Teaching Tools
A Guide to Selecting Teaching Tools by Instructional Method

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN

OFFICE OF
EDUCATIONAL
IMPROVEMENT

May 2022

What are Instructional Methods?

Instructional methods are the broader techniques used to help students achieve learning outcomes. Teaching methods help students master the content of the course and learn how to apply the content in particular contexts. There are many to choose from. To make the most appropriate choice, an instructor should first consider learning outcomes, students' needs and the learning environment. The two broad categories used in instructional methods are Teacher-Led and Student-Centered. Instructional modes are important to consider as well. Will your course be taught in-person, online, or hybrid?

Teacher-Led Instructional Methods

- Didactic lecture
- Direct instruction
- Teacher as Expert/Formal Authority

Student-Centered Instructional Methods

- Inquiry-based learning
- Cooperative learning
- Flipped classroom
- Differentiated learning
- Project-based learning
- Self-directed learning
- Small group instruction
- Games
- Peer to peer learning
- Teacher as Facilitator

What Teaching Tools are Available for My Instructional Method?

There are many teaching tools available for your instructional method. MCW provides numerous resources to aid in the development of your content. From software to library subscriptions, there are a wealth of resources to support you. Here are a few categories and tools that are available and feature support from MCW departments like OEI, MCW Libraries, or Information Services.

Class Content and Lecture Delivery Tools

- Brightspace
- Zoom
- Panopto
- PowerPoint
- Podcasting
- Aquifer
- Clinical Key
- Up To Date

Communication Tools

- Brightspace Discussion Forums
- Brightspace Announcements
- Course E-mail
- Microsoft Teams

Collaborative Tools

- Virtual Workspaces (Padlet, Whiteboards)
- Brightspace Groups
- Brightspace Discussion Forums
- Interactive Virtual Microscopes
- Virtual Reality

Exam and Assessment Tools

- Brightspace Quizzes
- ExamSoft

Feedback/Polling Tools

- TopHat Audience Response System
- Zoom Polling
- Brightspace Surveys
- Poll Everywhere
- Qualtrics

How Do I Choose a Teaching Tool?

Consider your learning objectives and how those will be best achieved in a student-centered environment. Does the tool meet device specification and is it reliable and easy for students and instructors to use? Keep it simple and consistent. Gather feedback from your learners on what's working well and what needs improvement. Each tool will serve a different purpose and have different impacts on learning. What will move the learner from rote memorization to higher level thinking skills? It's

important to remember that the content should be challenging; not the tool used to deliver the content.

You might also consider how customizable the tool is. Does it offer personalized or adaptive skill levels? Can the users personalize the user interface? Another point to consider is how the students will interact with the tool. Are students motivated to use it and select to use it often? Does the tool allow for feedback, and is that feedback specific enough to result in improved student performance?

Although there is much to consider when choosing a tool to support your instruction it is important to always keep your learning objectives in the forefront of your decision. The teaching tool is exactly that – a tool to support your instruction, not replace it.

Why Does It Matter?

It's important to consider your instructional method and the teaching tools you utilize because it will affect student learning outcomes. They way content is delivered, organized, and paced will make a difference in the student's ability to focus on the content and think deeply. Accessing and interacting with the material should not be the difficult part of the learning experience. Considering your teaching method and the best tools to support that can also provide autonomy and independence for adult learners.