

IDEas: Cultivating Connection

Office of Online & Professional Learning Resources (OPLR) Strategies and News for Fall 2024



Cultivate More Human Connection in Your Classroom This Semester

As we settle into the Fall semester, we hope your online classrooms are thriving! But if you notice the initial excitement fading as the days shorten, this issue is here to help. Inside, you'll find practical ways to foster stronger human connection (and boost motivation) in your classroom. We feature three quick ways to build empathy and encourage peer support, highlight the top five updates to our *Level Up* professional development courses, and share some tested ways to build a tighter-knit student community in our faculty spotlight. When you and your students need a lift this season, we hope you'll try these new ways to connect during the winter months ahead!

Featured: Three Easy Activities to Build a Stronger Classroom Community

If you're looking to [foster a stronger sense of community in the classroom, try out one \(or more\) of these practical and engaging activities](#). From problem-solving with peers to growing cultural intelligence and empathy, these activities are easy to implement and can greatly enhance student engagement, motivation, and collaboration.

Refresh Your Online Teaching Knowledge with Our Revised *Level Up* Courses

See the [top five changes to our *Level Up* courses](#), now streamlined with new resources, enhanced media, and more opportunities for personalized feedback from our instructional designers. These courses are designed to support you in creating a high-quality, more engaging classroom experience, and you can earn digital badges upon their completion.

If you have an idea for an article or would like to contribute to the next issue, let us know!

Get in Touch

Faculty Spotlight: Marya Wilson, PhD, Assistant Professor, UW-Stout

SMGT instructor [Marya Wilson shares how she builds a strong classroom community through discussion boards and guest speakers](#). Discover how these strategies can motivate students, support professional growth, and enrich the online learning experience in this issue's faculty spotlight.



Meet the Instructional Design and Media Team



Our instructional design and media teams collaborate with faculty across the Universities of Wisconsin to deliver engaging and high-quality online courses for our students. Read more about [instructional design](#) and [media](#) on our websites.

Want More?

□ Check out our tip sheets on [storytelling](#), [icebreakers](#), and [interacting with students online](#). Likewise, our Instructional Strategies & Course Design Showcase presents several ways to foster human connection virtually. Check out the examples under [Community Building Activities](#) and [Student Engagement](#), and click below to see this issue's featured example.

Check out this issue's featured example from the [Instructional Strategies & Course Design Showcase](#)

[About the Showcase](#)



Which way might you try to build a stronger classroom community?

Cultivating Connection - Select one of the following options:

Icebreakers like the rice activity

Group work like the troika consulting activity

Discussions where students are encouraged to share lived experiences

Developed by the ID Team, the Showcase website highlights live course examples that demonstrate best practices in online teaching and learning.

Encouraging professional networking by hosting guest speakers

Note: *You'll notice that our name has changed to the Office of Online Learning & Professional Resources. As we are in the process of rebranding, you may see some references to our old name.*

[Explore more resources from the Office of Online & Professional Learning Resources](#)

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