

FTCC Canvas Course Design Framework

A Proven Model for High-Quality, Aligned, Engaging Online Courses

Executive Summary

This framework presents a replicable, research-based approach to designing Canvas courses that prioritize **learning objective alignment, student engagement, assessment integrity, and instructor efficiency**. Developed and validated through multiple FTCC courses (HIS-131, HIS-132, others), this model combines Quality Matters standards, Universal Design for Learning principles, and proven Canvas pedagogies to create courses that work at scale.

Key Features: - 8-module structure adaptable to 8-week or 16-week formats - 3-5 carefully aligned MLOs per module (all mapped to CLOs) - Progressive skill development (Bloom's levels 1-4 minimum) - Balanced assessment: 85%+ auto-graded, 15% instructor-graded - Integrated projects with unique, choice-driven submission sequences - Strategic discussion boards (4 total) tied to content mastery, not reflection - Federal RSI compliance with practical engagement strategies

Part 1: Understanding Key Framework Concepts

RSI (Required Student Interaction) Definition & Standards

What is RSI?

RSI refers to **meaningful, asynchronous interaction between students and faculty, between students and other students, or between students and learning materials** that is required to complete a course or earn credit. RSI is a federal requirement for distance education courses to maintain academic rigor and ensure that students are not simply completing coursework independently without engagement.

Federal Requirements (34 CFR § 600.2):

Distance education courses must include **substantive interaction** between: - Instructor and student, OR - Students and students, OR - Students and learning materials (designed to be educationally meaningful)

NCCCS Interpretation:

For FTCC online courses, each module must contain opportunities for students to interact in ways that support learning objectives. This includes: - Engagement with instructional content (not just reading) - Active practice with feedback (learning activities) - Application of concepts (projects, discussions, assessments) - Feedback from instructor or peers

RSI Best Practices (Non-Negotiable):

1. **Built-In, Not Optional** - RSI should be required course components, not extra credit
2. **Meaningful to Learning** - All interactions must support MLOs
3. **Varied Modalities** - Mix of individual work, peer interaction, and instructor feedback
4. **Transparent Expectations** - Clear instructions and success criteria
5. **Regular Feedback** - Students receive regular communication about progress
6. **Trackable Engagement** - Analytics show participation patterns

Quality Matters (QM) Standards Integration

This framework addresses QM Standards 2-6 (learning design standards):

- **Standard 2:** Learning objectives clearly stated and measurable
- **Standard 3:** Assessments measure stated learning objectives
- **Standard 4:** Instructional materials support achievement of objectives
- **Standard 5:** Learning activities support achievement of objectives
- **Standard 6:** Tools/media support course objectives

Part 2: The 8-Module Course Structure

Overview

Standard Implementation Options:

Format	Duration	Modules/Week	Best For
Accelerated	8 weeks	1 module/week	Intensive, focused topics
Standard	16 weeks	2 modules/week	Comprehensive survey courses
Extended	12 weeks	.67 modules/week	Highly interactive courses

Module Naming Convention:

Name modules by **content theme** rather than "Module 1, 2, 3..." to help students see the progressive development:

Example: History course modules might be "Encounters," "Dissent," "Revolution," "Republic," rather than "Module 1," "Module 2," etc.

Part 3: Each Module Architecture

Standard Module Duration & Workload

Weekly Time Commitment: 6-8 hours per module (federal standard)

Component Breakdown: - Instructional Content reading: 1.5-2 hours - Learning Activities (practice): 2-3 hours - Project work or discussion: 1.5-2 hours - Assessment (quiz/exam): 0.5-1 hour - Review and reflection: 0.5-1 hour

Module Component #1: Instructional Content

Purpose: Provide foundational knowledge and context for module learning objectives

Structure:

1. **Overview Page** (5-10 minutes)
 - Module theme statement
 - 2-3 inquiry questions guiding the module
 - Connection to course “big picture”
 - Timeline and expectations
2. **Core Content Resources** (60-90 minutes total)
 - Primary textbook chapters (required)
 - Primary source documents (required)
 - Supplementary videos, infographics, or interactive elements (optional enrichment)
3. **Instructional Guidance Page** (active reading support)
 - Study questions tied to MLOs
 - Note-taking prompts
 - Key concept definitions
 - Connection exercises linking content to contemporary issues

Quality Standards: - Content exclusive to adopted textbooks and provided primary sources - No extraneous materials or “nice-to-know” additions - Clear organization supporting progressive understanding - Accessibility compliance (alt text, captions, screen reader compatibility)

RSI Element: Students **engage actively** with content through guided study questions rather than passive reading

Module Component #2: Learning Activities (5 Options, Choose 2-3 Required)

Philosophy:

Rather than one-size-fits-all activities, provide **5 different skill-building options** from which instructors select 2-3 required activities. This allows: - Instructors to customize based on class needs - Students to engage in their preferred learning style (if offering choice) - Varied practice pathways supporting the same MLOs

Activity Type Structure (Each Activity = 30-50 minutes):

All 5 activities in a module address the **same 2 MLOs** but use different approaches:

Activity				
Type	Bloom's Level	MLO Focus	Format	Duration
Activity 1: Source Detective	Level 2-3 (Understand/Apply)	MLO A (usually sourcing)	Doc analysis + quiz	30 min
Activity 2: Thinking Builder	Level 3-4 (Apply/Analyze)	MLO A (usually causation/context)	Sequencing, categorization	35 min
Activity 3: Evidence Evaluator	Level 4-5 (Analyze/Evaluate)	MLO B (usually evaluation)	Multiple perspective analysis	40 min
Activity 4: Pattern Tracker	Level 4-5 (Analyze/Evaluate)	MLO B (usually continuity/change)	Comparison, pattern recognition	45 min
Activity 5: Modern Connector	Level 5-6 (Evaluate/Create)	MLO C (usually application/relevance)	Current events or creative application	50 min

Standard Features (All Activities):

✓ Auto-graded using Canvas New Quizzes or native quiz tools ✓ Multiple attempts allowed (typically 2) ✓ Immediate feedback on each response ✓ No time limits (accessibility) ✓ One question at a time (reduces anxiety, prevents cheating) ✓ Mix of question types (multiple choice, hot spot, drag-drop, matching, short answer with keyword recognition) ✓ 30-50 points per activity (instructor can adjust)

RSI Elements: - Interactive practice with immediate feedback (not passive reading) - Multiple attempts supporting mastery learning - Varied question types matching diverse learning preferences - Progress toward mastery tracked in gradebook

Example MLO Connections (Module Structure):

MODULE: "Dissent & Dissenters" (Colonial Period)

MLO 1: Examine religious and political dissent in early colonial America
 MLO 2: Analyze the role of individual conscience vs. community authority
 MLO 3: Trace patterns of resistance and accommodation across colonial period

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Required Activity 1.1: Source Detective (Anne Hutchinson Trial)
 └ Bloom's 2-3: Read source, identify author, audience, purpose
 └ Focuses on MLO 1

Required Activity 1.2: Thinking Builder (Causation Chain)
 └ Bloom's 3-4: Arrange factors leading to dissent, explain connections

└ Focuses on MLO 1

Activity 1.3: Evidence Evaluator (Compare 3 dissent cases)

└ Bloom's 4-5: Rate reliability, identify bias, assess impact

└ Focuses on MLO 2

Activity 1.4: Pattern Tracker (Resistance strategies over time)

└ Bloom's 4-5: Identify methods, compare effectiveness, predict outcomes

└ Focuses on MLO 3

Activity 1.5: Modern Connector (Current dissent/protest movements)

└ Bloom's 5-6: Apply historical patterns to current events, justify connections

└ Focuses on MLO 2

Module Component #3: Knowledge Checks (5 questions, auto-graded)

Purpose: Verify students have completed and understood core textbook content before engaging with higher-level work

Structure: - 5 questions per module - Simple recall from assigned reading (Bloom's level 1-2) - Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or basic short answer - Auto-graded immediately - Unlimited attempts (students retake until mastery) - No time limit

Timing: Complete after reading assigned content, before learning activities

Points: 10 points total (2 points per question)

RSI Element: Ensures students engage with required reading; immediate feedback demonstrates whether understanding is adequate before moving to higher-level work

Module Component #4: Course Project (Integrated Throughout 8 Modules)

Philosophy:

Rather than separate “assignments,” students engage in a **semester-long project with strategic submission points** that creates a final capstone. This approach: - Threads throughout the entire course - Builds toward increasingly complex work - Reduces assessment fatigue - Creates coherent portfolio

Project Structure (Varies by Course, Example Below):

4 Graded Submissions (Modules 1, 3, 5, 7): - Each submission is 100-150 points - Use universal rubric across all submissions - Provide feedback guiding portfolio improvement - Require evidence integration (course content + personal connection)

4 Creation Periods (Modules 2, 4, 6, 8): - Create project pieces but don't submit for grade
- Students compile these into final portfolio - Focuses on content engagement, not assessment pressure

Choice Board System (Same across all submissions):

Each student chooses **3 elements** per submission:

1. **Format Choice** (pick 1)
 - Written analysis, infographic, timeline, audio reflection, video presentation, interactive tool, etc.
 - Supports different learning modalities
2. **Connection Choice** (pick 1)
 - Local history, family story, current events, cultural comparison, regional focus, etc.
 - **Ensures personal relevance & prevents AI-generated work**
 - Personal connections cannot be AI-generated effectively
3. **Inquiry Focus** (pick 1)
 - Different analytical lenses based on module content
 - Examples: "Who belongs?", "Who decides?", "What endures?"
 - All connect to course big question

RSI Elements: - Student choice increases engagement - Personal connections require authentic engagement - Multiple submissions create ongoing interaction with instructor - Final portfolio synthesis demonstrates mastery of course concepts

Grading: - Universal 100-point rubric (Evidence, Historical Thinking, Connection, Communication) - Applied consistently across all 4 submissions - 15-20 minute per-student grading time per submission - Focus on historical/disciplinary thinking, not format perfection

Module Component #5: Discussion Boards (4 per course, in Modules 2, 4, 6, 8)

Philosophy:

Discussion boards serve as **content-focused, MLO-specific assessments**—NOT mere reflection or general chat. Each discussion board:
- Focuses on 1-2 specific MLOs (not all)
- Requires evidence from course content
- Includes both individual post and peer engagement
- Has clear success criteria aligned to rubric

Strategic Placement:

Module	Position in Course	Purpose	MLO Focus
Discussion 2	After 25% of course	Build foundational understanding	Primary MLOs from Modules 1-2

Module	Position in Course	Purpose	MLO Focus
Discussion 4	Midpoint assessment	Deepen analysis and comparison	Emerging patterns across Modules 1-4
Discussion 6	After 75% of course	Complex synthesis with contemporary application	Advanced MLOs from Modules 5-6
Discussion 8	Final assessment	Demonstrate mastery & transfer learning	Integration across entire course

Discussion Board Structure (100 points total):

Initial Post (70 points): - Responds directly to content-focused prompt - Incorporates specific evidence (2-3 citations minimum) - Demonstrates historical/disciplinary thinking - Addresses contemporary relevance or application - 300-400 words

Example Prompt (NOT Reflective):

POOR: "Reflect on what you learned about colonial dissent. What surprised you?"

How do you feel about Anne Hutchinson's story?"

↓

BETTER: "Compare Anne Hutchinson's religious dissent with Roger Williams' political resistance. Using specific evidence from both sources, analyze whether shared resentment could create common cause among these colonial dissenters. How might their different positions have prevented or enabled collaboration?"

Peer Responses (30 points): - 2 substantive responses to classmates' posts (15 points each) - Advance discussion with evidence or alternative perspective - Show careful reading and thoughtful engagement - 150-200 words each

Rubric for Discussion (100 points):

Criteria	Exemplary (23-25)	Proficient (20-22)	Developing (17-19)	Beginning (0-16)
Content Analysis (25)	Sophisticated understanding with specific evidence	Solid understanding with adequate evidence	Basic understanding with limited evidence	Poor understanding or minimal evidence
Disciplinary Thinking (25)	Demonstrates causal reasoning, comparison, contextualization	Shows solid thinking skills	Limited analytical depth	Little evidence of thinking
Evidence & Citation (20)	Multiple relevant sources with proper citations	Appropriate sources with citations	Vague or minimal sources	Missing or incorrect citations
Contemporary	Meaningful,	Solid	Superficial	No connection

Criteria	Exemplary (23-25)	Proficient (20-22)	Developing (17-19)	Beginning (0-16)
Connection (15)	insightful modern parallel	connection to contemporary issues	connection	or irrelevant
Peer Engagement (15)	Thoughtful responses advancing discussion	Solid responses with meaningful contribution	Basic responses with limited contribution	Minimal or off-topic engagement

RSI Elements: - Required substantive interaction with peers - Content-focused (not just social engagement) - Demonstrates mastery of module MLOs - Feedback from instructor on thinking quality

Module Component #6: Module Quiz (10 questions, auto-graded)

Purpose: Low-stakes assessment of module-specific concepts; mid-level cognitive demand

Structure: - 10 questions per module - Bloom's levels 2-3 (Understand/Apply) - Mix of question types (multiple choice, matching, short answer with keyword recognition) - Auto-graded immediately - 1 attempt only (higher stakes than knowledge check) - 20-30 minute time window (tests understanding, not memory)

Points: 20 points total (2 points per question)

Content Focus: - Module-specific concepts - Application of concepts (not just recall) - Connections to MLOs - No trick questions; straightforward assessment of understanding

Part 4: Assessment Architecture

The Four Tiers of Assessment

This framework uses **four distinct assessment tiers** serving different purposes:

Tier	Component	Purpose	Cognitive			
			Level	Grading	Stakes	Timing
Tier 1	Knowledge Checks	Verify reading completion	Bloom's 1-2	Auto	Low	After content reading
Tier 2	Learning Activities	Practice with feedback	Bloom's 2-4	Auto	Low-Med	Throughout module
Tier 3	Module Quizzes	Assess module mastery	Bloom's 2-3	Auto	Medium	End of module

Tier	Component	Purpose	Cognitive Level		Grading	Stakes	Timing
			Bloom's 4-6	Bloom's 3-5			
Tier 4A	Project Submissions	Demonstrate integrated mastery	Bloom's 4-6	Manual	High	Modules 1,3,5,7	
Tier 4B	Discussion Boards	Demonstrate content mastery + peer engagement	Bloom's 3-5	Manual	High	Modules 2,4,6,8	
Tier 5	Midpoint Assessment	Cumulative check (Quiz in Module 4 OR combined quiz)	Bloom's 3-4	Auto	Medium-High	Week 4-5	
Tier 6	Final Assessment	Demonstrate course mastery	Bloom's 3-5	Varies	High	Module 8	

Bloom's Taxonomy Progression

Module Progression (Increasingly Complex):

Modules 1-2: Bloom's 1-3 focus - Build foundational knowledge - Practice basic analysis - Develop sourcing skills

Modules 3-4: Bloom's 2-4 focus - Deepen understanding - Apply concepts - Begin evaluation and synthesis

Modules 5-6: Bloom's 3-5 focus - Analyze complex patterns - Evaluate evidence - Create interpretations

Modules 7-8: Bloom's 4-6 focus - Evaluate sophistication - Synthesize across course - Create original analysis or arguments

Part 5: The 4-Quiz Assessment System

Why 4 Quizzes?

This model includes 4 formal quizzes/exams distributed strategically:

1. **Quiz 1 (Module 2 or 3) — Foundational Check**
 - 10 questions on Modules 1-2 content
 - Bloom's 2-3
 - Auto-graded, 1 attempt
2. **Midpoint Exam (Module 4) — Cumulative Progress Check**
 - 15-20 questions on Modules 1-4 content
 - Bloom's 2-4

- Comprehensive assessment of first half
 - Auto-graded, 1 attempt
 - **Federal RSI requirement:** Demonstrates midpoint progress
3. **Quiz 3 (Module 6)** — Advanced Application
- 10 questions on Modules 5-6 content
 - Bloom's 3-4
 - Auto-graded, 1 attempt
4. **Final Exam (Module 8)** — Comprehensive Course Assessment
- 20-25 questions covering entire course
 - Bloom's 3-5
 - Cumulative understanding + application
 - May include essay component (manual grading)
 - **Federal requirement:** Demonstrates course mastery

Key Differences Between Assessment Components:

Aspect	Knowledge Check	Learning Activity	Module Quiz	Discussion Board	Project	Midpoint Exam	Final Exam
Purpose	Verify reading	Practice with feedback	Module mastery	Content + engagement	Integrated mastery	Progress check	Course mastery
Cognitive Level	1-2	2-4	2-3	3-5	4-6	2-4	3-5
Grading	Auto	Auto	Auto	Manual	Manual	Auto	Auto/Manual
Stakes	Low	Low-Med	Medium	High	High	Medium-High	High
Attempts	Unlimited	2	1	1	1 per submission	1	1
Time Limit	None	None	20-30 min	None	None	45-60 min	60-90 min
Feedback	Immediate	Immediate	After deadline	Written rubric	Written rubric	After deadline	After deadline
RSI Element	Reading engagement	Active practice	Master check	Peer interaction	Content application	Progress verification	Mastery verification
Student	None	Varies	None	Content-Format,	None	None	None

Aspect	Knowledge Check	Learning Activity	Module Quiz	Discussion Board	Project	Midpoint Exam	Final Exam
Choice		by activity		based		connection, inquiry	

Part 6: Grading Distribution & Workload

Recommended Grade Weights

Auto-Graded Components (70-75%): - Knowledge Checks (Modules 1-8): 40 points (5%)
 - Learning Activities (16 total, 2 required per module): 400 points (50%) - Module Quizzes (Modules 1-8): 160 points (20%) - Subtotal: ~600 points (75%)

Manual-Graded Components (25-30%): - Project Submissions (Modules 1,3,5,7): 400 points (50% of grades) - Discussion Boards (Modules 2,4,6,8): 200-300 points (25-30% of grades) - Subtotal: ~600 points (25%)

Total Course Points: ~1,200 points (adjust as needed)

Instructor Time Commitment

Initial Setup: 30-40 hours (one-time) - Content organization and structuring - Learning activity creation/customization - Quiz/exam creation - Rubric development - Canvas configuration

Weekly Grading (16-week course): - **Module weeks (Modules 1,3,5,7):** 3-4 hours per module (project grading) - **Discussion weeks (Modules 2,4,6,8):** 2-3 hours per module (discussion grading) - **Quiz weeks:** 0 hours (auto-graded) - **Average per week:** 1.5-2 hours

Total semester grading: 24-32 hours

Part 7: Reducing RSI (Required Student Interaction) Load

Low-RSI Design Doesn't Mean Disengagement

Low-RSI design means **minimizing required real-time interaction and synchronous meetings** while maintaining **meaningful, asynchronous engagement**. This framework achieves this through:

1. Asynchronous-First Design - All content delivery is asynchronous - No required synchronous meetings - Discussion boards replace chat/video discussions - Students participate on their schedule

2. Auto-Graded Immediacy - Learning activities provide instant feedback (not waiting for instructor) - Knowledge checks show immediate results - Quizzes grade themselves - Students know their standing in real-time

3. Strategic Manual Grading - Only high-stakes assessments require instructor grading (projects, discussions) - Rubrics reduce subjectivity and grading time - Feedback is brief but meaningful (focus on thinking, not mechanics) - Turnaround: 7-10 days for project feedback

4. Built-In Peer Interaction - Discussion board responses create peer-to-peer RSI - Students learn from each other, not just from instructor - Reduces instructor as sole source of feedback

5. Student Choice Architecture - Choice board options require authentic work - Personal connections prevent disengagement - Varied formats maintain interest

Part 8: Discussion Board Best Practices (Non-Negotiable)

What Discussion Boards Are NOT

✗ Reflection journals ✗ General chat or social spaces ✗ Opinion forums ✗ Therapy or personal sharing ✗ Low-cognitive-demand activities

What Discussion Boards ARE

✓ Content-focused assessments ✓ Evidence-based discourse ✓ Peer learning opportunities ✓ Application of course concepts ✓ Demonstration of MLO mastery

Creating Effective Discussion Prompts

Ineffective Prompt Structure:

"Reflect on what you learned about [topic]. What surprised you? How does this connect to your life?"

Problems: Reflective, not analytical; low cognitive demand; no specific evidence required

Effective Prompt Structure:

"[Scenario or situation from course content]

Compare/Analyze [specific elements from course content] using evidence from at least [#] different sources.

Address specifically: [What is the analytical question they should answer?]

How does this pattern appear in contemporary [relevant current context]?"

Example (Effective):

PROMPT: "Comparing Religious and Political Dissent in Colonial America

Using specific evidence from Anne Hutchinson's trial, Roger Williams' writings, and the Bacon's Rebellion documents, analyze:

1. What was each dissenter challenging (religious authority, political authority, economic structure)?
2. What methods did they use to express dissent?
3. Could their different grievances create 'common cause' (shared resistance)?

Finally, identify a contemporary social movement that attempts to build common cause among different groups. What similarities and differences exist compared to colonial dissent strategies?"

Discussion Board Facilitation

Instructor Roles:

1. **Guide** — Clarify questions, provide additional resources if needed
2. **Validator** — Acknowledge good historical thinking, note when evidence is missing
3. **Challenger** — Push deeper thinking ("What would historians say about this interpretation?")
4. **Synthesizer** — Highlight connections between student posts
5. **Not Lecturer** — Avoid giving long instructor posts that dominate discussion

Timing: - Post prompt by Monday - Students post by Wednesday - Peer responses due Friday - Instructor feedback by Sunday

Grading Windows: - Allow 1 week after due date for grading and posting feedback - Feedback should be brief (2-3 sentences) focusing on thinking quality - Point out strong evidence use and identify where evidence is missing

Part 9: Project Threading Strategy

The Alternating Submission Model

Rather than submitting projects in every module, use **alternating pattern** to reduce assessment burden while maintaining engagement:

Pattern for 8-Module Course:

MODULE 1: PROJECT SUBMISSION (Graded) + Creation Brief
MODULE 2: Discussion Board (Graded) + Content Engagement
MODULE 3: PROJECT SUBMISSION (Graded) + Revision Focus
MODULE 4: Midpoint Exam + Content Mastery Check
MODULE 5: PROJECT CREATION (Not Graded) + Portfolio Building
MODULE 6: Discussion Board (Graded) + Advanced Analysis

MODULE 7: PROJECT SUBMISSION (Graded) + Final Refinement

MODULE 8: Final Exam + Final Project Compilation

Student Experience: - Project submitted: Modules 1, 3, 5, 7 (every other module) - Content practiced but not submitted: Modules 2, 4, 6, 8 - Discussion occurs in Modules 2, 4, 6, 8 (opposite of project submissions) - Final portfolio in Module 8 includes ALL pieces, revised based on feedback

Benefits: - Reduces assessment overwhelm - Allows instructor feedback to guide improvement in next submission - Creates natural revision/improvement cycle - Maintains engagement without constant submission demands

Choice Board Consistency

Each Project Submission Uses Same Choice Framework:

Choose 1 Format + Choose 1 Connection + Choose 1 Inquiry Focus = Unique Assignment

Module 1: Choice A × 27 combinations possible
Module 3: Choice B × 27 combinations possible (or same A with different content)
Module 5: Choice C × 27 combinations possible (or same A/B with different content)
Module 7: Choice D × 27 combinations possible (or combination/revision of all)

This Design: - Prevents copying (27 combinations makes identical work unlikely) - Accommodates learning preferences - Requires personalization (AI cannot write family stories or local history specifics) - Allows students to discover their preferred format/connection type

Part 10: MLO/CLO Alignment Framework

Recommended MLO Structure (3-5 per module)

All MLOs must: - Align to at least one CLO (no orphaned MLOs) - Be addressed in instructional content - Be practiced in learning activities - Be applied in projects or discussions - Be assessed in quizzes or discussions

MLO Mapping Format:

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVE (CLO):

"Students will construct historical arguments using evidence"

MODULE 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES (MLOs) - 3 total:

- └ MLO 1.1: Identify bias and perspective in primary sources [CLO 1]
- └ MLO 1.2: Explain the role of multiple perspectives in first contact [CLO 2]

- └ MLO 1.3: Apply contemporary relevance to historical topics [CLO 1, CLO 3]

WHERE ADDRESSED:

Content: YAWP Chapter 2, Columbus & Indigenous sources
 Activity: Activities 1.1-1.2 (sourcing, perspective comparison)
 Project: Part B requires personal connection + evidence
 Discussion: (N/A for Module 1)
 Quiz: Q7-9 ask about perspective and bias

MASTERY DEMONSTRATED BY: Learning Activity scores 80%+ AND Project includes evidence of sourcing and perspective analysis

Part 11: MLO Teaching-Practice-Application-Mastery Cycle

Every MLO should follow this progression within each module and across modules:

Stage	Component	How It Works	Cognitive Level
TEACH	Instructional Content	Content introduces the skill/concept with examples	Bloom's 1-2
PRACTICE	Learning Activities (1-2)	Students practice with feedback, multiple attempts	Bloom's 2-3
APPLY	Learning Activities (3-4) OR Project/Discussion	Students apply in more complex context	Bloom's 3-4
ASSESS FOR MASTERY	Quiz OR Discussion OR Project	Student demonstrates mastery with 80%+ performance	Bloom's 3-5

Example (Sourcing MLO across 4 modules):

MODULE 1:

TEACH: "What makes a source reliable? How to evaluate author, audience, purpose, bias"

PRACTICE: Activity 1.1 – Hot spot analysis of Columbus journal (identify intended audience, bias)

APPLY: Activity 1.2 – Compare perspectives (Columbus vs. Indigenous accounts)

ASSESS: Quiz Q3 – "Whose perspective is missing from this source?"

MODULE 2:

TEACH: "How to evaluate religious vs. political sources differently"

PRACTICE: Activity 2.1 – Analyze Hutchinson trial documents

APPLY: Project includes proper source citations

ASSESS: Discussion Board – "Evaluate reliability of trial transcript vs. Hutchinson's own writings"

MODULE 3:

TEACH: "Using multiple sources to construct arguments"

PRACTICE: Activity 3.1 – Identify which sources best support different claims

APPLY: Project requires synthesizing multiple sources with proper attribution

ASSESS: Project graded on evidence integration

MODULE 4:

TEACH: "Advanced source evaluation – identifying bias and limitations"

PRACTICE: Activity 4.3 – Assess which sources are most useful for different historical questions

APPLY: Midterm exam includes source evaluation

ASSESS: Discussion Board – "Explain why we need multiple perspectives to understand [topic]"

Part 12: Implementation Timeline

For an 8-Module Course (16-Week Format)

Pre-Semester (4-6 weeks before course starts):

Week 1-2: Planning - Define 8 modules and theme for each - Identify 2-3 CLOs and design 3-5 MLOs per module - Choose required textbook and primary sources - Sketch course big question/project thread

Week 3: Content Mapping - Complete reading assignments (pages, chapters) - Identify primary sources (all readings required) - Create module overview pages with inquiry questions

Week 4-5: Activity & Assessment Design - Outline 5 learning activities per module (choose 2-3 to build fully) - Draft 5 quiz questions per module - Design discussion prompts (Modules 2, 4, 6, 8) - Create project choice boards

Week 6: Rubric & Alignment - Build universal project rubric - Design discussion board rubric - Tag all materials with MLOs - Verify CLO-MLO alignment completeness

Semester Execution:

Module Release Cadence (if 16-week course): - Week 1-2: Modules 1-2 open - Week 3-4: Modules 3-4 open - Week 5-6: Modules 5-6 open - Week 7-8: Module 7 open - Week 9+: Module 8 open (final project and exam window extends)

Grading Cycle: - Knowledge checks: Daily monitor (auto-grade) - Learning activities: Daily feedback/auto-grade - Discussion boards: Grade by Sunday following Wednesday deadline - Projects: Grade and return feedback within 7-10 days - Quizzes: Immediate auto-grade feedback

Part 13: Accessibility & UDL Compliance

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles

Multiple Means of Representation: - Content in text, visual, and audio formats where possible - Alt text on all images - Captions on all videos - Screen reader compatible interactive elements - High contrast options for visual materials

Multiple Means of Engagement: - Student choice in project format and connection - Varied activity types (visual, kinesthetic, reading/writing) - Optional enrichment materials (not required) - Personal relevance through choice boards - Low-stakes practice before high-stakes assessment

Multiple Means of Expression: - Multiple submission formats (written, visual, audio, video) - Choice board options accommodate different modalities - Discussion boards support asynchronous participation - Extended time available (no time limits on learning activities) - Alternatives provided for interactive elements when needed

Accommodation Documentation

Each module should include: - Clear statement: "Accessibility support available" - Instruction to contact disability services - Links to alternative formats - Technology troubleshooting guide

Summary: Distinguishing Framework Components

Component	Primary Purpose	Cognitive Demand	Engagement Level	Grading Time	Student Autonomy
Instructional Content	Build foundational knowledge	Low-Medium	Passive	None	Low
Knowledge Checks	Verify reading completion	Low	Low-Medium	None (auto)	Low
Learning Activities	Practice with feedback	Low-High (varies)	Medium-High	None (auto)	Medium
Module Quizzes	Assess concept mastery	Medium	Medium	None (auto)	Low
Discussion Boards	Assess mastery + peer engagement	High	High	2-3 hrs	Medium
Project Submissions	Demonstrate integrated mastery	Very High	Very High	15-20 min each	High
Midpoint Exam	Check progress/adjustment point	Medium-High	Medium	None (auto)	Low

Component	Primary Purpose	Cognitive Demand	Engagement Level	Grading Time	Student Autonomy
Final Exam/Portfolio	Demonstrate course mastery	High	High	Varies	Medium

Part 14: Quick Reference—What Makes This Framework Work

5 Key Success Factors

- 1. Alignment Obsession**
 - Every activity connects to specific MLOs
 - Every assessment measures stated objectives
 - Students see the connections (not hidden)
 - No content “nice-to-know” that isn’t assessed
- 2. Graduated Cognitive Demand**
 - Modules 1-2: Build foundation (Bloom’s 1-3)
 - Modules 3-5: Deepen and apply (Bloom’s 3-4)
 - Modules 6-8: Synthesize and evaluate (Bloom’s 4-6)
 - Students don’t jump from recall to analysis overnight
- 3. Balanced Automation**
 - 75-80% auto-graded (efficiency + immediate feedback)
 - 20-25% manual-graded (meaningful assessment + human connection)
 - Instructor time focused on thinking quality, not mechanics
- 4. Choice + Accountability**
 - Students choose format, connection, inquiry focus
 - But all choices must include evidence and meet same rigor
 - Choice prevents disengagement without sacrificing standards
- 5. Feedback-Forward Loop**
 - Project submissions in alternating pattern (1,3,5,7)
 - Instructor feedback guides next submission
 - Final portfolio includes revisions showing growth
 - Students see their development across semester

Ready for Examples?

This framework provides the structure. The next phase would include:

- **Full-module example** (all components built out)
- **Detailed rubric examples** with Bloom’s annotations
- **Discussion prompt bank** with “before/after” comparisons

- **Quiz examples** showing progression across modules
- **Project choice board samples** from different disciplines
- **Canvas-specific setup instructions** (where to place each component)
- **Weekly communication templates** for instructor

Would you like me to develop detailed examples now, or would you prefer to customize this framework first for a specific course?

This framework is based on proven implementation at Fayetteville Technical Community College and is compliant with Quality Matters standards, NCCCS RSI requirements, and Universal Design for Learning principles.