

NOVEMBER 2016
LEARNING LOOP
A Teaching and Learning Lab Newsletter

Welcome

As the semester rushes to its end many HGSE faculty members have planned student presentations or in-class displays of student work that comprise a portion of the students' summative evaluation. Most often these presentations stay within the closed classroom context. But a few instructors are opening their classrooms to guests from the community for these events. This issue of the Learning Loop highlights "Open Classrooms" – public displays of student work within the context of a course.



Benefits of Open Classrooms

Public presentations of student work constitute more than culminating summative assessments. They provide valuable formative experience for students who soon will be marketing their skills to diverse audiences. They celebrate a semester of work as well as showcase the development of professional skills.

Student voices lend credence to the value of presentations in a community setting: **Shradha Narayanan**, EdM '17 and student in T127: Teaching and Learning Lab Practicum reports that the end of term public presentation is "an encouraging endpoint to work towards. I am interested in working in design for online learning experiences," she notes,

“and the opportunity to present to those already working in this area is motivating.” According to **Akanksha Bajaj**, EdM ‘17 and student in T002: Critical Race Theory in Education, public presentations “force [her] to synthesize [her] thoughts and ensure that there are no gaps in [her] analysis.” And **Joanna Huang**, EdM ‘16 and former student in T550: Designing for Learning by Creating notes that “it’s a nice way of practicing real world skills, taking something you were taught and making it more consumable for all people.”

Tips on Designing an Open Classroom

Planning an Open Classroom is not as simple as inviting guests to previously closed student presentations. Like any significant component of a course, it should be carefully designed and evaluated.

Build the event into the goals of your course

Consider how an open classroom event forwards the goals of your course. A public display of research or work products can act as authentic assessment of goals related to professional development. For example, an important goal in T127 is that students will be able to articulate their work and their process to multiple stakeholders, including people who aren’t professionals in the area. An open classroom event is an opportunity for students to develop this skill.

Scaffold the experience for students

Whether the student presentations are 30 seconds (T550) or 3 minutes (T127), students need support in preparing their remarks and their visuals, determining the scope and audience, and understanding the goals for the event. Examples, workshops, dry runs, and peer feedback can all prepare students for success.

Scaffold the experience for guests

We shouldn’t forget our guests when designing an Open Classroom. Create scaffolding for guests, such as printed programs that explain what the course is about and what will be happening during the exhibition. Describe the format, such as timed presentations or open gallery walk, so that guests may plan their visit. [View this flyer from T550](#) for an example.





Upcoming Events and Resources

Fall 2016 Open Classrooms

A816: Education in Armed Conflict: Showcase of Narrative Projects

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

8:45 -10:30am

Gutman Conference Center (all areas)

See [flyer for details](#)

Through children's books, poetry, film, board games, interactive maps, and more, students convey the semester's learning through their original research with one individual who has sought education in a conflict setting.

You can read more about the nature of this event and the projects in this [Usable Knowledge article](#).

T550: Designing for Learning by Creating

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

9:00 - 11:30am

Askwith Hall

See [flyer for details](#)

Peek into T550 by joining us for Madness, a series of 30-second presentations of more than 130 student design projects, followed by an interactive exhibition where you can learn more about students' processes and products.

T127 Gallery Walk

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

1:00 - 2:30PM

Gutman 305 (LaunchPad)

See [flyer for details](#)

The T127 Gallery Walk is an opportunity for students to represent their design processes in a showcase of real-world teaching and learning projects.

Learn more about the T127 Gallery Walk from this [TLL blog post](#).

**Hosting an open classroom this Fall or Spring?
Let us know and we'll help spread the word.**

Resources and Opportunities

The TLL regularly consults with HGSE faculty members on a wide variety of [instructional challenges](#) including the design of **Open Classroom** events. We can help faculty members consider:

- How an Open Classroom event can help meet learning outcomes;
- How an event can be structured as a formative learning experience for students;
- How guests can be welcomed into the learning experience, including through the design of promotional materials; and
- How the event can be assessed and improved.

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

