

# The Learning Experience Framework.



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# The Learning Experience Framework.

The 2U Learning Experience Framework (LXF) is a collection of research-based principles about how people learn, drawn from the learning sciences. The framework is specifically tailored to creating and delivering effective and engaging learning experiences within the 2U environment, and can be used in different applications across asynchronous and synchronous digital and in-person teaching and learning.

## Learning@2U.

At its heart, our approach is built around the evidence-based ideas that people learn best when they are “learning by doing” and “thinking about what they are doing” (Bonwell & Eison, 1991)<sup>1</sup>—and that what learners are feeling is also critically important. The right kinds of action and reflection foster effective learning, so we aim to create successful learning experiences that provide opportunities for “designed action and guided reflection” (Laurillard, 1993).<sup>2</sup>



### Feel.

How a learner feels impacts their engagement with the learning process.



### Do.

What a learner does and how they do it impacts the quality of learning.



### Think.

How a student thinks about their learning impacts their ability to grow and improve.

There are three learner-centered dimensions we consider when designing and delivering effective learning experiences—**Feel**, **Do**, and **Think**. Although they are presented here in a specific order, learning is a complicated process, with learners feeling, doing, and thinking all at once. At 2U, our teams are trained to support instructors and students in applying the principles of the framework effectively in practice. Please see the full LXF for additional detail and application ideas.



# Feel.

## Students learn best when they are motivated and have the right attitude toward learning.

The principles in the LXF are the building blocks that make transformative learning experiences possible. While discrete, the principles are naturally interconnected, and using them together strengthens their impact on fostering effective learning. The research behind the principles enables our teams to combine 2U's unique delivery model with the science of how people learn to provide students with powerfully effective learning experiences.

The principles in this category touch on the inner world of the learner and refer to the fact that emotions play an important role in helping learners achieve success. They are highly interconnected both within the category and with the rest of the principles.

### **1. Intrinsic motivation.**

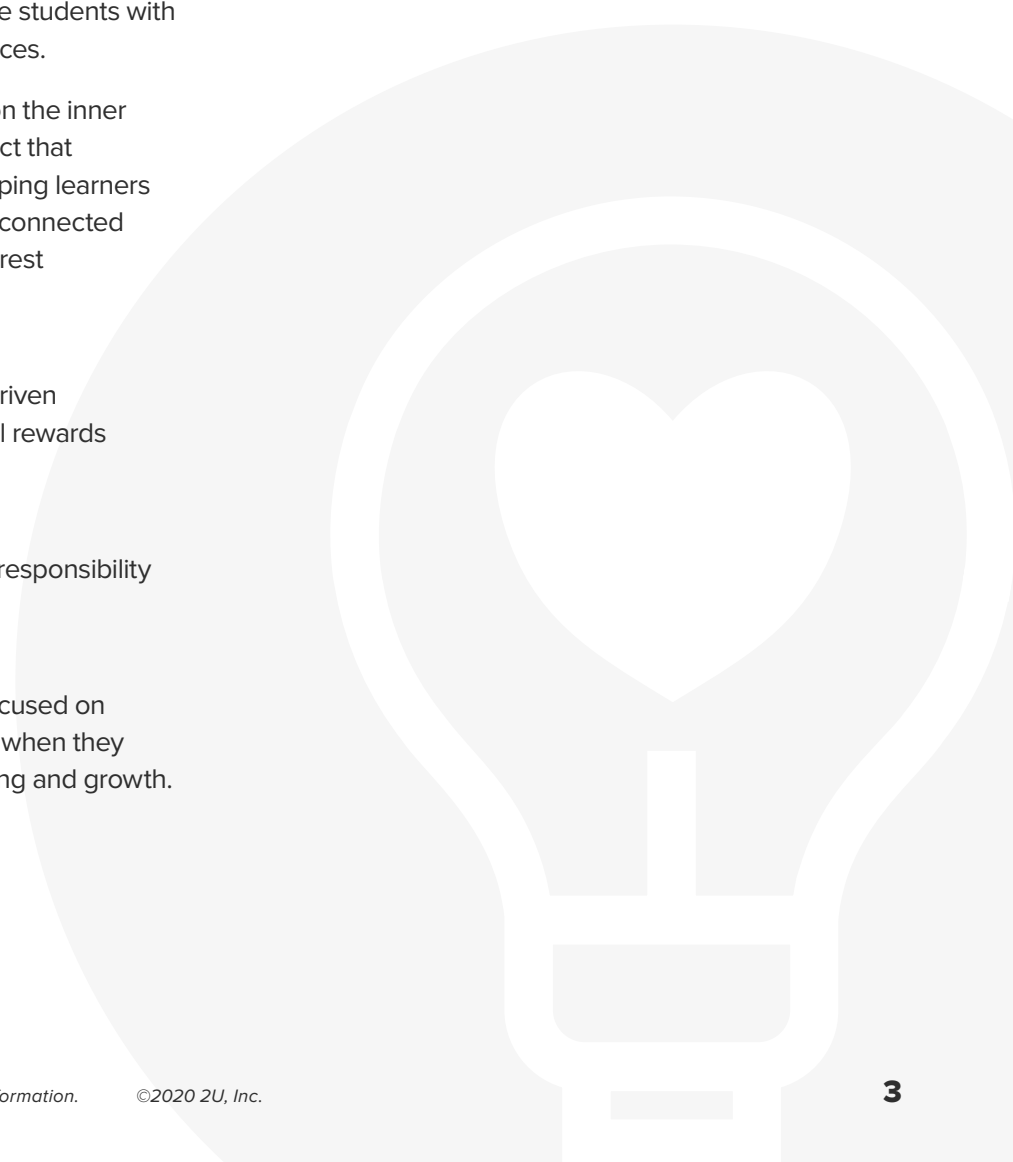
Students learn better when they are driven more by internal reasons than external rewards or consequences.

### **2. Self-regulated learning.**

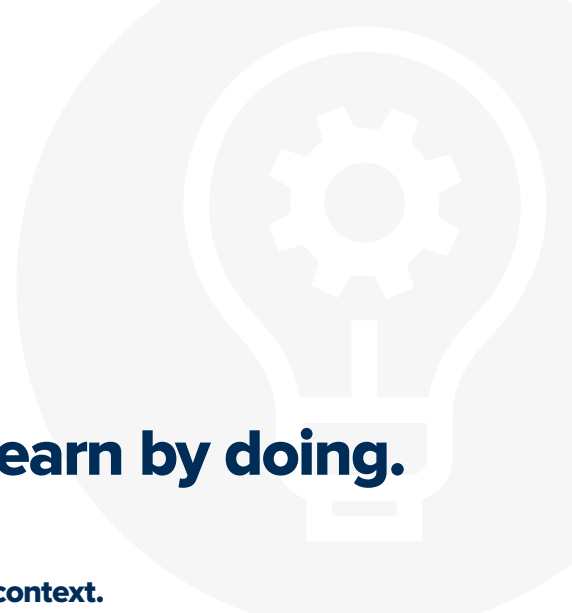
Students learn better when they take responsibility for their own learning.

### **3. Learning goals and mindsets.**

Students learn more when they are focused on mastery rather than performance and when they believe that they are capable of learning and growth.



# Do.



## Students learn best when they learn by doing.

Applied practice is critically important to making sure that learning is usable and not inert. But in order to do, students must also know. The principles in this category inform the design of the active, applied practice that should be central to all learning experiences, and the instructional content that must support it. They include principles that inform what the student should learn and how the student should learn it.

### **4. Instructional alignment.**

Students learn better when instructional strategies and assessments are aligned to clear learning objectives.

### **5. Cognitive load.**

Students learn better when the burden placed on working memory in the process of learning is managed appropriately.

### **6. Challenge and complexity.**

Students learn better when coursework progresses from simple to complex at an appropriate level of challenge.

### **7. Prior knowledge.**

Students learn better when they can connect new knowledge to prior knowledge. Learners find it easier to understand and retain new knowledge when they integrate it with what they already know.

### **8. Modality.**

Students learn better when practice and instructional content are delivered in a mode that is appropriate for their pedagogical needs. The right mode—used the right way—can help replicate authentic contexts and make concepts easy to understand, while the wrong mode can generate extraneous cognitive load.

### **9. Practice in context.**

Students learn better when knowledge and skills are presented and practiced in context. It is particularly valuable when the context reflects settings and scenarios that are authentic to the work that students will engage in as practitioners and professionals in the field.

### **10. Desirable difficulties.**

Students learn better when learning requires effort. Some learning tasks may feel hard for the learner but actually introduce difficulties that help promote long-term retention and transfer—and are thus “desirable.”

### **11. Deliberate practice.**

Students learn from mindful, carefully planned practice with feedback—the opposite of mindless repetition.

### **12. Stories and examples.**

Stories and examples help students learn and retain complex information. The human mind is naturally adept at remembering stories, while examples make abstract ideas concrete.

### **13. Expert thinking.**

Students learn from exposure to how experts think about approaching problems and making decisions, not just to explanations or demonstrations. To achieve mastery, learners must also be exposed to the invisible thought processes of experts.

# Think.

## Students learn best when they are thinking about what they are doing and feeling.

More beneficial than just “doing” alone, getting feedback, learning with others, and reflecting on the process of learning helps students succeed. This set of principles refers to the input students must receive throughout the process of learning—whether from the instructor, their peers, or themselves—in order to grow and improve.

### **14. Formative Feedback.**

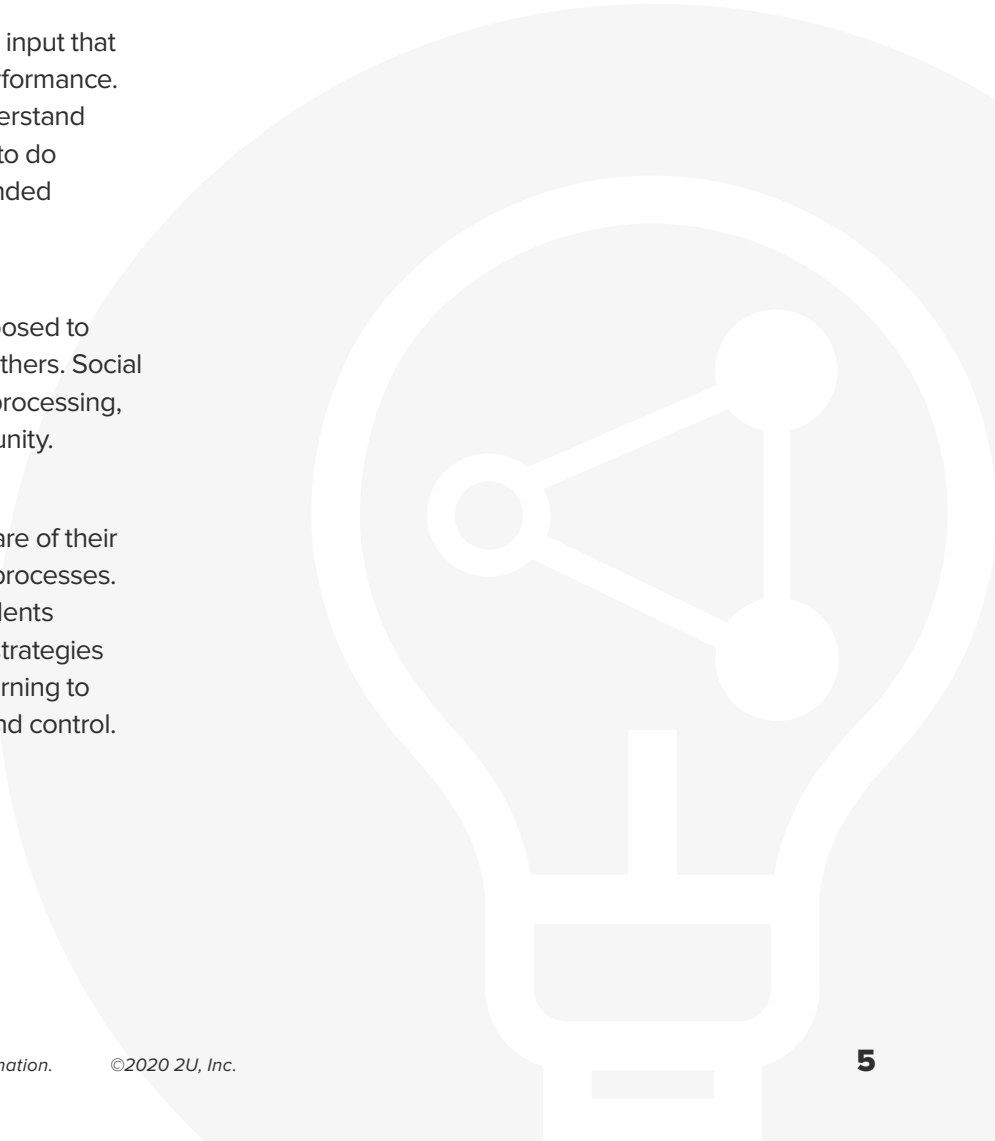
Students learn better when they receive input that helps them gauge and improve their performance. Formative feedback helps students understand their own progress and what they need to do in order to successfully achieve the intended learning objectives.

### **15. Social Learning.**

Students learn better when they are exposed to different perspectives by working with others. Social learning provides a forum for cognitive processing, receiving feedback, and building community.

### **16. Metacognition.**

Students learn better when they are aware of their own knowledge, thinking, and learning processes. This “thinking about thinking” helps students understand their own learning, choose strategies that will lead to success, and transfer learning to new contexts with greater confidence and control.



Our intent is to use the LXF as a shared reference and language to guide our work together, not as an enforced worldview. In our experience, the principles harmonize with a wide range of preferred pedagogical models—such as problem-based learning and Universal Design for Learning—some of which you may already be using in your teaching. We look forward to learning about your unique perspective, and incorporating it into our work together. Our goal is to draw on these principles to help you design and build digital learning experiences that honor your institution’s tradition of excellence as well as your expertise in understanding students’ needs. Together we will deliver the quality of education your students trust you to provide, which is nothing short of life changing.

## We are here to help.

To request the full **LXF report**, please email the **2U Learning Design & Development** team at [2UDotCom@2u.com](mailto:2UDotCom@2u.com).



### References

<sup>1</sup>Bonwell, C. C. & Eison, J. A. (1991). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. ASHE-ERIC higher education report, 1. Washington, DC: George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

<sup>2</sup>Laurillard, D. (1993). *Rethinking university teaching: A framework for effective use of educational technology*. London, UK: Routledge.

