



# Liberating Structures for Online Course Creators

Liberating Structures are a set of 33 facilitation techniques designed to help groups work together more effectively and inclusively.

These structures are particularly useful for online course creators who want to engage their learners in meaningful and collaborative activities. Here are some key facts about Liberating Structures:

## What are Liberating Structures?

Liberating Structures are a set of simple yet powerful activities that can be used to enhance group interactions. They are easy to learn and adapt. They were developed by Keith McCandless and Henri Lipmanowicz and are based on the idea that everyone has something valuable to contribute to a group.

## Why use Liberating Structures in online courses?

Online courses can be isolating and lack the interaction and engagement of traditional classroom settings. Liberating Structures can help to create a more collaborative and inclusive learning environment, where learners feel more connected and engaged in the learning process. They provide an effective (and fun!) alternative to one-sided presentations, managed discussions, and brainstorming.

## How can Liberating Structures be used in online courses?

Although Liberating Structures were originally designed to be used in person, many of them can be adapted for use in online courses, including:



**1-2-4-All:** This structure encourages learners to brainstorm ideas individually, then share them with a partner, and finally with a larger group.



**Impromptu Networking:** This structure invites learners to share their experiences and intentions with each other in short, paired conversations.



**TRIZ:** This structure encourages learners to think creatively and come up with solutions to a problem by asking a series of questions.



**W3:** This structure encourages learners to share their experiences and insights with each other by answering three questions: What? So what? Now what?

## How can using Liberating Structures improve online courses?

Overall, Liberating Structures enable online course creators to create a more engaging and collaborative learning experience for their learners. Using Liberating Structures in online courses can have many benefits, including:

- Increased engagement and participation from learners
- Enhanced collaboration and teamwork
- Improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- More inclusive and equitable learning environments
- Increased creativity and innovation

## Can I really use Liberating Structures in my courses?

Yes. The creators of Liberating Structures, Keith McCandless and Henri Lipmanowicz, chose not to copyright their work and instead published it under a Creative Commons License. If you give credit to Keith and Henri, you can use and even alter the Structures to best serve your learners.

## Where can I learn more?

Here are some online resources for finding out more about Liberating Structures:

**Liberating Structures website:** This is the official website for Liberating Structures, where you can find a comprehensive overview of the structures, as well as step-by-step instructions and examples of their use.

<https://liberatingstructures.com>

**Liberating Structures in education:** This webpage describes how schools and universities are using Liberating Structures to create conditions for self-discovery and peer-to-peer learning.

<https://www.liberatingstructures.com/education/>

**Liberating Structures app:** This app provides a handy reference guide to all 33 Liberating Structures, with step-by-step instructions for each one.

<https://www.liberatingstructures.app/en/>

**Liberating Structures communities of practice:** Liberating Structures communities of practice are open to anyone. You can connect with other users and learn how to adapt Liberating Structures to the online environment.

<https://www.liberatingstructures.com/user-group/>



Contact me if you would like me to introduce Liberating Structures to your students or if you have questions about how to use them in your online courses.

-- [Barb Bickford](#) of [Bickford Collaboration, LLC](#)