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A Model Taxonomy of Learning Objectives for the Online Learning Environment

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A Model Taxonomy of Learning Objectives for the Online Learning Environment

Presented by -

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Online Learning Goals

- Provide learner-centered activities
- Guide students towards self-directedness
- Increase modes of interaction
- Improve student performance
- Reduce classroom seat time

Instructor-Led

Online
Mentoring

Online
Learning
Environment

Technology

Self-Paced Learning
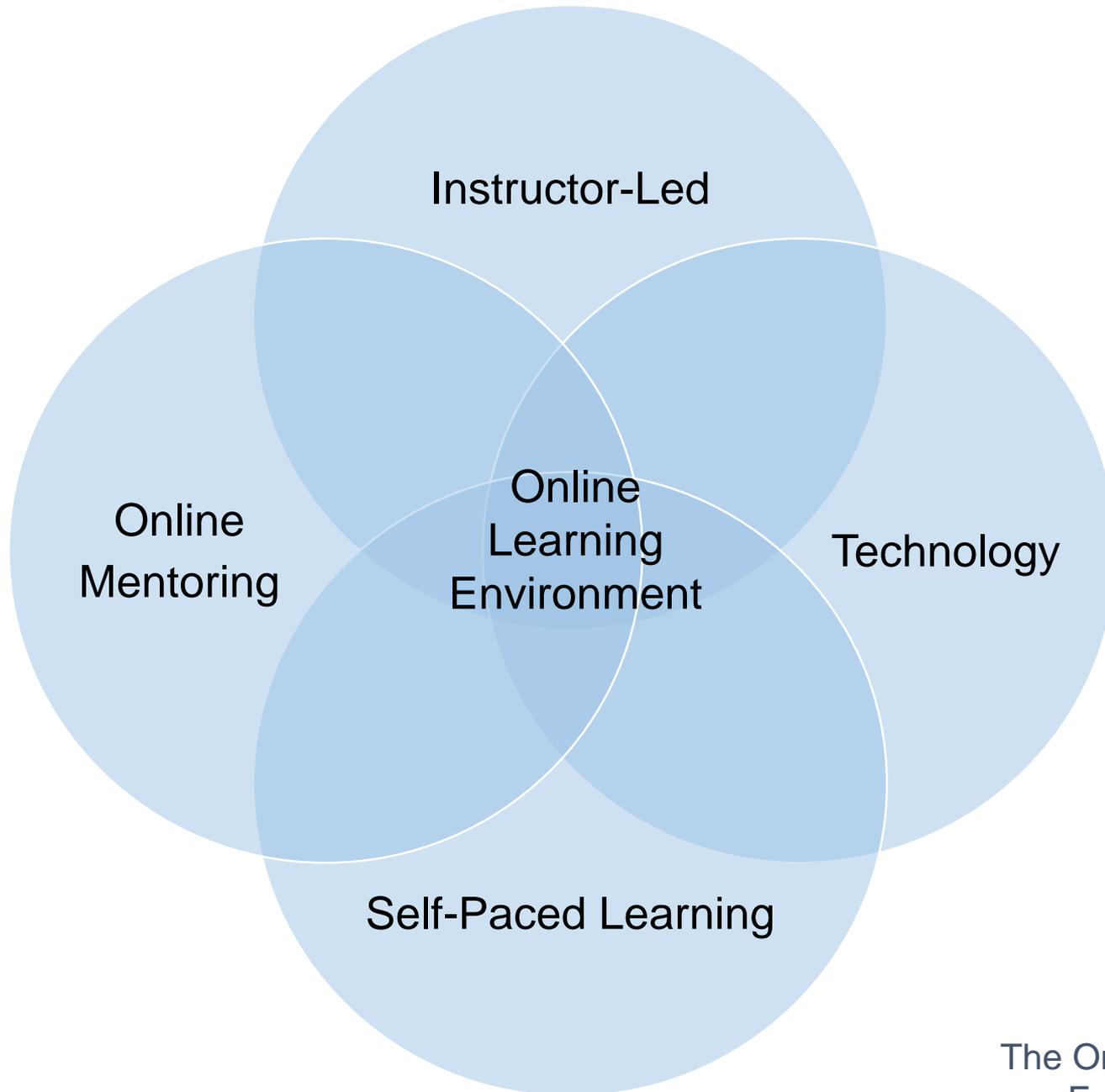
The Online Learning
Environment

Unique Needs of the Adult Learner

- Use prior experience as a resource
- Seek the immediate application of skills
- Possess an independent self-concept
- Become self-directed
- Perform social roles linked to learning styles
- Motivated by internal factors

Online Learning Taxonomy
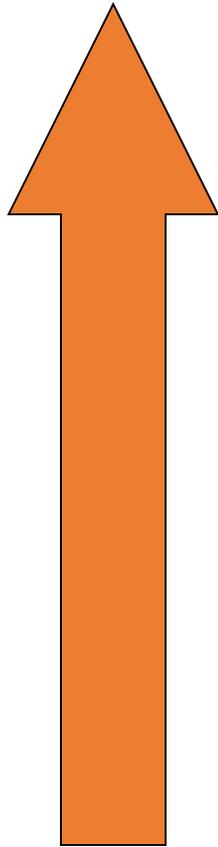
Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience

Level 1: Online Experience is Gained

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
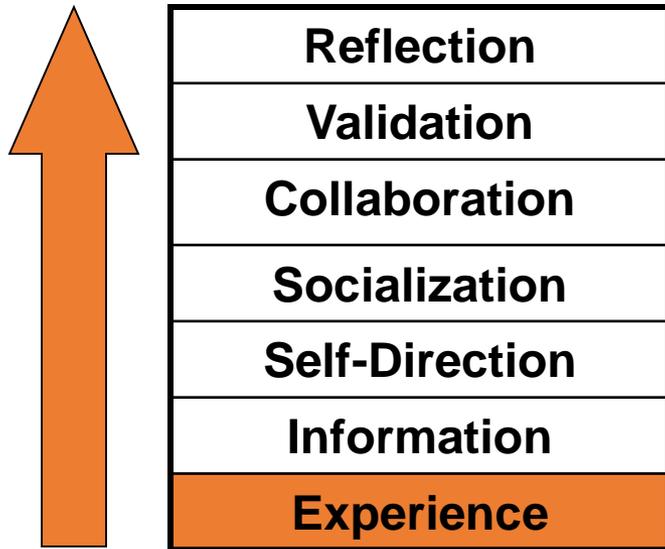
Due to the lack of *prior experience* new online students often become preoccupied with learning how to use the course management system.

- General Course Navigation
- Discussion Boards
- Virtual Classrooms
- Uploading / Downloading

Level 1: Learning Objectives
Support the Transition to Online Learning

- Create a "Start Here" area
- Designate an "online classroom" area
- Create "practice areas"
- Allow time for students to acquaint themselves with the class structure
- Establish a system that enables students to provide / receive course-related help
- Use screen capture, screen recording technologies, and/or videos to create tutorials

Level 2: Critical Information Identified

| Reflection |
|:---:|
| Validation |
| Collaboration |
| Socialization |
| Self-Direction |
| **Information** |
| **Experience** |
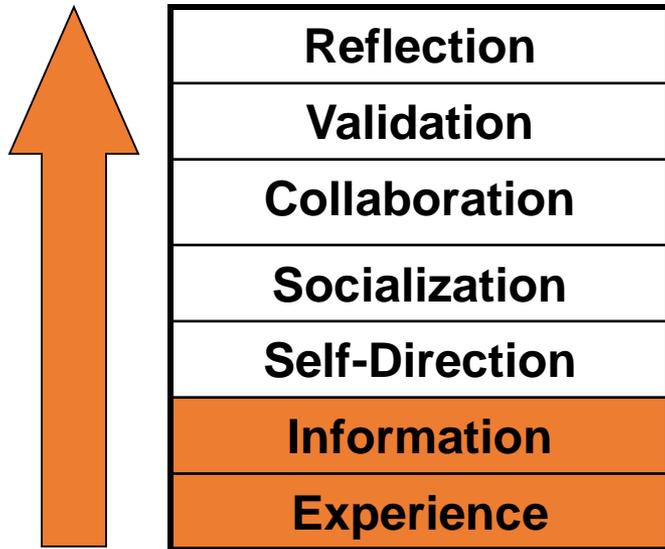
Students in traditional instructor-led courses:

- View the instructor as the sole source of information

- Are comfortable in a one-to-one relationship

- Do not understand their role as it relates to the generation of new knowledge within the online learning community

Level 2: Learning Objectives

Reduce Student Anxiety & Isolation
Target New Course Content & Student Roles

Establish communities of learners as students begin to interact with the course content. A sense of student well-being within the learning environment is created through support from the instructor and peers.

- Create "Meet & Greet" activities
- Require that students form groups
- Create public & private group areas
- Maintain a virtual social presence (instructor)
- Refocus student attention on the course content

Level 3: Self-Directed Learning Begins

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
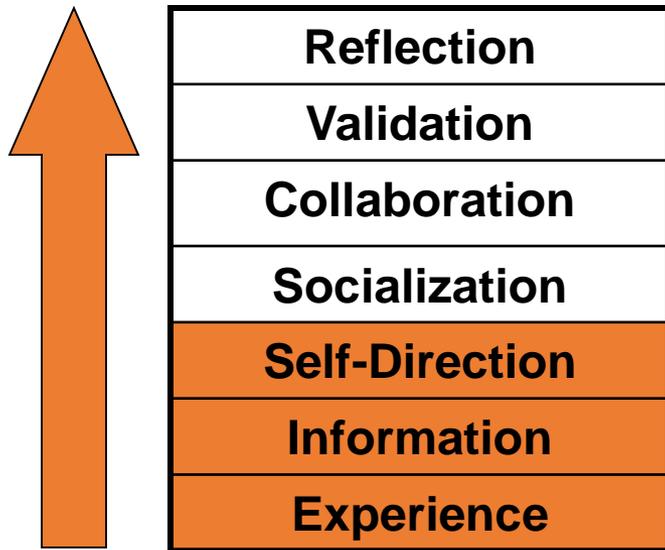
Students are *self-directed* when they independently diagnose their learning needs, formulate educational goals, identify resources, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate educational outcomes.

- Some students continue to rely only on the instructor for guidance

- Students often lack time management and organizational skills at this level

Level 3: Learning Objectives
Foster & Support Learner Autonomy

A *structured learning environment* enables students to take control of their learning. Include a detailed syllabus, scaffold lessons, and answer the question "Why are we learning this?".

- Set clear guidelines and instructor expectancies
- Include assignments that are completed by every student at the start of the course (not groups)
- Activities must foster active involvement by enabling students to use resources and strategies effectively

Level 3: Learning Objectives
Support Time Management & Organization Skills

Online learning requires more planning and commitment that traditional site-based classes. Time management may be the most important factor for the successful online student.

- Post ALL assignment due dates at the start of the course
- Contact students who do not login regularly
- Create and use an assignment checklist
- Provide grading rubrics at the start of the course

Level 4: Social Networking Skills Develop

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
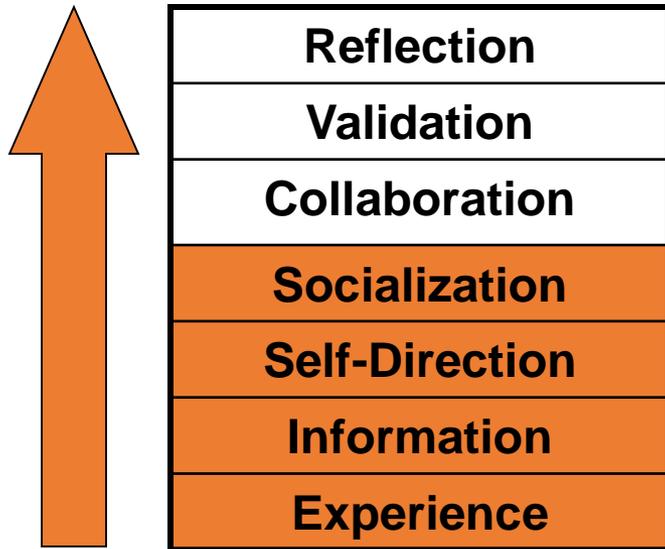
Socialization occurs within a social context through observation, imitation, and modeling.

- The ability of students to communicate through a variety of technologies varies

- Personality and individual learning styles play an important role

Level 4: Learning Objectives
Initiate & Sustain Social Structures

Social structures must be initiated and sustained by the course instructor for the purpose of building trust along with a "sense of community" or connectedness among learners.

- Encourage students to address each other by name
- Include small-group and whole class discussions
- Provide synchronous and asynchronous activities
- Select certain assignments and require that they be shared on the Discussion Board

Level 5: Collaboration Skills Strengthen

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
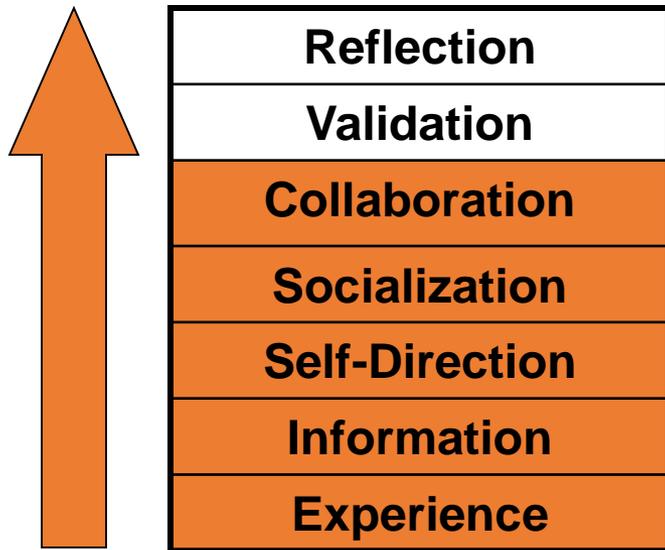
Learning environments that include *collaborative problem-solving activities* become less competitive and promote positive learner interdependence

- Students who value flexibility in scheduling and learning may be dissatisfied or reluctant to participate

Level 5: Learning Objectives
Support the Generation of New Knowledge

Collaboration enables individuals gain new insight or challenge previously conceived ideas.

- Activities require that knowledge is shared among learners as they work towards common goals
- Activities build student research, critical thinking, and knowledge generation skills
- Assignments focus students on the product as well as the process
- The use of Web 2.0 online collaboration tools can serve as a social space for generative learning

Level 6:
Learning & Social Interaction is Validated

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
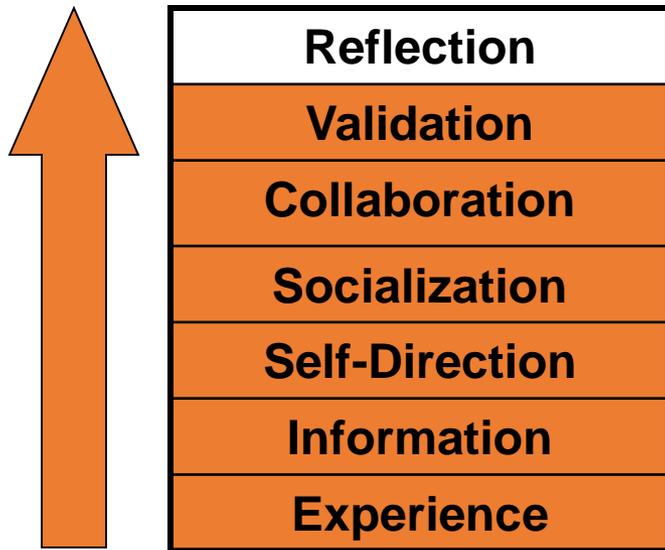
Feedback from the course instructor and peers provides *validation* that enables each learner to assess his/her performance in relation to other course participants.

- At this level, attitudes that include anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy may impact a learner's goals, attributions, self-regulation, and volition

Level 6: Learning Objectives
Validate Content Mastery & Learning Dispositions

Students who receive personalized feedback from the instructor and peers are more satisfied and perform academically better than students who receive only collective feedback from the instructor.

- Provide individual, group, and class feedback

Announcements (weekly) Help Me (daily)

Email (as required) Discussion Board (daily)

Online Office Hours (weekly)

- Require peer review of selected assignments

Level 7: Reflective Skills Improve

Reflection
Validation
Collaboration
Socialization
Self-Direction
Information
Experience
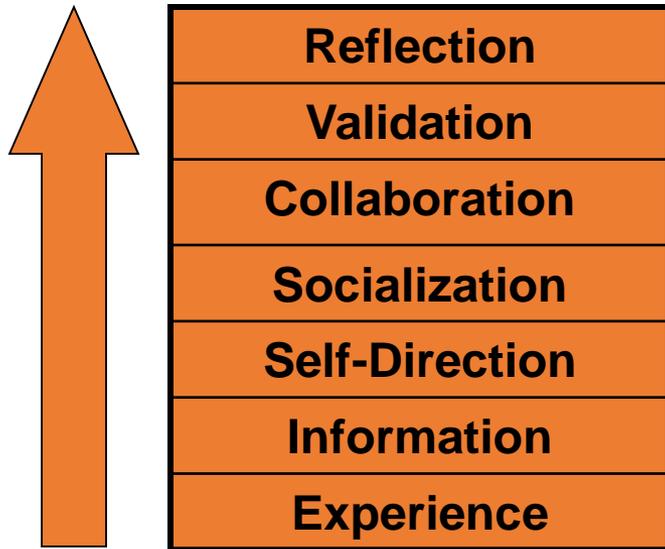
Through *reflection*, learners consider their interpersonal and communication skills, strengthen their ability to work in collaborative groups, and demonstrate their critical, analytical, and problem-solving skills.

- The lack of reflective assignments can negatively impact the transfer of subject matter knowledge by students

Level 7: Learning Objectives
Deepen Conceptual Understanding

The use of reflective assignments at the end of the semester can have a positive impact on a student's ability to transfer knowledge and create connections between course subject matter, skills, and processes.

- Create surveys that enable students to reflect on their mastery of learning outcomes
- Include reflective group and class discussions
- Develop collaboration rubrics that enable students to evaluate their interpersonal skills as well as those of their peers

Questions?

Resources

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Dr. Bruciati has been developing and teaching online courses since 1998. In 2007, she was recognized by the Connecticut Technology Council as one of the top state Women of Innovation in the category of Academic Innovation and Leadership. In addition to her work at the university level, Dr. Bruciati provides professional development training and other educational technology consulting services for school districts, organizations, and businesses through the Bruciati Institute of Educational Technology.