Student Engagement and Retention: Enhancing Educational Opportunities in an Online Environment

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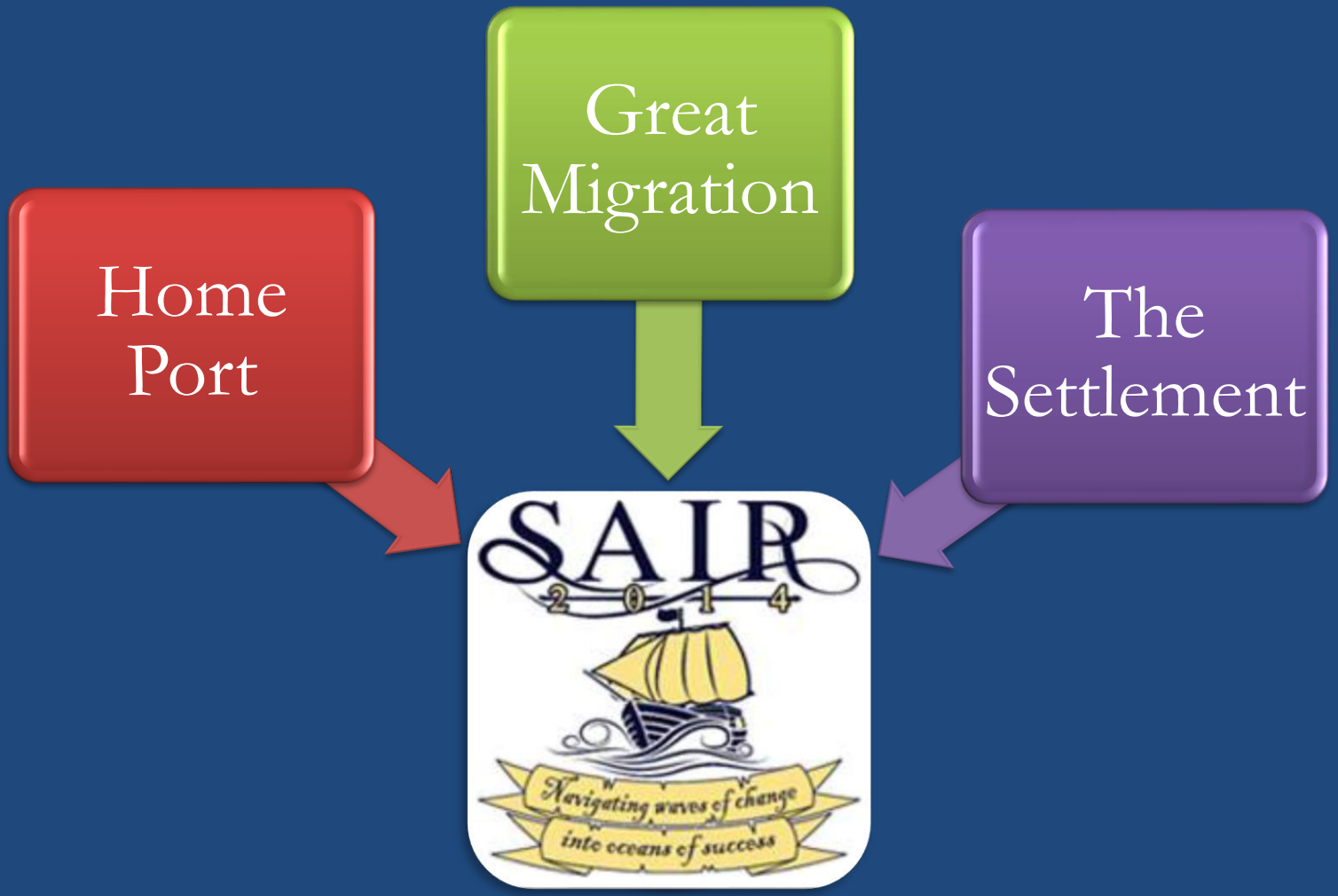
Columbia Southern University

Online Education Session

- Nina • Question
- Pinta •Positive
- Santa Maria •Challenge

Discovering a Whole New World

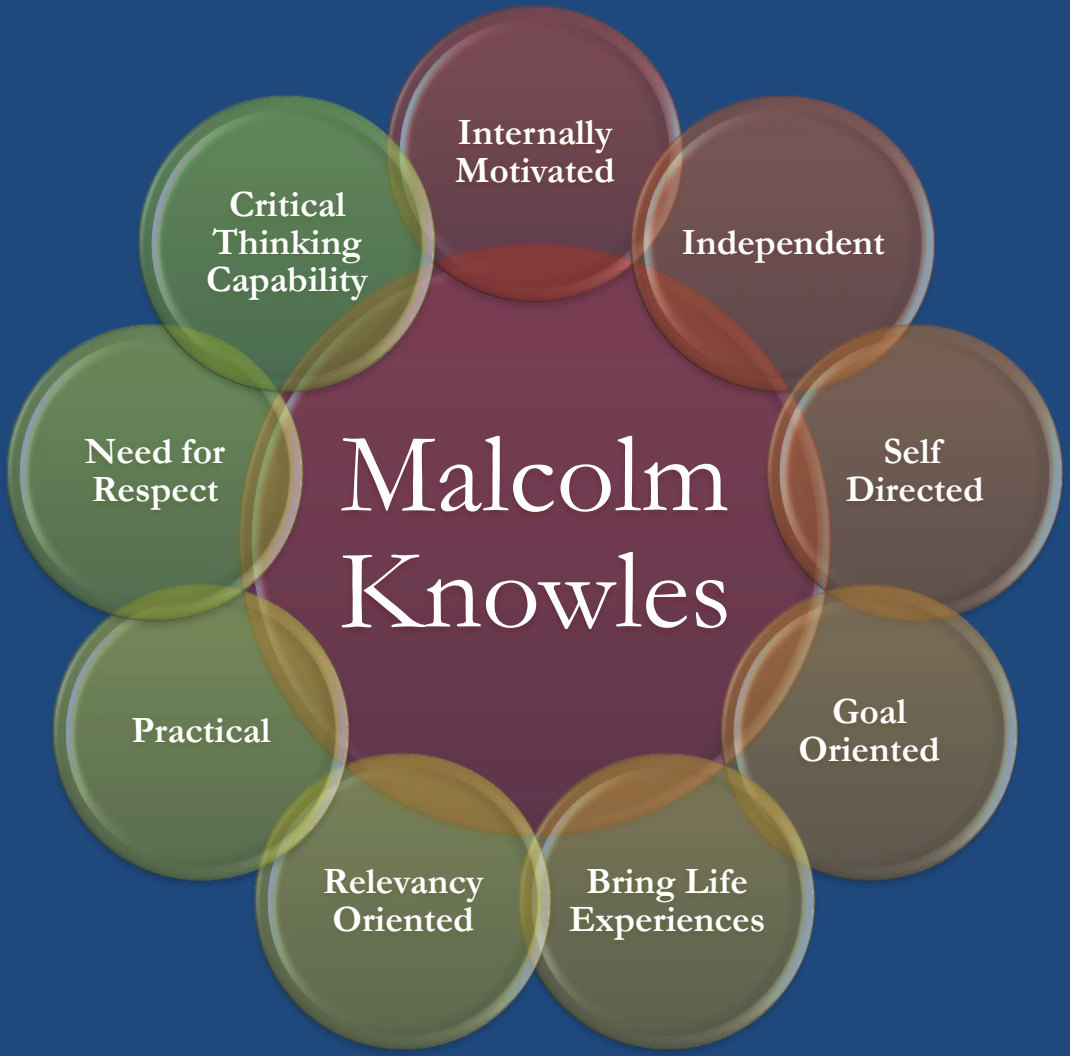


The Home Port

- Make Sure Your Foundation

Adult Learning Theory

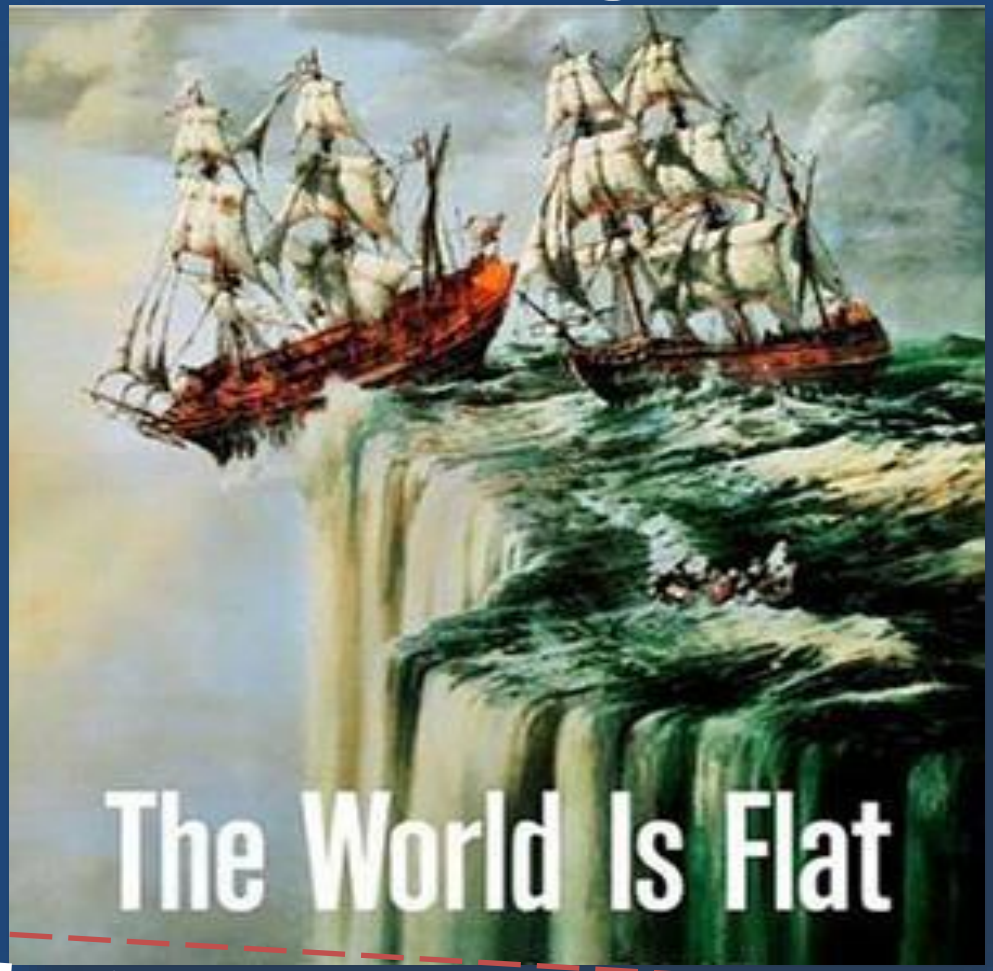
Andragogy: Methods and practices of teaching adults



The Great Migration

- Journey to a New Land

Naysayers Throughout History



Fact: If you sail, you will fall off!
If you disagree we will burn you at the stake.

Naysayers Throughout History

NOTHING CAN REPLACE A HEALTHY HORSE AND WELL BUILT BUGGY!

Naysayers Throughout History

We have 8-Tracks to listen to in our homes and cars, that's all we need!
Why would you ever want to rewind?

I have a walkman, technology is now complete!

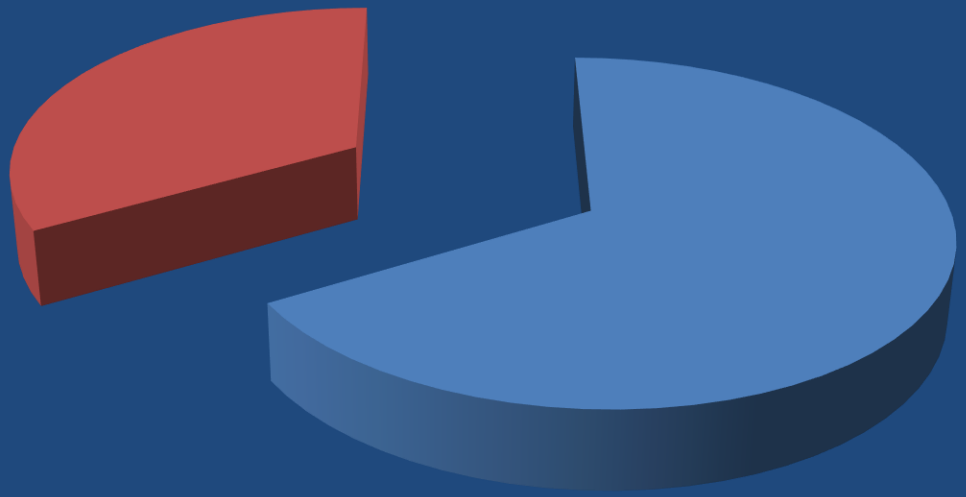
Naysayers Throughout History

NASA has a computer in a whole room.
We could never have one that fits in our home!

Naysayers Throughout History

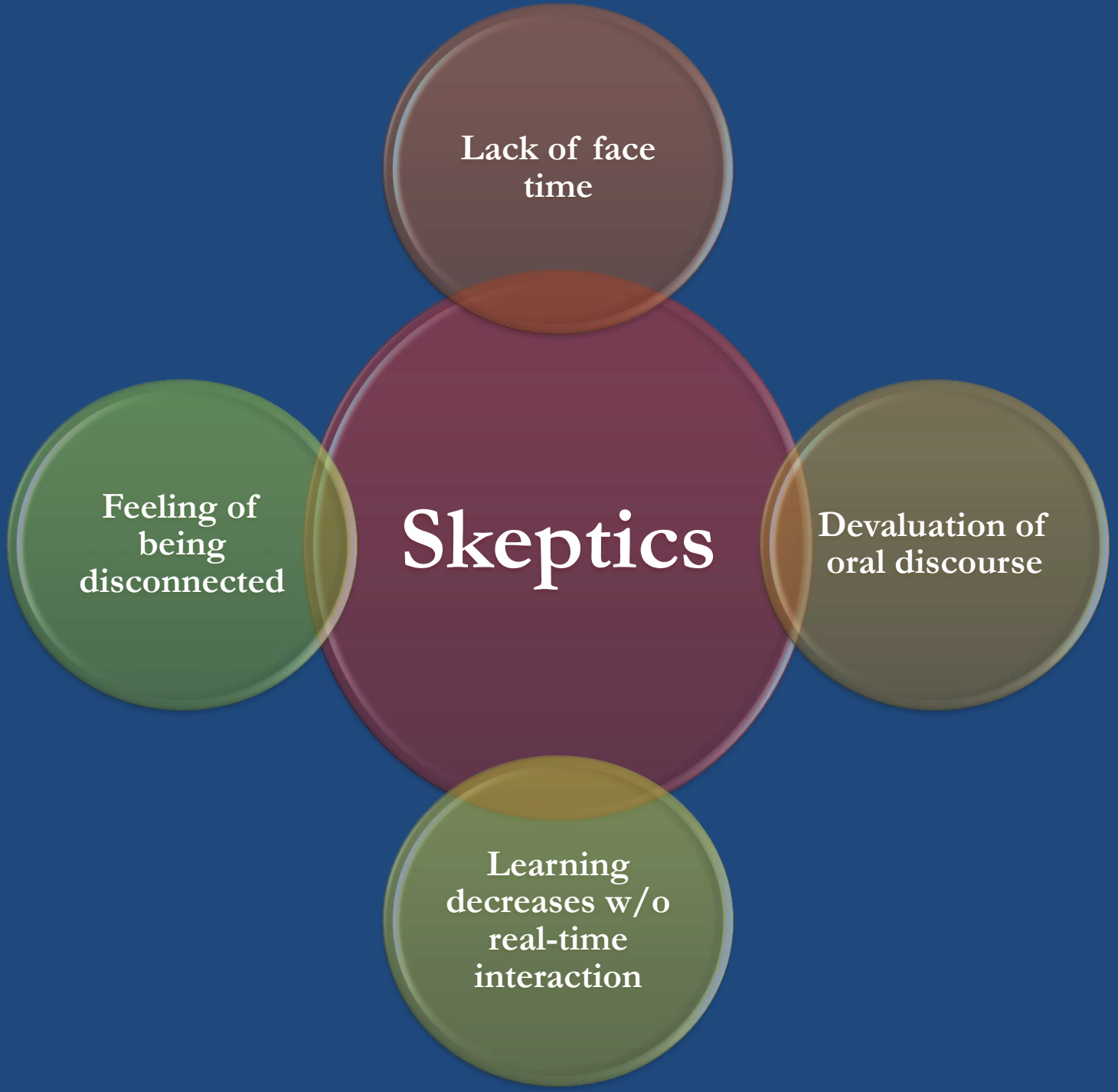
Learning can only takes place in a synchronous, face-to-face environment!

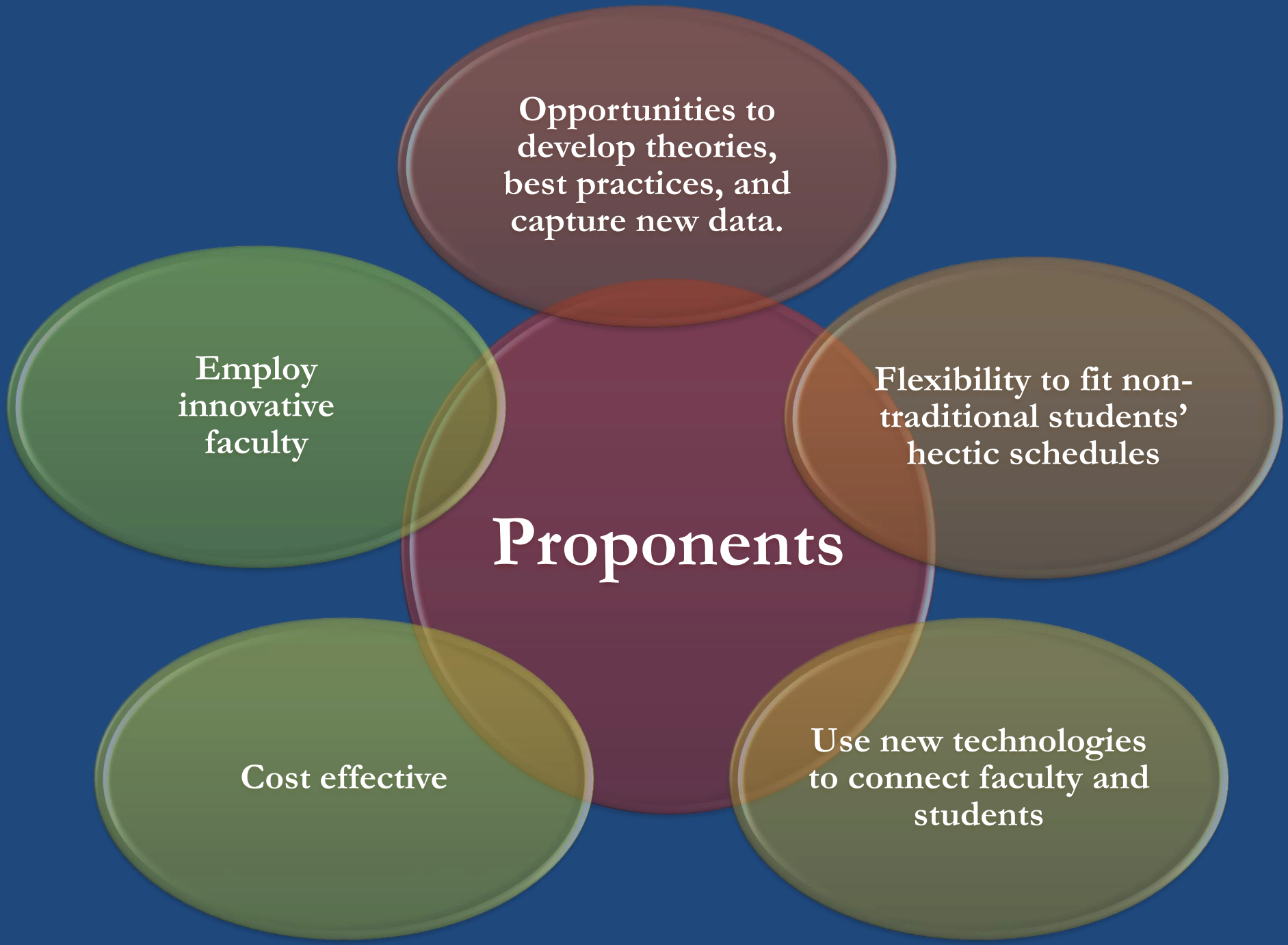
Virtual Classroom Demand

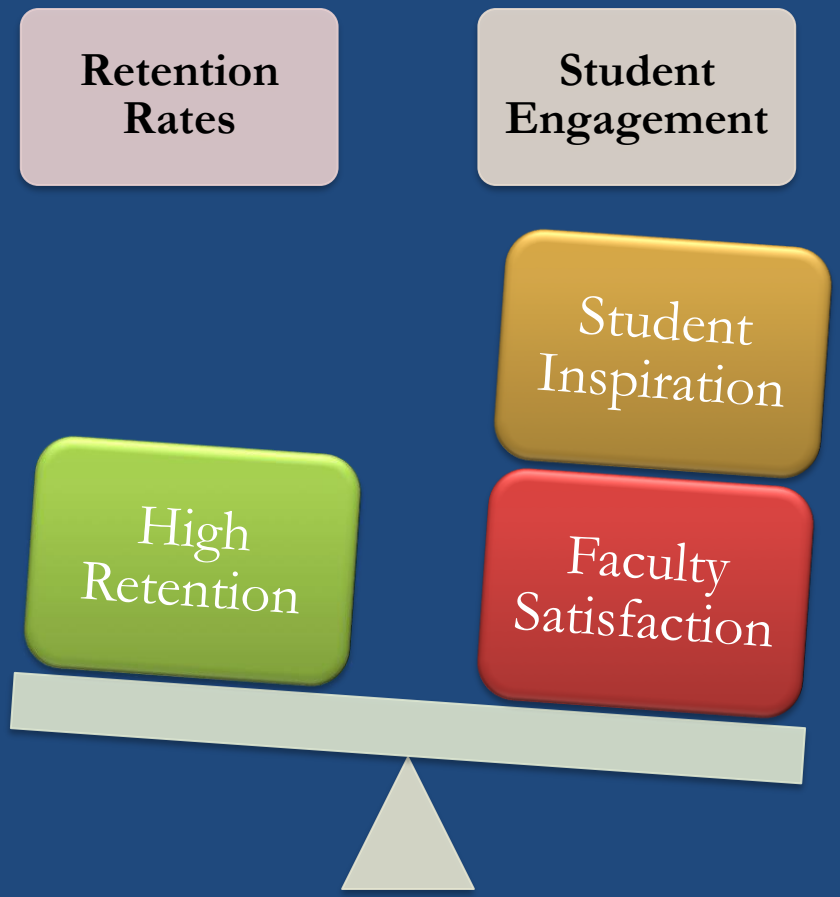


- Online Learning Consortium (2011):
  - Nearly **one-third** of all students in higher education are taking at least one **online** course.
  - Growth rate in **online** enrollments is **ten** times that of the rate in all higher education.

- Many students are opting for learning through online courses, thus institutes of higher learning must offer engaging educational opportunities in the virtual classroom.

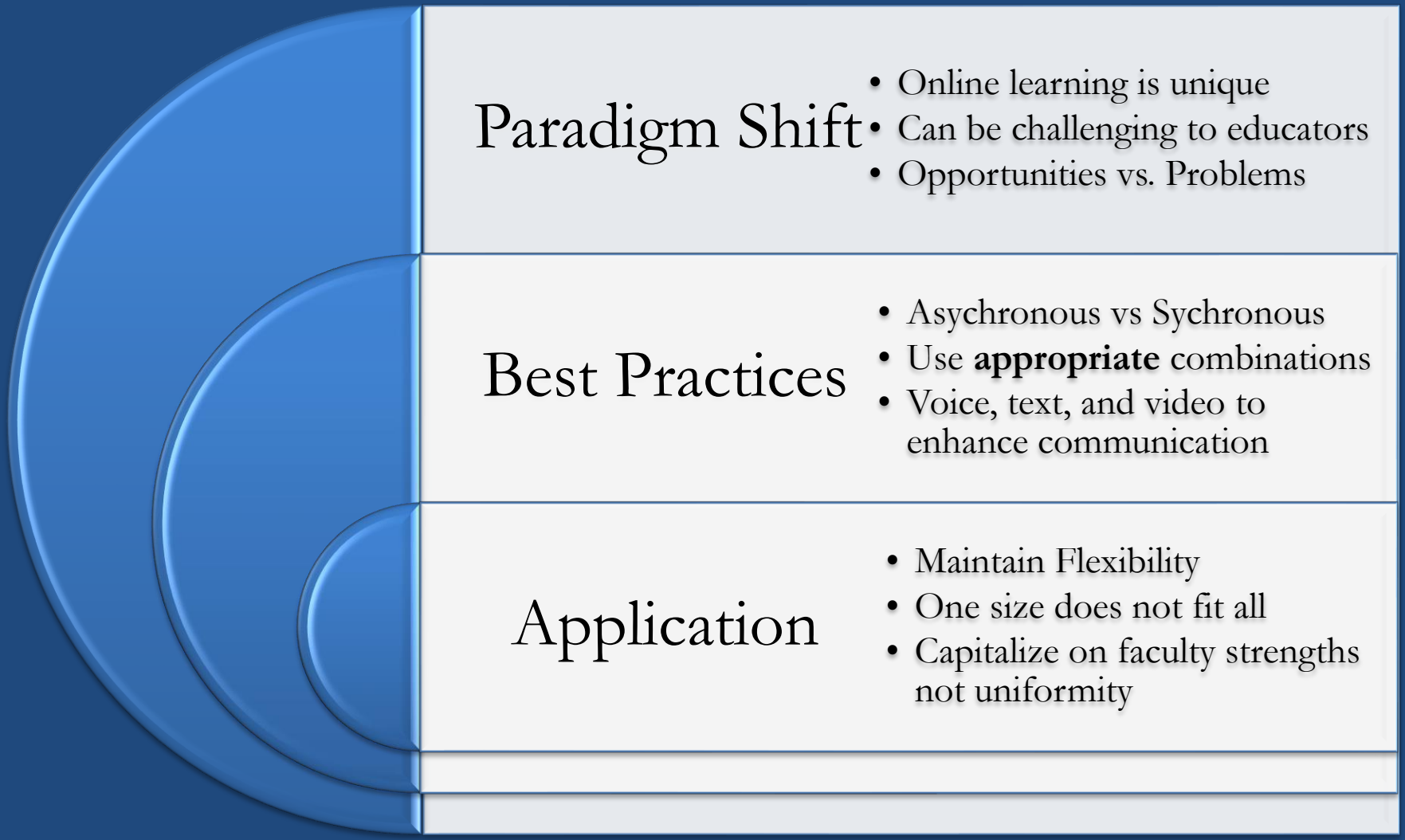

Lack of face time
Feeling of being disconnected
Skeptics
Devaluation of oral discourse
Learning decreases w/o real-time interaction


Opportunities to develop theories, best practices, and capture new data.
Employ innovative faculty
Flexibility to fit non-traditional students' hectic schedules
Proponents
Cost effective
Use new technologies to connect faculty and students



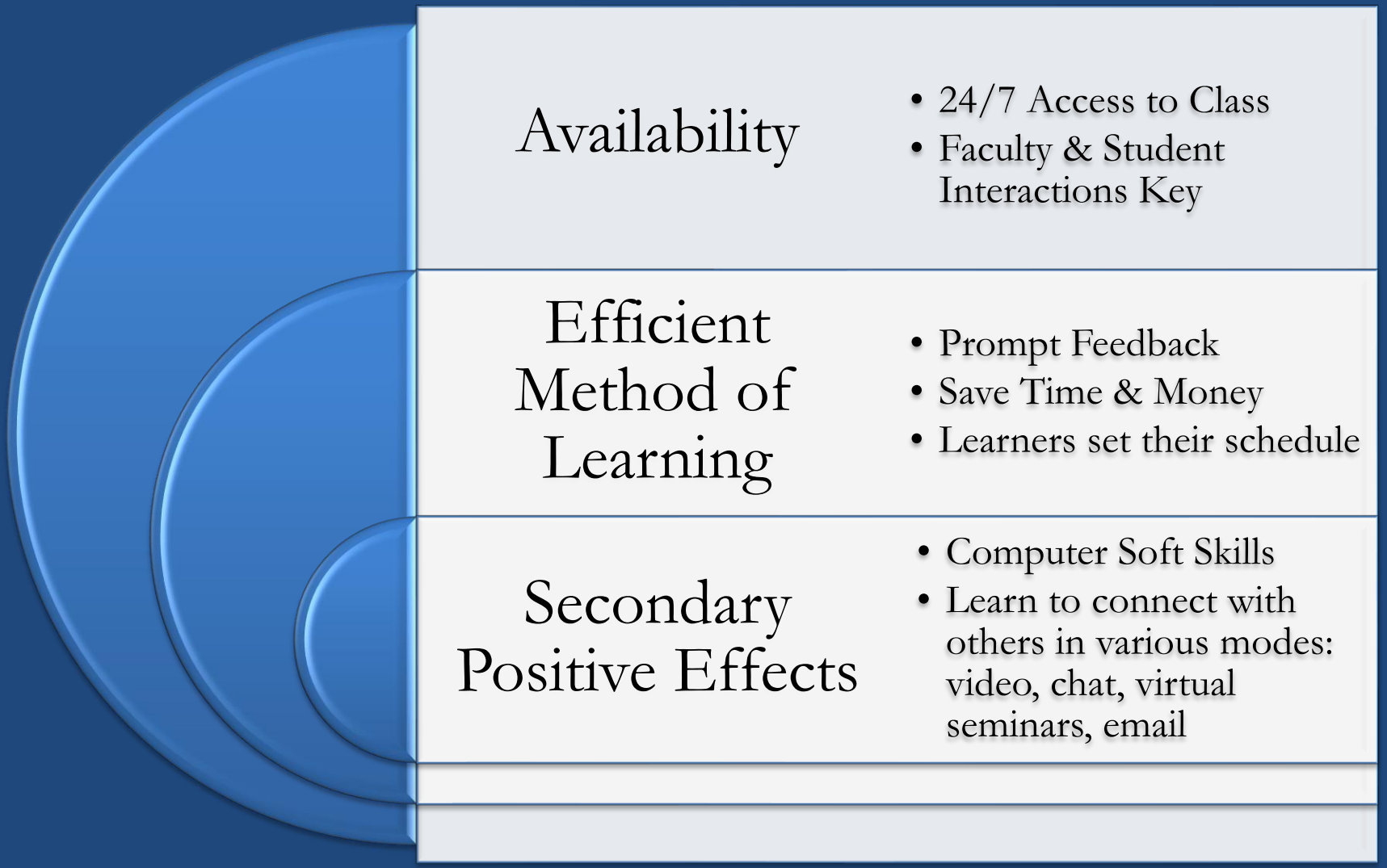
Practical strategies based on sound research are needed…

From Traditional to Online



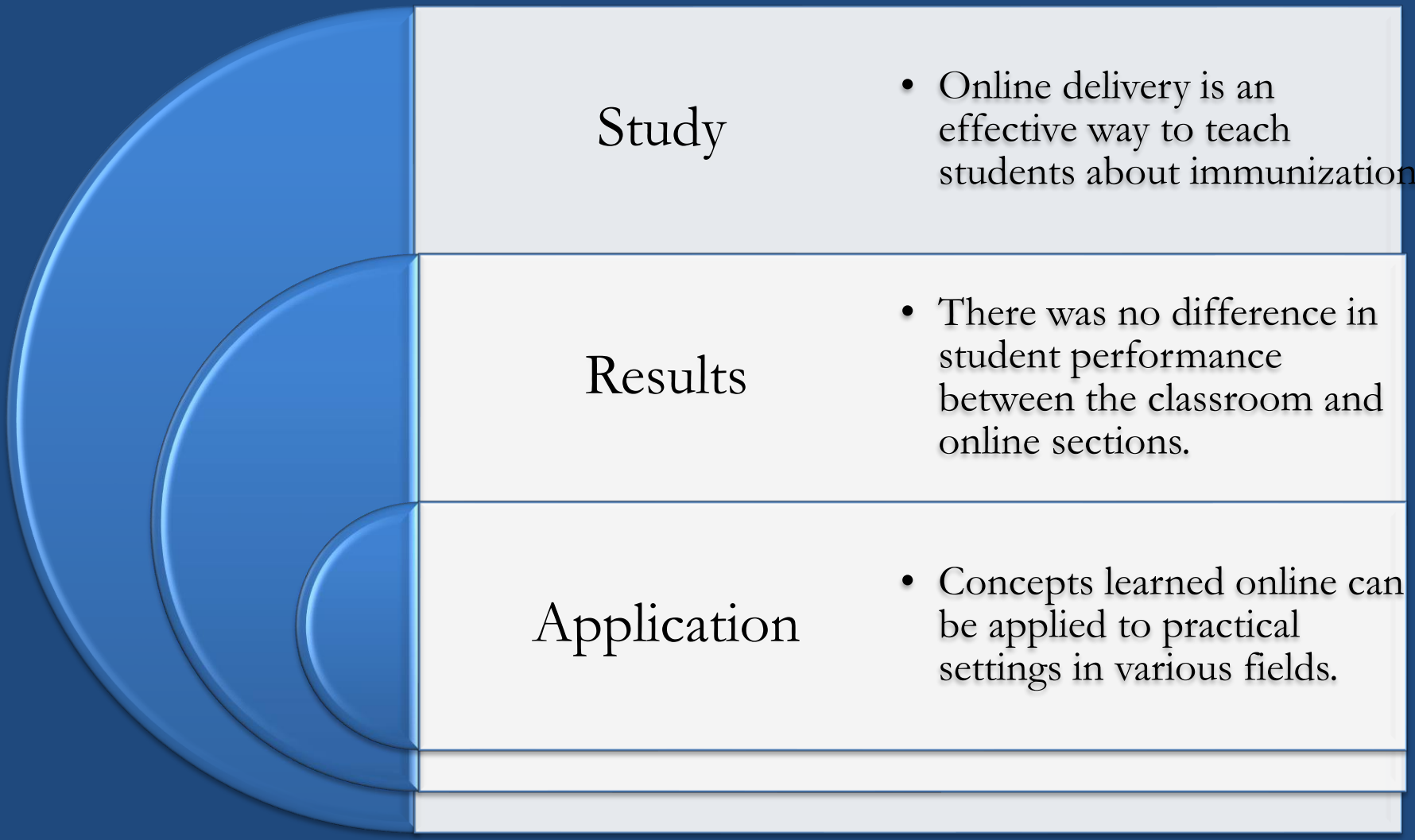
Anderson (2008)

Benefits of Online Learning



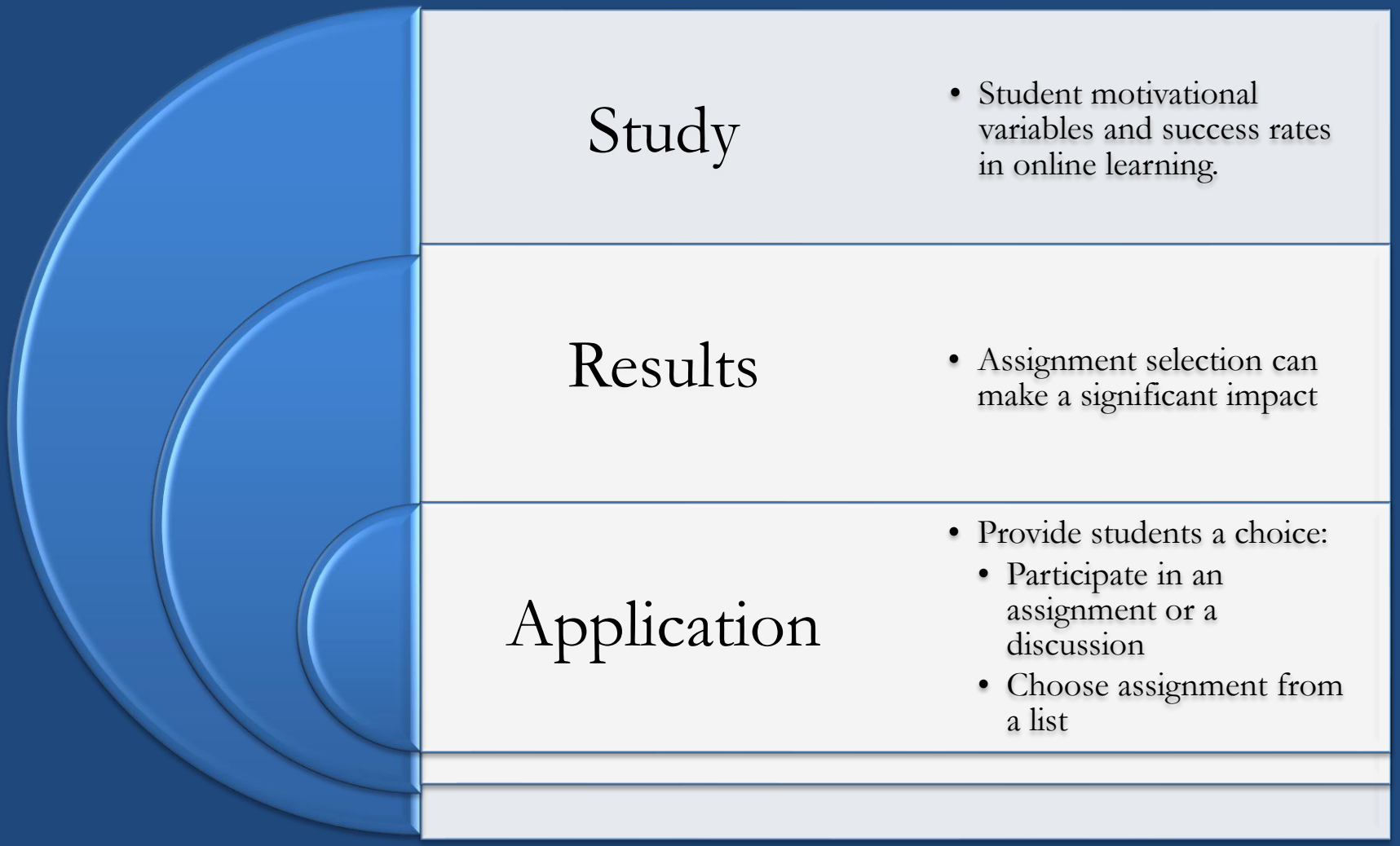
Yusuf (2013)

Effectiveness of Online Learning



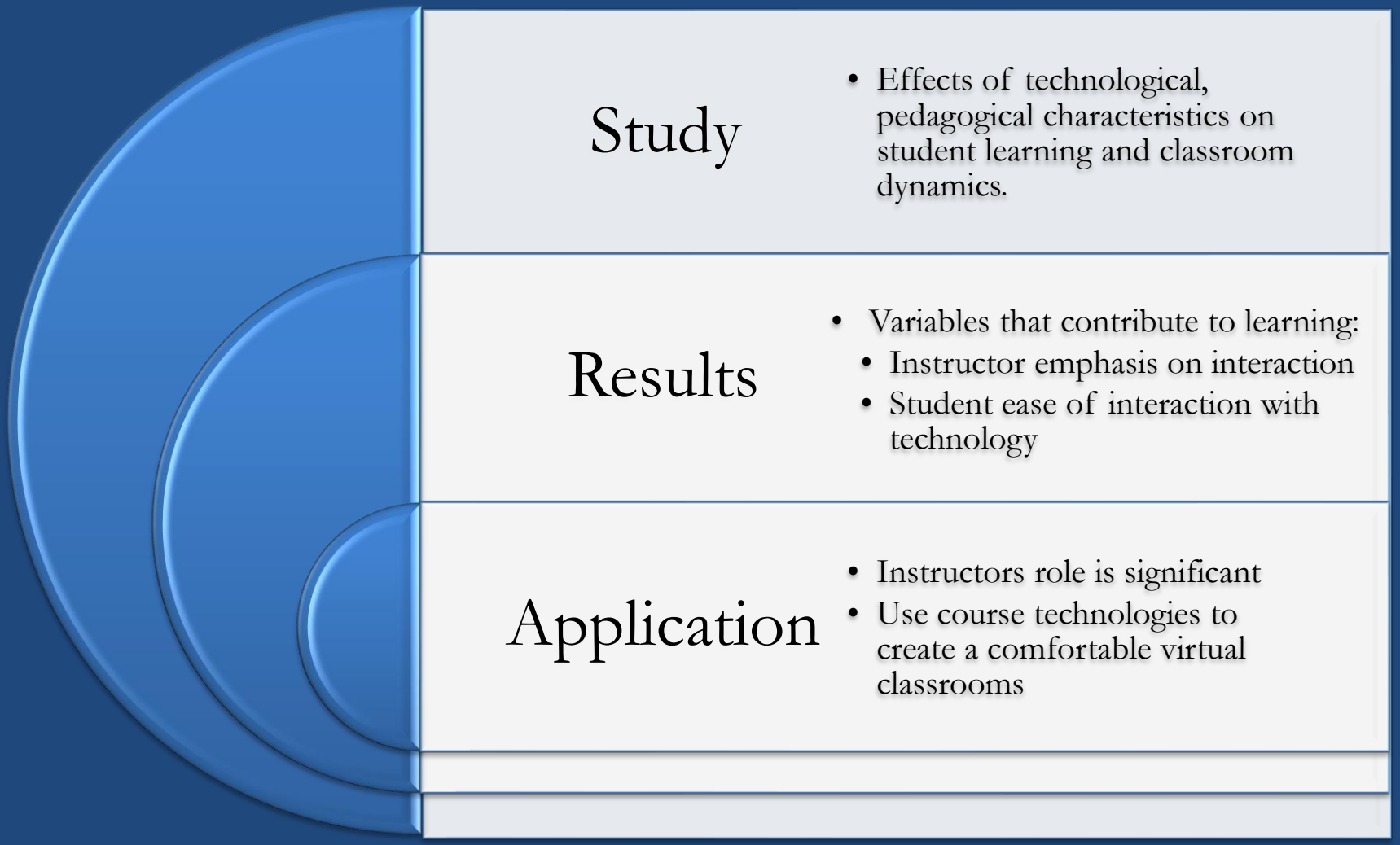
Porter, Pitterle, & Hayney (2014)

Curriculum Design & Engagement



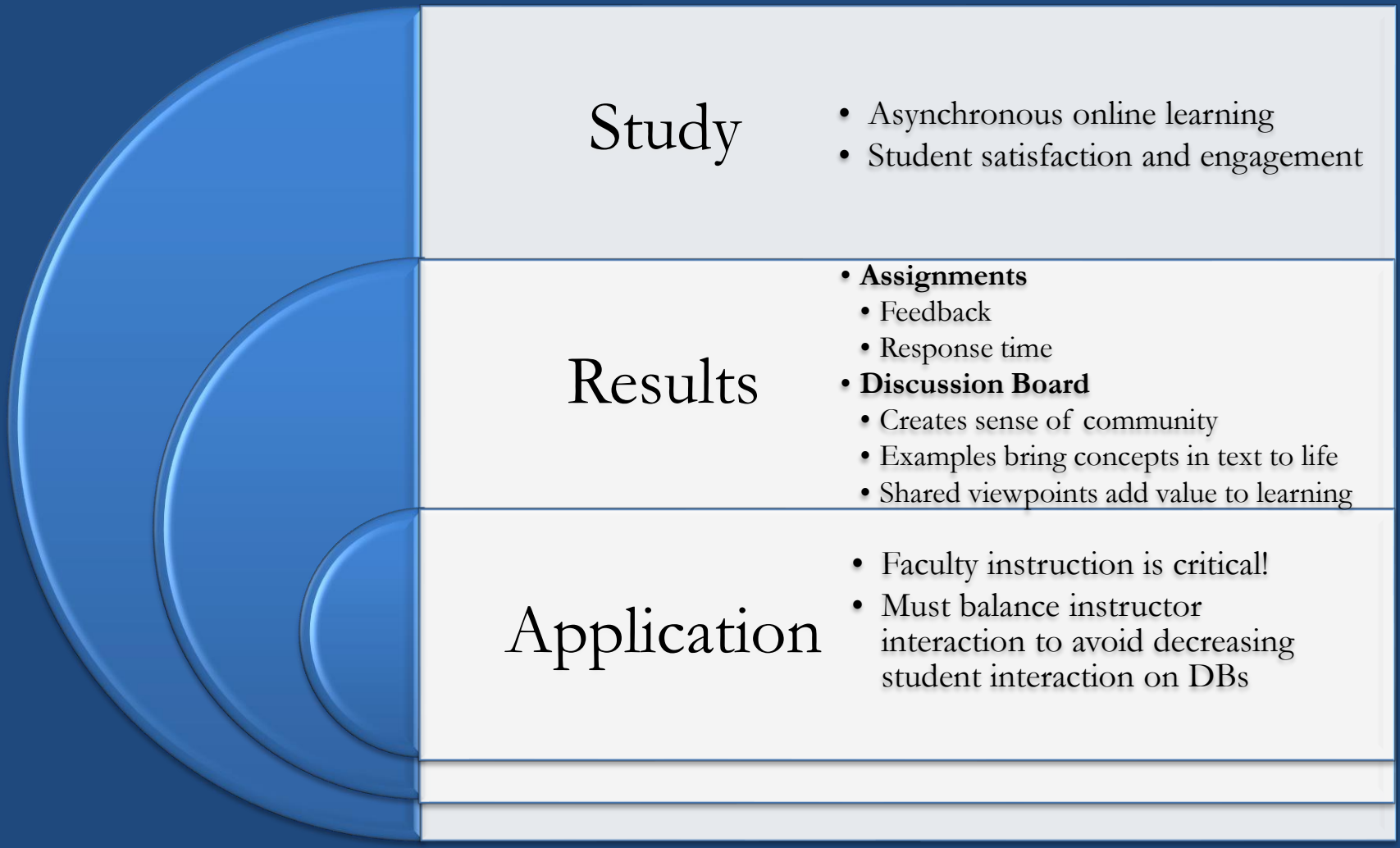
Seiver & Troja (2014)

Classroom Environment & Engagement



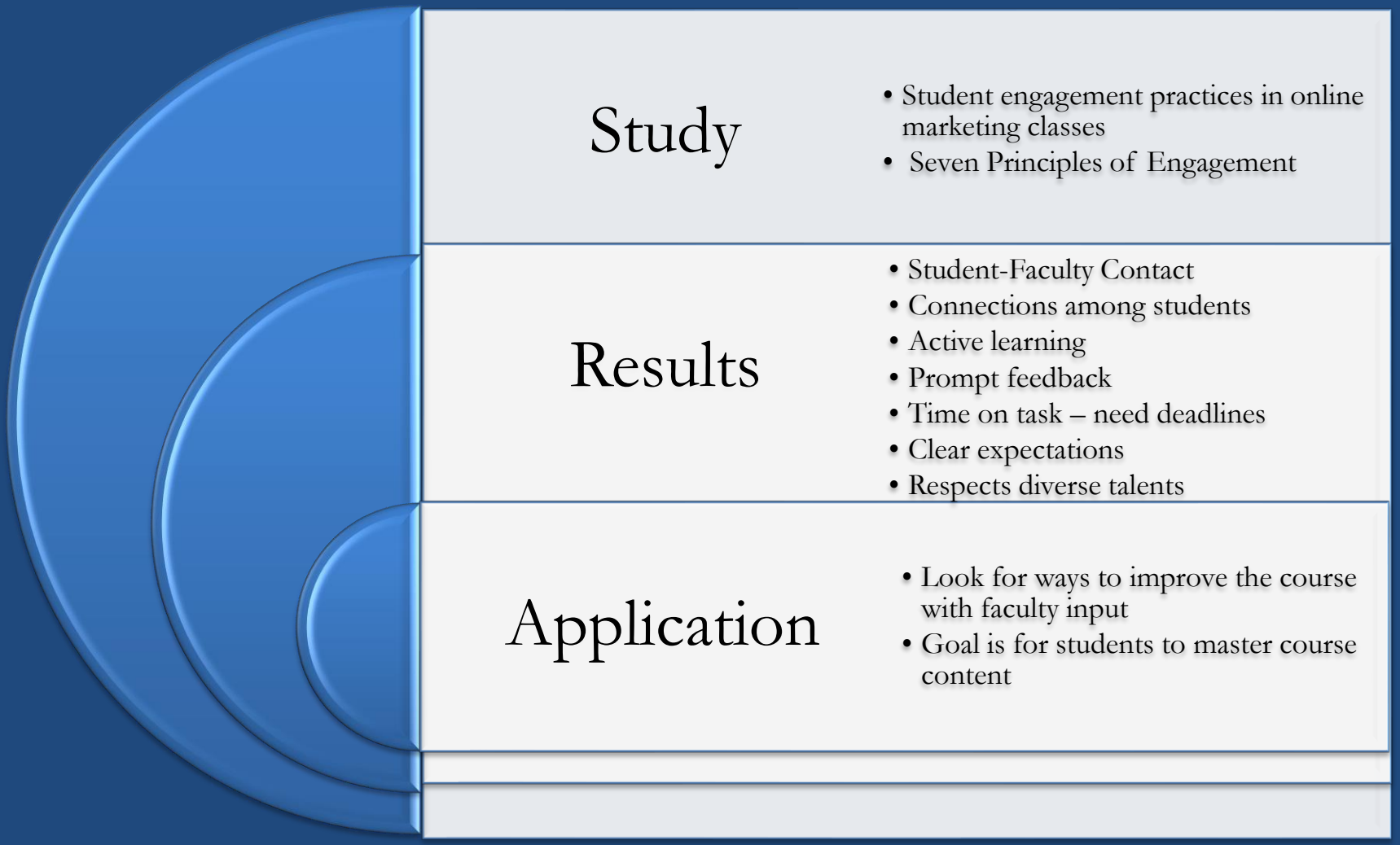
Arbaugh (2000)

Faculty Driven Engagement



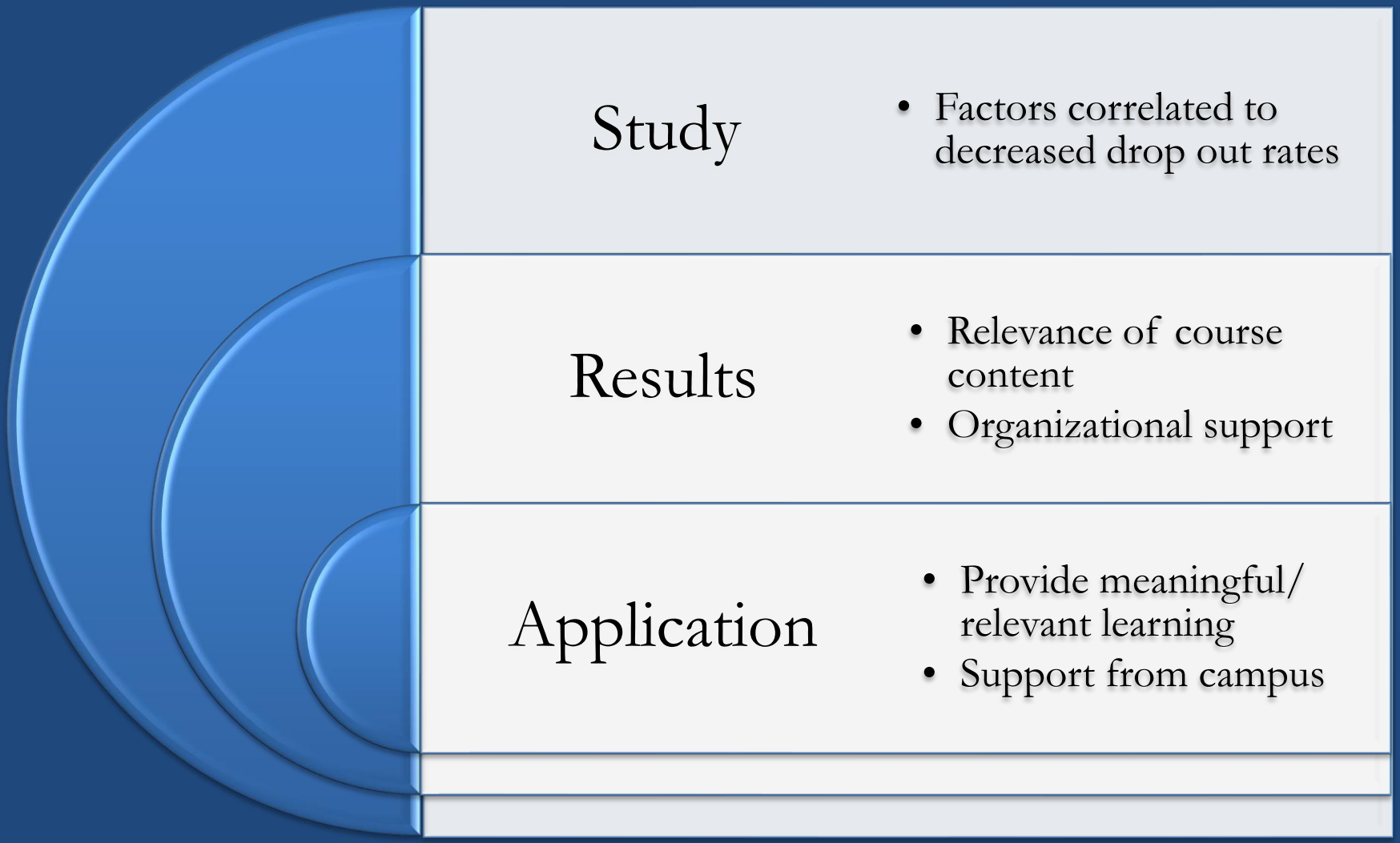
Nicholas (2014)

Principles of Engagement



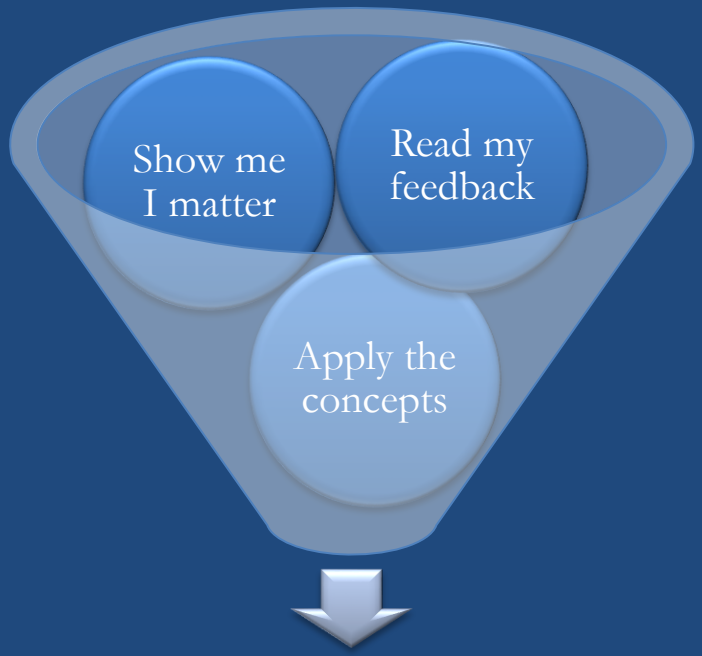
Silverstone & Keeler (2013)

Retention & Engagement



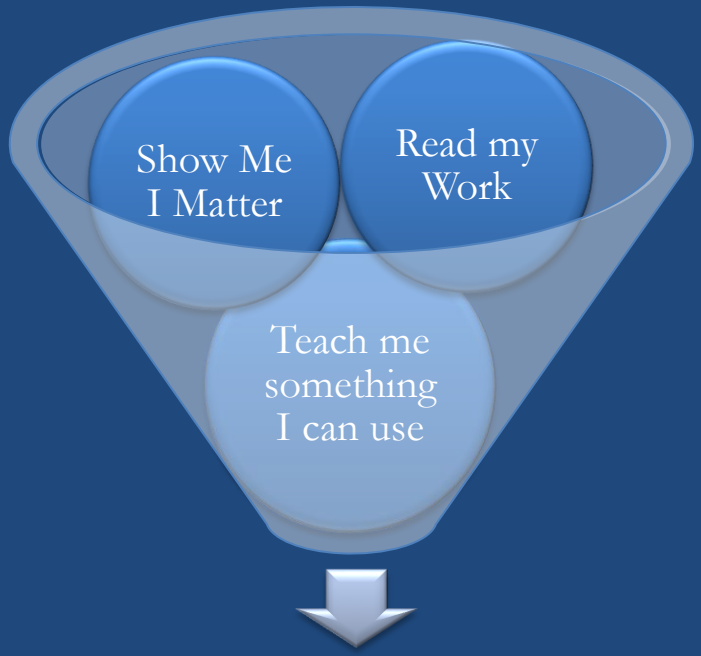
Park & Choi (2009)

Retention Solutions



Faculty Satisfaction

+



Student Inspiration

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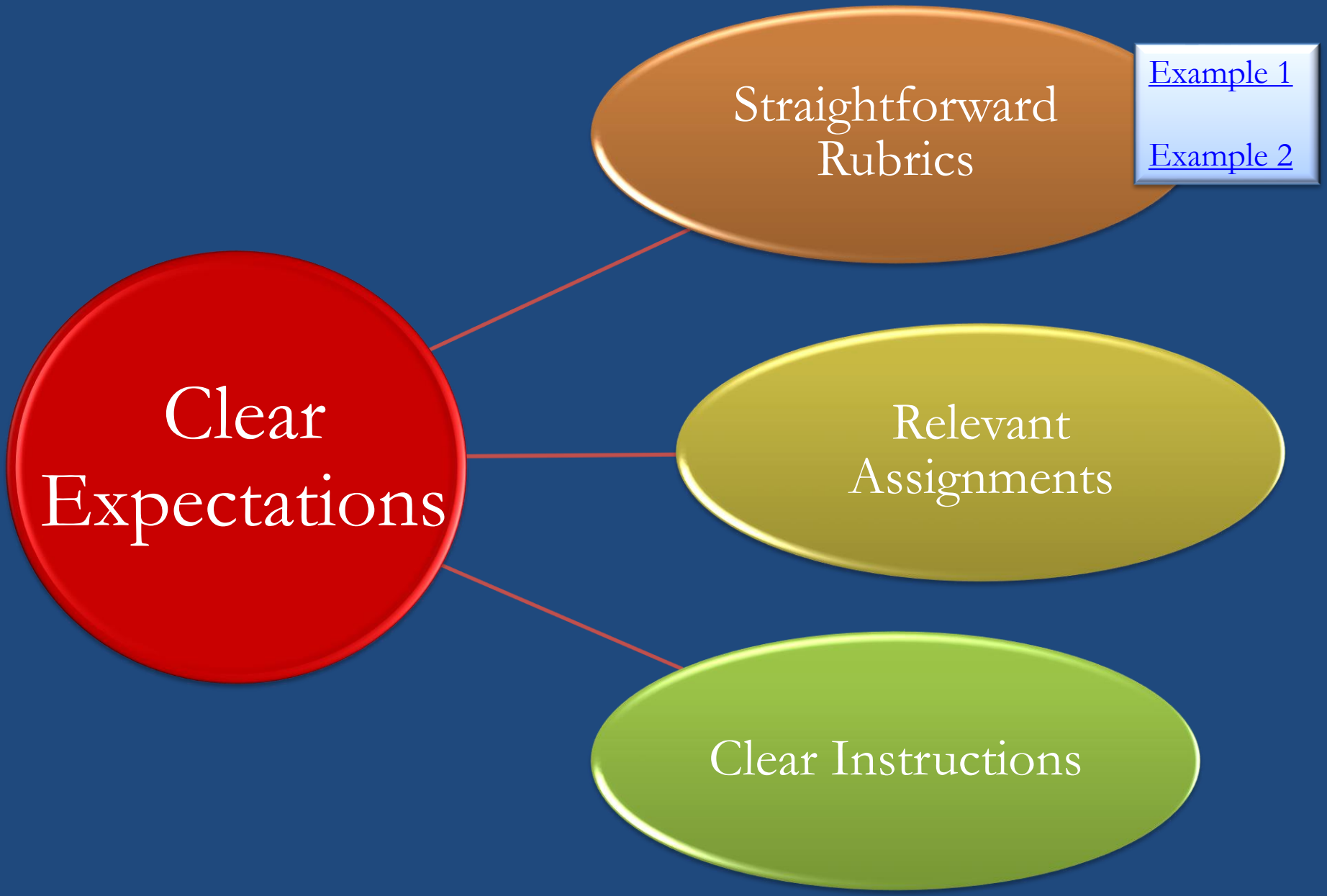
Authentic Engagement

Practical strategies for enhancing teaching and learning events in an online setting.

Build Rapport
Clear Expectations
Faculty Talent
Practical Strategies


Clear Expectations
Straightforward Rubrics
Example 1
Example 2
Relevant Assignments
Clear Instructions

Clear Expectations

Course Expectations: *Review the Course Syllabus and Assignment Instructions*

Discussion Boards:

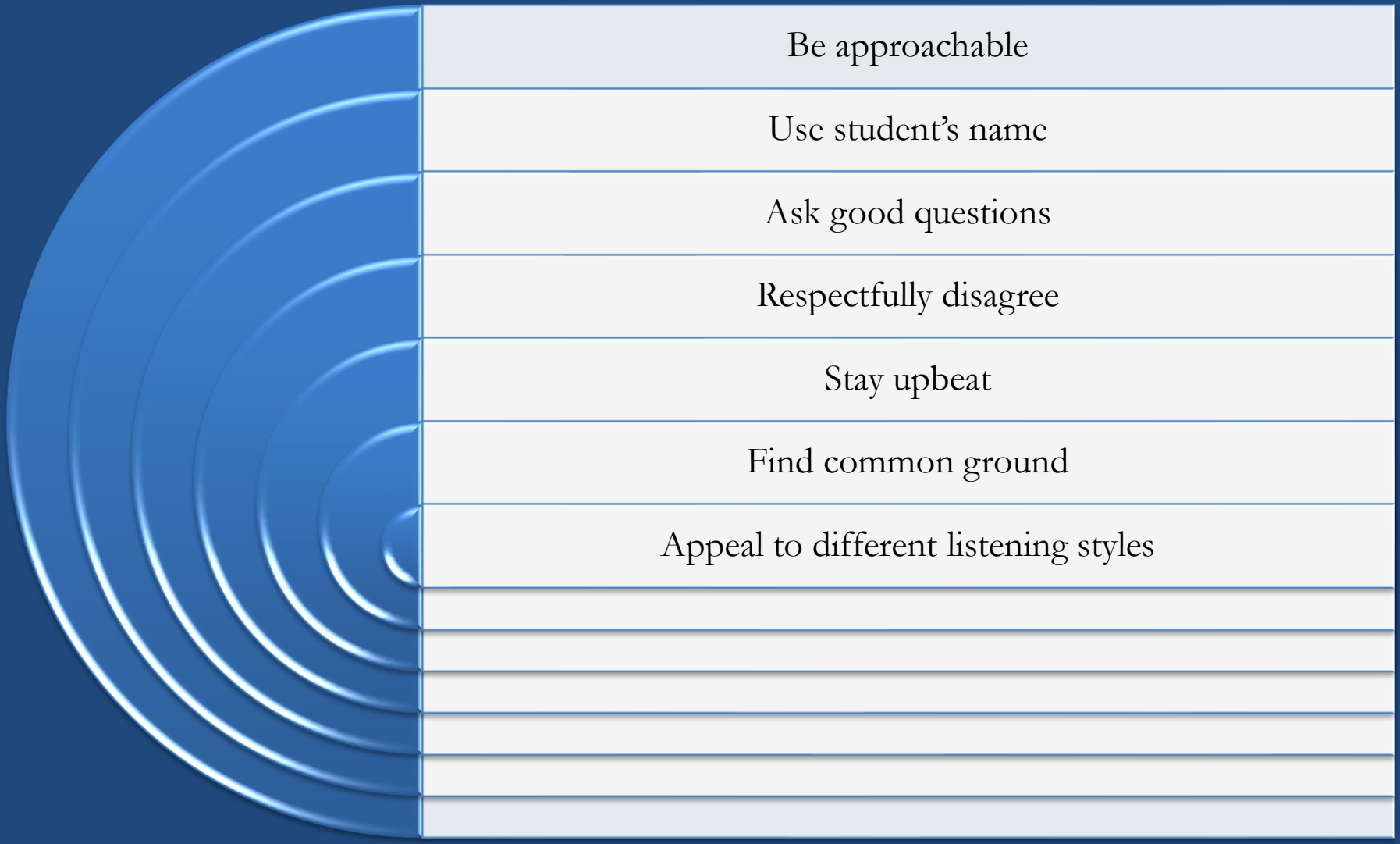
- Be creative, be responsive, have fun!
- The Discussion Board (DB) is the part of the class where you can discuss the concepts we are studying and how they relate to your current or previous roles.
- These weekly discussions allow us to interact with each other and explore the topics in more detail.
  - Draw on your personal experiences and share your opinions about the topics presented.
  - Provide substantial posts by supporting your ideas with examples or if you find an interesting article, website, or content from the course textbook that supports your opinion on the topics discussed, feel free to share it.
  - Be sure to give credit to any work used from a source.
- Make at least two substantial posts per week:
  - Answer the original question, and make a follow-up post to someone else's post.
  - You can do this by answering why you agree or disagree to most questions.
- Your viewpoint will be respected, so respect the ideas of others!

Course Assignments - Unit IV & Unit VI

- Review the link entitled Syllabus/Schedule located on the left panel to become familiar with the assignment requirements.
- Look for Unit IV & VI Coming Attraction Announcements and Ask the Professor Forum posts for helpful tips in completing these assignments.
- Review grading rubrics for each assignment within the Unit IV and Unit VI Course Content links to view how your work will be evaluated.

Build Rapport
Practical Strategies

Build Rapport: Lessons from Online Strategies



Young (2014)

Build Rapport: Introductory Discussion Board

- Respond to each student in introduction discussion
- Use student's name
- Relate to experiences
- Introduce relevant class topics/tips

Build Rapport: Student Introductions

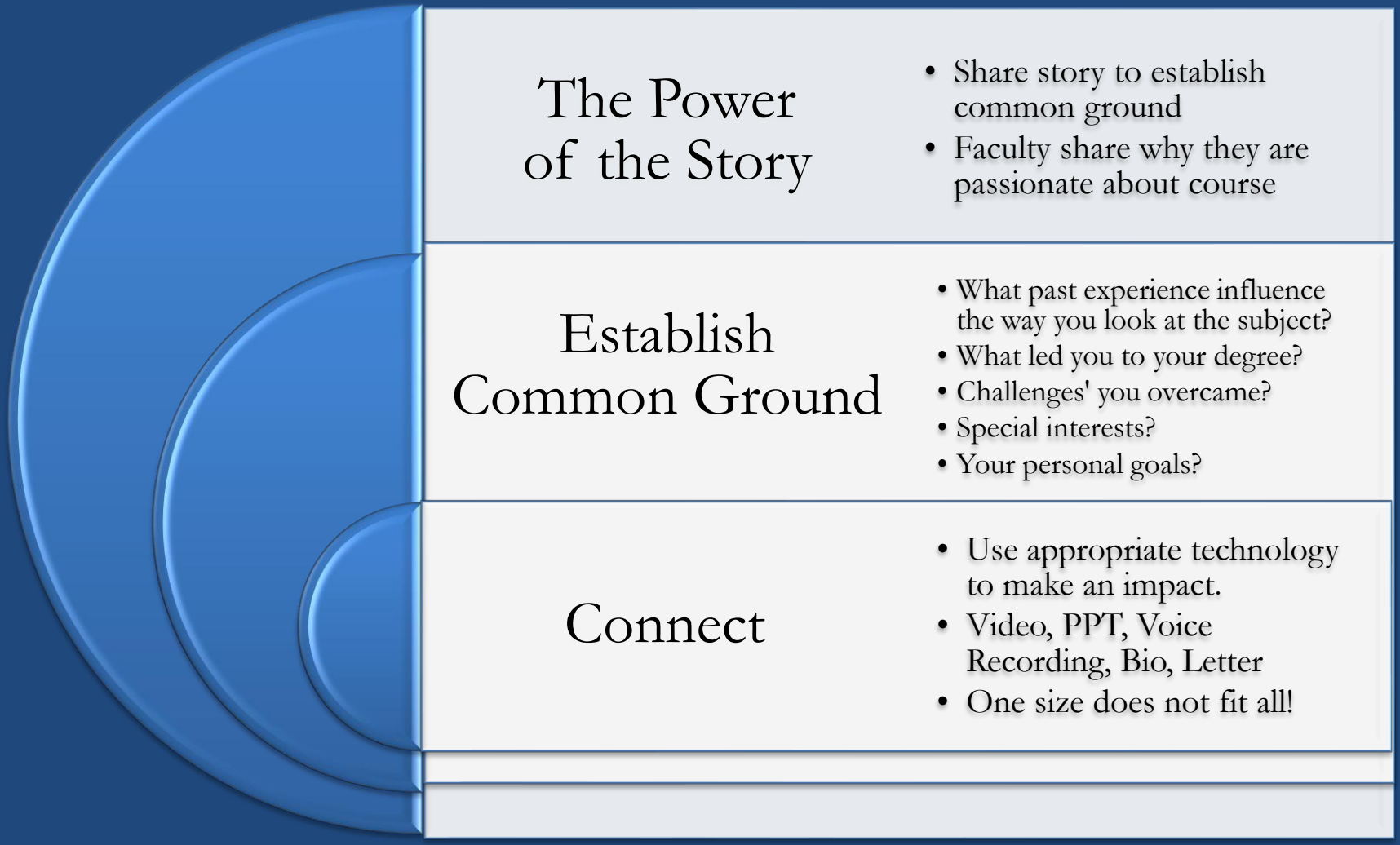
Sample Introduction DB Question:

One way to establish common ground and get to know your fellow classmates is to discover what commonalities you may share.

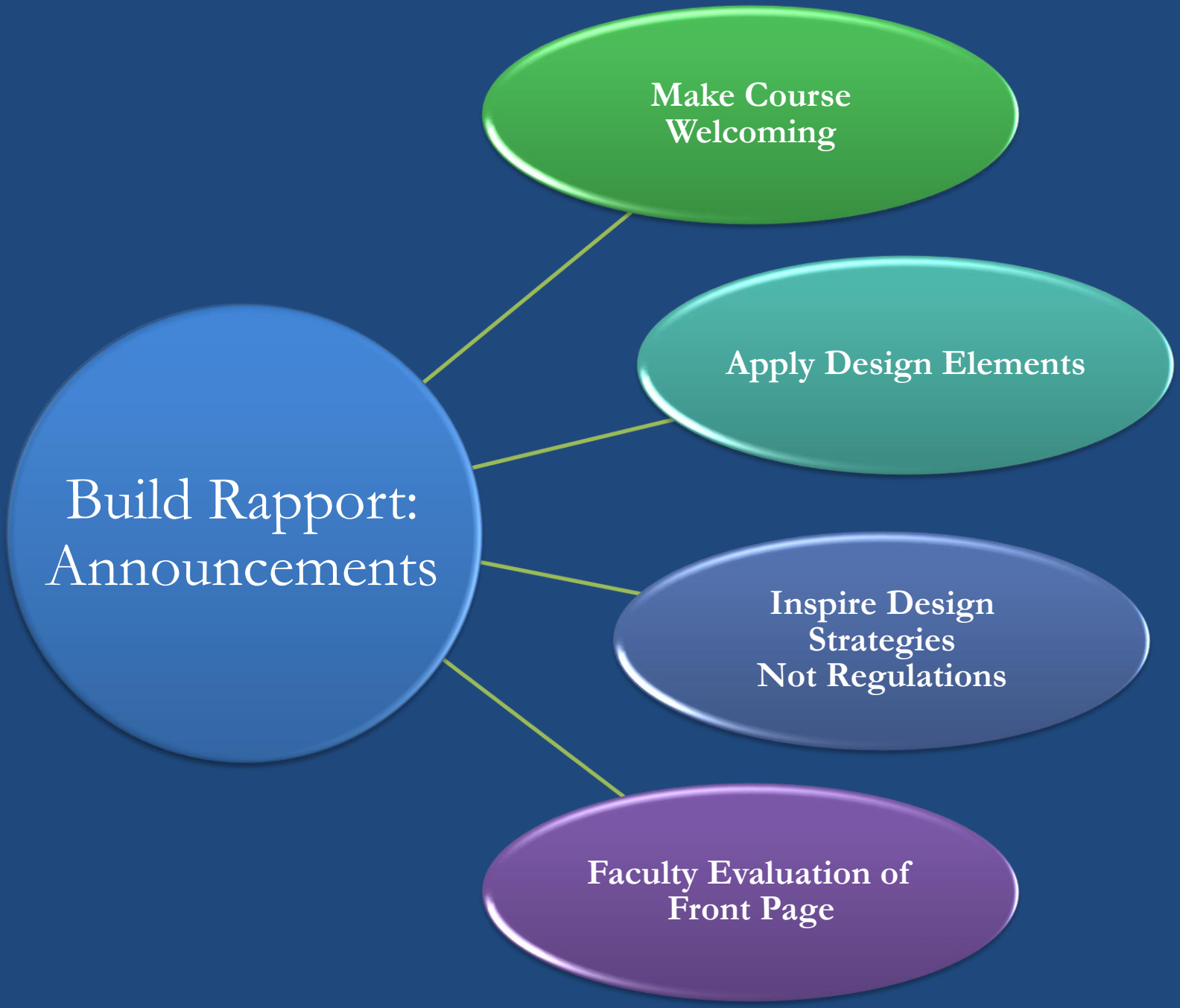
Provide any of the following information within your introduction or other information you would like to share:

- What degree are you pursuing?
- What topics in this course interest you most?
- What is your favorite movie or book?
- Do you have any pets? What kind?
- Do you have any hobbies or other interests?
- Have you ever traveled or lived abroad?
- Share one interesting fact about yourself.

Building Rapport: What's Your Story



Faculty e-Commons (2013)


Make Course Welcoming
Apply Design Elements
Build Rapport: Announcements
Inspire Design Strategies Not Regulations
Faculty Evaluation of Front Page

Build Rapport: Announcements

Use Design Elements

Welcome

Citation Style

Coming Attractions

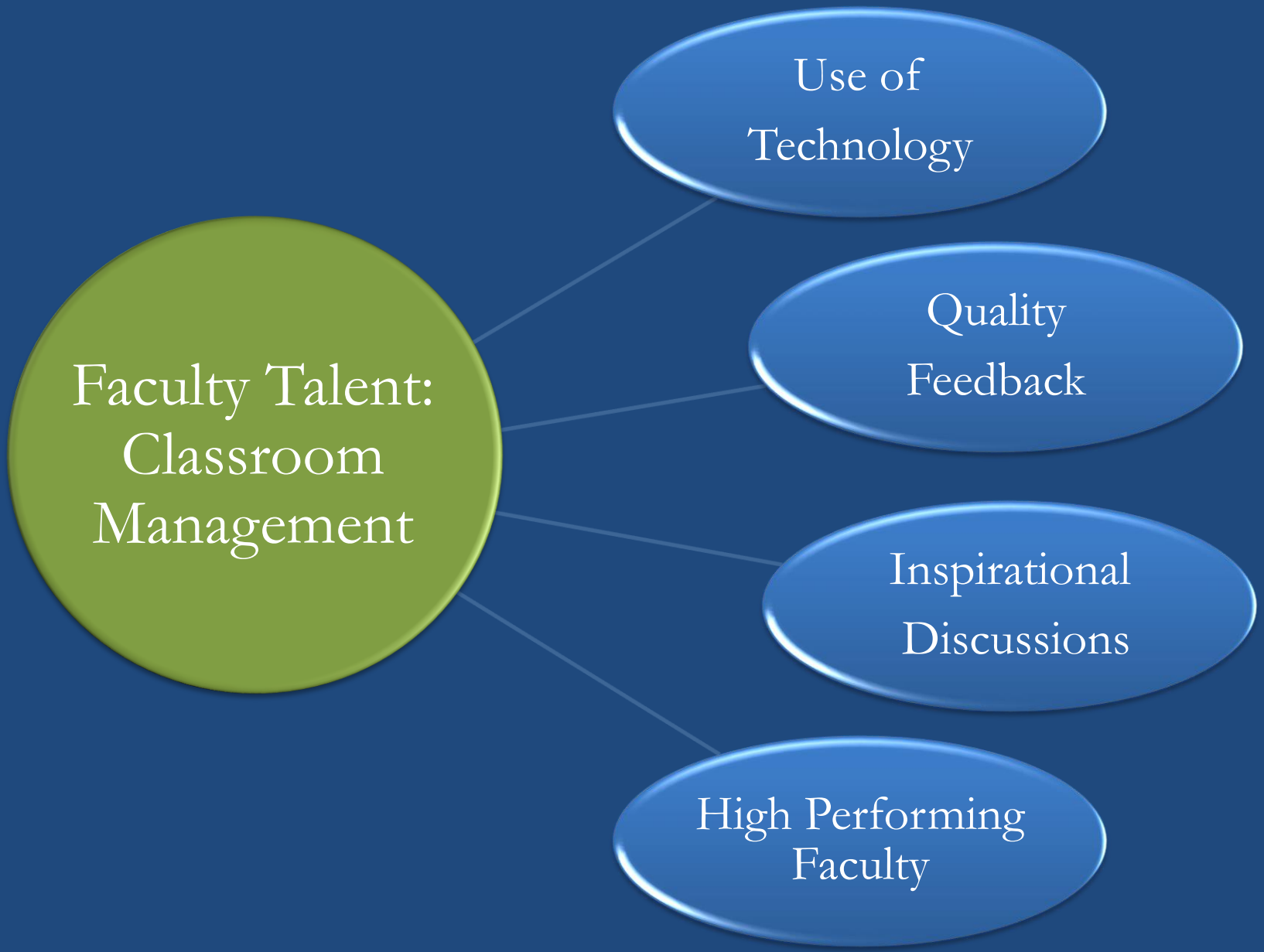
Resources & Strategies

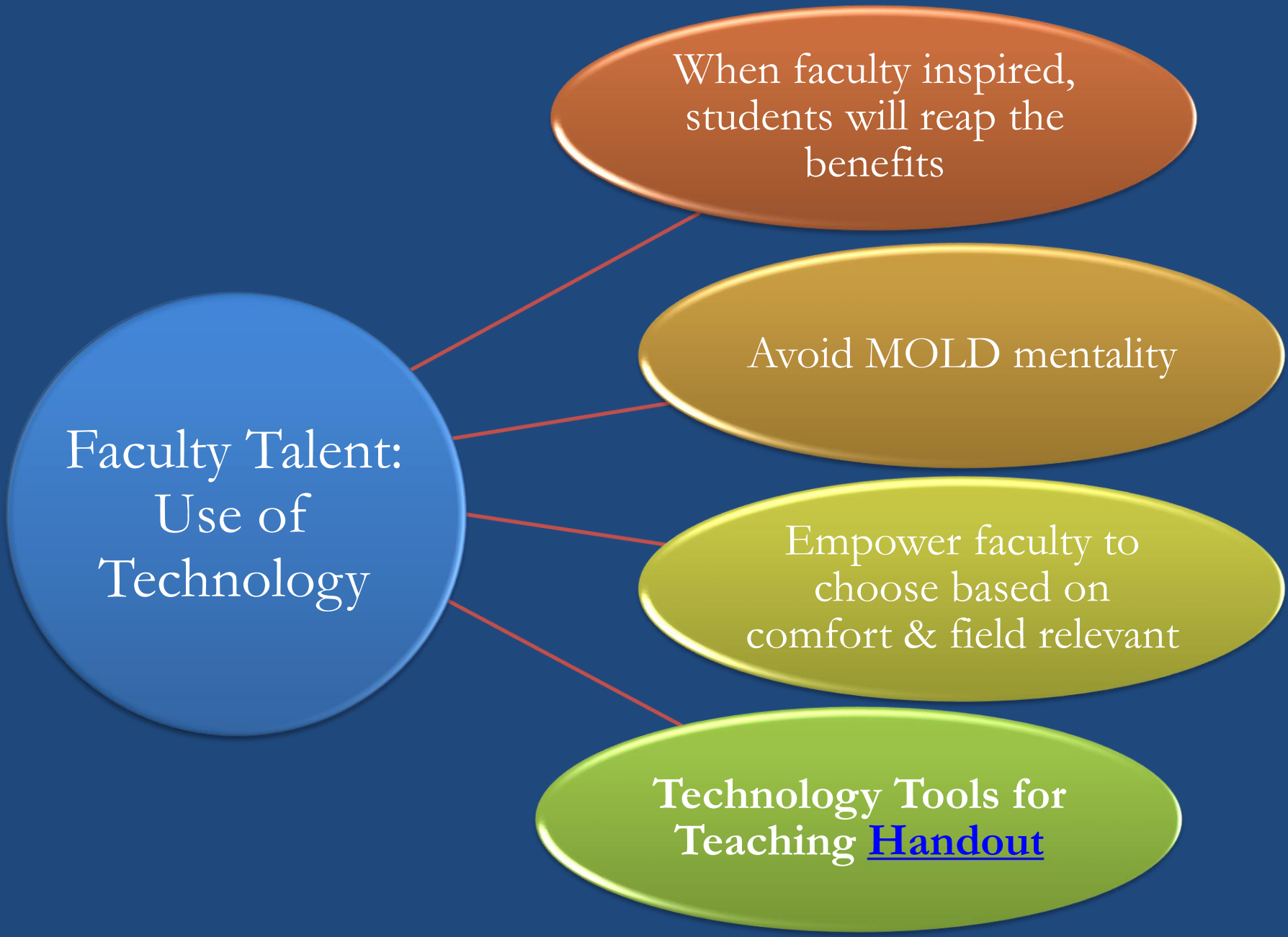
Email
Skype/ Link
Office Hours
Build Rapport: Faculty Contact
Live Chat Sessions
Phone Campus Ext.
Reply within 48 hours
Avoid 24 Hours Response Time

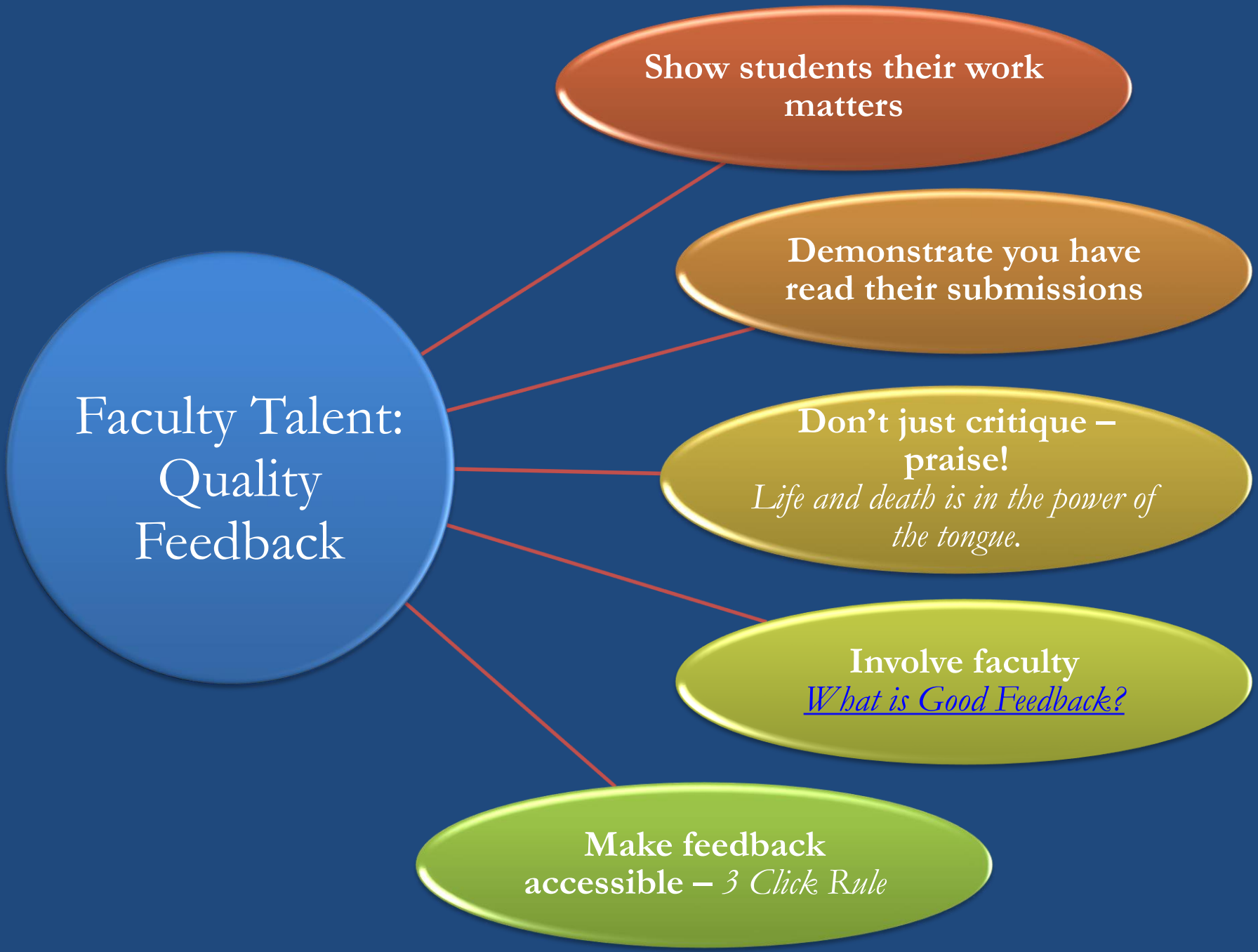
Faculty Talent
Practical Strategies

“Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.”

George S. Patton


Faculty Talent: Classroom Management
Use of Technology
Quality Feedback
Inspirational Discussions
High Performing Faculty


Faculty Talent: Use of Technology
When faculty inspired, students will reap the benefits
Avoid MOLD mentality
Empower faculty to choose based on comfort & field relevant
Technology Tools for Teaching Handout


Faculty Talent: Quality Feedback
Show students their work matters
Demonstrate you have read their submissions
Don't just critique – praise!
Life and death is in the power of the tongue.
Involve faculty
What is Good Feedback?
Make feedback accessible – 3 Click Rule

Faculty Feedback: Epic Fail Samples

Sound reasoning!

Way off track!

Fine job, keep up the good work.

This is plagiarized, you get a zero!

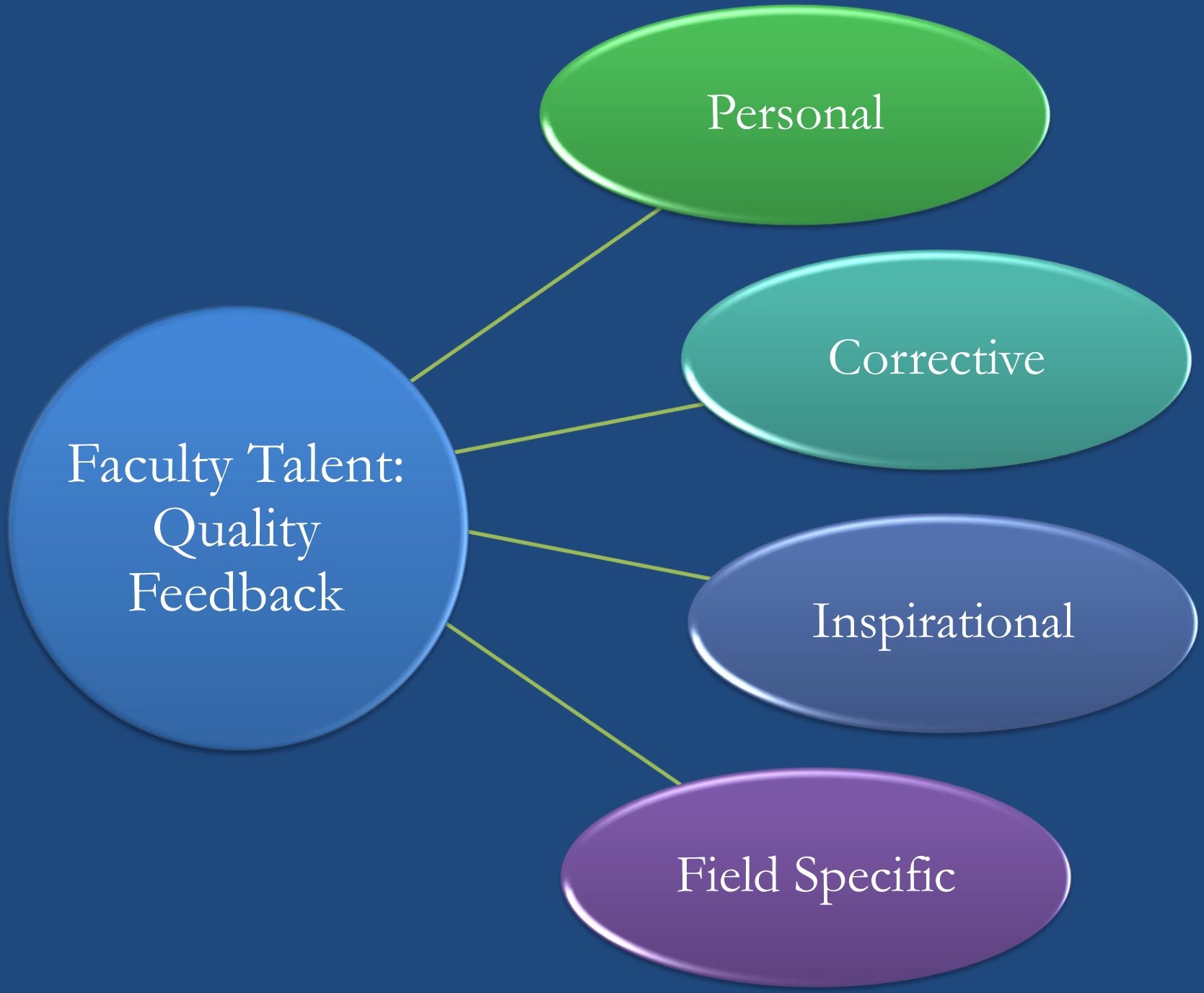
Need work on your citations & reference listing

This is not a quality response!

Good work, stay on track.

You are on target!

Solid answer!


Personal
Corrective
Faculty Talent: Quality Feedback
Inspirational
Field Specific

Faculty Feedback: Sample

Toby,

- Detailed observations and analysis of the situation between the two communicators.
- You applied some important concepts related to intercultural communication to interpret the challenges these two communicators were experiencing including language equivalency and cultural differences in the use of space and time.
- A challenge to cross-cultural communication is evidenced in this scenario. If we understand what the limitations are we can mitigate the impact cultural differences have on our communication. Working in a global economy requires us to learn how to communicate effectively with those of other cultures.
- Great job proofreading your work!
- Effective use of transitions and separate paragraphs to move your reader from point to point.
- Need conclusion. Work on wrapping up your ideas and closing with a statement that reinforces the importance of this topic and your viewpoint.
- I look forward to reading your next submission.

Respectfully,
Professor Jones

Faculty Feedback: Feedback Repertoire

Unit I - Nonverbal Communication

Examples of Support Material:

- "According to Thill and Bovee (2011), "Paying attention to nonverbal cues will make you both a better speaker and a better listener" (p. 52).
- Active listening is "making a conscious effort to turn off their own filters and biases to truly hear and understand what the other party is saying" (Thill & Bovee, 2011, p. 48).

Inspirational:

- You provided some interesting examples and detailed explanations to highlight the importance of interpreting one's own nonverbal communication behaviors.
- Understanding these techniques can enhance one's professional presence and ensure the verbal and nonverbal message is consistent.

Field Specific:

- For more information on communication barriers see Chapter 1, p. 12 in the course textbook.
- If you would like more information about nonverbal communication, you can visit the Online Library in four steps: select the *My Library* link on the left panel, under *Research Databases* choose *Business Source Complete*, and then use search terms "nonverbal communication" to find articles on this topic or to read the following:

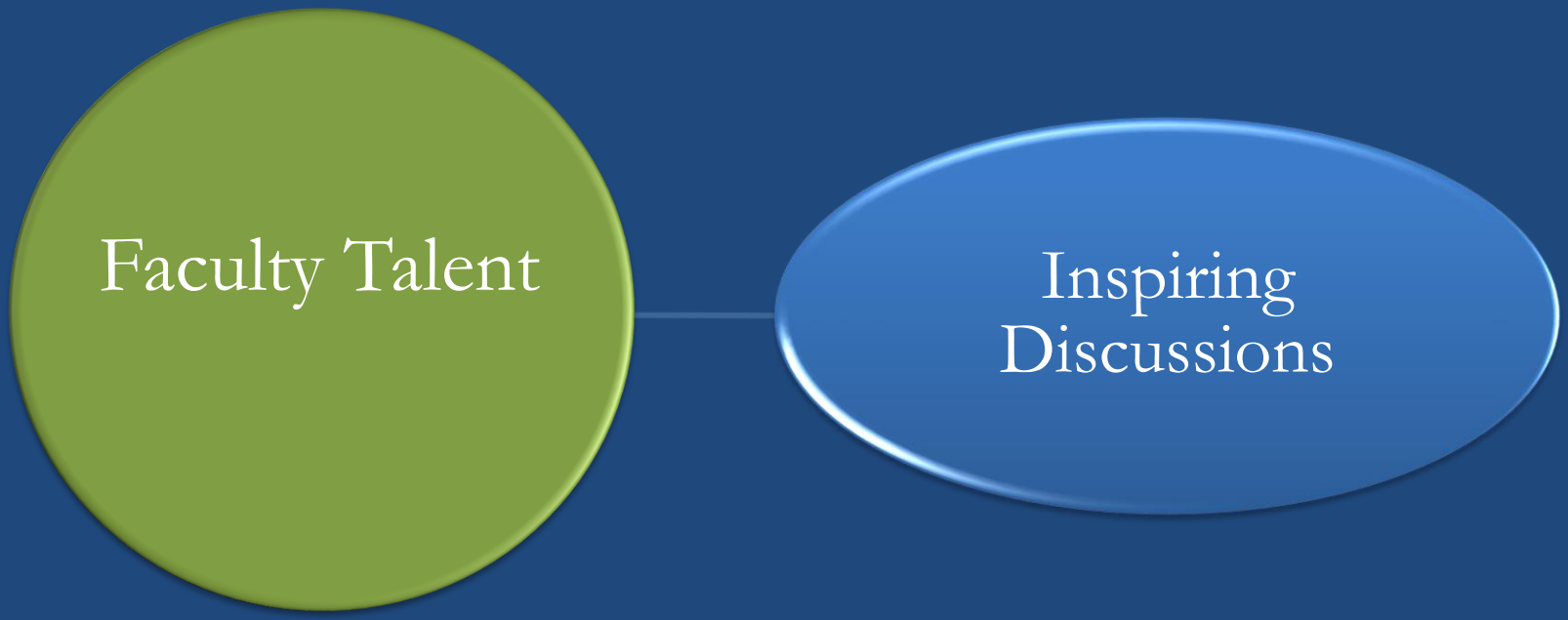
  Hiemstra, K. (2014). Making First Impressions with the Hand Shake. *Business Communication*, 50(5), 33. Retrieved from Business Source Complete database.

Faculty Feedback: Samples

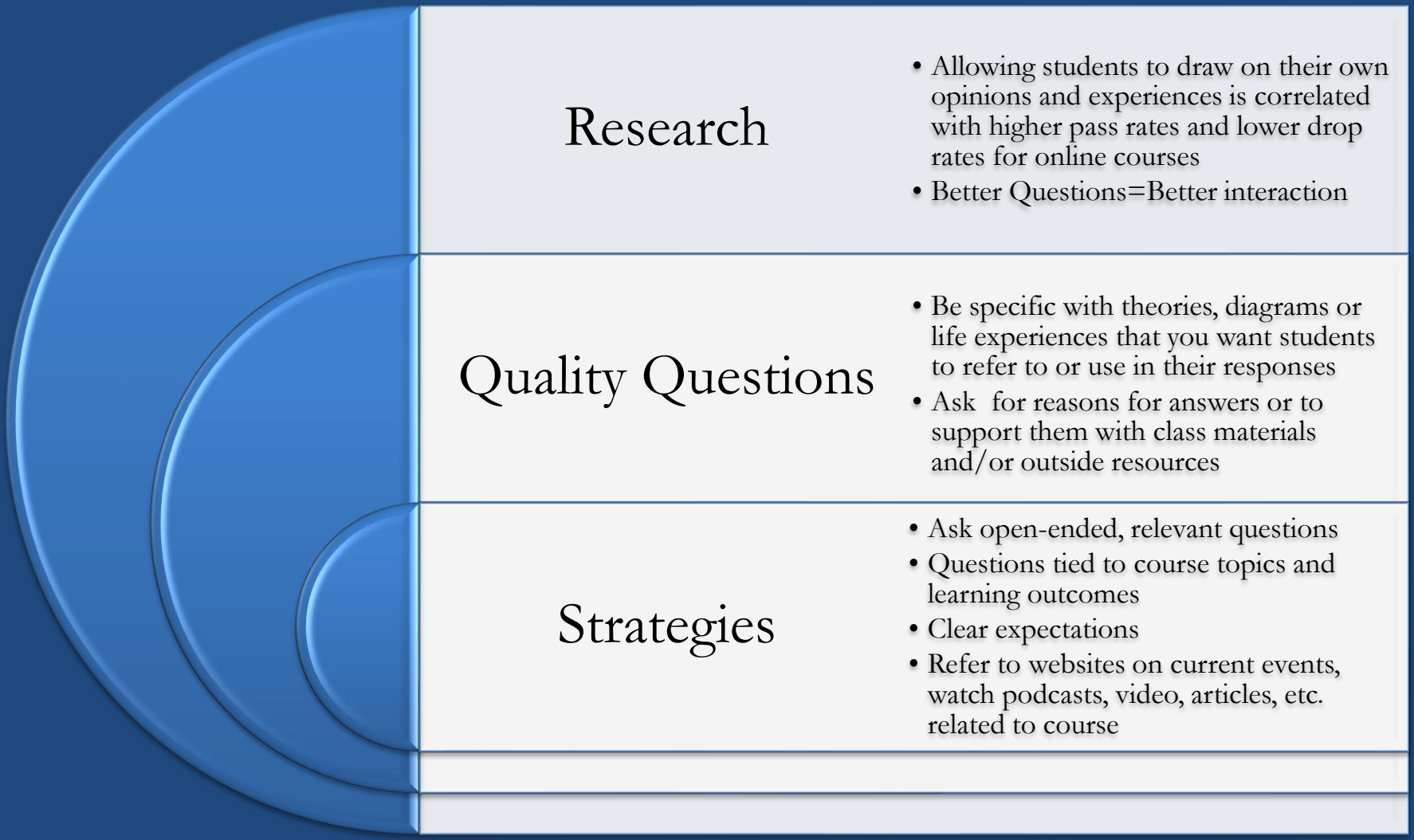
Sample Feedback Template

Sample Feedback Template_Need Citation & Reference

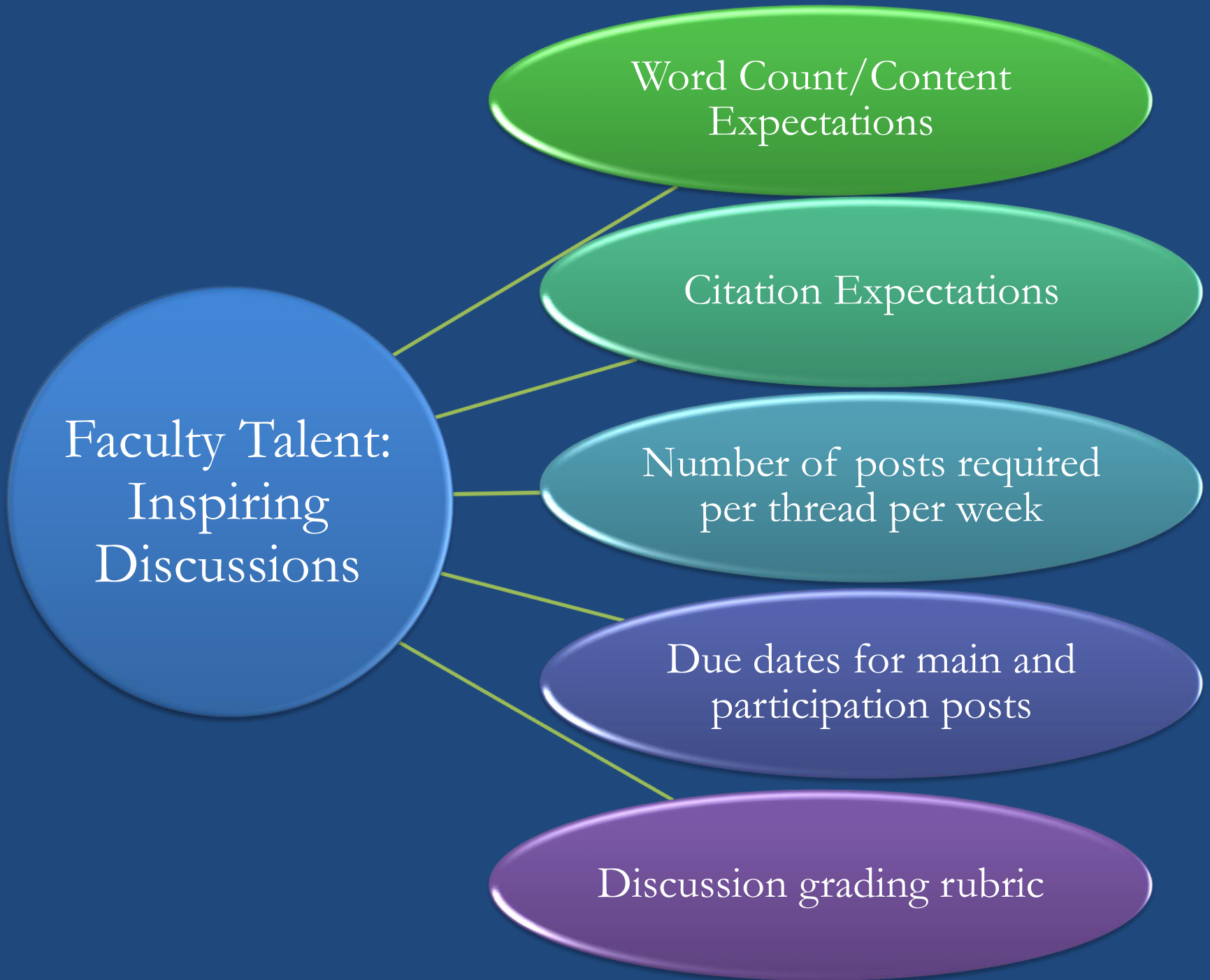
Sample Student Feedback

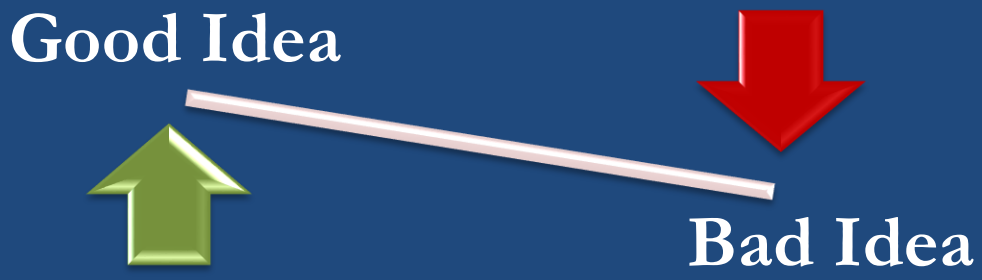

Faculty Talent
Inspiring Discussions

Faculty Talent: DB Management



McCourt, Yarbrough, & Tanner (2014)

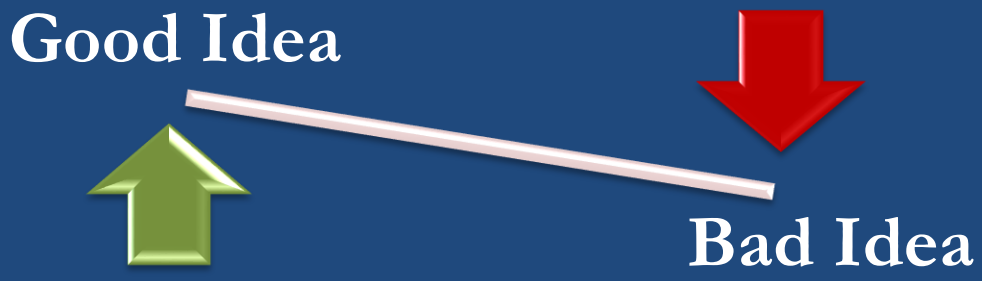

Faculty Talent: Inspiring Discussions
Word Count/Content Expectations
Citation Expectations
Number of posts required per thread per week
Due dates for main and participation posts
Discussion grading rubric



Bad Idea:

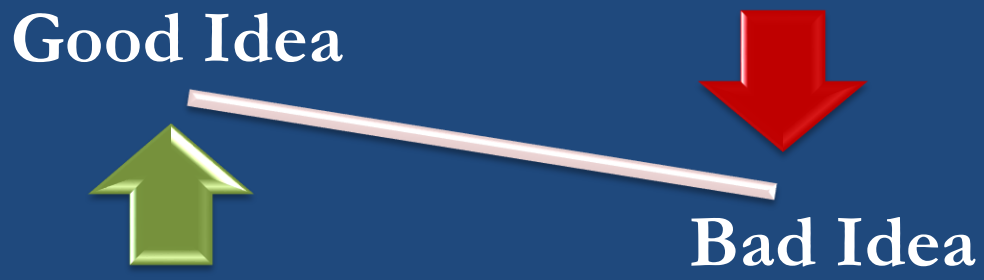
This discussion question will refer to the sample letter on pages x – xx of your textbook.

Analyze the letter and explain the fallacies in reasoning you see used by the writer.



Good Ideas:

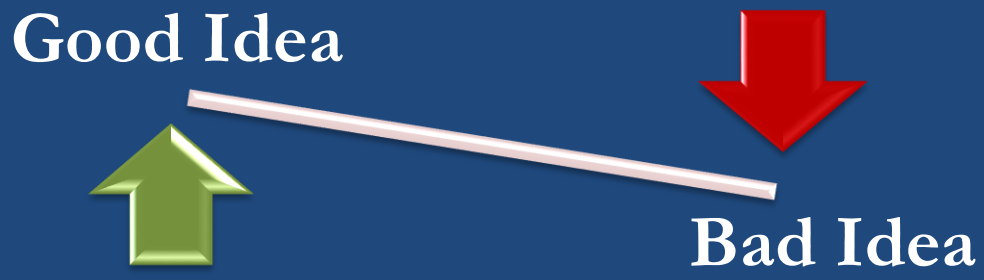
- Create questions related to course content & outcomes
- Inspire varied answers
  - Use powerful quote and ask for responses
  - Ask opinions/Support opinions
  - Apply concepts
- Define by negation
- Have students post engaging questions
- Teach students to respectfully disagree



Hypothetical Situations

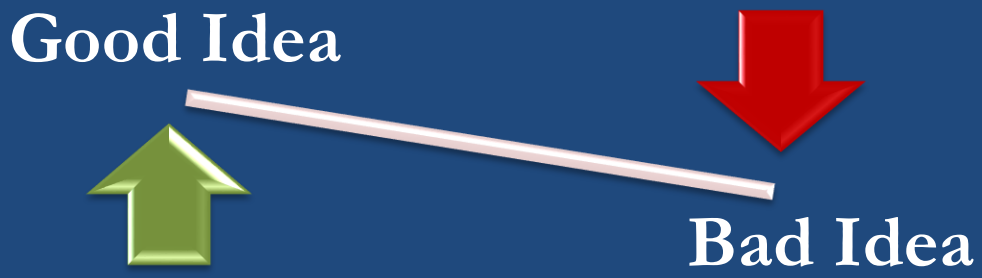
Draw From Personal Experience

Encourage Cooperative Learning



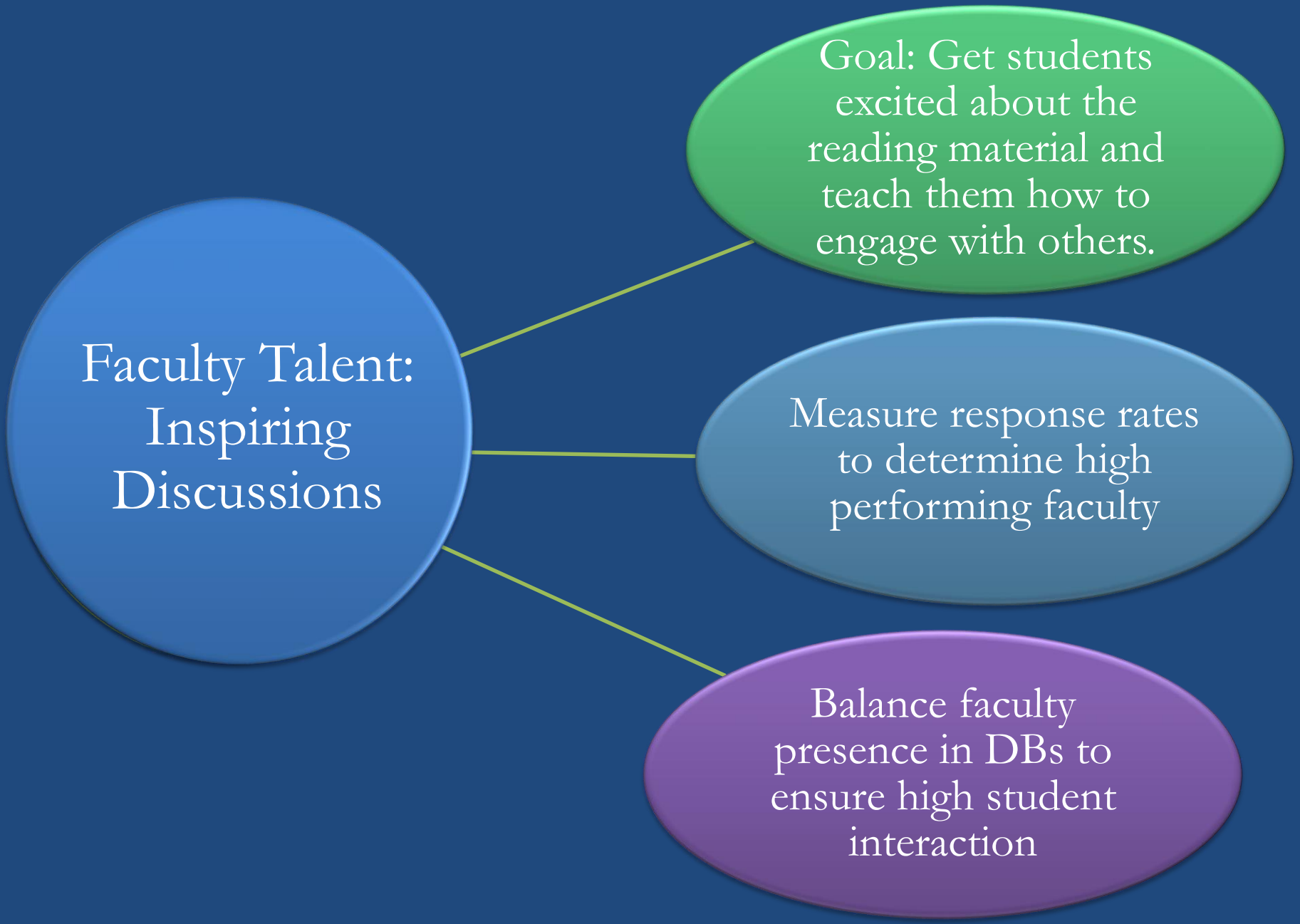
Follow-up Posts

- Connect with students
- Guide the conversation

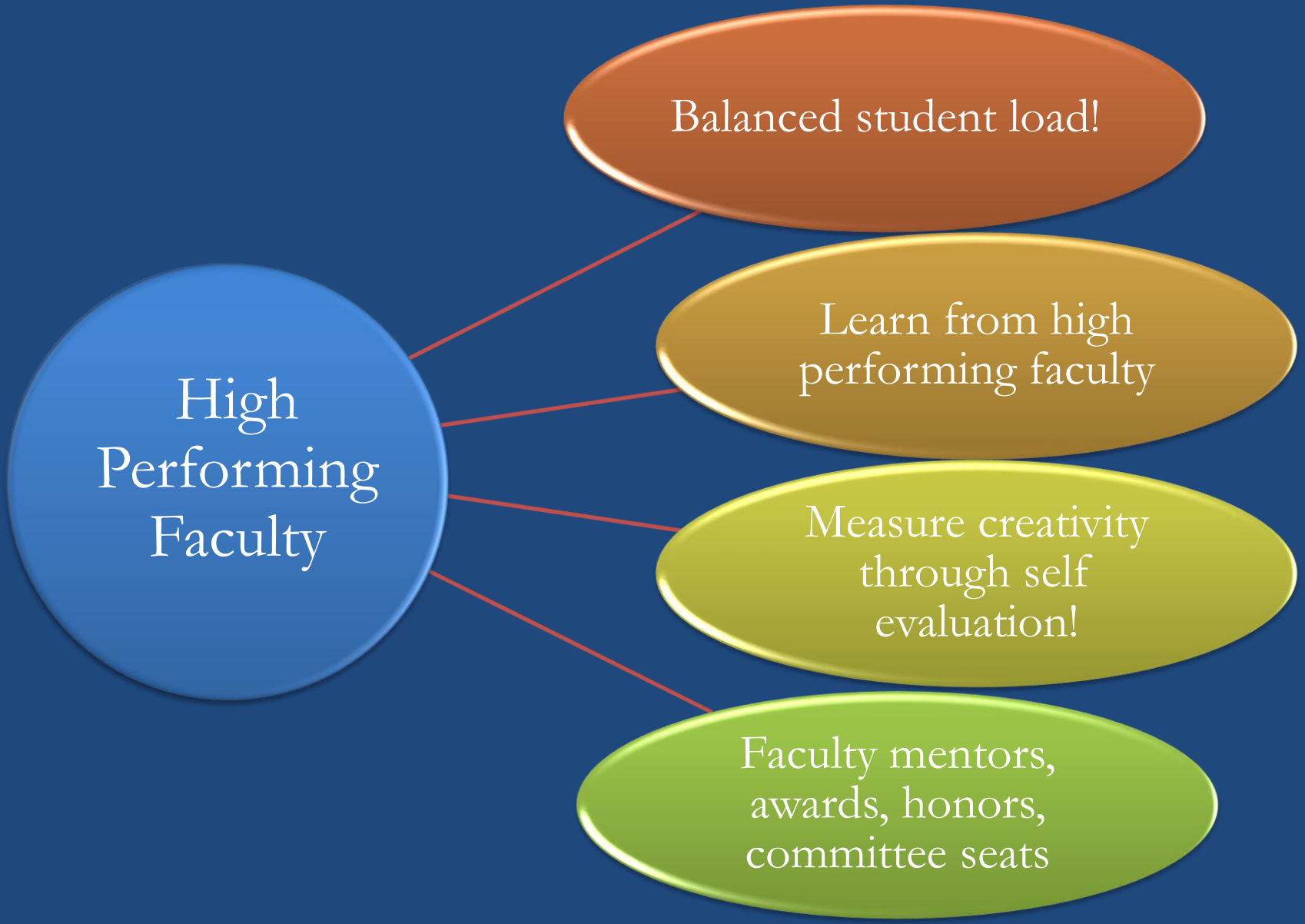


Combative Student

- Exemplify respectful disagreement
- Show students how to disagree while respecting others' ideas


Faculty Talent: Inspiring Discussions
Goal: Get students excited about the reading material and teach them how to engage with others.
Measure response rates to determine high performing faculty
Balance faculty presence in DBs to ensure high student interaction

Faculty Talent



Discovering a Whole New World

Concluding Thoughts

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

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Porter, A. L., Pitterle, M. E., & Hayney, M. S. (2014). Comparison of online versus classroom delivery of an immunization elective course. *American Journal Of Pharmaceutical Education*, *78*(5), 1-9. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete

Seiver, J., & Troja, A. (2014). Satisfaction and success in online learning as a function of the needs for affiliation, autonomy, and mastery. *Distance Education*, *35*(1), 90-105. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

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