Synthesized Learning Environments Guide

Virtual Delight: Increasing Student Satisfaction and Engagement in Virtual Teaching Environments During the Coronavirus Pandemic and Beyond

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During this presentation, ideas that fall under three different Good Teaching Elements: Connection, Preparation, and Engagement will be discussed. This handout provides examples and links to support the practices considered.

Riddle’s approach to virtual instruction being presented was shared with the Great Lakes community a part of Chautauqua in the Dunes 2020 at the Indiana Dunes State Park, presented at the ICEA Bridging the Gap(s) Virtual 2020 Conference, the 6th annual Indiana Commission for Higher Education Student Advocates Conference “Innovation: Today’s Higher Education Imperative” in December 2020, will be presented at the 2021 Minds, Means, and Material Conference on Writing and Well-Being hosted by the University of Nevada and at the 2021 OLC Innovate: Education Reimagined Conference in March of 2021, was awarded a 2020 Statewide Ivy Tech Fostering Creativity and Innovation Strategy Team Recognition, and was also recognized at the 2020 Society of Innovators at Purdue Northwest Innovation Awards as among the best innovative practices in Northwest Indiana business, education, healthcare, and industry. Previous individual innovation award recipients include: P. Scott Bening, CEO of MonoSol; Congressman Peter J. Visclosky; and Scott Albanese, Founder and CEO of Albanese Confectionery Group.

Example Gathering Questions:

1. My favorite film is...
2. My favorite song is...
3. My favorite book is...
4. Today, I am grateful for...
5. What would be your superpower and why?
6. You must sing karaoke. What song do you pick and why?
7. If you could be immortal, at what age would you choose to stop aging and why?
8. If you had a time machine, would you go back in time or into the future?
9. Tell us about a highlight of your week? And/or tell us something you are noticing in your life, work, or studies because of this course that you may not have prior.
10. How do you feel about courses being virtually delivered? What are your concerns? Does the possibility to attend some classes in your pajamas make you smile?
11. If you could be any animal in the world, what animal would you chose to be and why?
12. If you could earn the same pay no matter what job you did, what profession would you pursue?
13. What fictional world or place would you like to visit and why?
14. What are your favorite foods? What about this food appeals to you? Does this food connect to a memory or your family history?
15. Why do I believe what I believe? What would I like to be true? What if the opposite is true?
16. The best piece of advice I’ve ever been give is...
17. Are there any specific steps you think you could take that would help you improve your work in this course? Another course? At college in general?
18. Do you know your instructors’ names? Do they know yours? How easy or difficult is it for you to talk with your instructors? Why?
19. Identify a role model you respect and tell us why you chose that person. When you think of a successful Black/Latino/White person, who comes to mind and why? What are the characteristics about that role model that you admire?
20. What key individuals made a difference for you in deciding to attend college? Family members? Friends? Were there teachers, counselors, coaches, other students, anyone else who influenced your thinking about whether or not to go to college? What specifically did these people you are mentioning say or do that made a difference for you?
21. What kind of expectations do you think teachers have of you at this college? As an individual? Do these expectations of you seem any different from expectations for other groups of students? Men vs. women? Men of color vs. White men? Other groups?
22. What are the characteristics of a successful college student? How do you see yourself in relation to this model student? During your time in college, when have you felt most successful? What was/is happening that made you feel successful?
23. Are there places, virtual or on campus, where you feel most comfortable? Safe? How would you describe them? What makes them appealing to you?
24. Are there particular individuals here on campus who have made, or are currently making, a positive difference for you? What specifically are they saying or doing that is making a difference?
25. Do you feel that you belong here at this college? Why or why not? If your answer is no, can you think of anything that the college or anyone at the college could do to help you feel that you belong here? Anything you could do to help you feel that you belong here?

26. What are the characteristics of an instructor who you would say is the best type of instructor for you?

27. How do you think most of your instructors would describe you? Do you think they listen to you? Respect you? How about staff? Other students? Explain your answer.

28. Tell us about your best friend. Why is this relationship important? What aspect of messages, writing, or social media is relevant to sustaining this relationship?

29. Do you await the future with more hope or fear? What are your greatest expectations and/or concerns about the future?

30. How often do you step back and reflect on where you are headed? Would more or less self-reflection be good for you?

The Four C’s:
(Sedlovskaya, 2020)

1. Curiosity
2. Candor
3. Courtesy
4. Courage

American Optometric Association’s 20/20/20

TO PREVENT DIGITAL EYE STRAIN

TAKE A 20 SECOND BREAK EVERY 20 MINUTES LOOK AT SOMETHING 20 FEET AWAY

Visit www.aoa.org for more tips on how to protect your eye health and to find a doctor of optometry near you for your annual comprehensive eye exam.
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Example:

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BBC

Also, in April of 2018, the BBC released thousands of sound effects from their library for personal and educational use. Library at: http://bbcsfx.acropolis.org.uk/

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Public Domain Day

So, each year January 1st is Public Domain Day, and the Center for the Study of the Public Domain at Duke University School of Law publishes a list of works that are entering the public domain.

For example, in 2020, the following works first entered the public domain:

1. The first film adaptation of Peter Pan directed by Herbert Brenon: https://archive.org/details/PeterPan1924
2. E.M. Forster’s A Passage to India
3. George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue
To be clear, subsequent arrangements, adaptations, orchestrations, or recordings of these works are copyrighted. So, Craig Armstrong’s adaptation of Rhapsody in Blue used to dramatically introduce Jay Gatsby in Baz Luhrmann’s 2013 film with Leonard DiCaprio is still in copyright.

The sheet music can be used to perform, record, or adapt, for example, Gershwin’s composition, but will likely need permission to use a specific recording of it.

So, what just entered the public domain on January 1, 2021:

The 1925 Universal Pictures The Phantom of the Opera with Lon Chaney, Buster Keaton’s Go West, as well as some silent films featuring Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton, the musical works of Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey, the “Mother of the Blues” and, as far as books: Theodore Dreiser’s An American Tragedy, Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, and... F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby.

More at: https://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2020/

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**Good Teaching**

(The Academy of Education Excellence, 2019)

The faculty at *Ivy Tech Community College – Lake County* (Academy of Educational Excellence, 2019) have continuously grappled with defining good teaching intending a continued exploration of the question, “What does good teaching really look like?”, for we have found that a authentically viable philosophy of teaching is living, evolving, open to feedback, and informed by a measurable feedback loop, consisting of, at least, the following seven elements:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Faculty are committed to clear and open lines of communication with students and other members of the college community. Good teachers thoughtfully choose ways in which they communicate, considering word choice, and demonstrating their commitment to being respectful of and responsive to their students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate in a timely manner with students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o (R) Give students feedback on their work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o (A) Help students understand what they need to do to succeed before it is too late for them to succeed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reply to electronic messages in a timely manner</td>
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<td>o (R) Respond to electronic communication within 24 hours during the work week</td>
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<td>o (S) Demonstrate thoughtful use of electronic communication, asking for face to face or phone conversations for difficult conversations</td>
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<td>• Create clear syllabi for your courses</td>
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<td>o (R) Communicate expectations for the course</td>
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<td>o (S) Evince the desire to support and help students succeed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o (S) Continue to evolve and rework individual course syllabi from term to term, engaging thoughtful reflection on policy choices and course design</td>
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Facility regularly analyzes the effectiveness of their teaching, implement diverse instructional strategies, create outcome-based assessments, and promote engaged learning to enable student attainment and application of knowledge and comprehension.

- Demonstrate proficiency in locating, evaluating and analyzing discipline and academic materials relevant to teaching
  - (R) Know where to find Course Outline of Record (COR) material
  - (R) Understand and demonstrate familiarity with Academic Support and Operations Manual (ASOM)
- Produce a thoughtful and organized course
  - (R) Provide students with a realistic schedule and accommodate changes, interruptions and deviations
  - (R) Create assessments that are in line with course objectives,
  - (S) Scaffold thoughtfully with transparent assignments that lead students to succeed in assessments
  - (A) Thoughtfully select extra course materials and methods for students to access learning supports outside of class
- Recognize and employ a variety of academically sound techniques in conducting class
  - (R) Create and maintain positive and productive classroom environment
  - (S) Choose, be able to provide thoughtful rationale for the choices for class format, and demonstrate skill in conducting class in that format (e.g. lecture, small group, flipped)
  - (S) Choose policies which support the class format
- Utilize online Learning Management System (LMS) to facilitate organization, communication and access to content and participants outside of class.
  - (R) Help students understand how to use notifications
  - (S) Use the LMS to communicate with the individuals and groups
  - (S) Maintain a reasonably up to date gradebook and course, incorporating changes necessitated by adverse weather, different learning paces
- Engage in on-going self-evaluation to create active improvement
  - (R) Solicit feedback from students, both through formal evaluations and informal mid-course evaluations
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<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Faculty are dedicated to their profession, including content knowledge, willingness to engage in the broader institution and fulfill basic obligations. In addition, good teachers are committed to understanding the challenges of equity and success for community college students as well as an ongoing willingness to participate in meaningful professional development.</th>
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<td>• Stay committed to learning, keeping up with developments in the field</td>
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<td>o (R) Observe other faculty teaching similar classes</td>
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<td>o (S) Continue professional development in content area and around teaching methods</td>
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<td>o (A) Remain engaged with professional practice in the field</td>
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<td>• Stay engaged with the broader institution</td>
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<td>o (R) Understand school policies and engage with improving problematic policies</td>
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<td>o (S) Understand how the individual courses you teach fit into different degrees</td>
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<td>o (S) Know the college vision and mission and how it connects to your own teaching</td>
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<td>• Fulfill basic obligations</td>
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<td>o (R) Willingness to “want to” versus “have to”</td>
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<td>o (R) Meet grading and reporting requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work for Equity</td>
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<td>o (S) Engage in professional development around equitable teaching practices</td>
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<td>o (S) Work on developing multi-cultural competence to better serve all students</td>
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<td>o (A) Set and maintain high expectations for all students while providing support for the cognitive and affective needs of each individual student</td>
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(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring

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<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Faculty will actively engage in opportunities to work with others inside and outside of the institution. We value interaction and engagement around shared challenges and goals in departments, in our fields, and in the larger community.</th>
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<td>• Collaborate with community outside of the college</td>
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<td>o (R) Connect with community in authentic ways (church, community organizations, sports)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o (S) Work to understand community support organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o (A) Facilitate connections for students with community support organizations</td>
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(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring
• Collaborate within the college
  o (R) Engage with other faculty members within your department
    ▪ Attend meetings
    ▪ Forge relationships with colleagues
    ▪ Share ideas and materials for courses
  o (S) Engage with non-departmental faculty
    ▪ Participate in college-wide committees and organizations (e.g. Faculty Council)
    ▪ Attend college-wide meetings and events
  o (A) Engage with non-faculty stakeholders at the college
    ▪ Connect with advisors around advising issues
    ▪ Work to understand and make connections with the financial aid department
    ▪ Communicate with maintenance and custodians of the physical space
    ▪ Forge relationships with support staff
    ▪ Work with administrators to identify and tackle problems at the college

(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring

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<th>Character</th>
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<td>Faculty should have good moral values which includes being ethical, honest, and having integrity. The good teacher’s attitude should be one that is positive, passionate, enthusiastic, and confident with a sense of respectfulness and humbleness.</td>
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- Demonstrates ethical approach to interactions
  o (S) Explores implicit bias to uncover problematic behaviors or beliefs
  o (R) Assess students consistently, maintaining high expectations for all students
- Demonstrate integrity and honesty
  o (R) Follow through on commitments
  o (S) Be reliable and willing to acknowledge mistakes
  o (S) Take responsibility for personal choices
- Demonstrate positivity
  o (R) Believe in your students
  o (S) Assume best intentions in interactions
- Demonstrate humility
  o (S) Demonstrate awareness of your own weaknesses
  o (S) Embrace a growth mindset towards skills and tasks outside of your comfort zone
  o (S) Be willing to acknowledge and correct mistakes

(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring

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<th>Engagement</th>
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<td>Faculty engage with their students and colleagues, developing and fostering relationships inside of the institution. Good teachers know their students, their stories, the communities they represent and come from and consistently work to understand their students better, looking for ways to meet them where they are. Good teachers also work to foster a spirit of collegiality within their departments and buildings, including all support staff and administration in addition to other faculty members and students.</td>
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- (R) Maintain a recognizable and friendly presence on campus.

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• (S) Empower students wherever they are at: in structured spaces such as classrooms and clubs, as well as informal spaces such as the student commons and the campus-at-large.
• Exemplify and implement the Student Success Commitments
  o (R) Interact with student by name by first class/end of first week
  o (S) Monitor student behavior and progress closely and intervene immediately, including providing timely feedback on assignment/exams so students can make changes to their learning practices
  o (S) Initiate one-on-one and frequent communications with students early in semester, and maintain communication throughout the semester
  o (S) Conduct highly structured courses with penalties for missed exams and assignments but be flexible when appropriate
  o (A) Know your campus resources and direct students to them when needed
• (A) Review engagement activities for measurable impact and modified as appropriate.
• (A) Enable co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences that foster dynamic on-going experiential learning opportunities
• (A) Take part in service learning, community fairs and outreach, international learning opportunities, student clubs, S.G.A., C.A.B., and so on.
• (A) Develop and sustain an active reputation as a connected team-member, involved in the functions of the college and allied with those linked to our mission.

(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring

Connection

Faculty will create a welcoming class community and safe environment. Good teachers facilitate an approachable, respectful student-instructor relationship that will engage students to learn and exchange ideas.

• Work to establish a welcoming tone, especially during the first few meetings of the class
  o (R) Demonstrate willingness to explain “basics” of college, like office hours, especially in introductory courses
  o (S) Communicate care for students as a whole, and their success in college in particular
  o (S) Explain techniques for student support
  o (A) Attend to students’ uncertainty about belonging and success in college
• Demonstrate respect for student
  o (R) Respond to students in a timely manner
  o (S) Learn names
  o (A) Assume best intentions
• Make time to check on student understanding in a non-graded format, utilizing interactive and in-person modes (student to student, teacher to student).
  o (R) Performance monitoring
  o (S) Small groups and report outs
  o (S) Student as instructor class sessions
  o (A) Conferencing

(R) Researching/Discovering – (S) Skilled/Good Teacher – (A) Advanced/Mentoring
For Further Study

American Optometric Association. 20/20/20 Rule and Digital Eye Strain.


Society of Innovators. Society of Innovators Fall Series. Purdue University Northwest. Fall 2020.