# Embedding Professional & Personal Development into Undergraduate Courses

## Dr. Jennifer Epley Sanders

*Professor of Political Science*
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

EPIC Employee Development Week
Tuesday, November 12, 2024
3:00pm-3:45pm
University Center, Oso Room 221

# OVERVIEW

This presentation will provide concrete suggestions for incorporating **professional and personal development** ideas and activities into course syllabi, structures, lesson plans, and assessments to facilitate applied student learning and preparations for students' future careers.

# CONTEXT & ADAPTATIONS

Today's advice needs to adapted to your needs and interests, especially with special or extenuating circumstances.

Some advice will apply now, other advice later, and there may be advice that doesn't work for you at all but might work for someone else in your program, department, or unit.
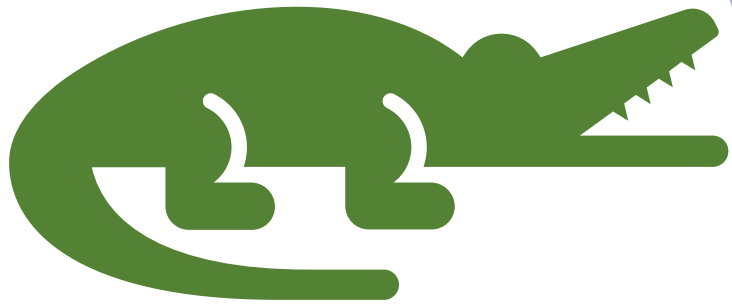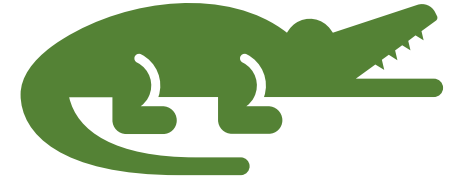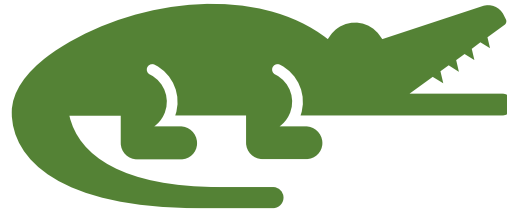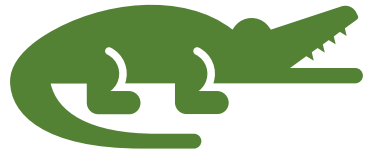
CLOSEST ALLIGATOR
TO THE BOAT

# Brainstorm, Plan, and Implement Steps:

**OBJECTIVES**

**LOGISTICS**

**MORALE**

# OBJECTIVES

❑ **What type(s) of professional and personal development do you want to embed in your undergraduate course(s)? Why?**

❑ **What are your top 1, 2, or 3 professional and personal development goals for your students? Why are these your top goals?**

❑ **Will you embed your top goals throughout the entire course or in selected course units? Why or why not?**

# EXAMPLES

**Intellectual and Practical Skills:**

- **Inquiry and analysis**
- **Critical thinking**
- **Creative thinking**
- **Written communication**
- **Oral communication**
- **Reading**
- **Quantitative literacy**
- **Information literacy**
- **Teamwork**
- **Problem solving**

**Personal and Social Responsibility:**

- **Civic engagement—local and global**
- **Intercultural knowledge and competence**
- **Ethical reasoning**
- **Foundations and skills for lifelong learning**
- **Global learning**

**Integrative and Applied Learning:**

- **Integrative learning**

**AAC&U VALUE RUBRICS – LEARNING OUTCOMES**
**https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics**

# ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

**Life or Career Skills:**

- Adaptation or Improvisation
- Advocacy (Self and Others)
- Empathy
- Ethics and Morality
- Health and Safety
- Leadership
- Legal Skills
- Life-Long Learning
- Money Management
- Networking

- Personal Relationship Skills
- Professional Relationship Skills
- Research Skills
- Self-Care
- Social Media
- Stress Management
- Study Skills
- Time Management

**And more...**

# LOGISTICS

❑ **For your top 1, 2, or 3 professional and personal development goals, will you embed them into your syllabus, course structure, lesson plans, and/or assessments?**

   ❖ **Think carefully through the who, what, where, when, why, and how (5WH).**

   ❖ **You can make sweeping changes, i.e., overhaul a whole course, OR you can take incremental steps and make changes to course units over time.**

# EXAMPLES

## COURSE = POLS 2305: U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

## Professional & Personal Development Goal = Critical Thinking

**1. Syllabus**
- **Include critical thinking in the student learning outcomes/objectives**
- **Include critical thinking in titles of assessments**
- **Model critical thinking in the language and rationale of policies and assessments**

**2. Course Structure**
- **Scaffold critical thinking, i.e., start with basics and move to more advanced levels**

**3. Lesson Plans**
- **Explain critical thinking through readings and videos**
- **Explain role of critical thinking in the discipline of political science**
- **Explain critical thinking as it relates to current events**

**4. Assessments**
- **Provide opportunities to practice critical thinking on quizzes, exams, essays, or projects**

# EXAMPLES

## COURSE = POLS 3331: International Relations

**Professional & Personal Development Goals = Critical Thinking and Teamwork/Collaborative Learning**

**1. Course Structure**
- Scaffold critical thinking and teamwork, i.e., start with basics and move to more advanced levels as appropriate

**2. Lesson Plans**
- Explain critical thinking and teamwork through readings and videos
- Explain role of critical thinking and teamwork in the discipline of political science

**3. Assessments**
- Practice critical thinking on individual quizzes, essays, and LinkedIn Learning
- Practice teamwork on two multimedia group projects (e.g., video presentations with accompanying essay about teamwork processes and outputs, as well as an annotated bibliography)

# MORALE

❑ **What specific changes can you make for students' professional and personal development learning that will maintain <mark>your</mark> interest and enthusiasm throughout the semester, especially when it comes to grading?**

❑ **What specific changes can you make for students' professional and personal development learning that will maintain <mark>their</mark> interest and enthusiasm throughout the semester?**

# EXAMPLES

❑ Discussing and periodically checking in with students' regarding their "why," purpose(s), and goals or priorities.

❑ Scheduling breaks or buffers for time.

❑ Scheduling regular peer reviews. Then debrief if possible.

❑ Including mixed modes or mixed media for learning (in and out of class) and assessments.

❑ Crowdsourcing students' interests, needs, and expertise (e.g., crowdsourcing best practices, apps, and websites in a shared class document, folder, or site).

❑ Being honest and encouraging honesty, especially concerning difficult material and assignments (e.g., reality and importance of drafts).

# MORALE, continued...

*Teaching and modeling your discipline's theories, methods, debates, outputs, etc.* **does not** *have to involve suffering.*

*Think about the* **cool things** *that you like to do professionally and personally that they might enjoy as well in the short-term or long-term.*

# Q & A

**Email:**
jennifer.epley@tamucc.edu

**Website:**
officehourswithdrepley.com

**LinkedIn:**
https://www.linkedin.com/in/jenniferepley/