

The TEC-VARIETY Framework (Bonk & Khoo, 2014)

Bonk, C. J., & Khoo, E. (2014). *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY: 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online*. OpenWorldBooks.com and Amazon CreateSpace.

Free eBook: <http://tec-variety.com/>; Paperback/Kindle: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1496162722/>

Motivation is central to all things human. Online teaching and learning are no different. In the early years of the Web, however, students endured extremely dry online content, affectionately known as “shovelware.” Over time, learners were increasingly inundated by bland content and unimaginative activities. Worse, too often they accepted it as reality. In the process, online learning became woefully lockstep and mechanized. There was no room for flexibility, choice, or creative expression of any kind.

Unfortunately, most online content remains lifeless today. Legions of learners are interminably bored. Part of the reason is that their online and blended courses fail to effectively utilize the smartphones, tablets, and other wireless and mobile technologies strapped to their bodies or tucked into in their tote bags. At this very moment, tens of millions of learners around the planet are navigating through seemingly endless pages of their online courses. Unfortunately, most of these learners are swimming in this sea of content without much hope for interaction, collaboration, or engagement. The emergence of massive open online courses (MOOCs), where learners in a single course can number in the hundreds of thousands, has made the present situation even more precarious and a remedy more urgent.

We propose the TEC-VARIETY framework as a solution to the lack of meaningful engagement. It can shift learners from nearly comatose states to actively engaged ones. *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY* helps instructors focus on how to motivate online learners and increase learner retention. It also is a comprehensive, one-stop toolkit for online instructors to inspire learners and renew their own passion for teaching. Using 10 theoretically driven and proven motivational principles, TEC-VARIETY offers over 100 practical yet innovative ideas based on decades of author experience teaching in a variety of educational settings.

What motivates?

1. **Tone/Climate:** Psych Safety, Comfort, Sense of Belonging
2. **Encouragement:** Feedback, Responsive, Praise, Supports
3. **Curiosity:** Surprise, Intrigue, Unknowns
4. **Variety:** Novelty, Fun, Fantasy
5. **Autonomy:** Choice, Control, Flexibility, Opportunities
6. **Relevance:** Meaningful, Authentic, Interesting
7. **Interactivity:** Collaborative, Team-Based, Community
8. **Engagement:** Effort, Involvement, Investment
9. **Tension:** Challenge, Dissonance, Controversy
10. **Yielding Products:** Goal Driven, Purposeful Vision, Ownership

In this book, you will discover:

- A wellspring of Web resources;
- 10 fully documented successful motivational principles;
- Hundreds of activities to motivate and engage online learners;
- Proven ideas on how to design interactive and collaborative courses;
- A realistic path toward meaningful and relevant online learning;
- Detailed risk, cost, and time guidelines for each activity;
- A thoroughly researched basis for each idea and activity;
- Hope (yes, real hope!) for engaging online learners.

The Read, Reflect, Display, and Do (R2D2) Model (Bonk & Zhang, 2008)

Bonk, C. J., & Zhang, K. (2008). *Empowering Online Learning: 100+ Activities for Reading, Reflecting, Displaying, and Doing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

(Book homepage: <http://www.trainingshare.com/courseWeb/book.php>)

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the common reframe was that there was little engagement within online courses. Further fuel for the online retention travesty was that the general lack of instructor and student training for such environments. Add to that poorly designed courses, insufficient or inept strategic planning, and constantly changing demands and expectations, and there is much that can and did go wrong in such courses. In partial response to this situation, in 2005, Curt Bonk designed an easy-to-apply and highly practical framework for addressing more diverse learner needs. It is called the Read, Reflect, Display, and Do (R2D2) model (see below). In 2008, Curt Bonk and Ke Zhang published a book with Jossey-Bass on the R2D2 model titled, “Empowering Online Learning: 100+ Activities for Reading, Reflecting, Displaying, and Doing” (Bonk & Zhang, 2008). In the book, there were 25 activities for each of the four quadrants of the model or 100 activities in total. As explained in “Empowering Online Learning,” some might think of the R2D2 model as a knowledge acquisition and problem solving wheel.



Explaining the R2D2 Model: In the first phase of the R2D2 model, reading, listening, and text-based activities are emphasized. That initial component helps to focus the instruction on acquiring knowledge through various mechanism including online readings, podcasts, and Webstreamed lectures. Next, in the second phase, the R2D2 model highlights the observational side of learning. In this component, the online instructor targets reflection on content and self-checking one’s understanding such as with blogging, online practice tests, and shared online video reflections. Third, the model highlights visual forms of learning including timelines, concept maps, flowcharts, and videos. Here, the learner is forced to create visual representations of his learning and put it on display for the instructor and others to review and comment on. Alternatively, one might use or review the visual content or depictions created by others. Finally, the fourth phase of R2D2 is intended to encourage practice or hands-on experimentation with the learned content. In this phase, learners operationalize the learned content by resolving cases, solving problems in a simulation, or posting a report. As these activities take place, course content and activities become more enriching and personally meaningful for the learners.