

What are Universities for?

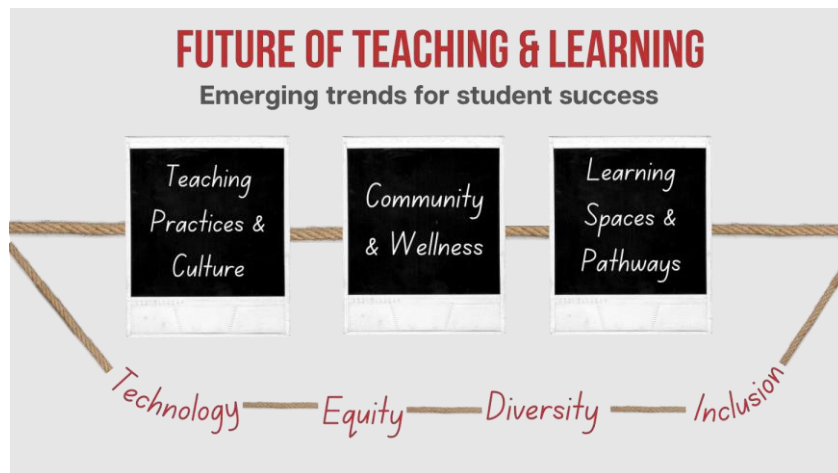
Directions for Discussion

Prepared by Teaching and Learning Services for the Future of Teaching and Learning Working Group
April 2022

Introduction

Based on the trends and Carleton context, the following themes are proposed as directions for our discussions around the future of teaching and learning at Carleton:

1. Teaching Practices and Cultures
2. Community and Wellness
3. Learning Spaces and Pathways



In the following sections, each theme is introduced with a summary and keywords, an overview of strengths and opportunities at Carleton regarding the theme, and potential directions for our discussion. Considerations relating to the use of technology and the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion are integrated within each theme rather than standing alone as separate themes.

A note on constructive alignment (see Fig. 1; based on Biggs (1996)): As we move through our conversations, we encourage consideration of not only teaching and learning activities but also the micro- and macro-contexts in which they exist (e.g., institutional policies and procedures, external accreditation), the different learning outcomes they target (e.g., higher-order thinking skills), and the assessment and feedback practices (e.g., reflection, rubrics) that support deep learning. As facilitators, we strive to promote the principles of constructive alignment to ensure our proposed directions are supported by research-based approaches for effective learning.

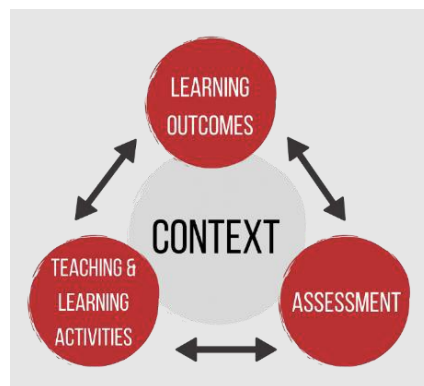


Figure 1: Constructive alignment model of course design (based on Biggs (1996))

Theme 1: Teaching Practices and Cultures

Completion rates
Course context
Course design
Curriculum review
DFW rates

Funding metrics
High-impact practices
SoTL
Impact metrics
Mentorship
Program maps

Teaching assistants
Teaching communities
Teaching cultures
Teaching excellence and innovation

This theme explores the impact of **teaching practices** on student and faculty success and wellness. Specifically, we consider the instructor's role in the learning experience and how to foster an inclusive, learner-centered classroom. We consider strategies for decentering the instructor to promote active and independent learning in our students. We also explore how **teaching cultures** have been shaped by institutional policies and processes (e.g., tenure and promotion, teaching grants and awards), communities of practice and mentorship, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Ultimately, we hope to engage in discussions about the path forward towards establishing a strong, competitive culture of teaching excellence at Carleton.

Strengths and Opportunities at Carleton

Carleton, through Teaching and Learning Services (TLS), supports the professional development of faculty members, contract instructors, and teaching assistants (TAs). This includes onboarding via orientations for [new faculty](#), [contract instructors](#), and [TAs](#), and enabling their continued success through a variety of training and professional development opportunities, ranging from single workshops to full certificate programs. Sample programs include [Course Design Fundamentals](#), [Certificate in University Teaching](#), and [Preparing to Teach](#), all of which prioritize constructive alignment and learner-centered approaches to teaching that promote student academic success.

Carleton's instructors and TAs are offered a variety of opportunities to engage with their peers and discuss their teaching experiences through different communities of practice, seminars, and other teaching-related events. In addition to these interdisciplinary communities focused on teaching, several departments across campus have [Faculty Teaching Mentors](#) who help to facilitate informal discussions on teaching and learning that instructors may face within their disciplinary and departmental contexts.

Carleton's commitment to [teaching excellence](#) is further reflected in providing teaching awards and grants at the faculty and university levels (e.g., [Carleton University Experiential Learning Fund](#), [Course Transformation Fund](#), [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\) grant](#)), but also through investment in the [paid pedagogical training of its TAs](#), rewarding teaching innovation of [contract instructors](#), and supporting discipline-specific scholarly activities, like the [Ottawa-Carleton Symposium on Teaching and Learning in STEM disciplines](#).

Outside of TLS, several offices have dedicated learning specialists to consult with Carleton instructors, including the Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives: Teaching and Research, the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities, and the [Library](#). There are a wide range of campus-wide student learning support services (e.g., [Student Experience Office](#), [FITA](#)), as well as department- and faculty-specific supports (e.g., [Sciences Student Success Centre](#)), that promote student success at many levels across the institution. There is also an ongoing partnership with the Centre for Indigenous Initiatives to make [Carleton Indigenous Learning Bundles](#) for instructors to integrate into their courses to help explore Indigenous topics.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed the resiliency of Carleton's educators and students. It also reinforced the need to break down silos between educational technologies and pedagogies, address the breadth of teaching at the university, including different teaching modalities; and proactively advocate for effective teaching practices that will bring systemic institutional changes.

Questions to Consider

What are opportunities for Carleton to push its current boundaries related to teaching and learning?

- What do we need to do differently in terms of our teaching practices and modalities post-pandemic? How can we preserve and scale aspects of virtual learning that worked well during the pandemic (Horváth et al., 2022; Rapanta et al., 2021)?
- How can teaching practices and cultures at Carleton be simultaneously ambitious and innovative, while remaining closely aligned with faculty-specific needs and current evidence about how students learn (e.g., peer observation, SoTL; Sagy et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2019)?
- How do we get better at being explicit about future-ready skills in our courses and programs (Ehlers & Kellermann, 2019)?
- What can we do to ensure that Carleton's teaching and learning experience is distinctive, relates to the Ottawa community, and responds to the needs of the future employers of our graduates?
- What can we do to ensure public confidence in the qualifications of our graduates (Monteiro et al., 2022)?

How can we combine the strengths of pedagogy (teacher-centered), andragogy (learner-driven), and heutagogy (independent learning) to produce the best possible learning experience?

- How can we support instructor roles and identities as they move away from traditional teaching modes (i.e., deliverers of content) and adapt to student-centered classrooms and teaching practices (Keiler, 2018)?
- How can we decolonize the classroom to make it a more diverse, learner-centered space that promotes wellness for everyone (Mitchell et al., 2018)?
- What do we need to do institutionally to remove barriers to study and foster inclusion and welcome students in person and online?
- How can we foster a culture of teaching and learning that values the process of learning (e.g., engagement, feedback, relationships, networking) at least as much as the product (credential, degree)? Currently, with the credential as top priority, academic integrity is threatened (Crossman, 2022).

How can we create safe spaces for teaching innovation and exploration?

- How can we facilitate innovation at a curricular level? How can we move conversations about modality and innovation from the course level to a higher level?
- How can we support innovation by ensuring mistakes and self-reflection are supported/encouraged (Antón Solanas et al., 2016)?
- How can we create a sustainable culture of teaching excellence (e.g., mentorship, advising, peer observation, feedback; Perkins, 2019)?
- How can we demonstrate that we value teaching and SoTL as essential components of our work, while balance other demands (e.g., research, teaching, administrative expectations; Harrison et al., 2022)?

Theme 2: Community and Wellness

Citizen scholarship	Skills articulation	Positive pedagogy
Co-curricular as curricular	Digital literacy	Mentorship
Volunteerism	Impact of 1st/2nd year	Community engaged pedagogy
Course context	Program accountability	Decolonizing/anti-racist pedagogies
Non-disposable assessments	Compassionate grading	Student academic communities
Undergraduate research	ACE framework	
Study abroad	Indigenous pedagogies	
Employability skills	Wellness programs	

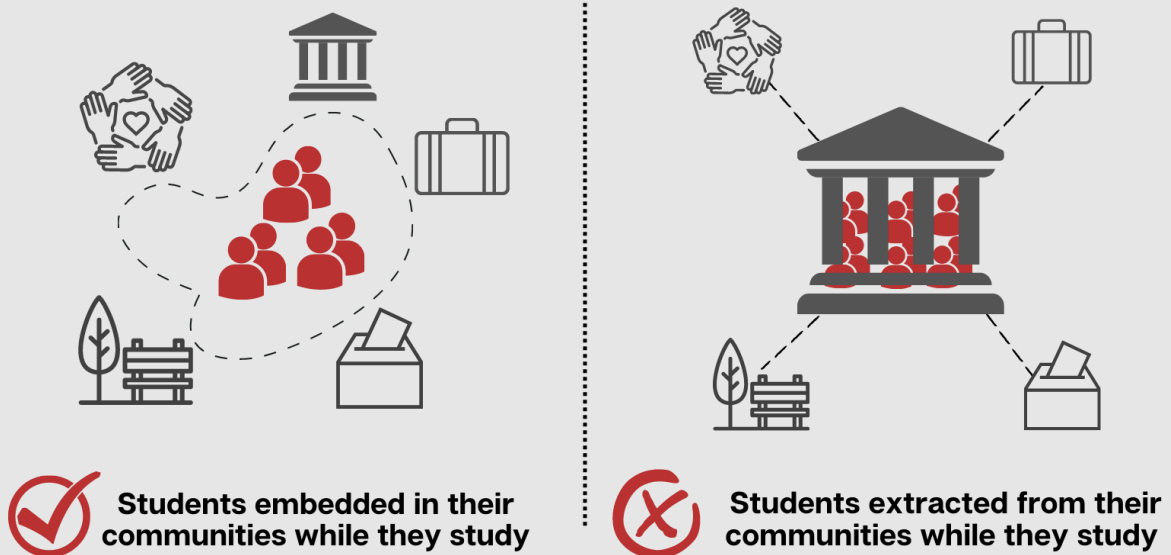
This theme touches on the importance of **community**, broadly speaking, as an essential component of Carleton students' development toward citizen scholarship. Programs, services, and courses that support campus-community connections—including with potential employers—provide opportunities for students to build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds. It also considers how **wellness** can be promoted at Carleton, including within our classrooms by leveraging strong pedagogies and emerging technologies; outside the classroom by prioritizing wellness across campus to foster a strong, healthy community of instructors, students, and staff; and in the broader communities that students will impact as a result of their university experiences.

Strengths and Opportunities at Carleton

Community engagement is a pillar of Carleton's [Strategic Integrated Plan](#), and several groups on campus promote and support community-based learning and initiatives (e.g., [CCEP](#), [Centre for Community Engagement](#), [TLS](#), [SEO](#)). Programs such as [Co-op](#) and the [Student Work Placement Program](#) give students additional opportunities to engage in experiential learning and improve their employability skills while studying. Carleton University's Bright Outlook Project (CUBO), an exploratory research initiative that investigated innovations that enhance higher learning, highlighted the need to bridge the gap between theory and practice, emphasizing the importance of industry and government partnership.

These programs stem from Carleton's valuing its learners as constructive members of the society in which they live, study, and work. By supporting the integration of disciplinary knowledge, skills development, and community engagement through deliberate decisions that empower individuals and communities, our learners are well-positioned to become knowledgeable and capable contributors to change and innovation in their communities (Arvanitakis & Hornsby, 2016). At Carleton, the *citizen scholar* is a graduate who, in addition to having disciplinary knowledge and a skillset that promotes employability, also has a sense of what it means to be an active and responsible citizen in their community.

WHAT IS CITIZEN SCHOLARSHIP?



Wellness for Carleton's community involves many interrelated factors, with equity and inclusion as necessary foundations to promote a culture of wellness for all. In addition to the many programs and services geared towards student and staff wellness (e.g., [ESP](#), [FITA](#), [PMC](#), [PASS](#), [Healthy Workplace](#)), Carleton has recently embarked on numerous initiatives to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment while making innovative and deliberate decisions that engage key stakeholders and the broader community. The newly drafted [Student Mental Health Framework](#) emphasizes the necessity of partnerships between students, staff, and instructors for a holistic approach to student mental health. For instructors, one of Carleton's newest initiatives, [Carleton Compass](#), connects new and continuing employees to promote the culture of inclusion and sense of community at Carleton as soon as new employees arrive.

In line with Carleton's commitment to reconciliation and anti-Black racism, [The New Names for New Times](#) initiative will rename three buildings on our main campus to reflect our diversity and commitment to inclusion. Carleton's Centre for Indigenous initiatives recently launched the [Kinàmàgawin Indigenous Learning Certificate](#). Offered to students, staff, and faculty, it discusses anti-Indigenous racism, Indigenous student experiences, practicing allyship, and righting relations. The program is being facilitated by the new Indigenous Curriculum Learning Specialist hired in 2021, and complements various offerings from the Centre, including the [Indigenous Peer Mentorship Program](#), the [Indigenous Enriched Support Program](#) (IESP), the [Ojigkwanong Indigenous Student Centre](#), and the [Indigenous Education Council](#), whose mandate is "to promote, guide and oversee the implementation of policies, programming and services that impact Indigenous students while attending Carleton University."

In 2021, the Department of [Equity and Inclusive Communities](#) at Carleton hired their inaugural Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Learning Specialist, and launched the new [EDI Action Plan](#) and the first competition for the [Student Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Research Award](#).

As we think about the future of teaching and learning in the wake of a disruptive couple of years, transition pedagogy for students entering first year will be a key trend to consider. In both the short and long-term, fostering a smooth transition for those entering post-secondary by considering the development of targeted advising services, early warning systems, student learning and life skill supports,

and programs and services that promote academic resilience and good mental health will ensure a successful, supported, and healthy group of undergraduate students at Carleton. These approaches may be especially impactful for newcomers to Canada and non-traditional learners, who come with different experiences and needs than those entering post-secondary directly from high school.

Questions to Consider

What attributes and proficiencies should a Carleton graduate have?

- How can we make citizenship foundational to all degree programs (e.g., credit volunteerism, mandatory community service hours, EL opportunities in courses, community partnerships)?
- How can we leverage authentic course content (based on current events, connection, relevance) to improve students' learning experience (e.g., satisfaction, engagement, effort) and employability (Karunanayaka & Naidu, 2021; Sokhanvar et al., 2021)?
- How can we encourage non-disposable assessments (Seraphin et al., 2019) to reinforce the impact of university studies on broader community goals (i.e., connection) and streamline community partnerships and opportunities (e.g., via a portal)?
- How can we foster learning communities that simulate real-world collaborative work contexts, improve student retention, and make financial sense (Gwebu et al., 2021), both in-person and online (Parrish et al., 2021)?

How can we embed a culture of student success within our teaching and learning environment?

- How can we factor into our efforts that academic adjustment in first year is the biggest predictor of student success, as measured by GPA, credits earned, and intention to persist (van Rooij et al., 2018)?
- How can we better support first-year students, a group that experiences significant mental health challenges compared to their peers in other years (Wyatt et al., 2017)?
- How can we ease the transition in the short-, mid-, and long-term for COVID-19 high school graduates (Dunn, 2022)?

How can faculty wellness improve engagement and student academic outcomes?

- How can we ensure that faculty and staff engagement, a core component of student success, drives teaching culture change (Harrill et al., 2015; Samuel, 2017)?
 - Engaged faculty and staff are more committed to their work and produce better student outcomes, but only 34% of faculty and staff in post-secondary education are engaged in their work (Marken & Matson, 2019).
- How can we address that the brunt of service load expectations in universities fall on the shoulders of female faculty (Guarino & Borden, 2017)?
 - Wellness has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and female and racialized faculty have been most affected, experiencing “higher levels of stress, social isolation, and lower well-being” (Davis et al., 2022).
- How can we better support contract academic staff, who are highly qualified and committed academics who are, generally speaking, overworked¹, under-resourced, and have poor mental health, with women and racialized instructors overrepresented in hours worked and lower income compared to white male colleagues (Pasma & Shaker, 2018)?
 - Productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic has been most challenging for Black women and mothers (male academics were the least affected group), and results highlighted the persistence of racism in PSE, especially against Black women (Staniscuaski et al., 2021).

How do we balance academic rigour and the development of healthy, skilled, and employable young people?

¹ On average, the workload of contract instructors at Carleton in 2020/2021 was 1.77 CRS or 0.91 CRD (includes retired faculty) ([OIRP data](#)) (CRS = course section; CRD = credit)

- Wellness improves retention and completion rates for students; how do we prioritize it not just for health, but also for academic performance (Frazier et al., 2019; Larson et al., 2016)?
- How do we address the issue of mental health being worse among engineering students than the average college student by approximately 2x, where 38% of respondents in one study screened as high risk for serious mental illness (more than double rate of adults in general population; Danowitz & Beddoes, 2018)?
- How can we build wellness practices into our courses? For example, students in a first-year writing class with wellness education integrated into the curriculum increased awareness of their wellbeing and increased wellness behaviours (Johnson et al., 2019).

How do we position student wellness in the teaching and learning environment?

- Carleton has many services and initiatives, but student wellness remains a major concern (Carleton University, 2020) – why are the programs ineffective/not reaching (enough) students?
- What is the role of the instructor in promoting student wellness? How can faculty promote student wellness without being overloaded with jobs they aren't qualified or hired to do?
 - o One report found 96% of faculty had experienced student self-disclosure of personal challenges and trauma, and newer, younger, and female faculty were the most likely to experience compassion fatigue and burnout (Lindecker & Cramer, 2021).
- How do we support student wellness knowing that it also involves complex factors outside of the classroom—e.g., food insecurity leads to poorer psychosocial health, which is associated with a lower GPA (Raskind et al., 2019)?

Theme 3: Learning Spaces and Pathways

Campus-community

Interdisciplinarity

Work-integrated learning

Satellite campuses

Service unbundling

Online/hybrid learning

“Complete” campus

Experiential learning

Micro-credentials

Domain-based degrees

Student-centered learning

Outdoor learning spaces

Lifelong learning

Flexible learning pathways

HyFlex as multi-access

This theme considers the various physical and virtual **learning spaces** where students learn, including classrooms, remote locations, community and industry, extended reality (XR, e.g., virtual reality or VR), and more. The pandemic has provided opportunities to expand our toolkit of educational technologies and provide learning flexibility across both time and space (e.g., online learning, HyFlex). Also included in this theme are opportunities to reconsider learning **pathways**, including their structure (e.g., micro-credentials), content (e.g., interdisciplinary degrees), and impact (e.g., community and industry partnerships).

Strengths and Opportunities at Carleton

Carleton has prioritized the campus-community connection in its [Strategic Integrated Plan](#) with *Connection* as a pillar: “Our students are best-served by learning experiences positioned within relationships and real-world contexts.” There are many current and upcoming Carleton initiatives that support this aim. A notable example is the **Future Learning Lab** (in development), a collaborative space for teaching and learning innovation that will include various experiential and work-integrated learning programs such as [Students as Partners Program](#) (SaPP; to involve students in curricular innovation), [i-CUREUS](#) (to facilitate undergraduate student research), and the Citizen Scholar Certificate (in development). A similarly innovation-driven campus space is Carleton’s new [Innovation Hub](#), which supports entrepreneurship and leadership for social impact.

Many of the Faculties at Carleton are already well known for their rich and innovative hands-on learning opportunities—for example, labs and field studies in Science; studios and co-op in Engineering and Design; interactive simulations and placements in Public Affairs; and industry research projects in the Sprott School of Business (to name but a few). Although arguably less well known, many programs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) also offer such opportunities—for example, the Minor in Community Engagement in Sociology, the practicum program in Art History, and language labs in the School of Linguistics and Language Studies. Moreover, to flag the relevance of FASS programs in terms of addressing real-world challenges, FASS has identified four [FASS themes](#) that their degree programs target: *Identities and Social Justice*, *Mental Health and the Mind*, *Sustainable Futures*, *The Power of Creative Expression*. They have also prepared [Major Maps](#) for several of their degree programs to better highlight the many EL and WIL opportunities available to their students throughout their degrees.

At Carleton, technology plays a big role knowledge and skills development. For instance, Carleton's new [D2L Brightspace learning management system](#) (LMS) has many features and tools to foster learning and accessible learning communities (e.g., web-conferencing, H5P, Poll Everywhere). The LMS facilitates curricular and co-curricular learning (e.g., training, workshops, communities of practice). A future direction for the LMS is to collect **learning analytics** that may help inform more effective and innovative teaching (e.g., identifying students dis-/engagement, gamified learning). **Extended reality** technologies (e.g., virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR)) are also up-and-coming technologies that Carleton has been developing to extend campus spaces to virtual environments. The ultimate goal is to take advantage of our growing digital learning tools and offer 20% of courses online, using a targeted, systematic approach to offer increased flexibility to our students and stay current with the sector.

In terms of physical spaces, Carleton has been developing its [HyFlex](#) and [active learning classrooms](#) to allow for more flexible, student-centered learning. Further campus updates include, for example, new Indigenous learning spaces (e.g., amphitheatre beside Paterson Hall), as per the new [Outdoor Space Master Plan](#). Students also have access to green spaces such as the Canal, Rideau River, and soon Vincent Massey Park (via the pedestrian bridge included in the O-Train South Line expansion). There are also the satellite locations such as the [Dominion Chalmers Centre](#) (acquired in 2018) and the new [CU@Kanata](#) (part of Kanata North's high-tech Hub350, as described in the "Carleton's Context" document), as well as roughly 300 acres of undeveloped land near Manotick intended for land-based learning. These locations help cement Carleton's ongoing relationships with local community and industry partners and provide opportunities for experiential and work-integrated learning (e.g., applied research projects, co-op).

Reinforcing that at Carleton, learning is for everyone, there are programs such as the [Lifelong Learning](#) program (formerly Learning in Retirement) that offers low-cost workshops and lecture series on a wide range of topics for adults of all ages. Lifelong learners from the general public can also re-/up-skill with Carleton's [Future EDge Talent Ecosystem](#), a series of micro-credentials, short workshops, certificates, and diplomas designed to enhance employability, career resilience, and community engagement. For the younger crowd, the [Enrichment Mini-Courses Program](#) (EMCP) welcomes Ottawa students from grades 8 to 11 to experience learning in the university setting. The Faculty of Science also offers the [Matters Series](#) to prepare its incoming students with the fundamental skills and knowledge they will need upon entering their programs.

Questions to Consider

How could the physical and virtual campus be re-envisioned to support innovative teaching and learning, wellness, and community?

- How can we rethink Carleton's campus as a healthy, vibrant, holistic community that shapes and supports teaching and learning?
- How can we leverage outdoor spaces on campus to create opportunities for learning, collaboration, community wellness, and skills integration?

- o One study found improved academic performance, peer-to-peer engagement, and participation in first year math students following a three-day outdoor learning experience mid-semester (Penazzi et al., 2022).
- How can indoor spaces be re-imagined to be more student-centered, emphasizing active learning to promote problem-solving skills, strong social relationships, and collaboration with peers and instructors (Harvey et al., 2019)?
- Could makerspaces in post-secondary help foster confidence, creativity, collaboration, and sense of belonging in students (Longo et al., 2017; Ludwig et al., 2017; Andrews et al., 2011)?
- How can we integrate considerations of learning with technology as we seek to create effective physical learning spaces (Harth & Panke, 2019)?

What could alternative and flexible degrees/credentials look like (e.g., domain-/problem-/skills-based degrees, “stackable” minors/micro-credentials, badges)?

- How can precision education (i.e., personalized learning) enhance the value proposition and overall experience for students (Wilson & Ismaili, 2019)?
- What role could academic advising play in facilitating customizable learner experiences (Poplar, 2019), including the promotion of equity (Lawton, 2018)?
- Is there a place for domain or problem-based degrees in the future (Whiting, 2019), whether for undergraduates or graduates?

How could course design (e.g., flexible deadlines, student choice) and/or modality (e.g., online, HyFlex) accommodate students’ diverse needs—wellness, employability skills, networking, etc.?

- What do new modalities like HyFlex offer students? One study found that HyFlex delivery for a graduate course showed no significant differences in students’ motivation, needs satisfaction, and perceived success based on whether they attended classes online or on campus (Butz et al., 2014).
- How can we rethink the standard course structure (duration, timing, etc.) and design? A recent meta-analysis in Switzerland (Müller & Mildenerger, 2021) found no difference in learning outcomes when classroom time was reduced 30-80% (i.e., blended learning).
- What does pedagogy-driven technology use look like (Lawrence et al., 2020)?
- What types of classes make the best candidates for online learning (e.g., lecture, seminar; Neuwirth et al., 2021)?
- How can we strategically create meaningful online experiences for students and build purposeful media-rich courses (Scherer et al., 2021)?

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