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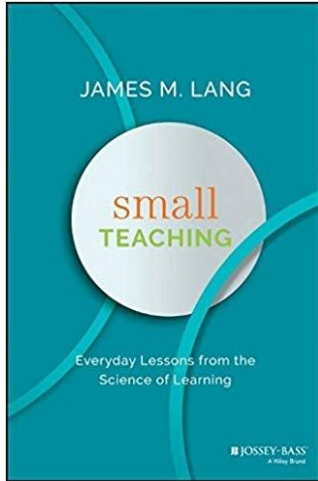
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# Small Changes for a Big Impact

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PRESENTED BY:

LAUREN BAGDY, *INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES*

SPENCER YOUNGBERG, *FAMILY AND CHILD SCIENCES*

# Workshop Framework

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- ❖ Small Changes or Big Revolution?
- ❖ The Minutes before Class
- ❖ The First 5 Minutes of Class
- ❖ Making Connections
- ❖ The Last 5 Minutes of Class
- ❖ Giving Them a Say
- ❖ Space It Out
- ❖ Small Teaching Online

What is one small change you can make in your classroom tomorrow that will have a big impact on your students?

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# Small Changes or Big Revolution?

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*“Good teaching takes time and effort, which is why we are reluctant to abandon our current approaches unless we are convinced that we will see a major payoff.”*

- **What** is small teaching?
  - Small changes in course design, classroom practices and communication with students
- **Why** small teaching?
  - Saves time and energy
- **How** do we implement small teaching in your classrooms?
  - Brief classroom activities, one-time interventions, small modifications in course design, and communication with students

Lang, J. M. (2016). *Small teaching: Everyday lessons from the science of learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

# The Minutes before Class

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*“In my early years I would walk into the classroom with just a minute or two to spare and spend the final moments before class putting my papers in order, preparing whatever technology I might be using that day, and gathering my thoughts.”*

- How are you?
  - Spend a few minutes to speaking to an individual student or two
- Display the framework
  - Post an agenda or outline to show students how the class period will be organized
  - Remind students of where they are within the framework
- Create wonder
  - Display an image, quote, newspaper headline, etc. to stimulate informal conversation

# The First 5 Minutes of Class

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*“....the first five minutes of a college class often get frittered away with logistical tasks (taking attendance or setting up our technology), gathering our thoughts as we discuss homework or upcoming tests, or writing on the board.”*

- Open with a question or two
  - Material that you want your students to learn should be answers to questions you are asking... (this is typically how you do it on a test anyway!)
- What did we learn last time?
  - Testing effect “retrieval practice”
- Reactivate what they learned in previous courses
  - Asking students to tell you what they already know (or think they know) has important benefits.
- Write it down
  - Frequent, low-stakes writing assignments constitute one of the best methods you can use to solicit engagement and thinking in class.

# Making Connections

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*“...new learners tend to have information, ideas, or skills lodged in their minds in discrete, isolated places. Connections that seem obvious to us may never occur to them.”*

- The commonplace book
  - Helps students retain information and make connections to the material
- Social-media connections
  - Students have devices... put them to good use!
- The minute thesis
  - Encourage students to synthesize and articulate the material



# The Last 5 Minutes of Class

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*“...most faculty members eye the final minutes of class as an opportunity to cram in eight more points before students exit, At the same time, we complain when students start to pack their bags before class ends.”*

- The minute paper
  - What was the most important thing you learned today?
  - What question still remains in your mind?
- Closing connections
  - For students to obtain mastery and expertise in our subjects, they need to be capable of **making their own connections** between what they are learning and the world around them.
- The metacognitive five
  - Students remember material better when they test themselves and try to retrieve information from their own minds.
- Close the loop
  - If you begin, open or start with a question or activity close or end by having students use, explain or tell you what was learned.

# Break

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Enjoy some pie!



# PIE Fall 2019

## Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshop Series

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Come join fellow TAs and instructors to discuss strategies and techniques that promote excellence in teaching and learning -- bring your questions, concerns, and ideas! As always, coffee & pie will be provided!

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**OCT 3RD**  
3:30-5PM

*Small Changes for a  
Big Impact*

**OCT 22ND**  
3:00-4:30PM

*Diversity & Inclusion  
in Classrooms Through  
Structured Feedback*

**NOV 7TH**  
1:00-2:30PM

*Promoting Active  
Student Engagement*

# Giving Them a Say

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*“Plenty of research suggests that a mastery orientation creates deeper and longer learning. That same research suggests that we can help orient students toward mastery by giving them choices.”*

- Student-generated exam questions
  - Commit to using some proportion or version of their questions
  - Excellent review activity
- Open assessments
  - Start small (one open assignment, open participation opportunities)
- Class constitutions
  - Promote your classroom as a community of learners

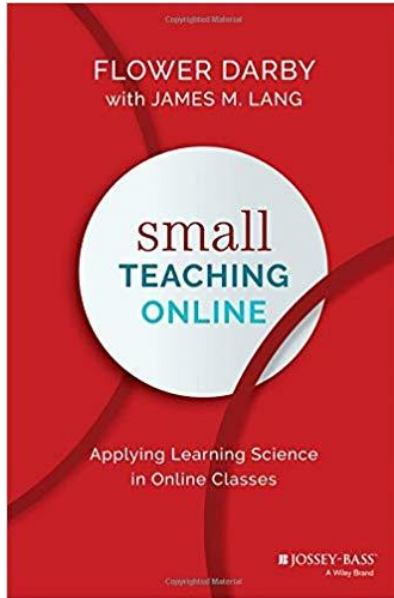
# Space it Out

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*“Nothing strengthens learning like spacing it out over time. The more opportunities we can give people to learn something the more we help them create deep, durable learning. Intensive, short-term learning often feels durable in the moment but then fades away. Cramming works for the short term. But without spaced exposure, learning dims quickly.”*

Improve learning through the power of spacing.

- Make all assessments (at least partially) cumulative
  - Whatever material you want students to retain beyond the confines of your course should make multiple appearances throughout the semester, especially on your tests.
- The spaced syllabus
- Space out deadlines and tests
  - Six moderately sized exams will leverage the power of spaced learning more than three major ones. Multiple short papers will beat that one long one, weekly quizzes, writing exercises, or problem-solving sessions will help even more.



# Small Teaching Online

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Darby, F., & Lang, J. M. (2019). *Small teaching online: Applying learning science in online classes*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

# Small Teaching Online

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*“Putting a class online is much, much harder than it sounds. At least if you want to do it well...And institutions may not be doing all that can be done to adequately prepare faculty to teach online.”*

- Manage cognitive load
  - Chunk content, release content strategically, scaffold learning
- Instructor presence
  - Interact with students, provide timely feedback, send targeted emails
- Continue learning

# Final Thoughts?

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- How do you plan on taking small teaching into your classroom?
- What is one small change you can make in your classroom tomorrow that will have a big impact on your students?