LEARNING LOOP

A Teaching and Learning Lab Newsletter

May 5, 2021

Teaching Today: Learn From This Year, Refresh Your Course for the Fall

Strategies for Refreshing Your Course

While next academic year may seem far away, learning from this year's teaching experiences can provide valuable insights for refreshing and improving future versions of your courses. Whether you'll be continuing to teach online or transitioning back to on-campus teaching (or both), here are strategies for making the most of the course refresh process by identifying and prioritizing changes that will have the greatest impact on your students' learning.

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teaching & learning lab | Events and Offerings

4/29 Faculty Brown Bag Highlights - Learning from This Year: What to Keep Post-Pandemic

The past year has demanded pedagogical creativity, flexibility, and resilience; in this Brown Bag, colleagues discussed teaching practices and tools we'd like to continue, even after the pandemic is over. Karen Mapp's and Monica Higgins' opening presentations offered a wealth of pedagogical insights and concrete applications they've developed this year, followed by participants' additional discoveries and intentions for next year. See below for highlights from the discussion; *if you'd like to view the recording, please email allison_pingree@gse.harvard.edu for the link.*

Virtual A122: The "Keepers"

- Thinking module vs class
- Planting a "hook" every week
- Photos/Bios of Authors
- Ten-minute warm-up
- Music DJ
- Bill Wisser and the TLL Team

- Develop a weekly arc for learning before, during, and after class
- Use videos and other assets to draw students in
- Provide context on authors and guests through slide show of bios
- Use initial block of time flexibly to respond to events of the moment
- Connect and humanize through "dance party" breaks
- Leverage TLL for thinking outside the box and pedagogical expertise

Karen Mapp: The Why, What, and How of School-Community-Family Partnerships (A-122)

REFLECTIONS FROM TEACHING 2020-2021

What to continue
- DIRECTIVE IN APPROACH
- DIFFERENCES IN MODALITIES AND ASSESSMENT
- DIVERSE VOICES IN/OUT OF THE "ROOM"

Why
- MANAGE EXPECTATIONS WHEN LIFE IS FULL
- EQUITY OF VOICE
- EXPAND PERSPECTIVE, BRIDGE TO REALITY

- Scaffold case discussions with agendas, key questions & concepts
- Incorporate student comments with virtual equivalent of chalkboard
- Create multiple channels and formats for student participation:
  - In-class discussion
  - Posts on podcasts - with student-selected deadlines to reach the same maximum point value across all students
  - Teams chat with TF as "stoker" - can include photos, videos
- Share the criteria teaching team will use to assess class participation

Monica Higgins: Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Learning (A-608)

General advice from faculty peers on what to carry forward from this year:

Community-Building, Communication

- Virtual office hours, virtual drop-in hours
- Required office hours to deepen connections with students + understanding of their work and interests
- Rich communications and community building over Slack
- Chat (or equivalent) as a back-channel / alternate modality
- Student self-introductions: intro post or video; slide with photos, acrostic poem of name, etc.
- Zoom classroom opened early and kept open afterward for informal conversation

Asynchronous Preparation, Engagement

- Asynchronous modules
- Flipped videos to free up class time for more interactivity
- Brief concept-focused videos that are easily searchable and can be used as ongoing resources to students
- Podcast series - reduced screen time
- Audio recordings of readings
- Pre-/post-class assignments (e.g., AnnotationsX) makes students' thinking visible for both instructors and peers

Synchronous Collaboration, Synthesis

- Whole-class opening and closing polls to collect best practices, takeaways
- "Minute papers" where students write takeaways and questions on collaborative board
- Zoom white board and annotation tool to have students reflect simultaneously
- Virtual gallery of student projects to share and collect feedback
- Targeted peer feedback sessions
- Small group / breakout discussions, with possible variations on level of self-selection, teaching team
- Combination of randomized / changing groups and groups that are consistent throughout the course

Course Design & Transparency

- Advanced videos and materials to show where the discussion is expected to go
- "Less is more" - in whole course goals, assigned readings, session plans, etc.
- Intentional planning and variation in how to use recommended 8-10 hours / week for student engagement

Expanding Classroom Boundaries

- Intentional space to name current events: "As you enter class, what feels important right now?"
- Daily "dedication": student names who they'd like to dedicate their learning to that day (family, friend, etc...)
- Discussions on work from arts or literature that are related to, but not specifically focused on, the topic
- Mentoring from professionals in field
- Assignments that enable students to bring in different contexts, workplaces, news events, parts of the world
- Engaging HGSE alumni with class topics, conversations
- Field projects to address a problem of practice self-identified by partner organizations
- Coordinated series of modules bridging across related courses

Resource – Higher Ed Articles on [Learning From This Year: What To Keep Post-pandemic](#)

Technology Toolkit Updates

There are a few important updates from HUIT we want to share:

Zoom (requires updating to the most recent version)

- You can now [enable live captions and transcripts](#) in meetings.
- Webinar hosts and panelists are now able to send files in chat.

Canvas

- In File Upload assignments, [students can use their webcam to submit an assignment](#).
- Instructors can [create quizzes using the New Quizzes LTI in modules](#).
- [File preview enhancements](#) allow users to review linked files in the rich content editor in an overlay.
- In SpeedGrader, instructors can [reassign an assignment to an individual student](#) and ask them to redo their submission.
- MathJax rendering of LaTeX is [supported in any text field](#). This allows users to create accessible equations in more areas of Canvas, like assignment titles or calendar events, and to enter LaTeX inline without having to use the equation editor.

Qualtrics

Qualtrics has introduced significant changes to the user interface (UI). The navigation and project creation interface have been modified, and you should see an opt-in banner for the new Survey Builder feature. Details about these changes are in the IT Help portal. Additional resources provided by Qualtrics include:

- The recording of Qualtrics' webinar on this topic
- A list of updated terminology used in the platform

Slack

HUIT is in ongoing contract negotiations with Slack. If they fail to arrive at mutually agreeable terms, the University contract with Slack will expire on June 30, 2021. If you have any questions, contact HGSE IT at IT_onestop@gse.harvard.edu.