



Islands in the Stream

Fluidity in Teaching: Adapting to a Constantly Changing Teaching Environment

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Fluidity in Teaching: Adapting to a Constantly Changing Teaching Environment

Recently, our teaching environment has shifted from somewhat “routine and predictable” to more like a stream at flood stage.

In this seminar, we will discuss making your course an “island” of respite and growth in the continual stream of information, new technology, and shifting classroom environments (in-person or virtual).

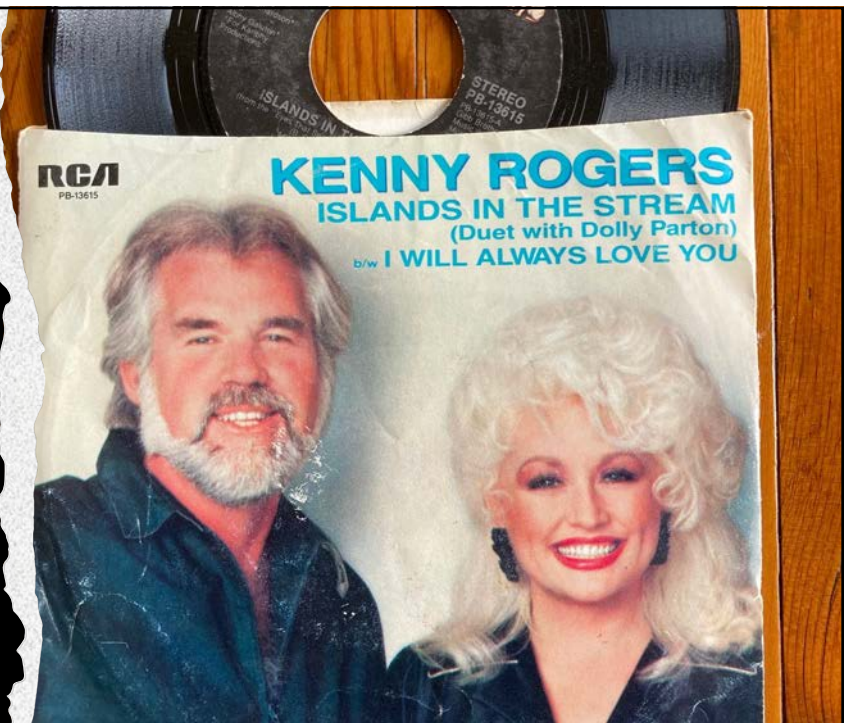
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Andrea Faber Taylor

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Child of the 70s & 80s



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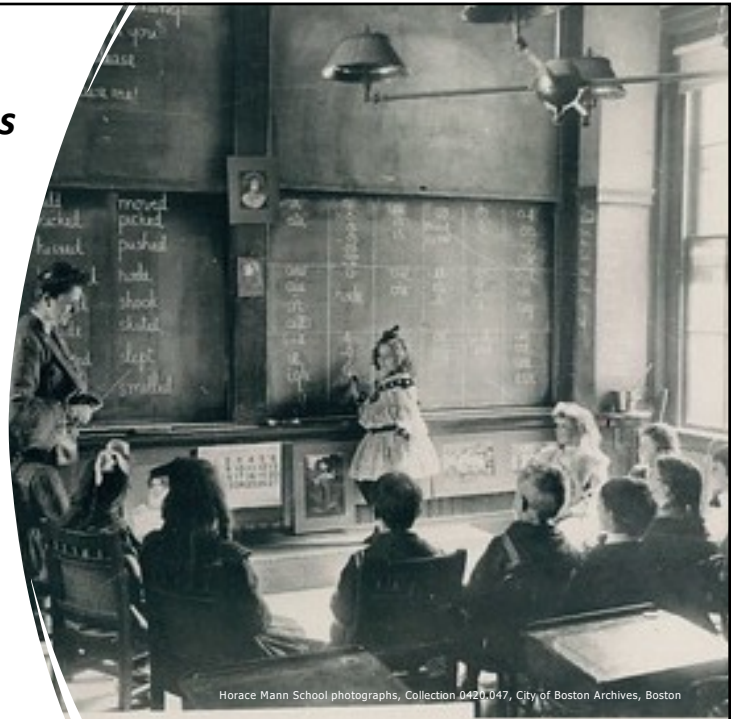
1. *Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings*
2. *Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students*
3. *Investing in yourself – consistently be your best.*



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1. Adapting your course to engage students in **a variety of settings**

No longer this... →

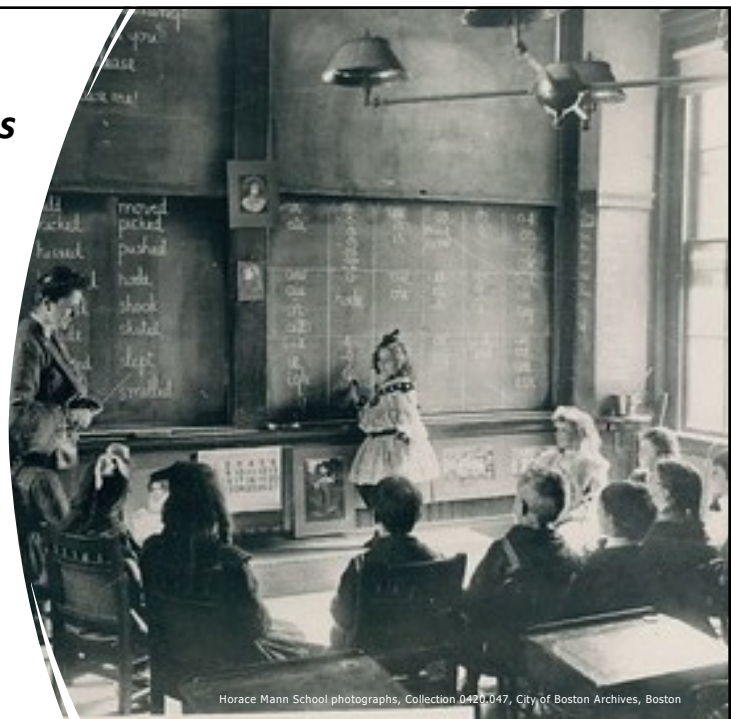


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1. Adapting your course to engage students in **a variety of settings**

Idea 1: Offer courses in **flexible formats** - supports students who can't attend full time/in person

- OLP sections - add to serve distance learners
 - I hear so much gratitude from these students

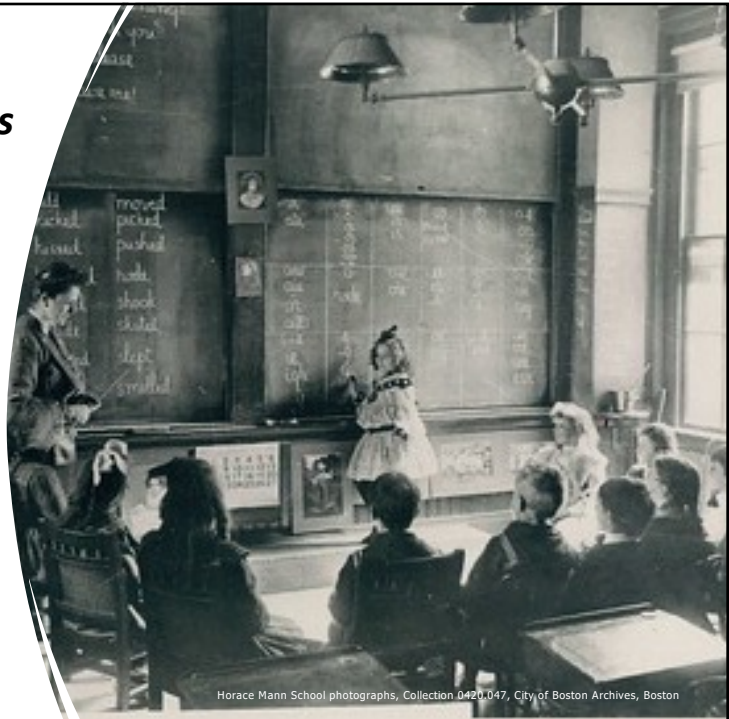


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1. Adapting your course to engage students in **a variety of settings**

Offering courses in **flexible format** supports students who can't attend full time/in person

- OLP sections - add to serve distance learners
- Hybrid format –
 - one day / week fits student schedules, allows students to take your course [as an elective]



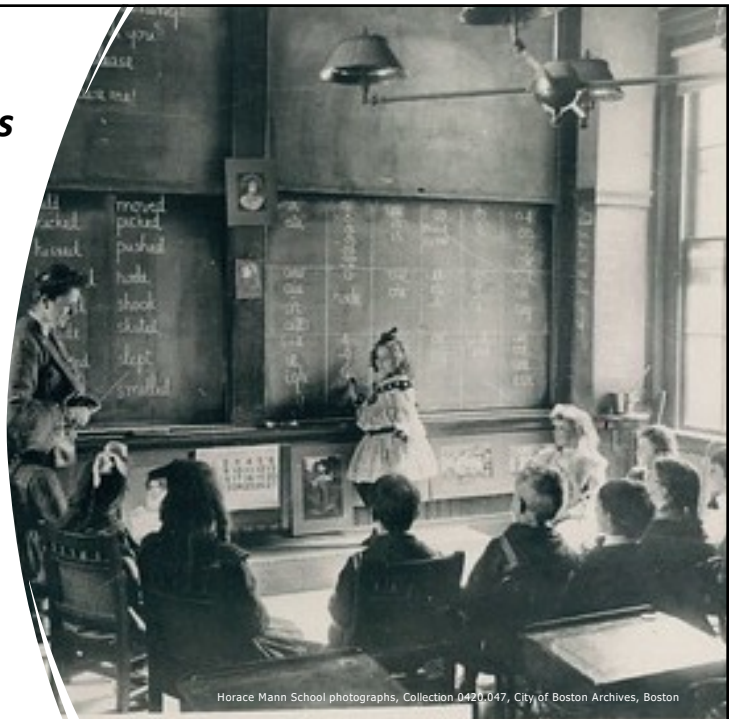
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1. Adapting your course to engage students in **a variety of settings**

Offering courses in **flexible format** supports students who can't attend full time/in person

- OLP sections - add to serve distance learners
- Hybrid format –
- Online asynchronous on – campus
 - on-campus activities to visit



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1. Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings

Idea 2: Adapt assignments to be accessible online asynchronous or off-campus

Displays to visit independently



Video each station for off-campus students

Pick up or mail kits to do at home



Growing plants from seeds at home

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1. Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings

Idea 3: Students find a local example of ...

Learning Activity 2:

Idea Garden (or any public garden) Hunt

25 points

Assignment Goals:

One goal of this activity is to encourage you to explore a garden. The Idea Garden at the UIUC Arboretum contains both flowering plants and fruits and vegetables. If you can't get to the Idea Garden, you may visit another public garden, or a home landscape.

The other goal is to practice recognizing the terms we are learning about in this course. A garden is a great place to see many of those.

Record your answers below the questions or feel free to create a new file in which you record your answers (copy the questions to your file). Upload the completed file on Compass.

Insert one, clearly numbered and labeled, photo of each of the following items from your visit to the Idea Garden. It is acceptable to submit a single picture that shows several of the required features, but be clear which features the picture illustrates. Unlabeled images will not receive points.

1. A composite flower (looks like a 'daisy' and contains both ray and disc flowers)
2. An inflorescence in the shape of an umbel or spike or raceme
3. A leaf with parallel venation
4. A leaf with pinnate or palmate venation
5. A stem with alternate leaf arrangement
6. A stem with opposite leaf arrangement
7. A plant exhibiting fine-textured foliage
8. A plant exhibiting coarse-textured foliage
9. A plant label that includes the genus, specific epithet, and cultivar names
10. One fruit or vegetable
11. A "selfie" of you in the garden or some indication that you visited the Idea Garden or some other garden.

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1. Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings

Idea 4: **Help online & off-campus feel connected to you and to campus**

Share what you are seeing today.

In announcements or a recorded lecture, open with:

"Here's a picture of something I saw today related to this week's topic..."

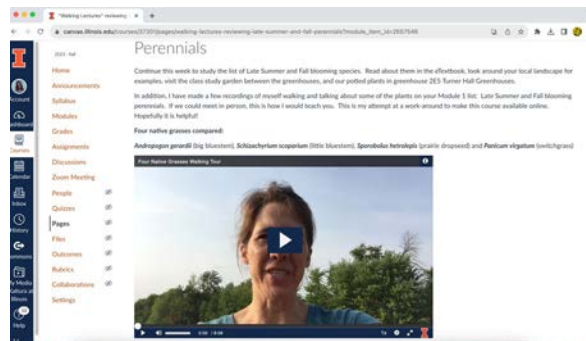
be 'place-based' not a talking head in cyberspace

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1. Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings

Idea 4: **Help online & off-campus feel connected to you and to campus**

Short *Walk and Talk* videos - adds variety to pre-recorded lectures.
Little 'commercial break'



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1. *Adapting your course to engage students in a variety of settings*
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3. *Investing in yourself – consistently be your best.*



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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 1: **Acknowledge the fatigue induced by information overload**



Remind students to take “green” breaks not phone breaks.

e.g., see: Jiang, B., Schmillen, R., & Sullivan, W. C. (2019). How to Waste a Break: Using Portable Electronic Devices Substantially Counteracts Attention Enhancement Effects of Green Spaces. *Environment and Behavior*, 51(9-10), 1133-1160.

Image: <https://www.rawpixel.com/image/9244585/png-face-paper>

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Why “green” breaks?

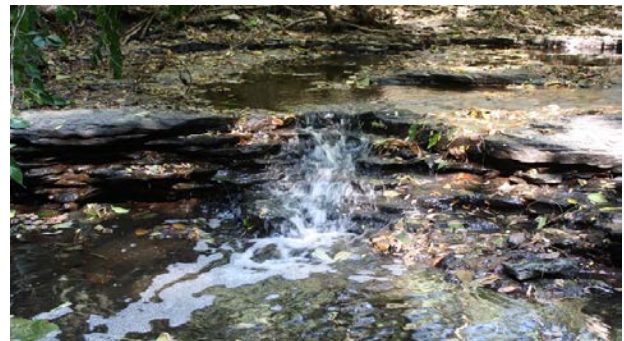
Attention Restoration Theory

being in nature is
mentally restorative



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Attention Restoration Theory



Natural settings

- Engage our *involuntary attention* (easy)
E.g., fire, flowing water, wind in trees, wildlife
- REST our *directed attention* (effortful)
- Fostering *attention restoration from fatigue*

Kaplan, S., (1995). The Restorative Benefits Of Nature: Toward An Integrative Framework. JEP, 15: 169-182.

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4 characteristics of restorative environments (nature)

1. *Soft Fascination*
2. *Sense of Being Away*
3. *Extent*
4. *Compatibility*

Kaplan, S.(1995). The Restorative Benefits Of Nature: Toward An Integrative Framework. *Journal Env'tl Psychology*, 15: 169-182.

Kaplan, R., Kaplan, S., & Ryan, R. L. (1998). *With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature*. Washington DC: Island Press.



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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 2: Build in stretch breaks, encourage to step outside

Make like
a tree and
stretch!
Starting
again in 2
minutes



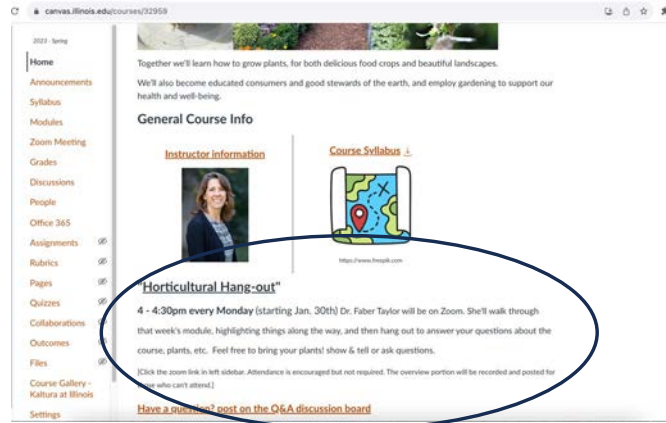
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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 3: Build in socializing – distance learners crave community

Horticultural Hangouts –

sometimes it's very effective!
Sometimes not.

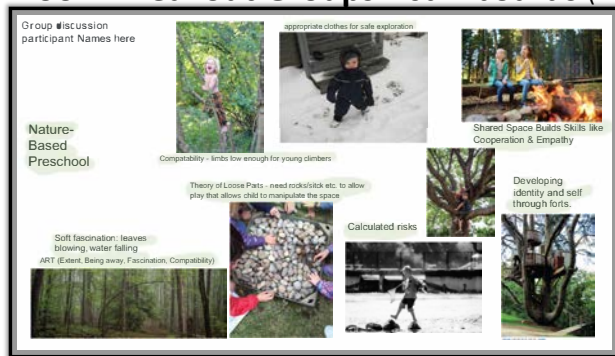


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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 3: **Build in socializing** – distance learners crave community

Zoom Breakout Groups + Jamboards (visual summary of small group discussion)



I display one Jamboard at a time,
group spokesperson points out highlights

TA generates a Wordcloud using terms
from all Jamboards.



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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 3: **Build in socializing** – distance learners crave community

Breakout Groups + Jamboards

What students have said about:

...said her group 'grew in confidence' as a result of their presenting their final projects to each other. All felt very timid to start but after seeing each others' projects and getting advice they feel much better and learned a lot.

...said she really got a lot out of her breakout groups and that that was the best part of the class. She was amazed by the diversity of experience and understanding (sometimes she was in groups with students who are currently educators and have lots of experience).

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2. Incorporating supportive and restorative activities for students

Idea 4: **Can it be done outdoors?** Encourage this approach to assignments



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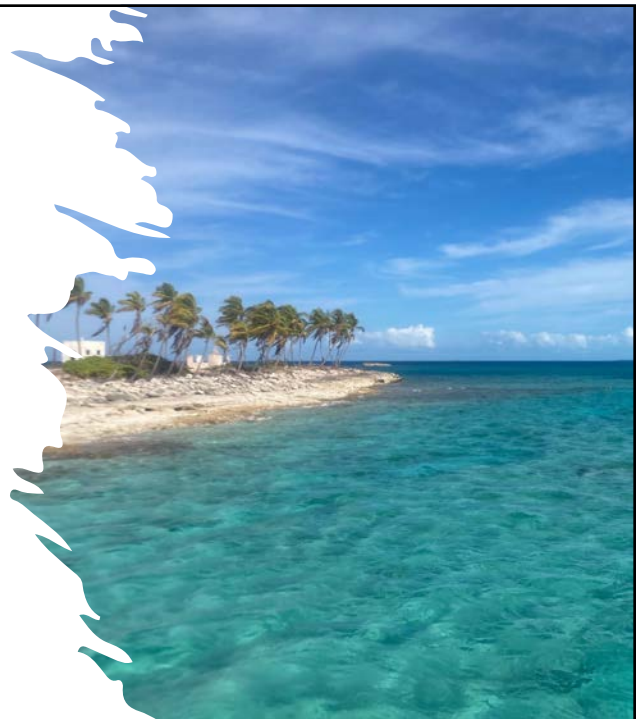


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3. Investing in yourself

—

*take steps to
consistently be your
best self*



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Investing in yourself

Idea 1:

Use your lunch break wisely

Natural settings renew your attentional capacity.

Take your lunch to the Arboretum

(Lincoln Ave.)



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**Natural settings
renew your
attentional capacity.**

Walk to the
2nd Street
Detention Basin



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**Natural settings renew your
attentional capacity**

Illini Grove

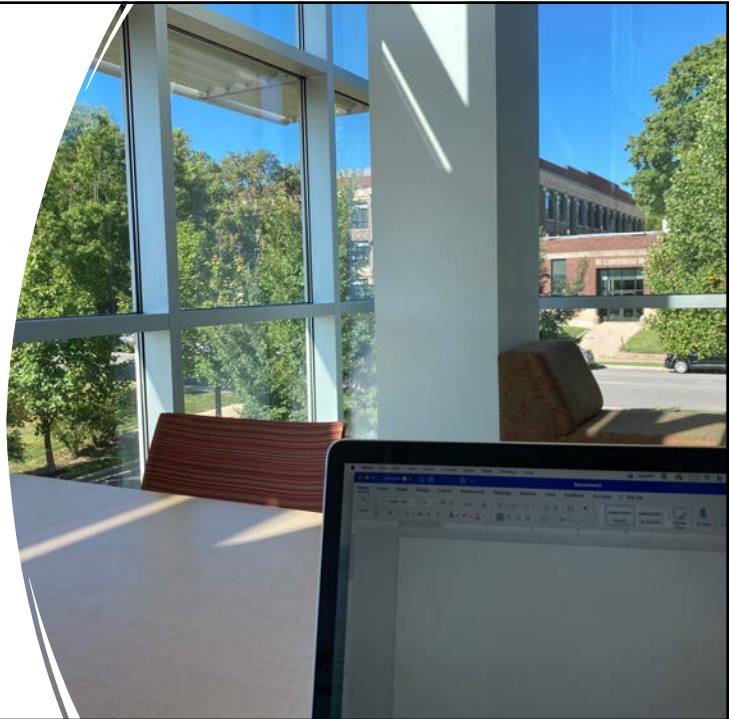
(Pennsylvania Ave.)



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Investing in yourself

Idea 2:
Work in a library with green views

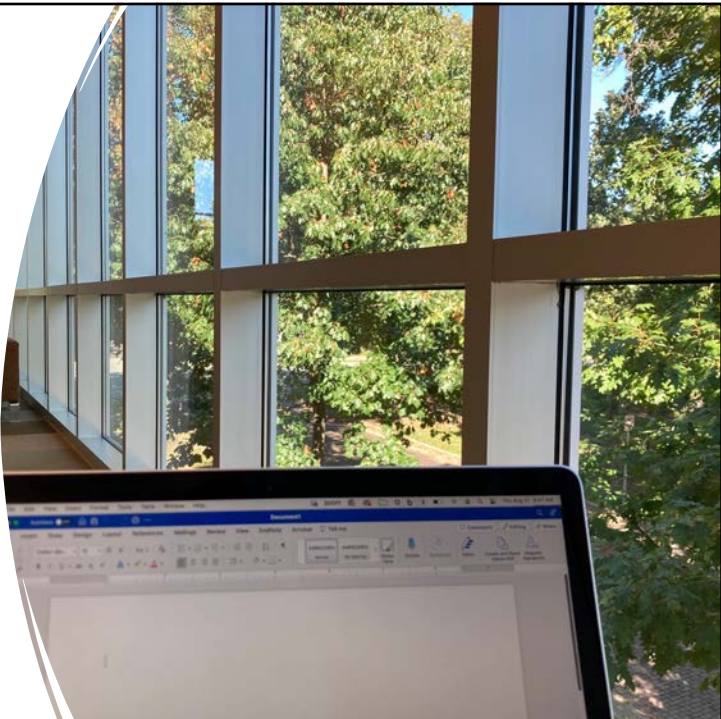


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Work in a library with green views

- Funk Library (College of ACES)
- Champaign Public Library

Large ongoing project?
Schedule weekly library time for only that project



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Investing in yourself

Idea 3:
Work outdoors for “fresh” ideas

Switch to markers and paper
(no electronics)

Or
Reward yourself with a short walk
after a block of focused attention



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Investing in yourself

Idea 4:

Go outdoors evenings & weekends

Local:

- Buffalo Trace
- Homer Lake
- Shades & Turkey Run State Parks
- Many others as well!



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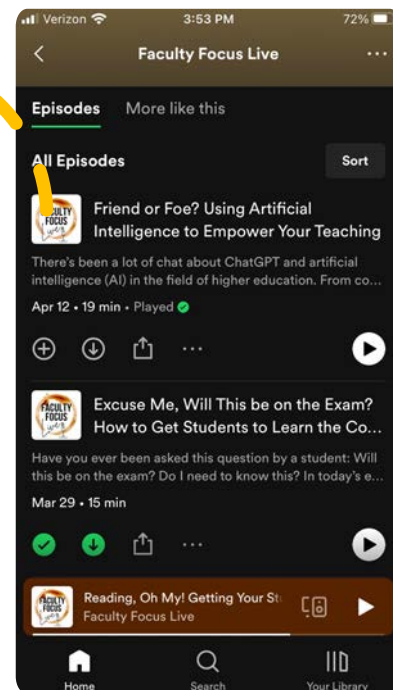
Investing in yourself

Idea 5:

Get inspired! Read 'a little bit' about teaching every day

E.g.,

- Faculty Focus emails and podcasts
- CITL workshops and newsletters posted
- A few pages from a book about teaching



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Right now!

Jot down some phrases or thoughts you have

“Baby steps” to take this week

***Make your course more like an
‘island’ of respite and growth***

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Steamboat Rock, Shades State Park Indiana

Feel free to reach out if you
want to discuss ideas further!

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College of ACES
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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Works cited

- Jiang, B., Schmillen, R., & Sullivan, W. C. (2019). How to Waste a Break: Using Portable Electronic Devices Substantially Counteracts Attention Enhancement Effects of Green Spaces. *Environment and Behavior*, 51(9-10), 1133-1160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916518788603>
- Kaplan, S. (1995). *The Restorative Benefits Of Nature: Toward An Integrative Framework*. *JEP*, 15: 169-182.
- Kaplan, R., Kaplan, S., & Ryan, R. L. (1998). *With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- *Image*: Horace Mann School photographs, Collection 0420.047, City of Boston Archives, Boston.
- *Other Images* by A. Faber Taylor unless otherwise noted.

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