



Welcome

Welcome to the August issue of the Learning Loop! This month will focus on how HGSE faculty approach designing their shopping sessions. In the TLL, we know that the first step in designing any learning experience is understanding your audience. The HGSE faculty we spoke to recently reiterated that the most important factor driving the design of their shopping sessions is the students' questions and concerns.

HGSE students often come to shopping sessions overwhelmed by the variety of options in front of them, from courses to internships to employment and volunteer opportunities. They've read the course description and perused the online syllabus. They've discussed program requirements with their advisor and outlined a list of (too many) potential courses. So, what are they hoping to learn from shopping that will help them decide what courses to take?

In this issue of the Learning Loop, you'll hear from three HGSE faculty about how they consider their students' needs and questions when crafting their shopping sessions. You'll also find a helpful guide for designing your own shopping session.



Course Shopping

Throughout the years, the following questions have emerged regarding what students generally hope to discover during a course shopping session: Who is the faculty member, and what is their teaching style? Does this course seem to be a good fit for me given how I like to learn and what I want to learn? How does this course differ from other courses offered? What time commitment should I expect to make in this course? How is this course going to help me advance professionally?

The [TLL](#) collaborated with the [Strengthening Learning and Teaching Excellence \(SLATE\)](#) Initiative at HKS to construct a resource guide that can help faculty create powerful shopping experiences that address these student questions. The core recommendations include:

TEACH

Course shopping provides an excellent opportunity for you to go beyond the course description and the syllabus, which are now easily accessible online, to provide students with a short experience that authentically represents the content, pedagogy, and engagement methods in the course. An ideal session would explore some core aspect of the course's content, use an engaging instructional method that is representative of your teaching, and take no more than 15 to 20 minutes.

CLARIFY

It can be helpful to ask yourself: "What do students absolutely need to know to help them decide if this course is a good fit for them?" If the course has any kind

of lottery or unique registration processes, be very clear about the steps and timeline involved. Leave at least 10 minutes for questions. It can be a good idea to ask people to save particularly idiosyncratic questions and have them ask you or a member of your teaching team after the session.

PLAN

Given the brevity and importance of shopping, make specific plans for how to allocate your time. It also can be helpful to do a dry run of your session with a colleague or consultant providing you some feedback. TLL consultants are also available to help you tailor your shopping session to best represent your course and meet the needs of your prospective students. Please reach out to us at tll@gse.harvard.edu.

You may download the [full resource guide](#) here.

Conference Presentations

TLL staff regularly engage with the field in order to share lessons learned and remain current with ideas that may have a positive impact on our work. Here's a list of some of the recent presentations or workshops delivered by TLL staff.

Instructional Moves, Stepback Consultancy
Teaching and Learning Consortium, Harvard University
March 2016 | Josh Bookin

Evidence-Based Instructional Improvement at Scale
New England Regional Computing Group (NERCOMP), Providence, RI
March 2016 | Bonnie Anderson

So You Want to be an Instructional Designer
Learn Launch, Boston, MA
April 2016 | Bill Wisser

Problem Solving with Empathy
IT Summit, Harvard University
June 2016 | Arti Sharma (TLL), Cindy Berhtram (IT), Victor Pereira (HTF)

Going Modular: Maximizing Impact with New Online Learning Model
IT Summit, Harvard University
June 2016 | Andrea Flores (TLL), Brandon Pousley (TLL), Danielle Thompson (PPE)

Focusing on the Learner Experience: Implementing ePortfolios
Association for Authentic and Experiential Evidence-Based Learning, Boston MA
August 2016 | Bonnie Anderson (TLL), Brandon Pousley (TLL), Victor Pereira (HTF)

Designing Engaging Online Learning Experiences
Society of American Archivists, Atlanta, GA
August 2016 | Bill Wisser



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
- 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.

