

### Figure 3. Six Steps for Using the Situationalities Framework

1. **Determine your learning values**, related to social interaction in online learning, that you would like your learning environment to support. For example, do you value forming online learning community? Or, maybe you value students learning through interactive discourse. I suggest you list these fundamental values in preparation for the next step.
2. **Identify the learning goals** that you want students to achieve. These learning goals should reflect your previously determined values. It is important to list at least one learning goal for each value. If you are not very familiar with online instruction, you might need to consult resources such as Table 9 Values and Goals (see page 100) and Appendix G List of Goals. If, in step 1, you stated your values in terms of means – what students should be doing – you do not need to identify specific learning goals in this step. (In this case, you are ready for step 3.)
3. **List alternative instructional methods** that will meet the learning goals you just identified. If you are not very familiar with online instruction, you might need to consult resources such as Table 10 Goals and Methods (see page 103) and Appendix H List of Methods. It's important to consider several instructional methods from which to choose, since it is likely that not every method will fit the specific conditions (see Step 4.) that exist in your online learning environment.
4. For each of the instructional methods you listed in step 3, **assess the instructional conditions** that should be met in order for the method to be effectively employed. I suggest that you list the instructional conditions next to each of the alternative instructional methods. You should use Table 11 Methods and Conditions and Appendix I List of Instructional Conditions to help you complete this assessment. *This is perhaps the most important step in using the situationalities framework. If you try to simply implement instructional methods without assessing whether or not the necessary instructional conditions are met, your online instruction may not be very effective.*
5. **Select specific instructional methods** from the list of alternatives based on your assessment of instructional conditions. For maximum effectiveness, choose methods that have all their associated instructional conditions met. If an important instructional condition is not met for a particular method, you should either choose an alternative method, modify the method to take into account the deficient condition, or add a secondary instructional method that will create the necessary condition for the primary method. For example, if you would like students to engage in interactive asynchronous dialogue, but you assess that your students are not likely to synchronize their participation in online discussions appropriately on their own, your instructional method should attempt to structure this interaction for them. You might assign an initial post on a particular day of a week, with a second deadline, later in the week, for a reply to another student's post, and a third deadline, also later in the week, for a reply to an original comment.
6. **Implement the instruction.** During the course of instruction, you should frequently assess the effectiveness of the methods you've selected. If a method seems to be ineffective, consider whether important instructional conditions have not been met. It is very possible that there are unique, significant conditions associated with the method you are implementing in your specific setting – conditions which are not addressed by the guidance contained in the tables and appendices of this study.