

The design phase can be broken down to the following components as set out in the NEAS Quality Principle H1. First of all, it is important to have all of your announcements, news and events in the same place. It is important not to send students on a wild goose chase, wasting their valuable time searching for up to date information. This is confusing for students, who are already struggling to get a handle on the course. Let's look at navigation. Good navigation online is a deal breaker in terms of student engagement in your course. Poor navigation is also one of the biggest complaints from students. Students will complain if navigation is not intuitive, logical and well-signposted. Students will also complain if your online course has too many of the same learning tools. Remember, we are dealing with twenty first century learners here. This cohort is used to rich online content, including short video, interactive activities with instant feedback such as open source H5P eLearning or Quizlet with its gamified activities and leaderboards. Students light up in the classroom when a teacher turns a learning activity into a competitive game. Student focus groups rate these activities highly during NEAS Quality Review Visits. Online spaces should be no different. Motivating learners to engage in new content and learn new skills in a convenient, self-paced way on multiple devices are some of the key reasons for investing in online spaces. Consistency is king. Make sure you storyboard or map out your whole course before putting it online. Consistent colours, fonts and page templates ensure a seamless learner experience. Recruiting a design team, employing design thinking, prototyping online courses, piloting and tweaking your course before launching it, also goes a long way to ensuring a quality learning experience for students.