Online Learning at Community Colleges: Promise and Problems

Dr. Theresa Capra
Professor of Education
Mercer County Community College

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Welcome to the webinar!

Agenda

- Overview of online education: then & now.

- Problems for community college students/professors.

- Addressing the problems: introduction to a paradigm shift
  - Four learning theories applicable to online learning
  - Pitfalls and improvements for online course design
  - Rethinking discussion boards
  - Prioritizing pedagogy at the individual and institutional levels

- Q & A…feel free to ask as we move along!

Online learning: one of the greats?

- Historically, Americans have pursued alternatives to face-to-face to education.
- Early attempts included correspondence through mail, radio, and television (McGivney, 2009).
- All attempts limited to one way interaction;
- Internet and World Wide Web made "interactive" distance learning possible (McGivney, 2009).

- WebCT 1997; CourseInfo 1996 (became Bb 1997)

Spark to explosion!

- Online education grown faster than overall student body in higher education (Allen & Seamen, 2008, 2011, 2016;).

- Steady increase [exception: for-profit dip since 2014] (Allen & Seamen, 2016; Deming, Yuchtman, Abulafi, & Katz, 2016).

- CC students *particularly* attracted to online learning; flexibility; more likely to take one (Barshay, 2015; Xu, D., & Jaggars Smith, 2011)

Problems for CC students …

- More likely to fail an online course than a traditional one & when compared to 4-year students (Aragon & Johnson, 2008; Barshay, 2015; Johnson & Mejia, 2014; Smith Jaggers & Bailey, 2010; Xu & Smith Jaggars, 2011)

- Why? Academically unprepared (Morris, 2009, 2011; Smith Jaggars & Xu, 2011).

- Why? Academically at risk: delayed entry, work 35+ hours, part-time status (below 12 credits), single parent, financially independent, no high school diploma (Barshay, 2015; Capra, 2013, 2014; Johnson & Mejia, J. 2014).

- Online courses may not be ideal for an academically weak population (Capra, 2013, 2014; Morris, 2011; Smith Jaggars & Bailey, 2010,)

Problems for faculty …

- Online literature plentiful, but studies primarily based on 4-year students.

- Studies (Capra, 2013, 2014; Morris, 2009, 2011) have investigated <u>outcomes</u> and <u>perceptions</u> *without offering a vivid account of student experience or learning that transpires.*

- Action research based mostly on basic *'best practices'* for students/faculty to follow. (Capra, 2013; Poulin & Straut, 2017)

- Institutional efforts and training usually focus on the <u>technology</u> and <u>basic best practices</u>. (Poulin & Straut, 2017)

Now what?

Start with a paradigm shift!

Time for a Paradigm Shift?

- <u>Apply</u> learning theories to instruction and course design;

- <u>Identify</u> common pitfalls in course design and <u>implement </u>alternatives;
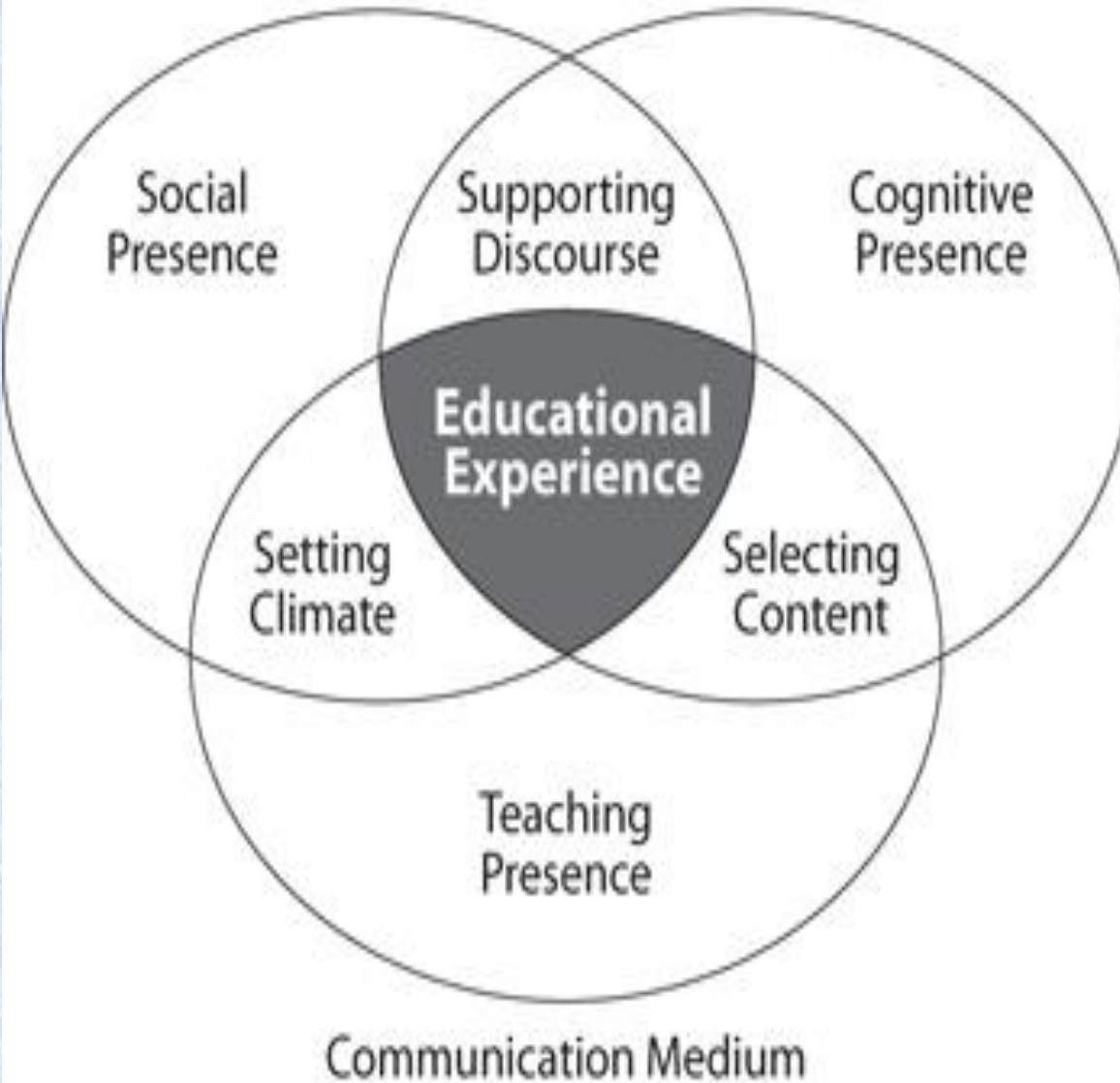
- <u>Prioritize </u>pedagogy;

Apply learning theory

- Finding the right ones; a myriad to select from --

- Four tried & true (by me, too)
  - Community of Inquiry (2000)
  - Bloom's Taxonomy (1956, 2001)
  - Problem-Based Learning (1994)
  - Engagement Theory (1999)

Community of Inquiry

Social Presence

Supporting Discourse

Cognitive Presence

Educational Experience

Setting Climate

Selecting Content

Teaching Presence

Communication Medium

(Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)

The Community of Inquiry Framework

– Social Presence
– Cognitive Presence
– Teaching Presence

"The Community of Inquiry theory represents a process of creating deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learning through the development of three interdependent elements - social, cognitive and teaching presence." (CoI, 2011).
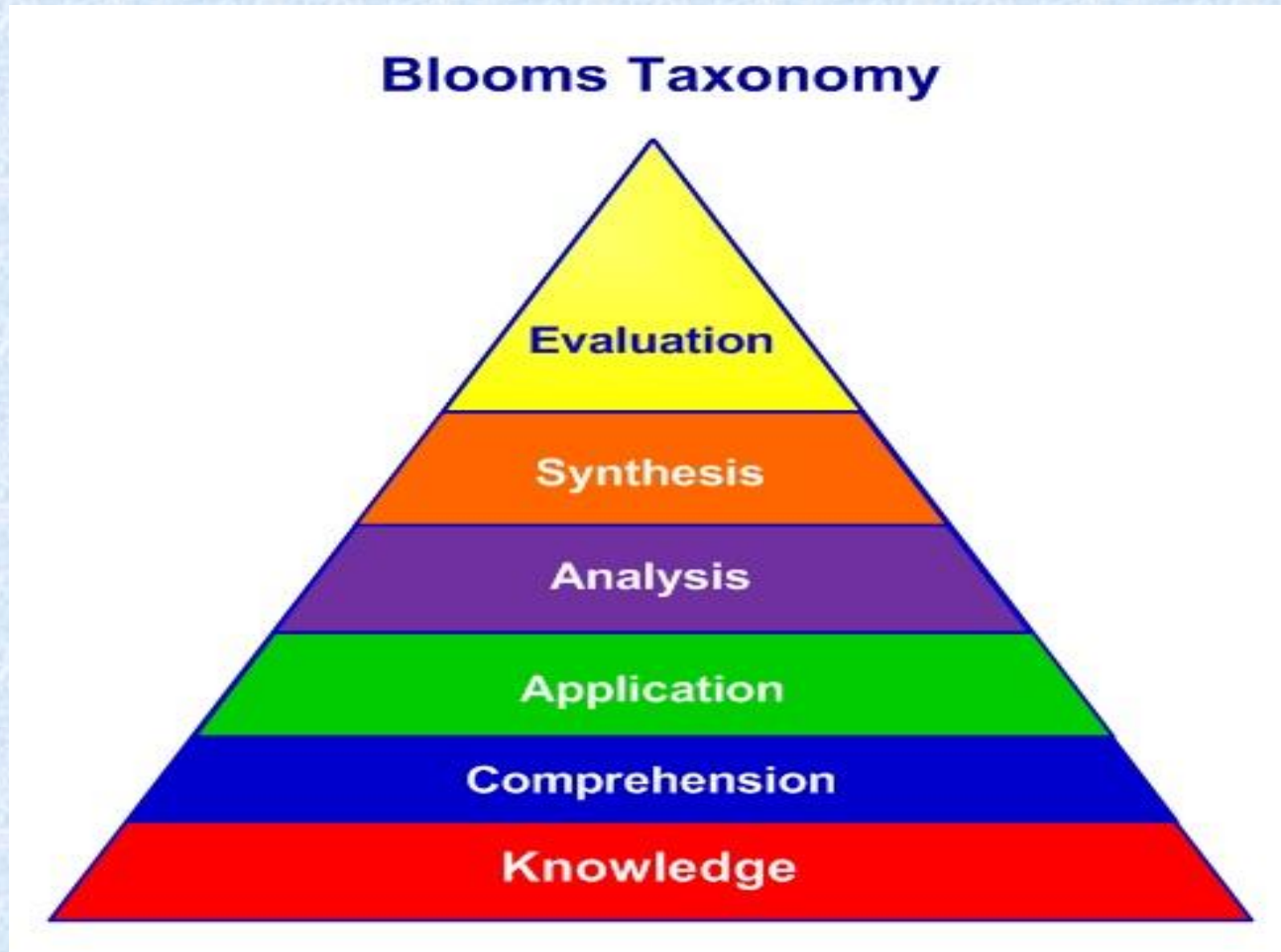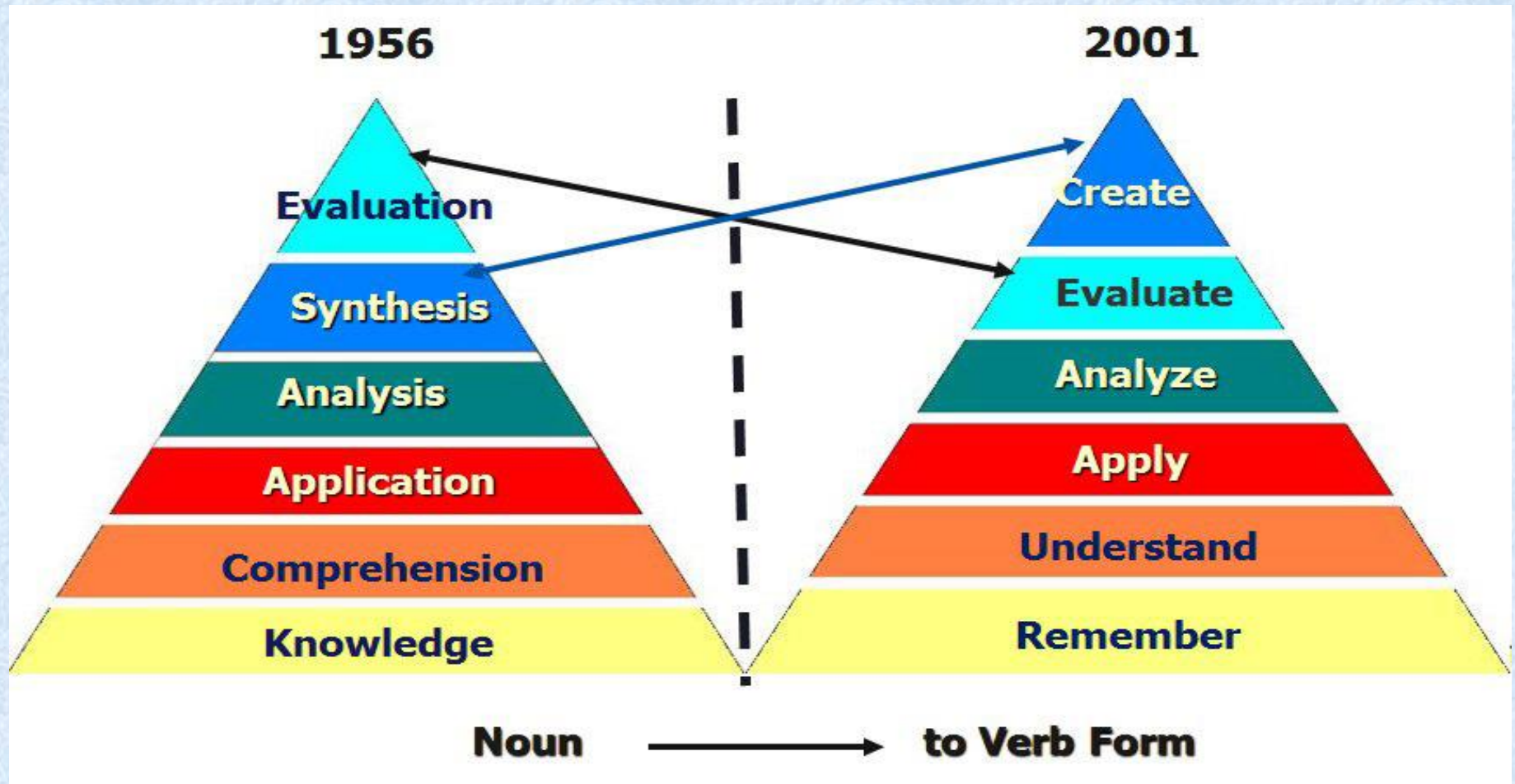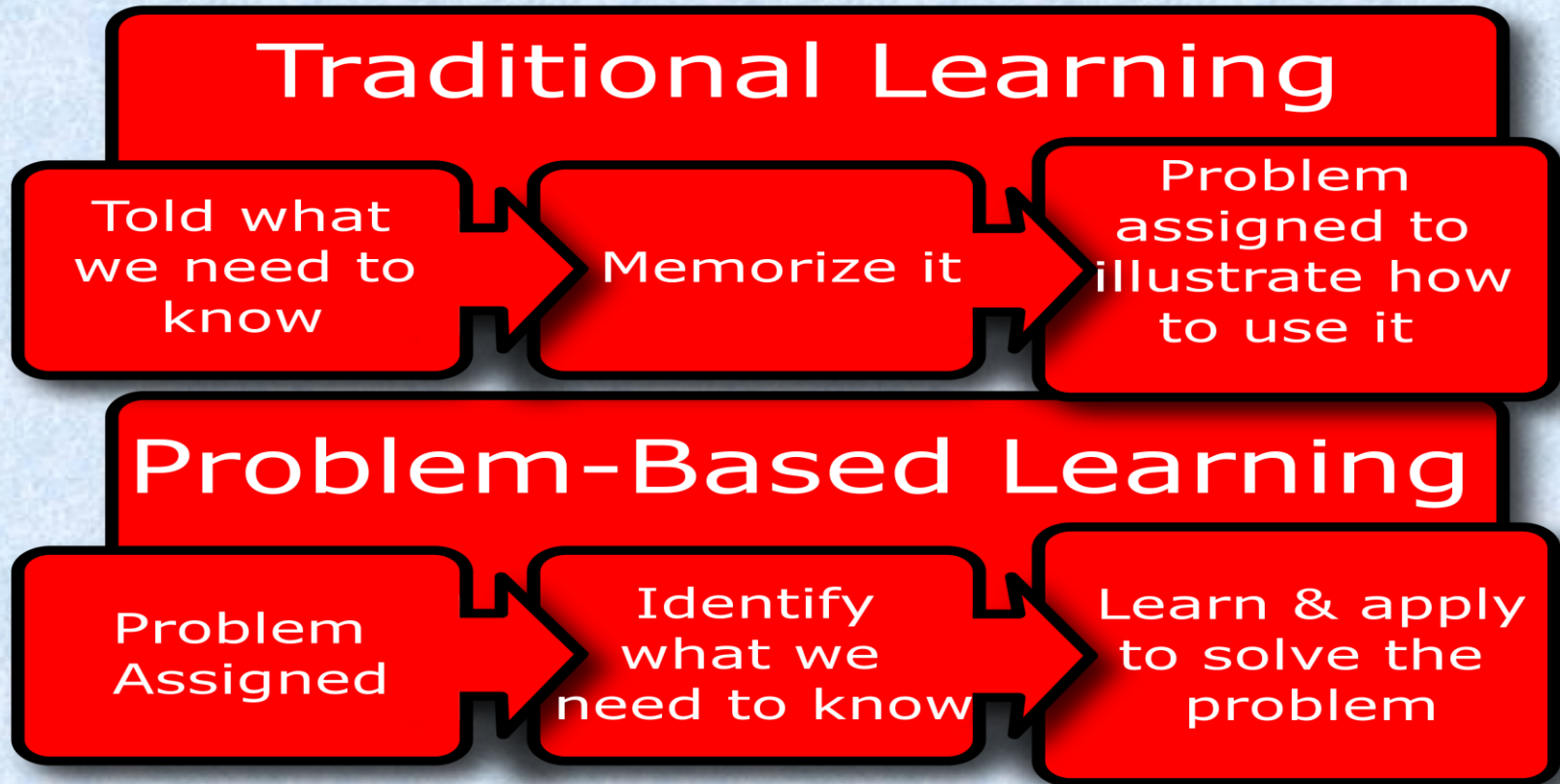
Bloom's Taxonomy

(Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, & Krathwohl ,1956)

Bloom's Taxonomy –Revised

(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

Problem-Based Learning

Traditional Learning

Told what we need to know → Memorize it → Problem assigned to illustrate how to use it

Problem-Based Learning

Problem Assigned → Identify what we need to know → Learn & apply to solve the problem

(Savery & Duffy, 1994)

Engagement Theory
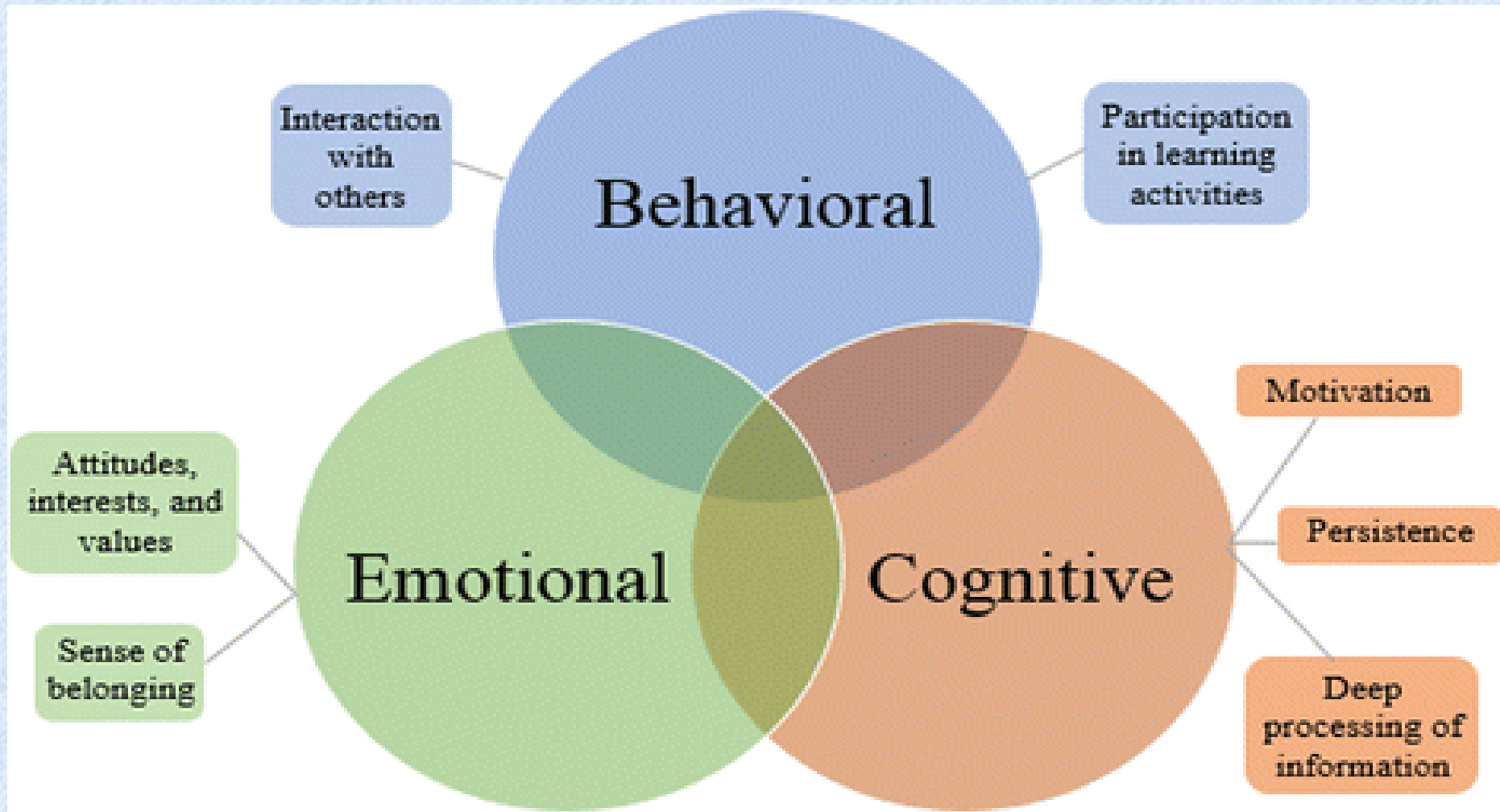
(Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999)

Identify pitfalls

- Common design pitfalls
  - All about the textbook
  - Layering of repetitive tasks; e.g. test bank quizzes, summaries, voice over PPTs
  - Narrow discussion boards

- Technology over/under-load
  - No meaningful use of technology to enhance expression
  - A cognitively shallow course dressed up with technology
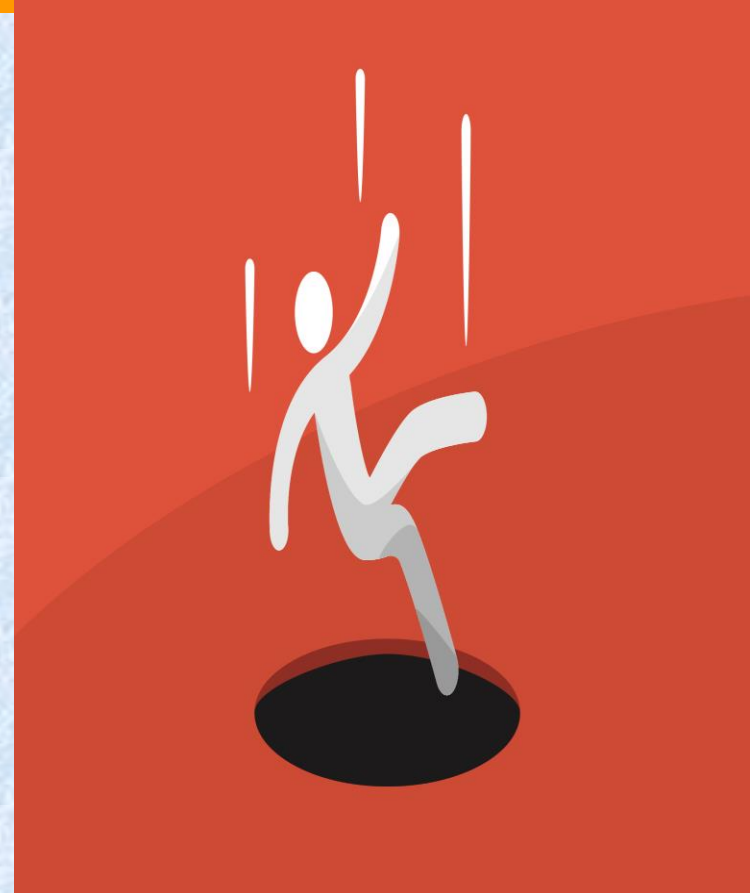
Implement alternatives

- ## Less is more
  - Identify fewer SLOs
  - Use textbook as reference, not GPS
  - Avoid perfunctory, overlapping tasks
  - Aim for higher levels of Bloom
  - Evaluate presence and purpose

  of technology beyond *your* views:

  what do I have, why, is there anything that

  would enhance/or should I remove?

Rethink discussion boards

- Discussion boards widely-used, effective mode of communication, interaction, and engagement in online courses, but they're also **abused!**
  - Avoid discussion boards if the goal is to assess if students read a chapter
  - Create open-ended, thought-provoking prompts that invite shared learning (the humanities)
  - Mathematics courses could reserve them for eureka moments, examples of working through problems
  - Science, health professions, engineering, technology courses; problem-based learning
  - Provide a rubric, consider engagement theory for facilitation, make them 'real-time'.

Rethink discussion board: example 1

- Deep Pedagogy online course; NJ Council Center for Student Success (spring 2017)
- Put learning theories in action
- Compare/contrast discussion board design

Answer the following questions using the Community of Inquiry website (link below) and Ragan (2009). Ten Principles of Effective Online Teaching. Magna Publication (attached). Minimum of 500 words. Document your sources in your preferred manner. Respond to postings by two (2) classmates by agreeing or disagreeing --ask for more information whenever possible. Refer to the rubric for grading criteria.

1) Read 'Ten Principles of Effective Online Teaching.' Which ones do you think are most important and why?
2) What is Community of Inquiry and why was it developed?
3) Explain how you could use Community of Inquiry.

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- PBL, engagement theory, Bloom, & CoI

Students, please watch the short video (below) for this discussion module. Discussion postings should be thoughtful, conscientious, and provide evidence of ample research. Readers need enough detail to generate a full understanding of your post, especially so we can respond fully; 500 words in total usually does the trick. Conform to the rubric for grading specifics and document your sources. Be courteous; when classmates respond to your posting, don't leave them hanging!

1) Complete some Internet research using the keywords 'best practices and online teaching.' Post an article/weblink for the class with a brief description of the main points and tell us why you selected it.
2) Explore the Community of Inquiry website below. Select one document or web page from the entire site and become an 'expert' on it (expert means well enough to answer questions). Post it with a brief description. Tell us why you selected it.
3) Choose at least 3 'finds' by your classmates (1 from each question, and then an additional 1 from either) and ask them questions. Put their expertise to the test!

Prioritize pedagogy

- Pedagogy
  - The art or science of teaching
  - Harder to transfer the 'intangibles'
  - Get beyond best practices; focus on
  cognition, content, and purpose
  (presence, responses, clear directions)

- Use media for expression
  - Discussion boards, not simply 'assignments'
  - Technology to enhance pedagogy, not replace

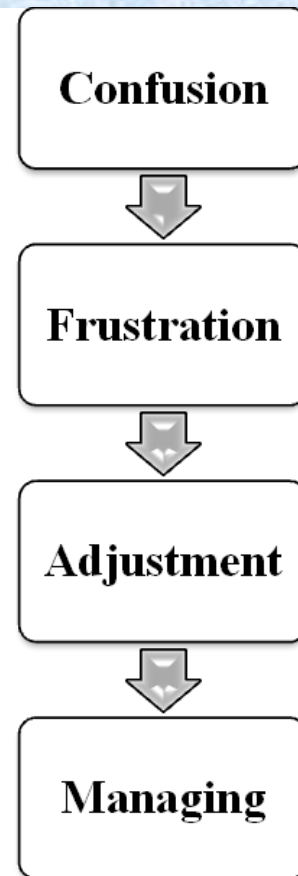# Prioritize pedagogy; Institutional efforts

- Move beyond orientations and technology; well-oiled machines, but need support <u>throughout</u>
- Faculty led PD for online *pedagogy*
- Incentivize faculty to develop <u>deep</u> courses
- Supplement w/ textbook platforms but avoid building entire courses upon them

Prioritize pedagogy; Institutional efforts

- Support first-time online learners; research shows they are most vulnerable (Capra, 2012, 2014; Smith Jaggers & Bailey, 2010, Smith Jaggars & Xu, 2011; Johnson & Mejia, 2014; Barshay, 2015).

Stages of first-time online learner. Majority will drop during frustration. Early support, peer mentoring, can mitigate.

(Capra, 2012)

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┌─────────────┐
│  Confusion  │
└─────────────┘
       ↓
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│ Frustration │
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│ Adjustment  │
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│  Managing   │
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Institutional efforts; expand hybrids

- Expand hybrid model: segue to online courses
    - Still flexible, but w/ f2f support
    - Different models to implement

Online Learning Consortium (formerly Sloan) (2017) – undergraduates prefer hybrid model; note potential to integrate technology w/ ease

Babson Group (2004-2017) – undergraduates need a lot of support in online courses!!

Community College Research Center @ Teachers College, Columbia (2006-2017) –---CC students LOVE flexibility, but fully online not always the best fit!

Traditional

Online

+ ➡ Hybrid
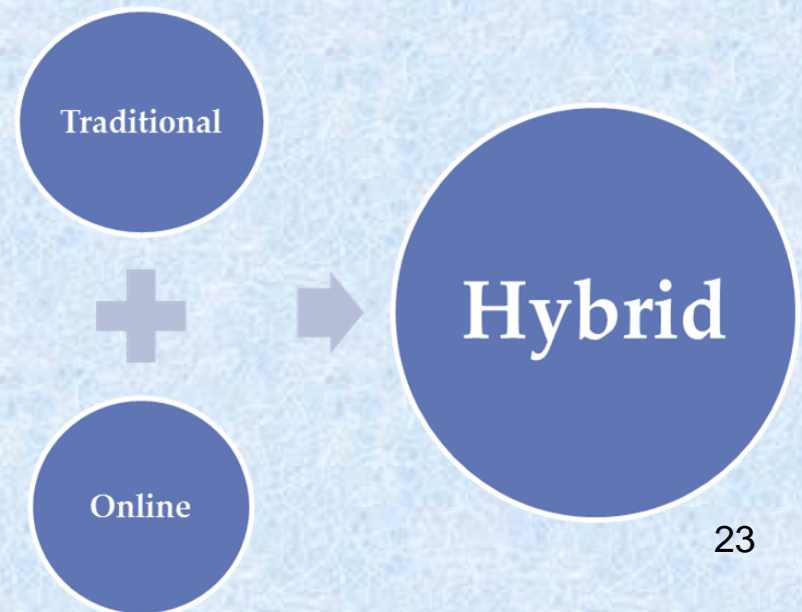
Contact me anytime!

Dr. Theresa Capra
Professor of Education
Mercer County Community College
caprat@mccc.edu

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