

Empirical Educator Center

Mission Statement

In the belief that all college employees are educators, the mission of the Empirical Educator Center is to provide professional development for all members of the college community and encourage a culture of continuous improvement to support the ideal student experience.

EEC Services

Campus-Wide Professional Development

Please visit the [Campus-Wide Professional Development Site](#)

NOTE: *You will need to log in with your Lee College employee credentials to view the site.*

If you have any additional professional development needs, please [email the EEC \(empiricaled@lee.edu\)](mailto:empiricaled@lee.edu)

Seven Principles of Learning

Prior Knowledge: Students' prior knowledge can help or hinder learning.

Students come into our courses with knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes gained in other courses and through daily life. As students bring this knowledge to bear in our classrooms, it influences how they filter and interpret what they are learning. If students' prior knowledge is robust and accurate and activated at the appropriate time, it provides a strong foundation for building new knowledge. However, when knowledge is inert, insufficient for the task, activated inappropriately, or inaccurate, it can interfere with or impede new learning.

Organizing Knowledge: How students organize knowledge influences how they learn and apply what they know. Students naturally make connections between pieces of knowledge.

When those connections form knowledge structures that are accurately and meaningfully organized, students are better able to retrieve and apply their knowledge effectively and efficiently. In contrast, when knowledge is connected in inaccurate or random ways, students can fail to retrieve or apply it appropriately.

Motivation: Students' motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn.

As students enter college and gain greater autonomy over what, when and how they study and learn, motivation plays a critical role in guiding the direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of the learning behaviors in which they engage. When students find positive value in a learning goal or activity, expect to successfully achieve a desired learning outcome, and perceive support from their environment, they are likely to be strongly motivated to learn.

Mastery: To develop mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned.

Students must develop not only the component skills and knowledge necessary to perform complex tasks, they must also practice combining and integrating them to develop greater fluency and automaticity. Finally, students must learn when and how to apply the skills and knowledge they learn. As instructors, it is important that we develop conscious awareness of these elements of mastery so as to help our students learn more effectively.

Feedback: Goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback enhances the quality of students' learning.

Learning and performance are best fostered when students engage in practice that focuses on a specific goal or criterion, targets an appropriate level of challenge, and is of sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the performance criteria. Practice must be coupled with feedback that explicitly communicates about some aspect(s) of students' performance relative to specific target criteria, provides information to help students progress in meeting those criteria, and is given at a time and frequency that allows it to be useful.

Climate: Students' current level of development interacts with the social, emotional, and intellectual climate of the course to impact learning.

Students are not only intellectual but also social and emotional beings, and they are still developing the full range of intellectual, social and emotional skills. While we cannot control the developmental process, we can shape the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of the classroom climate in developmentally appropriate ways. In fact, many studies have shown that the climate we create has implications for our students. A negative climate may impede learning and performance, but a positive climate can energize students' learning.

Self-Regulation: To become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning.

Learners may engage in a variety of metacognitive processes to monitor and control their learning — assessing the task at hand, evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses, planning their approach, applying and monitoring various strategies, and reflecting on the degree to which their current approach is working. Unfortunately, students tend not to engage in these processes naturally. When students develop the skills to engage these processes, they gain intellectual habits that not only improve their performance but also their effectiveness as learners.

Seven Principle of Learning Strategies

S. Ambrose, M. Bridges, M. Lovett, M. DiPietro, M. Norman. 2010. How learning works: 7 Research-based principles for smart teaching. Jossey-Bass.

Overview of Classroom and Online Observation

Classroom and online observations are intended to provide faculty with an opportunity to reflect on their instruction using one of the seven research-based principles for smart teaching. The classroom observations include two separate observations conducted by a student learning observer and faculty peer and an administrator of the class chosen by the faculty member. The online observation is a two-member team in which a faculty

peer is paired with an Empirical Educator Center Team member or another faculty member certified by Quality Matters as a Course Peer Reviewer.

The Empirical Educator Center subscribes to the **collaborative model** of observation. This model engages peer observation by participating in informed, reflective dialog with one another and is intended to motivate improvement in the observer and the observed. The results of observations are provided to the faculty member who is observed and is intended to stimulate personal reflection and reflective dialog with peers.

Classroom Observation Process: On two occasions your class will be observed to review the course based on the aspect of your teaching you are trying to improve and the relevant learning principle from How Learning Works. One observation will be with a student Learning Observer and faculty peer and the other observation by an administrator. Each team member will complete the observation form and submit it to the Empirical Educator Center. A member of the EEC will set a time to meet with the faculty member to review the observation.

Online Observation: The faculty will select the course and one of the seven principles for two-member team observation. The two-member team will review the course based on the selected principle and course design. Each team member will complete their observation form and submit the form to the Empirical Educator Center. A member of the EEC will set a time to meet with the faculty member to review the observation.

Formal Online Course Review: Using the principles of Quality Matters, a two-person team will conduct a formal online course review. At least one member of the team will be a certified course peer reviewer certified through Quality Matters. The second team member will be a related subject matter expert if at all possible. Courses will be identified using a variety of methods including student evaluations, high DFW rates, gateway core courses, and/or by Division Chair, Associate Vice President of Instruction, or Provost. Similar to the less formal online observation, course reviews will be aimed continuous improvement. The formal review will take a closer look at course introduction, student engagement and interaction, accessibility, assessment and measurement, instructional materials and activities, student support, and navigation. The reviewers will meet with the faculty member following the review and will provide a written course review.

Distance Education – Faculty Information

- [Instructor Tutorial Site](#)
- [Distance Education Handbook-Faculty \(PDF\)](#)

A complete faculty guide to Distance Education at Lee College.

Instructional Design Support

The instructional design process consists of determining the needs of the learners, defining the end goals and objectives of instruction, designing and planning assessment tasks, and designing teaching and learning activities to ensure the quality of instruction.

S. Kurt. (2017). Definitions of Instructional Design. Educational Technology. Retrieved from: <https://educationaltechnology.net/definitions-instructional-design/>

EEC Staff Members

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