

How to Engage Struggling/Difficult Online Learners

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Objectives

- Identify the characteristics of struggling and difficult online learners.
- Describe challenges faced by students from different learning groups.
- Discuss strategies to increase engagement in online learners.

For this webinar, please....

- Mute microphone
- Hold all questions and comments until the end



Characteristics

8 Characteristics of Successful University Students

Self-Belief

Personal Responsibility

Emotional Maturity

Motivating Purpose

Life-Long Learners

Effective Actions

Heightened Self-Awareness

Mutually Supportive Relationships

Successful vs Struggling Students

Successful Students	Struggling Students
Accept personal responsibility	What happens is beyond their control
Meaningful goals and dreams	Difficulty choosing a purpose
Plan and take action to achieve goals and dreams	Difficulty sustaining motivation; procrastinate
Build mutually supportive relationships	Seldom request assistance
Develop empowering beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors	Disempowering life scripts
Life-long learners	View learning as boring; resist new ideas and skills
Emotional maturity	Success hijacked by emotions
Belief in themselves; worthy	Doubt personal value

From the Literature.....

- Aziz, Mahboob, Sethi (2020)
 - Psychological distress
 - Time management
 - Family commitments, distractions, lack of attention
 - Impact on Academics
 - Demotivated
 - Loss of focus
 - Poor academic performance

From the Literature, continued

- Lower SES, English as second language, lower academic grades, “failure to fail” ¹
- Stress; emotional and psychological trauma ²
 - Cognitive and behavioral manifestations of work avoidance
 - Learned helplessness
 - Low self-efficacy

¹ As cited in Davenport, R., Hewart, S., Ferguson, A., McAllister, S., and Lincoln, M. *Struggle and failure on clinical placement: A critical narrative review*. *Int J Lang Commun Disord*. 2018;53(2): 218-22a

² Bohannon, L., Clapsaddle, S., McCollum, D. *Responding to college students who exhibit adverse manifestations of stress and trauma in the college classroom*. *Forum for International Research in Education*. 2019; 5(2): 66-78

³ As cited in Lehan, T. and Babcock, A. *Early intervention for struggling online graduate students: Processes and short-term outcomes*. *The Learning Assistance Review*, 2020; 25(2): 111-132

From the Literature, continued

- Online, working adults ³
 - More responsibilities
 - Single parents
 - Less prepared for success in higher ed

¹ As cited in Davenport, R., Hewart, S., Ferguson, A., McAllister, S., and Lincoln, M. *Struggle and failure on clinical placement: A critical narrative review*. Int J Lang Commun Disord. 2018;53(2): 218-22a

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Why Students Struggle

- Many commitments (family, work, school)
- Lack time management and organization skills
 - Procrastination
- Lack good study skills/habits
- Do not ask questions when unclear/confused
- Underprepared (writing, math, critical thinking)
- Communication skills
- Unrealistic expectations
- What else can we add to the list?



Challenges in Learning Groups

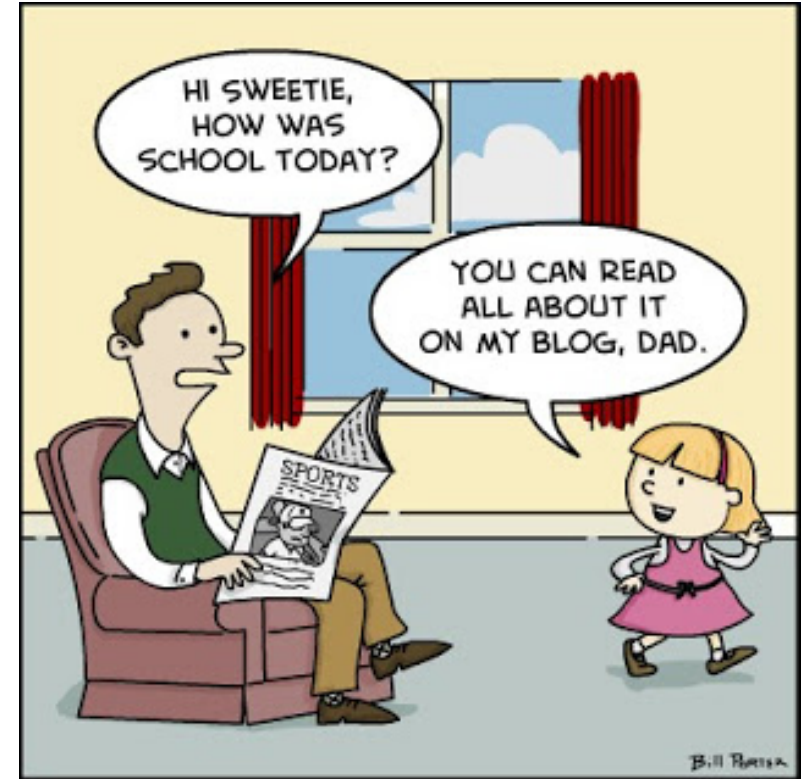
Baby Boomers (Knight, 2016)

- Born mid-1940's to early 1960's
- Strong work ethic and loyalty
- Invested in educational advancement
- Learn best in small group
- Draw from life experiences



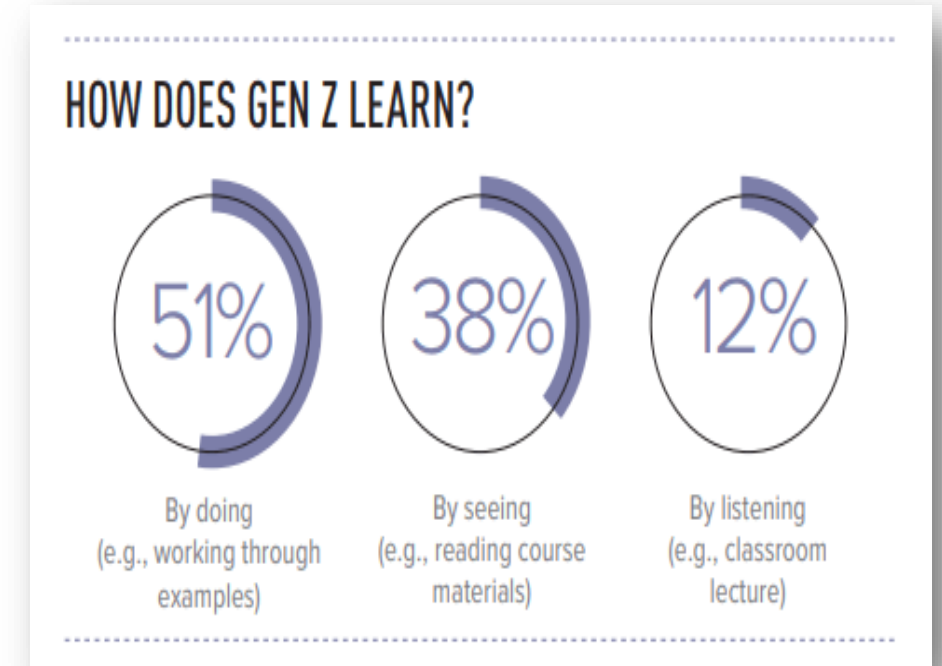
Generation X (Knight, 2016).

- Born late 1960's to mid- 1980's
- Raised by Baby boomer generation
- Most independent of the generations
- Comfortable working alone and with technology
- Want to learn in the easiest and quickest way
- Enjoy information presented in straightforward ways
- Judgmental and cliquish
- Like to question policies and projects, reject rules



Generation Z's (Sriprom et al., 2019)

- Born late 1990's to mid- 2010's
- Digital and global, e-connected
- Limited attention span-need immediate gratification
- Multi-task but focused on lifestyle of social media influences
- Work individually- faster in processing information
- Lack skills in face-to-face communication
- Poor writing skills-like abbreviations
- Slightly disobedient but faithful to friends
- Thoughtful towards social issues
- Agreeable, open-minded to differences



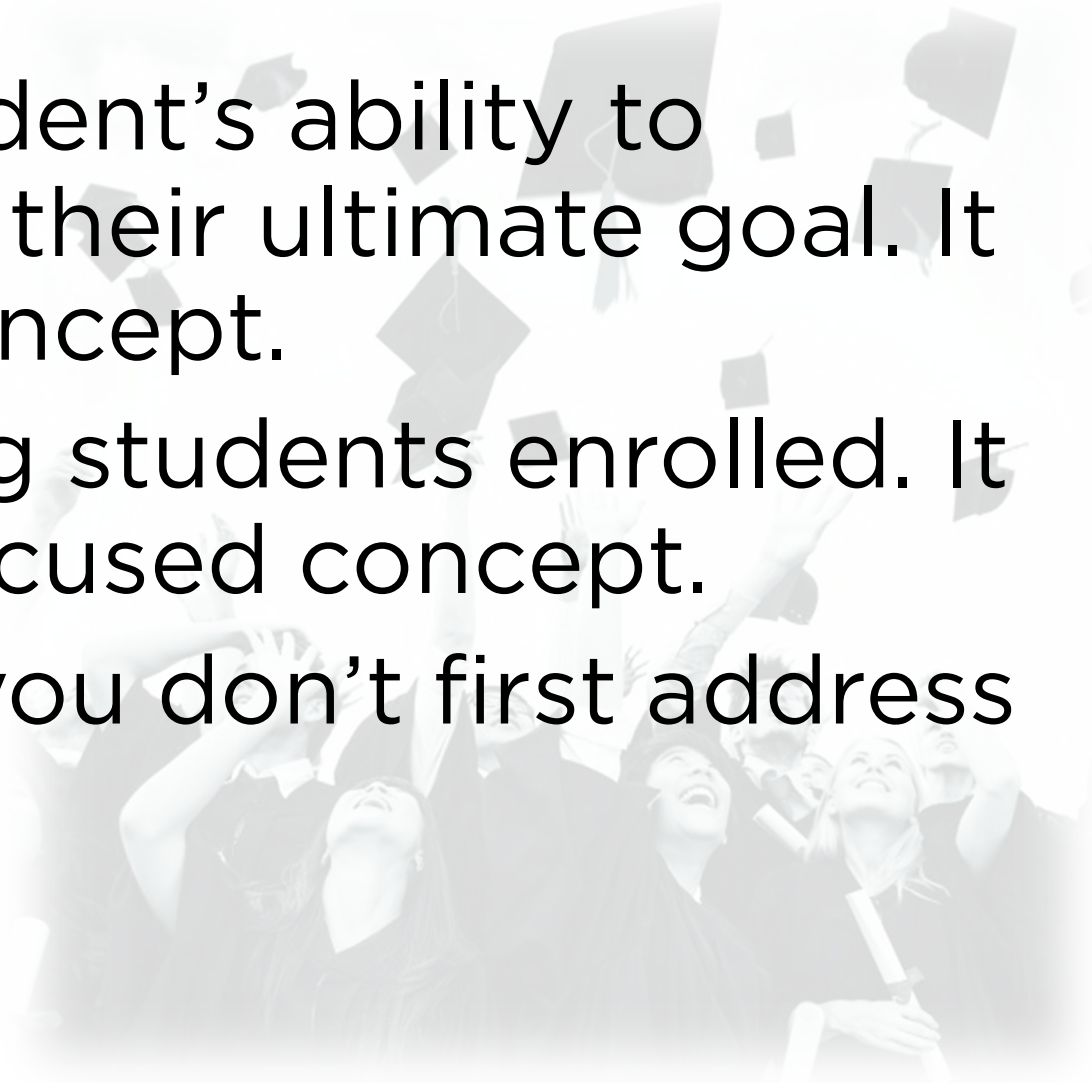


Strategies

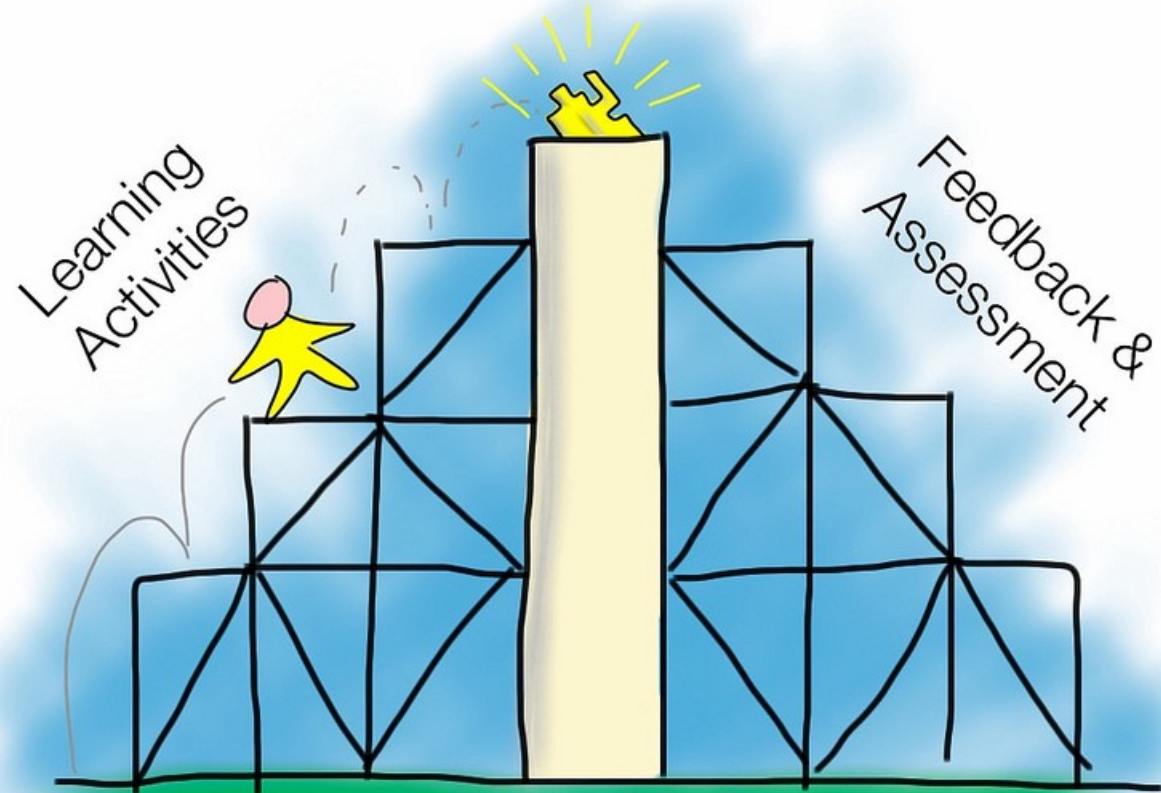
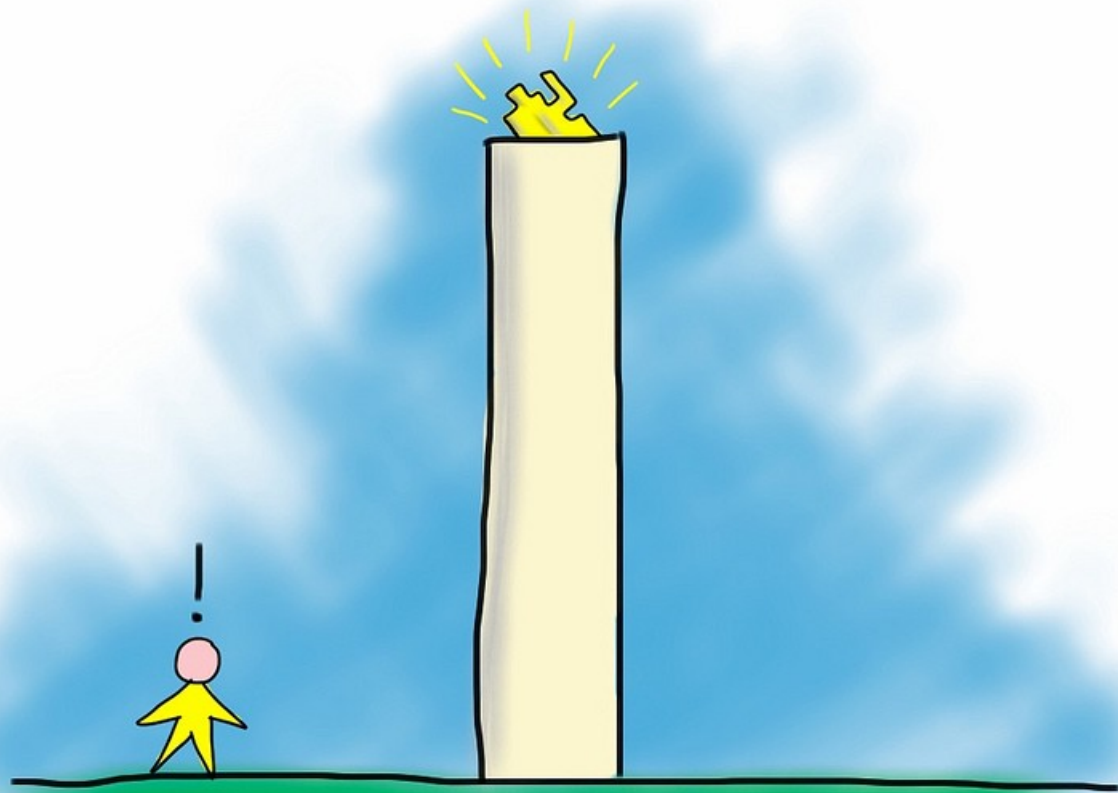
Poll Question

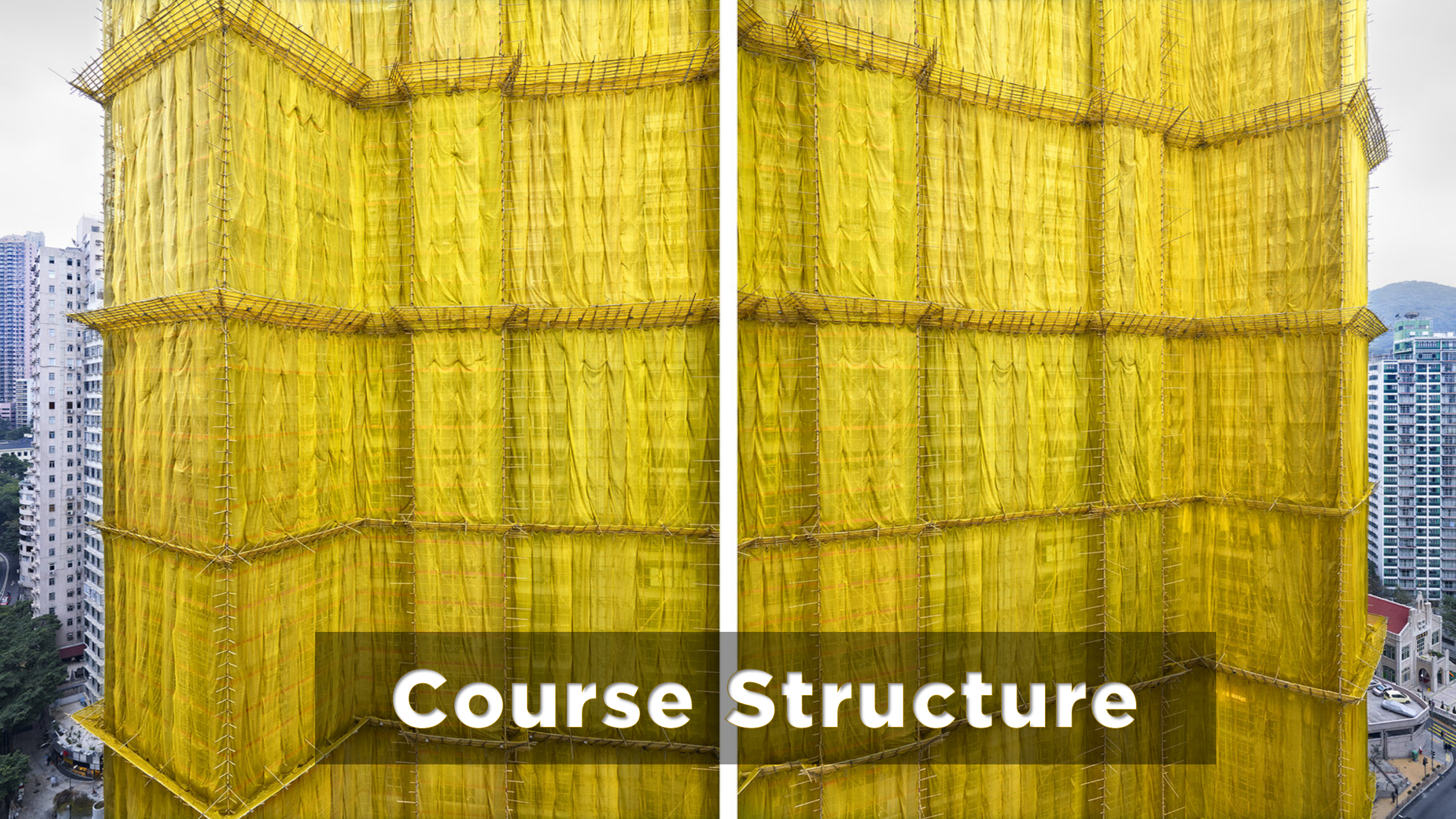
Persistence and Retention

- **Persistence** refers to a student's ability to continue over time toward their ultimate goal. It is an individual-focused concept.
- **Retention** refers to keeping students enrolled. It is more of an institution-focused concept.
- Can't address retention if you don't first address persistence.



Learning Outcome





Course Structure

Course Structure

- Organize from student's point of view
- Consistency
- Ease of use
- Provide a module/unit roadmap

Course Structure

- Clear expectations!
 - Here's what we're covering
 - Here's why it's important
 - Here's what you need to read/view
 - Here are the activities you need to engage in
 - Here's how you are being assessed
- Test it as a student!

Gen Z

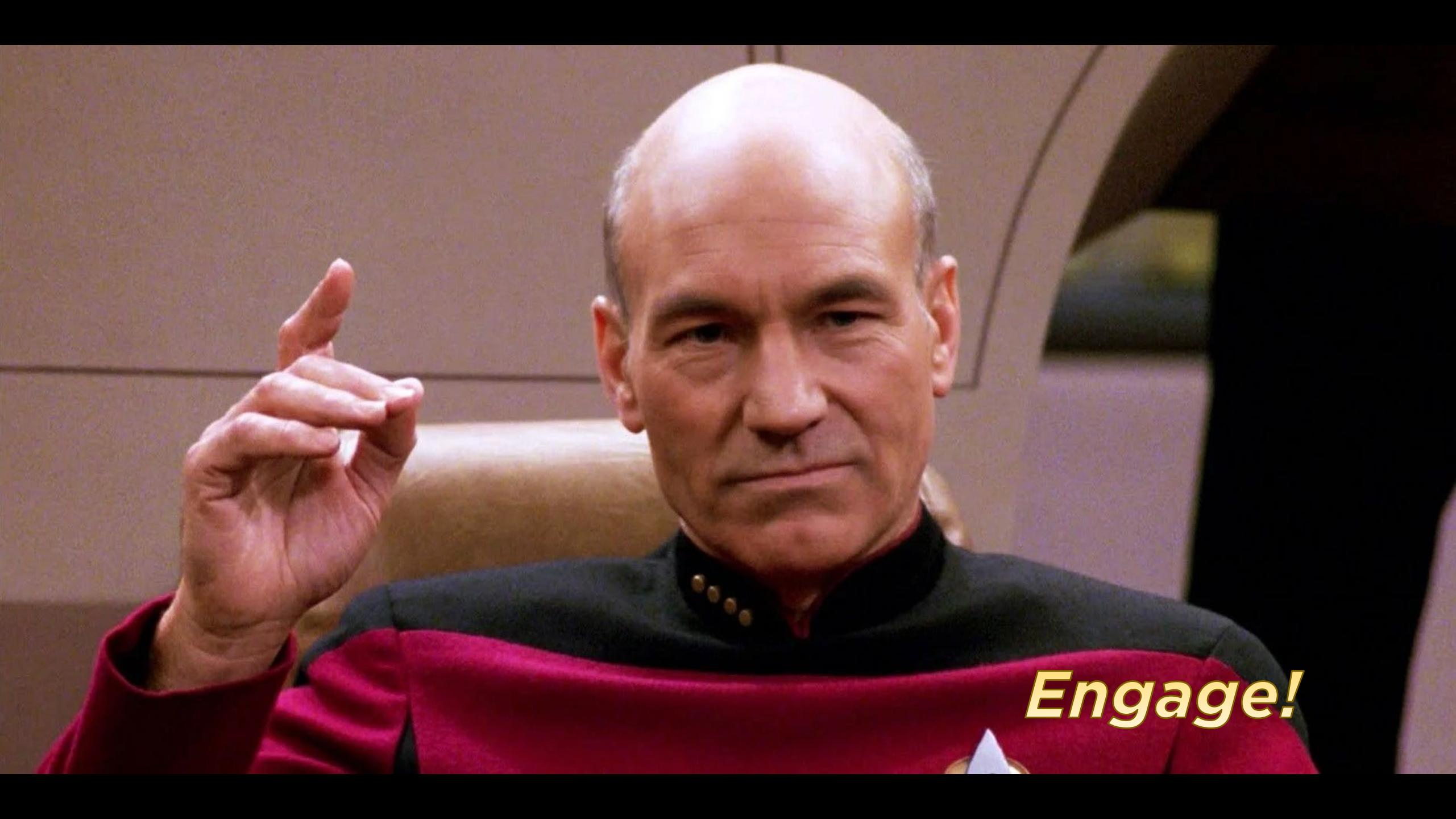
- Simplification of course content; getting to the point
- Shift from traditional pedagogy; technology integration; online
- Topics that interest them; enthusiastically give their points on issues such as religion, sexism, politics, and sexual discrimination
- Use class discussions in moderation; tend to avoid active participations and hesitate to share different views with their peers

Millennials

- 5 components of teaching and learning: Fun, engaging, fresh, movement at a steady pace, rewards skill development
- Orientation instead of training, assess what they already know and build on it
- Explain *why* things are done
- Infuse learning with technology

Gen X

- Integrate e-learning, online tutorials, and other independent learning
- Consider interactive games, video-gaming, e-learning, virtual learning, and other non-traditional technologically-enhanced learning environments
- Include training and development as a mean to increase versatility



Engage!

Engagement

- Engagement is a key predictor of student success.
- Activities that apply content
- Self-reflection activities
- Have students prepare questions
- Have student teach

ONLINE LEARNING

3 TYPES OF LEARNER INTERACTIONS

NICOLESNOTES.COM



Three Types of Interaction

Learner <--> Content

Learner <--> Instructor

Learner <--> Learner

Learner-Content Interaction

Learner-Content Interaction

- Lectures
- Videos
- PowerPoints
- Quizzes
 - iSpring, NearPod
- Games, simulations, scenarios, case studies

Learner-Instructor Interaction

ARE YOU THERE?

Tips for Developing Online Instructor Presence



Instructor Presence

Presence is the most important best practice for an online course.

(Boettcher & Conrad, 2010)

WHY IS INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE IMPORTANT?



1. Increases student engagement

2. Decreases sense of isolation




3. Increases student satisfaction

4. Decreases course attrition




HOW CAN INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE BE ENHANCED ONLINE?



1. Send messages

Send regular announcements or messages with course updates and reminders.




2. Post summaries

Post overviews and summaries of topics, weeks, or units.



3. Provide feedback

Provide timely and substantive feedback on discussions, assignments, and quizzes.



4. Offer opportunities to interact with students

Offer opportunities to interact with students in online conference rooms in real time (e.g. virtual office hours, exam reviews, small group discussions).




5. Create videos

Create videos to welcome students, to present content, and to give feedback.



6. Create screencasts

Create screencasts of how to navigate websites, use computer programs or solve problems.



Check-ins

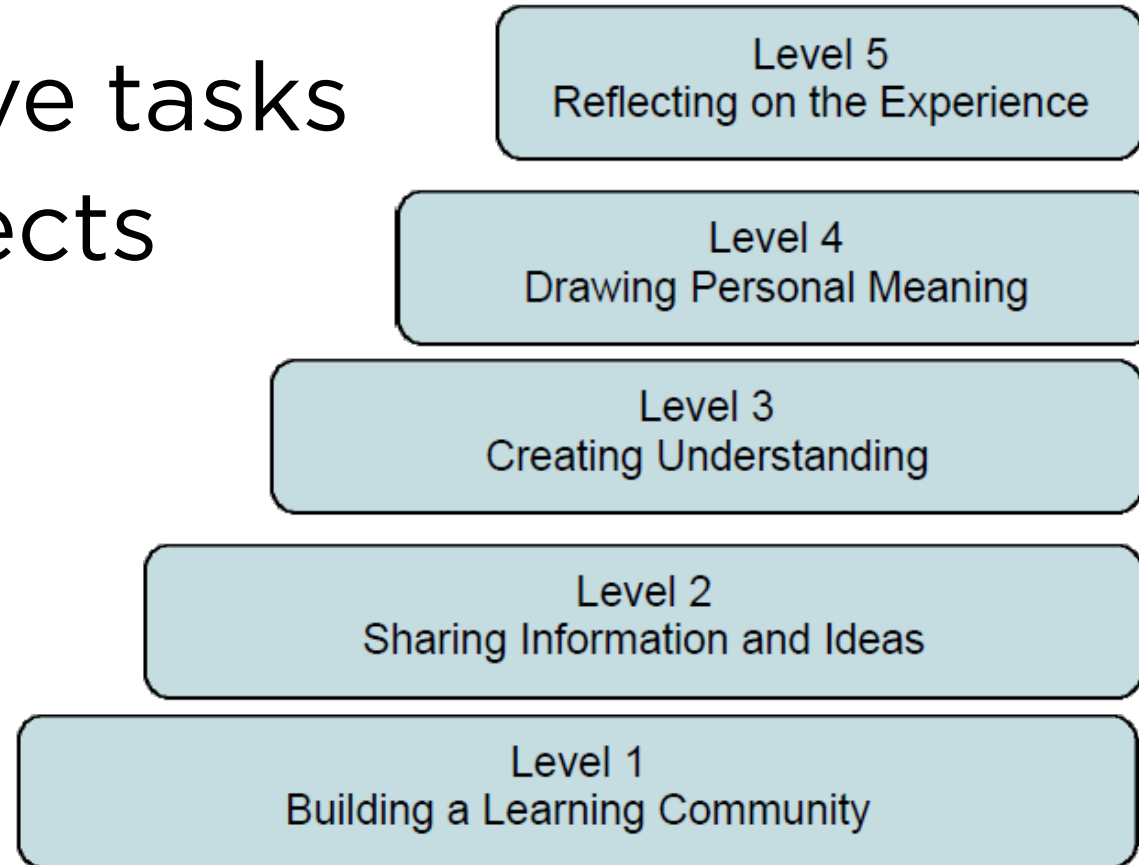
- Reach out to struggling students.
- Regular check-in process for students
 - Periodic meetings
 - Project-related meetings
- Small weekly assignments
- Study sessions
- Respond in timely manner



Learner-Learner Interaction

Learner-Learner Interaction

- Collaborative tasks
- Group projects



Learner-Learner Interaction

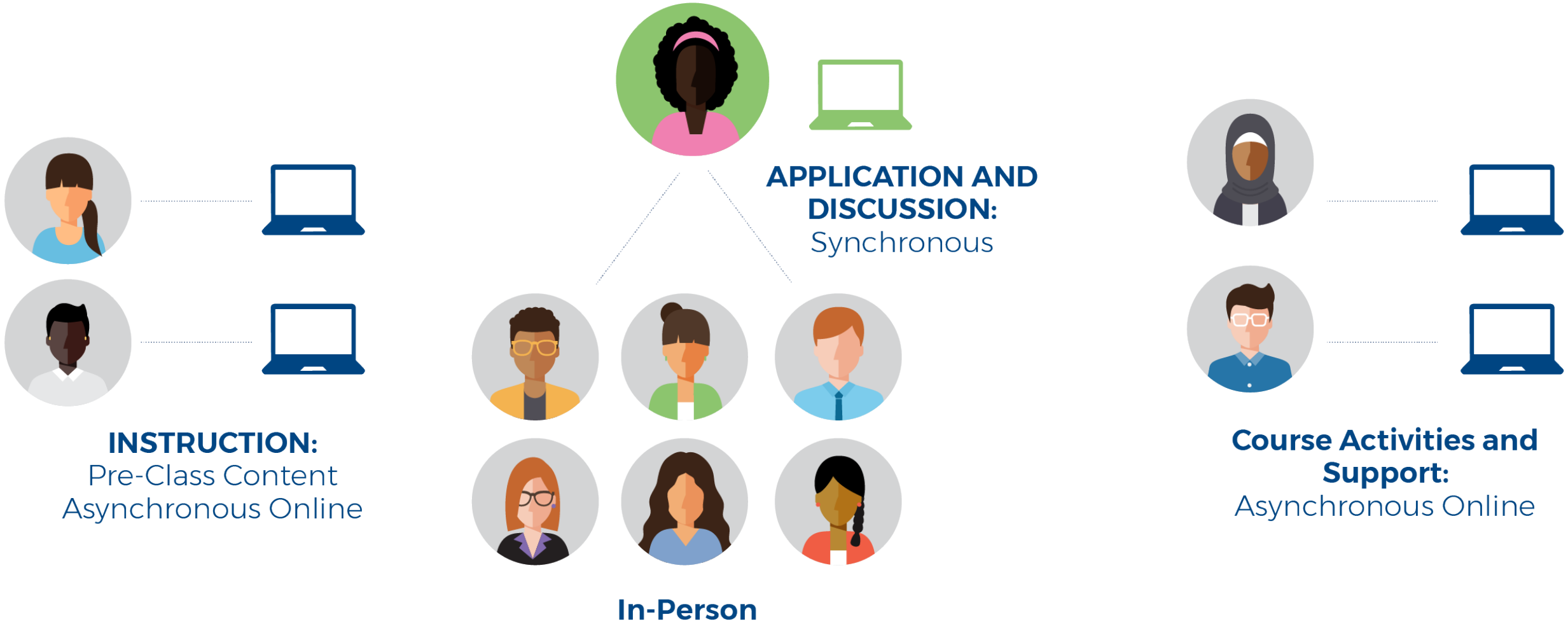
- How to Make it Work?
 - Group norms
 - Allow room for creativity
 - Allow for everyone's voice to be heard

Team Name:		
List Group Members:		
	Consideration	Team Norm
1.	Who will be the leader for each assignment? Since you already know the assignments (per the syllabus), you should go ahead and pick a leader for each assignment. (1.5)	
2.	What venue will the group use to accomplish group assignments? (i.e., D2L, Zoom, email, meeting in person, etc.) (1.5)	
3.	Provide details of guidelines that govern your agreement to accomplish your work. Include things like level of individual participation, timeliness of participation, specific deadlines, and procedure for completing and submitting the work. (2.5)	
4.	How will group members encourage compliance when a group member does not adhere to the group norms? Consider things such as how you will contact the group member, who will contact that person, how many attempts will be made, and who will complete that person's tasks if necessary. (2)	
5.	What will be the consequences for not complying with group norms? Consequences need to be specific and measurable, and they should go beyond simply contacting the instructor. (2.5)	

Learner-Learner Interaction

- Online discussions
 - Have to make them purposeful
 - VoiceThread, Flipgrid, Padlet, [Jamboard](#)
 - Have students assess each other – peer feedback
 - Peergrade
- Team or Competition tools
 - Kahoot
 - Brightful

Hybrid Courses



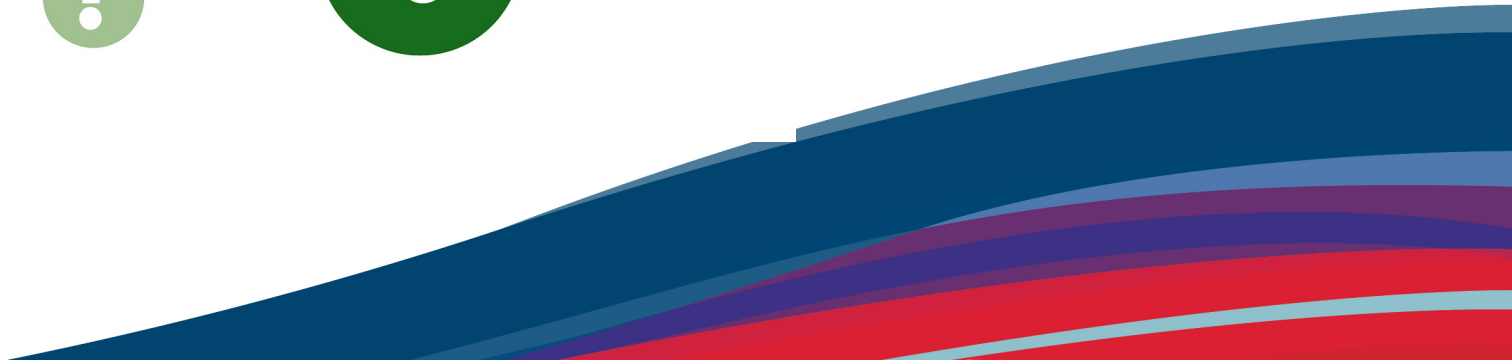
Synchronous Courses (Zoom)

- Provide objectives and guiding questions to help them keep focus.
- Limit lecture time to 10-15 minutes.
- Engage frequently:
 - Videos
 - Polls
 - Breakout rooms
 - Whiteboard collaboration

Synchronous Courses (Zoom)

- Repurpose in-person activities
 - Ex. Think-Pair-Share
- Have students present or teach.
- Open Zoom sessions early.
- Asynchronous but with required sessions

Questions and Discussions



Thank You for attending this webinar!

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