



BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

ACADEMY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

SPRING 2015

Not too many years ago, the term ‘learning environment’ evoked images of chalkboards and desks, opened books and raised hands. We at the ATL even use the chalkboard as our branding image, our shorthand signal that our focus is teaching and learning.

With the advent of new technologies and social media, however, much has changed for our students and for us as instructors. Learning environments have morphed from four-walled classrooms into something much more broad and inclusive of our students’ various learning experiences.

Learning environments today are better defined as complex domains where space, culture, pedagogy, and technology converge. This convergence creates new possibilities for learning.

At Baylor, teaching and learning matter. Your participation in ATL programs is a testament to this: last semester 380 of you participated in ATL events, an all-time high and a 32% increase from the fall 2013 semester (we’ve experienced a 66% increase in participation since 2012). The importance of teaching and learning at Baylor is perhaps best demonstrated, though, by the many ways our University creates and supports robust and successful learning environments. This edition of the newsletter highlights a few of those efforts from across campus and offers ideas for reinventing your own teaching and learning environments. We hope that when you read Master Teacher Roger Kirk’s answer to the question, “What has changed most in your fifty-six years of teaching?” or when you learn from Dean Terry Maness how a new facility might alter the way Business School faculty teach, or when you consider ideas for class



Learning Environments

activities in different kinds of spaces...we hope that when you reflect on these topics you will be inspired to redraw the boundaries of your own teaching and learning environments—even if you use a chalkboard to do it.

Best wishes,

J. Maness Wright
Lenore

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Dr. Lenore Wright

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Foster Campus Develops Innovative Learning Environments

By Dean Terry Maness

During the summer of 2015 the Hankamer School of Business will be moving into its new home, the Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation, located at the corner of 3rd and Bagby. The design of the new campus is based on a number of themes including: engaged learning, collaboration, community, technology, global connections, and sustainability. The facility's central atrium, an open area spanning all four floors of the campus, highlights these themes by creating a casual social space to build informal communities, offering visibility to all facets of the building, and establishing through abundant natural light a comfortable atmosphere that is both environmentally and economically friendly. To take full advantage of the new learning spaces provided by the Foster Campus, Hankamer enlisted the help of the Academy for Teaching and Learning to create a series of faculty workshops.

Different classroom configurations in the Foster Campus support engaged learning. With student capacity ranging from 24 to 80, these classrooms employ

a combination of fixed tables and flexible table arrangements to maximize student learning. There are a number of non-traditional classrooms including cluster classrooms that support a lecture format as well as small group discussions without moving furniture. Fully flexible classrooms allow for a variety of seating arrangements; tables and chairs can be set up in pods, a large U shape, a large X, or rows, depending on the teaching style preferences of the faculty. Many of these configurations have no natural front and allow the faculty member to move freely around the room to engage students. Each classroom has a rail system that supports detachable whiteboards that can be taken to the seats to capture thoughts and ideas when small groups are convening. To engage the outside community, the Foster Campus includes a Conference Center with a banquet hall, dedicated conference rooms with fully integrated technology, and a 350 seat auditorium that is in close proximity.

Collaboration outside the classroom is supported by the inclusion of 36 team meeting rooms that seat 4 to 6 students

to develop presentations, team reports, and case study collaborations. Each team room has a digital display monitor. Thus, the Foster Campus provides an ideal learning environment for faculty incorporating a flipped classroom.

Technology is integrated into the campus allowing for multiple displays in the classrooms and the ability to display from multiple sources. Many of the classrooms have lecture capture and video conferencing capabilities. Communication is facilitated throughout the campus via digital signage and a video board in the Atrium.

The Foster Campus has a number of specialty rooms that provide a variety of learning environments such as the Financial Market Center, a Technology Commons, a dedicated telepresence room, and a number of dedicated technology labs. Finally, the campus includes a behavioral research lab that will support faculty research but can also be used to support student projects as well as a number of role play rooms.



GETTING TO KNOW CANVAS

ONE FEATURE AT A TIME: THE “RECORD/UPLOAD MEDIA” ICON



The “Record/Upload Media” icon in Canvas allows you and your students to record audio/video straight from a laptop webcam or microphone or to upload media from files on your computer (recorded by a cellphone or some other device).

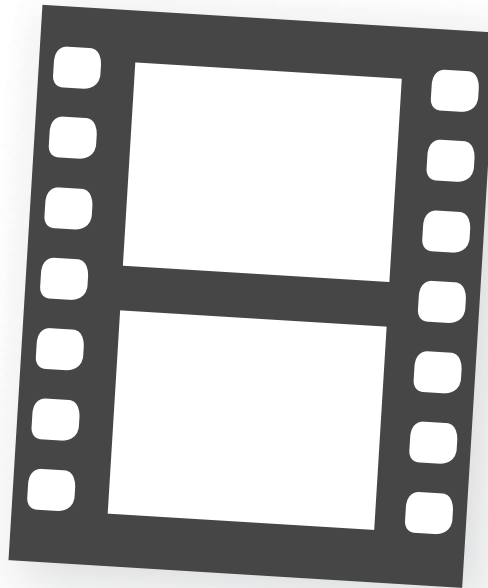
You can use this feature to assign audio or video essays to your students, encouraging them to respond to course materials in new and innovative ways. This feature makes assigning, watching, and grading digital media a breeze for instructors. It also makes recording and submitting digital media very easy for students.

But how might you integrate digital media in your next course?

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Instead of asking students to post typed comments to a discussion board, allow them to respond with digital media. Listening and responding to peers through digital media can engage students in ways other formats do not. Additionally, constructing such responses forces students to encounter the composition

process in new and exciting ways.



ONLINE MICROLECTURES

You or your students can record and post microlectures. These short,

focused video lectures give students the opportunity to watch and re-watch instruction they need and to bypass instruction over content they have mastered. This gives students more control over their learning. It also allows you to build a library of microlectures to use in future semesters.

FEEDBACK

Media submitted in completion of assignments can be streamed straight from the Canvas Speed Grader and is graded no differently than traditional alphabetic texts. Providing audio comments along with grades allows you to deliver personalized, constructive feedback to your students that instructs and builds rapport. It can also save you time.

More information about Canvas, including a number of helpful guides made specifically for Baylor University faculty and staff, can be found at <http://www.baylor.edu/canvas/>.

New Student Experience Course

All Baylor students are now required to take a New Student Experience (NSE) course in their first semester. These courses are designed to improve student success by engaging students

academically, socially, and spiritually in the earliest stages of student development. NSE classes also introduce students to the key values of a liberal education (critical thinking, integration of



Cornelia Marshall Smith Lecture

Q & A Excerpt



The following discussion took place after the Cornelia Marshall Smith Lecture, delivered by Dr. Roger E. Kirk last Spring. The excerpt demonstrates that as culture shifts, new challenges confront even the most expert teachers. Finding opportunities to talk about these challenges with colleagues not only can be therapeutic, but also can spur new ideas for addressing classroom difficulties.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE:

What is the biggest change you've noticed in the 56 years you've been doing this?

ANSWER FROM DR. KIRK:

Students feel like they deserve to get A's without really working. In 1958,

the students I think were much more conscientious about working hard in a class. They didn't feel entitled to an A. I think that's one of the major changes I've seen.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE:

It does certainly seem like students now have a sense of entitlement when it comes to grades. (Directed to other faculty members in the audience) I was wondering how those of you in psychology account for this. What's your explanation for this phenomenon?

ANSWER FROM DR. KIRK:

That's a great question. I'll hand it over to my friends in Social Psychology to answer that one.

COMMENT FROM FACULTY MEMBER A:

The University of California, San Diego documented that about 21% of incoming college freshmen meet the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder. That is not a made up statistic.

COMMENT FROM FACULTY MEMBER B:

Additionally, I think that these students are somewhat right. A C is a failing grade because a C will not take

them where they want to go. So their expectations are pretty high but it's fairly grievous that they've got to do well to go on.

COMMENT FROM FACULTY MEMBER C:

Harry Helsen in the 1930s and 40s published about a concept called Adaptation Level Theory, which says in some sense, if you put a frog in cold water and heat the water up slowly, the frog doesn't notice what's happening. Similarly, students in high school, I think, develop expectancy in their classrooms that X amount of effort produces a certain kind of grade.

But when they come to us, especially to a professor as rigorous as Professor Kirk, we actually ask them to bring more to the table. Many of them, though they have the ability to perform at a higher level, have simply not been asked to. So, when they get here and the level of requirements escalates so dramatically, it panics them. They become very anxious. That destroys their ability to remember and limits their ability to study and pay attention. And so, I think to some degree, the earlier portions of our educational system have begun to fail us. Obviously, professors at Baylor like Roger Kirk have worked very hard to counter that, but it's still very difficult.

faith and learning, social responsibility, etc.) through the lens of the course's discipline.

Unlike University 1000, credit-bearing NSE courses are rooted in traditional academic curriculum. Any first semester, freshman-level course can potentially be offered as an NSE course. "Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic" (FAS 1305), "Intro to Mass Communication" (JOU 1303),

"Elementary Spanish" (SPA 1401), and "Beginning Mountain Biking" (LF 1123) are just a few examples of the nearly forty different NSE classes offered last fall.

NSE classes are a wonderful way to connect students to their major in the first semester and engage first-semester students with undergraduate research and other academic excellence opportunities. They are

also a wonderful avenue for smaller departments to recruit secondary majors or minors.

If you are interested in offering an NSE course for Fall 2015, please contact Courtney_Lyons@baylor.edu for more information.

*Courtney Pace Lyons, Ph.D.
Assistant Director of Student Success*



WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH THIS SPACE?

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE

Recent research confirms what most educators have observed first-hand: the setup of a classroom affects the ways students and teachers behave.¹ Many traditional college classrooms are designed to facilitate content delivery from the front of a room, and students often fall into passive learning habits in these environments. Those habits are sometimes inadvertently reinforced by well-meaning instructors who may find themselves talking more than they realize and therefore spend less time observing students working and offering direct help. Flexible teaching spaces or creative uses of more traditional classrooms can engage

students more actively in the learning process, leading to significant educational gains. We offer a few examples of classrooms from across Baylor's campus and suggest strategies for making the most of these spaces or any other space you may find yourself in.

1. Whiteside, Aimee L., Christopher Brooks, and J. D. Walker. "Making the Case for Space: Three Years of Empirical Research on Learning Environments." *Educause Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (2010).

Marrs McLean Science Building 201

(opposite page)

Advantages: Computer; projector; light; moveable chairs

Potential challenges: The small size makes students and the instructor feel cramped or claustrophobic. A pillar blocks line of sight, and there are no windows.

Make the Most of the Space

Seek to change the feeling of the room from “cramped” and “claustrophobic” to “intimate” and “collaborative” by organizing the course around discussion, teamwork, and peer-to-peer teaching. On the first day of class, arrange the desks in a semicircle and explain to students that, despite

its challenges, the unique room offers an opportunity to approach the course as a joint learning venture rather than a traditional, instruction-based class. Present the idea of a “flipped classroom”—students first encounter course content outside of class through Canvas, readings, online videos, and other resources and then practice or apply those principles during class. Ask students to identify some of the advantages of that approach, and encourage them to come prepared to class each day to share, discuss, teach, and work.

Consider strategies such as Response Corners, Speed Dating, Post Comments, Jigsaw, Round Robin, Debate, Performance, Role Playing, and Picture This.



Carroll Science Hall 204

Advantages: Computer; projector; large windows; two chalkboards; a U-shape arrangement, which allows students to see each other; wide tables, which offer large workspaces for easy group work.

Potential challenges: Limited seating at the tables may require some students to sit at desks around the edge of the room.

Make the Most of the Space

Foster open class discussions. Consider conducting class while sitting at the desk rather than standing behind the computer console or the mobile podium.

Open window blinds to let in more natural light. Because the room is on the second floor, there is little danger of students being distracted by passersby.

Consider strategies such as Response Corners, Speed Dating, Post Comments, Debate, Performance, Rotate Seating, Role Playing, Picture This, and Storyboard.

Morrison Hall 102

Advantages: Computer; projector; moveable chairs

Potential challenges: The raised platform at the front of the room foregrounds the instructor and can reinforce the assumption that learning best occurs when an authority figure speaks to passive listeners. Fixed tables are flush against a wall, limiting classroom arrangements and instructor and student mobility.

Make the Most of the Space

Turn the raised platform into an asset by making the presentation of student work a central part of the course. Have students demonstrate their mastery of course objectives or teach other students through presentations, performances, and panels.

Form small groups quickly and efficiently by having students in every other row turn their chairs around.

Consider strategies such as Speed Dating, Post Comments, Performance, Listening Tasks, Expert Panels, Jigsaw, Round Robin, and Think-Pair-Share.

STRATEGIES TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE

Roaming:

Move purposefully around the room during class. Approach individual students or groups when addressing them directly. Move away from students when they address you to help redirect their comments to the whole class. Even walking through aisles while lecturing can help students focus and engage.

Response Corners:

Ask students an open-ended question but limit them to just three or four possible responses (or make a controversial statement and tell them they must either agree or disagree). Have students move to a designated corner, section, or half of the room depending on their responses. Allow like-minded students grouped together to discuss why they responded the way they did. After adequate time, sit or stand in the middle of the room and open a class discussion on the topic of your question with students still in their respective corners.

Speed Dating:

Two students sit across from each other (across a table, in facing desks, etc.) and spend five minutes brainstorming or sharing ideas for a paper or project and getting feedback. Every five minutes, students in every other row shift over a seat and repeat with a new partner.

Post Comments:

Students write down their “status” on something related to the course—a question they have about a reading or lecture, an application of a course principle, a proposal for a paper or project, etc.—and classmates “post” productive comments underneath. Papers can be left on desks while students “browse” the classroom, or papers can be passed down rows while students remain seated. Each student’s paper is eventually returned to him or her.

Listening Tasks:

Before a lecture, assign a different task to each section of the room—summarize the main idea(s), write down a follow-up or clarification question, think of an

application for a principle covered in the lecture, come up with a quiz or exam question, etc. Call on students randomly from different sections at various points in the class or at the end.

Expert Panels:

Outside of class, each student becomes an “expert” on a narrow aspect of the course. On certain days, a student panel is formed at the front of the room from the “experts” on that day’s material. They spend ten minutes answering questions posed by their classmates or the instructor. If the class is too large for all students to participate, allow students to replace a quiz with volunteering for a panel.

Rotate Seating:

Assign different roles—summarizing the reading, posting a review of class on Canvas, answering the instructor’s questions, etc.—to different sections of the room. Require students to rotate sections each class or each week so that they participate in different ways throughout the semester. Even without assignments attached to seating, changing seats periodically throughout the semester allows students to break out of passive patterns and get to know more of their classmates.

Debate:

Opposing teams of students sit across from each other in two lines on different sides of the room. Teams alternate making statements or rebuttals, and the spokesperson for each team becomes the next student down the line after each turn.

Performance or Role Playing:

A team of students acts out a scene in the front or center of the room while other students offer encouragement and feedback.

Jigsaw:

Create working stations out of tables or groups of desks and assign each team of students a different part of a large problem. After all teams have arrived at some kind of conclusion, reconfigure

the teams so that each new team has a member from each former team. The new teams work together to arrive at a comprehensive solution to the large problem.

Round Robin:

Teams of four students sit at a table or in a circle and review one team member’s individual work (paper, project, solution, etc.) and offer collective feedback. The team then reviews another student’s work until each member of the team receives feedback.

Think-Pair-Share:

Mid-class, ask a well prepared question. Give students a couple of minutes to think individually and write down their ideas. Then have them discuss their responses with a partner. Finally, ask a few students or pairs to share highlights of their discussion with the entire class.

Picture This:

On separate whiteboards, teams of students visually represent a piece of information communicated orally or textually—a concept from the lecture, a poem, an object or idea described in the textbook. The entire class then compares the drawings and discusses the significance of any differences.

Storyboard:

Divide a large problem into parts and assign each part to a different team of students. Teams work out a solution to their part of the problem and illustrate that solution on a section of a whiteboard. When all teams finish, the class decides the proper order of the illustrations and evaluates the comprehensive solution. Alternately, teams can be assigned a portion of a lecture or reading to illustrate.

Canvas in Class:

Take a break in class to have students use a laptop, tablet, or smart phone to post on Canvas a discussion question related to that day’s material. When everyone finishes, or during another break later on, have each student post a response to another classmate’s question.



Baylor Sciences Building B-110

Advantages: Two computers; two projectors; document camera; mobile microphone; tables at the front of the room; steep stadium seating, which allows all students to see the instructor; whiteboards

Potential challenges: Stadium seating makes meaningful instructor-student interaction difficult. The size of the room and the number of seats make it easy for students to “hide” and fall into passive learning behaviors. Students have very small workspaces.

Make the Most of the Space

Probably more than any other arrangement, a lecture hall reinforces the notion that students go to class to sit, listen, and, on days they’re feeling especially ambitious, maybe take a few notes. Seek ways to challenge those assumptions about learning from the start of the semester. Take advantage of the mobile microphone and projector remote control to move around the room or even walk up the aisles while speaking. Ask students to stand to address the entire hall. Invite a few students to record

important ideas on the whiteboards. Periodically pause your lecture and instruct students to review or discuss with a neighbor what was just covered.

Consider strategies such as Roaming, Listening Tasks, Expert Panels, Rotate Seating, Canvas in Class, and Think-Pair-Share. For additional suggestions on engaging students in a large lecture hall, see Professor Andrew Hogue’s ideas in the “TA Take Note” feature.



Tidwell Bible Building 107

Advantages: Computer; projector

Potential challenges: Fixed seating makes alternate arrangements virtually impossible—so long as they are seated, students necessarily face forward. Interaction between students sitting in the back rows and an instructor standing in the front is difficult.

Make the Most of the Space

The center aisle divides each row into groups of three or four seats, automatically creating small groups of students. Encourage communication and collaboration in those groups by giving them the first two minutes of class to review the previous class’s material and two minutes at the end to review that day’s material and ask any questions.

So that students meet more of their classmates and the same students are not always in the back, require everyone to move to a different section of the room each week.

Consider strategies such as Listening Tasks, Post Comments, Expert Panels, Rotate Seating, Canvas in Class, and Think-Pair-Share.

Baylor Theatre's "Found Space": Off the Stage and Into the Community



All the world's a stage, wrote William Shakespeare, and the Baylor Theatre Arts department is finding inventive ways to take advantage of it—hosting performances in campus parking garages, Waco's Cottonland Castle, Cameron Park, and even the Student Living Center swimming pool.

Baylor's state-of-the-art Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center hosts the university's

major dramatic productions in its Jones and Mabee Theatres, but with the theatre department's impressive growth—it has tripled in size in recent years—existing theatre space has proven insufficient for performance demands. Rather than cutting back on student engagement, department chair Dr. Stan Denman turned a challenge into an opportunity. In 2009 he decided to offer students

in his Advanced Directing course a chance to produce scenes from various Shakespeare plays at different locations around campus and in downtown Waco, in what thespians refer to as “found space theatres.”

Forty-minute “found space” adaptations of Shakespeare scenes directed by students are now regular exercises in Denman's Theatre 4365 course, “Advanced

Directing: Shakespeare on Location.” A particularly memorable performance of a scene from *Titus Andronicus* took place in one of the parking garages on campus. Since the adaptation was set in the modern world, vehicles were incorporated into the production, and at one point a character was thrown into the trunk of a car. Her realistic screams were overheard by individuals not viewing the production, prompting several 911 phone calls. (Students now post informational signs around their performance space and alert the police department in advance.)

Denman views these short productions as important learning opportunities for his students that would be difficult to achieve in traditional theatres. Directors are challenged to envision a performance from new perspectives. Working within an environment rather than in front of a background, they experiment with the aesthetics of space, depth, and angles. Additionally, performers must focus in spaces that often include unexpected noises, frequent passersby, and other unforeseeable distractions. Being heard clearly without the support of microphones or theatre acoustics forces them to hone their vocal abilities. All in all, students learn creativity and resourcefulness while

preparing for a wide range of production scenarios, including film.

Moving from traditional theatres to open environments for these exercises has also altered the dramatic experience for audiences. When Denman’s students performed a scene from *Hamlet* in the Student Union Building, the audience followed Ophelia’s movement through a hallway, hearing her mad ravings echoing as they reproduced her wanderings. In another instance, audiences watched an adaptation of *Macbeth* while standing inside the tunnels near the bear pits.

Embracing the concept of “found space,” theatre students focus not on facility limitations but on new and exciting possibilities. That’s how an awed group of viewers found themselves in a torchlit cemetery at night watching Romeo

advance from a distance holding a lantern. By staging a scene amid the bamboo of Cameron Park, students producing a scene from *The Tempest* immediately transported an audience from Central Texas to the

fantastic and exotic realm of Prospero. This willingness to consider new possibilities even led to some very brave actors to perform an unforgettable scene from *The Taming of the Shrew* in the SLC pool.

What began as an experiment in flexible learning environments has become a highlight of the theatre

department. The creative performances Baylor has witnessed over the past several years affirm that the best teaching and learning occurs in a wide range of spaces—even those without walls.



Top 10 Best Practices for Online Teaching

By Baylor University's Electronic Library

Develop a clear, concise, and comprehensive syllabus that includes a course schedule. A well-developed syllabus is the central document that sets the tone for the course. It (a) communicates what, when, and how students will learn, (b) clearly describes to students what they need to do to be successful in the course, (c) communicates faculty and student expectations and responsibilities, and (d) clarifies course policies. Additionally, an organized course schedule with due dates for upcoming course assignments and required readings can help students manage their time more effectively. For online students to be successful, it is essential that the syllabus contains all pertinent course information.

Be present frequently ("show up and teach"). By establishing a strong presence through frequent communication, the instructor minimizes that sense of isolation that students often describe in online learning environments. Sending frequent reminders about missed and upcoming deadlines, encouraging students to post to a Q&A discussion board and promptly responding to those posts, and establishing virtual office hours are possible strategies for engaging with students in online courses.

Include asynchronous and synchronous instructional components. Asynchronous learning provides students with opportunities to engage with content and their peers at different times. Students can also engage in real time, synchronously, with their instructor, peers, and content in the online learning space through video/web conferencing, live chats, and backchannels (Twitter, Today'sMeet, and Chatzy). Ideally, online courses should find a balance between the two components.

Organize your course content/curriculum in modules or units. Organizing course content by theme, week, or some other logical category helps students (a) focus their attention on accomplishing learning objectives, (b) connect ideas and concepts from one module to another, and (c) more easily navigate the course.

Vary content delivery. In addition to textbook chapter readings and PowerPoint presentations, explore other media options for delivering content in online courses. Evaluate and curate pre-existing Web content such as streaming media, research articles, and interactive simulations that align to course learning objectives. Varying the content delivery modalities allows students to engage with content in different ways.

Use video effectively. Video has the ability to distribute instructional content through auditory and visual channels, supporting the multisensory learning style preferences of students. Consider producing or curating videos that are no longer than 10 minutes. Cut lengthy videos into smaller segments or "chunks" that focus on a specific topic or main idea. Video content used in an online course should have a direct connection to the course learning objectives and relevancy to the instructional task at hand.

Vary the learning assessments. Using a variety of assignment types enables students to engage in content and collaborate with their peers in different ways. For example, students can add to discussion forums through a variety of formats; they can voice ideas using microphones and/or Web cameras, and they can create and post links to podcasts or videos hosted on YouTube or Vimeo. Students can use editable online documents and blogs to showcase group or independent research. Take advantage of the various learning technologies that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of content without losing sight of learning objectives.

Design meaningful discussions. Online discussions are an essential element to enhance student-to-instructor, student-to-student, and student-to-content interactions. Constructive online dialog induces higher-order thinking and encourages students to (a) reflect on the different ideas and perspectives of their peers and (b) synthesize and construct ideas and concepts. The design of online discussions needs to include clear and specific requirements and deadlines, ideally through an organized rubric. Simply asking students to answer a given question followed by a few replies to their peers does not engage learners to think more deeply about the course content.

Provide constructive/specific feedback on performance. Providing timely constructive feedback on coursework lets students know how they are performing in the course. To be more efficient, develop rubrics that define the requirements for instructional tasks and create a framework for providing student feedback. In your syllabus, it is essential to clearly state and define the reasonable turnaround time for submitting feedback to students.

Develop and model online interaction by engaging with your students early and frequently. In the course syllabus, clearly state expectations for online communication or “netiquette” by describing appropriate behavior for class vs. individual communication and define acceptable use of the online communication tools. Students frequently take cues from their instructors in online courses, so model appropriate communication through the various online formats (discussion forums, email, audio and video recordings, etc.). For example, the first assignment in the online course may require students to post brief introductions about themselves to a discussion board. The instructor can model expectations for this assignment by posting his or her own introduction to the same discussion board. Also consider making your online course available prior to the start of the semester and encourage students to ask questions should they need assistance.

TA TAKE NOTE with Dr. Andy Hogue

In this segment, a Graduate Student Teacher of Record poses a problem he or she is having with teaching, and an expert faculty member responds.



QUESTION: “HOW CAN I PROVIDE A SAFE SPACE FOR MY STUDENTS TO HONESTLY DISCUSS SOCIALLY CHARGED ISSUES?”

Dr. Andy Hogue,
Lecturer of Political Science
Director of Civic Education &
Community Service Program

Let me first say that some of the most enriching moments of my career have occurred when we chose to wade into these deep, dark waters. Rather than shying away from controversy, I embrace these conversations with a few primary goals. My first goal is to help students become more thoughtful on these topics,

moving away from binaries and “for” or “against” thinking. Secondly, I want my students to embrace complexity and understand that it’s okay to be less than certain of one’s position. Thirdly, I want my students to value diversity of thought and learn that sometimes it’s more important to hear someone else than to fortify one’s own way of thinking. Finally, I challenge students to practice a better, more civil form of democracy than the ones to which we’ve become accustomed.

Here is one method that I have found useful:

ANONYMOUS DISCUSSION

1. Relay 2-3 tough questions to your students (“Why is race still such a difficult issue in our society? Why do people of different races tend to answer this question differently?”).
2. Give students ten minutes to respond on paper. For anonymity’s sake, no names.
3. At the end of ten minutes, students fold their papers and pass them on the count of three. Pass at least five times before opening to preserve anonymity. Sometimes we wad up the papers and throw them across the room, which spreads them further and makes for a lot of fun.

4. Students open the paper and read the responses.
5. Pass again until they have read 3-4 different responses.
6. Once everyone has read several, we engage in discussion. I ask questions such as “What was the most interesting idea you read?” or “What is something you read that you would like to challenge?”

REWARD

We get some very interesting and honest responses out in the open because, rather than having to own the response and risk herself in front of her peers, a student is simply voicing someone else’s opinion, which is a lot easier to do. Without fail, this leads to some of our most interesting discussions of the semester.

To read more of Dr. Andy Hogue’s methods for dealing with controversial topics in classroom discussion (like Modeling, Incorporating Film, and Small Group Discussion, visit the Academy For Teaching and Learning’s website at baylor.edu/ATL.

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES FOR MAJORS

BAYLOR DEPARTMENTS FIND UNIQUE WAYS TO INSPIRE STUDENTS AND TO FOSTER COMMUNITY AMONG THEIR MAJORS. HERE ARE BUT A FEW EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS CAMPUS:



Anthropology: Spring Goat Roast

Students and professors use flint to work goat meat before roasting and eating it.

Classics: Othomerfest, Take-a-Dative Party

Students volunteer to read Homer all day outside of Morrison Hall. They sell baked goods to raise money for their honor society.

English: Friday Afternoon Tea

Students and Professors have tea together on the fourth floor of the beautiful Carroll Science building.

Chemistry: Magic Show

Students showcase their educational talents at the Mayborn Museum as they bring together the art of science and magic.



Modern Languages and Cultures: Singing Competition, Weekly Conversations

Student groups each sing two songs in the target language, one contemporary and one traditional. The winning group is awarded a trophy.

Engineering/Computer Science: (Computer) Game Night

Students have fun exploring the gaming industry through this monthly get-together.





“FIG for Futuris”

Faculty Interest Groups (FIG) are back! The Academy for Teaching and Learning (ATL) cordially invites you to join your colleagues for this Dutch treat luncheon series devoted to the five aspirations of Pro Futuris: FIG for Futuris.

FIG work best when participants attend each of the three sessions on a given topic, so if you register for a FIG, please plan to attend three group meetings.

★ FIG 1

Transformational Education

The purpose of this FIG is to promote active, engaged, and innovative learning across all schools and disciplines. Participants will consider transformation through empathy (bringing the arts—novels, songs, etc.—into any kind of lesson), through technology and through students’ self-assessment.

Facilitators:

Gia Chevis and Mona Choucair
Fridays: Feb. 27, Mar. 20, Apr. 17
11:15am – 12:15pm
Faculty Center #207 (Green Room)

★ FIG 2

Compelling Scholarship

The purpose of this FIG is to review and generate scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The primary aim is to strengthen the connections between teaching and learning on Baylor’s campus. A secondary aim is to raise the profile of Baylor faculty in the area of SoTL. Participants will brainstorm and workshop article ideas.

Facilitators:

Chris Meyer and Anne-Marie Schultz
Thursdays: Feb. 12, Mar. 19, Apr. 9
12:30 – 1:30pm
Faculty Center #207 (Green Room)

★ FIG 3

Informed Engagement

The purpose of this FIG is to help resolve systematic problems locally and internationally through dialogue. Faculty will learn to participate in and to guide student participation in constructive dialogue about controversial and potentially divisive issues both inside and outside the classroom.

Facilitators:

Mia Moody-Ramirez and David Pooler
Wednesdays: Feb. 18, Mar. 18,
Apr. 15
12:20 – 1:20pm
Faculty Center #207 (Green Room)

★ FIG 4

Committed Constituents

The purpose of this FIG is to explore Baptist identity in the context of contemporary American culture and also within Baylor culture. The first session, “Changing Baptist Identity,” will consider how the Baptist image is now shaped by cultural issues (anti-women, anti-abortion, anti-gay, etc.) more than by its old theology of adult baptism, congregational polity and separation of church and state. The second session, “Baptists and Baylor,” will consider how Baptist ties influence the University for good or ill.

Facilitator:

Bill Pitts
Tuesdays: Feb. 24, Mar. 3
12:30 – 1:30pm
Faculty Center #207
February (Yellow Room)
March (Green Room)

★ FIG 5

Judicious Stewardship

The purpose of this FIG is to reflect on your Enneagram personality type as you seek personal and spiritual growth. The Enneagram is an ancient tool used by Christians to understand and transform one’s personality. Enneagram types and corresponding spiritual practices will be described.

Facilitator:

Jon Singletary
Mondays: Feb. 9, Mar. 16, Mar. 30
12:20 – 1:20pm
Faculty Center #207 (Green Room)

SET Seminars for Excellence in Teaching

February

- 3** **The Sixth Week of Class, I Decided I Liked Canvas Better Than Blackboard**
12:30 - 1:30 PM
- 12** **Advising the Honors Thesis**
2:00 - 3:00 PM
- 18** **Minimal Marking & Mandatory Revision: Better Paper Grading for Better Student Writing**
3:35 - 4:35 PM
- 25** **Making the Most of Your Space: Engaging Students in Any Classroom**
12:20 - 1:20 PM

March

- 2** **Modeling: Making Students Build Their Own Concepts**
2:30 - 3:30 PM
- 20** **Teaching Students to Take Mental Health Seriously**
2:30 - 3:30 PM

- 24** **Whiteboarding: Making Students Do the Telling**
3:30 - 4:30 PM
- 31** **Effective Student Teamwork: Tips on Using Team-based Assignments**
12:30 - 1:30 PM

April

- 8** **Teaching Students How to Participate Using Suspense**
2:30 - 3:30 PM
- 15** **A Conversation with a Few of Baylor's Master Teachers**
3:35 - 4:35 PM
- 21** **How to Use Social Media and Blogging to Your Professional Advantage**
3:30 - 4:30 PM

All SET will be held in Jones Library Room #200. For more information and to register, visit www.baylor.edu/ATL.

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To support and inspire a flourishing community of learning.



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& LEARNING