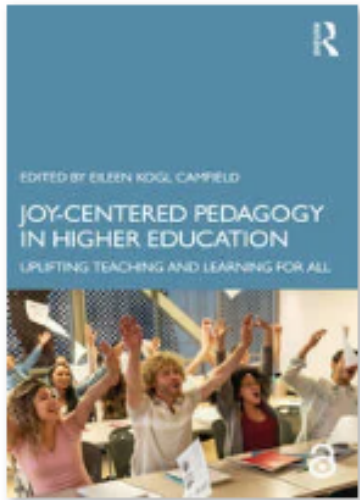


Signal in the Joys: Resources & Strategies for AI-enriched Educational Fun

eCOTS 2026 Beyond session by

- **Dennis Pearl**, dkp13@psu.edu, Pennsylvania State U. (*retired*)
- **Larry Lesser**, Lesser@utep.edu, The University of Texas at El Paso





Book

Joy-Centered Pedagogy in Higher Education

Uplifting Teaching and Learning for All

Edited By [Eileen Kogl Camfield](#) 

 OPEN ACCESS

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First Published 2025

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IASE 2025 Satellite Paper – Refereed (DOI: [10.52041/iase25.152](https://doi.org/10.52041/iase25.152))

Routledge book
& IASE paper

Playful experiential approach to reasoning with evidence

Sean McCusker and James Nicholson
University of Northumbria, UK
sean.mccusker@northumbria.ac.uk

“We must not stop talking about **joy** in science”

Hinman (2025) <https://www.aaas.org/news/we-must-not-stop-talking-about-joy-science>

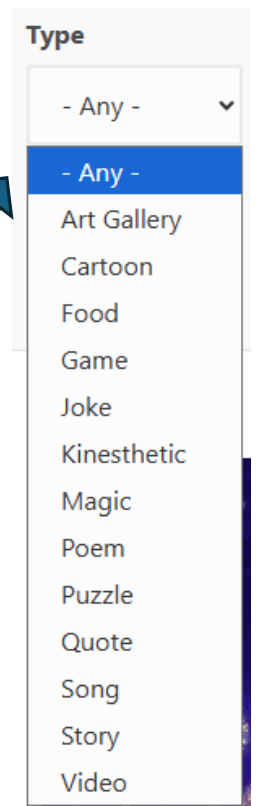
- Remember what drew us to our field and reconnect with our community
- Amidst “cancelled grants, shifting funder priorities, changing regulations,” joy is emotional antidote to stress
- “it can be difficult, after years of training in staying ‘objective’ in our communication, to shift into language of joy and inspiration, wonder and motivation,... but these are the common currency of humanity”



Dr. Katy Hinman
Director, Dialogue on Science, Ethics,
and Religion

sources of stats joy

- (Less obvious) stats **connections** to other disciplines
- Through the **arts** (music/song, poetry, magic, comedy, etc.) <https://CAUSEweb.org/cause/resources/fun/references>
- Biennial A-mu-sing & monthly cartoon caption **contests**
- Curated, searchable collection of 1000+ educational statistics fun items at **CAUSEweb.org/fun**, spanning 13 modalities of fun and 13 statistics topic areas
- 2019-2023 edutainment **column** in *Teaching Statistics*



Educational uses of joy

- Engaging moments in a lecture when an existing fun item is shared
- AI in education: the surprise of seeing what AI generates and then the use of critical thinking to assess its accuracy and usefulness
- Creative way for students to integrate and demonstrate knowledge, as in Lesser 2025 TS paper (p. 146) on poetry pedagogy:

In our era of artificial intelligence (AI), instructors wanting to ensure students do not rely on AI inappropriately may plan to have writing activities during in-person class meetings. Instructors who embrace AI might pose an assignment for students to give AI a prompt of the form “create a poem using the poetry form of [*insert something*] about the topic of [*insert something*]” and then have students evaluate its aesthetic quality and critique the accuracy of its statistical content.

DEMO with DENNIS!

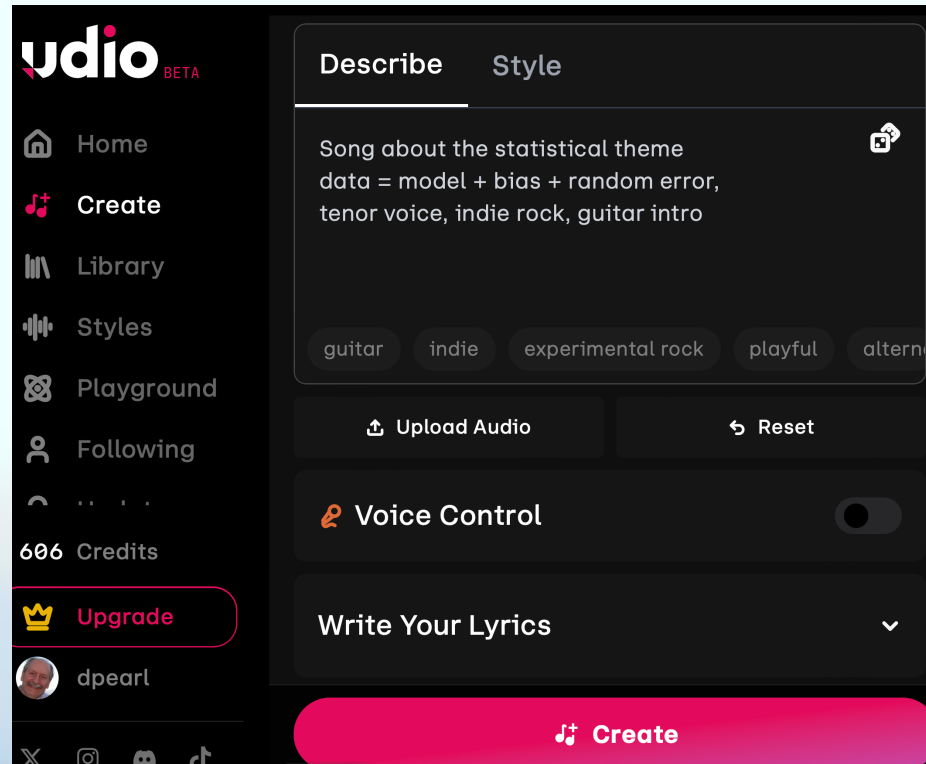
Use suno.com or udio.com, etc.

to turn a statistics poem/lyric
into a statistics song in any chosen genre!

correction: the recording said put commas
between words that designate the tags when
you create songs, but the syntax is to use
brackets to specify any tags (e.g.,
[contemporary folk] or [Rock] or [R&b] for
genres or [male vocalist] or [guitar intro])

Poems/Lyrics to Music

- Recognizing the power of music in learning, what about the less musical instructors who don't feel they can write or perform songs or feel that their taste in musical genre is unlikely to connect with their students?
- AI tools like ud.io and suno.com (which offer limited free versions) are now available to convert lyrics to the type of music you enjoy
- Rule of Thumb: About 5 to 7 lines of poetry/lyrics (≈ 50 to 70 words) (≈ 1 verse/chorus and a short bridge) translate to about 30 seconds of music



Outline of a Lesson Plan

- Pick a major course theme (e.g. $\text{data} = \text{model} + \text{bias} + \text{random error}$) or a simple learning objective (e.g. the trade-off between confidence and precision)
- Draft a poem/lyric for a draft chorus to state the theme or learning objective - try AI to improve it (e.g. ChatGPT can be helpful)

Draft Chorus

Data is model and bias and error
bias says on average the model ain't fair
Error could go plus or minus each day
And so we say...

Data is model and bias and error

One ChatGPT suggestion

Data is model and bias and error
Bias keeps pulling the signal off-center
Error shakes the numbers every day
Up and down, it never stays

And we shout!

Data is model and bias and error
Data is model and bias and error

- Instructor assigns individual HW to write a 3-5 line verse on the theme in the statistics topic assigned to them from the topics where the theme was featured in your class (e.g. survey sample results, measurement properties, prediction in regression or multi factor experiments) using whatever AI assistance they want. Grade on appropriateness to theme and statistical correctness.
- Pick best student lyric from each topic. In class have students work in teams to create a song with AI using the format Chorus/Student Lyric/Chorus. The students can use whatever genre and other characteristics they desire in their team work for the music they create and need to create a short reflection on how the song relates to the statistical theme and be ready to report back to the class.
- Finally the instructor facilitates class discussions as the teams play their music and give their ideas about the reflection.