

Experimenter Module



Scenario

I am looking for some new ideas, approaches or technologies to enhance what I am already doing in my course, so I can design some new learning experiences. I want to add some new ways of doing things to my teaching repertoire.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ-tjdMnHIA>

Overview

This module presents you with a series of challenges that invite you to experiment—to be curious and creative as you explore, and to reflect on new approaches to designing learning experiences. Experimentation is key to extending our skills related to online and technology-enabled learning.

Outcome

Experiment with new technologies, approaches and strategies to better support your teaching style and student learning in the digital age.

Objectives

- Reflect on different ways to design learning experiences
- Embrace experimentation in your teaching strategies

- Consider creative accesses to technology for all students
- Try new technology tools that enhance learning
- Experiment with using a tablet or smartphone for technology-enabled content creation

Embrace Experimentation

The English Oxford Dictionary defines an [experimenter](#) as a person who “tries out new ideas, methods and activities”. Experimenters are adventurers, path finders, seekers; they are inquisitive and have “an openness to try, reflect & learn from new approaches, pedagogy and technologies to support student learning” (Bates 2014).

Did you ever convince yourself that you would not like a certain type of food because of the way it looked? Only to find out that once you experimented with trying it you really enjoyed eating it and now cannot imagine your life without it.

Think back to the last time you were hosting a party or an event at your residence. In addition to organizing the menu, a guest list also had to be created. Maybe you flip-flopped back and forth about who to invite and who not to invite. You were not sure if that guest would get along with that other guest. In the end, you experimented with inviting different people and everyone got along smashingly! #bestfriendsforever

What about that time your friend encouraged you to go without something? Maybe you eliminated carbs or sugar from your diet? Maybe you stopped buying material items unconsciously? Or did you forego a trip that you were wanting to take because of the impact it might cause on the environment? It is during these times that you are experimenting with different lifestyle choices!

In each of the above examples, had you not experimented with trying new ways of doing things you might not have ever known what could be possible.

Experimenting in teaching and learning with different content delivery modes and pedagogical approaches can help to re-invigorate a love of teaching and spark further creativity and concept attainment in learning experiences for students. As well, experimenting with limited tools can expose issues of accessibility for students. This can lead to new creative strategies in teaching that considers the experience of students from all intersections of identity. While the majority of teachers and administrators recognize that educational technology can accelerate student

learning opportunities, a [recent survey](#) finds that 39 percent of school staff do not have training or "adequate learning opportunities" to adopt ed tech solutions in the classroom. Thus, the experimenter module encourages you to freely experiment as a means of providing those "adequate learning opportunities" for the adoption of educational technology.

It is not necessary for you to do any of the other modules before doing this one. This module can be explored in any relationship to the others. The Experimenter Module is designed to integrate elements of being a [scholar](#), and [curating](#) while [collaborating](#) in a network, who [teaches for learning](#), using [technology](#). Experimenting weaves throughout all of our work and it does not stop with technology driven teaching strategies! For instance, beyond this module you could experiment with different assessment techniques. Wouldn't it be great to find new ways of assessing students to lessen their focus on a grade to the detriment of learning?

Extend Connections

Accessibility: "is a general term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to be used by all intended audiences."

Here are some resources on how you can experiment with your pedagogy to become more accessible to all students:

[Accessible Education](#)

[An Educator's Introduction to the AODA](#)

[Racial Inequities in Higher Education](#)

[The Importance of Accessible Materials in Higher Education](#)

[Web Accessibility in Higher Education](#)

[We Need to Talk About Race in Higher Education](#)

[Decolonising the Curriculum](#)

[Racial Microaggressions: Comments That Sting](#)

Let's Experiment

Extend Activity

Below you will find a list of ten experimenter activities that will challenge you to think about the ways in which you have been designing and delivering your course content, as well as the formats, tools, and approaches you have been using. For this module you are asked to complete only three out of the ten possible experimenter activities.

If you have finished any of the other Extend modules, think back to your work on them! Do you remember being struck with the desire to “experiment” further as you progressed through the different extend activities? Have you been asking yourself whether or not you need to update your approaches to teaching and learning and how you might do this? Have you considered how your current pedagogical practices might have limited access for some students? Are you worried about introducing a new technology tool and how that might integrate with an existing one you are already using? Are you worried that not all students might have access to those tools?

This module encourages you reflect on those curious questions, start experimenting with different tools, modes and approaches to figure them out, and bask in the eventual glory of the aha educational enlightened moments coming your way. To better appreciate the experience on mobile devices, at least one of your three Experimenter activities should be done using a tablet or smartphone. Dive deep and get busy experimenting!



Take a deep dive! Diving deeper means challenging yourself. Complete at least one of the three experimenter activities using a tablet or smartphone! Yes, it is possible!

Extend Connections

If you or your students do not have access to a tablet or smartphone, consider the following resources:

- Utilizing technology and devices available at your own campus library. Consider putting devices on hold at your campus library for activities that require students to use particular devices so that all students have access.
- If your own campus library is not equipped with devices needed for an activity, think about local libraries and resources as well.

For example, the Toronto Public Library allows for laptop and digital equipment loans:

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/using-the-library/computer-services/borrow-a-laptop/>

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/using-the-library/borrowing-materials/>

Finally, before you start experimenting below you should explore the eCampusOntario [Extend Toolkit](#) that includes information on all tools used in Ontario Extend as well as other ones recommended to complete module activities. Other collections are listed below, offering dozens of technology tools with explanations of how and why they might be used in course design, class activities, assessments and so on. The tools found in these additional collections will lend added context for completing the experimenter activities found in this module. If you want to determine if a technology tool is the best choice for you and your learner's needs, you might want to evaluate it using the [Rubric for E-Learning Tool Evaluation](#).

[The University of British Columbia – Instructional Support and Informational Technology](#)

[University of Western Ontario – eLearning Toolkit](#)

[The Learning Portal: Digital Skills Hub](#)

[Top Tools for Learning 2020](#)

[University of Notre Dame – REMIX](#)

Now, as you begin experimenting a reminder to choose only **three experimenter activities** to complete that are listed below.

1. H5P

H5P is a [free and open-source](#) content platform independent framework based on the HTML5 standard. You can create a wide range of interactive widgets, such as “find the hotspot” or “fill in the blanks” that can then be used within web sites and LMS platforms (Canvas, Moodle and Blackboard) as well as WordPress. Learn more about the [capabilities of H5P content types](#) and explore live demos.

We [created our own hotspot content type in H5P](#) to share examples of responses to Ontario Extend Module Activities. eCampusOntario H5P Studio is your one stop shop to create, share, and discover interactive learning objects. This site uses H5P, an open source plugin, to allow content authors to easily create interactive content for their courses or other instructional projects.

eCampusOntario H5P Studio is provided as part of our set of Open Publishing tools. This platform was developed by the innovative team at Wilfrid Laurier University Library. For inquiries, please feel to contact us at open@ecampusontario.ca

Activity

Use the [eCampusOntario H5P Studio](#) to create an interactive activity for learners to review for an assessment or to assess prior knowledge about a topic.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your H5P creation as a response to the [Going Interactive with H5P](#) activity.

2. GIFs

Animated GIFs are familiar as expressions of emotion in social media but are also of educational value to as short looping videos to demonstrate a process.

Activity

Think about a concept or process in the subject you teach or are most interested in. What might you be able to demonstrate in an animated GIF form, one that allows rapid repetition in a few frames? Try the [Giphy Make a GIF tool](#) to generate an animated GIF from a section of a video or a series of uploaded photos.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your GIF creation as a response to the [A Serious Use For Silly Media](#) activity.

3. Surveys and Polls

Online survey or audience response tools are powerful for capturing opinions and understanding your students or colleagues better.

Activity

Explore an online survey tool. Experiment by creating and conducting a five-question survey of your peers about ways to use technology-enabled activities.

Users of the Google suite might try Google Forms, which store data in a spreadsheet stored in your drive (and can be embedded in other sites). Other survey tools like [Socrative](#), and [Poll Everywhere](#) are specially aimed at collecting audience feedback on mobile devices. See [more survey tools listed in the Extend Toolkit](#).

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share a link to your survey results as a response to the [Surveying](#) activity.

4. Videos

A bridge or hook is an effective teaching approach to gain a learner's attention and build motivation.

Activity

Create a video, that serves the bridge or hook purpose to welcome students to your course (think [course trailer](#) even), or your blog website, with one of the freely available tools highlighted in the [Online Learning Toolkit](#).

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your video as a response to the [Come In, Come In!](#) activity.

5. CC Images

Have you ever taken a photo or created a graphic that you would like to use or found the perfect image on the Internet and wanted to use it? It is time for you to [learn about the location and attribution of openly licensed images](#) (OER Commons) or see the [Consider This! activity](#) from the Curator module.

Activity

For this activity, experiment by building or customizing an openly licensed graphic or other resource for a concept related to your discipline, and share it via [OER Commons](#), the “public digital library of open educational resources.”

Use their [Open Resource Builder](#) to assemble and publish your OER. Build or customize an openly licensed graphic or other resource for your discipline area, and share it via [OER Commons](#). Why share here? It can be part of [a global commons of Open Education Resources](#) (worth exploring too).

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your OER Commons resource link or upload the PDF it generates as a response to the [Built to Share](#) activity.

6. Virtual Tours

Field work is an immersive and experiential way to engage students in the learning process. However, when you cannot hold a class on the Athabasca Glacier to examine glacial retreat or transport 60 students to Paris, France to study the urban form and function of the city, virtual tours provide a way to create that “in the field” experience.

Activity

Experiment to create a field work inspired activity for one of your courses using one of the following virtual tour experiences:

[Google Streetview](#) connects with Google’s map service to show fully navigable views of map locations. This offers a means to observe anywhere on earth they have mapped.

The [Streetview Gallery](#) provides examples of where you can go.

[MapCrunch](#) uses Streetview to transport you to a random location in the world. This might work as a writing prompt or an exercise to explore the cultures where you land.

[Geoguesser](#) provides random Streetview Images from around the world wrapped in a game format for identifying the location.

[Google Museum View](#) uses the same technology to map streets to provide walk through tours of museums around the world.

[Google Map Treks](#) takes to you inside the Taj Mahal, down inside the Grand Canyon, the Sambura National Refuge in Kenya, the Giza Pyramids in Egypt, and more.

[Google Earth](#) lifts you from the streets to explore the entire globe. Explore any location in full 360 degree navigation.

[Google Earth Timelapse](#) provides a way to explore satellite images of different locations over different periods of times.

[Google Tour Creator](#) helps you create your own virtual reality tours.

Explore one or more of these virtual tours and find the web address for one tour that would allow you to build a customized learning experience. Develop some commentary to post, focused on how could you integrate the tour into a learning experience and what it might offer your students.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your chosen tour link and associated comments as a response to the [Virtual Field Trips](#) activity.

7. Infographics

An infographic is “data, presented visually, that tells a story” (from [Creating Infographics](#)).

Activity

We have no shortage of tools and articles for how to generate an infographic, but the most important steps happen before you open a tool- identifying your audience, the topic, researching and tracking the data you will use, and planning out the best ways to visualize the information.

Experiment by creating an infographic to present data behind or as an explanation of an important concept in your discipline. Recommended tools include [Piktochart](#), [Canva](#), [Adobe Spark](#) or [other Infographic Tools in the Extend Toolkit](#).

Activity Bank Submission Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share your infographic as a response to the [Information in a Graphic](#) activity.

8. Technology Tools on Mobile Devices

The [UDG Agora Challenge Bank](#) is one of our inspirations.

Activity

This collection of activities (which is much like our own Activity Bank) was created as part of [a faculty development program for the University of Guadalajara](#) specifically focused on integration of technologies and strategies that are effective on mobile devices.

[Explore the UDG Challenge bank](#) (you can ever try a [randomly selected one](#)) and [try one of the challenges](#). When entering your response, be sure to name and link to the specific UDG Agora Challenge you chose.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share the details of your completed Agora Project challenge as a response to the [Just Like The Agora](#) activity.

9. Padlet

Creating a [Padlet](#) is often described as building a living, breathing web page. You will see it in use the [Curator Module](#).

Activity

Padlet offers a virtual bulletin board for sharing words, web sites, audio, video, and creating connecting between items. Padlets can be set up to allow contributions without logging on or they can be made private.

See [30 Creative Ways to Use Padlet for Teachers and Students](#) (BookWidgets blog) for specific types of activities educators might create there. These ideas include Brainstorming on a Topic, Online Student Portfolios, Mind Mapping, Book Discussions, Icebreakers, Geocaching, and more.

Experiment by using [padlet](#) to create an immersive learning activity that you can test out with your students.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share the link for your completed Padlet in a response to the [Padlet, Padlet](#) activity.

10. Quizzes

[Quizlet](#) began as one learner's method to improve their learning by creating online vocabulary quizzes and has grown to be a platform for creating sets of practice exercises for any discipline.

Activity

Interaction types include content review, flashcards, matching games, spelling and more learning tools. [Quizlet Live](#) is a platform for producing in class interactive activities.

A good starting point is exploring existing content created by other educators, [organized by subject](#). Then, when you have an idea of what kind of activities you want to experiment with, [create a free account](#) and then make your first Quizlet set.

Activity Bank Instructions

If you chose this activity as one of your three, please share a link to the sample study material you created as a response to the [More Than Quizzes](#) activity.

Extend Community

Visit the Extend Community Space [Ideas for New Experimenter Activities discussion area](#) (in the #experimenter channel) to identify a new experimenter activity using a technology tool not listed above. Use the eCampusOntario [Extend Toolkit](#) to choose a tool for your activity. Be sure to provide a title and detailed description of this activity in the community space.

Extend Activity

It is now time to reflect on what you have accomplished through your experimentation efforts in this module.

Prepare a detailed written reflection that includes responses to the questions below.

1. Which three experimenter activities did you choose to complete and why? Include links to your Activity Bank responses.
2. Identify and explain three overall lessons learned from experimenting with these three activities. How might you use these activities going forward in your teaching practice?
3. You were asked to complete at least one experimenter activity on a tablet or a smartphone. Identify the activity completed and on what type of mobile device? Then, identify and explain the advantages and challenges of using this technology tool on a mobile device. Comment on how you might plan for an upcoming assignment to be completed on a tablet or a smartphone. Explain the steps you might take in making access to these devices available to all students.
4. Using a mobile device, camera, or screencasting software highlighted in the [Online Learning Toolkit](#) to create a short 2-3 minute video of yourself illustrating how, when designing learning experiences in the future, you will use the technologies, ideas, formats, and/or approaches that you experimented with in this module. Include an example of how you would incorporate this new knowledge into a lesson plan. Get as creative as you wish! Upload your video to [YouTube](#), [Vimeo](#), or any other video hosting site that can create a public link to your video (or keep it private/unlisted if you like). Include the link for your video in your reflection document.

You can choose to upload your reflection as a document, link to a Google Doc or blog post, or compose it entirely in your response to the [I'm an Experimenter!](#) activity.

Module Checklist

I have satisfied the following criteria and will submit evidence in the requested fields when applying for the Experimenter badge. Your profile page in the [Activity Bank](#) provides links to all the responses you have submitted.

Criteria and Evidence Required for Badge Assessment – I have:
Completed my first experimenter activity. Evidence: Enter the web address/upload for your response to Experimenter Activity #1.
Completed my second experimenter activity. Evidence: Enter the web address/upload for your response to Experimenter Activity #2.
Completed my third experimenter activity. Evidence: Enter the web address/upload for your response to Experimenter Activity #3.
Summarized my experimenter activities in a detailed written reflection and created a short explainer video. Evidence: Enter the web address for your response to the I'm an Experimenter activity.
Reflected on the module experience. Evidence: Enter your reflection statement into the space provided on the badge submission page.

[Apply now for your Experimenter Badge](#)

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