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The 2025 Teaching Professor Conference

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THE Teaching PROFESSOR CONFERENCE

"Everyone was extremely welcoming and assistive. It was obvious that we were all on the same page, focusing on student needs and how we can make education better. I encountered many people who were helpful and offered ideas to implement within the classroom. By far, the best conference I've attended." —Asha Ralph, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, North Carolina Central University

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No Production Crew, No Problem: Delivering Broadcast-Quality Online Classes with Open Broadcaster Software

Alym Amlani and *John Shepherd*

Whether you teach synchronously online or create asynchronous video content for your students, producing professional-looking material has always been a challenge without a production team—until now. This article explores how Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) empowers educators to craft engaging, broadcast-quality learning experiences for both synchronous streaming and video creation.

Why OBS Studio Matters for educators

OBS augments the functionality of traditional conferencing software by integrating multimedia elements, overlaying slides, and adding dynamic features to your video stream. It's like having a full production crew at your fingertips, enhancing your live lectures and prerecorded content.

Engaging synchronous streaming

Think of your live lectures as a broadcast event, like a football game on TV. The broadcast switches between camera feeds, overlays player stats, and integrates sound effects to keep viewers engaged. With OBS, you can replicate this dynamic experience for your students.

Picture this: Your online session starts with a waiting room that includes your camera feed, your school logo, a countdown timer, and upbeat background music. Once the timer winds down, the logo and timer disappear, the music fades, and you're ready to begin your class.

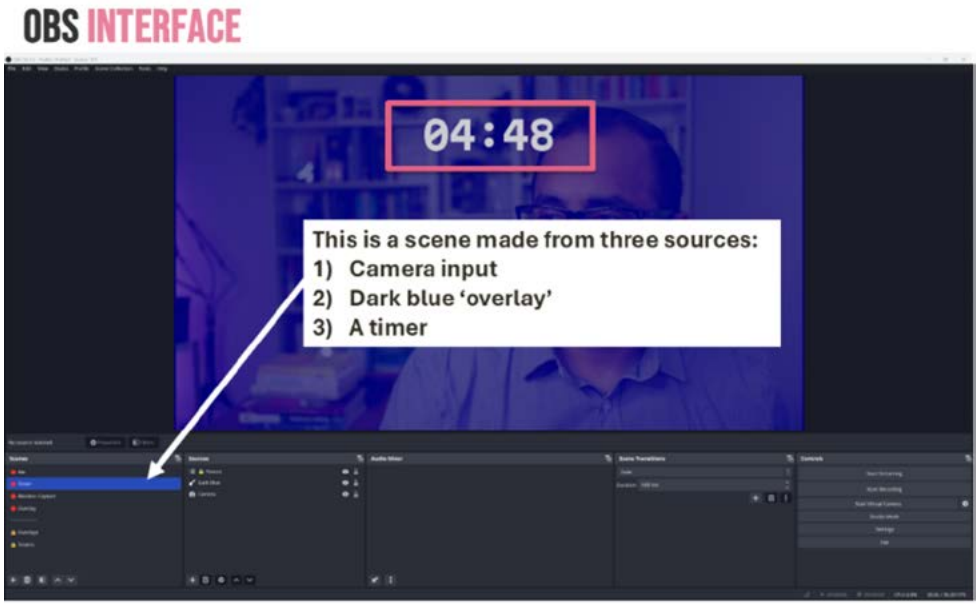
Enhancing asynchronous video creation

OBS isn't just for live streaming; it's also a powerful tool for producing high-quality prerecorded lectures. Using OBS, you can minimize the time you spend editing in post-production. This is particularly beneficial for creating flipped classroom content, which previously took hours to edit and produce.

By capturing content live in OBS, you streamline the creation process, allowing you to focus more on the material and less on the technical aspects of editing.

Getting started with OBS Studio

While OBS may seem overwhelming at first glance, the payoff is well worth the initial effort. After downloading and installing OBS from the official website, familiarize yourself with the main interface and elements. Next, visit the OBS Studio website and work through the **quick start guide**.



The above image shows the user interface of OBS. The area in blue is the Canvas—think of this like a Microsoft PowerPoint slide. Along the bottom of the screen are the scene and source controls. The magic of OBS lies in creating "scenes," where you combine your camera, slides, sound effects, graphics, and animations. The ability to blend different media sources creates a dynamic learning environment that's crucial for maintaining interest during live sessions.

From within OBS, once you click Start Virtual Camera in the Controls tab, OBS will send your composed scene to platforms like Zoom or Teams as if it were a regular webcam feed, seamlessly integrating your enhanced content into these applications.

With OBS, you can toggle effortlessly between these scenes to maintain a captivating flow with the push of a button. Instead of breaking up your session to share your screen, quickly switching between scenes during your lesson minimizes downtime and keeps students focused.

Elevating your production value

Good audio and lighting are crucial for professional-quality videos. Investing in an external USB microphone, such as the Blue Yeti ($100), can significantly improve sound quality. For lighting, options like the Elgato Key Light Air ($125) or a Neewer LED ring light ($75) can enhance your visual presentation.

To further improve video quality, consider using a mirrorless camera like the Canon EOS M6 Mark II. If you're into photography, your existing camera gear can provide a superior image compared to standard webcams. Plug-ins are available to integrate these cameras with OBS, allowing you to retire your webcam and elevate your video quality.

Pairing OBS with the Elgato Stream Deck ($130) is a game-changer. The Stream Deck is a customizable control panel that lets you automate actions within OBS, like switching scenes or starting recordings, all at the press of a button.

Advanced features for enhanced engagement

Once you're comfortable with the basics, OBS offers advanced features to further enrich your teaching:

- **Overlays and graphic**s: Add text, images, or logos to your video feed to highlight key points or brand your content.
- **Countdown timers and motion graphics**: Incorporate these to make your sessions more dynamic.
- **Sound effects and background music**: Sound effects and music elevate your live sessions.
- **Graphics tablets integration**: Use tools like OneNote with a graphics tablet to draw, annotate slides, or create real-time animations—ideal for subjects requiring written explanations.

- **Live chat overlays**: With plugins like Social Stream Ninja, you can display live chat messages during your presentations.

Conclusion

The shift to online learning presents both challenges and opportunities. OBS empowers educators to innovate and improve their teaching methods by delivering broadcast-quality content without the need for a production team. While there's a learning curve, the benefits—enhanced student engagement, superior content delivery, and a polished presentation—make it a worthwhile investment.

If you're ready to elevate your online teaching, OBS is a fantastic place to start. With plenty of resources and community support available, it's accessible even if you're not technically inclined. Start with simple setups, experiment, and watch as your online classes transform into captivating learning experiences.

For those interested, we are developing several 20-Minute Mentor sessions that will help you get started in OBS. They will eventually be available at this link. To book a professional development session, email the lead author at alym.amlani@kpu.ca.

Why not give it a try?

Becoming Expert Learners: Teaching Students How Learning Works

Michelle Blank Rentz

We all want our students to learn and can feel quite frustrated when they just don't seem to "get it." Despite our best efforts at applying all the great strategies we learned from the latest conference; employing ideas from our mentors; and using tips from articles and books by leading experts in learning, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience, we can still be baffled when grading tests and other assessments. We design solid courses, implement engaging pedagogical practices, and cultivate essential connections, yet many students still struggle to learn effectively.

It's tempting to place this lack of learning squarely on the students, which is exactly where it should be—but not in the way you might think. Most people, including our students, simply don't know how to learn effectively or prefer to use familiar methods, even if they're not effective. Unfortunately, many of us are inundated with myths that lead to the use of ineffective learning strategies. For instance, we might reread material when we don't grasp it initially or believe we can learn only when material is presented in a specific "style." Thankfully, advancements in neuroscience and research in cognitive psychology are debunking these myths and uncovering more effective learning strategies. While not a blueprint to guaranteed improvements in student learning, research supports that by including some of these effective learning strategies in our course design and providing scaffolded practice for our students, they can move from novices in our fields toward becoming expert learners with the tools to more fully engage with our content.

We know that to study and learn effectively, students need to focus fully and minimize distractions; use effective learning strategies; and assess their level of understanding to identify confusions, gaps, and misconceptions (Chew, 2021). These are complex concepts that students will comprehend, and hopefully implement, more fully when illustrated as concrete strategies. Let's look at four concepts, with accompanying concrete strategies,

that we can include in our courses that will help our students become expert learners: engaging "Drew," brain files, Bloom's levels, and retrieval practice.

1. **Engaging "Drew"**: Guiding students to recognize how their brains process new information by contrasting System 1 and System 2 thinking builds a foundation for using effective strategies like 2-column notemaking, crafting concept maps, and teaching others as means of connecting the new material to existing ideas. In my courses, we call this "engaging Drew", using language and imagery from the Veritasium video "The Science of Thinking". After viewing and briefly discussing this short video early in the term, the students and I revisit Drew- the brain's learning system- in every class session throughout the semester. Sometimes I ask, "How are we engaging Drew?" and other times students ask each other or me.

2. **Brain files**: While there isn't time in class to teach students the intricacies of memory models, a 10-minute mini-lecture on brain files (schema theory) is both doable and highly profitable. By showing students how brains create connected file folders to store sensory perceptions, they can then understand why reading before class matters, even though the same material is covered by the instructor; the importance of including elaboration in their note-making as a means of connecting existing knowledge to new information; and how the previewing and reviewing stages in the study cycle strengthen learning through opening and adding to those file folders. I demonstrate this complex concept through a simple role-play: a child's first encounter with a cat (fluffy, ears, tail, meow) followed by a later with a dog (fluffy, ears, tail, woof), Throughout the semester, we reinforce this idea through daily reminders such as "Is your brain file ready?"

3. **Bloom's levels**: Yes, this is the Bloom's we've all heard of, that framework for considering the levels of learning from the simplest (remembering) to the most complex (creating). Teachers have used it for over six decades to craft course objectives and lessons, but students can benefit from seeing these levels and considering the ways in which they're being expected to think and do. My favorite way to introduce students to Bloom's is by reminding them of a familiar fairy tale then having them answer questions at each level of Bloom's. Once they start to differentiate the levels, students can apply this new understanding to assignments by assessing the highest level of thinking expected to successfully complete the task then deciding what needs to be done at each lower level to reach the goal. For tests, they can prepare to answer questions that require higher levels of thinking rather than just studying to remember and understand.

4. **Retrieval practice**: Research tells us that we remember what we practice remembering. While the above strategies and methods address getting information into our brains, that's only one part of learning. To succeed in the college classroom and beyond it, we have to be able to recover the right "file folder," and that happens through practice. To help students establish habits to practice recalling information, we can build self-quizzing into our courses by having them make and use flash cards, quizzing apps, or practice tests that they create. We can also encourage or require study groups, which are an excellent environment for quizzing one another. Other methods to promote retrieval practice include providing opportunities for brief in-class teaching and scheduling in-class time for two-minute brain dumps.

   One of the most practical ways to help students develop retrieval practice skills is through the use of a five-day study plan. We know learning takes time, so starting to study five days prior to exams allows for that time. Students divide the test information into four parts from oldest to newest (A, B, C, D), then they study only part A on the first day. On day two, they study part B, then practice retrieving part A through self-quizzing. Day three has them studying part C, then retrieving parts A and B through self-quizzing. Similarly, on day four, they study part D and retrieve parts A–C. The fifth day of the plan is all retrieval practice of all four parts.

Whether these four concepts are new to you or things you've known throughout your career, teaching them to your students and providing scaffolded practice may seem challenging. Start slowly and intentionally. First, **check out my conference presentation slide deck**. Then incorporate one concept in one course and reinforce it with concrete strategies for students to try throughout the semester. Remember, a key to success here is expecting and rewarding the behavior, the use of the new strategies. If it's important, then we can reward students for doing it. Usually that means points, though explaining the "why" behind the strategies can help convince students to implement the new methods. Hopefully, this article has given you the "why" and encouraged you to try new things as well.

To learn more, feel free to reach out (mblank@goshen.edu).

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Seven Simple Strategies to Increase Student Engagement and Learning

Christine Harrington

Are you still lecturing? If so, you are like most faculty. The lecture continues to be the most used teaching approach. Although the lecture has often got a bad reputation for not being active enough, you may be pleased to know that a substantial body of research shows that when done well, the lecture can be an excellent way to engage students and help build and enhance their knowledge. Research has shown that while lectures are especially helpful to novice or new learners, they can benefit all learners. When professors skillfully share course content via lectures, students develop foundational knowledge and increase their understanding of complex concepts. As students learn and master course content, they become more confident and have higher self-efficacy, often increasing their motivation to learn more.

Not all lectures will increase student engagement and learning; just like any other teaching strategy, how lectures are implemented matters. Here are seven simple, research-supported lecture strategies that faculty can use to maximize student engagement and learning:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**. Learning is incremental, meaning that students bring a wealth of knowledge from their lived experiences to the classroom. When professors tap into students' existing knowledge, this helps them take in new information. Remembering is enhanced when new content is linked to previously learned content. There are many strategies professors can use to activate prior knowledge at the start of a lecture. One approach is the "dusting off the cobwebs" activity. This activity involves asking students to discuss with a partner what they learned during the previous class, first without their notes and then with their notes, then having a large group discussion to refresh everyone's memory of key concepts, bringing this previously learned content front and center before introducing new content.

2. **Capturing attention and emphasizing important points**. Attention is a precursor to learning. Professors who want to help their students learn will want to first capture their attention. It is important to capture attention before beginning a lecture as well as throughout class, especially before introducing the lecture's big ideas or main points. Attention can shift and often wanes as the class goes on unless the professor finds a way to recapture it. I recommend identifying three big ideas or important concepts for each lecture and then capturing student attention before teaching each big idea. There are many ways to grab students' attention, but a simple "This is important" or "Get ready for big idea number one" can work.

3. **Using multimedia effectively**. Visual aids can serve as a helpful backdrop for the lecture. Research has shown that students learn more when a related image accompanies content because memory for pictures is often stronger than for words. But slides with too much text or other content frequently hinder learning because they distract from listening and learning. Simple slides consisting primarily of an image work best. When using photos of people, be sure diverse students see themselves represented in the images.

4. **Elaborating via examples**. Students benefit from seeing the real-world applications of the content they're learning, which often happens when professors share examples. The examples help the content come alive for students. Watching experts work through examples is also highly beneficial to students. Determine examples that have meaning and value to students and incorporate these into lectures.

5. **Incorporating reflective opportunities**. Lectures typically contain a lot of content, and students need time to process what they are learning. One of the most important ways to increase learning during lectures is by strategically pausing to allow students to process and reflect. Numerous research studies show that students learn more when given reflective learning opportunities during lectures. Pauses can be brief—even just a minute or two—but longer ones can be particularly helpful when the content is more complex in nature. During pauses, students can summarize what they learned, share and compare notes with classmates, revise their notes, or use any other strategy that gets them thinking about what they just learned.

6. **Using retrieval practice**. Researchers have demonstrated that retrieving content learned improves memory. Professors can leverage this research and incorporate retrieval into their lectures. Retrieval is the act of recalling what was learned. Interactive quizzes are a great way to use retrieval practice as a teaching strategy. Technology tools such as Kahoot! can help students retrieve content just learned in fun and interactive ways.

7. **Questioning for critical thinking**. Although professors can foster critical thinking by posing questions to the whole class, it is also important to help students develop questioning skills that can promote critical thinking. Teaching students how to ask Socratic questions and then having them develop questions for their peers is an excellent way to support student learning. Students can create and respond to questions during lecture pauses to help them reflect on what was learned.

Incorporating these simple strategies into lectures can significantly improve student engagement and learning. Consulting with colleagues about integrating these strategies into lectures can generate creative ideas about how to implement these strategies. For additional information, visit **www.scholarlyteaching.org** and see **Harrington and Zakrajsek's (2018)** ***Dynamic Lecturing: Research-Based Strategies to Enhance Lecture Effectiveness***.

Beginning with Ourselves: The Hardest Part of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Ava Belisle-Chatterjee and *Gloria McDaniel-Hall*

"I've come to realize that as a society, we don't really do a good job at preparing, teaching, or training people how to be vulnerable, cultivate empathy, practice self-reflection—all the stuff that makes us human."

—Dr. Shawn Ginwright

As educators, we all are on a journey. We are two professors at different universities, teaching in varied programs and with different backgrounds and experiences, who have embarked on this journey. Despite these differences, we share a passion for not only advancing our work but also ensuring it has positive, far-reaching effects on our students, who will be future teachers, leaders, and citizens. We started out separately looking for answers to address how we could become more equitable in our thinking, our instructional decisions and actions, and, ultimately, our teaching and learning environments. We certainly acknowledge the importance of seeking answers. But our work together has changed our way of thinking. Instead of looking for answers, we realized the need to search for the right questions—the questions we needed to ask ourselves.

We both started out with the belief that the Illinois State Board of Education's (2021) 10 culturally responsive teaching and leading (CRTL) standards were a crucial step in the right direction. We had both separately spent time interpreting and actualizing these standards within our pedagogical practices. Our efforts brought us both to the stumbling block of the CRTL's standard A, which resulted in a change of paths in our journeys, triggered by a profound realization: for change to be meaningful and lasting, it must start from within.

We realized that in looking for answers, we often look for external solutions—new curricula, innovative technologies, fresh teaching strategies. But these tools, while valuable, can only go so far if we do not first address our internal landscapes. While looking for

such answers, we encountered the research of Dr. Shawn Ginwright (2022), who emphasizes the need for vulnerability, empathy, and self-reflection. Dr. Ginwright's premises challenged us to confront our own biases, to reflect on our personal and professional identities, and to understand how these elements influence our interactions with students. We began questioning what changes we needed to make within ourselves. We discussed the need for healing, reflection, and looking within ourselves to become more vulnerable and self-reflective.

Consideration of the need for such healing, reflection, and looking within caused us to look at standard A with different lenses. This standard specifically calls for us to become more self-aware and to examine our relationships with others. The language in the standard suggests that by doing these things, we will become reflective and gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and how we affect others. This work aims to result in more cohesive and productive student development, both academically and socially-emotionally, for all students. This is the point at which we began to ask ourselves the hard question of not what others were doing or needed to do, but what work we were doing within ourselves.

In the course of our introspection, we generated a set of questions aligned with the different components of standard A, with the hope that they would help others in their own journeys. A sample of the questions can be seen below.

According to Illinois's CRTL standard A, the culturally responsive teacher and leader will do the following:

1. Understand and value the notion that multiple lived experiences exist, that there is often not one "correct" way of doing or understanding something, and that what is seen as "correct" is most often based on our lived experiences.
    - *How do we incorporate our own and our students' lived experiences into our instructional plans?*
2. Approach their work and students with an asset-based mindset, affirming the validity of students' backgrounds and identities.
    - *How do we affirm the validity of our students' backgrounds and identities?*
3. Know about their students and their lives outside of school, using this knowledge to build instruction that leverages prior knowledge and skills.
    - *How do we learn about our students' lives outside of school?*

4. Include representative, familiar content in the curriculum to legitimize students' backgrounds, while also exposing them to new ideas and worldviews different from their own.

    - *How do we facilitate student exploration of new ideas and different worldviews?*

5. Engage in self-reflection about their own actions and interactions and what ideas and biases motivated those actions.

    - *How do we regularly self-interrogate about what ideas and biases motivate our teaching decisions and actions?*

6. Explore their own intersecting identities, how they were developed, and how they impact daily experience of the world.

    - *What intersecting identities of our own are we aware of?*

7. Recognize how their identity (race/ethnicity, national origin, language, sex and gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical/developmental/emotional ability, socioeconomic class, religion, etc.) affects their perspectives and beliefs about pedagogy and students.

    - *What impact does our race/ethnicity have on our perspectives and beliefs about pedagogy and students?*

8. Educate themselves about students' communities, cultures, and histories.

    - *How do we find out about the communities from which our students come?*

9. Critically think about the institutions in which they find themselves, working to reform these institutions whenever and wherever necessary.

    - *What campus groups do we work with to serve as change agents?*

10. Assess how their biases and perceptions affect their teaching practice and how they access tools to mitigate their own behavior (racism, sexism, homophobia, unearned privilege, Eurocentrism, etc.).

    - *What specific tools do we use to mitigate our own behaviors?*

We used some of the questions above to interview a faculty member colleague, as well as a graduate-level student. **See here**. The faculty member noted that her use of standard A as an anchor for planning, presenting, and engaging with students has transformed her

work. She now sees the teacher-student power dynamic of her work differently and uses student feedback for ongoing adjustments. The graduate student shared that she rarely felt valued in her interactions with professors and appreciated our efforts to seek her opinion about ways to improve our engagement and instructional practices.

Beyond using such introspective questions for ourselves and sharing them with others, we have taken specific actions to change our teaching, including implementing reflective practices in our courses. For example, we start each semester with a self-reflective essay where students share their backgrounds, experiences, and expectations. We have also introduced regular reflection journals, which have become a space for students to process their learning experiences, express their thoughts and feelings, and connect theoretical concepts with their personal lives. We incorporated more student-led discussions, peer feedback sessions, and collaborative projects. These shifts not only empowered our students but also enriched the learning experiences of everyone in the learning communities by bringing diverse perspectives into classroom conversations. An added bonus was hearing later from students about their self-motivated efforts outside of class to continue the conversations with family and friends.

Our commitment to self-reflection and continuous improvement has also extended to our professional development. We formed a peer support group with colleagues who were equally passionate about culturally responsive teaching. This group became a safe space for us to share our experiences, challenges, and successes. We engaged in regular reflective dialogues, where we questioned our assumptions, examined our practices, and supported each other's growth.

Through these collective efforts, we noticed a significant transformation in our teaching and in our students' learning experiences. Our classrooms became more inclusive, empathetic, and dynamic. Students were more engaged, more willing to share their ideas, and more open to learning from each other. The effect of these changes was evident not only in academic performance but also in the overall classroom climate.

We hope to continue our journey **through our blog**, engaging with others interested in traveling similar paths. We are committed to using a variety of resources to look more deeply inward and continually improve ourselves. This ongoing reflection and self-improvement, we believe, is key to truly becoming culturally responsive educators.

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GenAI Meets Backward Design: Empowering Faculty in Course Planning

Ian Selig and *Alesia Jennings*

Higher education stands at a transformative crossroads with the integration of generative AI (GenAI) into pedagogical strategies. As educators, we recognize that the process of formulating and refining learning outcomes, creating evidence-based evaluations, and enhancing overall learning experiences is time-consuming. But GenAI promises to revolutionize this landscape by working as a collaborative partner to streamline backward course design.

Backward design is a well-regarded method for course development that starts with defining the desired learning outcomes and then works backward to develop assessments and instructional strategies (MIT Teaching + Learning Lab, n.d.). Combining this course design process with generative GenAI tools can lead to more intentional and effective courses by offering unique insights and reducing time needed for course creation and redesign.

Prompts matter: Driving effective GenAI outputs

The quality of GenAI output depends heavily on the prompts provided. Basic prompts yield generic results, but given a more sophisticated and detailed prompt, GenAI can generate outcomes that better align with specific teaching needs.

For example, whereas a basic prompt might read, "Rewrite these learning outcomes to make them more specific and measurable," a deeper prompt might be as follows:

> You are an expert instructional designer who specializes in assisting university faculty in the backward design process for course design. You have a deep understanding of Dee Fink's taxonomy of significant learning outcomes. I have provided my current learning outcomes. Help me refine them ensuring they are specific and measurable.

Focused directives make GenAI a more effective partner in the backward design process.

Even so, faculty should still vet outputs for course alignment and accuracy. While GenAI can assist, faculty knowledge and understanding of content drives these tools to deliver more accurate and useful outputs.

Iterating for refinement

Giving feedback on the response you receive, noting things you like or dislike about it, or asking the GenAI to incorporate more information in formulating a new response refines the output. This collaborative endeavor is an iterative process producing better results. For example: "Tailor these outcomes for [graduate level] students," "Rewrite the second outcome to measure [skill]," or "Provide five alternative outcomes that use a higher level of Bloom's taxonomy."

From outcomes to assessments and learning experiences

With refined outcomes in hand, GenAI can quickly generate assessments that gauge the intended learning outcomes. Faculty can use prompts like this one:

> Generate a comprehensive assessment that includes a variety of question types (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, short answer, essay) designed to evaluate students' mastery of these outcomes. Each question should clearly align with at least one of the stated course outcomes. Please indicate which outcome each question addresses, including instructions for students and a grading rubric outlining the criteria for evaluating students' responses.

Again, the response will reflect the limitations of the GenAI tool being used and the specificity of the information provided. Including details about the course content, assessment type, or audience can lead to better results.

After creating assessments, faculty can also leverage GenAI to build learning experiences that help students develop the skills needed to meet the desired outcomes and succeed in their assessments. For example, a prompt like the one below can allow GenAI to assist in creating a more cohesive and engaging learning experience that aligns with the faculty member's teaching philosophy and course objectives:

> Given the assessments and course outcomes I've developed for my [subject/course name] at the [educational level], please generate a detailed plan for learning experiences that align with these elements and support students in achieving the desired outcomes. My preferred teaching practices include [e.g., project-based learning, flipped classroom, collaborative learning, direct instruction]. Using evidence-based teaching practices and considering my preferred teaching style, please generate a plan that incorporates a variety of learning activities (e.g., discussions, projects, lectures, readings) that promote engagement. Additionally, include recommendations for any digital tools or resources that could enhance these learning experiences and support the preferred teaching practices.

Flipping the script: Engaging GenAI in new ways

While GenAI can assist in large-scale course development, faculty should also consider flipping the script by asking GenAI to pose questions about their course. This approach can inspire new perspectives on redesigning outcomes, assessments, or learning activities. Ethan and Lilach Mollick (2023) have offered numerous suggestions for getting GenAI to be the inquisitor, such as this one:

> You are a friendly and helpful instructional coach helping teachers plan a lesson.
>
> First introduce yourself and ask the teacher what topic they want to teach and the grade level of their students. Wait for the teacher to respond. Do not move on until the teacher responds.
>
> Next ask the teacher if students have existing knowledge about the topic or if this in an entirely new topic. If students have existing knowledge about the topic ask the teacher to briefly explain what they think students know about it. Wait for the teacher to respond. Do not respond for the teacher.
>
> Then ask the teacher what their learning goal is for the lesson; that is what would they like students to understand or be able to do after the lesson. Wait for a response.
>
> Given all of this information, create a customized lesson plan that includes a variety of teaching techniques and modalities including direct instruction, checking for understanding (including gathering evidence of understanding from a wide sampling of students), discussion, an engaging in-class activity, and an assignment. Explain why you are specifically choosing each.

Conclusion: Embracing GenAI in course design

The integration of GenAI into the backward design process offers exciting possibilities for educators. By leveraging GenAI tools, faculty can create more efficient, effective, and personalized courses that meet the needs of their students. While challenges remain, the hope is faculty will find this transformative technology useful in their course design work.

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Teaching Squares: Nonevaluative and Supportive Peer Observation

Tonya Buchan and Jennifer Todd

Teaching Squares is a peer observation program that allows faculty to observe, learn from, and support each other in their quest to become better instructors; the program originated at community and teaching colleges. It is believed to have been developed at St. Louis Community College and popularized at Stonehill College in Massachusetts. At Colorado State University (CSU), the program follows the traditional nonevaluative, supportive, and growth-based spirit of Teaching Squares with the added element of the CSU Teaching Effectiveness Framework (TEF). Participants are coached to give individualized, supportive, constructive, and nonevaluative feedback using observation forms aligned with the TEF.

Foundation of Teaching Squares

Teaching Squares consists of a group of four instructors who commit to observing each other over the course of a semester. The spirit of collegiality is foundational to the success of any Teaching Squares program and is promoted through the four essential program elements: (1) reciprocity, (2) appreciation, (3) self-referential reflection, and (4) mutual respect (Figure 1). These four elements are necessary to establish a comfortable environment where participants can open their classroom doors to each other and share feedback.

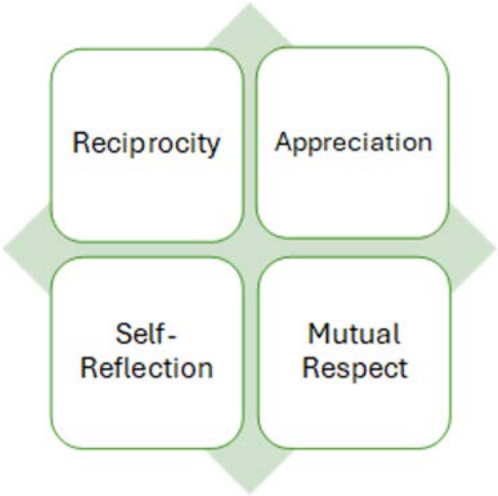

Figure 1. Teaching Squares program essentials

Teaching Squares at CSU

The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) has been offering the **Teaching Squares** program since 2018. Since that time, over 60 CSU instructors and graduate students have

been a part of the program. The **Teaching Effectiveness Framework** (TEF) is an integral part of Teaching Squares at CSU. The TEF is comprised of seven essential, interrelated domains of effective teaching practices: Inclusive Pedagogy at the center, surrounded by Student Motivation, Classroom Climate, Instructional Strategies, Feedback and Assessment, Curriculum/Curricular Alignment, and Pedagogical Content Knowledge, all grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning (Figure 2). Each domain has its own observation form that includes a list of evidence-based practices faculty can use to hone their teaching and gives a focus for the observation.

Figure 2. Teaching Effectiveness Framework domains

The Teaching Squares program allows anyone currently teaching (faculty, instructors, graduate teaching assistants GTAs, and postdocs) to observe, learn from, and support each other in their quest to become better instructors. The program's reciprocal nature requires that all participants be teaching a face-to-face or online course during the observation period. Teaching Squares takes approximately 16 hours over 12 weeks. Meeting times are scheduled at the start of the program to ensure that all participants can commit for the whole experience.

> "I feel empowered to continue evaluating my teaching journey and keeping an open mind for new ideas and approaches."

The program provides a forum to empower change, enhance innovation, and inspire growth in teaching. In addition to reflecting on and receiving feedback on teaching practices, participants make connections with colleagues, share ideas, reignite their passion for teaching, and discuss evidence-based instructional practices.

Logistics and program timeline

Teaching Squares is offered in the spring semester for the CSU teaching community and follows the timeline in Table 1. The squares are formed randomly and are often cross-disciplinary, allowing instructors to experience teaching in a variety of contexts. While our CTL runs a cohort each spring, the **Teaching Squares Facilitation Guide** allows faculty teams, departments, and colleges to run their own program at their convenience.

Scheduling and logistics are the most challenging components of Teaching Squares. Due to busy schedules and the reciprocal nature of the program, it is important to be transparent and emphasize the time commitment and scheduling requirements to ensure participants receive an equitable amount of feedback. In both the promotional materials and kickoff sessions, we underscore the importance to adhering to dates, showing up to observations, and committing to the square; during the kickoff session, we reinforce the commitment to colleagues during the community agreement norms activity.

Week	Meetings
1	Kickoff session (90–120 mins)
2	Pre-observation meeting (Individual squares meet ~60 mins)
3–5	Conduct observation cycle #1 (~50 mins × 3 colleagues)
6–7	Post observation #1 meeting (90 mins)
8–10	Conduct observation cycle #2 (~50 mins × 3 colleagues)
11–12	Post observation #2/wrap-up meeting (90 mins)

Table 1. Program timeline

While groups can and have run their own Teaching Squares, the TILT facilitated experience provides participants with scheduling administration, a structured timeline, and feedback in a supportive climate.

Benefits of Teaching Squares

After running Teaching Squares for six years, we have noticed multiple benefits for CSU participants:

1. It develops a common understanding of what effective teaching looks like.
2. It allows for focus on one domain of teaching at a time.
3. It fosters collegiality and collaboration among participants.
4. It provides insight into classroom teaching throughout the campus.
5. It reveals teaching strengths.
6. It promotes and provides space for self-reflection.

> "[Teaching Squares] has made me think more objectively about my teaching strategies and have gained a lot of useful feedback and observations that will help me improve in the future."

7. It offers individualized, supportive feedback.
8. Participants create artifacts that they can use for annual teaching reviews or promotion and tenure.
9. It earns participants recognition through CSU's **Teaching Effectiveness Initiative (TEI) Program**.

Getting started using the Teaching Squares Facilitation Guide

The **Teaching Squares Facilitation Guide** contains all the materials needed to run a Teaching Squares program. These materials have a Creative Commons license and are available for download to be used at any institution. Contact Tonya.Buchan@ColoState.Edu with questions about the guide.

Teaching Squares Workbook

The Teaching Squares Workbook contains links to all the materials, related to running the program. The facilitators give participants access to the workbook at the start of the program and update the workbook with contact information, community agreement, and meeting dates throughout the program.

Community agreement

Being observed is a vulnerable position. To create a safe space for participants to practice teaching and feel supported while doing so, each cohort develops a community agreement by identifying what they need to feel supported during this time. Confidentiality is at the core of the community agreement for both the facilitators and the participants.

> "I enjoyed connecting with colleagues from across campus, and I have a new appreciation for the skills my colleagues have in teaching classes that look really different from my own. I think it might benefit my future work by providing me with more examples of ways to improve my clarity in my instructional strategies."

Guided observations

Observation provides the opportunity to watch other instructors in action, see different ways of teaching, and gain insight into different class environments (class size, content discipline, delivery method, etc.). Participants receive feedback from three colleagues and engage in two observation cycles resulting in six total observations.

The observed participant identifies one TEF domain on which to be observed by all members of the square, allowing the participants to receive feedback from three participants. Each domain has its own **guided observation form**, including a list of relevant

evidence-based practices and observation question prompts and a self-reflection space for the observer. Reflection is an underused tool that often gets put on the back burner due to faculty load. Teaching Squares provides a space for faculty to engage in this powerful practice and promotes using it to make strategic changes in their teaching.

TILT does not look at nor retain any of the observation forms; all forms are the sole property of the individual being observed and are intended for use at their discretion. We simply provide the space and structure for participants to grow and gain efficacy in their teaching.

Feedback protocol

Text BoxDuring the post-observation meetings, participants give feedback to each other using the "What, So What, Now What" protocol. This protocol (available in the Teaching Squares guide) gives structure to the feedback session, including time for self-reflection, guidelines for supportive language, equal time for each participant to receive feedback, and plans for future teaching.

"We all appreciated each other's feedback so much we decided to stick with it and re-evaluated each other's classes the next semester and provided feedback."

A positive impact

Overall, the Teaching Squares has had a positive effect on teaching at Colorado State University. Faculty report that they enjoy collaborating with like-minded instructors, watching other instructors in action, and reflecting on this experience to improve their own teaching. Friendships have developed and some groups continue to meet several years after engaging in the Teaching Squares experience.

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"Why So Serious?" Integrating Game-Based Learning in Higher Education

Kristine Pedernal, Melanie Dauney, Aldona Nowak, and *Andria Phillips*

"Okay, take out a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. Now draw a pig"—an odd way to start a presentation, but then one of the presenters shares her story about a time in her undergraduate education when a nursing professor introduced this same playful activity in class:

> During a nursing leadership course, my professor asked us to take out a piece of paper and draw a picture of a pig. We were puzzled—what does drawing a pig have to do with this course? Once we finished, she explained that the placement and details of our drawings revealed aspects of our personalities. For example, a pig drawn at the top of the paper indicated optimism, while one at the bottom suggested pessimism; detailed drawings reflected analytical tendencies, and larger ears signified strong listening skills. While not actually evidence-informed, this exercise was a clever and engaging way to help us explore self-awareness, a crucial trait for effective leadership. It was a significant aha moment for me, demonstrating how games can be powerful tools for both teaching and learning.

Why games? Why fun?

The words "games" and "fun" are rarely associated with traditional classrooms. Traditional pedagogical approaches, whereby the student passively learns from the teacher as sage on the stage, are often attractive for teachers and students in programs that are content heavy. In addition to being content heavy, nursing programs must adhere to strict accreditation standards and learning outcomes to prepare students for the rigorous registration exam and ensure that they meet entry-to-practice requirements (Canadian Association Schools of Nursing, 2022; College of Nurses of Ontario, 2019). As nurse educators, we face ongoing challenges of balancing essential content requirements and heavy topics with engaging learning activities known to help prevent burnout and promote student well-being (Gibbons, 2010).

There are common misconceptions about learning: that it must be serious; that complex topics, such as those studied in nursing, demand rigorous study; and that the use of play to teach diminishes the importance of such topics. Brown (2009), however, argues that sometimes the most effective way to understand a complex subject is through play. In our practice as nurse educators, we found that play does not undermine rigor or professionalism; instead, it helps to balance the seriousness of learning while enhancing understanding and engagement with the content and peers. Game-based learning (GBL) also finds support in nursing literature. For example, Zehler and Musallam (2021) highlight the benefits of using a game-based approach to teach and reinforce clinical judgment skills in nursing education. Their research suggests that innovative teaching methods that include GBL can effectively prepare nursing students for real-world clinical situations and registration exams.

What is game-based learning?

GBL is an active learning strategy that leverages the power of play to achieve defined learning outcomes (Plass, 2015). Some advantages of using GBL in educational settings are that they are mentally stimulating, encourage participation, and foster active rather than passive learning. Unlike passive learning methods, GBL requires students to participate in actively applying course content. This approach not only promotes deep engagement but also provides opportunities for students to collaborate in building knowledge, leading to more memorable learning experiences in a fun format. GBL helps bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing students with opportunities to apply knowledge in realistic scenarios. This is particularly important in nursing courses, where students frequently struggle to apply their knowledge to practical nursing situations. This is supported by Plass and colleagues (2015), who stated that when game play is aligned with clear learning objectives, it becomes an effective approach for enhancing both understanding and retention of complex material. Lastly, GBL fosters a sense of connection, community, and trust among learners, enhancing the overall educational experience (Forbes & Thomas, 2022) and arguably supporting student well-being.

Pyramid of Play

According to Forbes and Thomas (2022), play in the classroom offers opportunities to build knowledge and create memorable learning experiences. The Pyramid of Play (Figure 1) developed by Forbes and Thomas provides a structured framework for understanding the diverse ways play can be incorporated into learning.

At the base of the pyramid is playfulness, which starts with the professor setting a playful tone in the classroom. This can be as simple as wearing necklaces while teaching or

incorporating emojis and memes into class slides. The next level involves connection-former activities that foster connection among students. These help to reduce anxiety and build trust, and they help students enter the learning space in a centered and joyful state. Examples include icebreakers like bingo, the pig personality test, and marshmallow building challenges. The third level, play to teach, integrates play with learning in meaningful ways, demonstrating how the two can go hand in hand. At the top of the pyramid is whole-course design, where play becomes the foundation of the entire course.

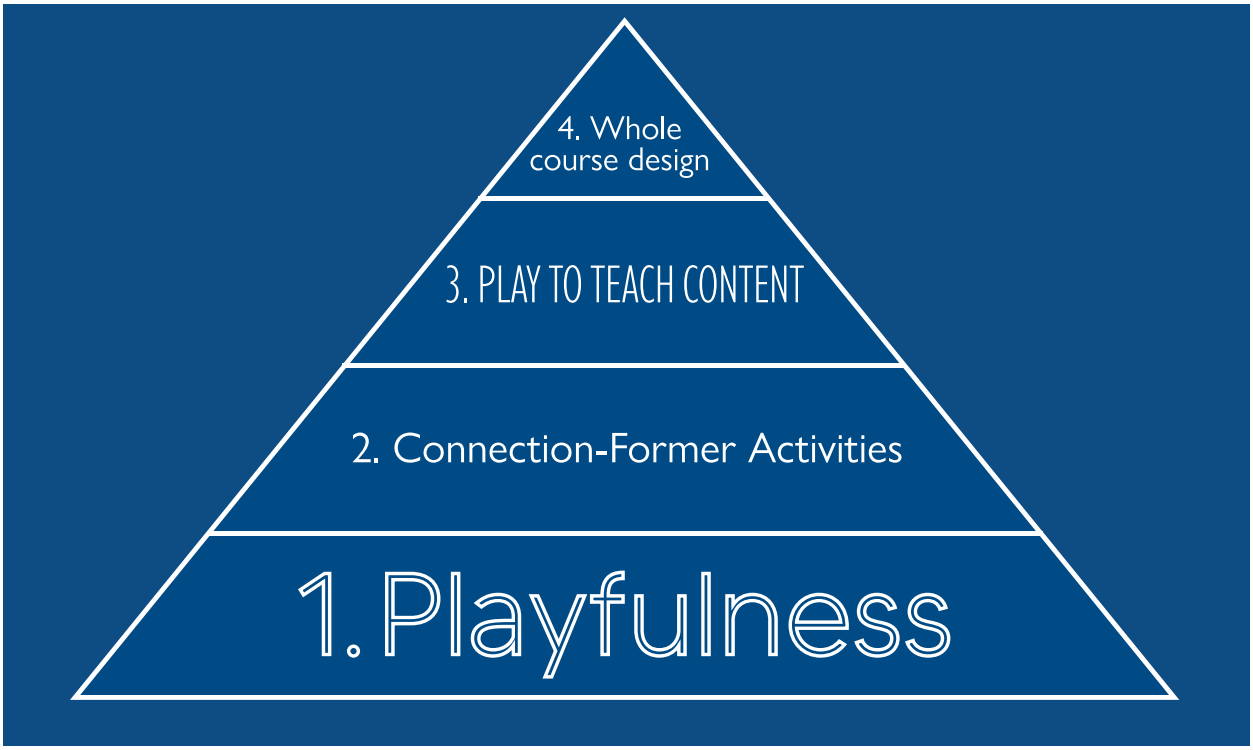


Figure 1. The Pyramid of Play (Forbes & Thomas, 2022)

We adapted Plass et al.'s integrated design framework for playful learning (Figure 2) and used it as a guiding framework for developing, implementing, and assessing GBL activities in our nursing classrooms, with a particular focus on the different domains of student engagement outlined in the first row. The more domains of engagement that an activity includes, the richer and more impactful the learning experience becomes.

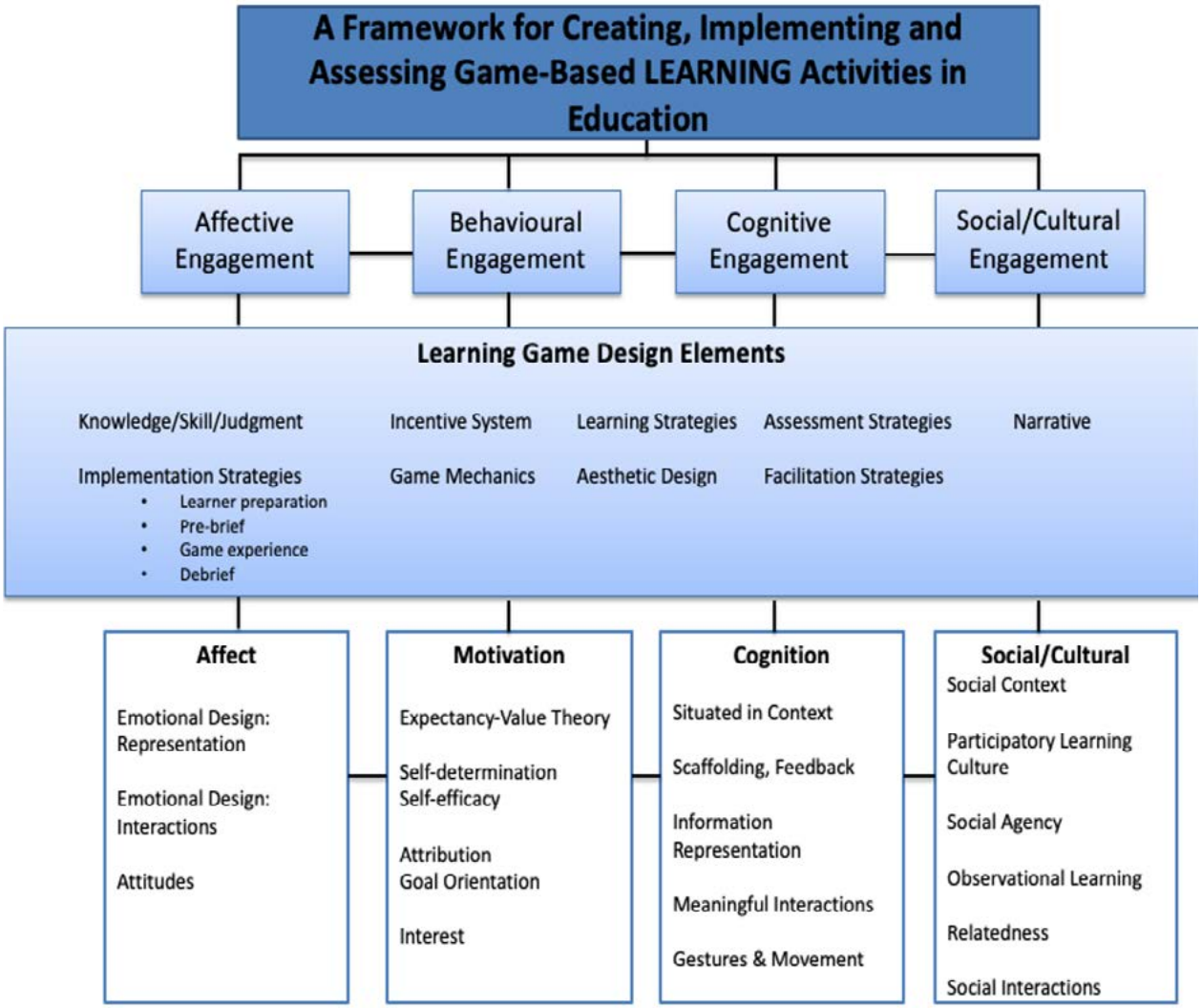
The affective domain involves students experiencing emotions, such as excitement or even confusion, which can enhance their participation in the learning activity. One activity that elicited strong emotional reactions from students was the Bristol stool game. Similar to the popular baby shower game whose participants guess different types of

chocolates hidden in diapers, this activity involved identifying various simulated stool types (made with chocolate) based on the Bristol stool chart. Students then described the appropriate nursing interventions for each stool type, as covered in their readings and lectures. Many students appreciated the realism of the activity, noting that it effectively prepared them for real-life patient scenarios. The game also generated considerable laughter and joy among participants.

The cognitive domain focuses on the processing of game content. Game-based activities can be used in the classroom to help student understand key terms and definitions, such as a word search of community nursing terms and a Jeopardy game based on communicable disease content. Quiz, Quiz Trade—a game-like review—is a cooperative learning strategy that also focuses on the cognitive domain. Students create study questions and take turns quizzing each other in preparation for an exam. After each pair completes their quiz session, they exchange questions and find new partners to continue the process of quizzing and trading.

The behavioral domain emphasizes hands-on participation. This was evident in one of our nursing pharmacology courses where students participated in an escape room scenario. The students were "locked" in the nursing simulation lab with a high-tech mannequin experiencing an anaphylactic reaction to an antibiotic. To safely manage the patient and "escape" the room, students applied real-life nursing skills, including physical assessment, medication administration, and clinical decision-making.

Finally, the sociocultural domain, which involves interactions among students, further enriches the overall learning experience. We used GBL to facilitate students' application of the NDDS's Looksee Checklist (2024), a tool used to assess child development. In this activity, students were divided into teams and participated in a charades-like game. A team leader would act out or draw clues related to an age group selected from a box, while their team had 90 seconds to guess the correct age group using their knowledge of the NDDS. If the team was unable to identify the age group within the time limit, the opposing team had the opportunity to "steal" the point by making a guess. The students worked together and grasped the material in a low-stakes and enjoyable manner. In practice, GBL classroom activities do not focus on a single domain of engagement. Instead, they integrate multiple domains, creating a multifaceted and deeply engaging educational environment.



Created By Pedernal, K., Phillips, A., & Bradley, P. (2021) and adapted from Plass, J. (2015)

Figure 2. A framework for creating, implementing and assessing game-based learning activities in education

Student feedback

We received positive feedback from students regarding the use of GBL and play in our nursing theory and laboratory classrooms. Students reported that GBL activities offer valuable opportunities for self-assessment, allowing them to identify knowledge gaps or areas needing further review. Conversely, these activities also affirmed their existing knowledge and skills, serving as motivation and reassurance that they were on the right track. Additionally, students appreciated how game-based activities foster peer connection, build a sense of community, and support collaborative learning. The element of competition also added excitement and enjoyment to the learning experience.

Lessons learned

1. **Ensure clear connections**. It is important to align activities with learning objectives. Conducting a dry run is crucial to identify and correct any issues, ensuring that the game achieves its intended purpose. Clear and accessible instructions that align to course learning objectives are essential to avoid confusion among students, allowing them to refer to the guidelines as needed.

2. **Fostering a safe learning experience**. Psychological safety must be emphasized, especially for activities involving real-life scenarios that could potentially trigger distress. Students should always have the option to opt out or step away. When incorporating roles within a game, it is important to clearly define each role's responsibilities early in the process.

3. **Considerations for faculty**. While some game-based activities require extensive preparation, others require minimal effort yet still positively affect learning. Games that foster collaboration also enhance communication skills. Additionally, it is important to consider the environment when planning activities, including the required space and potential noise levels.

GBL is an effective strategy for teaching and learning. It allows students to draw on their strengths, stimulate their minds, and increase motivation. It is pedagogically sound when used purposefully and aligned with learning objectives. It supports communication, enhances engagement, and facilitates critical thinking, all while fostering valuable peer-to-peer learning. Finally, it introduces an element of fun into higher education, demonstrating that learning doesn't always have to be so serious. Games and play are far from being just for kids; they can enrich the educational experience for students of all ages.

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No-Prep Student Engagement Activities

Jennifer Merrill

Every educator has been there: entering a full but silent classroom as students peer intently at their phones; asking for questions and hearing only crickets; posing questions and hearing more crickets—A lack of response that does not necessarily indicate disinterest but may suggest that students are not actively engaging with one another or the material. This lack of engagement diminishes the learning experience and deprives students of opportunities to develop important skills and create an atmosphere of community in the classroom.

Benefits of student engagement activities

Besides content mastery, the classroom is an excellent place for students to develop 21st-century skills, which Hummel (2024) has grouped into learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills.. Twenty-first-century skills are a collection of 12 skills employers look for when hiring. But the New Vision for Education, a multiyear initiative created by the World Economic Forum (2015), found large gaps between desired and exhibited skills, indicating that students are not developing these 21st-century skills. This finding was vividly illustrated during a discussion I had with a psychologist who specializes in workplace issues. They said that while technical skills got a person hired, it was behavioral issues that got them fired. They went on to say that companies are struggling to hire employees who can communicate effectively, engage with others socially, and collaborate on projects—all examples of 21st-century skills. While college courses often address literacy skills (information, technical, and media literacy), they typically fall short in developing other skills. Student engagement activities offer valuable opportunities to enhance learning skills (critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration) and life skills (flexibility, leadership, initiative, social skills, and productivity).

The US Surgeon General has declared loneliness and lack of connection to be public health crises, affecting both mental and physical well-being (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, 2023). Research indicates that they may also affect academic

performance: studies report a positive correlation between children's and adolescents' feelings of connectedness and academic achievement, with strong connections increasing the chance of graduating high school and earning a four-year degree. Connectedness in higher education also influences success and retention, evidenced by the finding that socially isolated medical students are more likely than their peers to drop out. Student engagement activities provide opportunities for students to connect with others in the classroom, creating a sense of community and belonging, increasing peer relations, and providing a space where students can learn from and support one another (Murthy, 2023, p. 34)

At Skyline College (my place of employment), student members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society conducted research that found that students who were in classes that played games reported increased participation and interest in the class, had increased interaction with both the material and their peers, and demonstrated greater content mastery on exams than students who did not participate in engagement activities.

Costs and considerations

Student engagement activities can take valuable time away from sharing content in class. This may be especially challenging for courses that are part of a sequence. One remedy is to flip the classroom and provide additional readings, mini-lectures, and so on outside of class.

Another challenge is the perception that these activities undermine an academic atmosphere. Some students might believe that if the professor isn't lecturing and they aren't taking notes, learning isn't occurring. Additionally, the fun nature of these activities might lead students to think that fun and learning are incompatible.

Student engagement activities

Below are two activities that require no prepared materials and instructors can conduct spontaneously. They work in classes of all sizes.

Hawks and eagles

This activity can happen at any time in the class period.

1. Present a question or prompt to the class. (*Important*: allow students time on their own to think about their response before having them break into pairs.)
2. Have students break into pairs and ask them to decide who in the pair will be a hawk and who will be an eagle, then share their response to the prompt with their partner.

3. After a two to three minutes, ask the students who are the hawks to raise their hands high in the air and keep them up.
4. Instruct the eagles to each get up and "fly" to another hawk.
5. Have the new pairs introduce themselves and share their responses with one another.
6. After two to three minutes, ask the students who are the eagles to raise their hands high in the air and keep them up.
7. Instruct the hawks to each get up and "fly" to another eagle.
8. Repeat as many times as you'd like.

IQ cards

This activity works best at the end of a lecture, unit, or chapter.

1. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and write the letter "I" on one side. This stands for "insights."
    a. Ask them to write down any insight (e.g., a new understanding of the material, an aha moment, or a big takeaway).
    b. Emphasize that you are not asking for a definition of a term they learned.
2. Ask students to flip the paper to the other side and write the letter "Q." This stands for "questions."
    a. Ask them to write down questions they have about the material or a question that came up for them as a result of learning about the material.
3. Optional: Ask students to share their I's and Q's in small groups and to choose a few to write on a giant Post-it note. Hang the notes around the classroom and have students participate in a gallery walk, commenting on their classmates' insights and answering their questions.

Student engagement activities have greatly enhanced my students' learning experience. I receive consistent feedback from students about how student engagement activities encouraged them to venture out of their comfort zones and made them more comfortable speaking to others. I have watched friendships develop and students create supportive environments for one another. While planning may be necessary to get content

to students outside of class, I have found that including student engagement activities in my curriculum far exceeds the costs.

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Six Lessons for Implementing an Institution-Wide Generative AI Framework

Tanya Wakelin and Amanda Maknyik

In spring 2023, faculty perspectives on the emergence of publicly accessible generative AI (GenAI) varied widely—from apprehension to eagerness. Many educators found themselves somewhere in between. Navigating this new technology was going to be a challenge, so it became imperative to take a proactive approach to determine how GenAI could and should be integrated. Our experience yielded six key lessons to guide faculty, postsecondary leaders, and teaching center directors in purposefully integrating GenAI into teaching practices and learning activities—and why doing so is essential.

Lesson one: Gain buy-in

The most critical first step in integrating GenAI is gaining buy-in from key stakeholders. At our institution, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) launched a GenAI task force composed of 17 members, including faculty, deans, and student support staff. This task force explored the opportunities and challenges that **various GenAI tools** present in teaching and learning. By involving a diverse group from the outset, we created a space where educators could experiment with and understand the significance of GenAI with no risk to their core responsibilities or student learning. You can replicate this approach by forming a multidisciplinary team, such as a task force, committee, or informal community of practice, to explore GenAI's potential and gather insights that resonate with your institution's needs and share these insights with your broader institutional community.

Lesson two: Emphasize positive messaging

Establishing a positive narrative around GenAI is essential. While our task force analyzed tools for teaching and learning, the CTL developed an **institutional statement on the use of GenAI** and created resources designed to support both faculty and students in adopting GenAI. We shared these resources under a Creative Commons license to promote openness and accessibility, benefiting the global educational community. The

key was framing GenAI as a tool that faculty were encouraged to explore and evaluate the benefits of adopting where it enhances student learning and aligns with industry expectations, not treating it as a threat to postsecondary education. We emphasized that our role as educators is to prepare our learners for the future world of work, and GenAI is going to be part of that work. This approach reinforced the idea that GenAI will be a cornerstone for our students and that graduates who have a critical understanding of the purposes and uses of GenAI will be valued and productive members of the labor market and economy. When educators feel empowered rather than fearful, they're more likely to experiment, innovate, and ultimately succeed.

Lesson three: Develop a framework

Without a clear framework that enables comprehensive assessment of tools and informed decision-making about their use, integrating GenAI can feel overwhelming. We created the **DC Framework for Integrating GenAI**, drawing on the work of Su and Weipeng Yang (2023) and McDermott (2023) to help faculty evaluate the use of GenAI in their courses through five key principles:

- **Intentionality**: What is the purpose of using the GenAI tool? Does it support the learning outcome?
- **Active engagement**: Does the assessment require adjustments to ensure that GenAI enhances learning without replacing it?
- **Responsibility for accuracy**: How will students be made responsible for verifying the accuracy of GenAI-generated content?
- **Ethical and legal considerations**: How will students understand their ethical responsibilities when using GenAI?
- **Reflective practice**: How will students and faculty reflect on the learning outcomes after using GenAI?

By intentionally and strategically planning how to incorporate GenAI in meaningful ways, you can ensure that it enhances learning outcomes rather than distracts from them. A framework helps you stay focused on what really matters: using GenAI in ways that are relevant, ethical, and aligned with industry needs.

Lesson four: Provide consistent and clear messaging

Communicating clear directives to students about its use is key to promoting buy-in and positive messaging and for guiding use that aligns with academic integrity. At our

institution, we decided faculty or program teams would be responsible for informing students about the permitted and prohibited uses of GenAI in coursework and assessments per industry use. To support this, we developed **three directive statements**: "The use of generative AI is not permitted in this course," "The use of generative AI is permitted in specific components of this course," and "The use of generative AI is permitted in this course." Each statement includes specific details and resources, ensuring that students receive consistent and clear messaging so they can explore GenAI confidently within those limits. These directives were built into our page templates in our learning management system and available in a customizable PowerPoint, **which you can download here**.

You can adapt this approach by providing faculty with similar directive templates that offer clarity and support. We encourage you to download the PowerPoint and revise it to suit your needs.

Lesson five: Focus on authentic assessment

The use of plagiarism detectors is a common practice in higher education; however, GenAI detectors have proven to vary in reliability, leading to false positives and a misplaced focus on catching misconduct rather than promoting learning (Elkhatat et al., 2023). Incorporating GenAI requires a shift away from relying on detectors toward focusing on authentic assessments that mirror real-world tasks, challenge students cognitively, and allow for creative application of knowledge. Authentic assessment should leverage GenAI to enhance learning while supporting knowledge retention, cognitive challenge and critical thinking. We invited faculty to review their existing assessment strategies, and if an assessment could be completed by a GenAI tool, we encouraged them to revisit and revise it. This approach requires effort to consider, develop, and pilot authentic assessment practices; however, it is crucial for academic integrity and focusing on the future world of work and job expectations.

Lesson six: Create a positive, supportive atmosphere

Finally, fostering a positive atmosphere around GenAI is essential. We kicked off our efforts with a **GenAI professional development day**, where faculty learned how the technology could enhance their teaching and support durable learning. Faculty were encouraged to share their experiences alongside GenAI tool demonstrations to build confidence and enthusiasm. Our key message was to take that risk and rest assured that it was okay if the learning activity crashed and burned; they could just pick it back up and try again. Additionally, we hired two faculty members as GenAI consultants to lead professional development sessions, facilitate a community of practice, and offer one-on-one support for faculty. Consistent communication through newsletters, website updates, and department

meetings helped maintain engagement, particularly for part-time faculty. By creating a positive buzz, you can sustain momentum and encourage continuous exploration of GenAI.

Summary

Integrating GenAI into our teaching practices isn't just about using new technology; it's about preparing our students and ourselves for the future world of work. Gaining buy-in, emphasizing positive messaging, developing a consistent framework, providing consistent communication, focusing on authentic assessment, and creating a positive atmosphere are all steps that will set you up for success. Leveraging these approaches will help you ensure that GenAI becomes a powerful ally in your educational toolkit, helping you and your students thrive.

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