



October 20, 2020

In this remarkable year, the TLL is re-launching a periodic newsletter to share tips, events, and other useful information. Look for another issue later this fall.

Teaching Today: Learning from Student Feedback

Gathering feedback from students early to mid-way through your course can provide invaluable information about things that are going well for learning, and suggested changes that can enhance it. For guidance and sample **mid-semester feedback forms**, consider [this helpful guide](#) from the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.

Some **HGSE colleagues have already gathered feedback** from students this semester. While every course is unique, their efforts offer a window into students' abiding concerns and interests. See below for their **insights gleaned** and **strategies for improving** the learning experience.



"Feedback after the fourth week indicated we've established a strong foundation. **Students are very positive about the interactive learning activities in every class**, including small breakout discussion groups, full class debriefs of pre-recorded lectures, forced choice polling exercises, and debates around real-life dilemmas for higher education leaders. Students also appreciate our multi-media mix of weekly readings, videos, documentaries, and podcasts. **Areas for improvement include creating a more organic flow for large group discussions**, which sometimes seem stilted and linear in the Zoom

environment, and refining the weekly asynchronous discussion board assignments to feel less artificial."

Strategies Fran's team may implement to improve the flow of large discussions include: "**warm calling**" to engage less-frequent participators; selecting from all raised hands in the Zoom participant list (not just the one at the top); using the "lower all hands" feature to clear the line-up between questions; and building in pauses for thinking or quick-writing before inviting responses to a question.

Francesca Purcell, Creating the Future of American Postsecondary Education (A-701)

Roberto Gonzales and the teaching team for *Contemporary Immigration Policy and Educational Practice (H-517)* have focused on **community-building and student well-being** as a central aspect of learning this semester. Their commitment to a humanizing course experience has created a context in which students feel welcome to **share reactions directly** with the teaching team via email about what

aspects of the course they most value.

One student expressed "profound gratitude for the beautiful learning community that your class has provided me. From the very beginning of our first session, with the **music playing and the warm energy** felt through the Zoom screen, I immediately felt so safe and ready to learn. Going into **sharing poems**, I was so moved and felt so **empowered to share my story** with 100 people who I had never met before."



Roberto Gonzales, Contemporary Immigration Policy and Educational Practice (H-517)



"A major challenge of teaching online is not being able to 'read the room': scanning body language and facial expressions and using informal check-in moments to see if I'm scaffolding appropriately. I typically solicit student input mid-semester via brown bag lunches, but this fall, starved for feedback, **I held an optional Zoom lunch** on September 25 which nearly all students attended.

"Following a half-hour of 'ask me anything,' I elicited 'plus deltas,' where each offered at least one thing they like and one thing they'd recommend improving. **'Pluses' included the flexibility I've allowed, the usefulness of assignments, and the community created through breakout rooms.** Picking up on **some 'tics' which I can improve**, students encouraged more wait time after questions, to allow for unmuting (I now try to count to 20, slowly); more sparing use of the chat (to avoid jarring shifts between slides and chat); and more learning checks in both asynchronous and synchronous modes—both to change the pace from passive lecture and to give them a clearer sense of their levels of understanding."

Andrew Ho, Statistical & Psychometric Methods for Educational Measurement (S-610)

Have a teaching tip or question to share for a future newsletter or workshop? *Let us know!*

From Our Students



As learner-centered educators and researchers, we seek multiple ways to learn from and work with students around their experiences. **The Student Experience Team (SET) offers a student-led venue for eliciting student ideas** about HGSE programming.



With TLL support, the SET uses tools such as surveys, focus groups, design sessions, and user tests to help HGSE better understand and serve the needs of our diverse student body. What is this industrious group working on right now?

- Gathering feedback to inform the use of a new Harvard student-created platform, called Congregate.live, for synchronous online interactions.
- Gathering ideas for improving **the Hub** as a "home base" for HGSE students.
- Gathering feedback on the new **HGSE Community Learning** website.

Want to know more about these projects, or to ask a question about the SET? Contact Patricia Vanderbilt at SET@gse.harvard.edu.

TLL Events & Offerings

Faculty Brown Bag

Wed. Oct. 28, 12-1 pm ET (note new date)

Before & After November 3rd: Teaching in Times of Strife and Trauma: Tim McCarthy, Metta McGarvey. [More info and RSVP here](#) | [Zoom link here](#)

Guide: Teaching in Times of Strife and Trauma: Curated Resources with Actionable Ideas. This document includes resources on trauma-informed teaching, difficult conversations, anti-racist teaching, and teaching during elections.

Conversations about Race & Racism Faculty Group: Reflective, honest conversations about racism and its implications for our personal and professional selves. The group uses various forms of [the consultancy protocol](#) to learn from dilemmas of practice that occur in our HGSE teaching. [More info and a brief interest survey are here.](#)

Learning about Online Teaching through Observation & Reflection

Opportunities for HGSE faculty interested in further developing their practice.



Teaching Circles: Small groups of faculty members view each other's classes and debrief afterward (TLL facilitator optional). Sign up solo to get matched, or as a group. [Sign up here.](#)



1:1 Observation Coaching: A TLL consultant observes your class (live or via recording) followed by confidential, individualized reflection and feedback. [Sign up here.](#)



DIY Observe & Learn: The TLL can suggest a course you might like to observe based on criteria you provide. [Sign up here.](#)

Technology Toolkit Updates

Breaking Out in Zoom

Zoom recently launched a long-anticipated feature, allowing students to choose among breakout rooms. This is especially useful when you want to form groups on the fly around a set of course topics. David Dockterman has experimented with this new feature and shares these tips:

What to do if a student has trouble picking their own room?

I have one student on a Chromebook who can't use the feature. We make her a co-host, and she can still move from room to room.

How to enable students to group on common interests?

We use the feature to let students self-organize into sub-teams or find common interests. At the start, we name a few rooms based on general topics, but also create some empty rooms for students to move to as they define more specific interests. Since

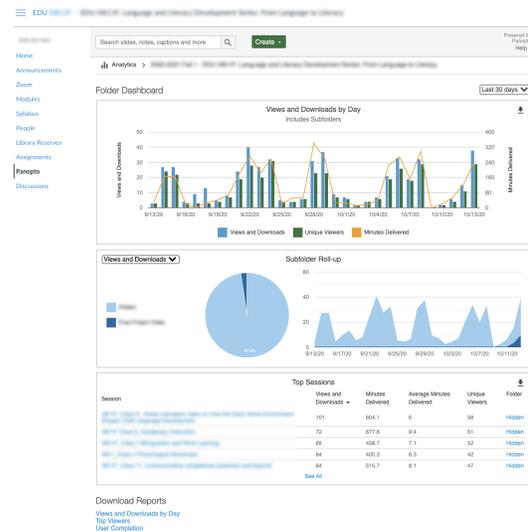


rooms can't be renamed once they've been opened, we ask students to rename **themselves** based on the topic (e.g., David "Racial Equity" Dockterman). That signals to others what's being discussed in that room. It's pretty fun to watch the migration pattern.

David Dockterman, *Innovation by Design: Projects in Educational Technology (T-522)*

For guidance on using this feature, [check out these instructions](#) from HGSE's IT group, or contact GSE-IT at IT_OneStop@gse.harvard.edu for support.

Panopto Analytics



Wondering how many students are watching those Panopto videos you painstakingly recorded and uploaded for your course? The **Panopto page in Canvas provides easy access to an analytics dashboard** and downloadable CSV file that gives you the stats you want.

To open the dashboard: Click on the bar chart icon on the upper right corner of the Panopto page in Canvas. The dashboard then displays modifiable charts and tables, followed by links to full reports.



On the TLL Blog

This summer the TLL hired several 2020 Ed.M. graduates as "Online Learning Fellows" to support faculty efforts to transition their courses to online. This fall the Fellows will highlight their many contributions to HGSE courses on the TLL blog. [Click here](#) to read TLL Director Bill Wisser's introduction to the Fellows program and the blog initiative. Then [check out the inaugural post](#) by media fellow Sophie Chung, who offers simple tips and reminders for creating impactful teaching videos.

Have a suggestion, question, or request for the TLL? [Let us know!](#)

Our mailing address is:

Harvard Graduate School of Education
13 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138 US

HARVARD



GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

[unsubscribe from all emails](#) [update subscription preferences](#) [update profile](#)