

## **Increased student engagement with instructors and peers**

Motivating students to be engaged with the course material, let alone their instructors or fellow students, can be challenging. The following PIs found that their projects helped increase student engagement with their instructors and their peers, as well as motivate them to engage with the course material.

Jossalyn Larson, assistant teaching professor of English, deliberately went after establishing connections with her mostly STEM students in her Research and Writing course. And it worked. “I can tell you too that I’ve had more requests for letters of recommendation from students who take my class. One student wrote, ‘Because of the structure of the class, I feel that you know me better than any of my other professors.’”

She also saw the peer discipline-specific groups that were formed work together so effectively that they continued as learning communities beyond the course.

Ana Ichim, assistant professor of economics, and Sarah Steelman, assistant teaching professor of economics, polled their students to discover that more than 70 percent of students preferred the game project as an assignment in Principles of Microeconomics or Principles of Macroeconomics. “It allowed us to engage students more and maybe convince some of them that economics is worth studying!” Ichim said.

The survey also showed that 70 percent of students felt the game project helped them better connect and relate to fellow students in a large, introductory class setting.

Beth Cudney, associate professor of engineering management and systems engineering, said she witnessed an increase in student engagement and motivation in her course on quality with more in-depth class discussions. The results from post-survey showed that the study tools she used in the course tools were effective, and students especially enjoyed using tools such as Scoop.it! which is also used in industry.

Doug Ludlow, professor of chemical engineering, found that there was a buzz of “hallway chatter” about his video project from his redesigned course. “There was generally a lot of positive feedback from the students,” he said. “I thought they got more creative with each iteration. I think there is a lot more creativity amongst the engineers than we give them credit for. It was a good experience.”

Nishant Kumar, associate teaching professor of mechanical engineering, heard positive comments from students about his changes in his courses: “The students like it and enjoy it,” he said. “It is something you are doing that gives satisfaction. At the end of the day students say, ‘Dr. Kumar, I found those practice problems really helpful in understanding the material,’ or ‘The concept problems helped me in the FE exams.’”

Katie Shannon, associate teaching professor of biological sciences, was surprised by the level of student-to-student connection that happened as a result of her redesign. “The benefit that I wasn’t expecting is allowing the students to get to know each other,” she said. “There were comments on their evaluations that they made friends, felt more like they belonged.”