitively complex (containing multiple parts that needed to be considered in turn),
- Overly abstract, so students could not draw on their personal experience.
- Questions set in later weeks were much less interactive and constructive across the class than questions set in earlier weeks.

# A Checklist For Question Design

1. Does the question structure relate clearly to course content (explicit knowledge domain learning goals as perceived by students) - i.e. what do they think they are there to learn?
2. Does the question knowledge domain relate clearly to students' professional interests - i.e. does answering this question move them nearer to accomplishing their career/job goal?
3. Does the question knowledge domain draw on either (a) students' prior experience, or (b) students' vicarious experience (communicated through course readings or discussion) - i.e. do students have the expertise or experience to answer the question?
4. Does the question structure reflect a single knowledge domain, with a single problem-solving goal - i.e. is there a single problem to be solved (or a set of aligned/incremental sub-problems relating to a single knowledge domain), or have you presented students with multiple, incompatible problems or knowledge domains to reconcile?

# Conclusions

- Try and draw on the cohort's experience
- Identify student learning objectives and interests
- Identify thought leaders early in the course and encourage these to participate heavily in later weeks
- Set questions that are open but bounded
- Provide strong background material for students to read
- Intervene when necessary - but keep watching the skies
- Be prepared to change the question if it is failing to engage students
  - *students, like politicians may often change the question themselves ...* 😊