

Teaching and Learning CONNECTIONS



Issue # 9

Teaching Well By Being Well: The Caring Edition

We feel like we can all agree that this has been quite a semester so far. Above and beyond the typical transitions we see at this time of the year – academic and otherwise, this semester has been described as unique.

As with all moments in time that challenge us, there is an opportunity for reflection, growth and, importantly, self-care.

In this issue of **Teaching and Learning Connections** (*formerly CTL Connects*), we invite you to take the time to prioritize the very important “you.” And while this might seem really unattainable in your busy life, we hope to share how even small gestures can have significant impacts for you and those around you.

Teaching for Equity, Social Justice, Indigenization and Changemaking

A Socially Just Pedagogy of Care



“Caring for others is not a sentimental act. It is a political act.” - bell hooks

In cultivating a pedagogy of care, we are invited to think about care as more than “being nice.” To care, in a meaningful and equitable way, means **paying attention to how power operates within and outside of our classrooms**. It means recognizing that structural discrimination, barriers to access, and inequitable distribution of resources shape how care is experienced...or withheld. These dynamics influence whose needs are supported and whose remains undervalued.

As educators, we might ask: What would it mean to cultivate a pedagogy of care that truly does not leave anyone out?

There is no simple checklist that shifts care from *sentiment* to *socially just*. Like many forms of meaningful work, **it begins with building awareness...noticing patterns around us, examining our own actions, and seeking to understand the lived experiences of others.**

It also calls us to **radically embrace care for ourselves**, so that care itself becomes a collective act of liberation.

Here are some resources to build socially just pedagogies of care for self and others:

- [Pedagogies of Care: Student and Instructor Wellness](#) (OER Chapter)
- [Pedagogies of Care - Equity Action Exchange](#) (library of equity-focused classroom activities)
- *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks (book)
- *Rest is Resistance* by Tricia Hersey (book)

Teaching & Life Hacks

Caring Teaching Hacks



1. **Microbreaks for Mental Clarity:** Use the [Pomodoro technique](#) (25 mins work, 5 mins break) during lesson planning or grading. It boosts focus and prevents burnout.
2. **Exit Tickets with a Twist:** Ask students to write one thing they learned and one thing they're grateful for. It reinforces learning and builds emotional intelligence.
3. **Colour-Coded Feedback:** Use different colors for types of feedback (e.g., green for praise, blue for suggestions, red for corrections). It helps students process feedback more constructively.
4. **Digital Toolbelt:** Keep a folder of go-to tools like Canva (for visuals), Padlet (for collaboration), and Loom (for video explanations). Saves time and enhances engagement.
5. **“Teach Back” Moments:** Let students explain concepts to each other. It deepens understanding and builds confidence.

Caring Life Hacks

1. **Compassion Calendar:** Add one small act of kindness to your weekly planner—like sending a thank-you note or checking in on a colleague.
2. **Emotional Check-Ins:** Use emojis or mood meters at the start of class or meetings to gauge how people are feeling. It fosters connection and empathy.
3. **Self-Care Signals:** Create a visual cue (like a desk plant or a mug) that reminds you to pause and breathe during hectic days.
4. **“No-Reply Needed” Emails:** When offering support or encouragement, let people know they don't need to respond. It reduces pressure and shows care.
5. **Gratitude Jar (Digital or Physical):** Keep a running list of things you're thankful for—especially small wins. It's a powerful mood booster.

Attribution:

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Faculty Competency Framework Update

Meet the Winners of Innovative Georgian

College Faculty Micro-Certificate



The Innovative Georgian College Faculty Micro-Certificate is now here! We are celebrating all of the roles we embody and weave into our practice each day. Hear from our first recipients of the award:

[Meet the first recipients of the Innovative Georgian Faculty Micro-Certificate](#) (YouTube video)

Want to learn more about how you can engage and grow your practice?

- Visit [Georgian Faculty Competency Framework - Georgian College](#)
- Access more details in our Pressbook [Georgian College Innovative Faculty Competency Framework – Simple Book Publishing](#).

Team Updates

Faculty Developers Team

Putting Well-Being on the Calendar



Faculty are schedule bound. Our class timetables, our syllabi, our contact times with students, our planning time and meetings fill our days. If you're anything like members of our team, you likely live each day bound by what's in your schedule.

To help us prioritize well-being, why not schedule it!

One tool we've found is the [Action for Happiness Calendar](#). Visit the free website and engage with practices that help you each day. New Ways November – day by day action for happiness calendar ([New Ways November | Action for Happiness](#)). The bonus, you can automatically add it to your calendar for every day of the month, every month of the year.

Another great well-being focused resource is the [Global Minds Collective](#). Among many things, [they share free, quick, mindfulness practices](#) that can help us all make sure we're ready to place some else's oxygen mask.

And last, consider joining our People and Culture team for a connection and mindfulness opportunity: [News - Take a pause: Mindfulness drop-in for](#).

We hope to see you there as you care for yourself!

Blackboard Team

Make Student Support Integral with Your Assessments



With the November 2025 release for Ultra comes the ability to automate messages to students based on assessment performance. With this feature, faculty can **set a grade threshold and craft a message** that can be sent to students who score above or below that level.

In addition to celebrating student success, this is a **great way to show support to students** who are struggling in course material by suggesting remedial steps, including tutoring, accessibility, and counselling services that are offered through Student Success.

Inviting students to take advantage of these services, or to connect with you for further support, provides immediate next steps for students without taking away the opportunity for instructors to follow up individually. You can learn about this new feature by watching our [Closer Look video here](#).

Instructional Designers Team

Teaching Well by Being Well



It's easy to care deeply about our students—and just as easy to forget that we need care too. Teaching well begins with being well.

Between grading, course prep, and endless emails, taking time for yourself can feel like one more task on the list. But small moments of care can make a big difference. Try a “micro-reset”: step away from your screen for five minutes, stretch, or jot down one thing that went well in class today. Those brief pauses help restore focus and energy—no elaborate routine required.

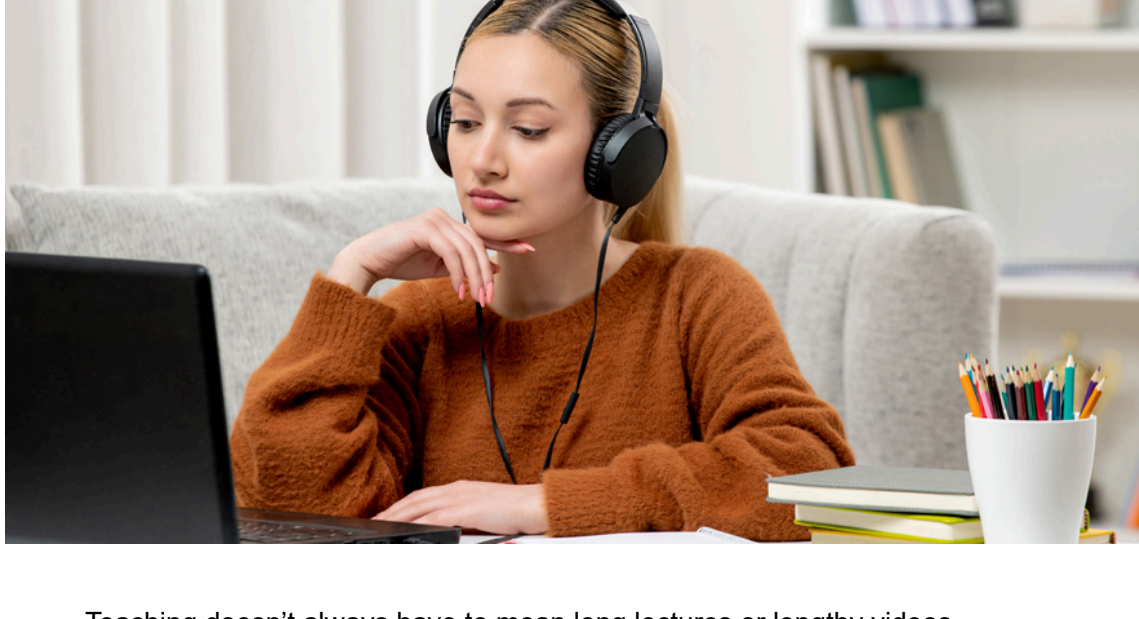
Here are a few quick micro-reset ideas you can try this week:

1. **Take a micro-walk:** Step outside for five minutes between meetings—sunlight and movement can work wonders.
2. **Pause your inbox:** Close email for 20 minutes to allow for deep work or genuine rest.
3. **Stretch and breathe:** Roll your shoulders, look away from your screen, and take three deep breaths.
4. **Go analogue:** Jot a note or doodle instead of typing; it resets your brain differently.
5. **Connect:** Send a quick message to a colleague—no agenda needed, just connection.

Research shows that when educators prioritize their own well-being, student engagement and learning outcomes also improve. So, giving yourself grace isn't just good for you—it's good for your students too.

Multimedia Team

Microlearning Meets Multimedia



Teaching doesn't always have to mean long lectures or lengthy videos. Microlearning—short, focused bursts of content—can help students absorb information more effectively and fit learning into their busy lives. Pair it with multimedia, and you've got a winning combo.

Here's how faculty can use it:

1. **Keep it short:** Aim for 2–5 minutes per video or activity. One concept, one takeaway.
2. **Mix your media:** Try a quick screen recording, narrated slides, or even a short smartphone video.
3. **Make it visual:** Use simple graphics or infographics to highlight key points.
4. **Add captions:** Helps with accessibility and makes it easier for students to follow along.
5. **Use it for review:** Short videos or audio clips are perfect for pre-class prep or quick study refreshers.
6. **Build a library:** A few short clips each semester can grow into a reusable set of resources.

Microlearning isn't about doing less—it's about doing what matters better. Small, well-crafted pieces of media can make a big difference in how students engage and retain information.



Do something distracting: Take five minutes and complete a jigsaw puzzle. [Free Online Jigsaw Puzzles](#) allows you to pick an image and the puzzle size. Search for an image that brings you peace and calm.

Get your groove on: Join the dance and get moving. [Swift Dance - Shake it off - DJ Raphi](#). Getting the jiggles out helps us to recenter and recharge.

Self-Sooth: Place one of your hands on your heart. Keep it there while taking a few natural breaths. The simple act of placing your hand on your heart has been shown to trigger “feel good hormones” such as oxytocin. It is a self-soothing technique that activates the parasympathetic nervous system and has similar effects on stress reduction as receiving a hug from a person does

And feel free to share any of these with your students; they’ll benefit, too!



Connection Opportunities

Watch for the *Teaching and Learning Weekly* email every Monday morning for a listing of all current offerings or view the [Workshop Calendar](#) for immediate details.

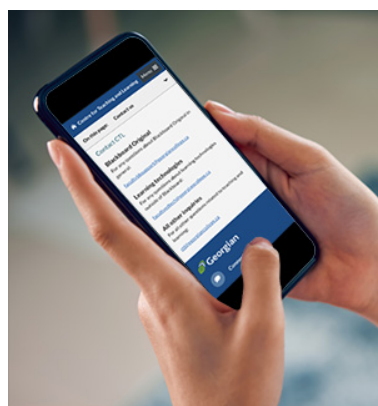
And check out our asynchronous learning modules in [CTL Central for Faculty](#) (Blackboard Ultra Organization).



Get Involved

Interested in sharing ideas for *Teaching and Learning Connections*? We’d love to hear your thoughts.

Please email facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca



Contact Us

Guess what. There are four ways to connect with us:

Blackboard Ultra

For general questions about Blackboard Ultra: facultybbsupport@georgiancollege.ca

Faculty Development

For questions for our faculty development team: facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca

Instructional Design

For questions for our instructional design team: instructional.designers@georgiancollege.ca

Learning Technologies

For questions about learning technologies outside of Blackboard: facultyedtech@georgiancollege.ca

All other inquiries

For all other questions related to teaching and learning: ctl@georgiancollege.ca

Or visit us on our [website](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [X \(Twitter\)](#).

Connect with us!



GeorgianCollege.ca/CTL
CTL@georgiancollege.ca

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