

# BLENDED AND ONLINE LEARNING DESIGN AND INSTRUCTION BEST PRACTICE

## Resources & Research

### QUICK RESOURCES

CTLI's website ([learninginnovation.ca](http://learninginnovation.ca)) is a great overall resource that is both practical and evidence based. The blog posts and teaching toolkits found on the site offer many resources and can be searched by theme. The list below presents resources in the form of easy-to-implement quick tips for improving your online and blended course design and instruction.

#### Blended and online course design

- [Blended and Online Handbook and Rubric](#)
- [Comprehensive Accessibility Through Universal Design for Learning](#)
- [Active Learning while Physically Distancing](#)  
(Louisiana State University, n.d.)
- [Instructor Influence on Online Student Retention](#)
- [Sustained and Versatile Support Through Embedded Librarianship](#)
- [Empowered Learning Through Hyflex Course Design](#)
- [Making Canvas Pictures More Accessible: The Benefits of Alt Text](#)
- [Best Practices for Educational Videos](#)
- [Online Group Work](#)
- [Using Group Roles in Synchronous Online Lessons](#)
- [Course Workload Estimator](#)  
(Wake Forest University, n.d.)
- [Why and How to Humanize Your Online Class \(Infographic\)](#)  
(Pacansky-Brock, 2020)

[learninginnovation.ca](http://learninginnovation.ca)

#### Online facilitation

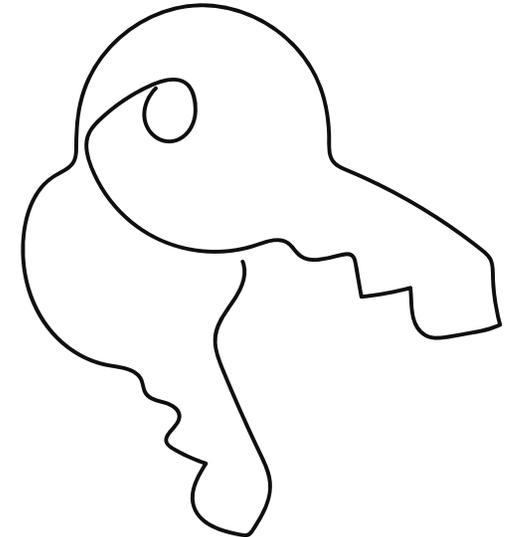
- [Removing Barriers to Online Learning Through a Teaching and Learning Lens](#)  
(BCcampus, 2020)
- [“The Future Started Yesterday and We’re Already Late”: The Case for Antiracist Online Teaching](#)  
(Humphrey & Davis, 2021)
- [Navigating Microaggressions in an Online Learning Environment](#)  
(McCrinkle & Phirangee, 2021)
- [Trauma-Informed Teaching in Remote Courses](#)  
(Huguenin, 2020)
- [Equity in Education: Removing Barriers to Online Learning](#)  
(Caldwell, 2020)
- [8 Ways to Improve Group Work Online](#)  
(Davidson & Kapotodis, 2020)
- [How to Build an Online Learning Community: 6 Theses](#)  
(Stommel, 2020)
- [Tips for better Zoom chats in Online Classes](#)  
(Nowak et al., 2020)
- [Socially Distanced Yet Intellectually Close](#)  
(Phillips et al., 2020)
- [A list of hybrid teaching resources from the Educational Developers Caucus](#)  
(Educational Developers Caucus, n.d.)

# RESEARCH

Lethbridge College's Learning Experience Design and Educational Development teams stay on top of current research and best practices in teaching and learning. Below you will find a summary of key takeaways from current research. A link to an annotated bibliography follows for those who'd like to look more deeply into the research.

## Research key takeaways for blended design

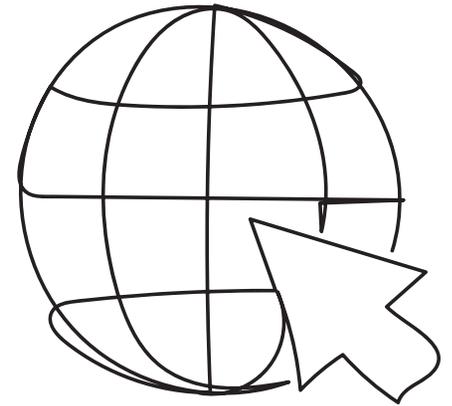
- Experiential learning and learner reflection is key in modern pedagogy. Applying knowledge to new experiences results in learning.
- Experiential learning requires time with real-world situations and problems, which often take place outside of a typical lecture or time spent in class.
- Blended and flipped models support autonomy-building among learners.
- Using real-world problems can support engagement and problem-solving skills.
- Building autonomy and self-direction among learners in a blended environment takes purposeful learning design, scaffolding, and reflective practice among learners. Some options for achieving this include the following:
  - Scripted roles in group work can help improve knowledge and individual responsibility.
  - Whole-class knowledge building through wikis or other digital environments can lead to deep knowledge building. Collaborative knowledge building principles, clear expectations, and meta-cognitive strategies must be used to guide students.
  - Visual activities (group or individual), such as concept mapping and knowledge graphing, can improve the depth of learning and foster active learning.
  - Using online time for knowledge building and class time for collaborative problem-solving, discussion, and mentorship can improve the quality of student work.
- Flipped models can be used successfully in large classes or classes with reduced time without any negative impact to the learning experience when designed using the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model.
- Learners new to active learning strategies can perceive they learned less because they had to “struggle” with the concept or skill—and this can reduce motivation. Instructors can prevent this through explicit instruction rooted in best practice research and regular assessments and chances for student to give feedback.



# RESEARCH (CONT)

## Research key takeaways for online learning design

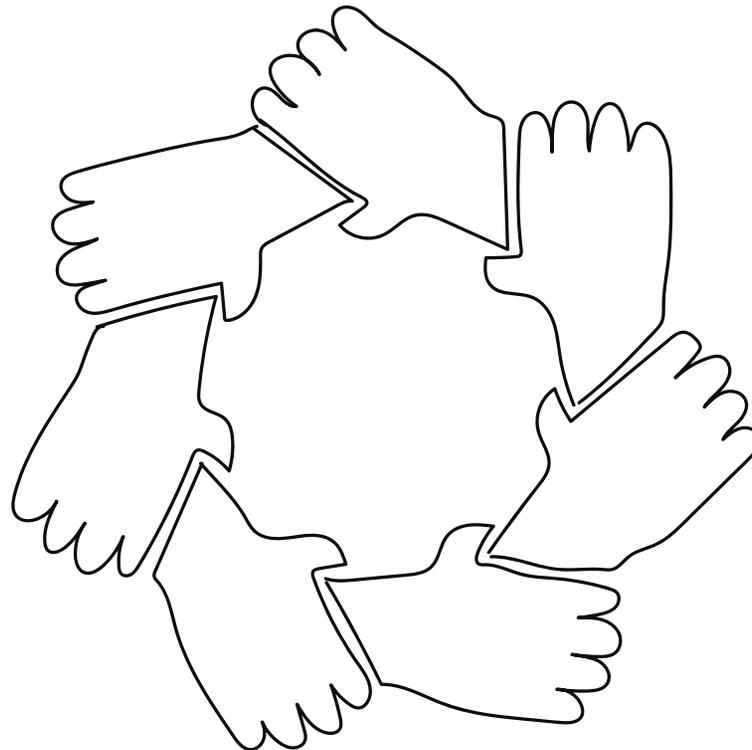
- Course content should be organized into meaningful segments (modules, weeks, topics, etc.) to guide learning as students progress through the course and minimize their cognitive load.
  - Clearly articulating course expectations and timelines will help students to plan their workload.
  - Students learn better if the content is divided into shorter segments rather than long lessons.
  - Where appropriate, instructors should consider providing models of exemplary and unsatisfactory student work.
  - Providing visuals to illustrate complex knowledge structures (processes, concepts, theories) can aid with retrieval and facilitate stronger learning; students can also create and share visuals to represent their understanding.
- Make use of multimedia resources:
  - Instructor-created content (screencasts, podcasts, recorded lectures) can increase social presence and student engagement.
  - Plan for multimodal repetition to give students an opportunity to process and engage with the material in a variety of modalities.
  - Accessibility of content for all learners is critical for student engagement (captions, alt text, transcripts of audio recordings).
- Select authentic and relevant course materials that are connected to practice; use varied examples, stories, and cases from different disciplines and contexts to explain abstract content.
- To facilitate deeper learning, integrate a variety of low-stakes assessments to provide students with an opportunity to assess their learning and engage in retrieval practice.
- Students are motivated by collaborative, self-assessment, hands-on, and active learning activities; facilitate self-regulated learning by assigning reflective writing assignments about their learning progress in the course
- Strive to create a safe and welcoming environment:
  - Students are motivated when they feel connected to their peers and instructor.
- Providing students with meaningful choices to demonstrate their understanding in different formats (text, video, audio, image) can increase motivation and encourage students to take ownership of their learning.



# RESEARCH (CONT)

## Research key takeaways for building community and connection

- Blended environments can provide further connection between learners and their studies, other students, and instructors because it provides options for engaging in learning (digitally and physically).
- Learners can positively respond to instant message reminders.
- Group learning processes don't happen naturally—instructors need to design the environment, set expectations, and model knowledge-building discourse.
- Problem-based learning structures can be effective in case analysis because they encourage collaborative discourse and collective knowledge building.
- Collaborative and collective learning requires instructor design and structure to be successful, as students are often inexperienced with this type of learning; however, when done properly it can be particularly effective.



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## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This **annotated bibliography** is a working document. The Learning Experience Design and Educational Development teams are continuously adding new research to it.