

# Quiet Catalysts

Subtle Strategies for Enhancing Student  
Engagement Through Authentic Connection

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# Presentation Objectives

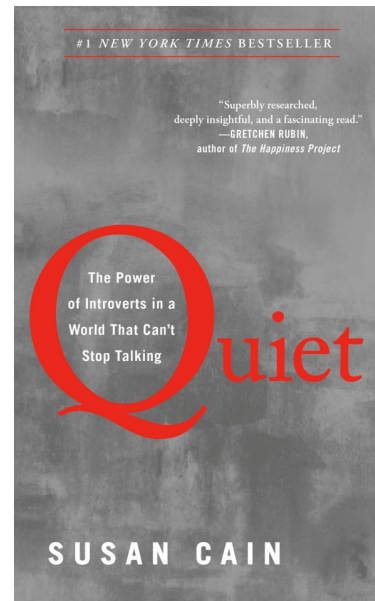
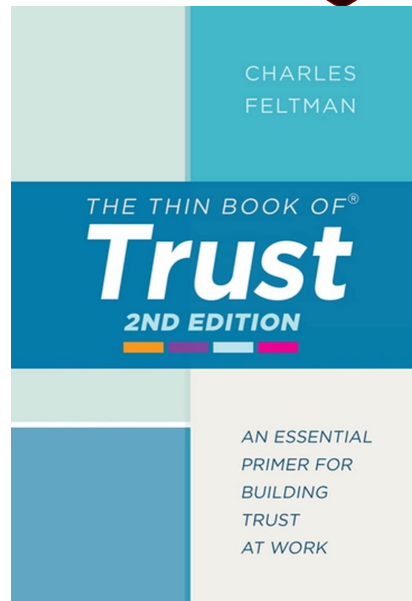
**Participants will be able to:**

- describe simple strategies for increasing student engagement both during class and outside the classroom; and
- identify tools that can be leveraged to increase student engagement both during class and outside the classroom.

## What is a Quiet Catalyst

**Quiet Catalysts** are the subtle yet powerful actions and attributes that educators and mentors employ to foster deep and meaningful engagement with individual students and are foundational elements that encourage the growth of a vibrant and supportive educational community.

# Recommended Books



## Building Trust is Key

“Choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person’s actions.”

— Charles Feltman, *The Thin Book of Trust*

### Four Distinctions of Trust

- Care – We’re in this together.
- Sincerity - I mean what I say, say what I mean, and act accordingly.
- Reliability – You can count on me to deliver what I promise.
- Competence – I know I can do this. I need to learn to do that.

## Building Trust is Key

“Trust is earned in the small moments”

- Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead*

# Two Things

- Engagement is not always visible
  - Don't be discouraged (50 eyes and no sound)
  - Does not happen first class meeting
  - All sorts of things impact engagement such as the weather, sports outcomes, national events, other classes
  - Strive to facilitate lasting connections beyond the class
  - Quiet Catalysts can help
- Your Peer Mentor wants to help – let them
  - Meet and prepare with them weekly
  - Let them do as much as they are comfortable doing
  - They are students too

# In-class Strategies and Tools

- Small things every class meeting
  - Arrive early and stay late
    - This is a great time to talk with student's individually
    - Your Peer Mentor can help with this
  - Consider randomized seating assignments at first
    - Yogi Tea Example
  - Smile and share but also be authentic
  - Start class promptly but not necessarily with a critical activity





# In-class Strategies and Tools

- Names and other things
  - Learn each student's name
    - 25 is a privilege
    - Use name tents or name badges
    - Utilize the Photo Roster
  - Learn more than the name
    - Great for making connections
    - Sometimes these are easier than names
  - Know each student's name

Hi Professor Smith!

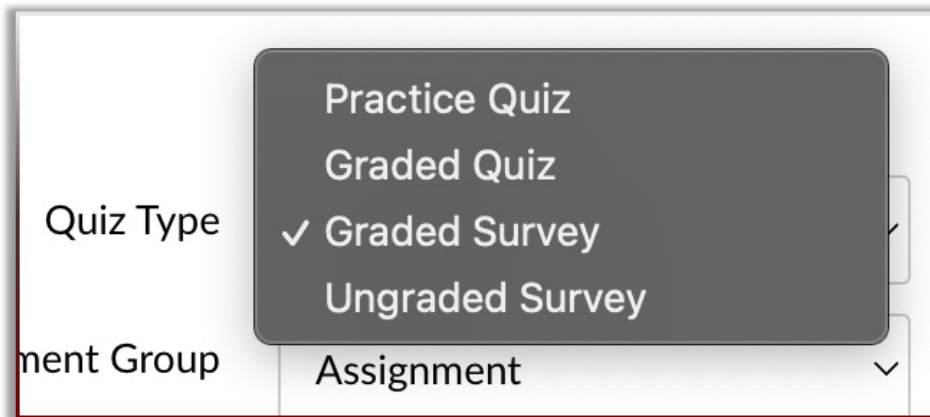
I hope you are doing well this semester! I am applying for a scholarship, and I was wondering if I could use you as an academic reference? I know your course was technically not one of my academic courses, but **I don't think my professors in those classes would know me very well** (considering most of them fill 300-person lecture halls). I'm not sure if the scholarship committee would be sending you an email, but I just wanted to ask and see if this would be something you would be willing to do before I put your information in.

Thank you!

# In-class Strategies and Tools

- Utilizing Canvas and presentation tools
- Canvas (In-class)
  - Starting with the first class, ask students to complete a brief survey as they are coming in before class begins
  - Survey can serve as both attendance and a chance to get feedback
- Poll Everywhere or Mentimeter
  - Great for interaction and integration with PowerPoint
  - The devices are their – utilize them
  - **NOTE: Use caution with student data**
- Qualtrics – works but it is a little cumbersome for follow-up
- Microsoft forms embedded into PowerPoint using “Live” presentation work well

# Canvas Graded Survey




The image shows a screenshot of the Canvas LMS interface. On the left, there are two dropdown menus: 'Quiz Type' and 'Assignment Group'. The 'Quiz Type' dropdown is open, showing a list of options: 'Practice Quiz', 'Graded Quiz', 'Graded Survey' (which has a checkmark next to it), and 'Ungraded Survey'. The 'Assignment Group' dropdown is partially visible below it, showing the option 'Assignment'.

- A graded survey looks like a quiz but there are no “correct” answers
- A password is provided in class to access the survey
- The survey availability is set from 10 minutes before to 10 minutes after class begins
- Points are given for “completing” the survey
- Quick follow-up communication can be initiated while assessing the survey results immediately after class
- Trends can easily be displayed during student meetings

# Canvas Graded Survey (cont.)

How is your week going?

Discrimination Index 

Great	12 respondents	50 %	 ✓
Challenging but good	10 respondents	42 %	
Not good but not horrible	2 respondents	8 %	
Really Bad		0 %	

50% answered correctly

# Canvas Graded Survey (cont.)

I change the open-ended questions each week.

Attempts: 24 out of 24

What is the best thing that has happened in the past week?

Ungraded answers

24  
respondents

100 %



[View in SpeedGrader](#)

Attempts: 24 out of 24

What challenges did you have this past week? Do you need help with any of these challenges?

Ungraded answers

24  
respondents

100 %



[View in SpeedGrader](#)

# Canvas Graded Survey (cont.)

Would you like for Ben or Tori to contact you?

No, I am good	23 respondents	96 %	✓
Yes, I would like for Ben to contact me		0 %	
Yes, I would for Tori to contact me	1 respondent	4 %	
No answer text provided.		0 %	

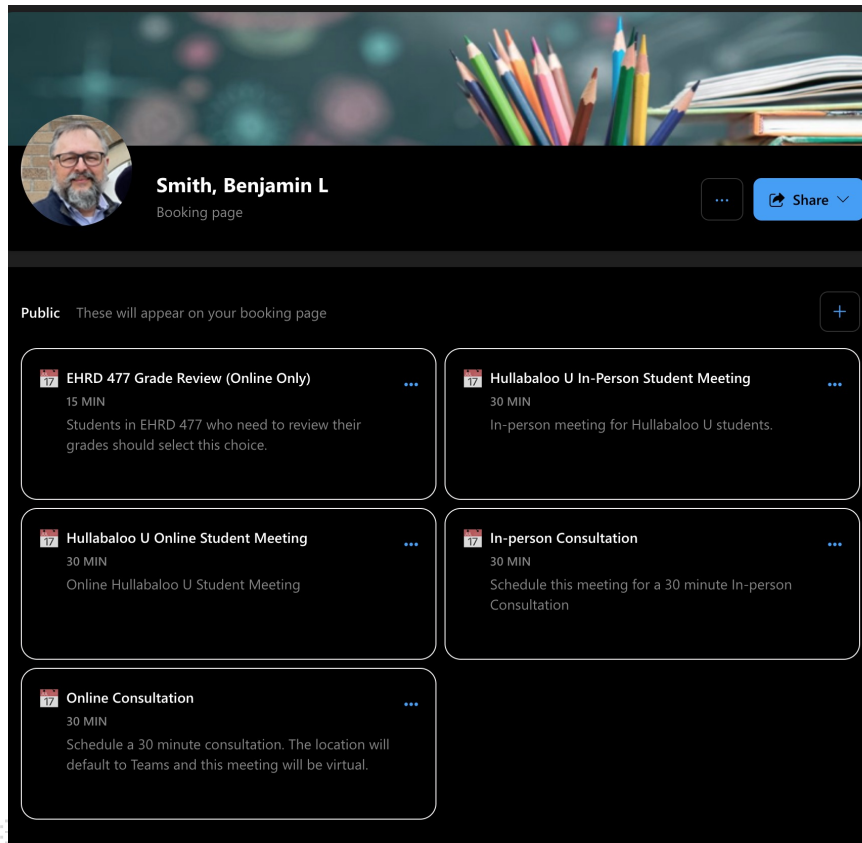
# Outside the classroom

- Meeting with students individually
  - Don't stay behind your desk
    - Consider meeting in a place other than your office if necessary
    - Walks are great too (weather allowing)
  - Turn flashy beepy things to Do Not Disturb
  - Review student progress in Canvas prior to meeting
- Consider small group meetings at your favorite campus spots or events
  - Our campus has some hidden gems
  - Lady Aggie sports are easy places to meet

# Scheduling Tools

- Microsoft 365 Scheduling Utilities
  - Find time – Outlook Add-in that is like Doodle but better
  - Bookings – personal Bookings page is best choice for student appointments (if you have tried it previously, try it again)





# Bookings Page

- Bookings syncs with your Outlook calendar
- Unique appointment types can have different characteristics such as online vs in-person, appointment duration, appointment availability can be customized
- Appointments can be public or private
- Changing appointment times and following-up after appointments is easier with Bookings

## Tools for Direct, Instant Communication

- Teams Chat
- Zoom Chat
- Canvas Messaging Application
  - My Preferred
  - Practice in first class meeting
  - Set it bypass everything else



# Conclusion and Contact Information

## Conclusion

- Value each student as a unique individual
- Build Trust
- Establish a routine of getting feedback
- Promptly respond to student feedback and communications
- Engagement does NOT happen easily
- Utilize your Peer Mentor
- Enjoy the privilege

## Contact Information

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