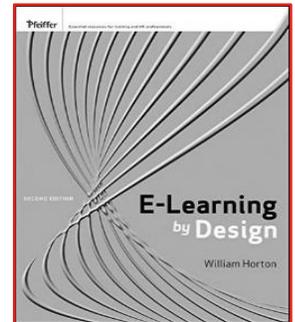


Planning Online Activities (3)

Active and Authentic Activities

Well-designed and appropriately integrated learning activities in blended and online environments are key aspects of student engagement and understanding. Students learn very little simply by clicking a mouse, surfing the web, or discussing their favorite color. [Active](#) and [authentic learning activities](#) are best.

As the instructional designer William Horton suggests, “people learn by considering, researching, analyzing, evaluating, organizing, synthesizing, discussing, testing, deciding, and applying ideas” (51). A way to consider designing activities within each weekly module is by incorporating three types of learning tasks he describes as **Absorbing (A)**, **Doing (D)**, and **Connecting (C)** activities.



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The ADCs Explained

Absorb-type Activities

Absorb activities inform and inspire learning, and they enable motivated learners to obtain crucial and contextual information they need to further their understanding. **In absorb activities, learners read, listen, or watch.** These activities may sound passive, but they can be an active component of learning (68). Some examples include:

- PowerPoint presentations,
- Weekly readings (textbooks or e-texts or hyperlinked content),
- Podcasts, audio commentary or instructor-led stories,
- Repository of guided (active) student examples for assignments/activities,
- Video lecture, simulated demonstrations, instructional films (i.e. YouTube),
- Virtual tours or online websites (i.e. google art project), and
- Work-place scenarios or case-study examples.

Do-type Activities (D)

Do activities transform that information into knowledge and skills. In Do activities, learners discover, parse, decode, analyze, compose, combine, organize, discuss, debate, evaluate, condense, refine, elaborate, and, most importantly, apply knowledge. Here are some examples of do activities:

- Drill and practice — online quizzes, self-assessments, and surveys;
- Hands-on activity — short assignments or skills based tasks;
- Virtual labs — instructor created activities that involve practice and application, ready-made textbook ancillaries focusing on topic or other open educational resources (OEDs);
- Group/team projects — any activities that is practiced by a group;
- Guided analysis — activities that answer a “So what?” question;
- Role-playing activities — guided activity designed by instructor to test an outcome.

Connect-type Activities (C)

Connect activities help learners close the gap between learning and the rest of their lives. They prepare learners to apply learning in situations they encounter at work, in later learning efforts, and in their personal lives. Here are some examples of connect activities:

- Online discussion forums — these are the most common type of connect activities. Guided group questions encourage students to connect content to the external world and their own lives,
- Reflection Journals — Short written assignments,
- Group/Team Projects — any activities that is practiced by a group,
- Guided Critiques — reviews, peer assessments, etc., and
- Research activities — synthesizing online material and applying it to a given situation.

Not all ADC activities may be present in each module, and often the order and degree of complexity of each activity will vary. However, as a general rule, having an ADC aspect of each module is a solid plan. Horton suggests that the goal, when possible, is to have “learnings spend **40% of their time absorbing, 50% doing, and 10% connecting**” (58). In addition, a fourth element is also often common – **the testing activity**, such as a weekly quiz (formative assessment) or a cumulative test (summative assessment).

How Can I Use This Technique in My FOL Course?

Think of each module in FOL as an opportunity to engage students in all three ADCs of learning:

- **Start with reviewing your course learning outcomes** (Course Plan CLOs),
- **Then write module objectives** (think of them as enabling goals) that detail what you want your students to achieve by the completion of the module, unit, or week.
- **Make sure each set of module objectives contributes to achieving your CLOs.** Ask yourself: “do they create [alignment](#)?” or, in other words, do the activities in each of your modules help the student to progress towards mastery of the course’s objectives.
- **Finally, it’s important to be transparent;** explain why your students are learning “X” or “Y” using words and phrases that are easy to understand. Below is a sample way to conceptualize your lesson:

Module Focus	Module Objectives for Students	ADC Activities
Module 1 Topic/Unit Theme	Upon completion of this weekly module the learner will have demonstrated the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ define... ▪ identify... ▪ recall... ▪ discuss... ▪ apply... 	Readings (Absorb): Assignments(Do): Activities (Connect): Course Outcome Met(s):

Another way to remember this process is the following: **READ, DO, DISCUSS, REFLECT** and *sometimes TEST (RDDR & T)*. When you have planned your module, there are several ways you can execute this in Fanshaweonline using templates.

Reference: For more information about Absorb, Do, Connect and Test activities, refer to William Horton’s *eLearning By Design* 2nd edition (Wiley, 2012), or the following website:

<http://horton.com/additional-resources/e-learning-examples/>