

Experimenter



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=vPOc-LFxhjo>

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 approaches, pedagogies, and technologies to support learning.

Objectives

- Try new technological and pedagogical approaches
- Reflect on different ways to design learning experiences



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).

If you’ve ever had the fun and sometimes frustrating experience of watching a young child feed herself when she discovers the “magic of gravity,” you have witnessed first-hand how we are all born experimenters. As the young experimenter throws her spoon or food on the floor and the nearby adult picks it up, the child monitors, analyzes, and evaluates the actions with all the precision of a scientist. And then she does it again. And again. And again.



Older children display similar behavior. Over 75% of Grade 5 students will attempt to solve a nonsensical math problem that adults don’t even begin to try (Bransford, 1983).

An example of a nonsensical and unsolvable problem might be: *There are 26 sheep and 10 goats on a ship. How old is the captain?*

Obviously, this kind of behaviour is beneficial: it prevents us from wasting time trying to solve a problem that has no solution. While math questions with unknowable variables are uncommon for most of us, we could, however, often benefit from tapping into the enthusiasm and flexible mindset young children bring to problem solving.

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 through all our work.

Let’s Experiment



Below are a sample of experimenter activities: 10 Daily Extends and 16 Deep Dives. Try at least 3 “daily extends” and 1 “deep dive” to play and experiment with new ideas, formats, tools, and approaches. Use the hashtag #oextend to tweet your response to the prompts. After you have completed these activities, please narrate, curate, and share your experiences on your blog.

The Daily Extend

The [Daily Extend site](#) was created as part of the Northern Capacity Building Initiative to provide a space for regular practice of spontaneous creativity through short challenges published every day. They are designed to extend your online skills.



These daily creative tasks follow in the footsteps of [The Daily Create](#). As described on the Daily Create (TDC) website: “each activity should take no more than 15-20 minutes. There are no registrations, no prizes, just a community of people producing art daily. Developed as part of the [ds106 open course on digital storytelling](#), TDC is open to anyone who wants a regular dose of creative exercises (and it more fun than jumping jacks, push-ups, and P90X)”.

Extend Activity



Let’s experiment with some of the Daily Extend activities. Look at the hashtag links (e.g. #oext1) to get a full description of the activity and to see some of the creative responses. Try at least 3 of these Daily Extends. Share what you create by sending a tweet to @ontarioextend and be sure to include the hashtag of the task (#oext1 or #oext56)

1. [#oext1](#) Can you think of an Everyday Metaphor for Extending?
We have chosen the verb [extend](#) as a metaphor for this project. What does it mean to you? Sure, you can look up definitions, but for our first Daily exercise, we ask you to look



around your home or office for an object that allows you to extend the capabilities of a task or utility. Show it in a photo.

2. [#oext2](#) Share Something Interesting from [OpenCulture.com](#).
Open Culture features video, audio, and links to content that celebrates openness or features famous figures or historical moments. See if you can find something relevant to your interests or subject area, and tweet a link to it with as much content as you can fit in a tweet.
3. [#oext 4](#) Google your own name. Find the most interesting doppelgänger.
Do you have a double in this world that you know of? [According to Wikipedia](#) a doppelgänger is “is a look-alike or double of a living person, sometimes portrayed as a paranormal phenomenon” — can you find yours that bears your same name? If you do not get a match on your full name, try using just your first or last name. Or heck, just pick the closest result. Or maybe you can try <https://findmydoppelganger.net/>.
4. [#oext6](#) How does my mobile phone see me? We stare so intently at our devices, what do you think it sees of us from its perspective? You know what people look like when they are busily engaged with their mobile phone. What does the phone see? Take a photo, or better yet shoot a short video, with a view from your phone’s perspective.
5. [#oext13](#) Define Yourself in One or More Noun Project Icons
Explore the Noun Project site for one or more icons that might represent you. Give credit to the source when you share the link.
6. [#oext56](#) Book stack Title Mashup
Make a lead in for a story by combining books where they are stacked and pushing their titles together.
7. [#oext62](#) What’s in it for me?
In the [Teacher for Learning](#) module there is an activity that suggests we consider how the students might answer the question “What’s In It For Me?” or **WIIFM**, if acronyms are your thing. Think of a skill, concept, idea, or process that you know in your heart of hearts that your students can *really* benefit from and **WIIFM** it for us.
8. [#oext64](#) Taylor Swift Curriculum Design
Help us prepare a new program proposal for the Taylor Swift graduate certificate to [OCQAS Credential Validation Service](#). We need to develop the course titles and short course descriptions.
9. [#oext72](#) Slide Deck Beauty Pageant.
Let’s have a slide deck beauty contest. Go through your slides and let us see your prettiest. Or, if you’re too shy, find a pretty one in this collection of about a million [Open](#)



[Education advocacy slide decks](#) and nominate one from there. Just take a [screenshot](#) of the slide, perhaps with the [Snipping Tool](#), and share it on Twitter.

10. [#oext73](#) We are Collaborators

Curation and collaboration are two parts of the [Anatomy of a 21st Century Scholar](#) (Simon Bates in 2014). Let's see if we can make them ONE part today. Let's work together (collaborate) to collect (curate) some videos on how and why to use various ed-tech tools

All the Daily Extend challenges can be accessed [here](#).

Don't forget to Tweet your 3 responses to [@OntarioExtend](#) and be sure to include the hashtag with the number of the Daily Extend [#oext"x"](#)

Extend Activity – Take a Deep Dive

These challenges take a bit longer to complete than the Daily Extend activities. Complete at least one of them.



- Look at these [course trailers](#) and make a 30 second commercial or trailer for your course.
- Highlight a topic or concept for _____, math, literature, philosophy, etc., by creating a [Graphics Interchange Format \(GIF\)](#) .
- Explain a concept using an animated [GIF slideshow](#) .
- Explore some online survey tools (via Google search) and conduct a five-question survey of your peers about ways to use technology-enabled activities.



- Create a video, to welcome students to your course, or your blog website, with one of the freely available tools highlighted in the [Online lecture toolkit](#).
- Build or customize an openly licensed graphic or other resource for your discipline area, and share it via [OER Commons](#).
- Find a Wikipedia article in your discipline that has inaccurate or inadequate information, go to the discussion page and suggest a revision.
- Is there a way you can use [Google Lit Trips](#) or maybe the [Google Street View of Museums](#) to create an activity for one of your courses?
- Use [H5P](#) (or a similar tool) to create an activity for your class to review for a test, or to assess prior knowledge about a topic.
- Curate a mini-lesson on a topic of interest using open education resources and via [Google + Collections](#), [Scoopit](#) or [Storify](#). Take a look at this [example using Storify](#), for inspiration.
- Remix and critically appraise a YouTube video using a free educator account for [Mediabreaker](#).
- Create an [Infographic](#) to present data or explain a concept.
- Look at the [Open Faculty Patchbook](#) and make a contribution.
- Find an [open textbook](#) in your discipline area and write a review.
- Explore these [Silly Useful Web Tricks](#) and use one of them to create an activity for a course or presentation.
- Peruse [The Agora Project Challenge Bank and complete one of the challenges](#).

Do you have a suggestion for another Deep Dive Activity to add to our Experimenter Activity Bank? Send an email to extend@ecampusontario with your suggestion or you can share it via a tweet to [@ontarioextend](#) with the hashtag #oextend.

Culminating Extend Activity



Which activities did you choose? Write a reflection on your blog to share your experience. What did you use to experiment? Why did you choose to do whatever you did?



How will you use the new ideas, formats or approaches that you experimented with when you are designing learning experiences?

Describe:

- What you did
- How you did it (what tools and resources)
- Why you chose those activities to experiment with
- How your “experiments” turned out
- What worked well
- What you would do differently

Add graphics and videos where appropriate. Come up with a jazzy title. Add an openly licenced and featured image. Tweet a link to your published blog post to @ontarioextend and be sure to include the hashtag #oextend

Hopefully experimenting was both fun and enlightening. If you have any ideas about experimenting that you’d like to share, be sure to tweet to @ontarioextend with the hashtag #oextend or send an email to extend@ecampusontario.ca

Module Checklist



I have:

- Completed at least 3 Daily Extends.
- Completed at least 1 Deep Dive Extend.
- Reflected on the Experimenter activities in a blog post and tweeted a link to @ontarioextend with the hashtag #oextend.

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