

## July Newsletter

### Top Stories This Month



#### AI in Teaching and Learning

We're launching a new semi-regular feature to keep you informed about how artificial intelligence (AI)—especially generative AI (GenAI)—is shaping teaching and learning at Carleton and beyond. We'll share practical strategies, instructor stories and timely developments that support thoughtful, intentional and student-centred pedagogy throughout this rapidly shifting AI landscape.

#### Start with a Strategy

A growing number of instructors are developing their own AI strategies: proactive, course-specific plans that clarify how AI will (or won't) be used to support learning. At TLS, we recommend a four-pronged approach we believe every educator should be equipped with:

1. **AI policies and syllabus language** for each course
2. **The "AI Talk"** – setting expectations and opening dialogue with students
3. **1+ AI activity** – intentionally integrating AI to support learning
4. **Rethinking assessments** – designing for depth, not detection

Over the next few months, we'll spotlight one prong of the AI strategy to help you build or refine your own. This month's focus is AI policies and syllabus language. [Read more.](#)



#### Making Home: A Carleton-Made Virtual Reality Film

*Home*, conceptualized by interdisciplinary scholar Dr. Manjeet Birk, is an immersive 360-degree virtual reality (VR) film that tells the story of an intergenerational journey of travelling to find one's physical, spiritual and emotional home across diasporic lands.

Designed specifically for Birk's CRST 4001 – Contemporary Critical Race Stories course, *Home* fills a gap in immersive learning by offering a fresh perspective – one that moves beyond trauma-based narratives to explore the universal experience of belonging. It immerses students into the often-complex relationship we have with "home," wherever that may be. [Read more.](#)



#### FeedbackFruits Feature: Interactive Presentation and Interactive Video

As part of our expanding educational technology toolkit, all instructors now have access to our full suite of [nine FeedbackFruits tools](#). To help you get started, we're highlighting two featured tools per month and exploring how they can impact the teaching and learning experience. This month, we're focusing on two tools designed to boost engagement and encourage active learning:

**Interactive Presentation:** [Interactive Presentation](#) turns passive slide decks into dynamic learning experiences. Whether delivered synchronously in class or asynchronously online, instructors can add comprehension questions, polls and discussion prompts directly into their presentations. Students participate through their own devices, making it easy to check understanding in real time or foster reflection between sessions. This tool promotes active participation, even in large classes or fully online environments.

**Interactive Video:** [Interactive Video](#) allows you to embed questions, prompts and feedback directly into videos to enhance learner engagement. Students watch at their own pace, responding to check-ins or engaging in discussions as they go. Use it to flip your classroom, guide students through complex concepts or create a more structured video viewing experience. It's a great way to turn passive watching into active learning.

Explore these tools today in Brightspace and see how they can support authentic, AI-resilient learning. Have you already implemented these tools in your courses? We'd love to hear from you! Reach out to us via [the FeedbackFruits link in our TLS Support Portal](#).



### Educational Technology News & Updates

#### Small Changes, Big Impact: Planning Ahead with Purpose

Fall/Winter 2025-26 course shells have been created in Brightspace. Access will be granted once you're officially linked to the course in Banner.

*"In a time of limited resources and growing complexity, small, thoughtful changes—when shared and supported—can lead to more sustainable, human-centred teaching."*

That's the message at the heart of our latest blog: [How Educational Technology Empowers Educators to Design Sustainable Courses in a Time of Austerity](#). As you prepare for Fall 2025, now is the time to explore strategies that reduce workload over time, adapt to shifting modes of instruction and maintain meaningful student engagement. From rethinking how content is delivered with [HSP](#), to using [cuPortfolio](#) for reflective assessment, to integrating [GenAI tools](#) to streamline logistics, there are practical ways to align your values, your pedagogy and your time.

#### D2L Brightspace Features

- **Assignment and Discussion – bulk feedback:** Brightspace now supports bulk feedback for Assignments and Discussions. This feature allows instructors to more efficiently give shared feedback to some or all learners in a course. Please note that bulk feedback will overwrite any previously provided feedback.
- **Notifications – one-click unsubscribe:** You (and your students) can now unsubscribe from Brightspace notifications directly from the emails—both instant and summary versions.
- **Groups – export enrolment data:** Need to track who's in which group? You can now export group enrolment data right from the Groups tool.

Check out the [What's New with Brightspace? page](#) for ongoing updates.

#### Summer Software Sunsets

As we continue to streamline and consolidate our educational technology ecosystem, a few tools are being retired this summer:

- **Peer Feedback Tool:** This built-in Brightspace tool will be removed Aug. 1. It has been replaced with the more robust [FeedbackFruits Peer Review](#) tool.
- **D2L Performance Plus:** A suite of tools from our previous D2L contract included S3, Course Overview Widget, Insights Portal and Insights Report Builder. We have transitioned to Carleton's supported business intelligence tool (PowerBI) and are working toward building dashboards. For now, any instructor whose questions cannot be answered via [Brightspace Core Analytics](#) can submit a support request via [our Learning Analytics form](#).
- **cuLearn:** Our previous learning management system will be decommissioned on July 31. Student access ended in May 2024, and all migrated instructor content will remain in Brightspace until May 30, 2026.

For an overview of our EdTech toolkit—including our fully-supported and integrated tools—check out our [Supported Educational Technology page](#). You'll also find an [Additional Learning Technology page](#) for other instructor-recommended tools.

#### Let's Talk!

Not sure where to begin? Join us at a Tuesday drop-in (10 to 11 a.m. in the Future Learning Lab) or connect through the [TLS Support Portal](#). Let's design with sustainability in mind, together.



### Accessible Teaching Tip: Text Formatting

Accessible text formatting greatly increases the readability of content for everyone, not only those with visual impairments. Here are four tips to help you ensure accessibility through text formatting:

1. **Use sans-serif fonts:** Fonts such as Arial, Lato or Aptos work well electronically as well as in printed format. Avoid serif fonts like Times New Roman, which were designed for printed format only. Set main content font size to 12pt in documents, 24pt in presentations and 19pt in Brightspace.
2. **Keep in mind that fonts are device specific:** It's best to use built-in system fonts rather than custom fonts manually installed onto your device. This is especially important if you are planning on sharing your presentation or document. If a device does not have the custom font that has been used in the document, it will replace it with another font, which might not be accessible.
3. **Avoid all-capital words or sentences (except acronyms):** Use bold text for emphasis and minimize the use of italics. Don't use underline for emphasis as it should only be used to indicate hyperlinks.
4. **Don't use the "enter" or "return" keys to create paragraph breaks:** Use paragraph formatting to set the spacing. This is important because screen readers may interpret breaks created with the enter/return keys as the end of the text and stop reading, or they may read them out as "blank."

### More News

- **Reminder about classroom support changes:** As of May 1, TLS no longer offers equipment loans, adapters and cables, or "just-in-time" service requests to bring chalk, whiteboard markers, cables or other materials to a classroom. The TLS Learning Spaces team will maintain an extra supply of chalk and whiteboard markers in Loeb D299, which can be picked up during the service desk's [hours of operation](#). Chalk and whiteboard markers in classrooms continue to be replenished overnight and classroom technologies continue to be maintained and renewed. We appreciate your understanding.
- **Podcasts and Audio Assignments as Authentic Assessment:** On June 18, we hosted a hands-on workshop exploring how podcasts and other audio assignments can be powerful alternatives to traditional assessments. Participants from a range of disciplines—including linguistics and language studies, law, french, biology and industrial design—joined the session to learn how to leverage audio as a creative and scholarly medium for student engagement. If you missed the session but are interested in integrating audio into your course, submit a request through the [TLS Support Portal](#) to connect with us, or stay tuned for future workshop dates on the [TLS Events page](#).

### Upcoming Events and Workshops

- [From Conflict to Connection: The Case for Constructive Dialogue Skills in the Classroom](#), Aug. 18, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
- [Designing Grading Rubrics](#), Aug. 19, 1 to 3 p.m.
- [Contract Instructor Orientation Q&A](#), Aug. 19, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- [Hands-On AI Retreat](#), Aug. 20, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- [Introduction to cuPortfolio](#), Aug. 21, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- [Applying Inclusive Practices in Your Course Design](#), Aug. 21, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
- [Increasing Engagement in Large Enrolment Courses with Polling](#), Aug. 25, 2:30 to 4 p.m.
- [Social Reading and Annotation Activities for Small Seminars and Large Classes](#), Aug. 26, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
- [Reimagining Group Work: Collaboration in the Classroom](#), Aug. 27, 1 to 3 p.m.
- [Encourage Participation and Streamline Communication in Large Classes by Using Intelligent Agents](#), Aug. 28, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- [CityStudio Ottawa Information Session](#), Aug. 28, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- [Effective Lesson Planning That Benefits Students and Instructors](#), Aug. 29, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Don't forget we host [drop-in sessions](#) every Tuesday in the Future Learning Lab (room 483) from 10 to 11 a.m. to help you with your course needs. Bring your laptop and any teaching-related questions you have.

Missed an event? Watch recorded sessions on our [Mediaspace channel](#).

[View all events](#)

