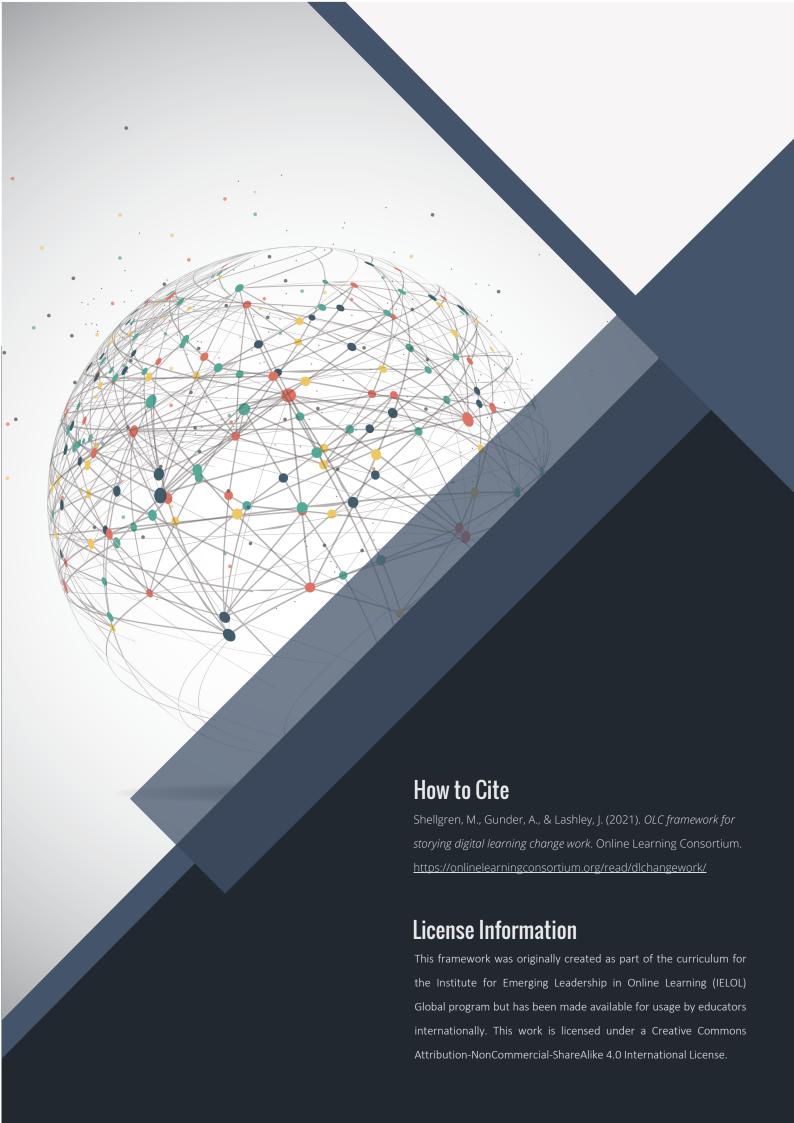# OLC
# FRAMEWORK

## FOR STORYING DIGITAL
## LEARNING CHANGE WORK

*A resource for educators working across international contexts and within global coalitions to align strategic initiatives for online, blended, and digital learning to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.*
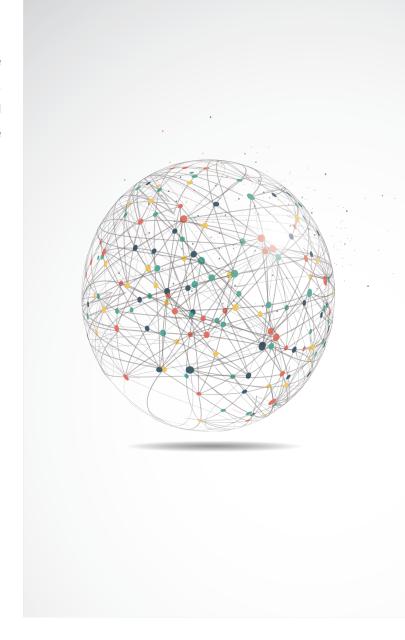
**OLC**
ONLINE LEARNING ™
CONSORTIUM

## How to Cite

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# OVERVIEW

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

**The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is a collaborative community of higher education leaders and innovators, dedicated to advancing quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage the modern learner – anyone, anywhere, anytime.**

Starting out as Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) in 1999, we have been the leading professional online learning society devoted to advancing quality online, blended, and digital learning across contexts, roles, and geographic regions around the world. Since 2008, the Online Learning Consortium has offered the prestigious Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) as a way to serve the development needs of emerging leaders responsible for a variety of digital learning initiatives in higher education. Inspired by the collective need for the field of online, blended, and digital learning to address ubiquitous issues of access to education more broadly, OLC gathered the first international cohort of IELOL in 2020. This new professional learning offering, IELOL Global, was focused on the transformative power of global collaborations in enacting change work in digital learning at the local and global levels. In creating the curriculum for this new offering, the design team determined that the program would be structured around creating capacity for sustaining global change work through three thematic actions: 1) developing and sharing examples of impactful cross-institutional and regional collaboration models; 2) building global communities of practice around transformative and sustainable digital transformation; and 3) curating and disseminating participant-created artifacts, use cases, and other resources that contribute to a more connected world.

# ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK

As shared by the United Nations on their framework for action, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are "the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by 2030" (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, n.d.). The resonant metaphors across these 17 goals provide an impactful and inclusive framing for how our collective actions have the propensity to enact lasting change for the good of the world. Within this framework, both metaphorical and literal connections to our work in digital learning are present and serve as powerful inspiration for increasing access to quality education within online, blended, and digital learning environments.

In developing the curriculum for IELOL Global, we wanted to create an adaptation of the United Nations' framework for global impact that would allow us each to examine our ability to uniquely contribute to significant and meaningful change as locally, contextually situated. The **OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** (p. 5) provides users the ability to contextualize strategic initiatives and collaborative action within both metaphorical and literal framings of each of the SDGs. Additionally, the **OLC Alignment Resource for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** (p. 10) offers examples of each sustainable development goal situated within a specific digital learning challenge and paired with an opportunity to advance the SDG through leadership and collaboration. Both frameworks utilize storytelling as a powerful tool for making sense of the world around us, encouraging us to work as a connected and engaged community of practice to dispel myths, bringing us to a place of empathy and understanding, and helping us to enact generative action steps to improve access to quality education.

As you leverage this framework to create an action plan for global change within your specific digital learning context, you will be asked to create your own interpretations of one (or several) of the SDGs that speak to real challenges and opportunities that exist within your community. Using narrative elements and human-centered design, the **OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** will reveal new connections and extensions to increasing the impact and scale of your efforts. Additionally, you will be encouraged to share your ideas, reflections, and findings with both your local and global communities, all in the hopes of increasing our collective power to address ubiquitous challenges through open praxis and collaboration. Ultimately, your stories will not only illuminate new pathways to creating meaningful change but will also serve as inspiration for future leaders looking to learn from your findings and experience.

Both the **OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** and the **OLC Alignment Resource for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** are openly licensed for educators to use and repurpose with attribution. You can reference the second page of this document for information on how to cite your usage of this work. Those looking to engage deeply with the frameworks through featured talks, discussions, and collaborative activities can take part in one of the cohorts of IELOL Global. The core program is offered fully-online to ensure inclusive participation internationally, with scholarships available for those requiring financial assistance in order to participate. The online core program is complemented by regional colloquies held on location in conjunction with lead partners located around the globe. To learn more about the IELOL Global program, we encourage you to visit the OLC IELOL Global website at:

https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/ielol-global/

# OLC FRAMEWORK FOR STORYING DIGITAL LEARNING CHANGE WORK

*Centering on the intersection of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and strategic actions for ensuring quality in online, blended, and digital learning, this framework serves as a resource for educators working across international contexts and within global coalitions to move from ideation to generative action and the open sharing of effective practices.*

How to Use the Framework: Answer the reflection questions below within each part of the framework, connecting your responses to challenges and opportunities that exist within your local or regional context. Feel free to complete this framework as a collaborative team activity with members of your community. You can use this framework as a formative tool in the planning stages for an action or initiative, or as a summative tool to reflect on the efficacy and impact of your actions.

## PART 1 - NARRATIVE PLACES

| STAGE | QUESTION |
|---|---|
| **Story of Self** | What do you consider your work in digital learning (i.e., how would you describe it, what all does it entail, what is "your work") and why were you called to it? |
| **Story of Us** | What purposes, goals, or vision do you share with others locally? |
| **Story of Now** | What is a local challenge related to your work in digital learning? |

## REFERENCES

Ganz, M. (n.d.). *Telling your public story: Self, us, now*. Welcoming Refugees.
https://www.welcomingrefugees.org/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Public%20Story%20Worksheet07Ganz.pdf

# PART II - LIVING FRAMEWORK

| Stage | Question |
|-------|----------|
| **Situate Story** | Describe a single event that embodies the local challenge you identified that relates to digital learning. |
| **Define Story** | Who are the local actors in this story? |
| | Who are the global actors in this story? |
| | What desirable actions do these local/global actors maintain? |
| | What undesirable actions do these local/global actors maintain? |
| | How are these actions significant in local contexts? |
| | How are these actions significant in global contexts? |
| | What motivates you to address these actions? |
| | Why is new action necessary among the systems you define? |
| **Reimagine Story** | What new action(s) might you take to address this challenge? |
| | What subactions need to be tackled in order to complete each of the actions articulated above? **Note**: If you listed more than one action above, answer each of these questions below for each action above.<br><br>• *What new subactions might you take to address this challenge?*<br>• *How might this subaction prove significant in your local context?*<br>• *How might this subaction prove significant in the global context?*<br>• *What motivates you to undertake this subaction?*<br>• *How can global collaboration support this subaction?*<br>• *What resources do you need in order to act?* |
| | What one new action are you most inspired to pursue? Why? |

## REFERENCES

Rosile, G. A., Boje, D. M., Carlon, D. M., Downs, A., & Saylors, R. (2013). Storytelling diamond. *Organizational Research Methods, 16*(4), 557–580. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428113482490

# PART III - ANTENARRATIVE INQUIRY

Antenarrative inquiry is "the attempt to free stories from the linear sequence of beginning, middle, and end in narrative" (Jørgensen & Boje, 2009, p. 34) and invites storytellers to place a bet on the future(s) that they would like to see come to fruition through their actions (Boje, 2011; Boje, Rosile, & Gardner, 2004; Jørgensen & Boje, 2009). As you answer these questions, think about what future goals you want to achieve and work backwards from there.

| Stage | Question |
|---|---|
| **Reflect** | Which SDGs connect to this new action you have identified in the final question of Part II (i.e., the one you stated you are most inspired to pursue)? <br><br> • *Goal 1: No Poverty* <br> • *Goal 2: Zero Hunger* <br> • *Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being* <br> • *Goal 4: Quality Education* <br> • *Goal 5: Gender Equality* <br> • *Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation* <br> • *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy* <br> • *Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth* <br> • *Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure* <br> • *Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities* <br> • *Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities* <br> • *Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production* <br> • *Goal 13: Climate Action* <br> • *Goal 14: Life Below Water* <br> • *Goal 15: Life on Land* <br> • *Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions* <br> • *Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals* <br><br> **Note**: Unsure of which UN SDGs apply to your new action? Reference the **OLC Alignment Resource for Storying Digital Learning Change Work** offered below on p. 10. This resource document highlights the linkages between the SDGs and digital learning through different real-life examples offered by the authors of this framework. |
| **Craft** | List the SDGs that you identified and answer the following questions for each. <br><br> **Note**: You can engage cyclically in this process as many times as you like but try to start with one SDG and move from there. <br><br> • How might new action bring about the aspirational vision of the world as contextualized by this SDG? <br> • Who will be responsible? <br> • What opportunities exist for collaboration? <br> • Who will be affected? <br> • Who will maintain the action? <br> • What may success look like? <br> • What may impede success? <br> • How will you collect feedback? <br> • What ongoing resources are needed? <br> • If desirable, how may new action be sustained? |

| Stage | Question |
| --- | --- |
| **Craft (continued)** | What is the optimal artifact (given time, constraints, resources, etc.) that you can develop in support of this action?<br><br>**Note:** We encourage you to consider how you might collaboratively design and create/build a change-oriented asset. This might be a resource, a proposal, a detailed strategic plan, etc. that you provide as an aid to your community specifically. Also consider sharing this out more broadly with other communities in support of addressing similar or related challenges. |
| | What testing protocols can be created to collect feedback on your artifact and its efficacy and impact? Who are the specific stakeholders or community members that would be important to provide feedback on your action plan/work? |
| **Analyze** | Reflect on the process of using this framework thus far – how did your perspectives or ideas shift and/or become more grounded by reflecting on change work through the lends of the SDGs? |
| | What new ideas emerged through engaging with this storytelling framework? This might include connections or linkages to other projects,  partners, collaborations, and resources. |
| **Share** | Thinking ahead to the point of creation of your artifact, how will you present it to your community and publicly share it as an asset?<br><br>• *Where will you share it? Do the spaces currently exist or will they need to be created?*<br>• *How will members of your community be able to access the artifact?*<br>• *What planning needs to occur to maintain the quality, relevance, and impact of the artifact?*<br>• *How will you continuously improve the artifact over time?* |

## REFERENCES

Boje, D. M. (2011). Introduction to agential antenarratives that shape the future of organizations. *Storytelling and the Future of Organizations: An Antenarrative Handbook*, 19–38.

Boje, D. M., Rosile, G. A., & Gardner, C. L. (2004). Antenarratives, narratives and anaemic stories. *Paper for the All Academy Symposium*. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.536.1516&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Jørgensen, K. M. & Boje, D. M. (2009). Genealogies of becoming - antenarrative inquiry in organizations. *Tamara Journal*, 8(1), 32-48.

# OLC ALIGNMENT RESOURCE FOR STORYING DIGITAL LEARNING CHANGE WORK

*To complement the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work, this resource provides brief examples of each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals applied to different contexts within online, blended, and digital learning. This alignment resource may become useful as you explore connections to your work and the SDGs.*

| Exploring the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | | Applying the UN SDGs to Digital Learning *How might we apply the individual UN SDGs to a specific problem within the context of online, blended, or digital learning?* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Original UN SDG* | *How is this SDG defined by the UN?* | *Describe the digital learning problem. How does this problem connect to this SDG?* | *What new actions can help solve this problem? How does this action connect to this SDG?* |
| **No Poverty** | End poverty in all its forms everywhere | **Value of a Degree** Despite the promise of a degree (and increased access to a degree through online learning), uncertainty exists as to whether a degree will ensure a meaningful career. For those investing in education, this can mean a costly risk in attempting to improve one's socioeconomic situation or even in resulting in a career that does not leave them financially burdened. | **Pathways to Workforce Development** Building intentional pathways to workforce development, both within credit-bearing curriculum and co-curricular activities can provide learners with the necessary skills to acquire and retain employment, helping to address poverty in a sustaining and empowering way. |
| **Zero Hunger** | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | **External Challenges Disrupting Learning** Even beyond digital learning, attending to the basic needs of the learners and colleagues we work with has proven challenging for many reasons. The remote shift served to further highlight the sheer extent to which we lack a collective and holistic awareness around the needs of our digital learning community, as well as the resources and infrastructure to support them. | **Attending to Students' Basic Needs** Incorporating basic security statements in syllabi (including connecting students to services such as food pantries) and writing language that leads with empathy can be a good first start in creating a learning culture that seeks to both recognize and support learners. Such statements can also be leveraged within and across a staff environment. Leading with these statements can support a culture shift towards valuing basic security and needs. |

| Exploring the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | | Applying the UN SDGs to Digital Learning<br>*How might we apply the individual UN SDGs to a specific problem within the context of online, blended, or digital learning?* | |
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| **Good Health and Well-Being** | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages | **Student Health Crisis**<br>Quite often, curriculum is situated such that learning is situated independent of the real-life experiences that affect the student experience, including mental health and well-being. This can not only serve as an obstacle to student progress within a course, but also extend into their belief that they can be successful within education more broadly. | **Promoting Student Well-Being**<br>Using frameworks and methods that attend to the whole student and not asking them to divest themselves of their lived-in experience when they enter the classroom can help to ensure that learning is equitable and inclusive. Hinging curriculum around culturally responsive teaching or situating course resources around student support services across modalities can help to promote health and well-being with digital learning environments. |
| **Quality Education** | Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | **Reactive Pivots to Remote Teaching**<br>With the world social distancing as a response to COVID-19, many educators were thrust into moving curriculum online rapidly, performing 1-to-1 translations of their face-to-face teaching practices as a reactive pivot, rather than building quality online education supported by evidenced-based methods. | **Intentional Design of Quality Online Instruction**<br>Designing and continuously improving instruction using a quality framework (i.e., the OLC Quality Scorecard Suite, particularly the QCTIP Scorecard on quality course teaching and instructional practice) becomes a way to ensure that students can engage with learning content, their faculty, and their peers within a digital learning space that is academically rigorous and supportive of the success for all learners. |
| **Gender Equality** | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls | **Endemic Discriminatory Practices**<br>Digital learning environments can be a place of opportunity to look at endemic discrimination more broadly. Conversely, when unattended to, DLEs can promulgate harmful binaries where micro- and macroaggressions can run pervasive. This includes discrimination based on not only gender, but race, ethnicity, religion, age, language, sexuality, etc. | **Inclusive Teaching and Learning**<br>Educators can employ community agreements within their classroom to establish an environment that engenders both success and belongingness of all students, and not just a privileged few. This can include creating policies and safeguards that protect individual students and acknowledge the dimensions of diversity as a shared value within the online learning environment. |

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| **Clean Water and Sanitation** | Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all | **Polluted Digital Learning Environments** Today's digital learning context is frequented by data insecurity (e.g., spam, viruses, data breaches) and misinformation. While we continue to see rapid growth in our adoption of technology, we remain relatively unaware of the implications of the use of our current technology systems (an issue that has already been surfaced through discussions of data and information privacy as related to tools that don't center care for students). | **Sustainability of Digital Learning Environments** Developing a DEI-centered protocol (which is incorporated and engaged with in an iterative manner) for selecting, reviewing, and auditing technological tools would help ensure that we are critically analyzing and evaluating the tools we are using. A good resource for this is the Peralta Online Equity Rubric. |
| **Affordable and Clean Energy** | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all | **Price of Education** Affordability of education continues to be a concern globally, particularly as related to the cost of learning materials. These materials, in many ways, are situated as the "fuel" that keep the engine of the teaching and learning experience working. Without access to these materials, students have no way to successfully move forward. | **Driving Access through Open Education** When imagining the curriculum of a course as the fuel that drives the bus, open educational resources as well as open educational practices (e.g., revising and remixing open resources, sharing open research) can serve as that fuel that drives our actions forward in ensuring accessible and inclusive access to education. |
| **Decent Work and Economic Growth** | Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all | **Challenges to Continuity of Instruction** Career and technical education centers and vocational schools are often left out of conversations within higher education, leaving us questioning how they have been historically disadvantaged. Furthermore, the pandemic resulted in the closing of many schools unable to remain open due, among other things, to the lack of a funding model for implementing experiential learning that could survive such a monumental and sweeping emergency situation. | **Shared Business Models and Effective Practices for Emergency Preparedness** Collaboratively establishing agile financial models that work across / can be contextualized to meet the needs of various institution types (and which take into account emergency preparedness situations like a pandemic), would enable us to leverage the collective expertise across digital learning contexts to ensure continuity of instruction regardless of the discipline or course type. |

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| **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure** | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | **Institutional Silos** Historically, many schools have built out their online learning initiatives as isolated departments with separate infrastructure and business models from the brick-and-mortar institution. This limits the ability of institutions to innovate, collaborate and improve practice for learners at scale. | **Connected Hubs of Innovation** Using a framework to build digital strategy cohesively with institutional strategy allows for organic and intentional collaboration and synergies that can be shared across modalities. Furthermore, these efficiencies of looking at digital strategy more holistically can help to instantiate initiatives more economically and sustainably. |
| **Reduced Inequalities** | Reduce inequality within and among countries | **Scarcity of Resources and Tools for Learning** There remain significant gaps between what students need to be successful and what they have when they start. In addition to being largely unaware of the breadth and scope of this issue, educational institutions have yet to develop sustainable systems for addressing those gaps we are aware of in ways that don't further burden the learner. | **Institutional Support for Basic Technology Needs** Dedicating resources for the establishment of a "technology library" in every department would afford students and staff the ability to "check out" or "loan" technology on a need-by-need basis. |
| **Sustainable Cities and Communities** | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable | **Deficit Narratives** Quite often, institutions serving minoritized student populations are situated as under-resourced and requiring of support to sustain their efforts. In many ways, this supports a problematic view of these institutions that positions them within a deficit narrative as opposed to portraying their resilience, agency, and autonomy. | **Resilience Narratives** Sharing practices and amplifying the accomplishments of these institutions can push back on the dominant narratives arising from schools of privilege, creating a more inclusive picture of success across the field. This can be accomplished through convenings and research studies that surface emergent themes across context-specific communities of practice and offering these findings to the field more broadly. (i.e., Stronger Together report amplifying the perspectives of digital learning leaders at historically black colleges and universities across the United States). |

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| **Responsible Consumption and Production** | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns | **Quick Revenue vs. Value Alignment** Quite often, institutions look to online learning as a way to quickly make a lot of revenue as opposed to focusing efforts on aligning to institutional values such as increasing access to education. This focus on the commoditization and monetization of courses often results in mass production of learning experiences with little focus on quality. | **Sustainable Online Enterprises** Building out online initiatives should be aligned to the mission and values of the institution, with resources responsibly allocated to ensure that the student experience is rigorous, engaging, and meaningful regardless of modality. Moreover, the business models that support the online enterprise should be created in a way that is equitable and sustainable for all stakeholders. |
| **Climate Action** | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts | **Environmental Cost of Programming and Events** Onsite events/programming have a cost (a cost that translates both financially and also in terms of the actual waste we produce as a result of in-person programming and events). | **Reducing Consumption and Waste Through Online and Blended Models** Leverage online engagement and blended models to reduce our carbon footprint and reduce our consumption and waste. For instance, in lieu of printed programs or signage, develop a process for supporting the shift towards digital content. |
| **Life Below Water** | Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development | **Uncharted Potential** Similarities between studies of the ocean (both its immense power as well as the fragility of the ecosystems contained therewithin) and online learning (an area of vast potential to address challenges to access to education) abound, with both spaces serving as confounders for how we can ethically and meaningfully use them for greater good. | **Harnessing Power for Good** Approaching online education from the standpoint of how it might be implemented ethically and sustainably begins with looking at the needs of the students that institutions are dedicated to serving, and centering care for those students uniquely. Starting from the opportunity space of student growth, development and retention sets institutions up for success across a diverse set of metrics beyond just enrollment numbers. |

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| **Life on Land** | Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss | **Evaluating the Purpose of Physical Space** Amidst the public conversation about whether or not it is safe or even necessary to be on campus for work, we are now positioned to collectively ask: What is the purpose and meaning of physical campuses as we move into our new digital reality? For campuses that have shifted fully remote, the question of what happens to those buildings still remains. Still further, those pushing for continued remote work raise the issue of whether the same extent of physical space is needed on campus, as well as what support needs look like in order to support 'at-home' or remote work. | **Agile 'Back-to-Work' Models** Develop a proposal for an agile and flexible 'back-to-work' model in order to be responsive to staff and student working / learning preferences. Couple this with an initiative to strengthen community partnerships as a means to collaboratively imagine new uses for on campus buildings. |
| **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** | Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels | **The Political Weaponizing of Social Justice Missions** In today's current climate, a social justice mission is not a de facto aspect of educational institutions. In fact, beyond a lack of collective commitment to social justice, we additionally live in a world where the legality of the presence of such a mission is regularly and publicly debated. Due in part to this volatile environment, those that are committed to social justice have yet to arrive at a cohesive understanding of what a commitment to social justice looks like / could look like, as well as how institutions might articulate and share such a mission. | **Collaborative Toolkits for Social Justice** There is opportunity in the collaborative and open designing of toolkits which would support educators in not only the development of an institutionally contextualized social justice mission, but also support them with strategies for how, where, and in what ways social justice missions can be storied and shared within their institutional contexts. |

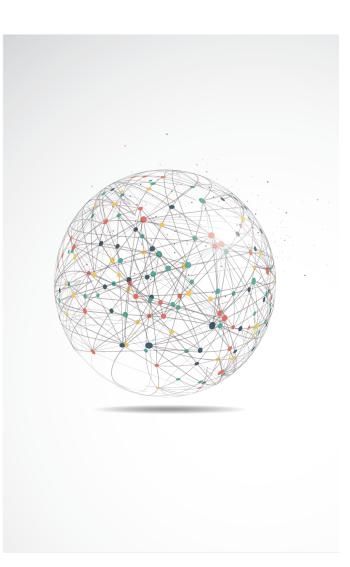| Exploring the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | | Applying the UN SDGs to Digital Learning<br>*How might we apply the individual UN SDGs to a specific problem within the context of online, blended, or digital learning?* | |
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| **Partnerships for the Goals** | Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development | **Missed Connections**<br>Industry partners currently play a major part in the field of online, digital, and blended learning. However, there is still a dominant narrative that educators and educational institutions have poor relationships (by and large) with the industry and corporate sectors. Furthermore, in some cases, a specified few industry partners have been raised to the public forum as being in conflict with educational missions which center diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice...more often than not contributing to negative narratives and perceptions of industry partners as a whole. | **Reimagined Partnerships for Shared Success**<br>As a community we can work to identify industry partners who are invested in generative collaborations and who seek to establish new types of relationships that help produce change that is impactful and scalable. Many industry partners are genuinely interested in contributing productively to the thought leadership of our field and learning from the lived experiences of those engaging with the technologies and services they offer. We have the opportunity to innovate alongside them through identifying and establishing better relationships with partners outside of our institutional contexts. |

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United Nations Sustainable Development Group: Home. (n.d.). https://www.undg.org/

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ABOUT THE ONLINE LEARNING CONSORTIUM

The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is a collaborative community of higher education leaders and innovators dedicated to advancing quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage the modern learner—anyone, anywhere, anytime. OLC inspires innovation and quality through an extensive set of resources, including best-practice publications, quality benchmarking, leading-edge instruction, community-driven conferences, practitioner-based and empirical research, and expert guidance. The growing OLC community includes faculty members, administrators, trainers, instructional designers, and other learning professionals, as well as educational institutions, professional societies, and corporate enterprises. Learn more online at https://www.onlinelearningconsortium.org

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