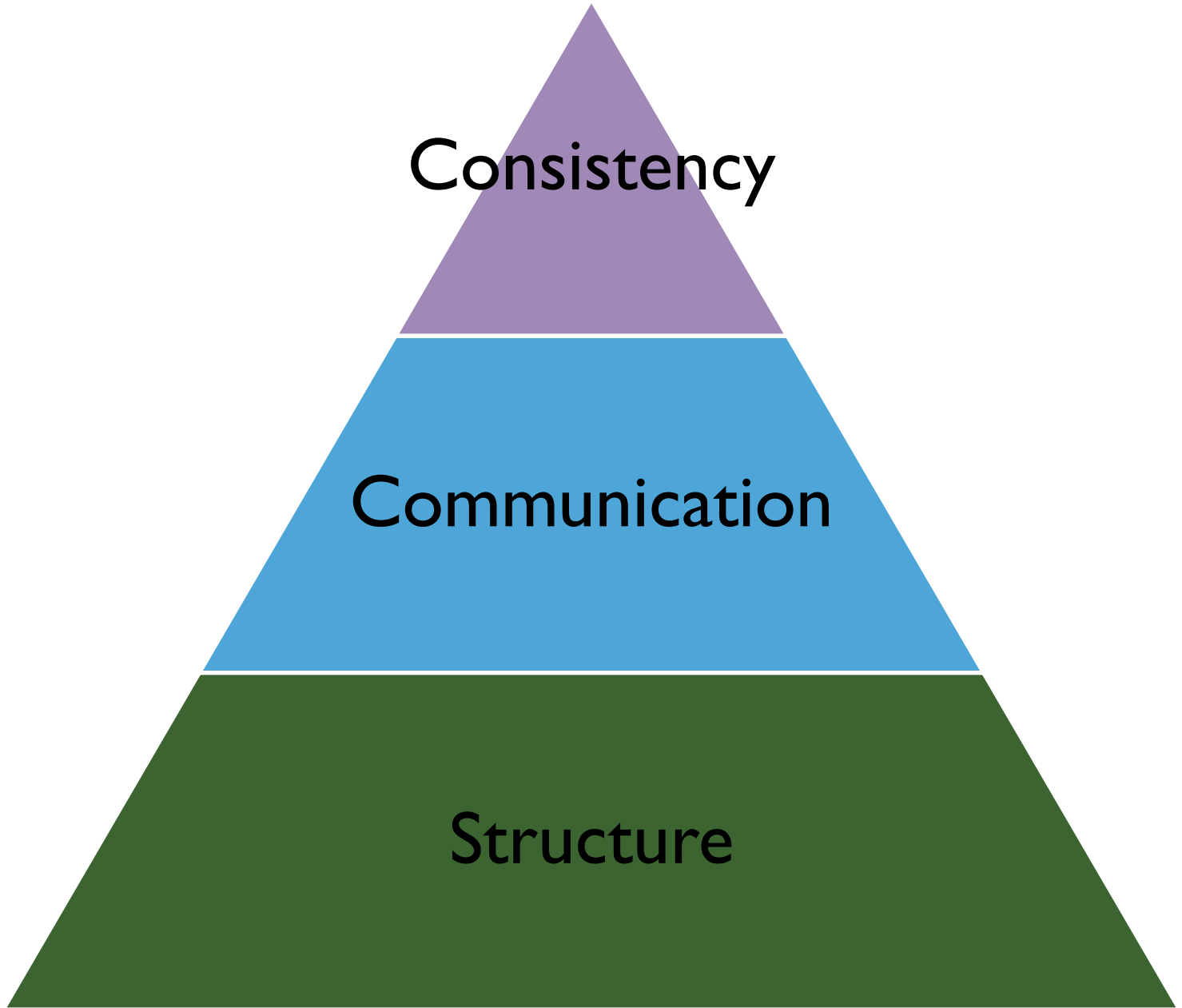




# Designing Your LMS Course Site for a Face-to-Face Class: Structure, Communication, Consistency

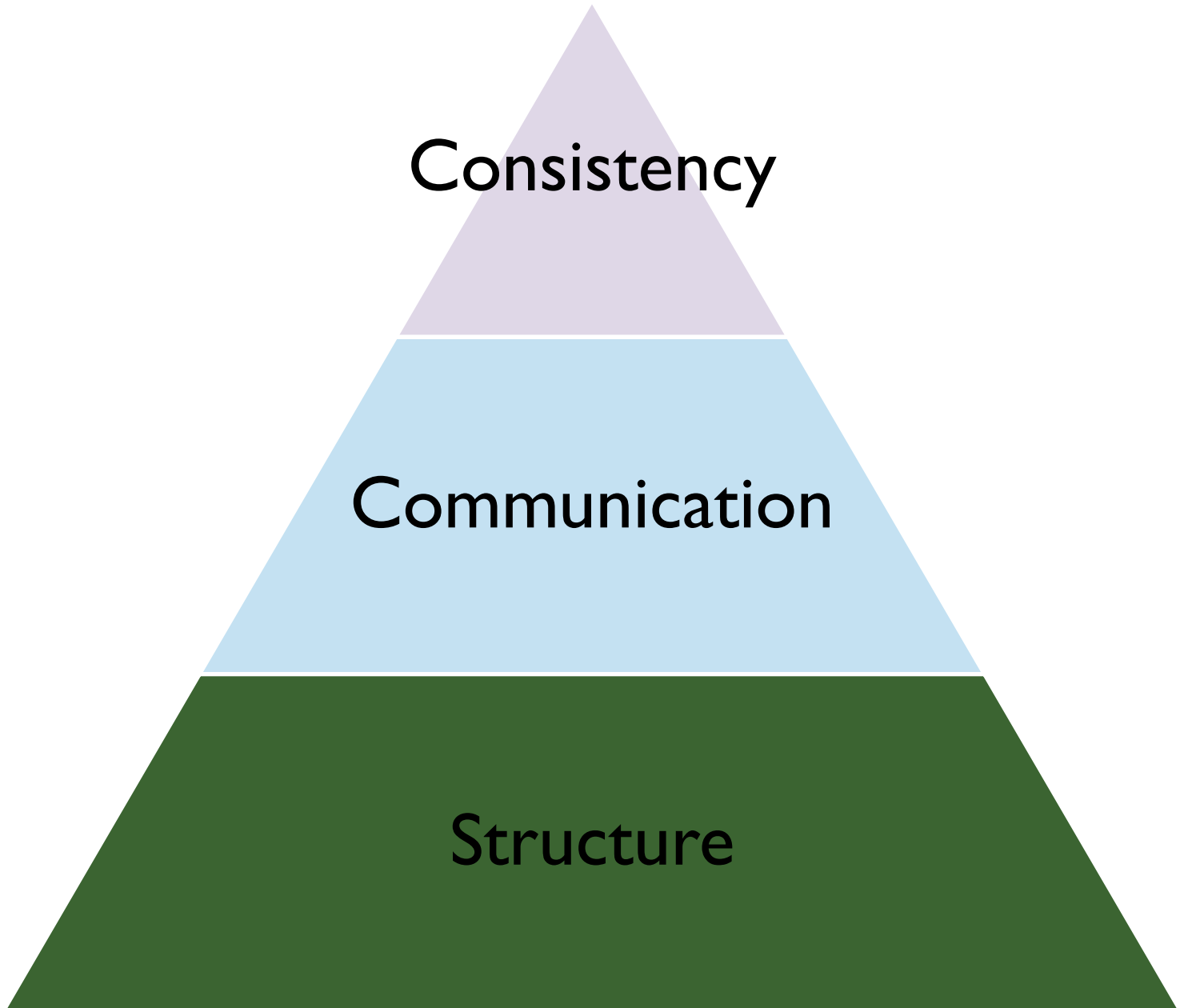
Presented by Liesl Wuest  
E-Learning 2.0 Conference  
Drexel University  
March 29, 2012



Consistency

Communication

Structure



Consistency

Communication

Structure

# Structure

- How are you organizing your course site?
- Good Structure
  - Aids in the navigation and use of information in the course site
  - Predictable
  - Sequential

# Structure

- Three recommended ways to structure your course:
  - Week
  - Chapter/Topic
  - Content Item
- How do you choose??

# Structuring by Week

- Do you use several tools consistently every week?
  - Weekly Discussions
  - Weekly Drop Box Assignment
  - Weekly Readings
- Are activities/assignments in the course site a major part of each week's work?

## STRUCTURING BY WEEK

- Main level folders will be labeled:
  - Week 1
  - Week 2
  - Week 3
- Folder content could be labeled:
  - Week 1 Discussion: *topic*
  - Week 1 Readings: *topic*

# Structuring by Chapter or Topic

- Do you have only chapter or topic specific content?
  - Handouts, PowerPoint slides, quizzes etc.
- Do chapters/topics vary in length of time?
  - Some may take a week, some may take three weeks, some may take a class
  - If the content is divided into weeks, will it be confusing to break down?



## STRUCTURING BY CHAPTER OR TOPIC

- Main level folders could be labeled:
  - Chapter 1: *Introduction to Biology*
  - Chapter 2: *Cells*
  - Chapter 3: *Plants*

OR

- Unit 1: *F. Scott Fitzgerald*
- Unit 2: *Ernest Hemmingway*
- Unit 3: *Louisa May Alcott*

# Organizing By Content Item or Assignment

- Are you only using a few specific tools throughout the semester?
  - Lecture notes, quizzes and journals
  - Discussions, Drop Box, and Readings
- Are you using your course site to organize a few specific assignments?
  - Research paper and group project
  - Autobiography assignment and Oral Presentation

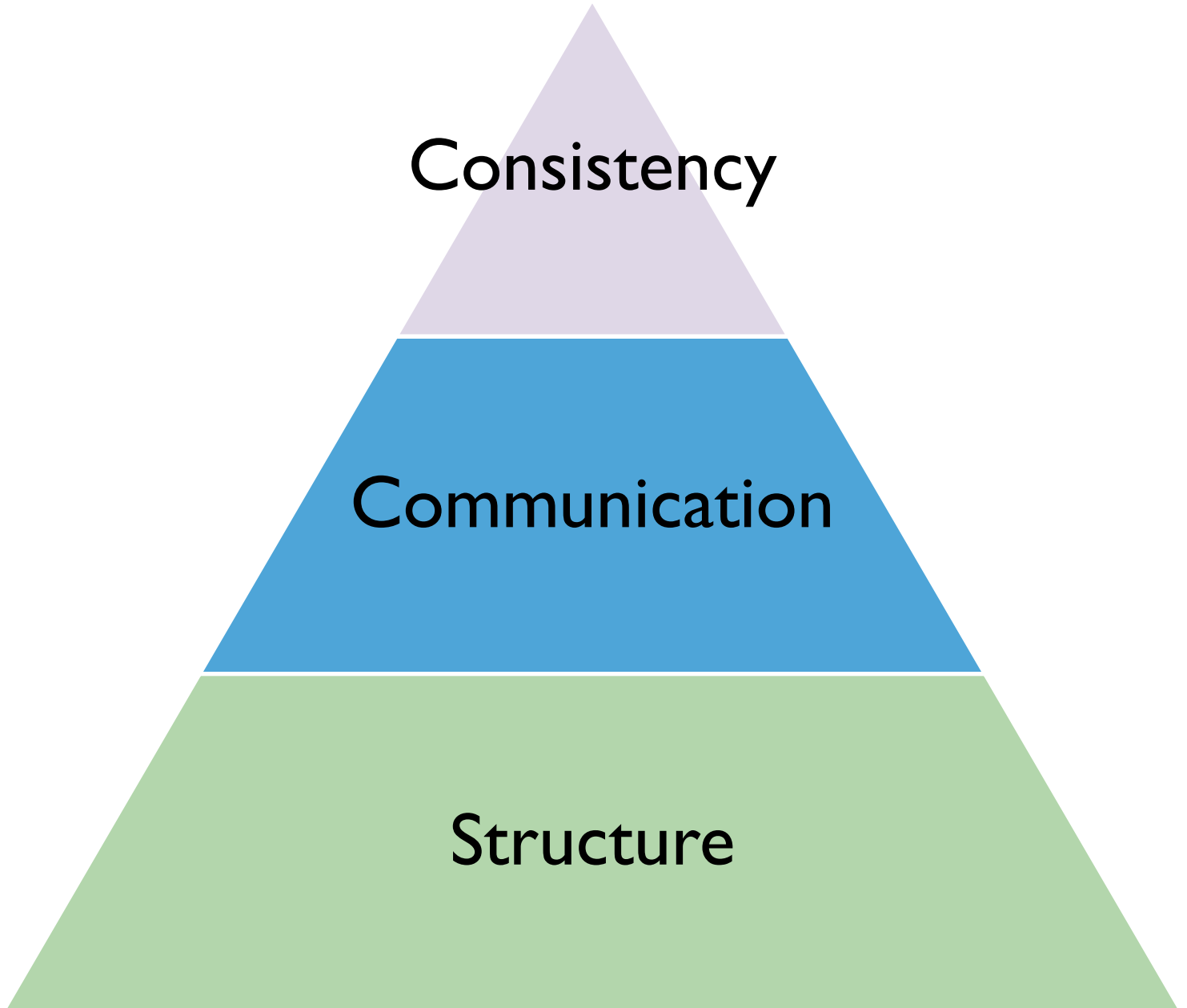
# Organizing By Content Item or Assignment

- Stand alone content in each folder
  - You don't need lecture notes to complete the quiz
  - You don't need the readings to complete and assignment
- No more than 2-4 folders

# STRUCTURING BY CONTENT ITEM OR ASSIGNMENT

- Main level folders could be labeled:
  - Research Paper
  - Group Project
  - Blog Assignment
- Folder content could be labeled:
  - Research Paper Assignment Information
  - Research Paper Citation Resources
  - Research Paper Draft Drop Box





**Consistency**

**Communication**

**Structure**

# Good Communication

- Let your students know
  - Your expectations for use of the site
  - How to get technical help
- Post your Course Site Expectations and Guidelines in the site
- Use the communication tools in the site
  - Calendar
  - Announcements

# Expectations and Use of the Site

- Review your **STRUCTURE** with the class
- What tools are you using?
  - Discussion, Quizzes, Gradebook etc.
- How often should students check the site?
- Should students look in the site for feedback?
  - Assignment feedback, quiz grades etc.



*Tip: If possible, review the site live during class and demonstrate how to use any tools they will be using during the semester*



# Technical Support

- Let students know how to get technical support for the LMS site
- Stress the difference between LMS Technical Support and IT Support



*Tip: Remind students that technology is not perfect and that they should always allow a little extra time for technical glitches*

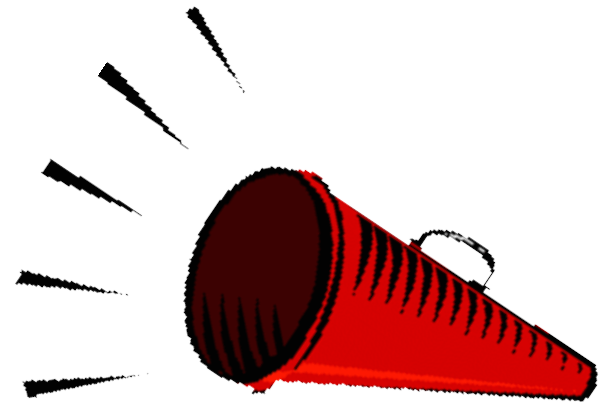
# Technical Support Info to Provide:

- Email contact
- Phone number
- Campus Office
- Virtual Office Hours
- Name of any support person assigned to the class
- Availability, e.g.
  - Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
  - 24/7
  - Evening Hours



# Announcements

- Provide weekly overviews
- Provide weekly wrap-ups
- Post assignment reminders
- Post special event reminder

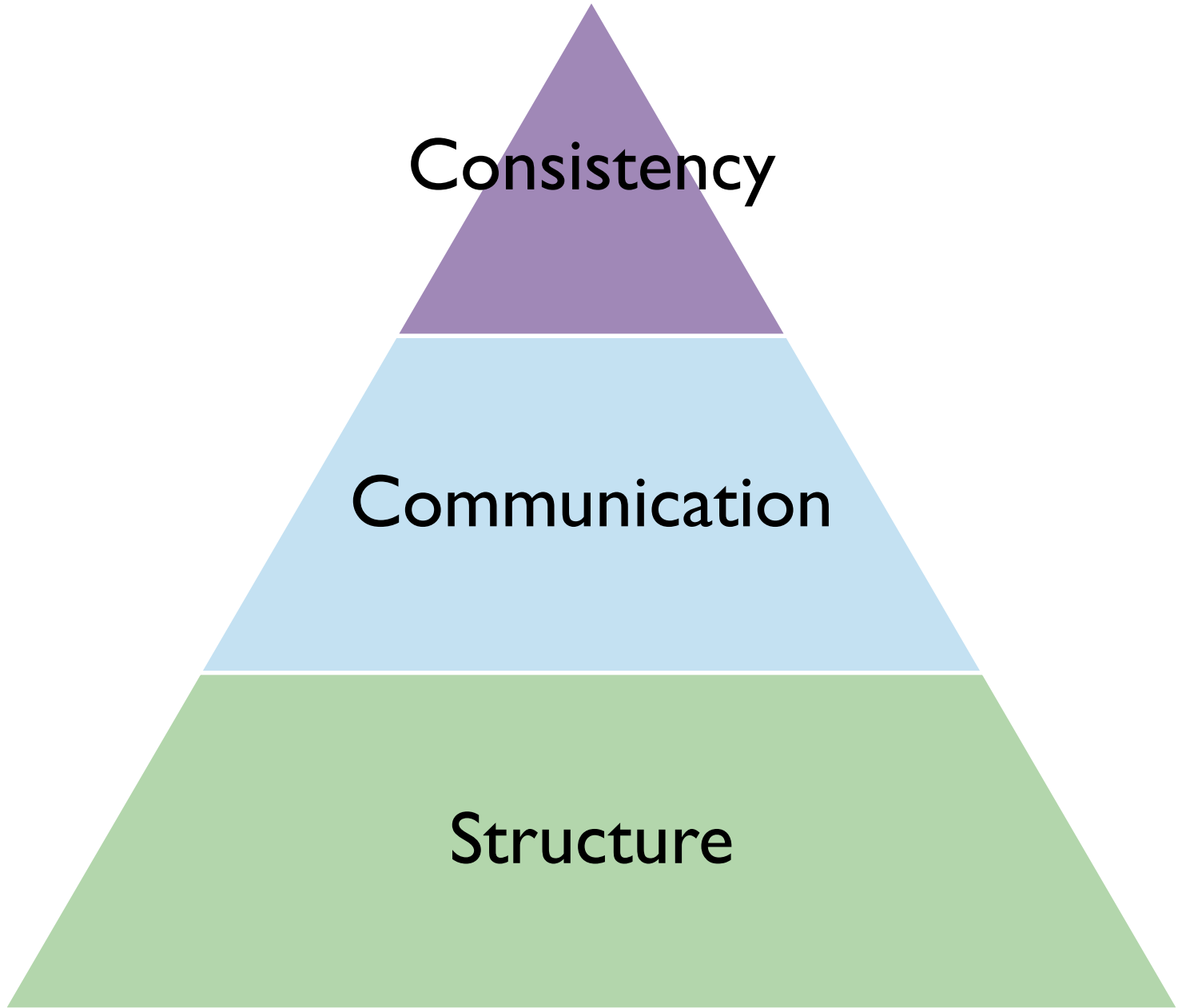


# Use the Calendar to list

- Assignment due dates
- Presentation dates
- Exam dates
- Office hours
- Special events







**Consistency**

**Communication**

**Structure**

# Consistency in

- Structure
- Order
- Naming Conventions
- Use of tools
- Design
  - Color
  - Font
- Keeping the site up to date

# Structure

- Once you choose a structure, BE CONSISTENT!
- Do not go back and forth between how you set up your content



## Good Structure

- Course Resources
- Week 1
- Week 2
- Week 3
- Week 4
- Week 5

## Poor Structure

- Week 1
- Week 2
- Week 3 – 4
- Week 5
- Week 6 – 8
- Assignments
- Readings
- Quizzes

# Any Variance in Structure

- Must have a valid reason
- One time occurrence
- Clearly defined and explained
- Clearly Visible
- Independent Content



# Order

- Keep your content in the same order in every folder to help students locate the items more quickly:

**CONSISTENT NAVIGATION!**

## GOOD ORDER

- Week One:
  - Week 1 PowerPoint slides
  - Week 1 Quiz
  - Week 1 Drop Box
- Week Two:
  - Week 2 PowerPoint slides
  - Week 2 Quiz
  - Week 2 Drop Box
- Week Three:
  - Week 3 PowerPoint slides
  - Week 3 Quiz
  - Week 3 Drop Box

## POOR ORDER

- Week One:
  - Week 1 PowerPoint slides
  - Week 1 Quiz
  - Week 1 Drop Box
- Week Two:
  - Week 2 Quiz
  - Week 2 Drop Box
  - Week 2 PowerPoint slides
- Week Three:
  - Week 3 PowerPoint slides
  - Week 3 Drop Box
  - Week 3 Quiz

# Naming Conventions

- Use the same naming convention for like content items throughout the semester.
  - Makes navigation easier
  - More organized

## Good NAMING CONVENTIONS

- Paper 1 Instructions
- Paper 2 Instructions
- Paper 3 Instructions
  
- Paper 1 Resources
- Paper 2 Resources
- Paper 3 Resources
  
- Paper 1 Drop Box
- Paper 2 Drop Box
- Paper 3 Drop Box

## Poor NAMING CONVENTIONS

- Paper 1 Instructions
- Paper 2 Directions
- Instructions for Paper 3
  
- Paper 1 Resources
- Resources for Paper 2
- Click for Paper 3 Resources
  
- Paper 1 Drop Box
- Upload Paper 2 Here
- Drop Box for Paper 3

# Use of Tools: consistency in action

- Once you decide to use a specific tool, stick to it!
  - Gives students consistency
  - Makes it easier to successfully implement the use of a tool

## CONSISTENCY IN USE OF TOOLS

- If you decide to collect papers using a Drop Box, don't accept submissions through e-mail or hard copies in class.
- If you decide to post weekly PowerPoint slides, don't hand out hard copies of the slides in class.



# Design: color

- Pick **1-3 colors** to use consistently throughout the course site
- Use color to **indicate change or importance**
  - Headers
  - Due Dates
- Use the **SAME COLOR** every time
- **DO NOT** change the font or background colors without reason or very often

# Design: font

- Do not change fonts throughout the site
- Be consistent in text size
- Generally San-serif fonts, e.g. Arial, are easier to read on a computer screen



*Tip: Try not to Copy/Paste directly from Word in to the LMS because styles do not always transfer. Either type directly into the course site or copy/paste from something like Text Edit or Notepad where there is no style.*

## Good Use of Color and Font

- Quiz I is due by **Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>** at **11:55 pm**
- Your Research Paper is due in the Drop box **Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>** at **11:55 pm**
- The guest speaker will be here on **Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>** at **3:00 pm**

## Poor Use of Color and Font

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# Update

- Don't forget to update your site!
  - Post content on time
  - Update your Announcements
  - Update Calendar events if due dates or speakers change



# Let's Practice!

- Pick an upcoming course and think about what you want to use it for
  - What **STRUCTURE** best suits your content?
  - How do you plan to **COMMUNICATE** with your students about using the LMS?
  - Where do you need to pay attention to **CONSISTENCY**?

# Recommended Reading

- *Essential Elements: Prepare, Design, and Teach Your Online Course*
  - by Bonnie Elbaum, Cynthia McIntyre and Alese Smith.
- Clear and easy to read
- Focuses on pedagogy for online course development