

# Engaging Students by Design: Principles of Course and Assignment Design

---

Sarah King, Associate Professor, Teaching, and Writing  
Centre Coordinator, CTL

Sarah Fedko, Librarian & Campus Information Literacy  
Coordinator, CTL

University of Toronto Scarborough

July 31, 2018

# Take a few minutes and reflect:

- Think of yourself as an undergraduate. What strengths and weaknesses did you bring to university?

1

- Think of a course you took as an undergraduate that you still remember. What do you remember and why?

## Slide 2

---

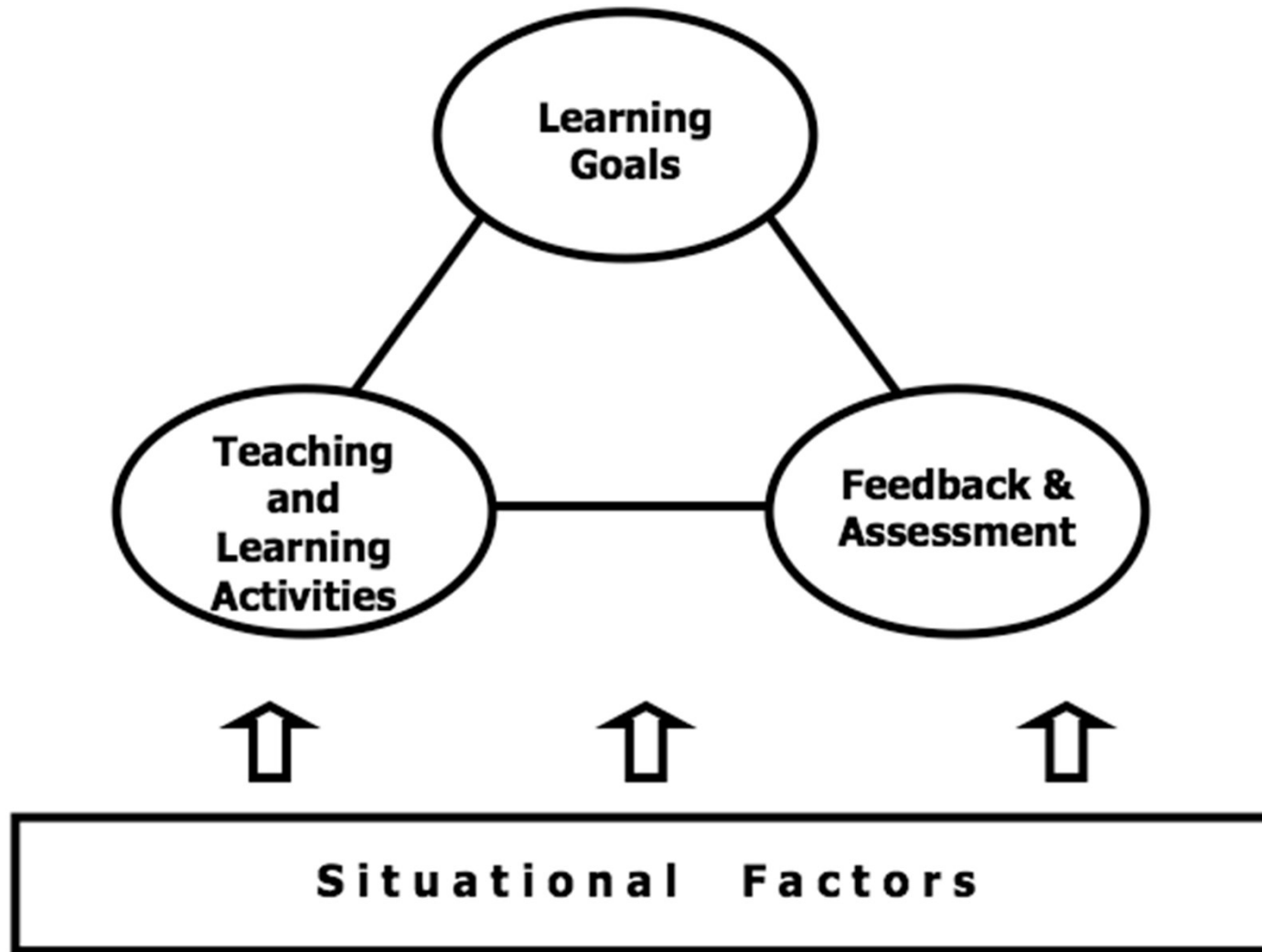
- 1 maybe only have one of these questions--worth thinking about what the goal is here.  
the self as undergraduate introduces idea of student-centred teaching  
UTSC, 7/17/2018

## During this hands-on session, we hope you will:

- Reflect on your teaching practices
- Explore model of backwards course design, particularly if you are not already using it
- Consider resources (people, worksheets, readings) on course design that you might consult, now or later

Our assumption: you are currently, or will be soon, designing a course

# L.Deer Fink's Model: Integrated Backwards Course Design



Dee Fink, L. (2003). *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. P. 62.

# Key Situational Factor: UTSC students

## University of Toronto\*

- 12,693 total students
- 2,048 undergraduate international students from 86 countries
- Many domestic students from immigrant families and first-generation university attenders

## Your Course

- Academic Level
- Course Format
- TA Support
- Place in your Program's Curriculum

\*Source: UofT Facts and Figures 2016

Test out this course design model with a course you are planning

1. Make notes on the situational factors for a course you will be teaching (worksheets p.2)

# Learning Goals

Instructors:

*shape learning and assessment activities*

Students:

*enhance student engagement and learning*

From *What are Learning Outcomes (CTSI)*



# By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Name some of the main stylistic categories (e.g. prehistoric, medieval), artists, times and chronology, and locations of major works of art in world civilization
- Identify the key elements of design in any work of art
- Analyze pictures when they visit an exhibition, in terms of main elements of design
- Find value in supporting the arts by attending art exhibits

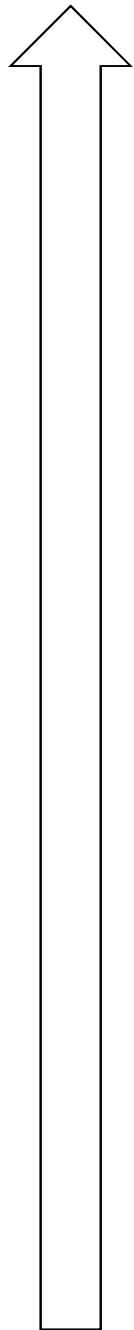
Art History

## By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define the meaning of terms related to population and parameter, sample and statistics
- Apply the two key concepts, variance and correlation, appropriately and correctly
- Interpret a graph and see relationships in the real world that are being described
- Derive satisfaction from quantitative reasoning

Psychology (Statistics)

# Taxonomy 1: Bloom



Create

Evaluate

Synthesize

Analyze

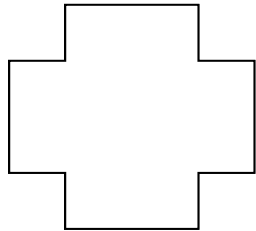
Apply

Comprehend

Memorize

# Taxonomy 2: Anderson & Krathwohl

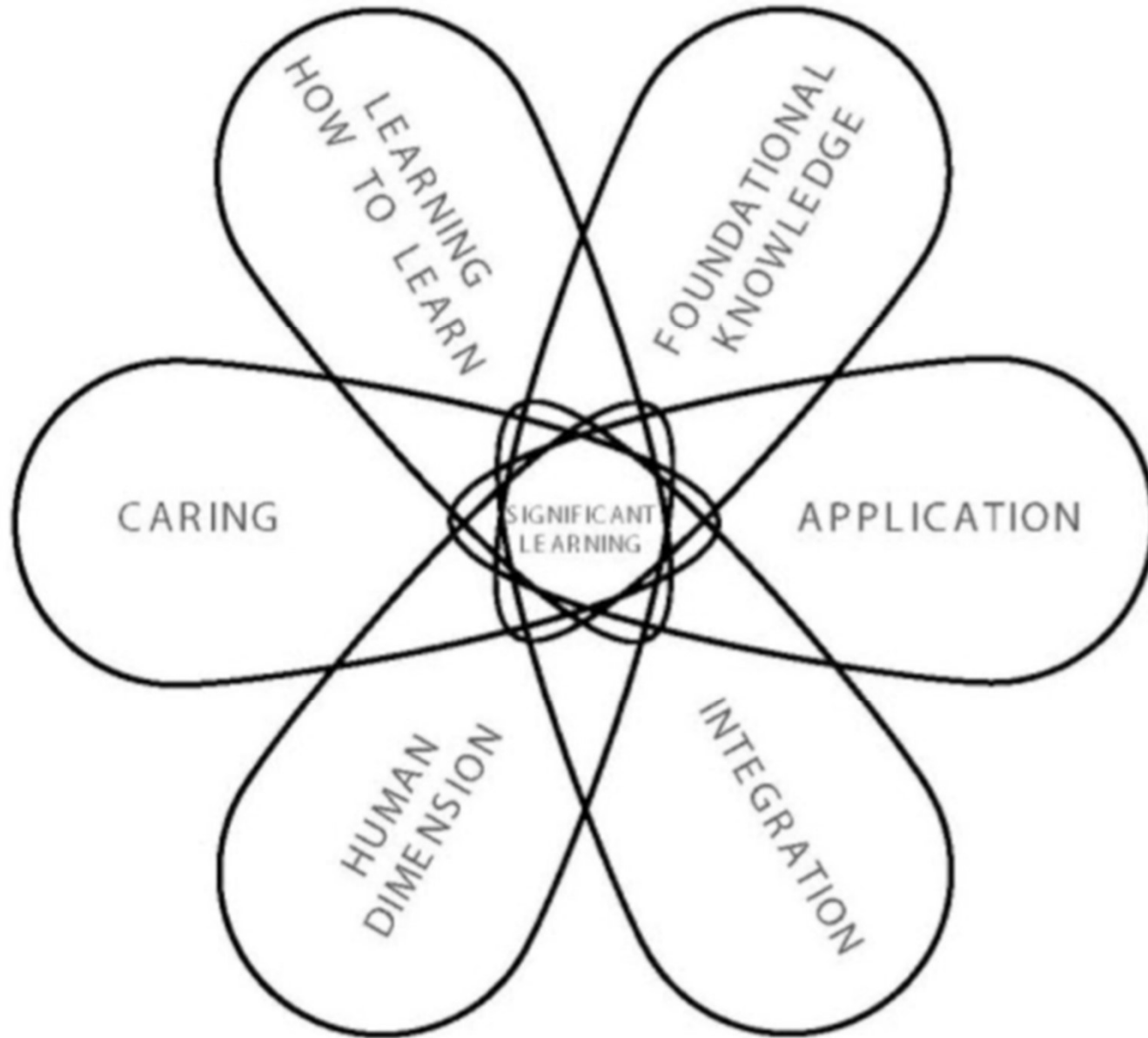
## Cognitive Process Dimension (from Bloom)



## Knowledge Dimension

- Factual (terminology; facts about discipline)
- Conceptual (theories, classifications, principles)
- Procedural (methods, algorithms, techniques)
- Meta-cognitive (self-awareness, strategy, evaluative)

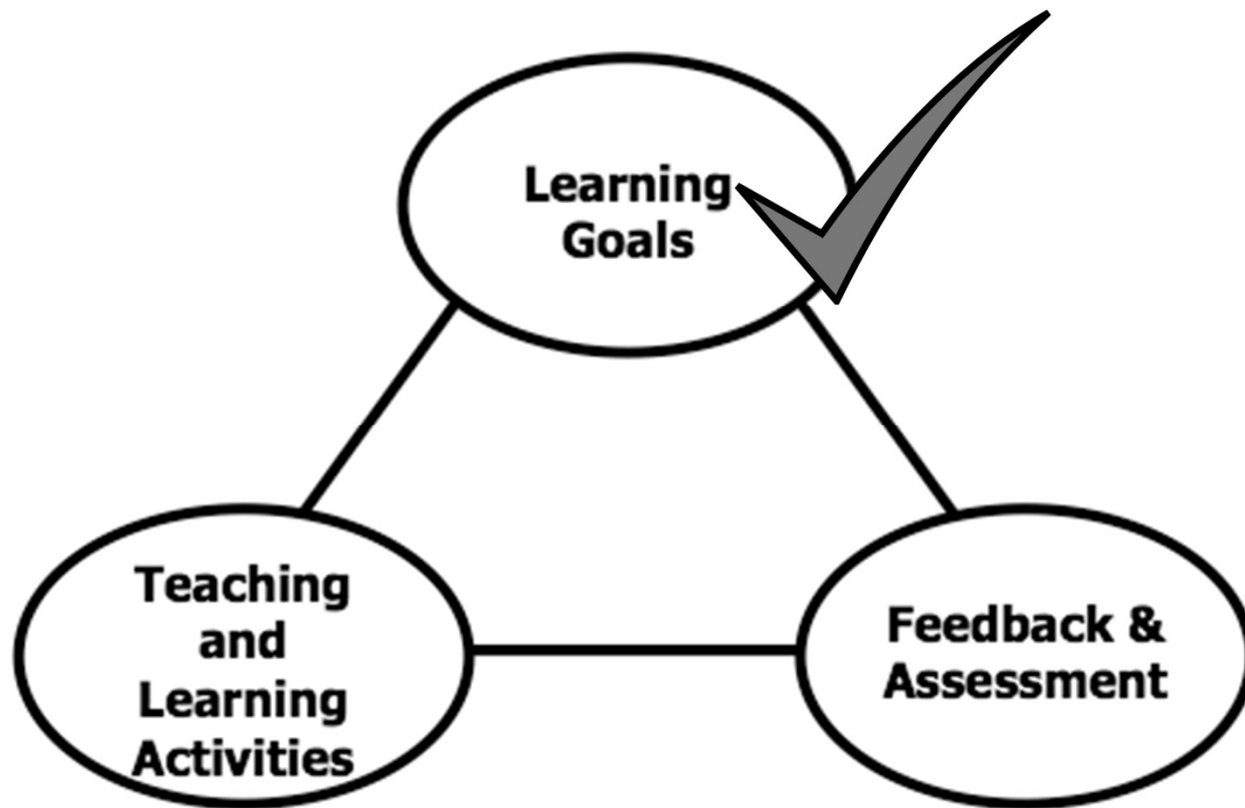
# Fink's Taxonomy



# Test out this course design model with a course you are planning

1. Make notes on the situational factors for a course you will be teaching (worksheets p.2)

2. Draft learning goals (worksheets p.2)



What has to happen in the course for students to do well on the assessment activities/assignments?

What will students **do** to demonstrate that they have achieved the course learning goals?



# Think about students when designing assessment and activities

- What can students **do** to help them master your learning goals?
- Which activities might you use to assess whether or not students have met learning goals?
- What might provide a significant learning experience that would meet multiple learning goals?

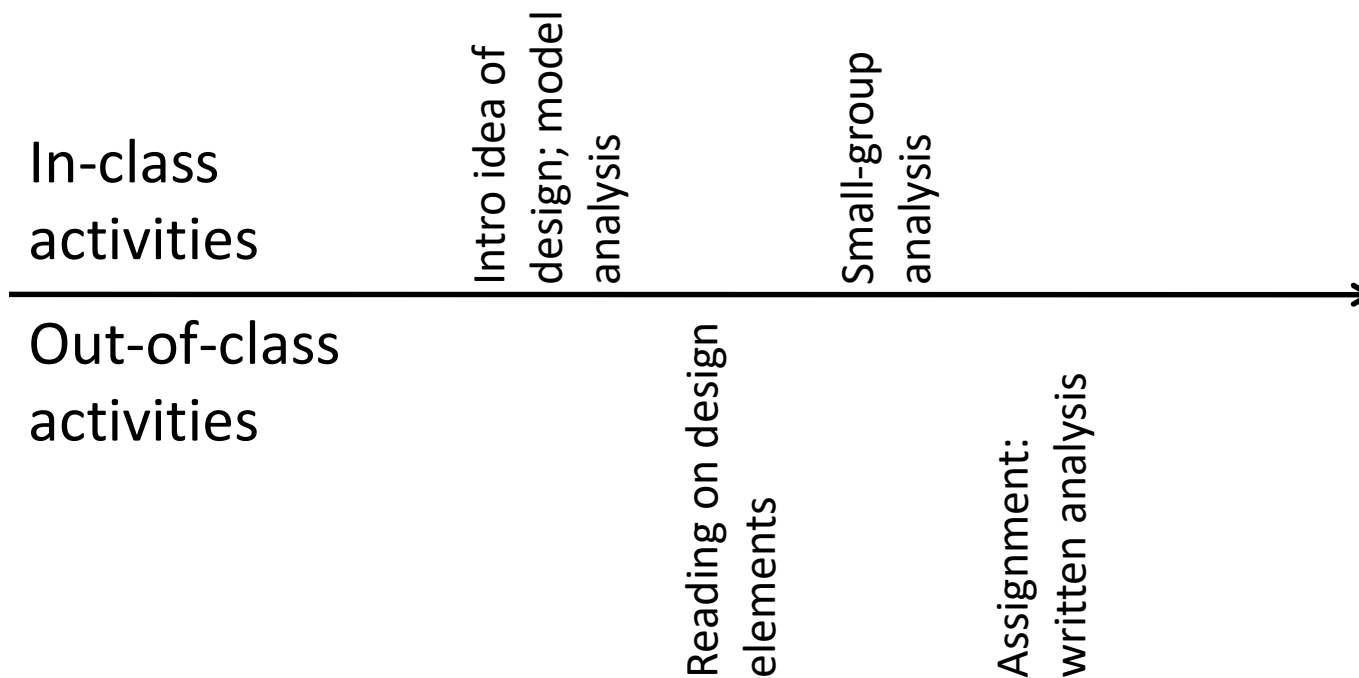


# One approach: work backwards from final assessment

At the end of the course, how will students demonstrate what they have learned?

- What steps will students need to do?
- What skills will they need to deploy?
- Where are they likely to run into trouble?

# Learning Activities: Castle Top Strategy



# Assignment Design Principles

1. Design authentic forward-looking tasks
2. Make goals and expectations clear and explicit (rubrics, examples)
3. Scaffold learning—skills and/or process
4. Build in feedback (instructor, peers) and self-assessment

# Test out this course design model with a course you are planning

1. Make notes on the situational factors for a course you will be teaching (worksheets p.2)

2. Draft learning goals (worksheets p.2)

3. Describe final assessment and brainstorm in-class and out-of-class learning activities (scaffolding) (pp.3-4)

# Debrief with person next to you

- What came out of playing with this course design model that was useful?
- What was challenging?
- To what extent are you motivated to use this model in your course design?

# Sources

Barkley, E. F. (2010). *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco: Wiley—Jossey Bass. Available in the UT library system LB2342.92 .B34 2010

Bean, John C. (2001). *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Available at Robarts Library PE1404 .B35 2011X

Bloom, Benjamin S. (1974). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Classification of educational goals*. New York: D. McKay.

Boud, D. and Molloy, E. (2013). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: the challenge of design. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 38 (6), 698-712.

Fink, Dee L. (2003). *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. See also [www.deefinkandassociates.com](http://www.deefinkandassociates.com)

Skene, A., and Fedko, S. (2014). *Instructional Scaffolding*. UTSC Centre for Teaching and Learning.

# Helpful resources at UTSC:

People: CTL, Writing Centre, Library, Math & Stats Help Centre, English Language Development Centre, Facilitated Study Groups, Instructional Technology, Mentor(s), Colleagues

Things: Quercus, Libguides, Writing Handouts

# Follow-up and assessment

Email and come see us to discuss your course(s)

[sfedko@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:sfedko@utsc.utoronto.ca)

[sking@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:sking@utsc.utoronto.ca)

... and in the process let us know to what extent we achieved our goals, whether our activities were useful, and how we can do better next year