

Using Asynchronous Communication To Support Virtual Faculty Learning Communities



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Context: NFW & FOLC

Faculty Online Learning Community (FOLC)

- Virtual community with participants from the Workshop for New Physics and Astronomy Faculty (NFW)
- **Goal:** support NFW participants to become better teachers
- One year of virtual meetings and communication via a Facebook-like platform (Socialcast)

Challenge: It is difficult to create vibrant virtual communities.

Based on **Socialcast interactions**, how well did we succeed and what contributed to that success?

What is Socialcast?

Facebook-like communications platform for communication between FOLC meetings

- Accessible only to FOLC cohort and facilitator
- Users could create posts, comment on posts, and “like” posts
- Users could also upload files or link to external resources

Who is the FOLC cohort?

First full-year FOLC cohort (AY 2015—2016)

9 participants

- 4 women, 5 men
- All had ≤ 5 years of teaching experience
- All untenured
- Wide variety of institutions
 - 3 public, 6 private
 - 2 Ph.D., 2 Master's, 4 Bachelor's, 1 Bachelor's/Associate's
 - 700 to 36,000 students

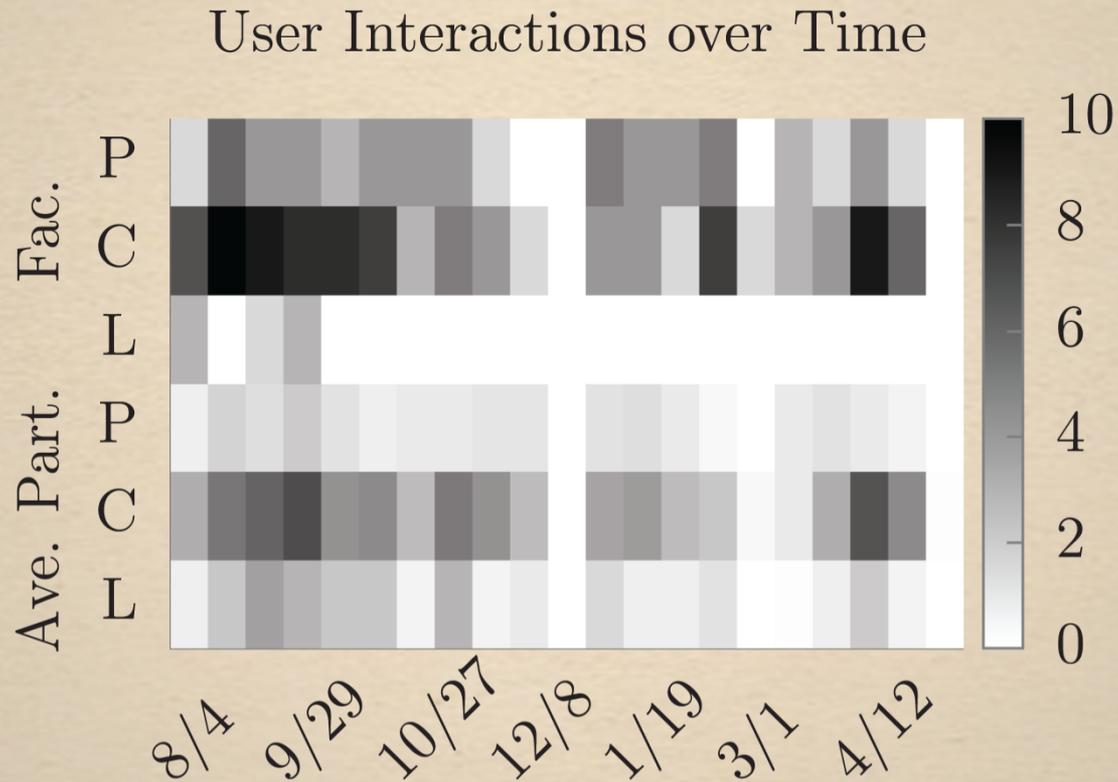
Data and Analysis

Analyzed all of the posts, comments, and likes from this cohort. Posts and comments coding scheme:

Question (Q)	Explicit or implicit question (not rhetorical).
Answer (A)	Directly answering a question.
Meta (M)	Discussing the operation of the FOLC.
Status (S)	Updating on what a participant is doing or planning to do.
Concern (C)	Expressing a concern or vulnerability about themselves or their teaching.
Reflection (R)	Reflecting on teaching, interpreting behavior, articulating assumptions, etc.
Share (Sh)	Sharing experiences, opinions, observations, advice, or a resource.
Information (I)	Sharing or referencing information or resources from an outside source.
Collaborate (Col)	Collaborating on a teaching project.
Social (Soc)	Empathy, emotional support, affirmation, humor, etc.

Results

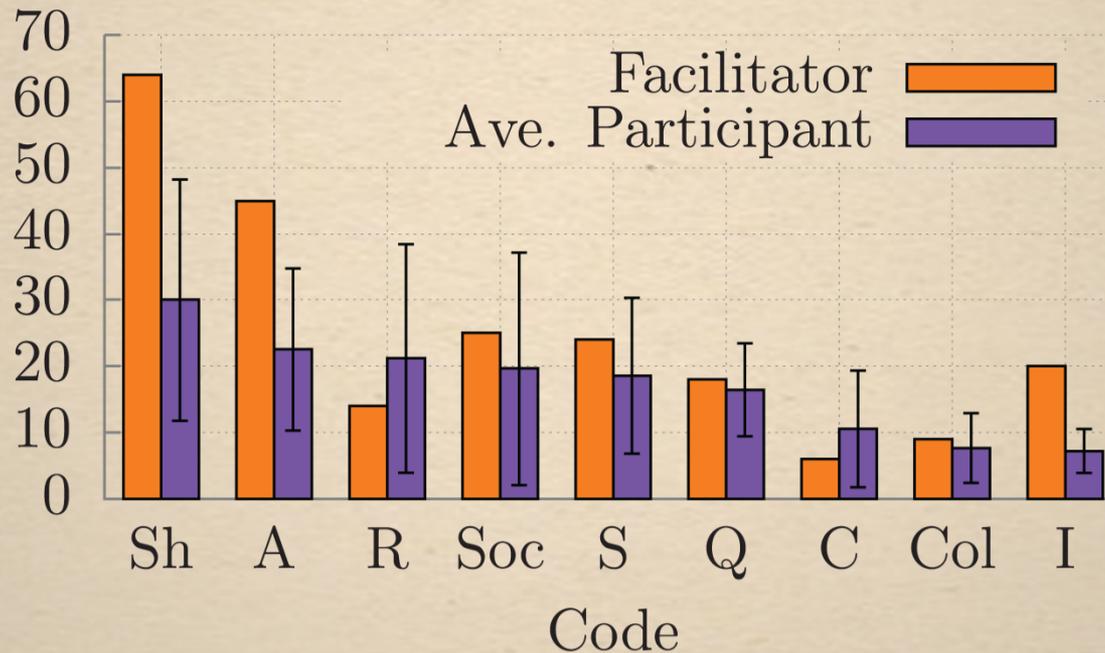
Participants used Socialcast consistently.



Results

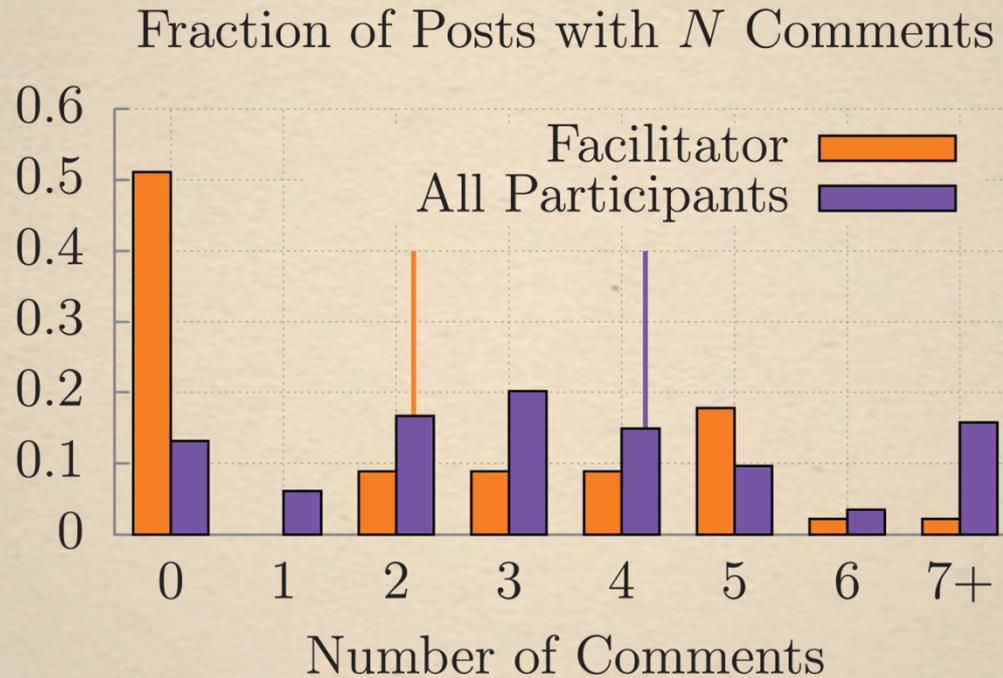
Participants asked for help (Q, C, and R), offered help (A, Sh, and I), and made social connections (Soc).

Code Prevalence in Posts and Comments



Results

Participants prioritized **supporting each other**.



Questions?

Come find me at my PERC poster: **#12, Poster session 3**
(9:45-10:30, Thursday morning)

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