

IDEAS: Skills That Stick

Office of Online & Professional Learning Resources (OPLR) Strategies and News for Summer 2025



Durable Skills Defined: Building Skills That Stick

This issue is all about durable skills—the foundational abilities students need to thrive beyond the classroom. We kick things off with a look at how online courses can be designed to foster these essential skills, from communication and collaboration to adaptability and critical thinking. Next, we present strategies for navigating controversial topics in class, offering practical ways to foster listening skills, diplomacy, and empathy—all key durable skills as well. Finally, don't miss our latest podcast episode, where UW faculty member John Muraski shares how he integrates AI into teaching students project management techniques. It's another example of durable skills in action, with insights you can apply to your own teaching. No matter your discipline, there are opportunities to help students build the skills that stick.

★ Featured: Incorporating Durable Skills Into Your Course

Explore [how online learning can build the durable skills today's employers value most](#)—from professional communication and collaboration to adaptability and critical thinking. This article summarizes what durable skills are and how intentional course design can connect academic work to real-world career readiness.

When the Discussion Heats Up: Strategies for Discussing Controversial Topics in Courses

Learn how to navigate difficult discussions about controversial topics—and [learn practical strategies for turning hard conversations into meaningful learning](#). Along the way, you can help students build durable skills like empathy, resilience, and professionalism when faced with challenging situations.

Faculty Spotlight: Prof. John Muraski on the IDEas Faculty Podcast

In this episode, John Muraski discusses how the [structured use of AI tools can deepen the authenticity of course assignments](#) and give students the AI literacy that employers in many fields are looking for. With AI here to stay, thoughtful course design can integrate this powerful tool to help students strengthen their skills in written communication, critical thinking, self-reflection, and more. Check out [Prof. Muraski's course activity on the showcase](#) and consider using the [AI Reflection Tool](#) to get started on your own.



John Muraski, DBA, Assistant Professor of Information Systems, UW-Oshkosh



✓ Save the Date

OPLR Virtual Faculty Symposium
Monday, September 29, 2025
1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

This year's **faculty symposium** will be a virtual half-day event. Similar to past years, the event will feature a keynote speaker, breakout sessions, and other shared best practices in online teaching by your colleagues and our instructional design team. Mark your calendars!

Want More?

📌 Explore [our collection of tip sheets](#) for more ideas on how to integrate durable skills into your courses. Many of our tip sheets highlight essential skills such as professional communication and effective collaboration. You might also consider [sharing the Keep Learning tip sheet with students](#)—it offers practical strategies to help them strengthen self-discipline and build resilience when learning online.

💡 Visit the [showcase](#) for inspiration on how to help students develop skills in [peer collaboration, critical thinking, AI](#)



Do you emphasize durable skills in your current courses?

Durable Skills - Select one response:

Yes

No

literacy, and **self-reflection**. Many of the examples focus on these foundational skills and are designed to spark ideas for activities in your own courses. Make sure to check out this issue's featured example as well by clicking on the graphic below.

Maybe in the future

Other - Let us know via the "Get in Touch" button below

*Check out this issue's
featured example from the
Instructional Strategies &
Course Design Showcase*



About the Showcase

Developed by the ID team, the **Instructional Strategies & Course Design Showcase** highlights examples from online courses created by Universities of Wisconsin faculty and instructors that demonstrate best practices in online teaching and learning.

*If you have an idea for an article or would like
to contribute to the next issue, let us know!*

Get in Touch

[Explore more resources from the Office of Online & Professional Learning Resources](#)

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