

Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning

Information for Instructors

Community college students benefit from active, engaging learning and meaningful connections with peers and instructors. When effectively used, technology can help create these types of learning environments. We invite you to participate in a free research-based virtual course focused on using technology tools to improve student learning. Instructors who participate in the course and all associated research activities will receive \$550 in incentives. A maximum of 120 instructors across four Oregon community colleges will participate in the professional learning course and research study.

The professional learning course

The [Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest](#) (REL NW) co-designed the *Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning* course with community college instructors in Oregon. Based on the [Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning](#) practice guide, the course offers practical strategies to implement five evidence-based practices:

1. Use communication and collaboration tools to increase interaction among students and between students and instructors.
2. Use varied, personalized, and readily available digital resources to design and deliver instructional content.
3. Incorporate technology that models and fosters self-regulated learning strategies.
4. Use technology to provide timely and targeted feedback on student performance.
5. Use simulation technologies that help students engage in complex problem solving.

This course is designed for community college instructors across disciplines. The 16 hours of professional learning includes:

- Four 2-hour virtual synchronous sessions where instructors will collaborate in activities relevant to the practice guide recommendations
- A total of 8 hours of asynchronous independent learning activities that help participants focus on specific areas of improvement and interest

[Click here](#) to view a short video describing the course.

The study

We're offering free participation in the course through a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. The study, led by [Community College Research Center](#) (CCRC), will determine whether and how the course improves instructors' comfort with and knowledge of technology tools for learning and students' engagement and achievement.

Who is eligible?

All full-time and part-time instructors teaching at least one fall 2024 credit-bearing course in any discipline, including developmental-level courses, are eligible to participate. Instructors who exclusively teach courses that are noncredit, continuing education, and/or courses that enroll exclusively dually enrolled students are not eligible.

What incentives are available?

Instructors who participate in the research activities will receive \$550 in incentives.

What will happen if I participate?

- All instructors will complete an application form that includes a brief survey in the spring of 2024 and take another brief survey in the fall of 2024.
- Instructors will be randomly assigned to participate in the professional learning course either in summer 2024 (treatment group) or 2025 (comparison group).
- Instructors in both groups will identify one “focal course” that is the reference course for the study; students enrolled in focal courses in fall 2024 will comprise the student sample.
- Instructors in both groups will be asked to remind their students to take a survey.
- A subset of the instructors will participate in a focus group and share their course materials.
- Instructors in both groups who participate in study activities will receive two payments of \$250 (one in the summer and one in fall of 2024), plus a \$50 gift card for reminding their students about the survey.

Participation is voluntary and will have no positive or negative impact on instructor employment or standing at the college.

Instructor activities

Activity	Treatment Group	Comparison Group
Complete application form and survey	Spring 2024	Spring 2024
Participate in the course	Summer 2024	Spring/summer 2025
Complete instructor survey	Fall 2024	Fall 2024
Participate in a focus group and provide researchers access to course materials (subset of instructors)	Fall 2024	Fall 2024
Remind students to take a survey	Fall 2024	Fall 2024

Benefits of participation

Participating in the course and the study offers the following benefits for you, your students, and colleges around the country:

- You gain skills and strategies for incorporating technology to create active and engaging learning environments.

- Your students benefit from your new knowledge about using technology and digital tools more effectively and meaningfully in the classroom.
- Community colleges around the country benefit from access to the course once it has been revised based on your input.

We hope that you will consider participating in this unique opportunity. We are eager to work with instructors who are interested in improving their use of technology in teaching. Eligible instructors will receive an invitation to participate in their college email.

For more information about the study, please contact Victor Sanchez at CCRC at vhs2111@tc.columbia.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration!