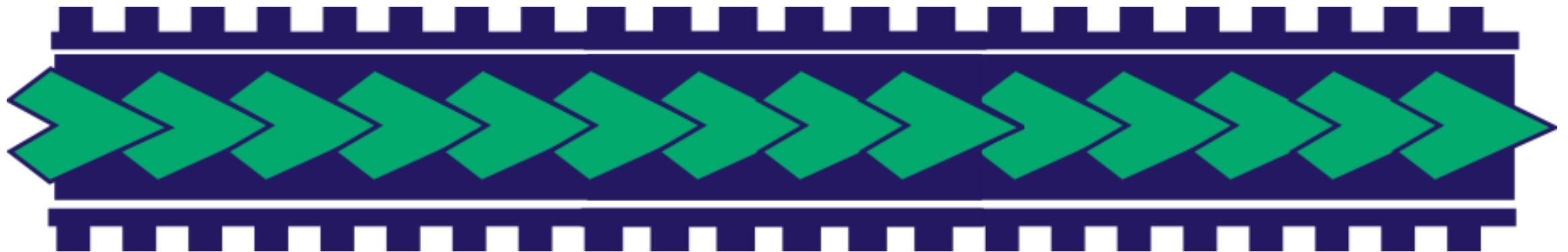# Design Online Learning Activities

Level 1   Stage 1   Design

Contents

- Introduction
- Types of online learning
- Benefits of online learning
- Things to consider
- Best practice features
- Tools
- Learning design skills and staying up to date
- Better online learning
- Review activity

Introduction

- Online learning is learning that takes place on a computer.
- Some people also refer to it as e-learning.
- It is in a virtual environment rather than a physical classroom.
- Online learning started in the 1990s with the rise of the internet.
- It has helped learners from different parts of the world to access learning.
- Online learning is flexible and often lets learners set their own pace.

Types of online learning

- Programs can be:
  - completely online
  - a mix of online and in-person learning
    - Called blended, hybrid or mixed-mode learning.

- Online learning can include:
  - live video classes
  - pre-recorded lessons.

Types of online learning (continued)

- Some online programs let learners work at their own pace and do assessments when they are ready.
- Other programs have a schedule for classes and assessments.

- Learners can interact with their trainers and other learners using:
  - Online discussion boards
  - Online meeting software, such as MS Teams and Zoom
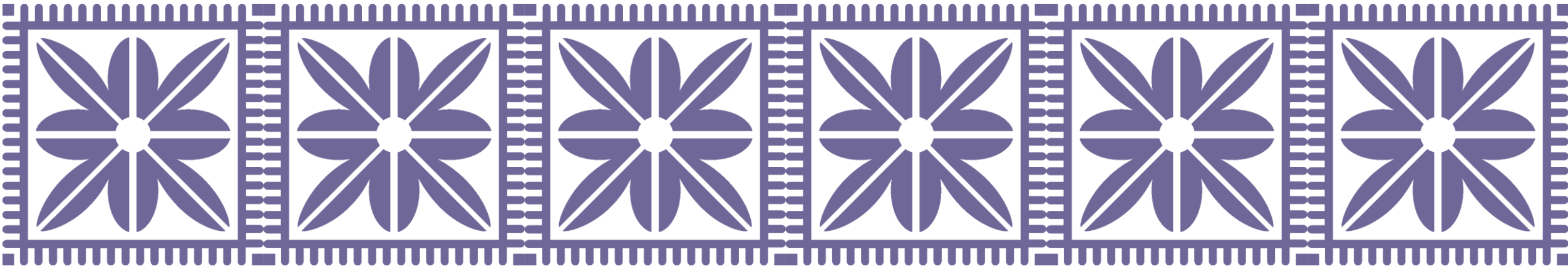 - Email
  - Telephone.

The benefits of online learning

Flexibility	Learners can learn in their own location. This may be useful when learners face challenges in getting to class.
Better time management	Learners can manage their learning with other commitments like home, family or work since they can learn at times to suit them.
Better attendance	Because learners can be flexible about where and when they learn, they may have better attendance.
Cost-effective	Learners save on travel expenses and trainers may save on printing and resource costs.
Visually appealing	Online modules can include more colour and interactive activities than printed resources.
Instant changes	Changes to resources can be made very quickly without needing to reprint any resources.
Accessible	Learners can access the internet and research topics covered in the module. This will help them learn.

Things to consider when designing online learning

Things to consider

- Some aspects of online learning will be different from in-person learning with printed resources

- When designing for online learning, we need to think about:

    - Reading on a screen

    - Internet connection

    - Available technology

    - Isolation

- We will look at each of these in order.

It is harder to read on a screen

- Reading something on paper is easier because it is still, so it is easier to focus on the content

- If there is movement on the screen, and learners need to scroll and click it can be harder to stay focused

- Learners may be less likely to read carefully if they are reading online
  - Online content must be shorter
  - Printed resources should not just be copied and pasted to an online format

Tip 1

Instead of putting a lot of written content online, you could create an interactive activity or use a video.

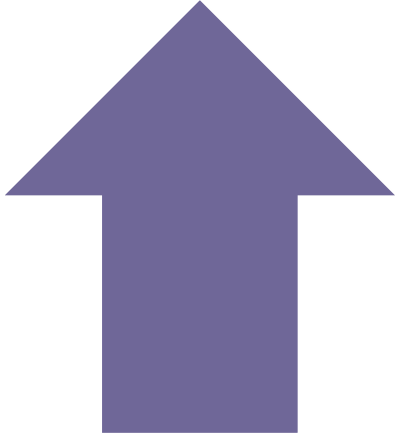# Internet connection

Tip 2

Explain the requirements for the internet connection before learners enrol in online learning.
They should check that they have a reliable connection before they start.

- Access to the internet has improved over the years. However, learners in some locations may still have some problems with connecting.

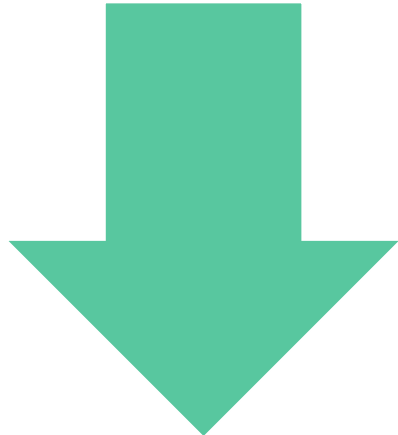- Without stable internet connections, your learners will get frustrated.

Available technology

Learners can have different kinds of hardware, such as:

- Computers
- Laptops
- Mobile devices.

Learners need to use different kinds of software, such as:

- Email
- Learning management systems (LMS)
- File sharing platforms e.g. One Drive and Dropbox.

Tip 3

- Explain the skills that learners will need before they enrol.

OR

- Provide training in the required skills at the beginning of the course.

Isolation

- Online learning is great because you do it from home.
- It can also be challenging for some people when they don't interact with other people.
- They may feel isolated.
- If they don't understand a topic or struggle, they can't always get instant help from you or a colleague.

Tip 4

Consider ways that learners can interact with you and/or each other. Some suggestions are:

- online forum in an LMS
- social media group
- phone catchups
- in person if they live close to each other.

8 best practice features of e-learning

Best practice features
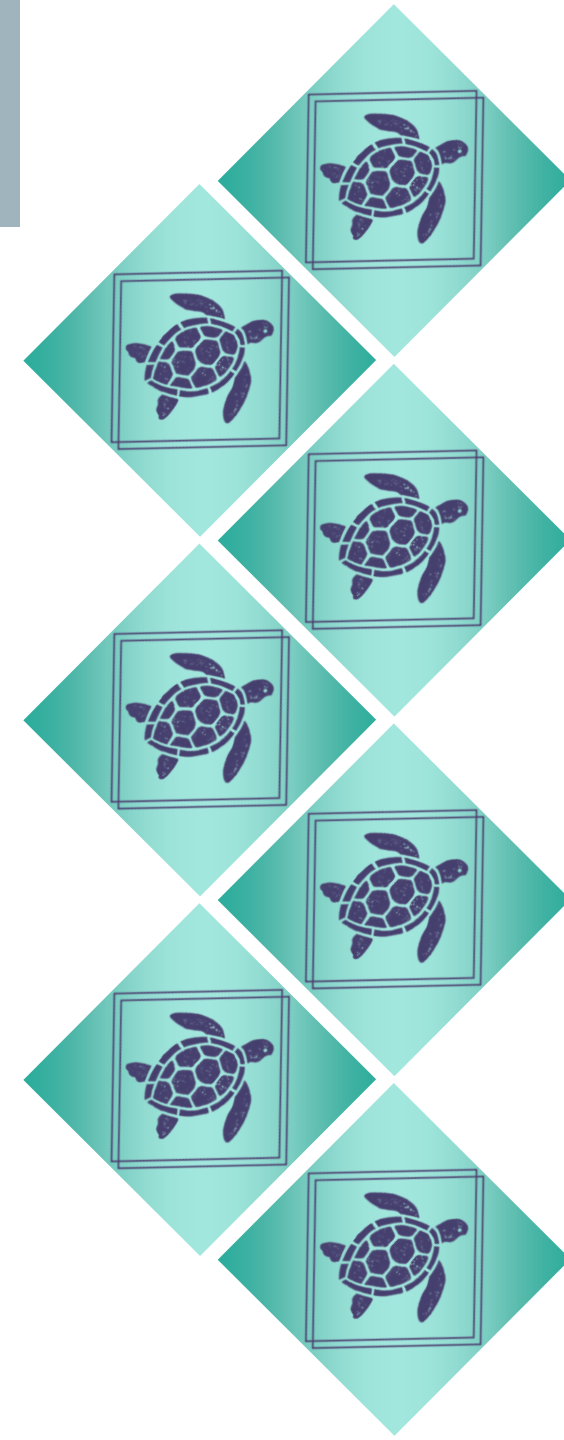
1. Adaptive learning

Create modules to adapt to learners' needs. Consider their previous knowledge and experience. Let them pick what they want to learn and what they find relevant.

2. Mobile-first

Design content that can be used on a mobile device. Many learners may use mobile devices like phones, iPads, or tablets. Content should be short. Consider the visual design and layout for smaller screens. For example, avoid large text and subtitles.

3. Micro-learning

Keep the modules short. Remember that learners don't stay focused for long when online. They should be able to complete a module in only a few minutes.

Best practice features (more)

4. Evaluation

Data on activity, completion, scores, and time to complete will help you improve the online learning experience.
Also, refer to the module on 'reflective practice'.

5. Visual design

Use colours, images, infographics and videos. It's more engaging than reading a paragraph of text. Our brains process a visual image 60,000 times faster than reading text. Learners will remember 80% of what they see compared with 20% of what they read.

6. Accessibility

Use subtitles for videos and transcriptions for voice recordings to make learning more accessible for learners with learning disabilities, reading challenges, dyslexia, or hearing impairments. This can also be helpful for learners using mobile devices. Also, follow the accessibility advice provided in MS Word.
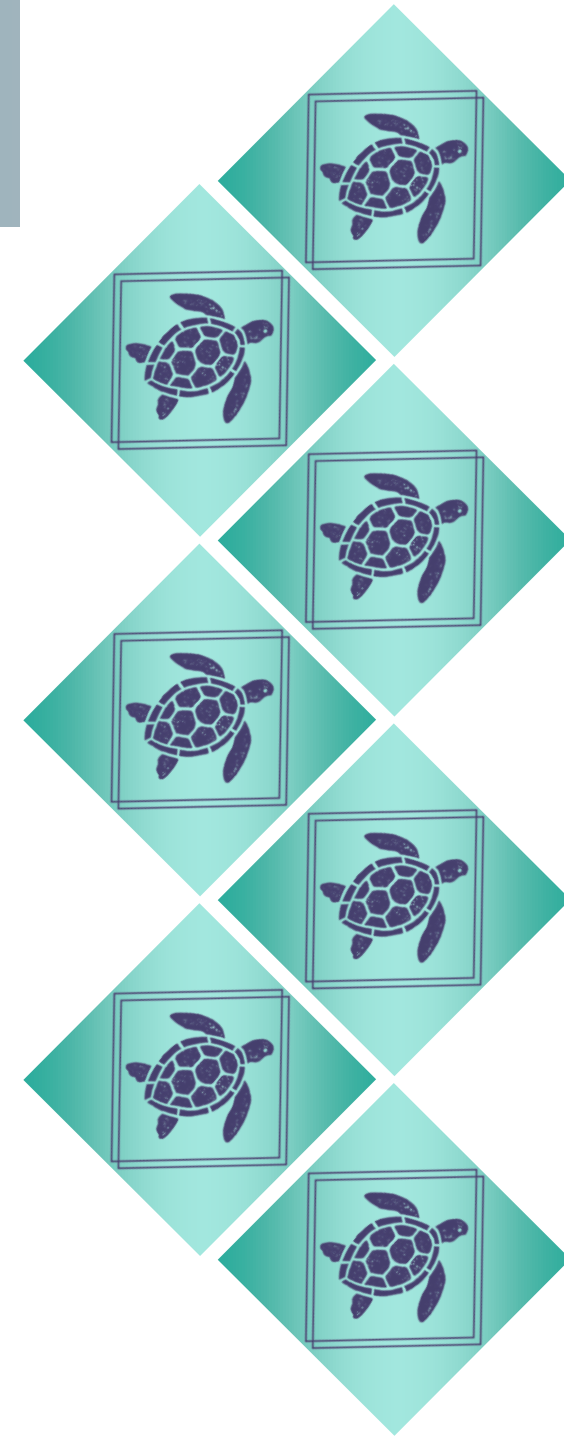
Best practice features (even more)

7. Inclusive learning

Make sure you know your specific audience, including their personal needs, culture and learning styles. Consider these learners' needs and experience in your design.

8. Best practice vs innovation

New technology like gaming can be helpful to engage learners, but make sure it suits the needs of your target audience. You will need to balance their experience with best practice.
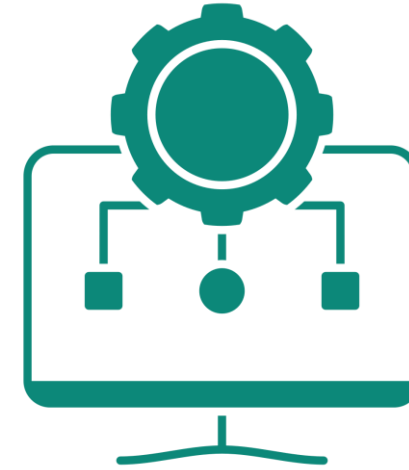
Useful tools for online learning

Learning Management System (LMS)

- An LMS is a software system that manages the learning process. Think of it as an administration tool.

- You can also use an LMS to:
  - store all your online modules
  - enrol learners
  - deliver online learning
  - track learners' progress.
  - collect data and generate reports
  - manage staff training and compliance.

- Moodle is a common open-source LMS that is free to use.

- [Click here to open the Moodle website](#)

Authoring tools

- Articulate Rise 360 as an example of an authoring tool.

- [Click here open the Articulate Rise 360 website](#)

- If you want to try it out, they offer a free trial.

- Authoring tools are software programmes to create different kinds of digital content, such as:
  - Text blocks
  - Flip cards
  - Drop-down menus
  - Hot spot images
  - Videos
  - Screen recordings
  - Quizzes

- After creating content, you need to convert it into a compatible format to use on an LMS.

- Some LMSs, like Moodle, have built-in authoring tools.

- Examples of authoring tools:
  - Articulate Storyline 360
  - Articulate Rise 360
  - Adobe Captivate
  - Adapt
  - Camtasia

Other tools to try

Kahoot

- Use Kahoot to make interactive learning activities, such as:
  - games
  - quizzes
  - challenges.
- Some activities are synchronous, so all learners do them at the same time.
- Some are asynchronous, so earners can do them at different times.
- [Click to open the Kahoot website](#)
- [Hybrid Learning Guide from Kahoot (pdf)](#)

Mentimeter

- Collect input from learners while they are online.
- Increase engagement during sessions by using it interactively.
- Get feedback from learners to help you evaluate your course
- [Click to open Mentimeter](#)

Microsoft Forms

- Create surveys, polls, and quizzes,
- Useful for engaging learners.
- Good to request feedback about your course.
- [Click to open Microsoft Forms](#)
- [Click to watch a video about Microsoft Forms](#)

Design skills: Learning and staying up to date

- Technology changes all the time and there are also changing trends in learning design. Online trainers and designers need to stay up to date. Consider signing up to these e-newsletters.
- E-learning Industry
  - Articles on trends, design, best practices and tools
  - Free downloads
  - [Click to open e-learning industry website](#).
- E-learning Heroes
  - Mainly for Articulate users, but it offers many valuable resources
  - Includes articles, discussions, examples, and ideas
  - Free resources (eBooks)
  - [Click to open e-learning heroes website](#).

Engaging online learning

- You can access this learning material in an online format.

- This will show you how online learning resources compare with print or presentation learning resources.

- Check the TVET Toolkit for this resource for the link.

Review activity

Reflect and think

- Go back through this learning resource and as you work through it, think about a course you are teaching.
  - What would work well online?
  - What would be challenging?
  - What benefits do you see for using online learning instead of printed resources?

Consider different types of online learning

For your current course, make a list of positive and negative aspects for each type of online learning.

Type of e-learning	Positive aspects for my course	Negative aspects for my course
Fully online		
Blended		
Live video		
Pre-recorded		
Discussion boards		
Online classes		
Email		
Telephone		
LMS		

Find solutions to challenges

- Earlier, we read about 'things to consider' when offering an online course.
- What are some solutions to these considerations for your students in your course?
- Add any other problems you or your learners might face.

Things to consider	Solutions
Reading online	
Internet connection	
Technology skills	
Isolation	

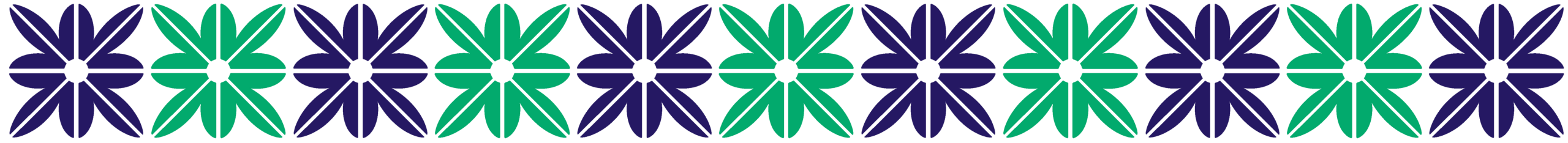# Trial some tools

Authoring tools

- Try an authoring tool like Articulate Rise.
- Build a simple online learning module.
- Use phone or tablet mode to see different formats.

Feedback survey

- Try Mentimeter or Microsoft Forms.
- Create a feedback survey.

Embed your survey into Rise

- From within Rise, use 'interactive' and add a button.
- Insert the website link to your survey.

Follow up to learn more

- Go back to some of the sites mentioned earlier in this module.

- What kinds of design features will suit your skill level, your program, and your learners?