

# Best Practices in Online Course Design

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# Agenda

- I. Creating the Course Environment
- II. Online Assessment
- III. Learner Engagement
- IV. Additional Considerations

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## **I. Creating the Course Environment**

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# Learner-Centered Design



*Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.*

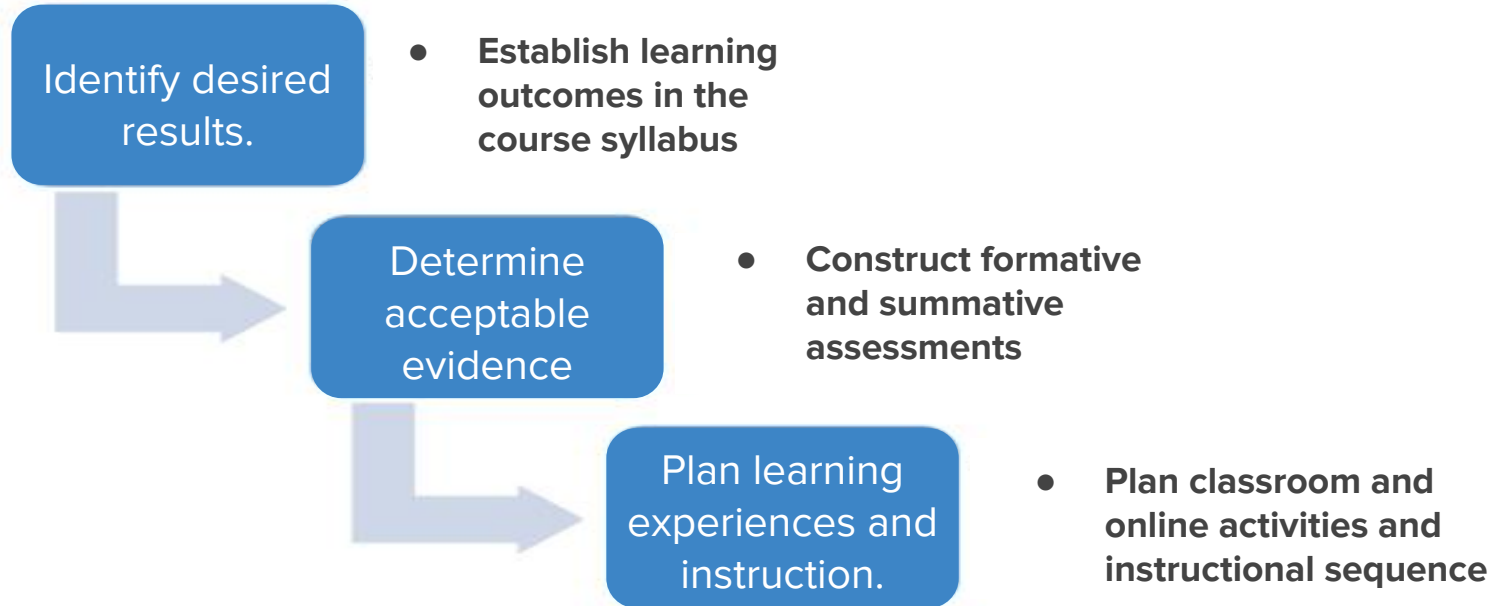
**- Abigail Adams**



*Learning results from what the student does and thinks, and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing the student to learn.*

**- Herbert Simon**

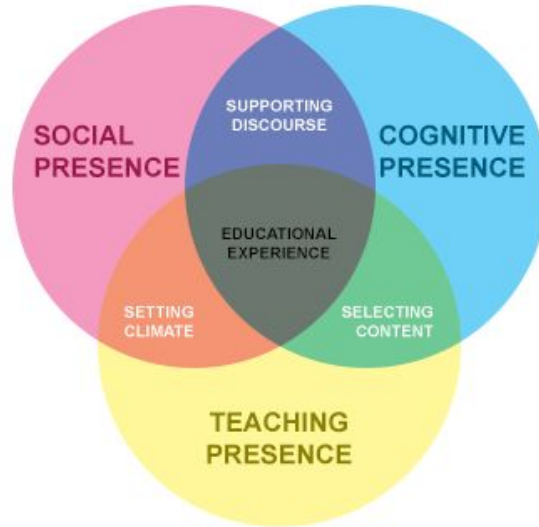
# Backwards Design



# Community of Inquiry Framework

## Social Presence

- **Personal expression** of emotions and authentic self.
- **Open communication** to develop shared social identity
- **Group cohesion** that fosters a sense of collaboration



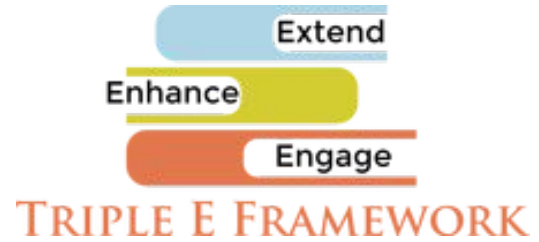
## Cognitive Presence

- **Enables and empowers students** to construct meaning and confirm knowledge of the material
- Employs **discourse and discovery** along with reflection
- Shaping of the **learning journey**

## Teaching Presence

- **Design and administration** of the learning ecosystem
- **Facilitation strategies** employed to engage and guide students in discourse and discovery
- **Direct instruction** through feedback, scaffolding, differentiation and content delivery

# Technology Integration



The Triple E is a practical framework that measures the degree to which the technology in a lesson is helping students meet the learning goals.

- Focus on learning goals, not specific technology tools
- Draws on educational research from the past two decades
- Reliable and valid framework verified through research base
- Focus on K-12 learning environment, provides a model for students

# Engage



**The technology tool helps students engage in the learning goals.**

- Does the technology allow students to **focus on the task** of the assignment or activity with less distraction (Time on Task)?
- Does the technology **motivate students** to start the learning process?
- Does the technology cause a **shift in the behavior** of the students, where they move from passive to active social learners (co-use or co-engagement)?



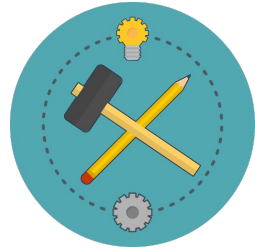
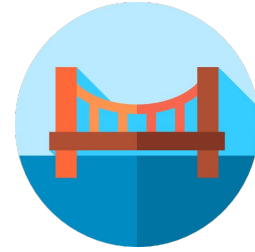
# Enhance



**Technology tools somehow aid, assist, or scaffold learning in a way that could not easily be done with traditional methods.**

- Does the technology tool aid students in developing or demonstrating a more **sophisticated understanding of the content**?
- Does the technology **create scaffolds** to make it easier to understand concepts or ideas?
- Does the technology **create paths for students** to demonstrate their understanding of the learning goals in a way that they could not do with traditional tools?

# Extend



**Technology can somehow aid or enhance the ability to create real-world connections.**

- Does the technology **create opportunities for students** to learn outside of their typical school day?
- Does the technology **create a bridge** between school learning and everyday life experiences?
- Does the technology allow students to **build skills**, that they can use in their everyday lives?

# Setting the Course Climate

- Determine your priorities
- Set clear expectations
- Recognize different abilities with online learning
- Create opportunities to engage socially
- Model the engagement you would like from your students








# Transitioning to online learning

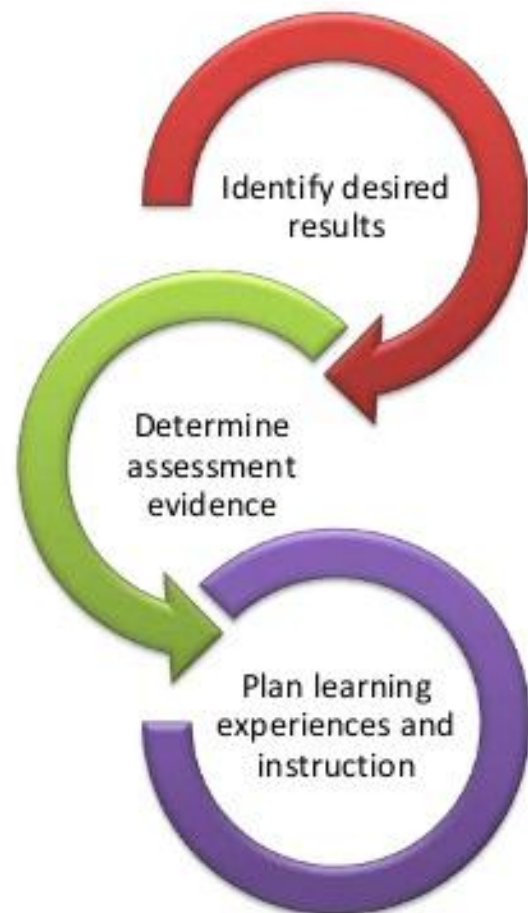
- Consistency
- Clarity
- Communication
- One tool at a time
- Responding to the needs of multigenerational learners



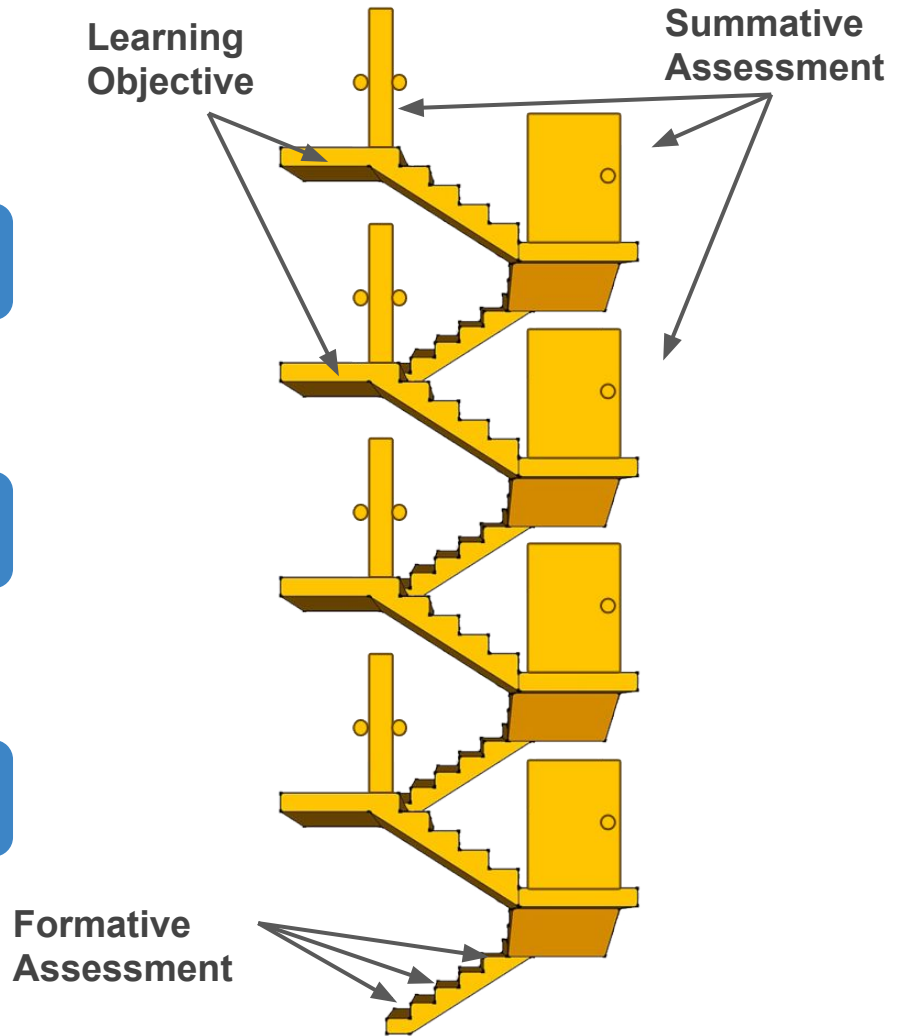
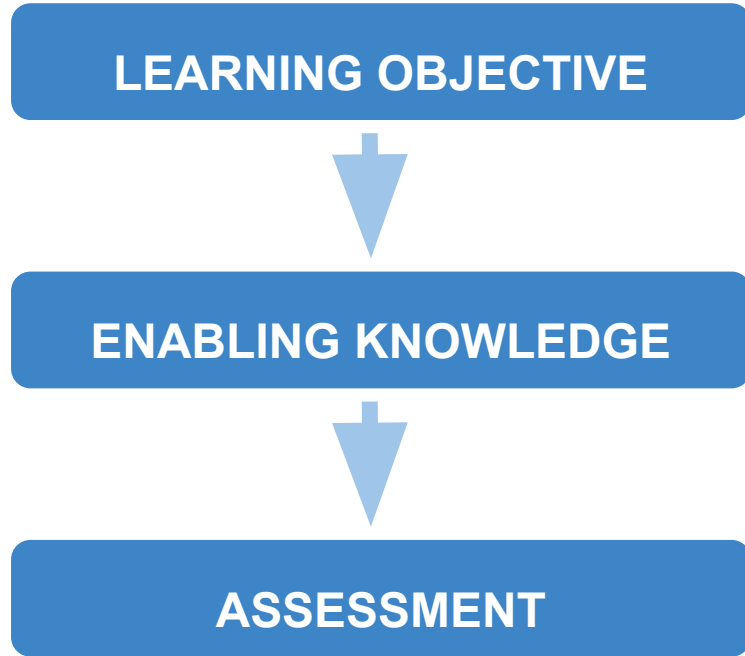
# CREATING AN ONLINE MODULE

-  **1** Write the Learning Outcomes
-  **2** Create the Assessments
-  **3** Create or curate Learning Materials & Activities
-  **4** Sequence the materials & activities to create A Learning Experience
-  **5** Write the Instructions for Students

## NEXT STEPS



# Scaffolding



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# Purpose of Assessment

## Diagnostic purposes

- Checking prior knowledge and learning styles
- Set expectations for learning opportunities

FOR

## Formative purposes

- To give students evidence to self-monitor and self-direct their learning
- For instructors to monitor students' progress/ learning and adjust teaching strategy

OF

## Summative purposes

- To evaluate/assign grades to students
- To evaluate instructor, course, curricular effectiveness



# Approaches to Diagnostic Assessments

- Shows students that you are **invested in their success** from day one
- Teaches students **where they are at**, not where you think they should be
- Provides the insight to differentiate to **meet students' goals**
- Establishes a marker to **compare with later progress**
- Helps to **match students into groups** with complementary skills/needs

# Examples of Diagnostic Assessments



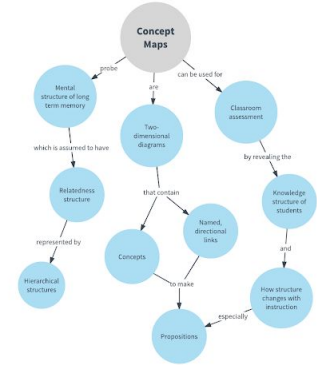
Online Poll



Survey



Discussion  
Observation



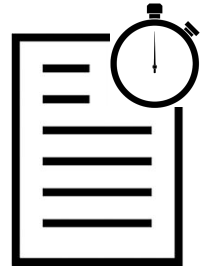
Concept Map

# Approaches to Formative Assessments

- Students **reinvest and take ownership** of their learning
- Gives students an **outlet for their concerns**
- Allows instructor to **implement meaningful changes immediately**
- Gives students an opportunity to **reflect on their learning**
- Instructor provides **critical and timely feedback**

# Types of Formative Assessments

- Discussion Board Questions
- Minute Paper
- Polls
- Low stakes quizzes
- Group projects
- Online exit tickets



# Approaches to Summative Assessments

- **Emphasize progress** rather than grades
- Give students an opportunity to **reflect on their results**
- Use assessment **as** learning

# Types of Summative Assessments

- Chapter tests, mid-term and final exams
- Creative projects and papers (video projects, screencast presentations, final papers)
- ePortfolio



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# What does each week look like?

- Adjust your syllabi and your classroom model
- Think about student schedule and availability
- If teaching asynchronously, what does your online week look like?
- If teaching synchronously, what does the structure of your synch meeting look like? (attendance, content, group work, etc.)
- What does your participation online look like? (Communicate this to students!)



# Other things to think about:

- Rubrics for discussion board postings
- Ground rules for synchronous sessions
- Structure for student participation online
- Instructor engagement
- Opportunities for reflection



# Focus on Multisensory Online Learning

- Each week, does your class have an audio, visual, and kinesthetic component?
- How can you combine tools to create a multisensory environment?
- Use of screencasts
- UDL/Accessible instruction



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- Additional ways students can contact you?
- What do office hours look like? (span of time using zoom or google meet? By appointment?)

# ADA Section 508 Compliance

- Ensure that all of your students have equitable access to content
- Check documents to make sure they comply with best practices
- Use video captions where appropriate
- Add alt text to all images
- Look for available online resources



What really matters  
is what you do with  
what you have.

**H.G. Wells**

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