



Welcome

The TLL was formed in 2015 to catalyze innovation in teaching and learning, cultivate capacity for effective instruction, and create powerful learning experiences. We have a specific focus on supporting strategic teaching and learning projects that cross all areas of the School. Our approach is collaborative; we work with faculty and administrators to surface their instructional needs, identify solutions, and create resources that help solve their teaching and learning challenges.

Our collaborative approach to supporting the design and development of strategic initiatives is exemplified through our engagement with the Harvard Teacher Fellows (HTF) program. When the faculty of the HTF program began envisioning their ambitious curriculum within an even more ambitious timeline, the TLL was ready to help in the areas of course design, technology exploration and implementation, and faculty support for teaching. This month's issue of the Learning Loop illuminates our collaborative approach to working with HGSE faculty in the development of new curricula or simply solving a difficult instructional challenge.



2016 HTF Cohort

Collaborative Design

Recently, HTF's Master Science Teacher, Victor Pereira, sat down with TLL staff members to discuss the design of his online Science Methods course and how it might look and feel different from his residential courses. One particular challenge we addressed was developing a coaching structure that is flexible enough to meet the needs of his Fellows but also manageable for his own workload. While listening to his comments about the coaching support he wanted to offer, we hit upon the idea of coaching themes that would span across multiple sessions and allow for a greater variation. In a moment of epiphany, Victor jotted some notes, briefly paused, and said, "I usually work alone because I'm used to it, but it really makes a big difference when there is someone to share and talk through ideas with."

That's the essence of collaboration – people putting their heads together to address a challenge or issue. The TLL is honored to come alongside HTF as a thought partner and collaborator in a number of ways. From dedicated course design and support, to the exploration and integration of new tools, we strive to provide a holistic and collective support model to Victor, HTF Director Eric Shed, and the entire HTF team.



An Interview With HTF Leaders

We recently posed the following questions to three key HTF faculty: Eric Shed, Lecturer on Education and HTF Director; Steve Mahoney, Lecturer on Education, HTF Associate Director, and Director of School Partnerships; and Victor Pereira, Lecturer on Education and HTF Master Teacher in Residence. Their responses highlight important insights into the TLL's collective approach to supporting the HTF program as well as into the nature of launching a new teaching and learning initiative.





From left to right: Steve Mahoney, Eric Shed, Victor Pereira

Has the process of designing and delivering an online course impacted your traditional teaching in any way?

Pereira: “Ease of use, what is an online user, what’s their attention span and what motivates and engages them, how Canvas is organized to communicate a pace and a progress and a direction . . . these all need to be considered in a different way when you teach online.”

Shed: “I think so much more about the micro–moves of teaching . . . The digital space forces me to be detailed and to be consistent and intentional in my approach with examples of practice.”

Can you talk a bit about what it has been like to work with the TLL on your online course design work?

Shed: “It’s been great and so many people have played a role in supporting HTF. Joanna (Huang, Learning Designer) thinks about designing and supporting the development of our seven online learning experiences; Brandon (Pousley, Senior Learning Technologist) serves multiple capacities, training faculty on WebEx and identifying an eportfolio (platform); Arti (Sharma, Manager of Media and Learning Technologies) and Bonnie (Anderson, Manager of Learning Design and Analytics) do high–level thinking about integration of technologies, program needs, pedagogical solutions, and the design process of a program; Josh (Bookin, Manager of Instructional Support and Development) helped to develop program mapping and re–evaluate competencies and alignment to coursework; and Aaliyah (El–Amin, Lecturer on Education and Project Lead for Diversity and Inclusion) helped us think about thoughtful competencies and throughlines of diversity and equity throughout the program experience.”

Pereira: “I have worked with everyone in TLL in one way or another (and it has been) some of the most engaging work I’ve done . . . not just learning protocols and procedures but considering my blind spots in areas of instruction.”

What has been one of the most difficult challenges so far? Can you tell us a story of one particularly joyous success so far?

Pereira: We really have talented people and grand ideas for the ideal version of the program – ‘startup’ and ‘ideal’ do not exist at the same time . . . In terms of success, I’m happy and proud of what we put together for my online methods course, and I am happy and proud of what I learned along the way.”

From a teaching and learning perspective, what are some opportunities you look forward to exploring in the year ahead?

Mahoney: "Using asynchronous teaching modules."

Pereira: "I talked to Josh about how to utilize readings in my class . . . engaging with reading and planning discussions that delve deeper into readings. Moving forward, I want to learn more about best practices with asynchronous discussions and teaching effective synchronous sessions in 90-minutes to keep everyone engaged."



Collaborative Innovation

In HTF's inaugural year, everything is brand new. This presents many opportunities for exploring innovative program design and new platforms and tools for teaching and learning. It also presents challenges in terms of time constraints, scalability, a balance between functionality and ease of use, and an articulated tolerance for risk. We have found the most effective way to navigate these challenges is through a technology pilot — a smaller-scale, yet real-world experiment that helps us learn the practical benefits and unanticipated variables of introducing a new technology.

In collaboration with HTF, we explored an ePortfolio technology pilot for use in their blended curriculum design. For the TLL, this was an extension of an earlier pilot we began with the CAEL program. By having HTF leadership in those early ePortfolio conversations, we were able to include their needs in our initial platform exploration. We were also able to apply everything we learned in CAEL to the HTF use case. This has allowed us to mitigate identified risks and more quickly begin applying best practices and focusing on larger issues of integration and scale.

[Learn more about how the TLL is exploring ePortfolios at HGSE and benefitting from a technology pilot structure in our latest blog post.](#)

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.

