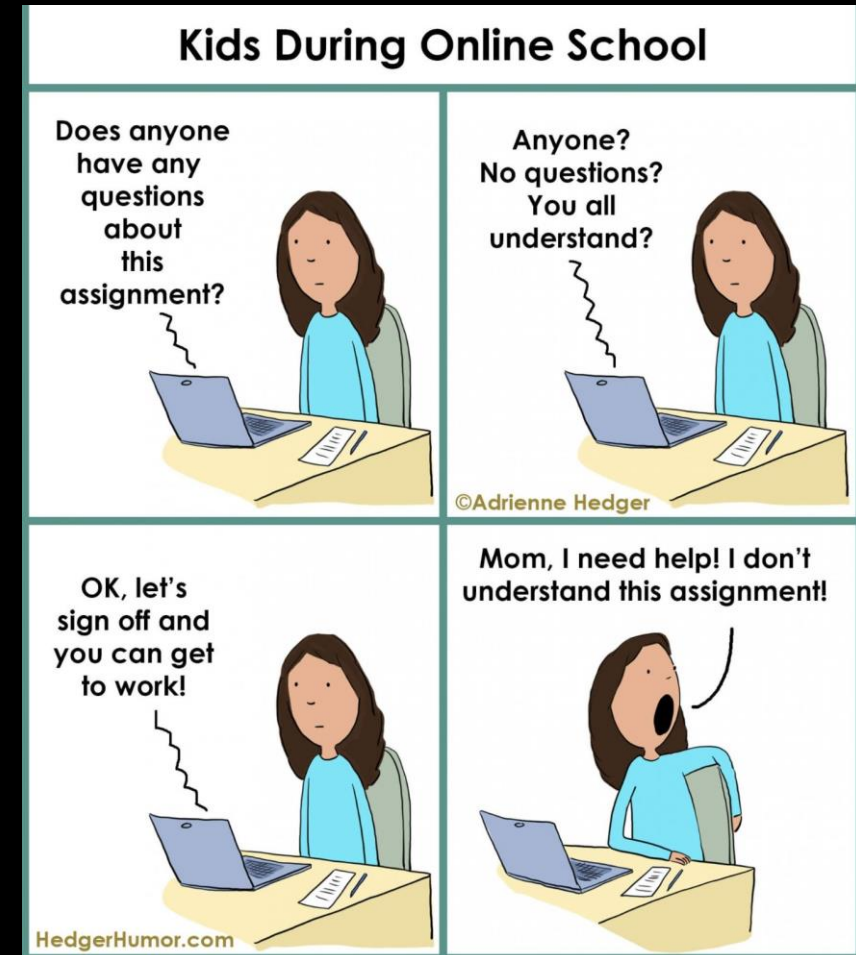# FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN DIGITAL PLATFORMS

WHAT DO STUDENTS EXPECT?

1. Easy-to-follow course design and navigation

2. Clear expectations and directions

3. Reasonably quick responses

4. Instructors' presence

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS DOING?

Effective online teachers;

- avoid a didactic approach
- vary their pedagogy
- use productive failure use (before instruction
- facilitate the learning (inclusion)
- provide seamless structure (course design)

SAME TEACHER / DIFFERENT TOOLS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ONLINE PRACTITIONER

- Good online teaching, in principle, is fundamentally the same as good face-to-face teaching

- For online teaching to be successful, teachers need to adapt their facilitation strategies

- However, online teaching does not necessarily mean transferring the exact same teaching approach and curriculum

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ONLINE PRACTITIONER

- Ko and Rossen (2004) remind us that "The move to the online format offers you opportunities to try new methods and approaches.

- There is no one answer to what good online teaching looks like. However, there are broader principles that can be applied to assist student learning.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE PRACTICES

MAKE ONLINE COURSES ACCESSIBLE

KNOWING AND SELECTING TECHNOLOGIES FOR TEACHING

MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE STUDENTS

BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AND RESPOND TO STUDENTS

COMMUNICATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS TO STUDENTS

REGULARLY CHECK CONTENT RESOURCES AND APPLICATIONS

EASY-TO-FOLLOW COURSE DESIGN AND NAVIGATION

CREATE AND MAINTAIN A STRONG PRESENCE

YOU CAN!

e-FLIP PROJECT

Erasmus+

P1: EASY-TO-FOLLOW COURSE DESIGN AND NAVIGATION

- Being confused or not knowing how to get started.

- Confusion can quickly lead to frustration and unhappy learner.

- Means more emails and questions

Teaching Online

"You have 736 new messages!"

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COURSE DESIGN

Use an LMS

Classify and present content and course activities in a consistent manner (e.g., by unit, week, chapter, or module)

Include a "Welcome-get started here" message

Direct students to the syllabus with additional information on the design and navigation of the course

Create hyperlinks to minimize the number of clicks required to access content

P2: COMMUNICATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS TO STUDENTS

- Providing explicit directions for course activities and assessments, as well as letting students know what will be expected of them, is important to reduce learners' confusion.

P2: COMMUNICATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS TO STUDENTS

The nature of online learning

Exemplars of quality student work

Netiquette: online rules (e.g. Respect the person speaking)

Features of the online learning environment:

Communication protocols: when and how

Assignments: submissions and evaluation criteria

Clear Expectations

P3: BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

- Fully online students have reported tendencies to feel isolated. It is important to establish a strong online learning community for students.

- Like many aspects of teaching, helping students develop a sense of belonging and community can impact learning in online courses.

- When students feel they belong to a class community, they are more likely to be motivated to complete class work, feel safe enough to contribute to discussions, and be open to feedbacks.

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

1. You serve as the role model
2. Let students get to know you and each other
3. Create a safe course environment
4. Survey student interests
5. Build in opportunities for students to share their knowledge and experiences
6. Create social opportunities for students
7. Build in multiple avenues for interaction and engagement

P4: KNOWING AND SELECTING TECHNOLOGIES FOR TEACHING

- An important aspect of good online teaching is the appropriate integration of technological tools.

- Technologies selected purely for their novelty value will soon lose their appeal with students.

- Selection of technology should be pedagogically grounded; i.e. a reason for using the technology related to the students' learning.

KEY AREAS FOR SELECTING APPROAPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

➢the learning task: can the task be achieved using technology?

➢media attributes: what features will support the learning activity?

➢grouping strategy: do students learn in group or individually?

➢learning context

➢learner characteristics

➢instructional management: will technology be supported in wider organisation?
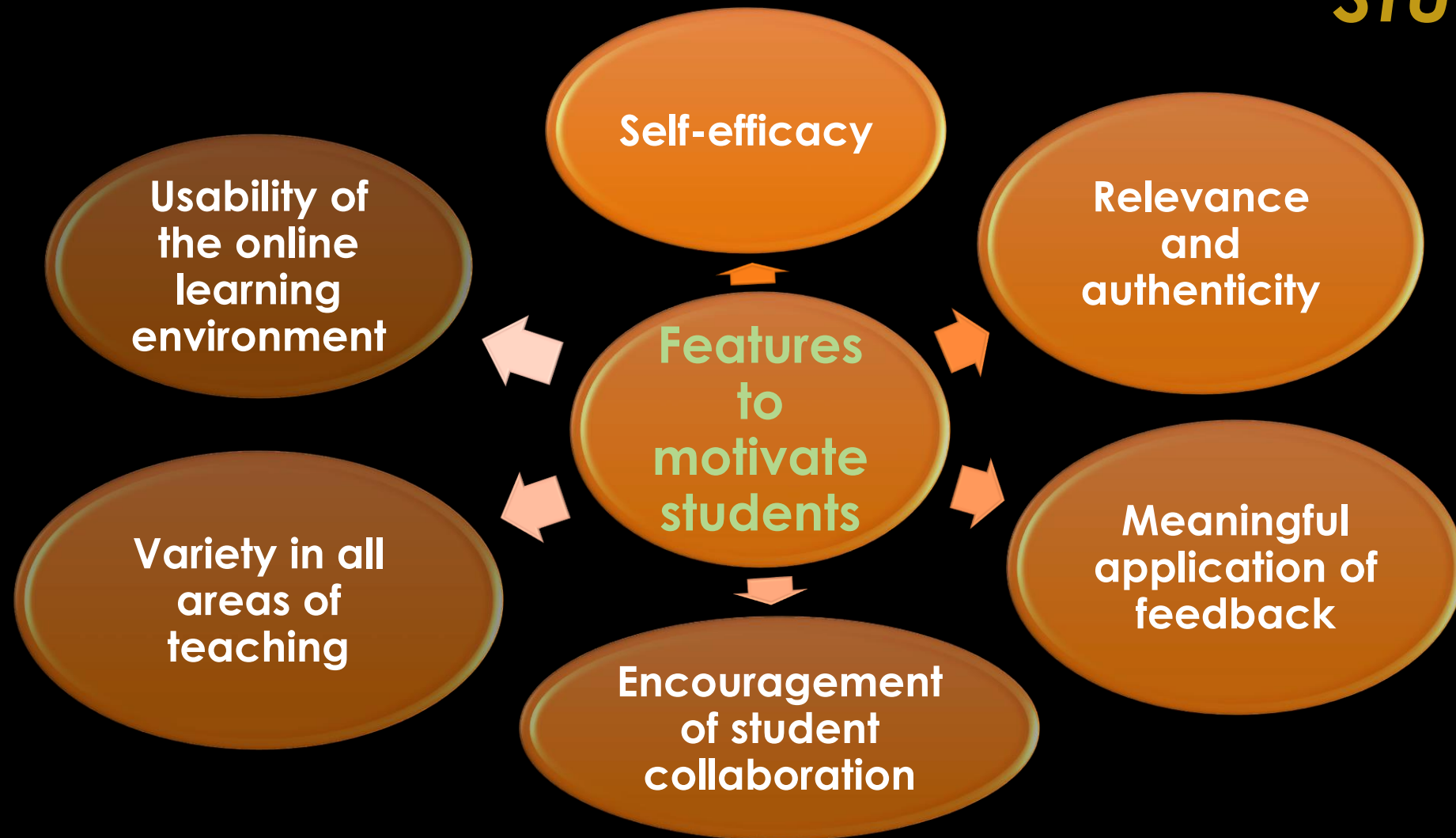
➢cost effectiveness

Before you press [SEND], take a walk in the shoes of your learners.

Author: Chrissie Butler

P5: MAKE ONLINE COURSES ACCESSIBLE

There are two main areas of accessibility for online students:

- **Inclusive:** Your course should be accessible for students from diverse backgrounds relating to such areas as culture, disability and socioeconomic status.

- **Technical:** Online components of your course should be accessible to students, in terms of file size versus student download speeds, and providing alternative ways for students to access information if required.

P6: MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE STUDENTS

Self-efficacy

Relevance and authenticity

Features to motivate students

Usability of the online learning environment

Variety in all areas of teaching

Encouragement of student collaboration

Meaningful application of feedback

- *Feedback* is intrinsic to many of the learning activities introduced in the principle of active learning, and a key aspect of formative assessment (assessment for learning).

- How might timely feedback be achieved richly and efficiently?

HOW TO GIVE EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Be SPECIFIC

Be TIMELY

Be Sincere

OffER Help

the balance

P7: GIVE TIMELY FEEDBACK

- *Peer feedback:* Peer feedback works best when students are persuaded of the value of the work and the feedback activity

- *Marking rubrics (criteria with descriptors for levels of achievement):* students tend to appreciate an explanation (as well as an indication) of the level they have achieved

- *Guided marking activity:* Where students familiarise themselves with the criteria and apply them to one or more exemplar

- *Automated test feedback (for example using Moodle Quiz):* It can be immediate and highly differentiated

P8: KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AND RESPOND TO STUDENTS

- This point may seem incredibly basic! However, it rates high on the list of items that are important to online learners.

- We all like to receive timely responses when we ask a question, whether it's directed to a colleague, a supervisor, or the cable company. Students are no different!

- Students are much complained about the lack of timely return to their asnwers: "I contacted my instructor with a question five days ago and haven't heard back yet."

P8: KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AND RESPOND TO STUDENTS

- There is a misconception that online learners expect 24/7 access to their instructors.

- If an instructor sets clear response expectations (e.g., I will respond to emails within 24 hours if I receive them on a weekday), most students will respect that.

- An online instructor does not need to be available 24/7 to be successful—and should not be!

P9: REGULARLY CHECK CONTENT RESOURCES AND APPLICATIONS

- Regularly check all links, resources, modules, and activities. Online content can move or change, which can lead to disengagement.

- Model the process of navigating to websites that are not embedded in the course, and demonstrate how to appropriately manage keeping track of navigation when jumping from site to site.

P10: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A STRONG PRESENCE

- One-way instructors can make their presence known to students is by regularly communicating with them.

- This communication might start with an email a week or two prior to the start of the class to introduce themselves and give students information about the course.

- It could include a video introduction or course orientation. Subsequent emails could include regular course updates and announcements.

- Most students greatly appreciate receiving reminders about due dates of upcoming assignments.

P10: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A STRONG PRESENCE

- Online courses can be text heavy, and many students enjoy both hearing and seeing their instructors in online courses.

- Students like to know their instructor's perspective on course content (such as written lecture narratives, podcasts, voice-over PowerPoints, or videos).

- Students realize when instructors simply share publisher-created content rather than offering their own viewpoint.

- Other ways to demonstrate presence are to provide prompt and meaningful feedback and to participate in online discussion forums.

TIPS FOR CREATING A STRONG PRESENCE!

- Send a message to all students, by video if possible, to welcome them to online learning and reassure them.

- Use video chat rather than basic instant message when interacting with students.

- Get the students talking by beginning discussions in the discussion board, and then contributing rapid, regular, and open responses to questions.

- Use non-verbal communication such as emojis.

- Complete your profile with professional and personal traits.

RESOURCES

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