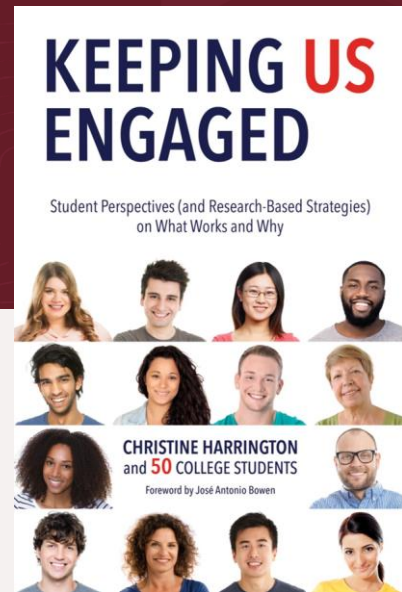


## Keeping Us Engaged: Student Perspectives (and Research-Based Strategies) on What Works and Why

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## Agenda

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Engaging students on the first day of class

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Connecting with students in and outside of the classroom

---

Using powerful teaching strategies

---

Creating meaningful assignments

---

Feedback that engages

---

2

# Engaging Students on the First Day of Class

Fostering a Sense of  
Belonging

Generating  
Excitement

Developing  
Knowledge and Skills

3

# Fostering a Sense of Belonging

4

"The first thing this professor had us do was create a nameplate and write on a notecard some personal information, like our name, major, minor, where we came from, what we wanted to do, a couple of fun facts about ourselves, why we were taking this class, and what we wanted to get out of it. Throughout the whole class, he kept high spirits and a smile on his face, giving us a little primer on what the class was going to be about. At the end of class, he took a picture of each of us holding our nameplates up and collected the notecards. He told us it was his goal by the next class to know each of our names. I thought for sure he was joking. I knew he had at least 100 students in all his classes. But sure enough, by the next class, he came up to me, called me by name, and asked about my second major (business) and we talked about the applications of psychology to business, as well as my involvement on the swim team (one of my fun facts)."

## Getting to Know Me Rosalyn Stoa, University of Wisconsin

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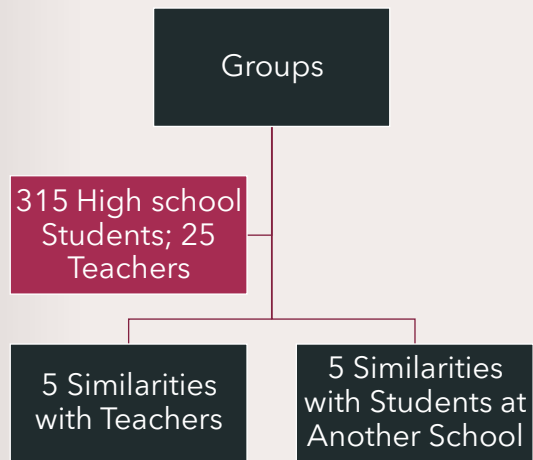
## Icebreakers: An Online Example RJ Portella, Rutgers University



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# Icebreakers: Focusing on Similarities

Gehlbach et al. (2016)



7

## Icebreakers: Focusing on Similarities Gehlbach et al. (2016)

### Results:

- Student-Teacher Similarity Group:
  - Better Relationships with Teachers
  - Higher Course Grades
  - Closed Equity Gap by 60%; Grade differences between Black and Latinx students and White and Asian students went from .6 to .2

8

**What strategies do you use to learn the names of your students and some interesting facts about them? What new strategies could you try?**



9

**Generating Excitement**

10

“Professor Birge discussed each book individually and told us why she had chosen the book as required reading. I recall her calling one of the textbooks delightful because of the author’s humor. Professor Birge described with excitement the unique properties of the books as well as her reason for teaching them. From the first day of class, students were encouraged to read our textbooks and to take notes.”

## **Explaining the Why Behind Textbook Selections Kristi Gundhus, Azusa Pacific University**

11

## **Developing Knowledge and Skills**

12

"The first day of a college course is normally a long, drawn-out reading of the syllabus. However, in my Math Methods and Assessment class, we were immediately engaged with the course content. This course involved exploring different methods of solving mathematical problems and unique ways to assess students on the skills they learn in the classroom. For faculty looking to create a more engaging classroom environment on the first day of class, I suggest finding an activity that touches on the big ideas you wish to cover in your course to give the students an overview of what is in store for them. You want to create curiosity in your students so that they keep coming back to your class hungry to learn more."

## **Solving Complicated Math Problems on Day One** **Cayleigh Keenan, William Paterson University**

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## **Connecting with Students**

Getting to Know  
Students During  
Class

Interacting with  
Students  
Outside of Class

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## Power of Relationships

### Motivation

- Wilson et al. (2010)

### Confidence

- Delfino (2019)

### Learning

- Demir et al. (2018)

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## Getting to Know Students During Class

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"He took the time to get to know each student during the class period. For example, he would take polls of your interests on certain topics and then, the night before each class, he would adjust his PowerPoints to customize each of his lectures, ensuring the examples would be of interest to certain students or fit the majority interest. With each student, he attempted to find an area of interest related to the topics of the class. Subsequently, he would send you an email with an article relating to that topic and paragraphs of his own thoughts. This almost weekly email from him continuously kept me engaged in the class.."

## **Tapping into Student Interests**

### **Michael Daidone, College of the Holy Cross**

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## **Getting to Know Students Outside of Class**

18



## **Advising Days, Sarah Harvey, Stockton University**

19

“Professor Raftery-Helmer made it clear she was available for extra help with class or any other issue we were having. On top of office hours, she let us email her to schedule appointment times to meet. This alone created the sense that this professor really cared about us as people and not just as students.”

## **Deeper Levels of Learning Michaela White, Worcester State University**

20

“In my first semester, I was taking a course that I wasn’t particularly interested in, and to make matters worse, it was an early morning class. My level of engagement was effectively nonexistent, and that disengagement and lack of desire undoubtedly showed in the classroom. If he had never asked me to meet with him in person, I could have easily dismissed even the elevated level of care I noticed he had in the class as insignificant. Instead, a few minutes of actual conversation made all the difference, and seeing he genuinely cared engaged me to do exactly the same.”

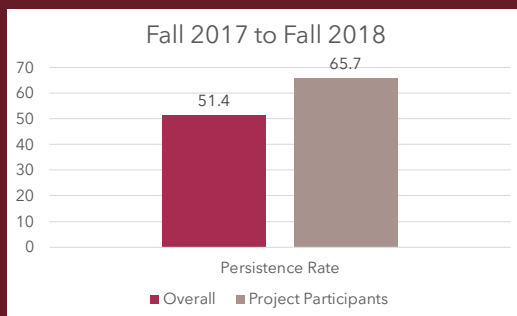
## An Individual Meeting with a Disengaged Student Joshua Allen Brown, Kennesaw State University

21

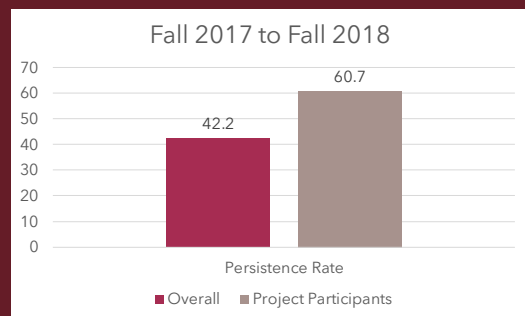
## Persistence Project: The 15-minute Meeting

Oakton Community College, Chicago Supiano (2020)

### Overall Program



### Black Students



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## Helping Students Develop Professional Networks

- Women and students of color are less likely to have “high-status” networks (McGuire, 2000)
  - But once they were given “the opportunity to interact with high-status employees, they were just as likely as White men to have high-status network members” (p. 517)

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**How do you encourage students, especially those who may not typically do so, to visit you outside of class?**



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## Teaching Strategies that Engage

Make it Personal

Demonstrations

Collaborative Activities

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# Make it Personal

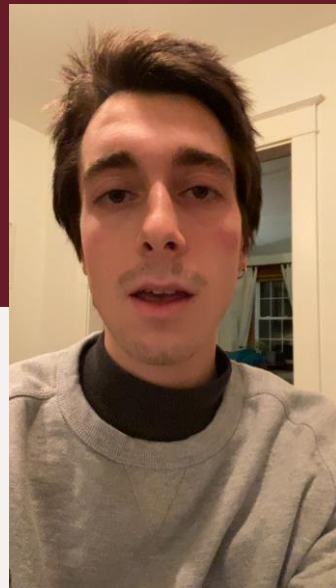
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**Engaging  
Student Survey,  
Aditya Shah,  
Princeton  
University**



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**A Note-Card Activity,  
Benjamin Sackler,  
College of Charleston**



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# Demonstrations

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**Interactive  
Demonstration  
in Physics,  
David Lont,  
Western  
Michigan  
University**

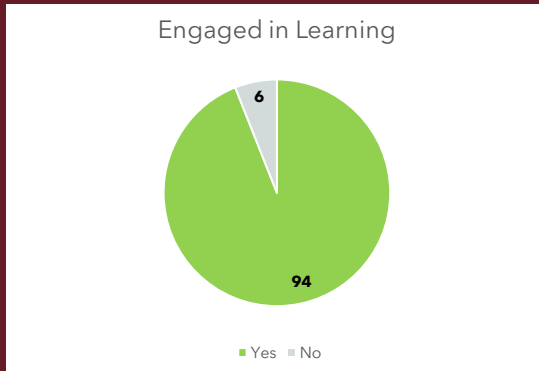


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# Demonstrations Increase Engagement and Learning

Kim (2015)

## Engaged in Learning



## Academic Achievement



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# Collaborative Activities

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"In this class, the instructor assigned a group project that required students to research an organization. Before starting the project, the instructor asked students to share what type of career they wanted to pursue. Each student was then placed into a team based on their career interests. Students also had to complete modules to learn interpersonal skills that would be helpful for teamwork. After each team member completed the modules, each team was asked to elect a leader, assign roles to the remainder of the team members, and agree on rules for the project."

## **Online Group Project Edwin S. Lee, San Jose State University**

33

"The small group work in this class involved partnering with Syrian newcomer families to organize events with them, which ranged from going to the Syrian families' homes to bowling, to cooking meals and playing games in a park. For professors seeking to engage students in collaborative learning experiences that extend into the community, I suggest you have students work together closely. Get them talking in small groups, put them in situations outside of their comfort zone, and give them tasks and responsibility. When you do these things, students will form bonds and friendships because they are forced to rely on each other. This, in turn, deepens learning. Sending students out into the community to work on projects is exciting, new, and challenging and provides motivation to work hard."

## **A Community-Based Learning Experience Rosemary Brockett, Wilfred Laurier University**

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# Collaboration and Learning

- Facilitates deeper levels of learning (Durham et al., 2018; Swanson et al., 2019)
- But....
  - 68% of community college students who completed the SENSE survey reported they NEVER worked with a classmate outside of class
  - 22% reported NEVER working with other students during class

(Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2010)

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**How do you use collaborative activities to engage students?**



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## Creating Meaningful Assignments that

Have Choice and  
Structure

Are Authentic

Foster Creativity

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## Choice and Structure

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**Choosing  
Assignments,  
Caleb Morris,  
University of  
South Carolina**



39

**Online  
Discussions,  
Sarah Lyman  
Kravits, Rutgers  
University**



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# Authentic Assignments

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"In an Organization and Finance class, Professor Yancey Gulley, challenged us to create a mock proposal to either change an existing program or process or create an entirely new program or process in our respective departments. I work full time in a career development office. I developed a proposal to move this function from the Career Development office to the Office of Human Resources, where it better aligns with their mission and existing resources. This is something our office has tried to do in the past, but these efforts were not previously successful. This assignment was engaging for me because it was practical rather than hypothetical. It empowered and motivated me to create a proposal that had the chance of making an actual change at the university. My full-time position at the university is entry level, and if I did not have this assignment, I would not have felt qualified to create the proposal."

**Developing a Proposal**  
**Carrie Hachadurian, Western Carolina University**

42

**Creating Sexual  
Education  
Curriculum,  
Kaitlynn Ely,  
Muhlenberg  
College**



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**Creative Assignments**

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# Benefits of Creative Coursework

Miller (2018)

Creative  
Coursework

Confidence in  
Creative  
Thinking,  
Critical  
Thinking,  
Entrepreneurial  
Skills  
Networking  
Abilities

45

"As is customary, the very first day of Children's and Young Adult Literature, Professor Giunta went through the class syllabus: weekly process journal, four mini-essays, three presentations, a larger reflective essay, and a revised final project. Immediately, I jumped to the conclusion that this professor wanted to stuff as much busy work as she could down our throats before we escaped her clutches. While I was making this silent judgment, she explained the nature of the final project. We would be writing a summative document drawing from all the expertise and knowledge accumulated in class, and, furthermore, we could pick what type of essay we wished to write. On paper, these two statements don't look revolutionary, but they are because they established two important concepts in my mind: All class material is pertinent to my final goal and I can guide this project in a personally relevant way. The workload did not change, but now I believed that the assignments would be meaningful and worthwhile. One recommended format for the final project was the creative essay of a fictional story. I chose this option."

**Creative Essay Portfolio**  
**Julie Bechtel Patino, New Jersey City University**

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"In one of the first assignments, we had to introduce ourselves through a brief speech. When I introduced myself and included that I'm also Mexican, Native American, and a lesbian, Professor Hankins didn't even blink an eye throughout the entire speech. Instead, my introductory speech was met with smiles and enthusiasm for being so open and speaking in such an eloquent way. From introductory speeches to persuasive and informative ones, we had free reign to explore topics and pick something we were passionate about."

## **Finding My Voice** **Kara Infelise, Gateway Technical College**

47



## **Discovering Your Passion,** **Genevieve Jaser,** **Southern Connecticut State University**

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**Creativity in Assignments,  
Kristina Perrelli,  
University of  
Rhode Island**

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**What are some examples  
of authentic or creative  
assignments?**



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## Feedback and Engagement

Formative Assessment Opportunities

Giving Students Opportunities to Revise

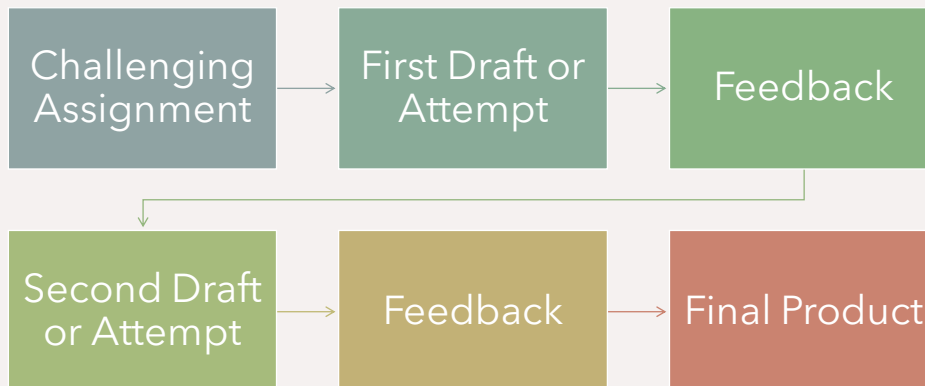
Reinforce Strengths

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## Formative Assessment Opportunities

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## Re-thinking Assignments: An Equity Issue (Taras, 2006)



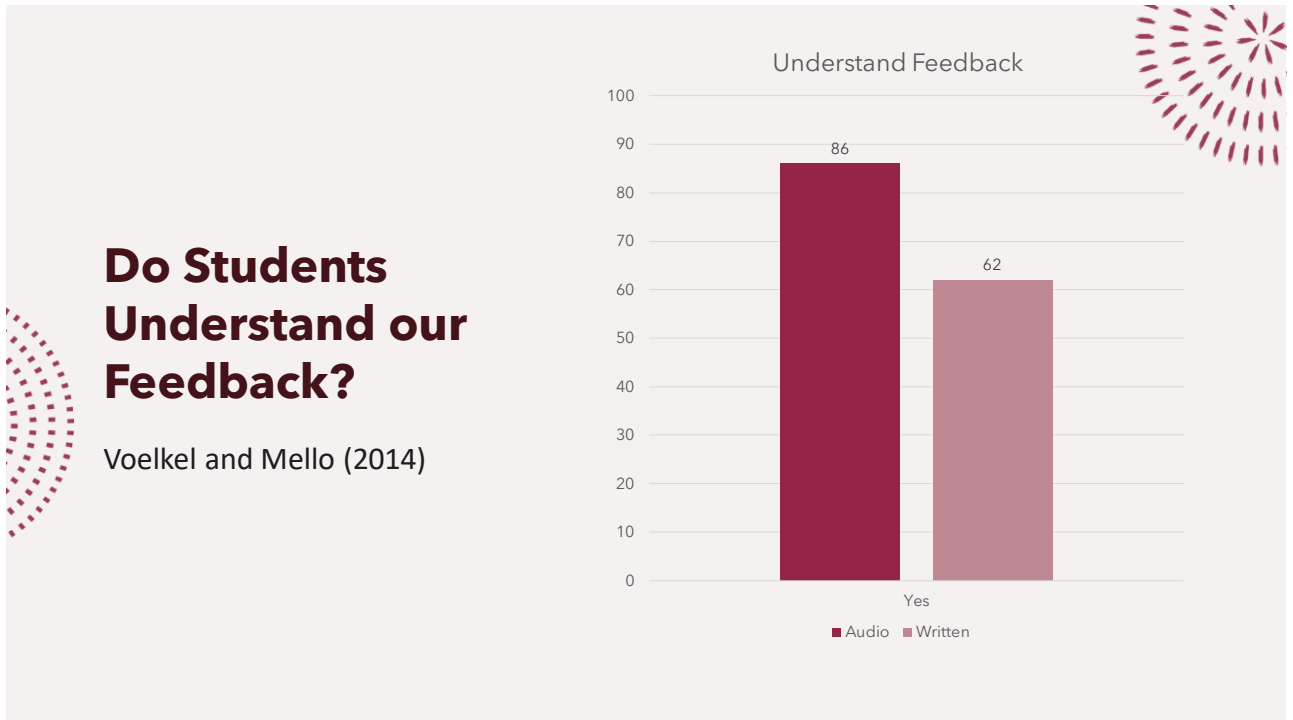
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“My professor designed the final project to be completed throughout the semester by making pieces of it due on certain weeks leading up to the final date. This gave us the opportunity to complete the assignment one part at a time and receive feedback at each point. After the first assignment, she gave thorough feedback on what we could improve on for the next phase of the assignment. This approach really helps us gain confidence and skills.”

## Breaking Down a Major Assignment Kayla Jasper, Temple University

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## Giving Students Opportunities to Revise

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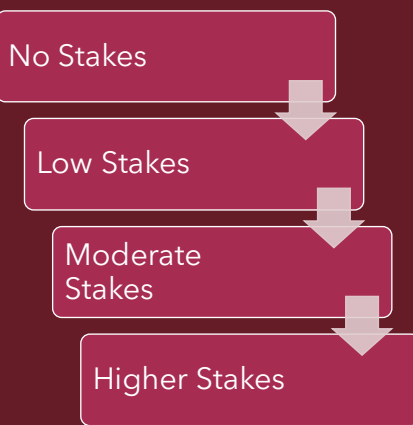
"In this course, one of the major assignments was a group project that included a presentation and a paper. About halfway through the semester, the paper portion of this project was due. The professor graded the papers by the following class, and when he returned the papers to each group, he explained how we would be spending the entire class reviewing our papers. The professor then spoke to the whole class describing the requirements of this revision assignment. He told us that we would be receiving a separate grade for this second, revised submission. Knowing that this assignment was going to be graded again, we immediately became more interested in the notes and feedback that the professor had written on the returned papers. The professor then went to each group and spent 5-10 minutes discussing that group's paper with the group members while the other groups were working on the presentation portion of the project."

## Required Revisions Ryan Harrington, Quinnipiac University

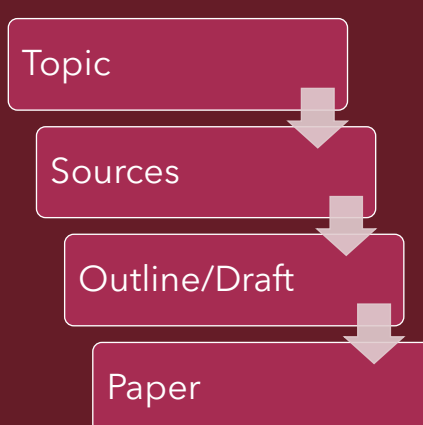
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## Scaffolding Assignments

### Low-High Stakes to Build Self-Efficacy



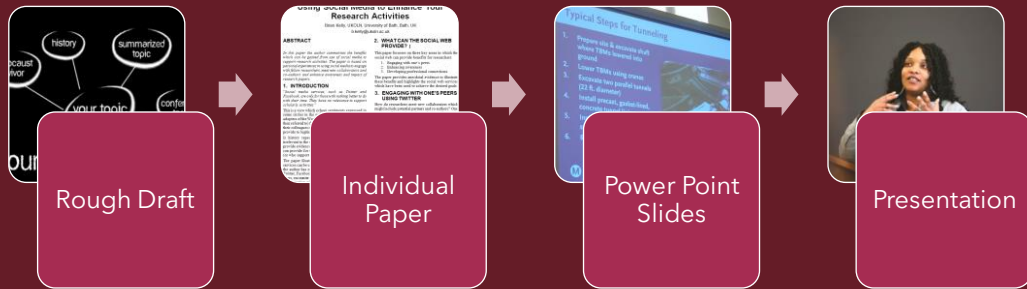
### Breaking Down Assignments to Benefit from Feedback



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# Feedback: Linking Assignments?



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## Reinforce Strengths

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**Reinforcing Strengths,  
Christina Christodoulou  
Drew University**

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**What is a key take-away from today's session?**



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**Thank You!**

Questions?

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[www.scholarlyteaching.org](http://www.scholarlyteaching.org)

