

Your Moodle Toolkit for Building Community in Online Courses

KAREN E. BALLENGEE

Course Introduction



Turn off your cameras.



Mute your microphone.



Save your questions for the end of the presentation.



At the end of this training, we will have a quiz to see what you remember.



Connection

- What just happened?
- How did that make you feel?
- Have you ever been in a course like this? (either online or F2F)

Agenda
Today you will learn:

01

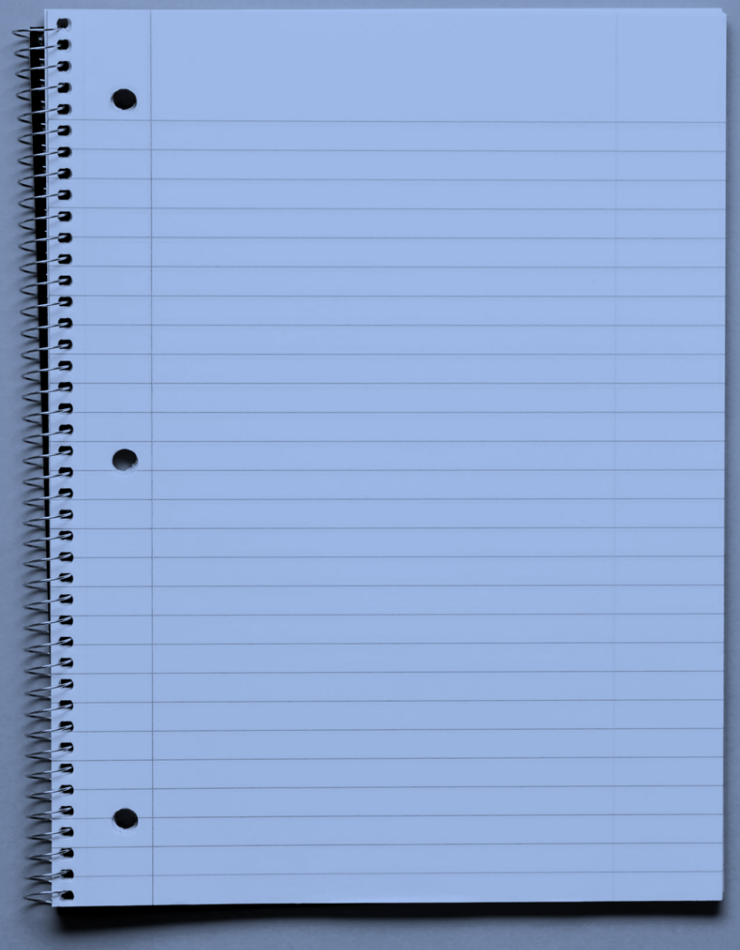
the importance of community in the online learning environment,

02

six key activities in ATIS/Moodle that foster community, and

03

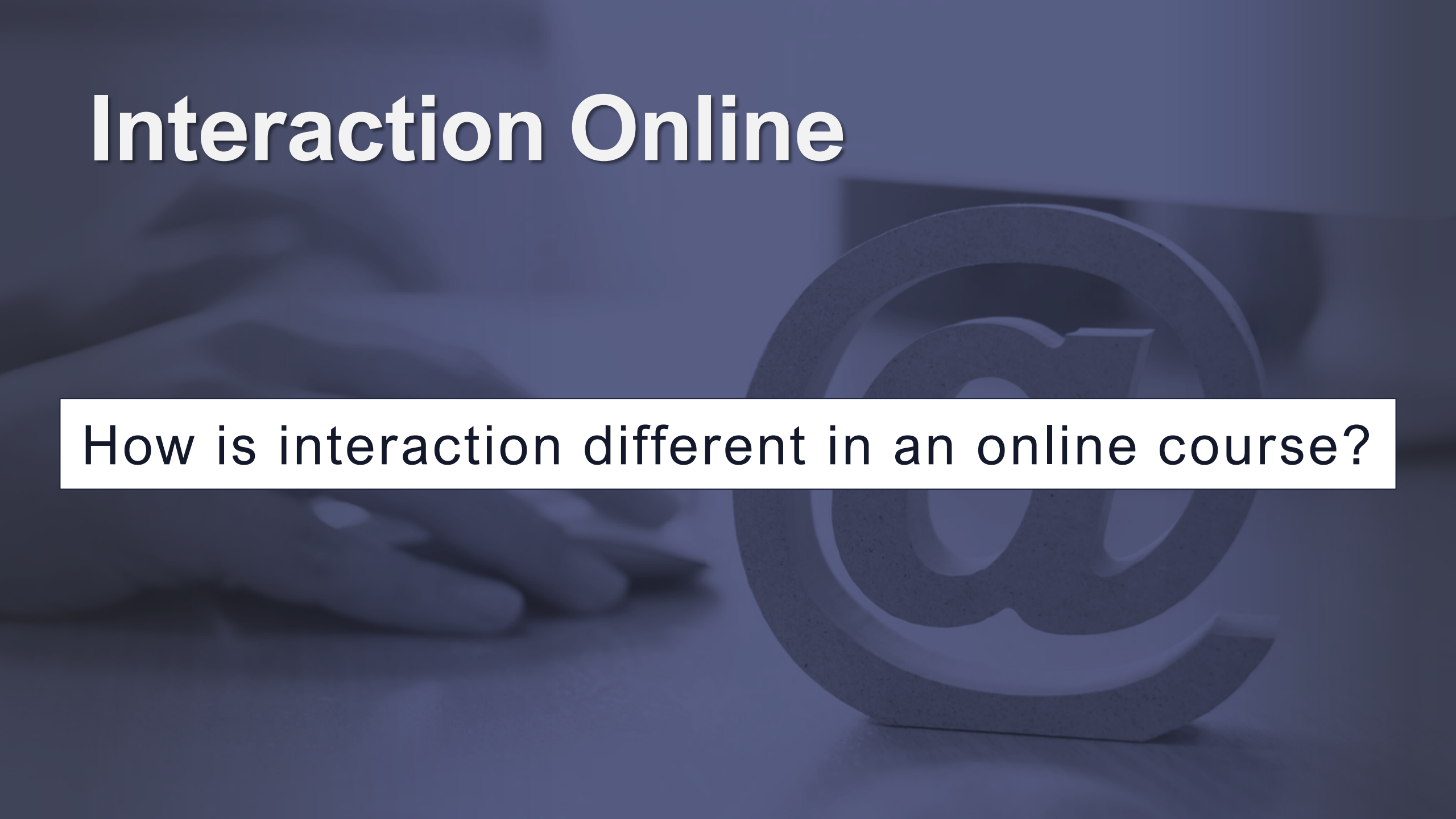
practical ideas for using Moodle activities to build a sense of community.



Note

This course focuses on tools to use in an online course, but many of the same principles can be applied to hybrid or face-to-face courses.

Interaction Online



How is interaction different in an online course?

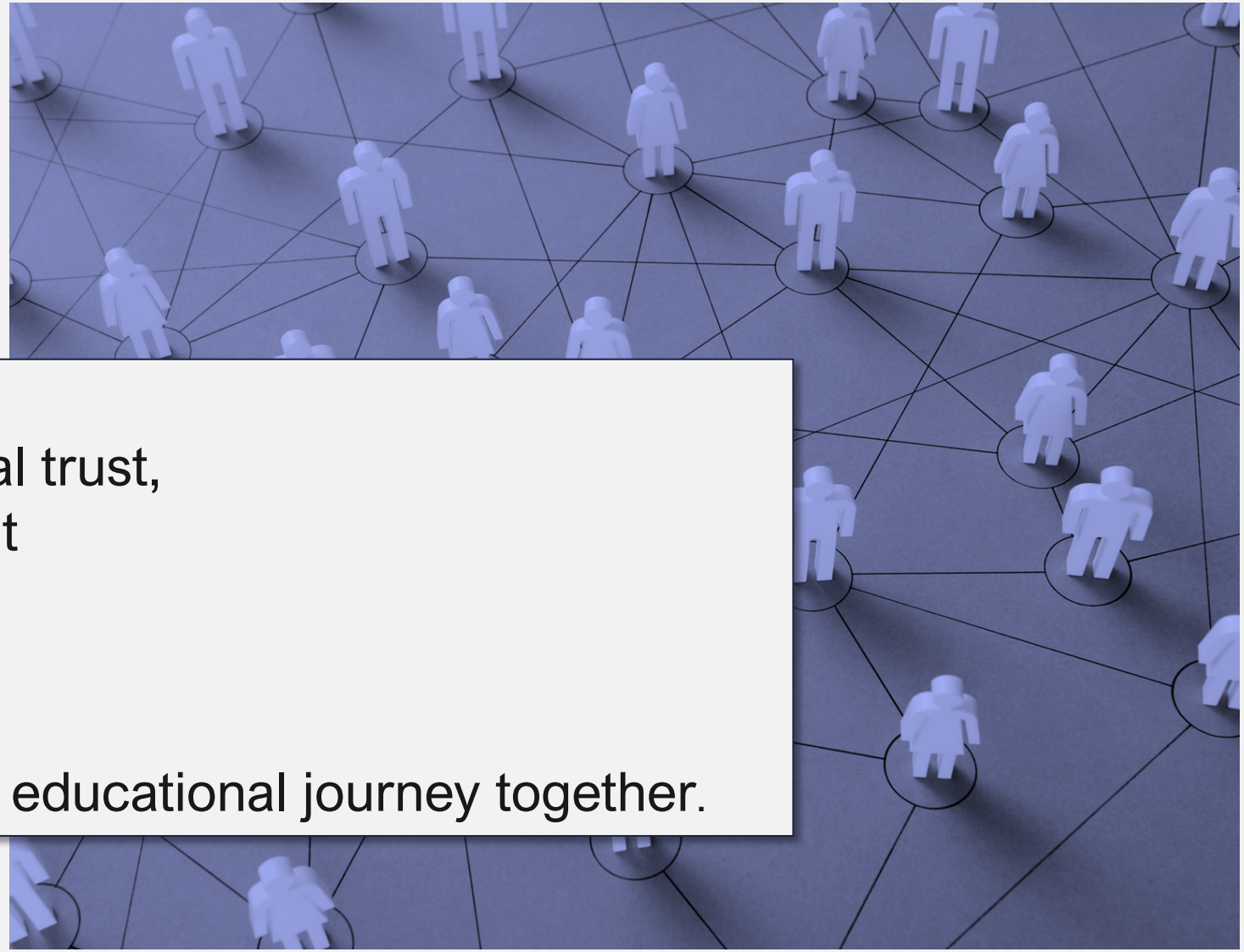


Community

Interaction and collaboration are critical to community development; without them, there would clearly be no community.

—(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 18)

Online Community



Defined as:

- the ability to build mutual trust,
- a connection of the spirit
- a sense of belonging,
- a sense of membership,
- a sense of support, and
- an ability to share in the educational journey together.

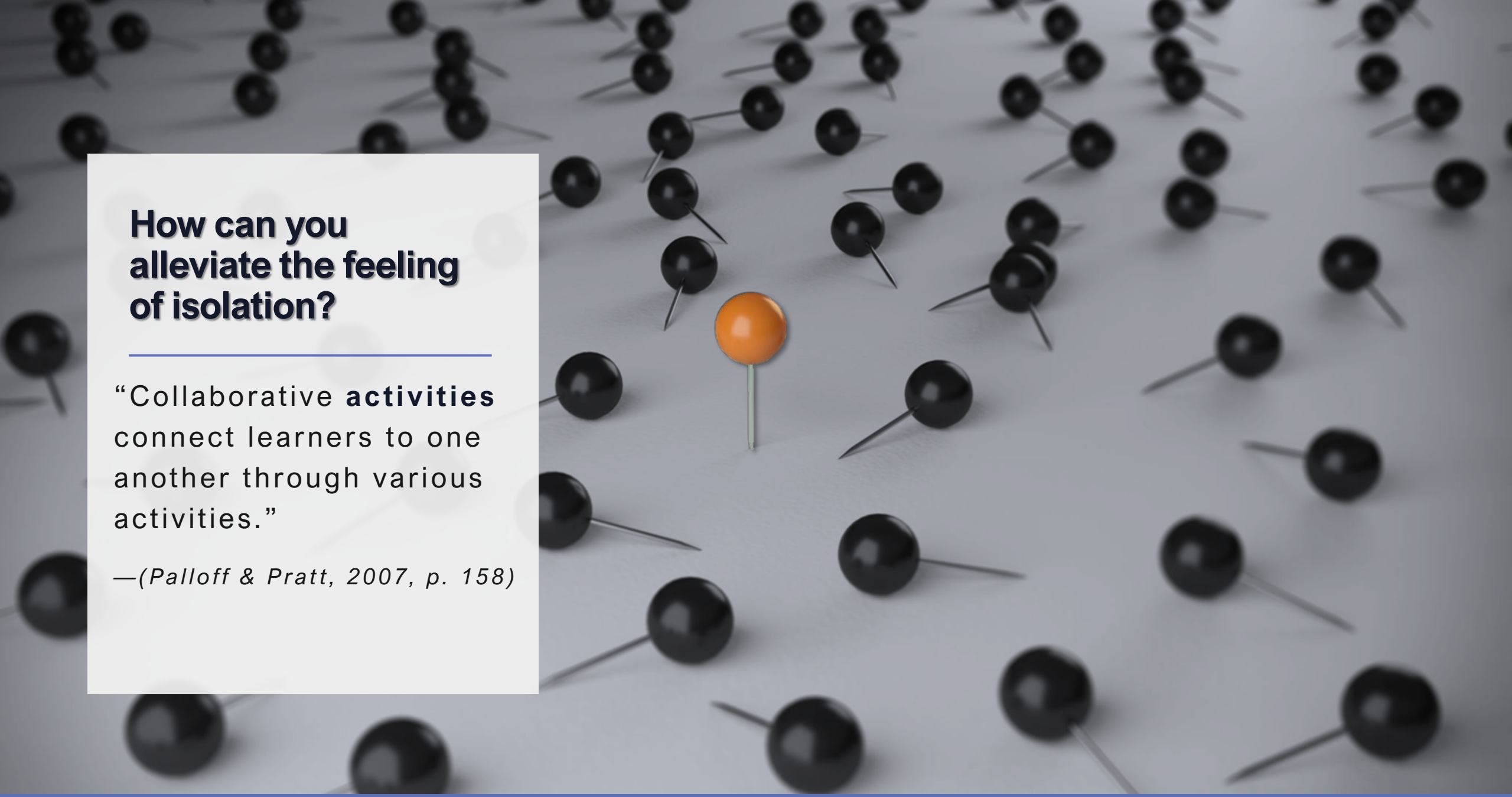
(Shea, Swan, and Pickett, 2004 as cited in Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 26)

The Downside of the Online Environment

- It can be a lonely place.
- Students and faculty report feeling isolation.

—*(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p.158)*





How can you alleviate the feeling of isolation?

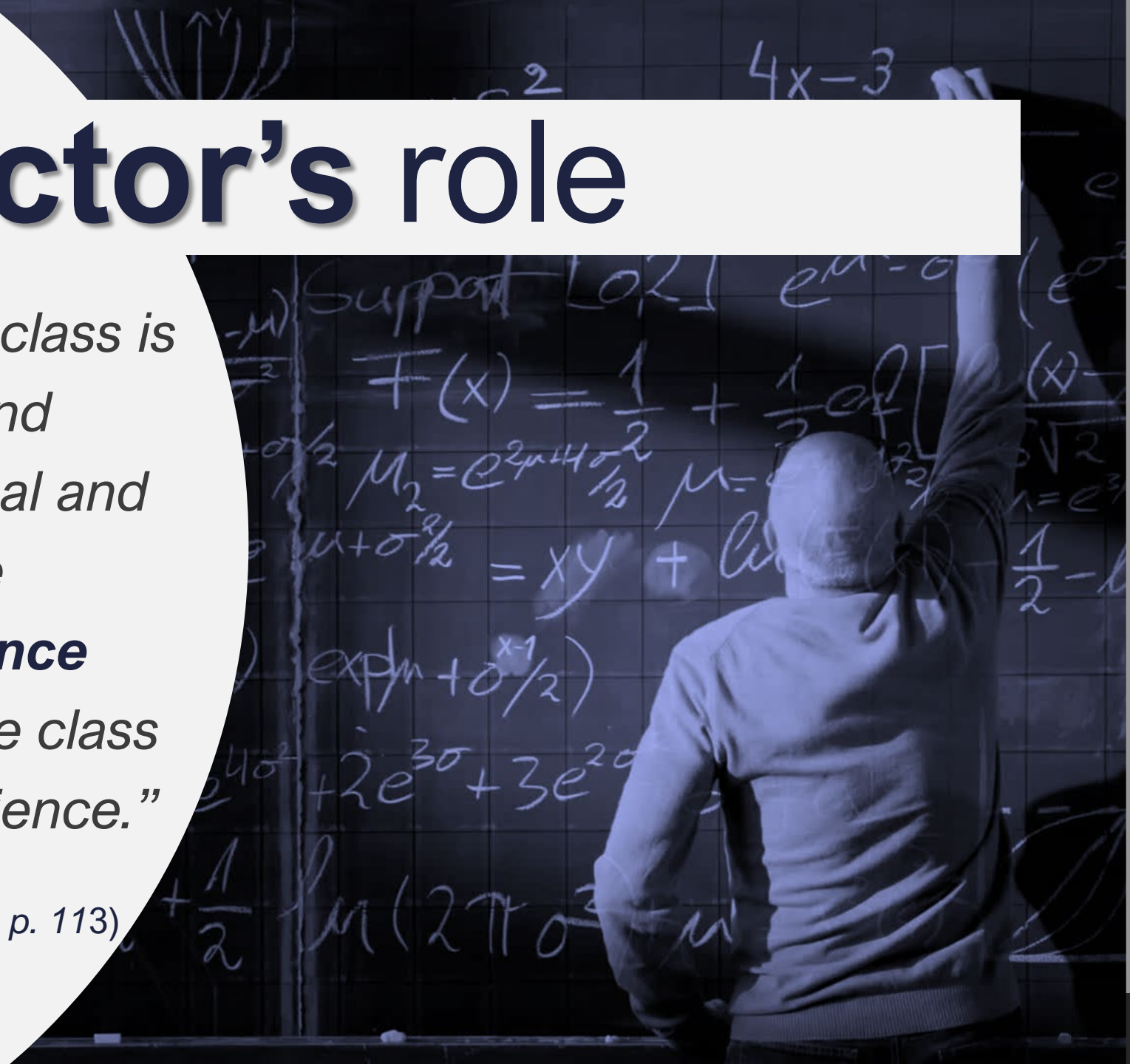
"Collaborative **activities** connect learners to one another through various activities."

—(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 158)

The **Instructor's** role

"The instructor in an online class is responsible for facilitating and making room for the personal and ***social aspects*** *of the online community so* ***social presence*** *can emerge and to make the class a successful learning experience."*

(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 113)

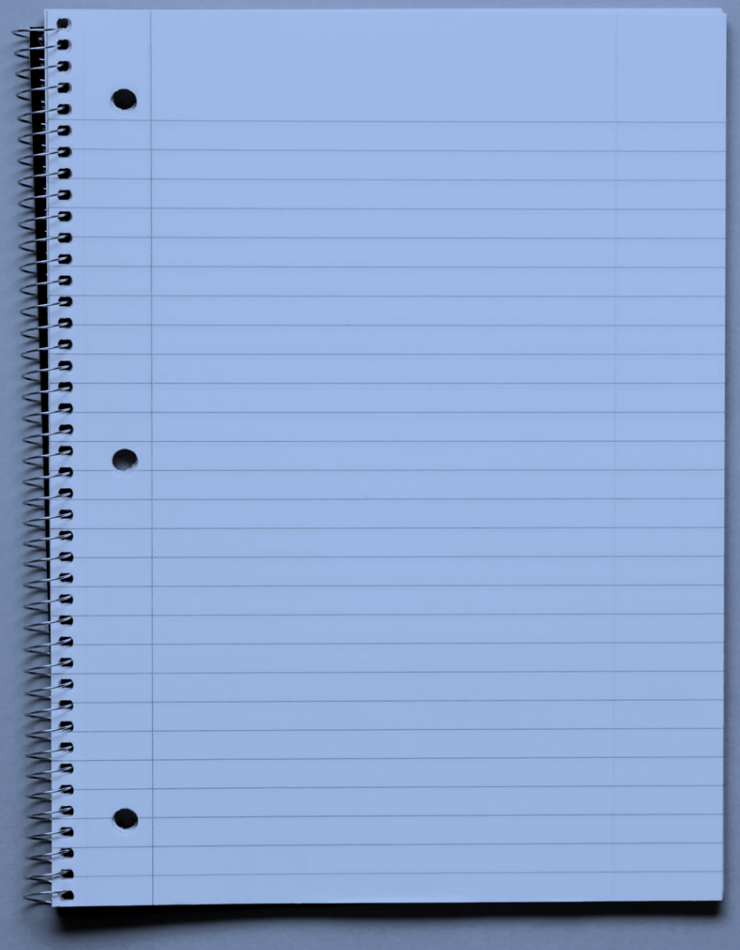


The **Developer's** role

*"The creation of an effective online course involves a **paradigm shift regarding the mode of delivery** of the course material."*

(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 130)





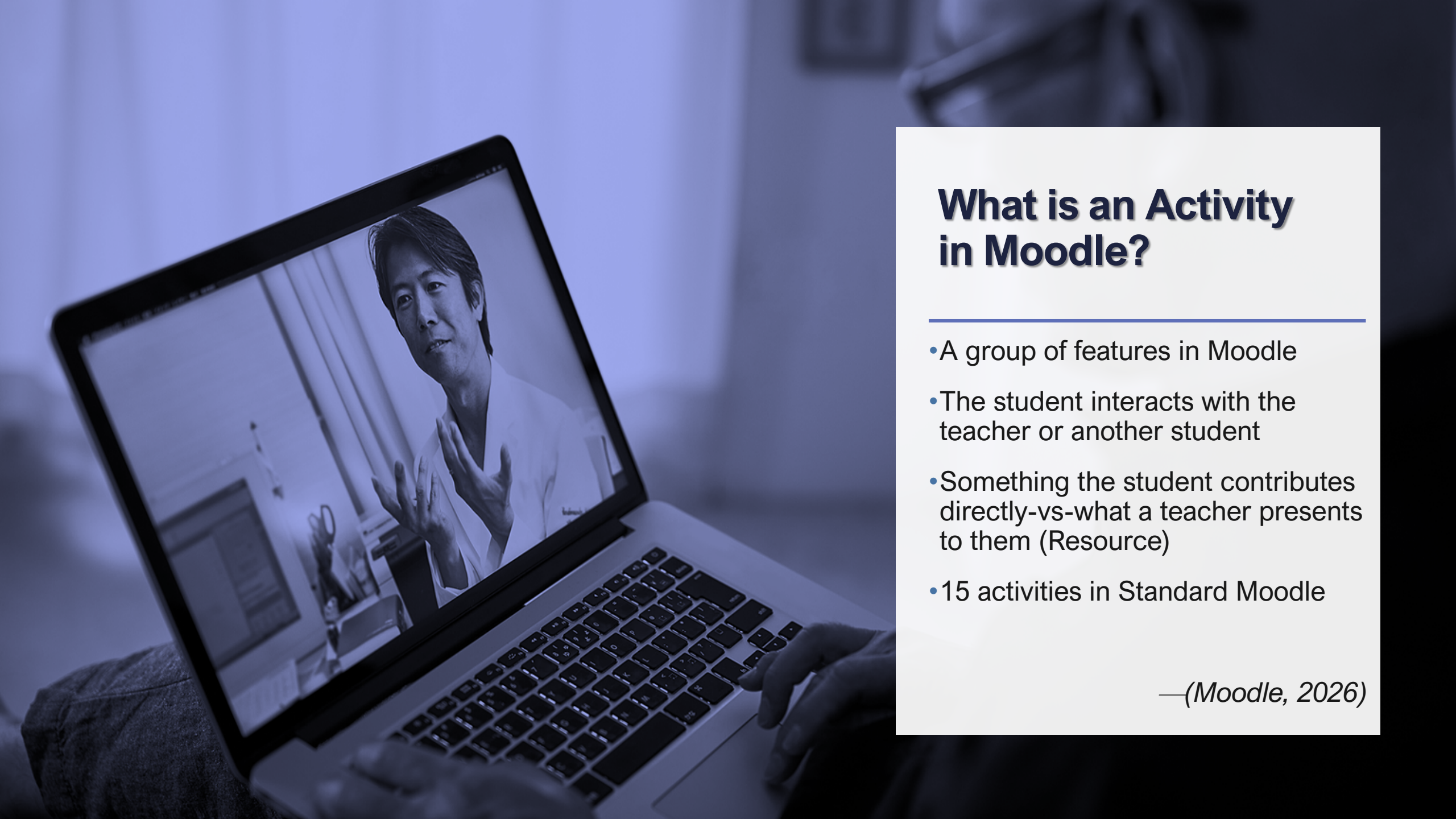
Note on Tools

This is not a how-to for the tools, but it is meant to be informational with ideas on how the tools can be deployed.



Activities in Moodle

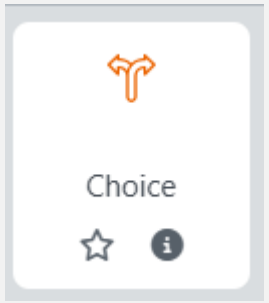
Choice | Database | Forum | Feedback | Wiki | Workshop



What is an Activity in Moodle?

- A group of features in Moodle
- The student interacts with the teacher or another student
- Something the student contributes directly-vs-what a teacher presents to them (Resource)
- 15 activities in Standard Moodle

—*(Moodle, 2026)*



Choice

Examples:

- Icebreaker Questions
- Group sign-ups
- Polls
- Check for Understanding

Facilitators can set to anonymous or with identifiable responses.

*Polling can encourage **active participation** for large and small class/group sizes.*

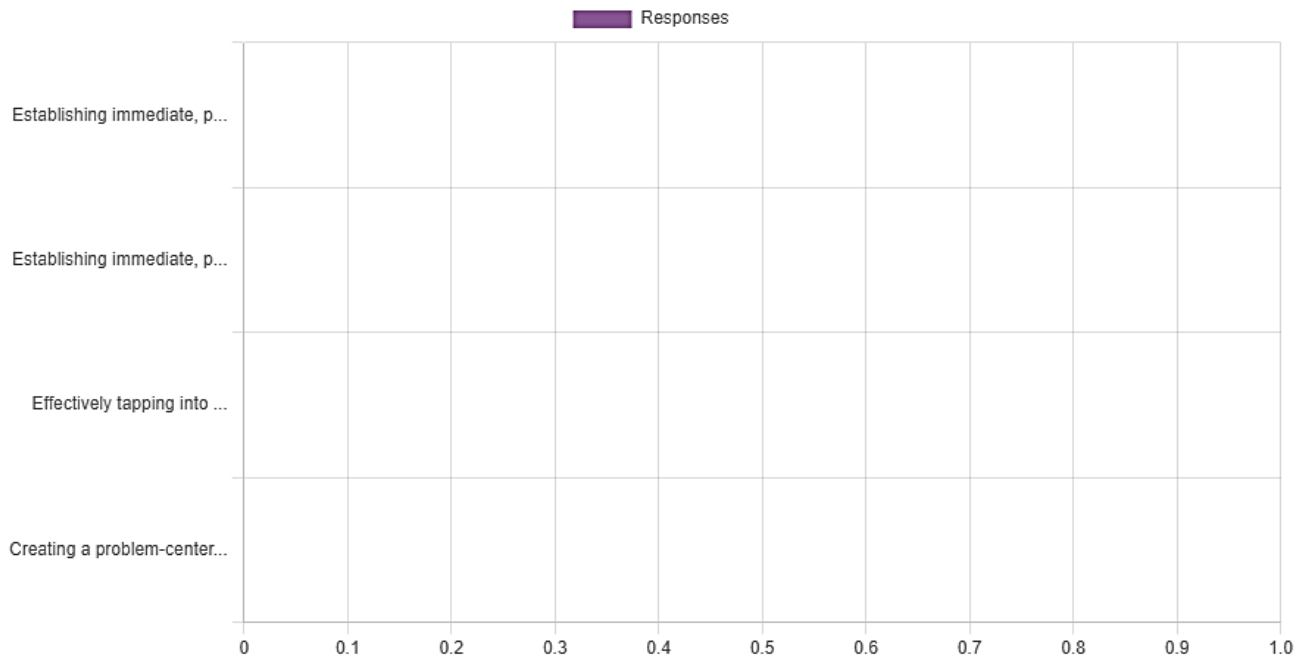
—(Sendgraf, 2024)

Choice

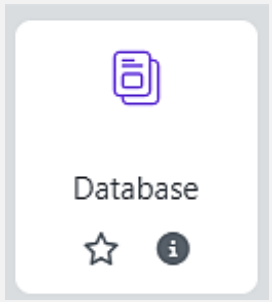
✓ Done

Which of the following principles of adult learning do you find is the most challenging to incorporate into mandatory compliance training?

Your selection: Effectively tapping into the learner's prior experience.



Show chart data



Database

Examples:

- Collaborative Resource Library
- Class Directory

Palloff and Pratt (2007) believe the online environment is prefect for collaborative skills. They encourage **intergroup collaboration** and believe that **resource sharing** allows students to share internet resources and readings. This, they believe allows the students to expand their bibliography beyond the assigned readings for the course.

Add a learning resource to the database.

List view

Entries per page 10 Search Sort by Time added Ascending Advanced search Save settings

KB

Karen Ballengee
06 May 2026

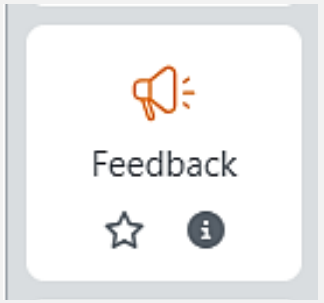
Last edited: 06 May 2026

Resource Name CAST-Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

URL https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

Tags

Add entry



Feedback

Examples:

- Mid-course check in
- Surveys
- Peer Feedback

How is this different than Choice?

- Allows more than one question with more types of questions
- Choice is for quick polls
- Feedback is best for custom surveys

Facilitators can set to anonymous or with identifiable responses.

> *A great way to get students **engaged and interested** in their lessons is to ask their opinion and to make them participate in a poll. Giving students a chance to express their opinion may make them more curious about their assignments.*
>
> *—(Nash, 2015, p. 161)*



FEEDBACK

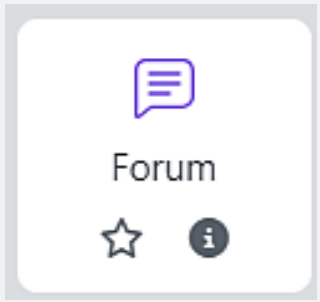
Feedback

Show responses

Anonymous entries (1)

Download table data as Comma separated values (.csv) Download

Response number	From today's lesson, what ...	
Response number: 1	The Forgetting Curve	



Forum

Examples:

- Discussion Board
- Introductions
- Water Cooler
- Non-graded off topic chats



*Online students who participate in discussion forums are **more likely to feel a sense of community** with other students in their classes. Such forums are a crucial tool for forming **cohesive online learning communities** and supporting student **persistence and success**. This is more important for non-traditional learners.*

—Manturuk (2018)

FORUM

Forum

Done: Post replies: 1

Answer the question.

Search forums

Add discussion topic

Subscribe to forum

View grades

Discussion	Started by	Last post ↓	Replies	Subscribe
Adult Learning in Modern Times Discussion	Karen Ballenq... 04 May 2026	Karen Ballenq... 06 May 2026	1	



Wiki

Examples:

- Shared notes
- Group project planning
- Individual journals

Requiring students to complete papers collaboratively and evaluating that work on a group basis also promotes interdependence.

—(Palloff and Pratt, 2007, p182)

WIKI

Wiki

✓ Done

This is where you reflect on what you have learned.

View

Print

Day 1

Please fill out the KWL chart.

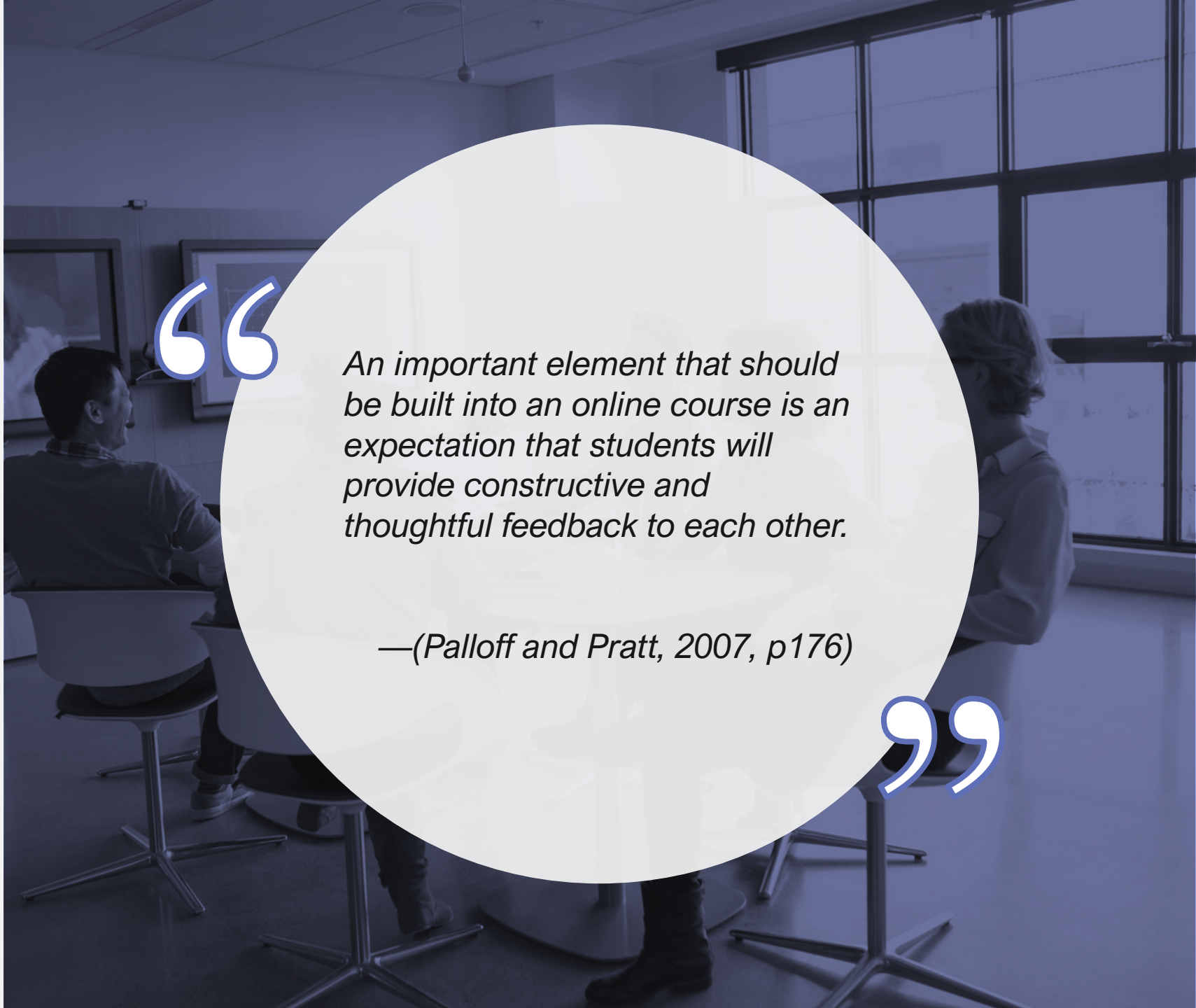
What I KNOW	What I WANT to Know	What I LEARNED
ADDIE	I would like to know more about the different types of Analysis. How are they different?	I learned about the outputs of each phase of ADDIE.



Workshop

Examples:

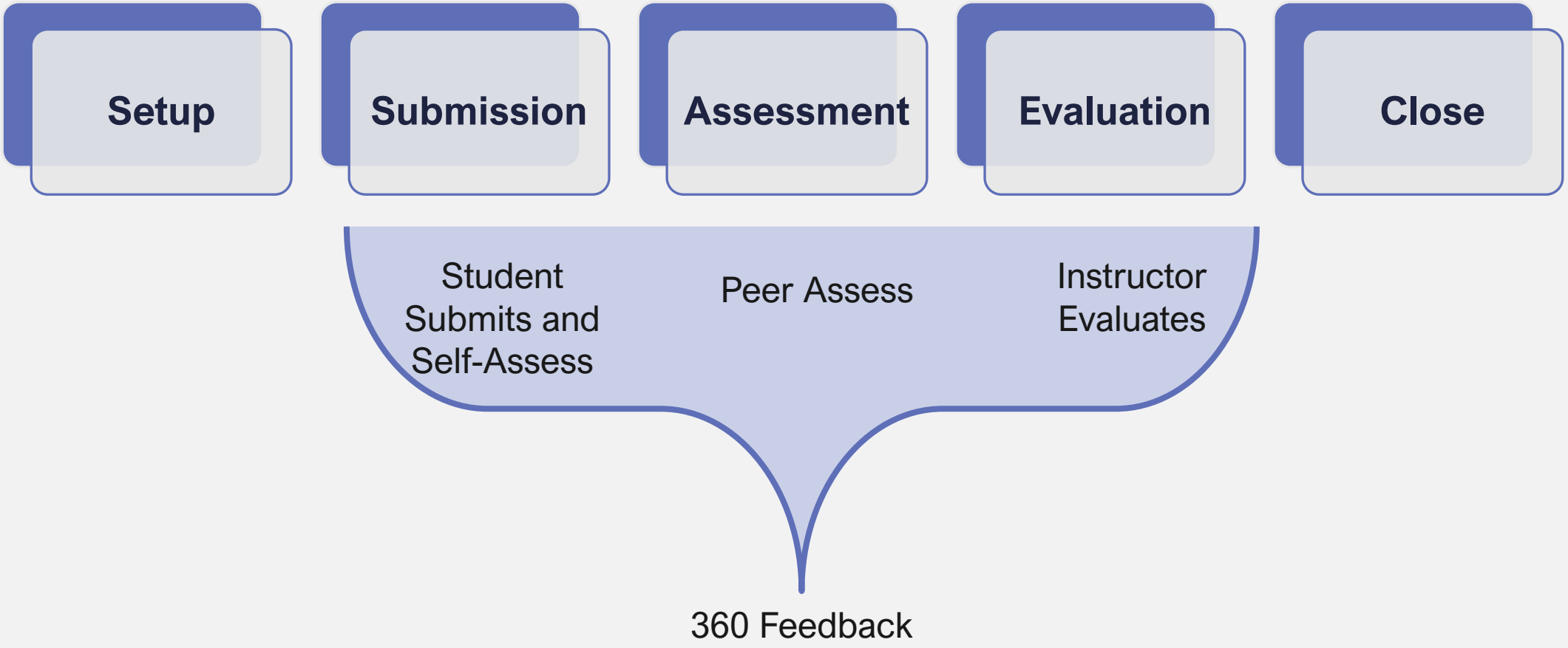
- Structured peer review



An important element that should be built into an online course is an expectation that students will provide constructive and thoughtful feedback to each other.

—(Palloff and Pratt, 2007, p176)

Phases of a Workshop



WORKSHOP

Workshop

Workshop | Settings | Assessment form | Submissions allocation | More

Submission phase

Setup phase Switch to the setup phase	Submission phase Current phase	Assessment phase Switch to the assessment phase	Grading evaluation phase Switch to the evaluation phase	Closed Close workshop
Set the workshop description Provide instructions for submission Edit assessment form Prepare example submissions	Provide instructions for assessment Allocate submissions expected: 0 submitted: 1 to allocate: 1 Switch to the next phase		Calculate submission grades expected: 0 calculated: 0 Calculate assessment grades expected: 0 calculated: 0 Provide a conclusion of the activity	

Instructions for submission

Submit your project here.

Workshop submissions report

Submitted (0) / not submitted (0)

First name: All | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Last name: All | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Activity Review

TOOL	USE	ENABLES GRADING
Choice	•Icebreaker Questions •Group sign-ups •Polls •Check for Understanding	No
Database	•Collaborative Resource Library •Class Directory	Yes
Feedback	•Mid-course check in •Surveys •Peer Feedback	No
Forum	•Introductions •Water Cooler •Non-graded off topic chats	Yes
Wiki	•Shared notes •Group project planning	No
Workshop	•Structured peer review	Yes

**You can enter a manual grade*

Evidence that Community has Formed in an Online Course:

Active interaction involving both course content and personal communication
Collaborative learning evidenced by comments directed primarily student to student rather than student to instructor
Socially constructed meaning evidenced by agreement or questioning with the intent to achieve agreement on issues of meaning
Sharing of resources among students
Expressions of support and encouragement exchanged between students, as well as willingness to critically evaluate the work of others

(Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 31)

How do I know if a community has formed?

Additional ways to build community



Break the students into groups in Moodle.



Create a “water cooler” in the discussion board area.



Give students a “tour” of the course.

Regardless of the technology used, it should never serve as the **driver** of the learning process, but should be viewed as the **vehicle** through which learning occurs.

—(Palloff and Pratt, 2007, p.90)

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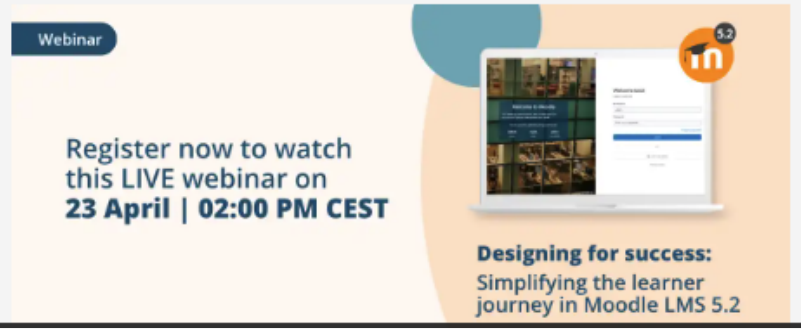
New to Moodle? Take the 1 hour Introduction to Moodle course to get started.

Webinar

Better learning with Moodle LMS 5.2

Moodle LMS 5.2 releases 20 April, 2026. Join us Thursday, 23 April at 2:00pm CEST (GMT+2) for a practical guide to the updates that matter most. From navigation and grading to flexible AI, see what's new and how to simplify your learner's journey. Can't attend live? Register and we'll send you the recording!

Register for the webinar



Summary
Today you learned:

01

the importance of community in the online learning environment,

02

six key activities in ATIS/Moodle that foster community, and

03

practical ideas for using Moodle activities to build a sense of community.



Wrap-up

Share with the group which Moodle activity you are excited to try:

Choice, Database, Feedback, Forum, Wiki, or Workshop?


Questions

Contact information

- Have questions about the Moodle Activities presented today?
- Want to explore more activities?
- Need resources?





References

Manturuk, K., (2018). *Online discussion forums create a sense of community in online learning*. Duke Center for Teaching and Learning. https://ctl.duke.edu/blog/2018/10/online-discussion-forums-create-sense-of-community-in-online-learning/

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Sendgraf, T. (2024). *Learner engagement: Polling activities*. New York University, Steinhardt. https://technology.steinhardt.nyu.edu/hc/en-us/articles/16632749484059-Learner-Engagement-Polling-Activities