

EXPLORING ACADEMIC RESILIENCE:

Teaching Practices & Course Design

Workshop #2 in the Academic Resilience Series



Welcome!

While we wait to get started, please introduce yourself in the chat and tell us one thing that makes you excited about teaching next term!

Today's facilitators



Megan Burnett (she/her)

Associate Director, CTSI

megan.burnett@utoronto.ca

- 16 years' experience in faculty development
- Studied French literature
- Choral singer
- Not a chocolate fan



Maria Assif (she/her)

Associate Professor, Teaching Stream

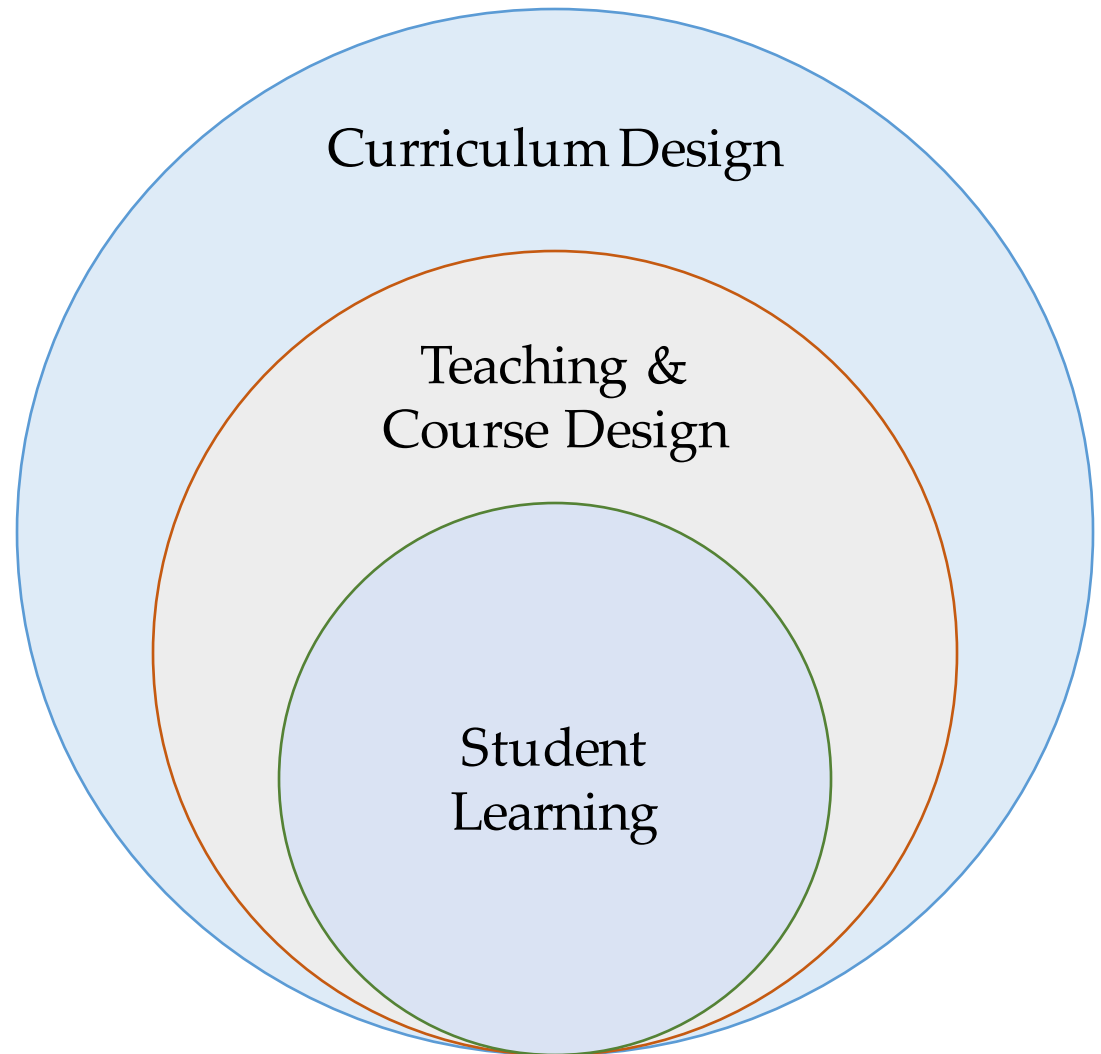
Department of English, UTSC

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- 14 years at UTSC
- A huge NBA fan
- Speaks four languages
- Loves being close to the water

Academic Resilience Series Overview

In this series, we will build our understanding of academic resilience by looking at experiences of student learning, practices for teaching and course design, and approaches for curriculum design.



Our goals for today's session

In today's webinar, you will:

- Examine how course design impacts resilience
- Explore strategies to promote academic resilience
- Review a range of approaches that can be applied in any teaching context – from simple and straightforward to more complex undertakings
- Hopefully see that you are already doing things that build resilience!



Our agenda for today's session

- **INTRODUCTION:**
 - Defining Academic Resilience: Revisiting “positive adaptation”
 - Impact of Course Design on Resilience
- **PART 1:** Elements of Course Design for Academic Resilience
- **ACTIVITY:** Ah-ha’s & Muddy Points
- **PART 2:** Teaching Practices to Foster Academic Resilience
- **ACTIVITY:** Murmur Moment
- **CLOSING:** Take-aways & Wrap-up



MENTAL SET



When have you felt overwhelmed when learning in an academic space?

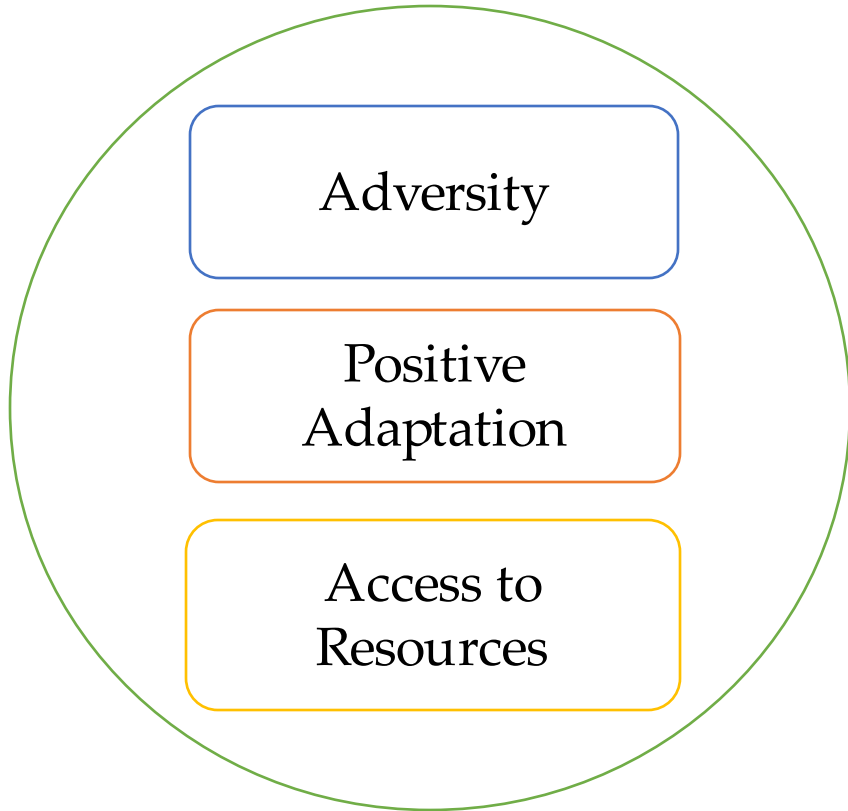
What helped you overcome or manage this feeling?

Now, think about:

- What could be done *before a course starts* to help develop academic resilience?
- What could be done *while you are teaching* to build academic resilience?

**SEE
WORKBOOK**

Resilience defined (from Workshop #1)



- Resilience is the capacity to meet and positively adapt to adversity and the capacity to bounce back from setbacks.
- Resilience is not just an individual capacity – it is also the capacity of a community to provide relevant and accessible resources of support.

(Ye, Strietholt, Blömeke, 2021; Holdsworth, Turner, and Scott-Young, 2018; Ungar, 2016; Martin, 2013.)

Importance of reinforcing **positive adaptation**

(from Workshop #1)

Students are able to...

- adapt to and learn from academic challenges
- sustain academic engagement despite risk factors
- successfully access and navigate resources of support



MARIA MINUTE

Instructors support positive adaptation by...

- **integrating academic resilience** within curricular spaces to support equitable learning
- focusing on **resources that are within our control** as educators

Positive adaptation

What is within our control?

- Course design
- Syllabus design
- Lesson design
- Assignment design
- In-class activities

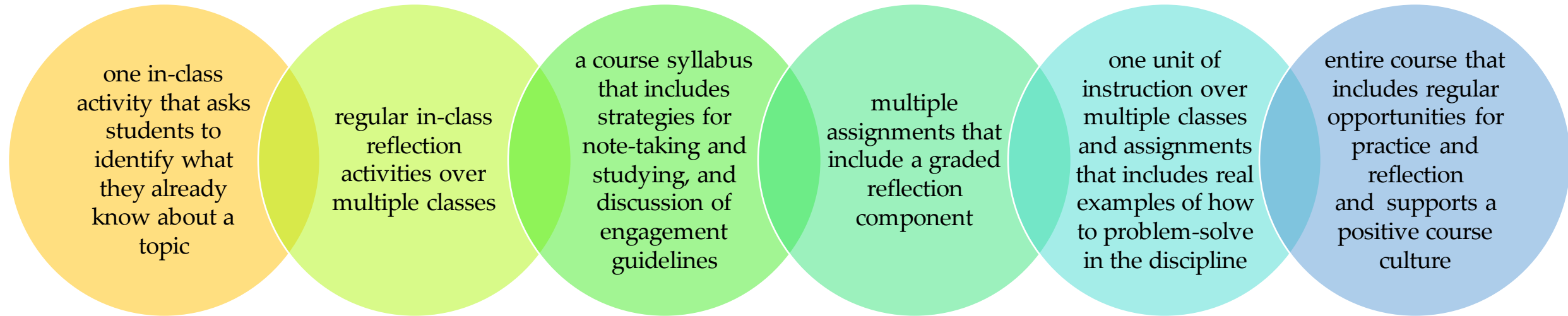


MARIA MINUTE

Where can academic resilience be integrated?

- Careful sequencing of lessons and timing of evaluations
- Supportive course syllabus
- In-class activities that activate prior learning and promote reflection
- Variety of examples given to students that show early failures, progress through stages of improvement, and not just final product
- Instruction - modelling and demonstrating the disciplinary process for identifying/solving a problem or completing a task; showing students how to use the feedback they receive

Fostering resilience through effective learning design and teaching practices can happen at any level...



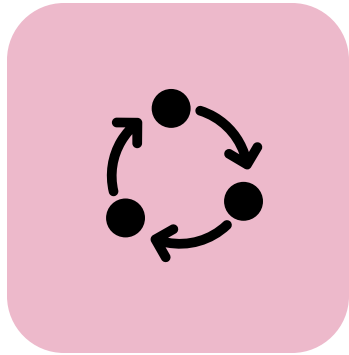
You may choose to try only one of these approaches or you may focus on an entire course – any approach, no matter how seemingly small, can have an important effect!



Impact of course design on resilience

Intentional course design **creates space** for students to process what they are learning and reflect on what and how they are learning

Creating **space** through effective course design =



Space for students to **process** and **practice** using new information



Space to **reflect** deeply on how they are learning



Space to **review** and incorporate feedback



Space to connect with peers

Course **design** that builds **resilience** includes...



Time for
reflection
either during
class or at
key
moments
in the course



Sequencing lessons
or units of instruction
as a **series of**
“**spirals**”:
- introductory
material
- modelling/
application/feedback/
practice/more
feedback
- mastery



Course
assessments
and
evaluations
timed to this
sequence

Course **design** that builds **resilience** includes...



Opportunities to
provide, receive
and
use **feedback**,
including
guidance
on **how to**
do this



Opportunities to
engage in **active**
and respectful
listening and
questioning



Opportunities
for students
to learn from
their **peers**

PART 1

Elements of Course Design for Academic Resilience

Assignment Design

Lesson Design

Supportive Course Culture

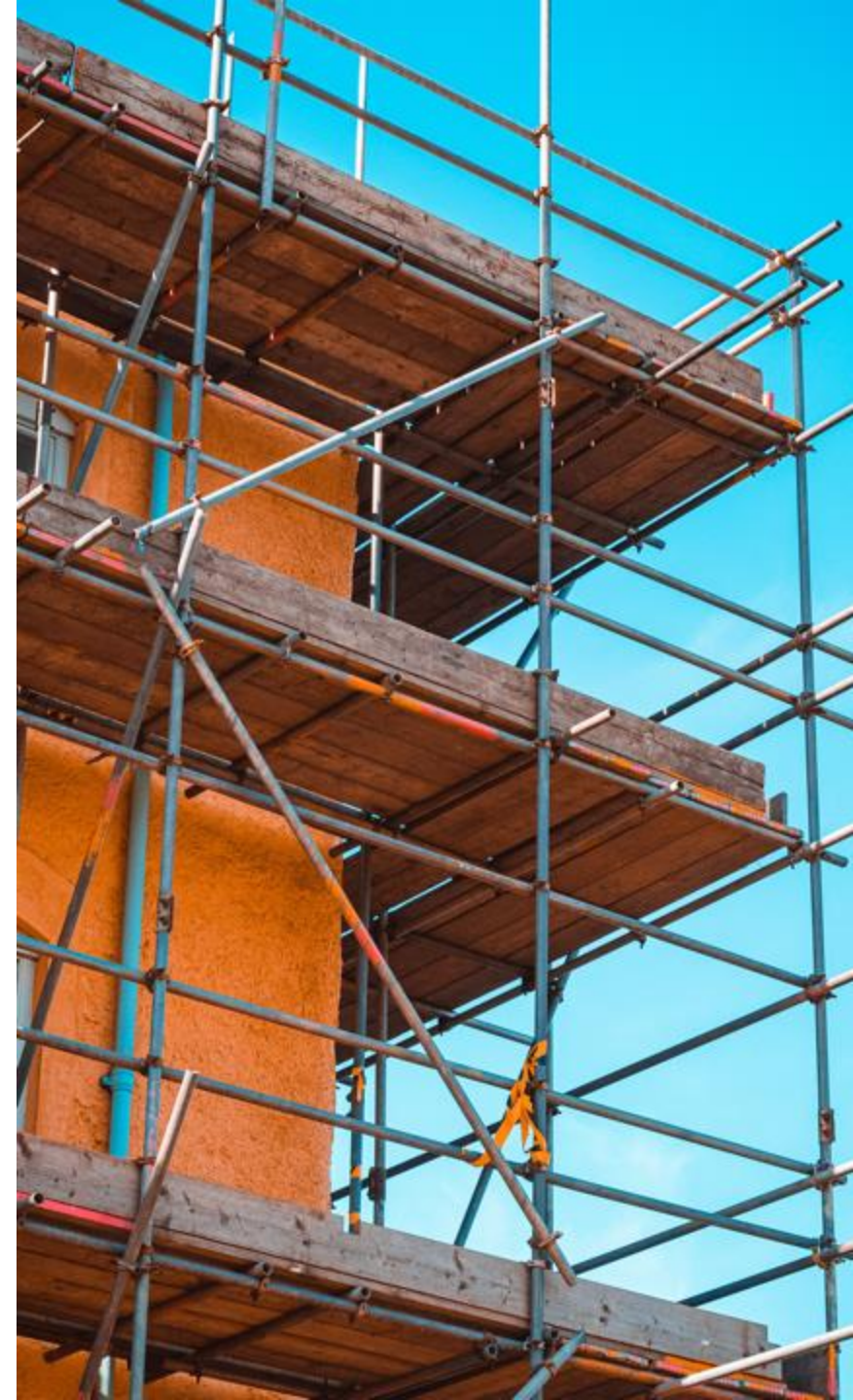
Assignment Design

SCAFFOLDING

Approach to structuring assignments that breaks down large, complex tasks into several smaller components.

Key considerations:

- Helps students master course content by approaching the final product in stages that build on each other
- Makes the learning visible, i.e. allows students to see the path/progress towards the final stage
- Can help students avoid feeling overwhelmed - when working on a complex assignment, helps students structure their work into manageable steps
- Can enable both students and instructors/TAs to catch problems earlier in the course



Examples of Assignment Scaffolding



Possible steps in a complex assignment

- Smaller assignments that could help students master each step.



Topic selection

- Free writing
- Proposal
- Working thesis statement



Research

- Annotated bibliography



Evaluation of sources

- Source evaluation
- [Critical review](#)
- Literature review



Draft

- Outline
- First draft



Revise

- [Peer review](#)
- Meta-statement
- Final draft

MARIA MINUTE

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN How can I do this?

Something small

- Integrate supports at each stage of the assignment - include a FAQ section with every assignment prompt
- Use visuals to explain the scaffolded approach of your assignment design

Something more complex

- Assign a revision reflection as part of the assignment, where students reflect on the feedback they have received from their peers and professor/ T.A., list their decision-making process about their next revisions, and the timeline they commit to before the final submission deadline

ASSIGNMENT DESIGN More examples

Something small

- Adopt a conversation style at the beginning of the assignment, where you are addressing students directly
- Congratulate students at the beginning of every assignment on their achievements up to that point
- Articulate the assignment rationale
- Share a recommended timeline for student work on the assignment outside class
- Integrate assignment (writing) retreats before major deadlines

Something more complex

- Co-author or revise a scaffolded assignment with students
- Implement assignment revision clinic (former and current students)
- Conduct a calibration session of student exemplars with students

Lesson Design

Using a framework to scaffold instruction

LESSON DESIGN

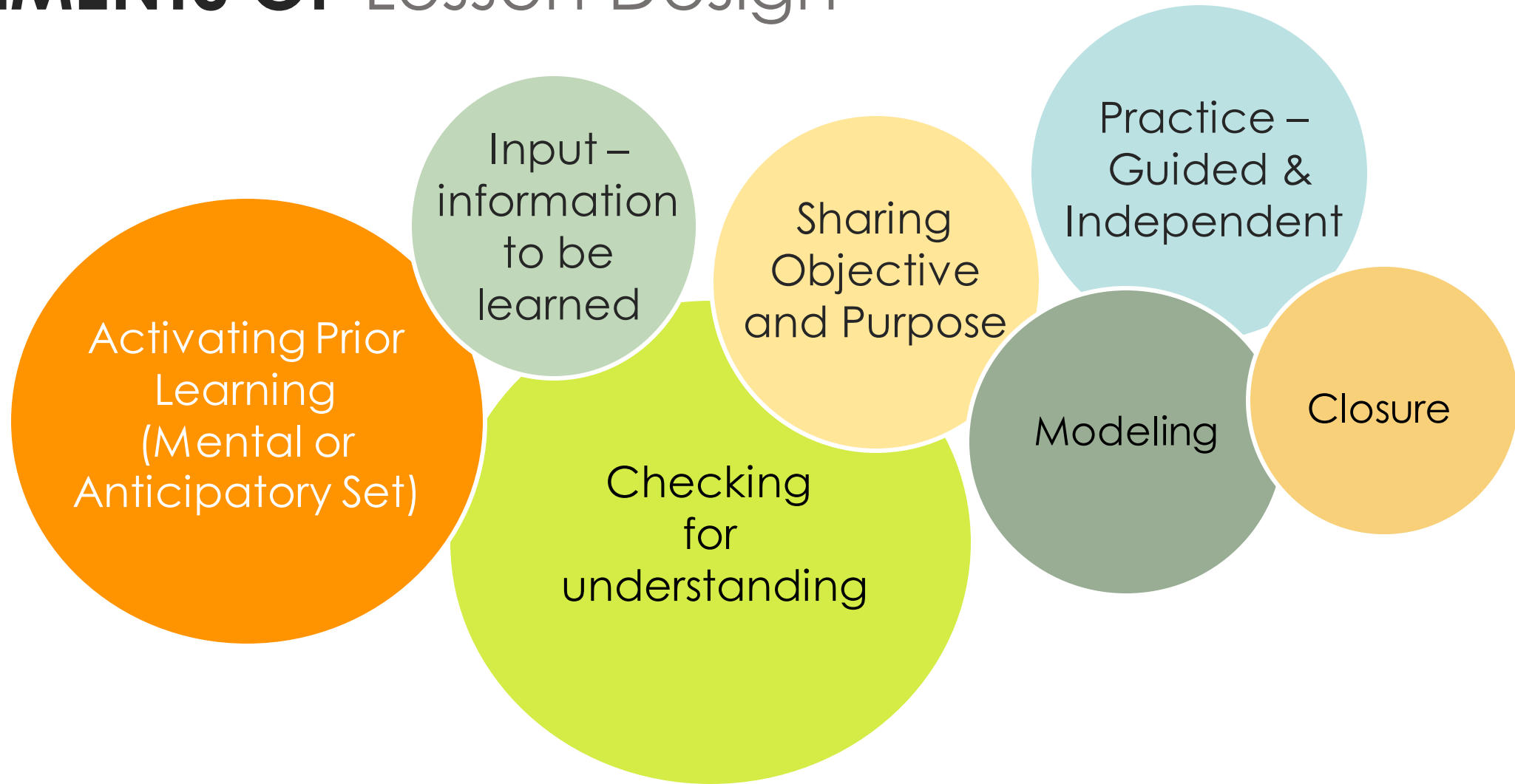
A Framework for Creating Conceptual Flow in a Lesson

- Is a series of considerations, not a “lock step” process
- Will help you identify where to create space in a class or a series of classes for processing or using information, and where to build in time for:
 - collaboration
 - revision / peer review
 - reflection
 - additional practice
 - feedback on what they’ve practiced



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ELEMENTS OF Lesson Design



LESSON DESIGN How can I do this?

Something small

- Choose **one element** to use in **one class**

e.g. activating prior learning

What will you have students do to generate what they already know about a topic? When in the course will they do this?

Something more complex

- Plan a **series of lessons** for an entire unit of instruction using various elements:
 - What will be your “mental set” for this unit?
 - What will the students do to practice/use what they are learning? When and how often will they do this?
 - How and when will you check for understanding?

Supportive Course Culture

Syllabus Design

Engagement Guidelines

Exemplars

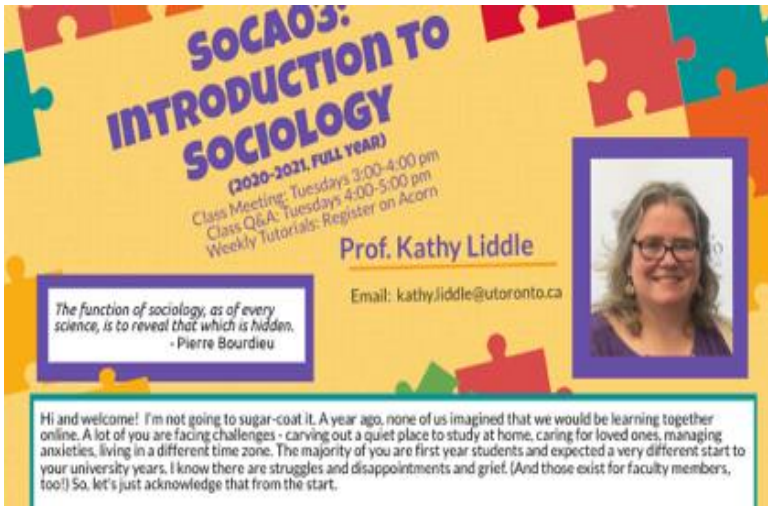
Features of a positive course culture

- Resilient course design builds a constructive and supportive “course culture” that values:
 - mastery more than performance, i.e. improvement through practice more than achieving perfection
 - learning as a process that includes practice and failure
 - learning as a collective experience, not just individual
 - the capacity to seek help before the moment of crisis
 - the capacity to share, receive and apply feedback



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Syllabus Design



- **Modify syllabus to be more inviting** (e.g., add welcome message, discuss your own background, refer to “office hours” as “student drop-ins”, etc.)
- **Course Schedule**
 - Consider timing of deadlines (e.g., avoid the “midnight default”, consider grace periods, include pacing deadlines)
- **Grading Scheme**
 - Make it easy for students to know what to do when they miss an evaluation or assignment
 - Consider resubmission assignments
 - Consider “engagement” marks rather than participation grades – clarify what engagement looks like in your course
- **Embed learning resources** in Quercus course and integrate as part of assignment instructions

MARIA'S SYLLABUS

Course Etiquette and Learning Environment Statement

My teaching philosophy puts emphasis on two terms: mindfulness and students—you! I do strive to make all of you feel welcome, that you do matter as individuals, and that you are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. It is in this context that I do promise you to come to class prepared and on time; be present during my office hours; respond to your questions promptly; and return your work on time.

I kindly expect the following from you: be respectful of each other's opinions and the community of learners in our class (including your professor) and be fully present in class (attend our synchronous and onsite sessions, come prepared to class, take notes when needed, engage with course materials, collaborate with your peers, and take pride in your work). I thank you in advance for helping each other keep the classroom a productive and enjoyable learning environment.

Engagement Guidelines

- Develop guidelines for how to participate in class with your students in the first week of classes
 - What does *in-class* participation actually look like?
 - What does “engagement” look like *outside* of class?
 - Reinforce the notion that the class is a community of learners – how they behave and interact affects others’ learning



Exemplars

MARIA MINUTE



Show an early draft of an academic article you yourself have published

If you're able/willing, show the feedback you received on this draft pointing out the shortcomings of the work, and discuss how you responded to/incorporated this feedback



Show exemplars of student work – solicit examples from former students, share excerpts of early and final drafts with current students



Show examples that illustrate how thinking has evolved in your disciplinary area over time – reinforce that knowledge and learning are fluid!

SUPPORTIVE COURSE CULTURE

How can I do this?

Something small

- Share the timeline of your revision process for a recent research project; share the challenges you encountered and how you overcame some of them
- Share the feedback you received from reviewers, including rejection and acceptance letters

Something more complex

- Structure an assignment to include a step where students review early drafts from peers and get early peer feedback in return
- Revise your entire syllabus with an eye to making it more inclusive and supportive, with former students as partners

SUPPORTIVE COURSE CULTURE

More examples

Something small

- Use "friends", "comrades" or other supportive terms in the weekly announcements
- Find an early draft of something you've eventually published – share with students how you reworked the draft to arrive at the final version
- Integrate graded individual conferences early in the term

Something more complex

- Integrate peer review feedback more than once
- Include a peer support system in your course
- Create efficient working groups

A person with dark curly hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, is seen from behind, performing a back stretch. They are standing at a wooden desk, with their hands clasped behind their head and one hand resting on their lower back. The desk in front of them holds a laptop, a calculator, a mouse, and a smartphone. The background is a blurred office setting with a grey wall and a window.

Thirty- Second Power Stretch!

BREAK-OUT DISCUSSIONS

10 minutes



Share 1 "Ah-HA!"
moment



Share 1 Muddy Point
("I'm still not clear
about...")

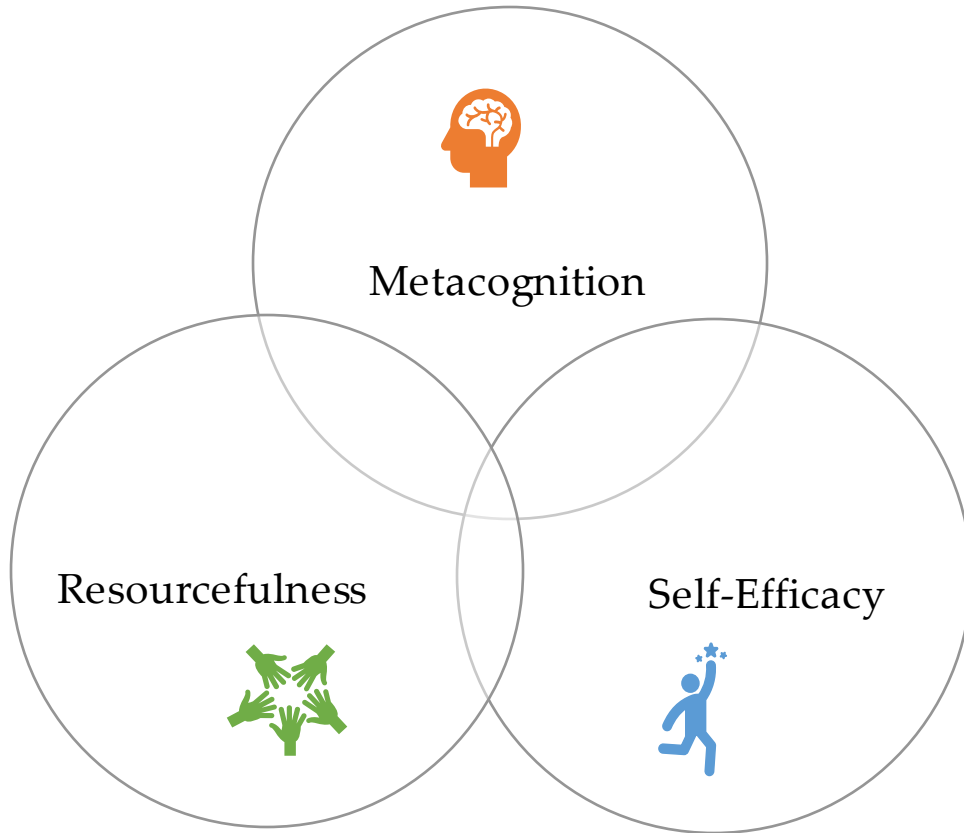
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PART 2

Teaching Practices to Foster Academic Resilience

From Workshop #1...

Three areas of focus:



- **Metacognition** – the capacity to think about one's own thinking; the process of planning, monitoring, and assessing one's own learning.
- **Self-efficacy** - the personal belief in one's capability to organize and execute effective action for academic engagement.
- **Resourcefulness** - the ability to problem-solve and find ways to overcome academic challenges.

TEACHING PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT...



Metacognition

- Support the application of effective study strategies
- Engage students in the classroom in active reflection
- Provide opportunities for students to share muddy points and acknowledge desirable difficulty



Self-Efficacy

- Provide opportunities for productive successes and productive failures
- Explore opportunities for students to learn from others with role modelling to normalize difficulty
- Provide exemplars before or after an assignment or exam



Resourcefulness

- Encourage students to identify their needs and access relevant resources
- Model the thinking processes involved in your field
- Encourage positive coping strategies – for both learning and well-being



Metacognition

SEE
WORKBOOK

application of effective
study strategies



advance organizer

active reflection



exam wrappers or 3-2-1

opportunities to
acknowledge when
something is difficult or
unclear



muddy points

Metacognition – more examples



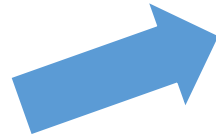
GOAL	STRATEGY
Support the application of effective study strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interleaving• Note-taking (use of advance organizers)
Engage students in the classroom in active reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrance/Exit Tickets• Exam Wrappers
Provide opportunities for students to share muddy points and acknowledge desirable difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Muddy Points• 3-2-1 Reflections



Self-efficacy

SEE
WORKBOOK

opportunities
to learn with
and from
others in a way
that normalizes
difficulty



- as students exit a course, they write a piece of advice for the next cohort of students coming into the course – this becomes part of the next syllabus/welcome package/assignment instructions
- have previous students attend the first class

Self-efficacy – more examples



GOAL	STRATEGY
Provide opportunities for productive successes and productive failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance of guided and independent practice, both in front of the instructor and on their own• Have students tackle a problem or analysis that you yourself have struggled with, or that represents a common challenge in your field; once they've tried to work through a solution or response, explain how <i>you</i> approached the task/problem
Explore opportunities for students to learn from others with role modelling to normalize difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share examples of your own early work• Engage peer mentors to support current students• Incorporate comments/experiences from previous students in your lectures• Help students understand when “good” is “good enough”
Provide exemplars before or after an assignment or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show students authentic examples of the kind of work they will be doing in the assignment/exam – e.g. real datasets, cultural artifacts, peer reviewed articles• Consider sharing samples of student work



Resourcefulness

SEE
WORKBOOK

encourage students to
identify their needs and
access relevant resources



Pre-assignment activity:

What do we already know about
this topic?

What more do we need to learn?

Where will we go/what will we do
to find this additional information?

What else do we need to be able to
complete this assignment?

Resourcefulness – more examples



GOAL	STRATEGY
Encourage students to identify their needs and access relevant resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Guided Syllabus Review” or "Syllabus Scavenger Hunt" activity• Pre-assignment activity• Mid-course feedback
Model the thinking processes involved in your field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take students through the disciplinary approach to identifying, breaking down and then solving a research problem
Encourage positive coping strategies – for both learning and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build in movement breaks or well-being pauses• Build in regular checks for understanding• Allow time to “process” during class time• Model interleaving through effective course/lesson design• Provide suggested workback schedules for major assignments (could be included in course syllabus)• Help students understand how learning happens, and the conditions needed for learning to be successful

murmur



moment

Which practice(s) appeal(s) to you?

What other ideas can you think of to build:

- Metacognitive skills?
- Self-efficacy?
- Resourcefulness?



BEFORE WE CLOSE

A word from one of Maria's students

Student Reflection Excerpt (English A02)

From a Sciences student who had to take this writing course as a breadth requirement

Having a sense of belonging is an essential ingredient to enhance my learning since A02 made us aware that failure is a part of the process and everyone will have a different path to success. **An example that really stuck with me was when our professor shared one of her personal setbacks** of when an article that she co-authored and worked on for many months was rejected by publishers. The article was eventually published because they persevered and never gave up. This experience made me feel like I **truly belong** in this class as I used to constantly burden myself with the lonely and isolating misconception that I was the only person failing and everyone around me was on the pathway to success. **Having a sense of community is just as important which is fostered when we are in a caring learning environment that supports resilience.** I truly believe the **peer-to-peer interactions** I had during the essay draft review sessions heightened our sense of social presence and the feedback that was shared amongst us encouraged critical thinking, skills that I will take with me in my sciences courses. **Constructive criticism can be a tough pill to swallow; however, it is a crucial aspect of learning.** It required a lot of humility, self-awareness and understanding of my peer's perspectives. At the end of the day, **being a member of a community taught me** how to present feedback as well as receive it in a respectful manner.

Key Take-Aways

- Resist the “tyranny of content”
- Create **s p a c e** for processing and reflection
- Course culture counts!
- Scaffold instruction
- Share rationale for learning activities
- Activate prior learning
- Build community through peer interactions
- Show and share the value of struggle in learning, and of getting and sharing feedback to improve
- Start small – pace yourself!



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



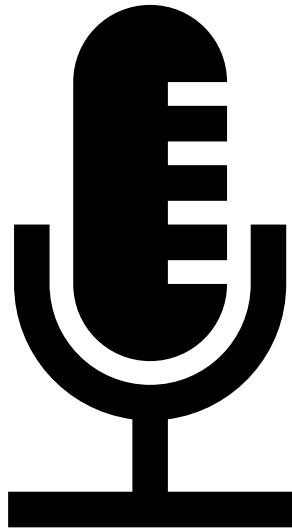
Remember these questions from the Mental Set...?

- What could be done *before a course starts* to help develop academic resilience?
- What could be done *while you are teaching* to build academic resilience?

Consider your responses from the beginning of the workshop.

What would be your responses now?

Quick Quiz



How have we modelled academic resilience in today's session?

Name as many practices as you can in the chat!

Or, un-mute and share out loud!

Commitment to action

One thing I will try is:

One thing I need to know
more about is:

And this is where I will
look for more information:



**SEE
WORKBOOK**

Academic Resilience Series

Partnership with Academic Success, CTSI & OVPIUE

Session 3: Building Academic Resilience Across the Curriculum

May 25, 10-11:30 am | [Register](#)



Upcoming Clinics

Extend your knowledge!
Develop your materials!

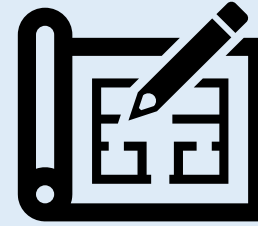
Check
<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/events/> for details.



COURSE PLAN CLINIC

June 21, 2022
9:30 am-12 pm

**IN
PERSON!**



LESSON DESIGN CLINIC

June 22, 2022
1-3 pm



SYLLABUS DESIGN CLINIC

June 24
10 am-12 pm

**THANK
YOU!**

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