



FACULTY TOOLKIT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

2026-2027



**KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY**

NORMAN J. RADOW COLLEGE OF
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
Office of Academic Innovation

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How can I help students reach their academic goals?

Engage in a Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT) approach for assessment design. Transparent assignment design refers to teaching practices aimed at making learning processes more explicit for students by including the purpose, task, and criteria in the assignment. The goal is to demystify the assessment goals for students. One technique for transparent assessments is to give students an example of a successful submission, in addition to written instructions that explain how the assignment will benefit their learning and the specific knowledge and skills used to complete the assignment. Transparency also includes, as part of its purpose, how the assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the context of the assignment. Transparent assignment design promotes students' success equitably and allows students to not only demonstrate what they learn but also to see assessments as the basis for intellectual and academic challenges, which further a growth mindset.

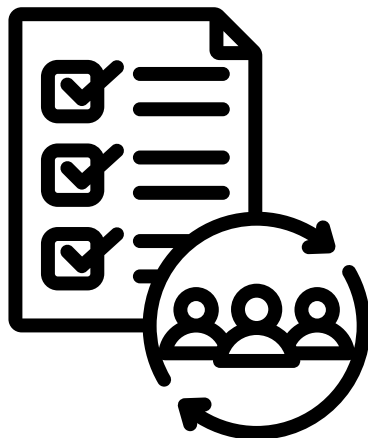
Scaffold complex concepts to foster student understanding. Scaffolding is a way of structuring assignments to support your learning objectives. There are several methods, such as breaking the literature review process into smaller components to help students master each step. Another strategy is to begin with assignments that demand lower-order critical-thinking skills, such as an abstract or annotated bibliography, and build towards more complex assignments, such as a literature review.

Communicate the idea that students can improve their abilities through practice. This growth mindset approach offers multiple opportunities for students to engage with the course material through low-stakes assignments and considers practicing part of the learning process. This approach helps students become more persistent learners and understand that they can improve through effort.

How can I engage my students in self-evaluation?

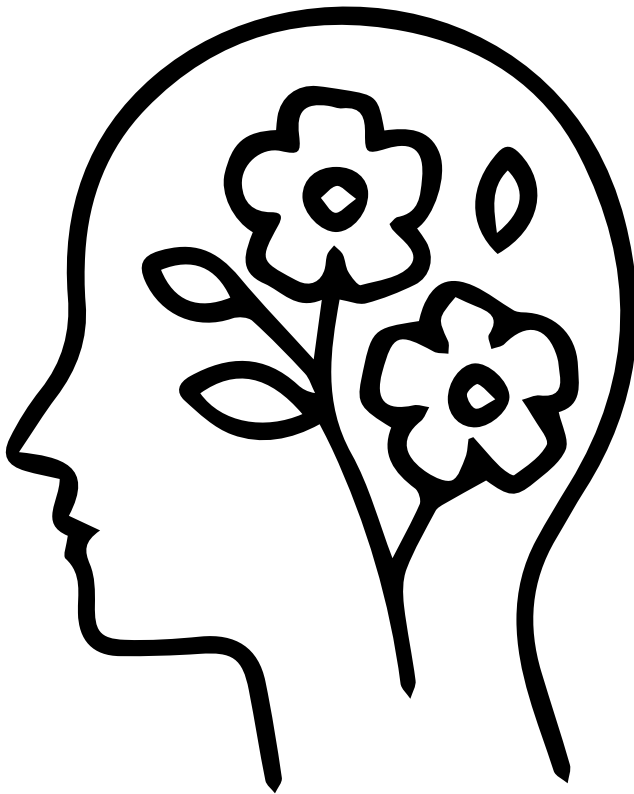
Embed self-assessments for students to monitor their progress at various waypoints in course units, even if it is just a one-sentence prompt. Self-assessment asks students to evaluate their own learning progress, skills, and knowledge. It may involve students reflecting on their own work, setting goals, and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. This approach encourages students to take an active role in their learning, develop metacognitive skills by understanding their own thinking processes, identify their own learning gaps, and develop skills that are valuable beyond the classroom, such as how to set goals, monitor progress, and adjust their performance.

Utilize exam or cognitive wrappers. These tools “wrap around” an assignment to help emphasize the importance of seeing learning as a process, by encouraging students to plan for or reflect on how they can improve their performance. Often when students see their graded assignment, they focus on a single feature – the score they earned, which can lead students to miss out on the learning opportunities self-assessment can provide. Various activity wrappers can focus on writing, class discussions, or exams, and they can be given before or after an assignment. These exercises foster the development of students’ metacognitive skills and help students build a growth mindset by focusing on improving learning.



How can I foster a growth mindset in my classroom?

Cultivate a growth mindset for yourself. A growth mindset means believing you can improve, being ready to try new things, and continuing to search out new pedagogical approaches. This also means that when something does not go well in your class, you view it as a chance to learn and grow. Studies show students in growth-mindset classrooms report being more motivated to work hard in that class and feel that their professor cares about their learning.



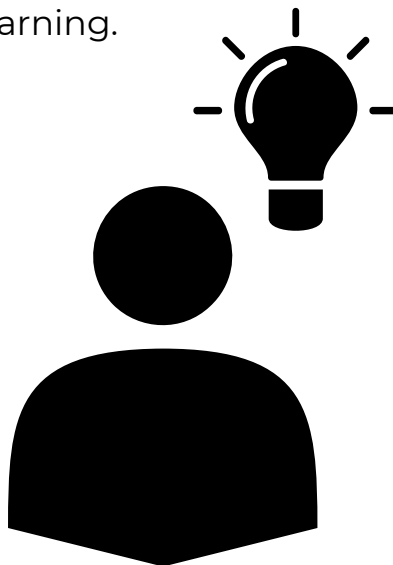
- Value effort and persistence over performance.
- Frame language around positively encouraging growth and avoid “fixed mindset” language that denies a student’s ability to succeed.
- Build error training into the language you use in.
- Praise a student’s efforts to improve their mastery of content.
- Find ways to support student growth.
- Self-reflect on your own teaching.

University of North Texas Division of Digital Strategy and Innovation CLEAR

How can I offer feedback to students to encourage their growth and success?

Utilize KSU's opportunities for feedback including Early Alert and Midterm Grades. Early Alert starts in the fourth week of the semester and provides an intervention early enough for the student to drop the course and save some tuition money or allow them to get the support they need to be successful. Supplying students with a Midterm Grade offers advisors a holistic image of how students are performing and allows them to triage at-risk students. Come back and add resources.

Develop formative assessments, which take place during instruction, to measure student learning as you teach. Formative assessments can serve as a powerful diagnostic tool to monitor progress, identify areas of improvement, and guide instructional planning. Formative assessments are generally low-stakes and are as simple as in-class quiz questions on "Kahoot!", an exit question, Think-Pair-Share, and other simple methods of feedback. Formative in-class assessments help capture levels of students' level of understanding so you can make small, immediate decisions on how to support student learning.



How can I involve students in their academic progression?

Employ course engagement tools such as intelligent agents in D2L to offer personalized feedback to students for positive engagement and progress. Emails can be programed to go out when students improve over a previous score, to remind students when items are due, or to nudge students who have been inactive for a period of time. Depending on the level of the course, consider planning activities that require frequent logins to the course to keep students engaged and thinking about their own progress toward their goals. These logins should go beyond a simple click; rather, they should require a response. Such interactions encourage ongoing engagement and connection with the course and its topics. Consider employing self-assessments at various waypoints in course units, even if it is just a one-sentence prompt. Such assessments promote self-directed learning and require students to reflect on their role in their own learning.

Solicit feedback from students through surveys. To offer students feedback in a productive way, you might first consider gathering student perspectives. Collecting student feedback is an important part of any continuous improvement practice and will help identify areas for development and clarification within a course. Explain your reasons for requesting feedback and let students know whether you plan to act on their responses during the semester or in a future semester. For example, a midterm survey is early enough in the semester to allow for immediate changes before the end of the term.



How can I remove educational obstacles for students?

Integrate Open Education Resources (OER) to reduce course costs and provide accessibility for all students. OERs are educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt, and re-share them, depending on the license. Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG) is a USG initiative that promotes student success by supporting the implementation of affordable alternatives to expensive commercial textbooks and routinely offers grants to faculty to support the development of no- and low- cost materials to ensure textbook costs do not keep students from succeeding in class or graduating.

Create a course map. Course mapping fosters clarity and showcases the alignment between the learning outcomes, course materials, and assessments. This helps both you and your students see the relationship between instruction and assessment and set (?) course expectations. Additionally, by charting out the entire course, you can identify potential gaps, redundancies, or misalignments.

Design courses with a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. UDL is a teaching approach that accommodates the needs and abilities of all learners by presenting information in multiple ways and providing students options for demonstrating their learning. For example, consider providing text options when audio is used and audio or text options when visuals are used. Also consider giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in different ways such as the choice between a paper, presentation, or project. The UDL approach of offering something to all types of learners in your class fosters a growth mindset.

How can students demonstrate they have learned the material?

Integrate Project-Based Learning (PBL) to help students develop and improve self-reliant, critical thinking skills. PBL involves students designing, developing, and constructing hands-on solutions to a problem. PBL, depending on the course and student level, can range from a single activity to a series of activities designed to help students develop a deeper understanding of a particular topic or subject. These activities range from hands-on experiments and simulations to research projects. Typically, PBL involves identifying a problem, devising a potential solution, and refining the solution. Often PBL is collaborative and interdisciplinary in nature. Unlike a typical content-focused project, PBL is driven by student inquiry, and the emphasis is on the process, not the final product. This learning approach has been shown to significantly improve students' learning outcomes and positively contribute to the academic achievement of students across all populations, increase student engagement, and prepare students for life after graduation.

Employ peer-to-peer activities during class. This approach requires learners to actively participate in the learning process and fosters collaboration among participants while encountering different perspectives for a deeper understanding of the subject matter. One popular in class approach is "Think-Pair-Share," which can work classes of all sizes. First, the instructor poses a question and asks students to think about it. Then, they discuss their response with one person sitting near them in a pair; next the pair shares what they discussed with the class or other pairs. Other forms of peer-to-peer activities can include peer review, through which students evaluate and provide feedback on one another's work, or collaborative assignments that have students work together to discuss concepts or find solutions. Peer collaboration brings active learning into the classroom and strengthens comprehension as students develop through discussion, revision, and feedback.

How can I connect my course to social issues and real- world problems?

Incorporate, where possible, current events that are relevant to your course content that develop connections to local, state, national, or global issues. Such connections help students recognize the relevance of your course while researching, analyzing, and discussing current events hones media literacy skills, expands worldviews, and encourages informed participatory citizenship.

Develop creative assessments which require students to solve real-world problems using the skills and knowledge described by your course outcomes. Problem based learning (PBL) allows any issue to be tackled and made relevant. Real life scenarios have been shown to improve student motivation, recognize the lack of a singular solution to complex problems, engage in team building, and gain a sense of connection with the course material.

Engage in service learning to create connections between the classroom, local, and global living. Service learning is recognized as a high-impact practice through which students learn theories in the classroom and work in the community to put those theories into practice. At the end of this experience, students engage in reflection, which deepens their understanding of what has been taught. The goal is for this cycle of theory, practice, and reflection to broaden both knowledge and critical thinking skills. Service learning connects the classroom with real-world experiences in the community, and students who participate in it are more deeply involved in their local communities and become more engaged citizens.

How can I prepare my students for their desired career pathway?

Connect your course to workforce readiness. Be transparent about how the content, skills, and assessments in the course will assist students in their professional lives. Inform students of the various career opportunities that align with the course you are teaching. See if other professors will speak to your class about their research and excite students to be future majors.

Inform students about opportunities for internships, mentored research, practicums, field-based learning experiences, service learning, and study abroad. Sharing these opportunities in your class helps students connect their coursework to their career goals. If possible, include research assignments on careers and industries associated with your course. Learning from professionals or completing an informational interview with an employer can excite students about your discipline. Consider requiring or giving extra credit to students who attend a job fair or other career event, or have students create a resume or do a practice interview.

Utilize to have students apply knowledge. An authentic assessment is one that requires the application of what students have learned to a new, often real-world, situation. As such, these assessments are often tied to real world constraints and challenges, offering students the ability to use what they have learned in class while also recognizing the subtleties of applying knowledge effectively. Because they emulate real world tasks, authentic assessments are often motivating for students and connect them to their future professions. However, they can require more time to assess and more effort to develop, which is why they often work well as formative feedback with the faculty facilitating and peers reviewing for the assessment. to have students apply knowledge.

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1

Connect

How can the content, skills, and assessments in your course assist students in their professional lives?

2

Inform

What opportunities can you inform your students about to help them connect their coursework to their career goals?

3

Utilize

How can students apply the knowledge and skills they've accumulated into a real-world assessment?

How can I foster student success through collaboration?

Consider increasing student engagement through collaborative learning in cooperative groups through games, role play, or competition. These types of activities can foster collaboration in a constructive manner while working towards a common goal. These types of activities encourage communication, help students gain additional perspectives on course concepts, and encounter common group dynamic issues they will need for their professional success.

Encourage students to form a reading or study group to discuss the required readings key ideas, terms, or concepts. Consider rewarding students by asking them to have their group generate a brief report or invite them to help lead classroom discussions.



Collaborative activities & tools

- Group brainstorming & investigation in shared documents.
- Group discussions with video conferencing and chat.
- Group projects: creation.
- Peer learning, critiquing, giving feedback.
- Group reflection & social annotation activities
- Group learning with polling and team competitions

Cornell University – Center for Teaching Innovation

How can I help students develop an ethical grounding?

Incorporate an Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol activity to teach students research ethics. This is necessary to teach students how to comply with the university's ethical standards as well as U.S. federal regulations. IRB's ethics review and approval is required for all research studies before participant recruitment, data collection, or dataset access.

Embed ethical and civil considerations where appropriate. Civic engagement fosters abstract and higher order thinking and often requires multidisciplinary thinking in order to propose effective solutions to pressing social, environmental, educational, and economic issues. Facilitated opportunities, such as case studies, debates, or role-playing activities, not only encourage participants to develop their own views but promote a better understanding of opposing viewpoints and the various complications that are contained within dynamic problems. Issues with a policy element – public housing, transport, climate change, homelessness, etc., can deepen engagement, critical thinking skills, and increase their awareness of civic issues.

Encourage perspective-taking by which students are asked to engage with new information to better understand different experiences and viewpoints. By exploring other perspectives, students are encouraged to place themselves in other people's shoes and learn to appreciate the differences between each other's values, counteract bias, and find empathetic solutions to problems.

How can I support students in taking initiative in their own learning?

Encourage creative thinking as a first step to generating solutions.

Creative-thinking activities can foster judgement-free thinking that can be an obstacle for some students' engagement. Some students, for example, dominate brainstorming and class discussions, while others fear judgment for their ideas. Creative thinking, however, such as asking students to imagine the worst possible solution to an issue, can validate all approaches and ideas.

How can I foster students' organizational abilities?

Embed goal-setting activities in coursework. Having students set specific course- related goals and develop strategies for accomplishing their stated goals can help them gain a sense of purpose, assist with time management, and develop a growth mindset.

How can I help my students become engaged citizens?

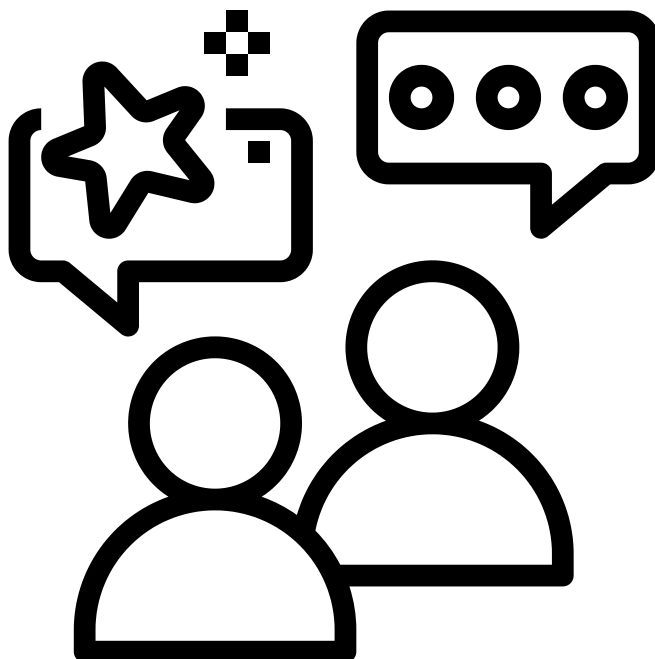
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Integrate activities through which students evaluate the credibility of sources. Learning to evaluate the credibility of information encourages students to think critically about the content they encounter. Primary sources teach students that records reflect the personal, social, political, or economic points of view of those who created them and teach students to question and analyze information. Such exercises help students develop well-supported academic work as well as responsible, ethical, and well-informed decision-making skills.



Appendix I: Resources for Classroom Use

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