

## Reinvigorating Your Teaching

Ever feel like you've lost a little bit of that teaching spark? You know, especially when you're kind of in the middle of your career?

Oh, yeah. I think we've all been there.

Yeah. It can be tough to keep that same level of excitement going, right? So, today we're going to do a deep dive into reigniting that teaching passion.

Okay, great.

We're looking at an article called Reinvigorating Your Teaching. It's from a publication called Level Up, a mid-career guide for faculty.

Interesting.

And what I think is really cool about this entire publication is it was actually created by faculty for faculty.

Oh, that's fantastic.

Yeah. So, you know, it's going to be like they really get it, right? From people who've been in the trenches.

Exactly. And you can actually find the entire publication if you want to read more on the Center for Faculty Excellence website.

Okay. I'll check that out.

But for now, we'll break down some of the key points, give you some good stuff to think about. Sounds good.

So, one of the things that the article talks about right at the beginning is this idea of reflection, like actually taking some time to think about, you know, why did you want to teach in the first place?

Oh, that's a good point. We don't always think about that, do we?

No. I mean, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day, right? All the grading, the lesson planning.

Yep. All of that.

And kind of forget about those initial motivations, that excitement that you had when you first started.

Right. Right. When everything was fresh and new.

Exactly.

Yeah.

So, they suggest things like, you know, maybe journaling about your teaching philosophy or even having a conversation with your colleagues.

Oh, I like that.

You know, just kind of talking about how your teaching has evolved over time.

Yeah. Bounce ideas off each other, get some fresh perspective.

And what's interesting is, you know, it's not just touchyfeey kind of stuff. Like there's actual research

that shows that when faculty reflect on their teaching practices.

They tend to feel more fulfilled.

Okay, that makes sense.

And their students are actually more engaged, too.

Wow, that's a win-win,

right? So, it's really beneficial for everyone. But then, okay, so we've reconnected with our why. We thought about our motivations, but how do we actually translate that into like real changes in the classroom?

That's the key question, right?

Right. Yeah. And one of the things that the article talks about is active learning.

Active learning. Okay.

Which, you know, I'll be honest, I used to think, oh, active learning, that means I have to completely redo my whole syllabus. Like, it's this huge undertaking.

Yeah. It can sound intimidating,

right? But they actually make it sound much more approachable. Like you don't have to do everything all at once,

right? Bite-sized pieces.

Yeah. Even just inor like one or two active learning techniques can make a big difference.

That that makes it seem less overwhelming. So what kind of techniques are we talking about?

Well, they give a few examples. So instead of lecturing for, you know, a whole hour.

Okay.

You could break students up into smaller groups.

I see.

And have them, you know, tackle a problem, a real world problem related to the field, right?

So they're actually applying what they're learning.

Yeah. And they're working together, they're debating, they're collaborating.

I bet that gets them way more engag Oh, absolutely. And one thing I really like is they emphasize, you know, explaining to the students the purpose of these activities.

Oh, that's important.

Because if they understand why they're doing a group project or why they're having a debate, it's not just busy work.

Exactly. Then they're much more likely to be invested in it.

Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, we all want to know why we're doing something.

Exactly. Exactly. And then, you know, on top of the active learning stuff, the article also talks about some really interesting things like AI and competency based learning. Ooh. Okay. Those are some hot topics.

Yeah. And I will admit like the AI thing. I'm a little intimidated by it.

I think a lot of people are.

Yeah. I think we all kind of have this fear that, you know, is AI going to replace professors altogether?

Right. Like are we all going to be obsolete?

Exactly.

Yeah.

But the way they talk about it, it's much more about seeing AI as a tool.

A tool to help us teach better.

Exactly. So, for example, you could use AI to analyze student writing. M and give them personalized feedback on things like grammar and style.

Oh, that's interesting.

So then that frees you up as the professor to focus on, you know, the bigger picture stuff, the critical thinking skills.

So it's not replacing us. It's just taking some of the more tedious tasks off our plate.

Right. Exactly. And then competency based learning. That's another one that I've heard a lot about, but I'm not quite sure I totally understand it.

Yeah. It can be a little confusing at first.

Yeah. So what is competencybased learning?

So competency based learning is really about shift shifting the focus from traditional grades.

Okay.

To whether a student can actually do something with the knowledge,

I see.

So, it's less about memorizing facts for a test.

Okay.

And more about can they analyze a historical document? Can they design a scientific experiment? Can they write a compelling legal argument? You know, whatever the skills are in your field.

Oh, that makes sense.

So, it's about showing they've mastered those specific skills.

So, they're actually applying it to real world scenario. Exactly.

That's really cool. And then one more thing I wanted to mention that the article talks about is peer collaboration.

Oh yeah. That's so important.

Especially, you know, for faculty members,

it's so easy to get isolated in our own departments.

Absolutely. You can feel like you're on an island sometimes,

right? So they really emphasize the importance of sharing teaching methods, sharing resources with each other.

I think that's especially valuable at the mid-career stage.

Yeah. Why is that?

Well, because we've got all this experience under our belts, right? We've tried different things.

We've learned what works and what doesn't. So, sharing that with each other can really help us all grow.

It's like we have this built-in support system.

Exactly.

So, if we had to kind of boil down this article into one key takeaway.

Yeah.

I think it would be that reinvigorating your teaching doesn't have to be this huge overwhelming thing.

Right. You don't have to throw everything out and start over.

Exactly. It's really about being willing to grow, adapt, maybe even try something new.

Absolutely. Be open. into new ideas, new approaches.

And so I guess to leave our listeners with something to ponder.

Yeah.

What's one small thing that you listening right now could do this week to bring a little bit of fresh energy into your classroom?

Yeah. It could be something as simple as trying a five minute group activity or checking out a new AI tool

or even just having a conversation with a colleague about teaching.

The point is just to take a small step, see what happens. You never know where it might lead.  
You might just rediscover that passion you thought you'd lost.  
And who knows, it might even inspire your students in ways you never imagined.  
Exactly.  
So, that's our deep dive for today.  
Thanks for listening.  
We'll catch you next time.  
See you then.