



BUILDING CONNECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

A Toolkit for Instructors in the Faculty of Arts



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McGill University

This project is the result of a collaboration between representatives of Campus Life and Engagement, the Arts Undergraduate Society, Teaching and Learning Services, and Faculty of Arts Student Affairs (OASIS) who serendipitously discovered a shared perspective and vision for building connections and community in the classroom.

For more information, please contact Teaching and Learning Services at tls@mcgill.ca.

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Welcome to the Toolkit

Dear Colleagues,

Why is it important to build a sense of intellectual community in the classroom? Some will say that communities emerge organically, and that conscious and purposeful actions aimed at constructing community in the classroom are not necessary. Yet, I regularly meet students who experience a sense of anomie, disconnectedness, and even isolation throughout their academic careers. Such encounters made me wonder about whether it was possible to purposefully build and create classroom communities that would foster a sense of belonging and through this, a more meaningful experience of knowledges and skill acquisition.

The idea of a Toolkit that professors could easily access emerged as something that was tangible, useful, and would represent a beginning effort by the Faculty of Arts to not only adopt ways of supporting student success and well-being, but do so in a manner that upheld the principle of care.

Throughout the process of developing this Toolkit, I have learned that there are numerous colleagues in the Faculty of Arts with whom this notion of intellectual community resonates. They have already been teaching with this in mind and are looking for ways to enhance what they have implemented. We have much to learn from them. Others wonder about the role that they could play in facilitating a stronger sense of an intellectual community; they are interested in learning about and adopting new strategies in the classroom. Finally, there are those who have not considered this in the past, and who may be interested. We hope that you will find something in this Toolkit that is helpful.

This Toolkit provides instructors with tangible strategies for course design, assisting students in difficulty, getting feedback from students on the Toolkit, and self-care. Integrating any one of these strategies will take some time and energy, but the reward will be movement toward a richer and more fulfilling classroom environment for both you and your students. We are excited to present this menu of possibilities to the academic community and look forward to continuing to build upon the foundations that already exist.

Regards,
Lucy

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Preamble

What is this toolkit for?

The *Faculty of Arts Toolkit for Building Connections in the Classroom* is a collection of tools designed for instructors in the Faculty of Arts to support you as you build community in your classrooms. It is clear that Arts instructors are already using their own strategies to do this, so this toolkit also aims to showcase the expertise of instructors in the faculty.

How is this toolkit structured?

In this toolkit, tools are divided into four sections: “Course Design”, “Students in Difficulty”, “Getting Feedback from Students on the Classroom Community” and “Self-Care for Instructors”. The first section includes tools to incorporate into your course design and delivery, exploring three definitive temporal periods in a course: the preparatory stage, the first day of class and ongoing. The second section includes strategies for responding to students in difficulty with confidence and care. “Getting Feedback from Students...” is the third section of the toolkit and suggests ways to gather feedback from students about their experiences of community in the classroom. The fourth section acknowledges that the wellbeing of instructors, along with the wellbeing of students, should also be a priority. Each tool includes a step-by-step procedure, example or testimonial and a link to further reading. We have also included a tracking sheet to stimulate reflection on the tools used.

What will you find in this toolkit?

The tools in this toolkit have been collected through interviews conducted with current instructors in the Faculty of Arts, students and members of the McGill community, as well as research in educational development. As you read through this toolkit, you will find a variety of strategies for a variety of contexts. Please choose the ones that best suit your context.

We are also interested in how this project may spark reflection on the notion of classroom communities and begin a dialogue. Should you wish to partake in this discussion, or have comments, questions or an interest in contributing to the project, please contact us at marcy.slapcoff@mcgill.ca and kira.smith@mcgill.ca.

Best wishes,
Marcy and Kira

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SECTION 1: Course Design

Introduction

The tools in this section provide strategies to incorporate into your course design and delivery. They are organized in three categories defined by the time in which you might use them. These tools will help you to get to know students, and enhance their learning and engagement with the course material.

Tools in this Section

Preparatory

1. Course Outline Checklist
2. Welcome Email to Students
3. Three Principles for Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

First Day of Class

4. Introduction Cards
5. Introductory Student Survey
6. Student Response to Course Outline
7. Classroom Guidelines

Ongoing

8. Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory
9. One Minute Paper/Free Write
10. Think-Pair-Share
11. Paired Interviews
12. Small Group Work for Consensus-Building
13. Small Group Work for Exploring Divergent Perspectives
14. Reflection on Diversity of Identity
15. Moderating Complex, Meaningful Discussions

Tool #1: Course Outline Checklist

The main goal of this checklist is to help you assess how well your course outline communicates a tone of promise, inclusivity and respect. You can use the checklist to self-assess your course outline or give it to a colleague with a request to review your outline and provide feedback.

Suggested procedure:

- Prepare your course outline following the McGill guidelines. (<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-design/outline>)
- Use this checklist to assess how well certain elements of the outline contribute to community building.
 - Tone is positive, respectful, inviting.
 - Communicates high expectations for all students.
 - Fosters positive motivation.
 - Describes value of course.
 - Promotes content as a vehicle for learning.
 - Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction.
 - All course elements are clearly communicated: instructor info, TA info, description of course content, learning outcomes, assessment strategies, instructional strategies, materials, schedule and policies.
 - Provides a link to support services for students (<https://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/get-support>).

More info:

Harnish, Richard J., Rory O'Brien McElwee, Jeanne M. Slattery, Sue Frantz, Michelle R. Haney, Cecilia M. Shore, and Julie Penley. "Creating the Foundation for a Warm Classroom Climate." *Observer Magazine* (2011): n. pag. *Association for Psychological Science*. Web. <<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/creating-the-foundation-for-a-warm-classroom-climate>>.

Tool #2: Welcome Email to Students

Sending a welcome email to students before the first day of class can be a great way to greet students, convey important information about the course and set a positive tone for the semester. Use this template as a guide and modify it to fit your own style and voice.

Suggested procedure:

- Use a welcoming subject line:
"Subject: Welcome to ENGL 100"
- Begin by addressing the student by their preferred first name using myCourses programming (see instructions below*).
"Dear Ali,"
- Create an opening paragraph in which you introduce yourself as the instructor and provide the course name, date, and location. As well, convey any preliminary thoughts that set the tone.
"Welcome to ENG 100! I am the instructor for this course which begins on Wednesday, September 4, in Leacock 132. I'm pleased that you have chosen this course and I am looking forward to a semester of interesting discussions and exchange."
- Provide some background information in the body of the email. Discuss your experience with the course and your areas of academic expertise. Consider explaining how you are personally connected to the course material.
"This will be my fourth time teaching this course at McGill, but I previously taught at Queen's University. My expertise is in Restoration literature; however, I remember clearly how my interest and passion developed from introductory courses such as this one."
- Describe your goals for the class and your plans to communicate how students might achieve these.
"Whether you took this course because you have always been interested in literature or because it simply fit in your schedule as an elective, my goal is to spark your passion for learning and discovery. This will require your engagement as much as mine. On the first day of class, we will be discussing what you can do to succeed in this class, as well as what you think I can do to support you in the classroom. Think about what I can do to ensure that you are best able to learn and to contribute to the class."
- Briefly describe the class experience and learning environment so that students might understand how the classroom would function as a community.
"While I will lecture using a guiding PowerPoint for the first thirty minutes of each class, this course will be largely discussion-based. Throughout the term, you and your peers will collaboratively analyze texts and share your thoughts with the class. I anticipate the classroom developing into a space where we all work together to develop ideas and grow. All additional information about the course can be found within the syllabus, which is accessible on MyCourses and will be distributed on the first day of class. I will also dedicate time during our first class to addressing any questions you might have."

- Close the email with a welcoming message.
“I look forward to meeting you Wednesday and to the semester ahead.
Kind regards,
Professor X”

* Instructions for Programming for Personalized Emails in myCourses

myCourses allows you to easily send personalized emails. Simply insert the phrase {FirstName}, which will be automatically replaced with the first name of the email recipient. Blind carbon copy (Bcc) the class and send the email! For example, to send an email that begins with “Dear Marcy”, you would write, “Dear {FirstName}”.

To ensure that students who register for your course during the add/drop period also see the email, post it as an announcement on myCourses.

More info:

Legg, Angela M., and Janie H. Wilson. "E-Mail from Professor Enhances Student Motivation and Attitudes." *Teaching* 36.3 (2009): 205-11. *Teaching of Psychology*. Teaching Psychology. Web.<<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00986280902960034>>.

Tool #3: Three Principles for Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Along with the rising participant population at McGill comes the growing need to reach an increasingly diverse student body while still meeting their individual learning needs. Students in your classes vary in readiness levels, life experiences, perceptual differences, language abilities, and more. UDL practices are designed to help reduce barriers to learning and to support teaching strategies that help meet the needs of all learners.

Consider the following principles from the McGill Office for Students with Disabilities. Find out more here: www.mcgill.ca/osd.

Principle I: provide multiple means of representation

To reduce barriers to learning, it is important to ensure that key information is equally perceptible to all learners. There is no one medium to represent information that is equally accessible for all students. Information conveyed solely through sound, for example, is not equally accessible to all learners and is especially inaccessible for learners with hearing disabilities, for learners who need more time to process information, or for learners who are English second language learners. Thus, it is essential to provide options, for instance graphic organizers are a great way to visually represent complex concepts, capture the essential components of a lecture, and organize thoughts and ideas.

Principle II: provide multiple means of action and expression

Providing multiple means of action and expression (the how of learning) means providing different ways for students to demonstrate what they know and what they have learned. Assessments are designed to measure knowledge, skills, and abilities. Providing students with a single method of evaluation such as multiple choice exams or written assignments can create barriers for students with Learning Disabilities, students who are English second language learners, or students from different cultural backgrounds. Application of UDL to assessment used in postsecondary courses has the potential to ensure that the variability among learners is addressed.

Principle III: provide multiple means of engagement

What opportunities are available for learners to be actively engaged? Knowing that active participation is key to learning, consider adopting various ways that students can actively participate in class. Active students strengthens learning and, ultimately, the effectiveness of your instruction. Start by identifying the potential barriers to engagement in your class. While some students may thrive giving presentations and actively participating in front of the class, it can create barriers for other students, such as students with anxiety or depression, but also students who come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Individual learner variability is the norm not the exception. It is essential to provide options for students to engage with the material, such as, small group discussions, online discussions, or group presentations to give all students the opportunity to equally engage with their learning.

First Day of Class Tools

Tool #4: Introduction Cards

Introduction cards are index cards submitted by students at the beginning of the semester, which contain their photo and describe their interests and career plans. This information can make you aware of students' experience and concerns, and be better able to link your teaching approach to the make-up of the current student cohort.

Suggested procedure:

- Either give students blank index cards and provide the questions below in-class, or create your own cards using the template below on half-size pieces of paper.
- Distribute the cards on the first class following the add/drop period and ask students to return a completed copy by the next class.
- Collect all completed cards and consolidate the responses.
- Consider explaining how the course content relates to the various areas of specialization and plans of students.

* myCourses provides a class list with photos and students' preferred name so you may not wish to ask for these items.

Sample card

Please attach a photo.	Name _____
	Commonly used first name or nickname _____
	Area of interest _____ _____
	Course-related experience _____ _____
	Reason for taking this course _____ _____

Adapted from Prof. Chantale Westgate, Desautels Faculty of Management

Tool #5: Introductory Student Survey

The Introductory Student Survey is conducted at the beginning of the semester and asks for basic, simple responses to help you get to know your students. It can allow you to gather information from classes of any size.

Those with large classes may find it efficient to use Polling @ McGill (Student Response Systems), which can be a very quick and thorough method of tabulating student responses to multiple choice **and** short answer questions (<http://www.mcgill.ca/polling/>). This activity will also allow students to become comfortable using Polling @ McGill, which may be useful for future course activities.

Suggested procedure:

- Determine the questions you would like to ask students.
- Decide upon the method you will use to gather information (show-of-hands, print-based, electronic, etc.)
- Provide students with the reason you are gathering this information.
- Conduct the survey.
- Review and/or synthesize results.
- Report back to students on highlights and/or trends. Describe what you have learned and how you will respond.

Example from Prof. Ken Ragan, Intro to Physics (600 students)

Prof. Ragan conducts this survey at the beginning of the semester using a paper-based questionnaire so students can add drawings and doodles if they like. He summarizes the results in a few PowerPoint slides for one of the subsequent classes, including any off-the-wall, whimsical drawings and answers. He reports that students appear to appreciate this survey, in part because they see that their own worries are often shared by many of their classmates. Prof. Ragan repeats this activity at the end of the term to see if the attitudes of the students towards physics have changed.

Sample questions:

- What is your background in physics?
- Summarize your feelings on taking this course.
- What does physics mean to you?
- What can I do to help make this course go better?

More info:

Garrett, Jennifer, and Mary Clement. "First Day of Class Activity: The Interest Inventory." *Faculty Focus*, Magna Publications, 13 Aug. 2018, <www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/first-day-of-class-activity-the-interest-inventory/?st=FFdaily>.

Hermann, A.D. and Foster, D.A. "Fostering approachability and classroom participation during the first day of class." *Active Learning in Higher Education*, Vol 9, Issue 2 (2008): pp. 139 – 151. <<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1469787408090840>>.

Tool #6: Student Response to Course Outline

In a typical first class, you may read the course outline aloud to students or have them read it on their own and ask questions. With this strategy, you can use the outline as a conversation starter about expectations – both yours and students’.

Suggested procedure:

- Introduce the activity and provide instructions. For homework, ask students to write you a letter that focuses on selected aspects of the outline. Explain that the purpose of the assignment is to engage them more deeply with the course outline and get their feedback from the onset. This assignment is informal, meaning that it is neither required nor graded.
- Review and/or synthesize results.
- Report back to students on highlights and/or trends. Describe what you have learned and how you will respond.

Sample instructions

Write a short letter (500-800 words) in which you answer 3-5 of the following questions. Rather than an outline or a list of bullet points, write a letter in your own voice (don’t worry about perfect grammar or spelling).

Questions:

- What does my first section mean to you?
- What do you think about my distinction between assessing and grading?
- Pick one point in the outline you like. Pick one you don’t. Tell me why you selected these.
- What do you think might discourage you from achieving the outcomes listed on pages 1-2. How, specifically can I help you reach them?
- How might this course contribute toward your intellectual, personal or professional goals?
- What do you think of the attendance policy? The late policy? Do you understand the reasons for those policies?
- What do you like or find most reassuring about taking this course? The least reassuring?
- Tell me anything you would like me to know about you as a student.

More info:

Hafer, G. *Embracing Writing: Ways to Teach Reluctant Writers in Any College Course*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Tool #7: Classroom Guidelines

As a complement to the course outline, Classroom Guidelines are mutually-agreed upon norms that help to establish a positive learning environment. Above all, the goal of the Classroom Guidelines is to foster an environment that promotes academic growth for all students and emphasizes the collective responsibility of instructors and students. They are best introduced at the beginning of the semester and revisited throughout the semester.

Suggested procedure:

Explain why you are establishing Classroom Guidelines, emphasizing that all members of the classroom community, not only the professor, have the responsibility to hold one another accountable to the guidelines:

- Provide a list of norms as a starting point for discussion (see Sample Classroom Guidelines below).
- Give students 5 minutes to reflect on guiding questions such as:
 - Which norms would you like to keep?
 - Why? Which would you change? Why?
 - What norms, if any, would you like to add? Why?
- Break up students into groups of three or four. Give each group sticky notes or cue cards to develop a revised Classroom Guidelines document. Allot a specific amount of time (e.g. 10 minutes) for this activity.
- Collect the papers and write suggestions on the board. Consolidate all group norms and form the first draft of the Classroom Guidelines. Alternatively, collect the responses and synthesize them on your own for discussion during the next class.
- Once the first draft is complete, open the guidelines for discussion and agree on the second draft of the document.

Throughout the semester, frequently refer back to the document, distributing it to students and making an online copy available. Learning may look different for each student, so when a student does not follow a guideline, it may be because they are engaging in a different way. Consider asking students if the guidelines are still fostering a positive learning environment for them or if any guidelines needed to be added or changed. You might ask students to contact you directly for their feedback if they don't feel comfortable sharing it with the class.

Sample Classroom Guidelines

This is a living document and may be altered to fit the needs of all members of our classroom community. All members of this course, including Professor X, are expected to uphold the following norms, which have been discussed and agreed upon by the class.

- Treat each other with respect.
- Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to the class in the form they feel most comfortable (e.g. written, spoken).
- Listen carefully while another person is speaking.
- Respect all members' right to speak and share their thoughts – one member should not dominate discussion.
- Direct arguments towards opinions and ideas, not the individual stating them.
- Students can ask questions at any time, but following a raised hand.

- Begin on time and end on time.
- Everyone may take a moment to step out of the classroom discreetly without explanation at any time.
- Cellphones should only be used outside of the classroom in emergency situations.

More info:

"Guidelines for the Use of Mobile Computing and Communications Devices in Classes at McGill." McGill University, 11 June 2010. Web. <<https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/Mobile-Computing-Commun-devices-MC2-guidelines-11June2010.pdf>>.

Tool #8: One Minute Paper/Free Write

Discussions can be great strategies for promoting active learning but all too often they fall short – either students provide the answers they think the instructor is looking for, they hold back and allow a small number of their peers to engage or the instructor, without realizing it, dominates the conversation. To overcome this situation, many instructors move back and forth among lecture segments, whole class discussions and small group work. What follows is one suggestion for using writing to increase participation in class discussions.

Suggested procedure:

- Pose a question, either by writing it on the board or projecting it. Open-ended questions are more likely to generate more discussion and higher order thinking.
- Have students reflect and jot down notes in response to the question (1 – 5 min).
- Emphasize content over form, so that students focus on expressing their ideas given the time limitation.
- Re-group as a whole class and ask one or two students to read their responses. Each time this activity is carried out, you can intentionally choose different people to read their responses and kick-start the discussion.

More info:

Brookfield, S.D, and Preskill, S. *Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005.

Cashin, William E. "Effective Classroom Discussions, IDEA Paper #49." *IDEA Papers* (2011): n. pag. The IDEA Centre. Web.
<http://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA Paper_49.pdf>.

Davis, Barbara Gross. "Encouraging Student Participation in Discussion." *Tools for Teaching* (1993): n. pag. Web.
<http://pan.intrasun.tcnj.edu/501/501resources/Encouraging_Participation_in_Discussions.pdf>.

Tool #9: Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory

The information in this section is from McGill's First Peoples' House. Find out more here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/fph/>.

Many post-secondary institutions across Canada have adopted policies that institutionalize the acknowledgement of the traditional territory at major events, such as convocations, new participant, staff and faculty orientations, and award ceremonies. Acknowledging the traditional territory and its history strengthens the relationship between post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities. It also educates the University community on Indigenous peoples in Canada, and provides a welcoming environment for Indigenous participant, staff, and faculty to engage with the academy. Such a policy is currently under development at McGill University. The purpose of the policy is to institutionalize the acknowledgment of the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations to ensure that:

- recognition is given to the land's history in order to strengthen and cultivate relationships with the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations, and other Indigenous communities;
- the McGill community is exposed to and educated about Indigenous histories, cultures, and identities;
- McGill University provides a welcoming space for Indigenous participants, staff, faculty, and alumni.
- Indigenous participants see themselves reflected in our campus community and help contribute to their success and well-being at McGill.

This policy shall apply to convocations; orientations for new participants, staff, and faculty; and award ceremonies at McGill University. McGill community members are welcome to use this statement at all other events, including before in-class presentations:

"We acknowledge that McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today."

DEFINITIONS:

1. Traditional Territory refers to the geographic area identified by a First Nation to be the area of land which they and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied and/or used for spiritual, economic and cultural purposes (Hanson, 2009).
2. Indigenous and Aboriginal refer to those who self-identify as having First Nations ("Status Indian" or "Non-Status Indian"), Inuit, or Métis heritage (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada. 2012)
3. Haudenosaunee means "People of the Longhouse (Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa, Language & Cultural Center, 2015)."
4. Anishinabeg means "people from the whence lowered" or "the good people."

Tool #10: Think-Pair-Share

You can use the Think-Pair-Share activity in class to allow students to connect new ideas to prior knowledge and to summarize, apply, or integrate new information. Students first consider a question on their own before taking a few minutes to discuss their ideas in pairs, and then with the whole group. Working alone gives students a few moments to reflect and come up with their own responses; working in pairs is a chance to test out ideas before going public; and discussing with the group allows both the instructor and students to gain an understanding of how everyone is thinking.

Suggested procedure:

- Pose a question, usually by writing it on the board or projecting it. Open-ended questions are more likely to generate more discussion and higher order thinking.
- Have students reflect on and jot down notes in response to the question (1-2 min).
- Emphasize content over form, so that students focus on expressing their ideas given the time limitation.
- Instruct students to form groups of 2-3 people and discuss the question and share their responses (3 min).
- Re-group as a whole class and solicit responses from some or all of the pairs (5 min). Each time this activity is carried out, you can intentionally choose different pairs to give summaries of their ideas.

Sample Instructions

- Step 1 - Think (2 min): Describe and interpret the image. (Images could include graphs, photographs, cartoons, and other visuals.)
- Step 2 - Pair (3 min): In pairs, discuss your answers.
- Step 3 - Share (5 min): As a whole class, share your responses and any further questions.

More info:

"Think-Pair-Share." *The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning*. Sheridan Centre for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, n.d. Web. <<https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/think-pair-share>>.

"Think-Pair-Share." *Starting Point, Teaching Entry Level Geoscience*. Science Education Resource Centre, Carleton College, 14 Mar. 2017. Web. <<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/interactive/tpshare.html>>.

Tool #11: Paired Interviews

When students in a course are working on different topics for a research paper assignment, you can have them interview one another about their work in progress. This type of exercise can add a social element to learning while helping students to refine their ideas before submitting their papers to you. In terms of assessment, there are several options: 1) this can be an ungraded assignment; 2) it can be part of the participation grade; or 3) you can have students write a short reflection piece on the exercise's effectiveness and mark that on pass/fail basis.

Suggested procedure:

- Place students in pairs (or groups of three) and ask them to talk through their ideas with partners.
- Instruct students not to look at their notes or drafts as the goal is for them to reformulate their ideas conversationally in a new context.
- Require each student to speak for 10-15 minutes; the interviewer's job is to keep the speaker on task by asking probing questions or playing devil's advocate.
- Provide guiding questions such as:
 - What problem or question is our paper going to address?
 - Why is this question controversial or otherwise problematic? Why is it significant? Show me what makes this a good question to address.
 - What is your one-sentence answer to this question? (If the writer doesn't have a good thesis statement yet, go on to the next question and then come back to this one. Perhaps you can help the writer figure out a thesis.)
 - Talk me through your whole argument or at least explain your ideas so far. (As you interview your writer, get them to do most of the talking; however, you can respond to the writer by offering suggestions, bringing up additional ideas, playing devil's advocate, etc.)

More info:

Bean, J. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2011.

Tool #12: Small Group Work for Consensus-Building

Oftentimes students participate in small groups to exchange ideas; with this tool, students are guided by the instructor in disciplinary thinking and are expected to reach consensus. By engaging in consensus-building in small groups, students practice the skills of stating a claim, supporting it with evidence, and learning from each other. This low-stakes, in-class activity might be most helpful in small classes as a way for students to practice argumentation before they write research or term papers.

Suggested procedure:

- Present a disciplinary problem that requires critical thinking (one that does not have a right answer). The task for students to work in groups to reach consensus to a “best solution” to this problem in order to practice the skills of argumentation and synthesis. If consensus is impossible, you can allow the small groups to present majority and minority views with an explanation of why consensus was not possible.
- Have students form groups of 3-5 (either by you beforehand or by students themselves).
- Provide a time limit for the task. You may want to allocate 10-15 minutes for group work and up to an hour for plenary presentations (depending on your class size).
- To keep each group on task, ask groups to produce a visual product to present in plenary (e.g., thesis statement, list of pros and cons, concept map, outline of the argument, or drawing).
- Have students identify a recorder for each group whose job it is to take notes and report on the group’s consensus solution during the plenary session.
- Let students work in their small groups and keep track of the time. Warn students when there are only a few minutes left so they have time to complete their visual product.
- During the plenary session, instruct each group’s recorder to present their group’s solutions and arguments.
- As the reports are shared, points out strengths and weaknesses in the arguments, and how alternative claims from different groups mirror the existing debates within the discipline.
- Once all groups have shared their reports, explain how this problem has been addressed by experts in the field.

More info:

Bean, J. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2011, pp. 183-189

Oakley, B.; Felder, R. M.; Brent, R.; and Elhajj, I. Turning Student Groups into Effective Teams. *Journal of Student Centered Learning* 2004, 2(1), 9–34.

Tool #13: Small Group Work for Exploring Divergent Perspectives

The goal of this tool is for students to explore multiple perspectives on different issues or topics and examine evidence that can be found to support divergent opinions. Students may view the perspectives of scholars as truths put forward by distant authorities in their field. Alternatively, some students may be resistant to ideas contrary to their own and reject them without further consideration. Opposite Day invites students to confront both of these perspectives, asking them to both agree wholeheartedly and play their best devil's advocate. Bringing students into this conversation will not only develop argumentation and critical thinking skills, but it will validate their participation in the disciplinary community.

Suggested procedure:

- Form small groups of 3-4 students, or invite students to remain seated and turn to face a few peers, once instructions have been given. This tool can be used in classes of any size.
- Propose a controversial thesis to the class. There should be clear affirmative and negative perspectives on the thesis. Do not clarify your position on the issue, or if you would like to do so, also mention an authority (real or fictional) who holds an opposite position.
- Invite students to take one minute to introduce themselves to their peers and state their initial views on the thesis to one another.
- Ask students to take 5-10 minutes to immerse themselves in the affirmative perspective (i.e. the thesis is convincing and accurate). Clarify that no negative arguments are to be shared during this time. Ask students to reflect on course material that contributes to the affirmative perspective (you may wish to direct students to specific sections of course material).
- Next, ask students to take 5-10 minutes, abandon the previous viewpoint and assume the negative perspective (i.e. the thesis is inaccurate and unconvincing). Once again, arguments in opposition shouldn't be shared.
- Following the activity, ask groups to reflect on whether they still held their initial views on the thesis. Consider questioning whether the affirmative or negative perspective were more difficult to adopt, and why.

More info:

Bean, J. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2011, pp. 176.

Tool #14: Reflection on Diversity of Identity

Using course materials, students will have the opportunity to reflect on their social location (gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, class, etc.) and how it impacts engagement with content. Small groups will facilitate an exchange and allow students to further explore how diversity of identity influences learning.

Suggested procedure:

- Identify a text or artifact or film as the content to which the students will respond.
- Invite students to write a reflection on how their social location (e.g. gender, sexuality, etc.) affected their engagement with the content.
- Have students identify groups of 3-4 or identify the groups yourself. Create space and time for group members to present their reflection to each other.
- Invite students to write a follow up to their 1st paper on what they learned from others, what they found surprising, and how that affected their original reflection.
 - What did others say about how they experienced the text?
 - How was that similar to different to your own experience?
 - What difference will this make to how you think about the text/artifact/film? What difference will this make to your future work?

More info:

“Diversity in Higher Education.” *Teaching and Learning Services*, McGill University, www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/resources/diversity.

Tool #15: Moderating Complex, Meaningful Discussions

Discussions are an excellent opportunity for students to practise skills such as active listening, argumentation, public speaking, and consideration of multiple points of view. Below are some strategies and sample phrases to help you enhance active participation in discussions.

Strategy	Sample phrases
Paraphrasing - you validate a student's contribution and ensure that their thoughts are clear to you and the rest of the group.	<i>"To make sure I understand what you're saying..."</i>
Connecting ideas - you encourage the class to relate their ideas, creating a synthesis that they may have not previously considered.	<i>"It sounds like your perspective on this topic parallels John's - you both seem to raise the point that..."</i>
Giving neutral feedback - you acknowledge a student's point without revealing your feelings about it and ask the group to think about the idea.	<i>"That's an interesting possibility. What do the rest of you think?"</i>
Returning a question asked to you to the class - you empower the class to share their own knowledge and experience, and engage in the conversation.	<i>"Does anyone have a response?"</i>
Provide structured opportunities for reflection and input - you change the pace, allowing for new ideas to surface when discussion is lagging.	<i>"Let's take some time to think about alternative perspectives we might not have considered before..."</i>
Create opportunities for all students to partake - you ask those who have not yet participated to participate. The goal is for students to have a choice to participate (i.e. not cold calling).	<i>"Can we hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet?"</i>
Ensure diverse perspectives are welcome - you promote the diversity of ideas and reflection on new perspectives.	<i>"What perspectives have we not yet considered? Does anyone want to weigh in?"</i>
Refocus students' attention - you bring students' attention back if the discussion is going off track.	<i>"How do the issues that have just been raised relate to the question originally posed?"</i>
Bring closure - you allow students to summarize the central issues covered in the discussion. Likewise, you link the discussion to the learning objectives.	<i>"Can anyone summarize the key points we discussed?"</i>

SECTION 2: Students in Difficulty

Introduction

Occasionally, you may be in a position to respond to students in difficulty, whether self-identified or identified by the instructor. According to “Student Health at McGill University: A Report of the Findings of the 2014 National College Health Assessment”, 42% of students self-reportedly experience stress, 42% report a chronic health problem, 33% report anxiety, 14% report depression, 8.4% report a sexual assault, etc.

Your role is not to serve as a therapist, but to ensure that you have the tools necessary to respond to a student in difficulty with confidence and care.

Anecdote from a student: “A few semesters ago, I was in a large introductory course with another student who exacerbated my anxiety. I told the professor that the possibility of interacting with this student caused me to feel unable to focus and contribute to the class. This professor empathized with me and offered to let me slip out of class a few moments early, as well as suggesting I contact the Dean of Students. This professor’s support changed my experience in the class entirely. I would not have attended class and might have failed the course had the professor not made the accommodations he did.”

Anecdote from a student: “I was very depressed and my instructor noticed my absences from class. The instructor stopped me at the end of class and asked to speak with me, and asked if there was anything that she could help me with. I was happy that someone cared enough to ask and I shared that I was really struggling and in a difficult relationship, but was staying because of financial concerns. With the professor’s patience and kind words, and offer to give me additional time to hand in a paper, as well as directing me to the Counselling Services, I found the strength to continue.”

Tools in this Section

16. Helping Students in Difficulty Folder
17. The Early Alert System
18. Important Contacts for Instructors
19. Important Contacts for Students

Tool #16: Helping Students in Difficulty Folder

Formerly known as the **Red Folder** (<https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/helpingstudents>), this resource was developed by the Office of the Dean of Students to serve as the guide for what to do and who to contact in emergencies, crises, and worrisome or difficult situations with students.

The Helping Students in Difficulty Folder is provided on the next page. A web version is provided at the link above. If you would like a paper copy of the 2017 edition of the Helping Students in Difficulty folder, it will be available for pick-up at the Office of the Dean of Students front desk (Suite 2100, Brown Student Services Building). Please call ahead to reserve your copies (514-398-4990).

Suggested procedure:

- Keep this document close at hand and review it thoroughly.
- Should you *observe* the various behaviours and indicators, determine if the corresponding party should be contacted. When unsure if the situation requires follow-up, err on the side of caution and contact the Office of the Dean of Students Case Manager (Edith Breiner) by phone (514-398-1881) or the **Early Alert System** (see Tool #17).
- Should you *encounter* a situation that warrants immediate intervention (i.e. a student appears in crisis or identifies themselves as needing assistance from a McGill service), remember to respect your personal boundaries. Develop a concrete action path with or for the student. This may include asking a student if they are already connected to a McGill Service, **referring a student to a resource** (see Tool #18) or coordinating for someone to accompany the student to the Office of the Dean of Students.

More info:

Samuel, Carolyn. "I Came upon a Student in Distress." *Teaching for Learning Blog*, 31 Mar. 2017, Web. <<https://teachingblog.mcgill.ca/2017/03/31/i-came-upon-a-student-in-distress/>>.

Tellier, Pierre-Paul, and Lina DiGenova. "Student Health at McGill University: A Report of the Findings from the 2013 National College Health Assessment." *McGill University*, December 2014. Web. <https://www.mcgill.ca/studenthealth/files/studenthealth/mcgill_ncha_report_dec_2014_final.pdf>.

OBSERVE



ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- Frequent absences or lateness
- Marked changes in performance
- Lack of preparation or participation
- Withdrawal from academics

WORRISOME COMMUNICATIONS

LACK OF COMMUNICATIONS

WORRISOME BEHAVIOUR

- Disconcerting comments on social media, on assignments/exams, via phone/email, etc.
- Expression of concern from a friend, family member, or McGill community member
- Disclosure of sexual assault, harassment, mental health, or any type of crisis situation

- Despondency (no communication whatsoever)

THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

HOSTILE BEHAVIOUR

VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

- Temperament (anxiety, disorientation, agitation, extreme sadness, hopelessness, paranoia, etc.)
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Changes in appearance, hygiene and/or weight

Threatens:

- Self-harm (e.g., cutting, etc.)
- Suicidal ideation
- Harm to others
- Humiliation
- Damage or destruction to property

- Damages property
- Disrupts University activity (teaching, research, daily operations, etc.)

- Stalks
- Bullies
- Harasses
- Emotionally abuses

- Self-harms (e.g., misuses substances, etc.)
- Attempts suicide
- Possesses a weapon
- Instigates a physical altercation
- Commits assault or sexual assault

WHEN IN DOUBT

Err on the side of caution and notify the **Case Manager, Office of the Dean of Students** even in situations where you are unsure whether intervention is required.

514-398-1881 or 4990

ASSESS



Should an effort be made to directly contact the student?

YES

RESPOND



Office of Advising & Student Information Services (OASIS)
1029

Find the Directory at
www.mcgill.ca/students/advising

Or use the *Early Alert* widget found on *myCourses*

Should communication with concerned parties be coordinated?

YES

Case Manager
Office of the Dean of Students
During Regular Business Hours
1881 / 4990

After Regular Business Hours
Security Services
Downtown: 3000
Macdonald: 7777

Is the behaviour new?
Is there a change or escalation in the behaviour?

YES

Available Services
Counselling Services: 3601
Psychiatric Services: 6019
Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education: 4486 / 3786

Does the student require additional support, follow-up or access to resources?

YES

If the situation requires immediate intervention, it is recommended that someone accompanies the student to the appropriate service.

Is there repetitive disregard for previous recommendations about seeking help or accessing resources?

YES

Is there concern about the **immediate** safety and/or well-being of the student or others?

YES

Call 911
When dialing from an outside line/cell, also alert **Security Services**.

NO

Security Services
Downtown: 3000
Macdonald: 7777

FOLLOW-UP & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for follow-up and liaison with all internal and external parties.

In cases of accident, hospitalization, or death, the Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for follow-up and support.
1881 / 4990

Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education
www.mcgill.ca/saap
4486 / 3786

Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination
www.mcgill.ca/harass
3954

Quick Fact
The Office for Students with Disabilities offers personal and academic support for students experiencing medical or mental health issues and visible and invisible disabilities.
www.mcgill.ca/osd
6009

Quick Fact
The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is your quick guide to policies and related information.
www.mcgill.ca/students/srr

Tool #17: The Early Alert System

The **Early Alert System** (<https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/helpingstudents/early-alert-system>) coordinates efforts to support a student or refer them to the relevant resource. It is a widget that is accessible by customizing the myCourses homepage. If you observe indicators or behaviours outlined in the Helping Students in Difficulty Folder, you can use the Early Alert System to directly notify the Office of the Dean of Students' Case Manager about a concern for a student.

The Office of the Dean of Students will reach out to students with an Expressions of Concern – sometimes this comes to us as a phone call from an advisor, sometimes it's when a Prof sends an Early Alert, which is merely a signal to the Office of the Dean of Students that an instructor is worried for a student. The Dean of Students Case Manager (Edith Breiner) will reach out to a student when concern has been raised, but will not reference any specific details. The personnel at the Office are discreet, respect the privacy of everyone, but also ensure they prioritize student well-being. Here are examples of how students respond to the expression of concern:

Anecdote from a student: *"Thank you. I have not been ok and I am not sure what kind of help I need. I would be glad to meet with you."*

Anecdote from a student: *"Thank you for your concern. I have not been able to leave my room, not sleeping, I have an exam tomorrow and I don't know what to do. Can you help?"*

It is suggested that instructors err on the side of caution when using the Early Alert System, so that issues might be addressed before they escalate. The alert is confidential, does not reference specific details, and does not appear on myCourses or on the student's transcript. If you want to ask an initial question without including the student's name, you are also welcome to do so.

Suggested procedure:

Follow the detailed instructions provided by the IT Knowledge Base - <http://kb.mcgill.ca/kb/?ArticleId=3901&source=article&c=12&cid=2#tab:homeTab:crumb:8:artId:3901:src:article>. When finished, the widget will appear as follows:

Early Alert System ▾

Note: this widget is visible to instructors only.

Use this automated email service to express concern for a student who is:

- performing poorly academically and/or
- chronically absent or generally disinterested and/or
- seemingly isolated and/or
- exhibiting behavioural or emotional issues.

Instructions

- Briefly detail your concern
- View the class list to include the student's ID number.

If warranted, the Dean of Students will refer the student to academic advising or other services available at McGill.

Thank you for your participation. Expressing concern for students who may need assistance early in the semester may avoid situations from escalating.

[Learn more here.](#)

Tool #18: Important Contacts for Instructors

This tool includes contact information for the services that you are most likely to refer students to. Referrals will likely be made once a student clearly identifies their needs or asks for additional resources. If you are unsure of the appropriate service, the Office of the Dean of Students is able to direct the student or provide direct assistance. In case of emergency, Security Services is the primary contact.

Suggested procedure:

- Have this list on hand, placing it on your desk or nearby.
- When dealing with a student in difficulty, establish rapport by listening carefully to the concerns they are expressing. Ask if the student is already connected to a McGill Student Service and if you may call that service. Alternatively, refer them to a student service that is well equipped to provide assistance. In some circumstances, students may also benefit from accompaniment to the service.

McGill Resources	
Office of the Dean of Students – <i>Brown Building</i>	514-398-1881/4990
Counselling and Mental Health Service – <i>Brown Building</i>	514-398-3601/6019
Office of Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education – <i>550 Sherbrooke O. Suite 585</i>	514-398-4486/3786
Office for Students with Disabilities – <i>3459 McTavish</i>	514-398-6009
Security Services – <i>Burnside Hall</i>	514-398-3000
Student Health Service – <i>Brown Building</i>	514-398-6017
Faculty of Arts Resources	
Office of Advising and Student Information Service (OASIS) - <i>Dawson Hall</i>	514-398-1029
Associate Dean of Student Affairs - <i>Dawson Hall</i>	514-398-4206

Departmental Resources
Departmental Advisor
Program Director
*left blank for instructors to fill in

Tool #19: Important Contacts for Students

Students may not be aware of the various campus and community support services available. Here is a list you can share with them, either by linking to the hub for support services (<https://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/get-support>) in the syllabus or posting the following list in myCourses.

Suggested post for myCourses:

Subject heading: Getting Support On-Campus

Text: There are a number of support services on campus, which meet a wide variety of needs. It is likely that every student will access at least one of these services during their time at McGill. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or Campus Security Services at 514-398-3000.

Professional Mental Health Support

McGill Counselling Service (514-398-3601) – offers counselling to individuals dealing with psychological and emotional issues, as well as academic and vocational challenges. You can book an appointment, attend workshops/group therapy, or access crisis drop-in times. (<http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/>).

McGill Psychiatric Services (514-398-6019) – focuses on psychological wellbeing. You have the option to book appointments with psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists, or access urgent care (<http://www.mcgill.ca/mentalhealth/>).

McGill Student Health Services (514-398-6017) – You can book appointments for a variety of purposes (general check-ups, prescription renewals, STI testing, etc.) or access the urgent care clinic (<http://www.mcgill.ca/studenthealth/>).

Academic Support

Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009) - offers you support if you feel that difficulties and impairments are hindering your academic performance while at McGill, or if you require assistance with access-related issues (<http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>).

Office of Advising and Student Information Services (OASIS) (514-398-1029) - advises, assists and supports all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts (<http://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/>).

Peer Support

Peer Support Centre – offers free, drop-in, confidential and non-judgemental peer-to-peer support and resource referral to McGill students (<https://www.facebook.com/peersupportmcgill/>).

McGill Student's Nightline (514-398-MAIN/3246) – serves as a confidential and anonymous listening and referral service (<http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/nightline/>).

Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student's Society (SACOMSS) (514-398-8500) – offers survivors of sexual assault and their allies direct support, advocacy, and outreach-based programs. (<https://www.facebook.com/sacomss/>).

Additional Resources

Office of the Dean of Students (514-398-4990) - offer students assistance in every way, whether it is answering questions or providing advice and referrals to the appropriate individual or office on campus (<http://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/>).

Office of Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (514-398-4486) - provides confidential, non-judgmental and non-directional support and education to students, faculty and staff of all genders who have been impacted by sexual violence.

International Student Services (514-398-4349) - supports the growth, progress, and success of international students at McGill, and aims to ease their transition to a new school, a new home and a new country (<http://www.mcgill.ca/internationalstudents/>).

Scholarships and Student (Financial) Aid - offers advice on funding options, budgeting and debt management. They also disburse all provincial, federal and US government student aid funding, and help with government aid information and documentation (<http://www.mcgill.ca/studentaid/>).

First People's House (514-398-3217) - strives to provide a "home away from home" for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students at McGill University. It is a resource, residence, gathering place, and community (<http://www.mcgill.ca/fph/>).

SECTION 3: Getting Feedback from Students on the Classroom Community

Introduction

The tools in this section provide ways for you to find out how your students experience community in your classroom. These tools, like all those in the Toolkit, are optional and can be adapted for use in any course. We focus here on how to use mid-course evaluations and end-of-course evaluations to assess community-building. Ideally, you would introduce these tools to students with an explanation of why community-building is important to you and what you hope to gain by reading their feedback.

Tools in this Section

- 20. Mid-Course Evaluations
- 21. Adding Questions to End-of-Course Evaluations

Tool #20: Mid-Course Evaluations

Gathering feedback from students during the semester is optional (unlike final course evaluation) and can be an effective means of assessing how your teaching approach is influencing the student experience. It is recommended that you conduct mid-course evaluations while you still have time to respond to the feedback and make any desired adjustments (between weeks 4 and 7 for regularly scheduled courses).

Methods for Mid-Course Evaluation:

- **Online Survey in myCourses**
Instructors can create an anonymous online survey on myCourses. They are easy for students to complete, the comments will be legible, and it is possible to download reports. Learn more about surveys in myCourses (<http://kb.mcgill.ca/it/easylink/article.html?id=4286>).
- **Anonymous Discussion in myCourses**
Instructors can create an anonymous discussion topic in myCourses. Take note that instructors should select the option to "**Allow Anonymous Posts**" when setting up the topic. Instructors should inform their students that in order to send anonymous feedback, they should select the checkbox to "**Post as Anonymous**" before posting. Learn more about Discussions in myCourses (<http://kb.mcgill.ca/kb/?ArticleId=3916&source=article&c=12&cid=2>).
- **Anonymous Polling Questions**
Instructors can use the Polling @ McGill service to solicit anonymous mid-course evaluation feedback. Polling @ McGill (previously known as clickers) is a technology-supported questioning strategy that allows for both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Please note that each question must be set to anonymous and you should configure your polling session so that results do not display in front of students. Learn more about Polling @ McGill (<http://www.mcgill.ca/polling/>).
- **One Minute Paper**
At the end of class, instructors can ask students to pull out a sheet of paper and take one minute to answer a question, such as "What single thing could I change about my teaching that would improve this course for you?" Students then submit their paper to the instructor.
- **Student-led Discussion**
Instructors can also receive oral feedback from the students as a group (as opposed to individual feedback). To ensure anonymity and allow students to speak freely, instructors leave the class for 10-15 minutes. In large classes, students should split into groups of no more than 20. Each group selects a facilitator and a reporter, and discusses constructive suggestions for the instructors (and TAs where applicable) to improve the course. The reporter records the feedback and reports to the instructor immediately after class. We recommend that instructors agree on some guidelines with the students beforehand (http://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/files/tls/mid-course_evaluations_guidelines.pdf).
- **See detailed instructions for Small Group Diagnosis -** (<https://www.seattleu.edu/faculty-development/services/learning-and-teaching/small-group-instructional-diagnosis/>).

Questions to Ask:

- The focus should be on areas where you are still able to make changes. Questions pertaining to future course offering should be reserved for end-of-course evaluations (Mercury) because students need to see that their feedback has an actual impact on the course.
- Mid-course evaluations should not be long and complicated. We recommend three to four open-ended questions that address different areas of the course (e.g., content, presentation, learning environment/atmosphere).
- Sample questions:
 - What do you like best about the course and the instructor's teaching?
 - If there were one thing that you could change about this course, what would it be?
 - Do you feel comfortable expressing your opinions or asking questions in this course?
 - Any specific areas of change, for example: Should we continue the online discussion forums? Do the voluntary review quizzes/other practice tools work for you?
 - Is there a strategy that really works for you? If so, which one? (e.g., summary at the beginning of class, weekly quizzes, questions that accompany the reading material, class discussions, online discussions)
 - What could you do to make the course better for you and the instructor?
 - Is there an area where you would need more guidance/support to enhance your learning?
 - Do you have any additional comments or concerns?

Sample Mid-Course Evaluation from the Faculty of Engineering

<http://www.mcgill.ca/engineering/students/current-students/undergraduate/courses-registration/policies-procedures/course-feedback-questionnaire>

Acting on the Feedback:

- Analyze and Reflect - the Comments Analysis Worksheet (http://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/files/tls/comments_analysis_worksheet.docx) is intended for instructors and teaching assistants to help organize and make sense of student comments. To help derive the most benefit from the student feedback, we encourage you to discuss them with a trusted colleague, your academic unit head or someone from Teaching and Learning Services (TLS).
- Discuss with the Students
 - You should take some time to respond to the student feedback in the week following the evaluation.
 - Comments in the ongoing discussion board should be referred to in class and discussed as appropriate. This could be in the form of a brief summary of the main points raised by the students and ways in which you plan on addressing them.
 - If you will not be making changes to the course, you should still acknowledge the feedback and briefly explain the reasons for keeping the status quo.
 - Students should feel that their feedback is valued, even if it does not lead to changes.
 - Students should be encouraged to provide follow-up feedback on the end-of-course evaluation (Mercury).

More info:

"MERCURY Mid-Course Evaluations." *McGill University*. Web.
<www.mcgill.ca/mercury/instructors/midcourse/>.

Weimer, Maryellen. "Benefits of Talking with Students about Mid-Course Evaluations." *Faculty Focus*.
Magna Publications, 13 June 2016. Web.
<<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/benefits-talking-students-mid-course-evaluations/>>.

Tool #21: Adding Questions to End-of-Course Evaluations

Instructors may add up to three questions to their course evaluation questionnaires to seek feedback on issues of particular interest, such as how students experienced the classroom as a community. In general, end-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback, and are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience.

Suggested procedure:

- To add questions, complete this form to send your additional questions to your unit's Mercury Departmental Liaison (<http://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/about/liaisons>) who will add them to your questionnaire (<https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/instructors/customize>).
- If you are teaching **different courses**, you will need to fill out this form for each course.
- Your unit's existing questionnaire can be found (<http://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/about/questionnaires>). You may also wish to consult the Recommended Pool of Questions (https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/files/mercury/recommended_pool_of_questions_2014-final_0.pdf).
- If you have any questions, please contact the Mercury System Administrator (mercury.info@mcgill.ca).

Sample questions:

- Overall, I felt like I was part of a community in this course. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
- What was the main thing you learned in doing xxx assignment or in-class exercise? (*If you included a new assignment/activity to promote community-building.*)
- If there were one thing that you could change in this course to promote community-building, what would it be?

More info:

"MERCURY Course Evaluations." *McGill University*. Web. <www.mcgill.ca/mercury/>.

SECTION 4: Self-Care for Instructors

Introduction

This toolkit is geared mostly to what the instructor can do for students, but it is also important for instructors to acknowledge boundaries, set limitations, and take care of themselves.

Tools in this Section

- 22. Teaching Consultations
- 23. Ideas for Self-care

Tool #22: Teaching Consultations

Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) offers a consultation service designed to assist instructors, administrators and staff, in analyzing and enhancing or developing their teaching skills. The service is free of charge to all McGill and Macdonald Campus faculty and staff.

To request a consultation, please visit the TLS website at www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/consultations.

TLS offers two types of consultations:

1. Individual consultations for instructors who would like assistance planning their courses, developing teaching strategies and skills, interpreting course evaluation questionnaire data, developing teaching portfolios, etc. and,
2. Unit/Program consultations involving all or a sub-group of individuals within a unit who are analyzing, developing, or improving a teaching program.

All consultations are provided as a service, at the request of instructors and/or teaching units, and all information pertaining to these consultations is considered strictly confidential.

A consultation might consist of one or two brief meetings to discuss specific aspects of an instructor's course or teaching, or that of a unit or program. This collaboration could continue throughout an entire term, with ongoing assistance from the consultant. A more in-depth consultation might involve:

- developing and applying specific teaching strategies and techniques;
- reviewing information about the course and the instructor's teaching, collected from, for example: classroom observations by a consultant, interviews with the instructor, and/or information collected from students, e.g. through the MERCURY course evaluation service, or privately by the instructor through the learning management system or other means;
- selecting aspects of instruction on which to focus;
- monitoring the effectiveness of these strategies and planning any relevant modifications.

This process is flexible and has proven useful in a variety of teaching situations, including lectures, laboratories, discussion groups, seminars and clinical training.

Tool #23: Ideas for Self-Care

Every instructor will have their own unique approach to wellness. Here are some suggested strategies.

Suggested strategies:

- Identify signs you need self-care. When you are well, consider making a list of the signs that you need to care for yourself. Identifying early warning signs allows you to deescalate negative situations and understand indications of poor mental health (e.g. poor nutrition, irritability).
- Consider activities and strategies that you find contribute to your wellness. These may be physical, creative, spiritual or mental in nature (e.g. grounding exercises, meditation, speaking with a loved one).
- Identify supporters and connect with them. Supporters are individuals in your life who support your wellness and/or promote wellness in their own lives. Consider making regular contact with them to develop a support system (e.g. family, friends, coworkers, counsellors, neighbours, etc.)
- Access resources available to you.
 - The Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) (514-843-7009 or 1-800-567-2433) is a confidential counselling service offering short-term counselling (4-6 sessions) and referral services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - at no cost to members of the McGill University benefits program (or their spouse and dependent children). The McGill EAP provider, Morneau Shepell, provides you with direct access to qualified and experienced professionals from different fields (psychology, social work, educational counselling) who are accredited by their respective professional associates. <https://mcgill.ca/hr/benefits/eap>
 - McGill Human Resources Health & Well-being works to promote a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance by offering employees events and challenges focused on a variety of health related topics, as well as information, tips and links to health and wellness resources <https://mcgill.ca/hr/benefits/health-well-being>.
 - Staff Fitness Program: McGill Athletics and Recreation offers a variety of fitness programs exclusively for McGill staff. <http://mcgillathletics.ca/sports/2012/10/31/1031123936.aspx>

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