



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

August 17, 2021

The [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) monthly newsletter provides information about events sponsored by the CTL as well as around the university and beyond. We also highlight resources available to Alliant faculty on the CTE site and elsewhere. We encourage you to submit possible content of interest to faculty for an upcoming newsletter.

Dalia Ducker

Center for Teaching Excellence Events

Upcoming



October 22, 12 :00 - 1:30PM Dr. Dana Ferris, Professor and Associate Director of the Writing Program at University of California/Davis, will give a webinar/workshop on **providing students with effective feedback on their writing**. Dr. Ferris's research areas include responding to student writing and second language literacy. She is widely published and teaches upper division writing courses, writing pedagogy courses, English Grammar, and seminars on second language writing and responses to student writing.

Other Events

Upcoming



Alliant

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is sponsoring three interactive presentations by Dr. Kumea Shorter-Gooden during the fall semester.

September 17, 12:00 - 1:30PM Implicit Bias: What It Is and How to Interrupt It

October 5, 12:00 - 1:30PM How to Deal With Diversity Flashpoints in the Classroom

November 6, 12:00 - 1:30PM Culturally Responsive Mentoring

Dr. Shorter-Gooden is a principal at Shorter-Gooden Consulting. She served as the first Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Vice President at the University of Maryland, College Park, and as Associate Provost for International-Multicultural Initiatives at Alliant International University and Professor at the California School of Professional Psychology. Dr. Shorter-Gooden is a thought leader with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion and has provided consultation, training, and coaching to educational institutions, professional associations, and non-profit organizations.

Other

Systemic Racism and Traumatic Racism: The Long and the Short of It... September 17, 7:00 - 8:30 PM Eastern Time. The presentation, sponsored by Boston College Lynch School of Education and Humanities, features Dr. Homi Bhabha, Anne E. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities in the English and Comparative Literature Department at Harvard University. This lecture will explore the dynamic relations between systemic and traumatic racism by drawing on politics, poetics, and psychoanalysis.

► [Register here](#)

On Demand

This is a link to a presentation sponsored by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on Active Learning for a Post-Pandemic World.

► [Watch on demand](#)

Best practices in teaching recommend that all students be active participants in their learning, with greater emphasis on group work, opportunities to solve problems, and hands-on experiences. In this webinar, a panel of learning experts address these questions: (a) How has the digital transformation of higher ed affected the push for active learning? (b) How can technology help — or hurt — this effort? (b) What could active learning look like this fall, whether classes are in person, remote, or hybrid?

This is a link to a presentation sponsored by the Steve Fund on Anti-Asian Hate and the Mental Health Crisis on College Campuses

► [Watch presentation](#)

In this webinar, experts discuss AAPI college student experiences, positionalities, and mental health, and then provide recommendations, both structural and individual, for improving AAPI student well-being. Panelists also discuss strategies for improving student mental health and achieving a more racially equitable campus.

Resources on Center for Teaching Excellence site



Reports

In the section on **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**, there is a link to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* Report of Building Diverse Campuses. This report discusses four key issues: the pipeline problem, diversity training, diversity task forces, and hiring and promotion, and provides case studies and a list of additional resources.

► [Building Diverse Campuses](#)

Resources

In the section on **Remote Teaching**, there are a series of links to articles and sites that present ideas on **teaching students in dual audiences**: online and in the classroom.

► [CTE: Teaching Dual Audiences](#)

In the section on **Resources for Teaching**, an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* provides a very comprehensive step by step guide to **creating a syllabus** that includes detailed suggestions on what to include as well as examples of narratives.

► [How to Create a Syllabus](#)

Teaching Tips



Lectures and Discussions

The CTE site section on **Instructional Strategies** has two subsection that can be helpful as instructors plan for the new semester/term: Preparing and Presenting Lectures and Facilitating Class Discussions. Both subsections list common mistakes that even experienced instructors make and offer suggestions for what to do about them.

Preparing and presenting lectures: Common mistakes and what to do about them

1. Not preparing the lecture in advance
 - ◆ **What to do:** Prepare the lecture by organizing the material and deciding on a structure for presenting it. The following is an effective structure:
 - (a) The introduction, which lays out the major points to be addressed as an outline or agenda;
 - (b) The body, which presents the information in a meaningful order and includes explicit transitions and periodic summaries;
 - (c) The conclusion, which synthesizes and summarizes all the material and creates a bridge to the next lecture.

2. Not tying the new material to material the students already know
 - ◆ **What to do:** A lecture is most effective when it builds a bridge between students' knowledge base and the new material that is the subject matter of the lecture. When introducing new topics, start with a review of the material that came before and show how the new content is connected to it.
3. Trying to cover too much material in one class session
 - ◆ **What to do:** When preparing a new lecture, it is easy to overestimate what can be covered in a given period; however, it is better to cover part of the material well than to rush through all of it. Limit a one-hour lecture to three or four key points.
4. Not asking questions
 - ◆ **What to do:** Create breaks in the lecture and ask a mix of questions (i.e., questions that test comprehension and questions that require more complex levels of thinking) throughout the lecture.
5. Waiting until the last two minutes of class to ask for and answer questions
 - ◆ **What to do:** Don't just say "any questions?" as the lecture is ending. Rather, during the lecture, build in pauses that allow students time to ask questions and then give thorough and meaningful answers.
6. Not including opportunities for active learning
 - ◆ **What to do:** Break up a lecture into segments (about 15-20 minutes each) and use active learning techniques to ensure that students engage with the material.
 - ▶ [Promoting Active Learning](#)
7. Not preparing and using visual aids appropriately
 - ◆ **What to do:** Visual aids such as slides should supplement, not replace, a lecture. They should be used to outline the presentation or highlight important points.
 - ▶ [Best Practices for Using PowerPoint](#)
8. Not paying attention to presentation style
 - ◆ **What to do:** Focus on communicating with your audience: speak loudly and clearly. Vary the pitch and speed of your voice for emphasis and effect; do not speak in a monotone. Use appropriate pauses for emphasis. Use facial expressions and gestures to engage student attention.
9. Not looking at the students when lecturing; looking only at notes, the board, or the PowerPoint slides
 - ◆ **What to do:** Face the class, not the board or the screen, and make eye contact with the students. Prepare notes that will serve as a road map rather than a script to be read verbatim.
10. Not planning the timing of the lecture
 - ◆ **What to do:** To avoid running out of time, practice the lecture (including time for questions or active learning activities) and pace yourself, so you do not have to rush at the end or cut the lecture short without finishing.

Facilitating class discussions: Common mistakes and what to do about them

1. Failing to plan
 - ◆ **What to do:** Determine the goal of a discussion. What learning objectives will it

address? Plan how the discussion will meet these objectives and develop a list of guiding questions.

2. Neglecting to frame the discussion
 - ◆ **What to do:** Relate the discussion to other aspects of the course, including course learning objectives, assigned readings, past lectures or discussions, and future assessments. Make your goals for the discussion explicit.
3. Not starting with a shared point of departure
 - ◆ **What to do:** Begin with a shared experience such as an introductory open-ended question, an allusion to or a quotation from an assigned reading, a report on a research study, a cartoon or photo, a video or audio clip, a first-hand account, or a demonstration. If relevant, begin with a summary of the previous class session.
4. Not creating discussion ground rules
 - ◆ **What to do:** In the syllabus, provide a set of ground rules for respectful discussions or create them collaboratively with the students. Allude to them, if necessary, during the discussion.
 - ▶ [Facilitating Difficult Dialogues](#)
5. Neglecting to clarify expectation
 - ◆ **What to do:** Make expectations regarding participation explicit at the start of the course. Explain grading criteria for discussion participation (i.e., create and share a rubric to evaluate participation).
6. Talking too much: answering own questions or asking more than one question at once
 - ◆ **What to do:** If there is a pause after a question, do not assume that students are not prepared or motivated to reply. Give them time (usually 5 to 10 seconds but up to 15 to 20 seconds) to think and formulate an answer. If needed, rephrase the question. Do not confuse them with multiple questions.
7. Asking too many questions that are “closed” or have only one correct answer
 - ◆ **What to do:** Ask questions with multiple possible answers, giving students an opportunity to share their perspectives.
8. Failing to probe the implications of answers
 - ◆ **What to do:** Encourage students to think more deeply, substantiate their claims, and consider implications by asking follow-up questions about reasoning, supporting evidence, and applications.
9. Asking unconnected questions
 - ◆ **What to do:** Ask questions that follow from each other and lead the discussion in a logical progression. Using Bloom’s taxonomy, questions can progress from simpler (e.g., recall or comprehension) to more complex (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation, or creation) cognitive tasks.
10. Ignoring or failing to build on answers
 - ◆ **What to do:** Acknowledge student contributions, praise and flesh out good ideas, and critique flawed arguments. Connect responses to one another.

11. Allowing the discussion to turn into an argument
 - ◆ **What to do:** In order to keep the discussion from degenerating into an argument with unsubstantiated claims and emotional attacks (a) ask students to provide bases for claims, (b) clarify if values, rather than facts, are involved in argument, (c) list points representing all sides of the discussion (d) moderate the discussion, reminding students of the need for civil discourse and applying the ground rules.
12. Failing to redirect students back to the ideas at hand when the discussion strays off topic
 - ◆ **What to do:** When a discussion becomes unfocused, keep returning to a list of guiding questions. Also, pause to summarize key points and refocus attention, emphasizing importance or relevance of topic under discussion.
13. Not establishing a class climate that encourages participation in discussions
 - ◆ **What to do:** From the beginning of the course, establish a climate in which students feel comfortable taking intellectual risks by (a) modeling and expecting respectful behavior, (b) establishing the clear expectation that students will prepare for the discussion and giving preparatory assignments that require them to do so, (c) getting to know students and giving them opportunities to get to know each other, and (d) highlight the importance of hearing diverse perspectives.
14. Asking students to speak for an entire group
 - ◆ **What to do:** Expect that all students will represent their own perspectives; therefore, pose questions that ask students about their own opinions, experiences, thoughts, or knowledge – not about those of a group you may believe they represent.
15. Not modeling exemplary discussion behavior
 - ◆ **What to do:** Use language that demonstrates (a) how to build on another person's contributions, (b) how to ask for clarification, (c) how to disagree politely, and (d) how to provide evidence to support a position.
16. Letting a small number of talkative students dominate the discussion or letting the discussion become a conversation or debate with one student
 - ◆ **What to do:** Redirect discussion to other students or other topics. If necessary, ask students who are monopolizing the conversation to allow others opportunities to contribute and encourage them to continue the discussion after class.
17. Not encouraging participation by quieter students
 - ◆ **What to do:** Strategies for Involving quiet students who may hesitate to participate include (a) breaking down the group into smaller units, even pairs (think-pair-share), (b) asking opinion rather than factual questions, (c) giving students time to think and write out their opinions, either before class or during class, and then asking them to read what they have written, (d) giving students opportunities to answer questions in an alternative format (e.g., posts on discussion boards) and then alluding to those answers in class, and (e) prior to class giving students a list of concepts, terms, or even questions to think about.
18. Not summing up at the end of the discussion
 - ◆ **What to do:** Summarize the major points (at least three) and relate them to the original goal of the discussion.

You can learn more about these topics and access relevant resources at

► [CTE: Instructional Strategies Resources](#)

Other Resources



Newsletter articles

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article on What We Learned In the Pandemic About Graduate Training, the authors present three Covid-inspired innovations that shed light on what needs to change in graduate education

► [Read article](#)

The *Inside Higher Ed* article, What We've Learned, What We'll Keep, summarizes the thoughts of a sample of faculty members about teaching remotely during the pandemic as well as their reflections on what they are taking away from the experience.

► [Read article](#)

Podcasts

Stanford Innovation Lab presents a series of conversations on the leading edge of entrepreneurship, featuring Stanford faculty and other experts on strategy, creativity, technology, and smart growth.

► [Listen to podcast](#)

Leading Lines, produced by personnel at Vanderbilt University, is a podcast on educational technology in higher education that explores creative, intentional, and effective uses of technology to enhance student learning. Interviews with educators, researchers, technologists, and others are used to voice ideas about digital learning and digital pedagogy.

► [Listen to podcast](#)

Speaking of Psychology is a podcast series produced by the American Psychological Association that highlights recent, important, and relevant psychological research. Examples include the history of LGBTQ psychology, preventing gun violence, insomnia and sleep, and the future of remote and hybrid work.

► [Listen to podcast](#)

Shared Resources



Assessment Information Hub

From Scott Zimmer, University Librarian:

The library is in the process of transferring its plagiarism tutorial and quiz away from Moodle and into the LibWizard platform. This platform integrates well with other parts of the library website, and also allows us to fully automate the course so that it will no longer be necessary to grade any of the sections manually. Students will also receive a certificate of completion which they can submit to their instructor. The goal is to have the transfer complete before the first day of classes.

Also related to the LibWizard platform, the library is developing an APA tutorial and quiz. Similar to the plagiarism tutorial, this will be fully automated and will produce a certificate of completion. Due to time constraints, we will be rolling out an introductory version of the tutorial/quiz by the first day of classes, and throughout the Fall semester we will expand on this so that it eventually includes more content.

As a reminder, the library has recently set up an [Assessment Information Hub](#). This is primarily intended for faculty and gathers together information about which tests are available on which online platforms, and how each platform works from an instructor perspective.



Burnout

This is a link to a report based on a nationwide survey of college and university faculty conducted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in the fall of 2020. Titled *On the Verge of Burnout*, it summarizes its findings about the impact of COVID 19 on faculty well-being and career plans.

▶ [View report](#)

This essay in *Faculty Focus* by two faculty members presents their suggestions on how to Regroup and Refocus: Strategies to Avoid Burn Out.

▶ [View essay](#)

This article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education in January 2021*, *8 Strategies to Prevent Teaching Burnout*, offers suggestions designed to work in a mix of online formats.

▶ [View article](#)

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