

## **My Teaching Philosophy On The Current State of Online Secondary Learning**

I firmly believe that online education can be “The Great Equalizer” if implemented correctly. It can bring course offerings to small districts that may not have access to a certified teacher. It can be used to collect data and differentiate down to the individual. It can even be used to connect and collaborate with local, national, or international communities. It is a powerful tool that will continue to influence and shape the future of education.

However, I feel that online learning in the secondary education setting is currently being misused and underutilized. In my field, there is a strong trend of online secondary courses competing against Google and an assortment of other search engine software. Many online courses are looking for students to produce simple facts to prove their content mastery. These same simple facts can be found word-for-word within moments of using any of the above software. A student merely has to select a multiple choice answer after a search result to score 100%. According to the assessment, they have proven mastery of the content in the typical secondary online platform. This can create long lasting issues when assessment grades do not accurately reflect the depth of a student’s skills and content knowledge. I feel that the current status-quo of online assessments are effecting the validity and effectiveness of online education in the secondary setting. So why are these types of assessments prevalent and how do we fix them?

The 3rd party online content providers that are supplying secondary courses are national in scale and recycle multiple-choice assessments over and over again. This leads to assessment solutions being readily available on numerous websites which take little effort to locate. In my personal opinion, in order to provide a high quality education to students in a digital format, online courses must move away from fact-based/multiple-choice assessments as their assessment format of choice. Instead, assessments need to be project-based and engage learners in a way that require more problem-solving and critical thinking. The underlying issue is that it costs more money to facilitate project-based/problem-solving assessments in comparison to multiple-choice assessments. Currently, most online content providers use multiple-choice assessments as their go-to format because a computer script can auto-grade the assessments without the need of a certified teacher. This keeps the cost of the online course low and the online instructor can take on a much larger pupil-to-teacher ratio.

As educators, we must ensure that online learning is designed to be compatible with 21st century technology and ideology. Online education must be designed around constructivist learning, multimodal content delivery, and authentic assessments. In order to accomplish this, we have to continue to form assessments around constructivist learning styles and question-based education. Assessments and thought-provoking questions cannot expect simple facts responses as an answer. These fact responses can easily be retrieved from a search engine and do not take much critical thinking to produce. Therefore, to improve upon the current industry standard of

instructional design, students must construct their own learning through integrating the content with their own personal opinions, reflections, self-assessments, and interests.

My goal as an educator and as a professional is to create online courses in a way that will solve the current issues in online secondary education through multimodal and engaging design. I will design online lessons to include a combination of text, video, and images to display content. I will utilize gifs, infographics, and interactive images to incorporate innovative and engaging technologies. I will push to create more authentic and cost-effective assessments as my main design model for assessing students. I will integrate self-assessment, text-based assessment, reflection, open application of content, digital media skills, and collaborative projects. I will give students the opportunity to design their own learning experience through constructivist methods. I will design an online assessment experience where students learn by engaging with the assessments just as much as they do with the content delivery.

My goal is to design assessments that promote authentic learning. I want students to learn through the use of digital tools instead of using digital tools to do the learning for them. My assessments will require critical thinking, knowledge construction, and student engagement rather than inauthentic fact responses.