

“If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” – From Netflix and *Chill* to Netflix and *Skill*

Kristel M. Gallagher, Ph.D.
Thiel College
kgallagher@thiel.edu

Abstract

Netflix is the most popular streaming subscription service in the United States, especially among young adults where 71% access content at least weekly. Consequently, college students have coined the term “Netflix student”. As instructors, it may seem impossible to convince our “Netflix students” to replace their Netflix time with study time. Is there another way? What if we took “Netflix and Chill” and offered up “Netflix and Skill”, a chance for students to learn while streaming?

This research describes the success of a semester-long series of assignments involving Netflix that were incorporated into a Social Psychology course, aptly named the Netflix & Skill assignments. Each week, students watched instructor-selected content on Netflix that corresponded to class content and completed an assignment that tied the two together. The assignments asked students to engage with the content in a variety of creative ways. Students completed 12 weekly assignments and a final assignment, “Create-Your-Own Netflix & Skill”, where they produced a prototype of a class assignment based on Netflix content of their choosing.

Students in two sections of the course assessed their experiences completing the assignments in broad areas of application, enjoyment, value, and interest. Students also completed assessments of perceived learning and compared the Netflix & Skill assignments to other course assignments. Both quantitative and qualitative assessment data support this use of curated Netflix programming in the undergraduate curriculum. Future research should be designed to more explicitly measure gains in content learning and understanding as a result of the integration of Netflix.

Empirical References

- Brame, C. J. (2016). Effective educational videos: Principles and guidelines for maximizing student learning from video content. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 15(4), es6.
- Hsin, W.J. & Cigas, J. (2013). Short videos improve student learning in online education. *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges*, 28, 253–259.
- Mischel, L. J. (2019). Watch and learn? Using EDpuzzle to enhance the use of online videos. *Management Teaching Review*, 4(3), 283–289.
- Nowaczyk, R. H., Santos, L. T., & Patton, C. (1998). Student perception of multimedia in the undergraduate classroom. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 25(4), 367–382.
- Rackaway, C. (2012). Video killed the textbook star? Use of multimedia supplements to enhance student learning. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 8, 189–200.
- Renninger, K. A. (1992). Individual interest and development: Implications for theory and practice. In K. A. Renninger, S. Hidi, & A. Krapp (Eds.), *The role of interest in learning and development* (pp. 361–398). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Schmid, R.F., Bernard, R.M., Borokhovski, E., Tamim, RM, Abrami, P.C., Surkes, M.A., Wade, C.A., & Woods, J. (2014). The effects of technology use in postsecondary education: a meta-analysis of classroom applications. *Computers & Education*, 72, 271–291.
- Stockwell, B.R., Stockwell, M.S., Cennamo, M., & Jiang, E. (2015). Blended learning improves science education. *Cell*, 162, 933–936.
- Tobias, S. (1994). Interest, prior knowledge and learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 64(1), 37–54.
- van Alten, D. C., Phielix, C., Janssen, J., & Kester, L. (2020). Self-regulated learning support in flipped learning videos enhances learning outcomes. *Computers & Education*, 158, 104000.

Helpful Websites

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

<https://financesonline.com/number-of-netflix-subscribers/>

<https://www.tvinsider.com/933154/netflix-statistics-quarantine-viewing-habits/>

<https://grademiners.com/blog/how-netflix-affects-college-students>

<https://www.tvtechnology.com/news/netflix-is-most-popular-streaming-service-among-youth>

Poster

"If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" – From Netflix and Chill to Netflix and Skill

Kristel M. Gallagher, Ph.D., Thiel College

Why Take On Netflix? (problem)

It's pervasive! An impressive 80% of young adults ages 18-29 have access to the streaming service Netflix – the most popular streaming subscription service in the United States. Of these young adults, 71% access content every week (and many daily). Further, most Americans spend an average of 3.2 hours per day viewing Netflix. This underestimates college students who have coined the term 'Netflix student' to describe their lifestyle addiction to Netflix.

Technology is a fundamental part of higher education. When integrated appropriately, videos specifically can enrich learning and be a valuable educational tool. Research suggests that students might both prefer and benefit from multimedia video content when learning because it stimulates interest and thus retention of the information. Videos tend to be more engaging than written descriptions, and engaging content leads to better learning of information. Importantly, students put more effort into tasks they find interesting. Using Netflix to connect with our 'Netflix students' may promote the kind of classroom engagement we have long been seeking!


How Did I Use Netflix? (solution)

Enter: **Netflix and Skill**. What if we took on 'Netflix and Chill' and offered up 'Netflix and Skill', a chance for students to learn while streaming? I designed a semester-long series of assignments involving Netflix for my Social Psychology course. Each week, students watched (outside of class) instructor-selected content on Netflix that corresponded to the content being covered in class. Students completed an assignment that tied together course content and Netflix content. These 12 assignments asked students to work with the material in a variety of creative ways, such as letter-to-you, informational brochure, social media scavenger hunt, news article, evidence-based dating advice, fictional story, persuasive communication piece, freewrite, and representative quotes. A final culminating assignment, 'Create-Your-Own Netflix and Skill', asked students to produce a prototype of a class assignment based on course and Netflix content of their choosing.

NETFLIX SHOW	COURSE CONTENT
1. The Office	personality psychology, social influence
2. Trust No One (48 Hours)	personality, thinking, extreme, prejudice
3. 100 Things to See Before You Die	engagement, design, bias
4. I Am a Singer	developmental, architecture, error
5. Shark Menace (True Story)	group dynamics, management, self-promotion
6. Madeline Carter	group dynamics, decision, judgement of effort
7. Pam	group norms, communication, attitude change
8. Darius Brown: The Psychology of a Social Influence	group dynamics, social influence, obedience
9. Tiger King	group, groupthink
10. Earth on the Spectrum (TV Information)	groupthink, conformity, regression
11. Barbie and the Diamond	groupthink, social influence, persuasion
12. Little Women in Christmas	groupthink, persuasion, discrimination

What Did Students Think? (assessment)

Two sections of two semesters of the course anonymously assessed their experiences completing the Netflix and Skill assignments.

And, they loved it!  Surprise finding! More than 50% of students noted Netflix and Skill in course feedback question 'Favorite or most memorable part of course'. It was also the modal response to anonymous College course evaluation question 'course component to retain in future'.

Assessment Item	Mean (SD)
Because of completing the NF&S assignments:	
... I learned to apply course concepts in a new way	6.71 (1.53)
... I now find myself seeing course concepts in other things I watch	6.57 (1.69)
... I can think in a more sophisticated way about course concepts	6.18 (1.86)
The NF&S assignments:	
... were the most enjoyable part of the course	6.50 (1.69)
... were a valuable part of the course	6.47 (1.92)
... were worth my time and effort	6.50 (1.64)
... kept me engaged in the course material	6.54 (1.74)
... were meaningful to me personally	6.50 (1.58)
... provided me a new perspective on what I watch	6.10 (1.55)
Compared to other psychology course assignments completed:	
... the NF&S assignments were more engaging	6.71 (1.66)
... I learned more with the NF&S assignments	6.40 (1.83)
I did actually learn course concepts through the NF&S assignments	6.68 (1.53)
I would recommend NF&S assignments for future semesters	6.79 (1.63)

Note: Responses were given on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A score of 6 corresponded with agree.

But of course, future research must be deliberate in explicitly measuring gains in actual content learning and understanding as a result of the integration of Netflix.

Psychology is everywhere... including Netflix. Let's meet our students where they are by engaging them in a fun, creative, and meaningful way. **We can teach and learn in "the stream" – no, this isn't just a dream!** 😊



SCAN ME:
abstract, references,
poster, and email

So, what will you be streaming tonight on Netflix? You know, as course prep? 😊

