



LEARNING LOOP

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the Learning Loop, a compilation of insights, project and partnership spotlights, and practical tips from the [Teaching and Learning Lab](#) (TLL) for HGSE faculty. Formed in 2015 within Academic Affairs, the TLL supports HGSE faculty through **catalyzing** innovation in teaching and learning, **cultivating** capacity for effective instruction, and **creating** powerful learning experiences.

In this issue, we are introducing the Learning Loop as both a newsletter and a concept, providing highlights from our first year as a newly formed organization at HGSE, and highlighting design consultations as a resource for faculty who are in the process of creating and/or enhancing courses for the upcoming semester. Below, we share the story of one such interaction with Gretchen Brion-Meisels. We hope this is the beginning of an ongoing conversation around timely ideas for enhancing your teaching practice in the classroom, the field, and online.

What is a "Learning Loop"?

Every project we undertake in the TLL is **intentionally iterative**. Whether through evaluating course learning outcomes, or debriefing new initiatives, or conducting user experience testing with new technologies, we regularly reflect on our processes, adjust our methods, and identify change goals.



A powerful example of this iterative approach is the "learning loop" process, coined by [Dr. Liz City](#) to describe a series of weekly meetings for course design teams to leverage data from student evaluations, facilitator feedback, and platform analytics to inform decisions about future revisions. To learn more, we invite you to visit our recent [blog post](#) about our course

design learning loops.

Year in Review

In the last academic year, the TLL conducted more than **50 faculty consultations** on topics such as course design and evaluation, instructional technologies, and teaching enhancements. In collaboration with teaching teams and Programs in Professional Education, we created or enhanced more than **20 online learning experiences** with a combined total reach of nearly **2,500 learners**.

Through our **workshops**, we introduced dozens of teaching fellows, students, and University colleagues to new approaches in design thinking, instructional design, and active learning. And our **practicum course (T127)** embedded 25 students in ongoing TLL projects over the Fall and Spring semesters, equipping them with practical skills in learning design, media production, project management, user experience testing, and instructional technology as they prepared to transition from HGSE to the field.



Spotlight: Partnering with Gretchen Brion-Meisels

Gretchen came to the TLL with the goal of creating a well-designed final project for a new course ([S501](#)), with a particular emphasis on ensuring the project was flexible enough to meet different learners' interests while maintaining a uniformly high standard of rigor.



[Josh Bookin](#), our Manager of Instructional Support and Development, met with Gretchen over a series of sessions to scope out the project needs, discuss relevant models from around the University, and create a development plan. Between meetings, Gretchen drafted learning objectives, project guidelines, sample project ideas, and a rubric, while Josh shared documentation on best practices for team- and project-based work. Together, they workshopped the draft plan and drilled down specifically on how to manage the tension between flexibility and standardization and how to integrate the project into the final class session.

“One of the many reasons that I appreciated this consultancy was having Josh as a thought partner. (I often use my teaching fellows in this way, but I know

that their time is precious!) Josh brought a depth of experience with project design; his ideas were fantastic, but he also held me accountable to my own vision of the work. Having now completed and reflected on the process with students, I hope to work with Josh again in order to improve the project design.” ~ [Gretchen Brion-Meisels](#)

Related Resources and Opportunities

The TLL regularly consults with faculty on a wide variety of design challenges including:

- crafting a course design framework
- sharpening learning objectives
- creating meaningful assessments
- incorporating inclusive teaching practices
- making use of student feedback
- leveraging learning technologies



Connect with us today: tll@gse.harvard.edu or call Bill Wisser, TLL Director, at 617-495-3182.



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