



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

July 11, 2022

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.

Center for Teaching Excellence Events



UPCOMING

Center for Teaching Excellence

Save the date: On Friday, September 23, 12:00 - 1:30pm, Dr. Sharon Foster, Alliant Distinguished Professor Emerita (CSPP Clinical PhD Program in San Diego), will give a presentation on mentoring dissertation and theses students. Dr. Foster is co-author of the widely read *Dissertations from Start to Finish*, which provides information to guide students "through the logistical, practical, and emotional struggles that come with writing dissertations and theses".

Other Events



ON DEMAND

Other

ACUE, Association of College and University Educators, is an organization whose mission is "to ensure student success and equity through quality instruction". As part of that mission it sponsors webinars on a range of topics related to teaching. Here are links to two sets of webinars that were recorded in 2020 and are available on demand. The first comprises six sessions on [Effective Online Teaching](#), and the second comprises three panels on [Inclusive Online Teaching](#).

Resources on Center for Teaching Excellence site



Resources for Teaching

The Center for Teaching Excellence site offers the following resources to help instructors prepare for the new semester/term:

- [Designing and Teaching a Course](#)
- [How to Create a Syllabus](#)
- [Creating an Inclusive Syllabus](#)
- [Developing Student Learning Objectives](#)
- [Creating Rubrics](#)
- [Best Practices for Remote Teaching](#)
- [Inclusive Teaching](#)
- [First Day of Class](#)
- [Making Teaching Engaging](#)
- [Facilitating Class Discussions](#)
- [Preparing and Presenting Lectures](#)
- [Using PowerPoint](#)

Each section provides information as well as sources and additional resources for planning new courses or revising existing courses.

Teaching Tips



Reflective Teaching

According to the Yale University Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, “Through reflective teaching, an instructor habitually examines the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching, with the aim to understand their underlying beliefs about teaching and learning and improve their pedagogy.” [Reflective Teaching](#)

By collecting information and reflecting on data about their teaching, instructors can decide whether or not to make changes, and – of so – what innovations to introduce. Reflective teaching also involves examining one’s underlying beliefs about teaching and learning and their alignment with one’s actual teaching practices. It offers a chance to explore one’s thoughts and opinions about learning and teaching, many of which may have become so deeply ingrained that they are automatic.

Yale University’s Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning provided the following examples of both self and external teaching assessments:

1. **Reflection Journal:** A reflection journal allows instructors to record details of their teaching directly after class and create an ongoing narrative of their teaching. Instructors might reflect on the following questions: What went well? What could I have done differently? How will I modify my instruction in the future?
2. **Teaching Philosophy:** Writing a teaching philosophy can be a helpful exercise in reflecting about teaching. Teaching philosophies call for instructors to articulate their knowledge of teaching and learning with details from the own classes.
3. **Teaching Inventories:** A number of [inventories](#) have been developed to help instructors assess their teaching approaches. These inventories are often designed to assess use of particular pedagogies.
4. **Video-Recorded Teaching Practices:** Instructors can video-record themselves while teaching and then watch the video, using a [classroom observation protocol](#) or teaching inventory.
5. **Peer or Departmental Observation and Feedback:** Instructors can ask a colleague or administrator to observe their classroom using an [observation protocol](#) and then give them feedback on their teaching. These observations are meant to be non-evaluative and promote reflection. (The CTE is available to conduct such observations.)
6. **Student Evaluations (Midterm and End-of-Term):** Instructors can obtain feedback from students in the form of midterm feedback and/or end-of-term student evaluations. Because of potential bias, instructors should consider student evaluations as one data source in their instruction and take note of any prevailing themes rather than dwelling on individual items. (See [Developing and Implementing Midterm Feedback](#) and [Interpreting End of Semester Course Evaluations](#).)

Once an instructor had gathered some information about what goes on in a class, the next step involves reflecting on the data. According to the University of Manitoba Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning, [Reflective Teaching](#), these are some options for what to do next in order to utilize the data collected:

- **Think:** Through your observation and consultation, you may have noticed patterns occurring in your teaching or things about your teaching that you were previously unaware of. Your students’ feedback may surprise you or confirm what you have already suspected. Ideas for changes to try out may begin to form as you study the data you have collected from various sources.

- **Talk:** By talking about what you have discovered, to a supportive colleague or even a friend, you may be able to come up with some ideas for how to do things differently. You can meet to discuss issues of concern with colleagues who also wish to develop their teaching. (The CTE is available to discuss course design and instructional practices.)
- **Read:** You may decide that you need to find out more about a certain area. There is an extensive literature on developments in pedagogy. (The CTE has information on selected topics, with lists of resources.)

The CTE section on [Reflective Teaching](#) contains additional information on this topic as well as additional sources and resources.

The CTE is available for consultations about teaching and related questions.

Other Resources



Newsletter Articles

Flexibility

Beth McMurtrie writes a column on teaching for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. For that column, she asked readers whether pandemic-driven changes to teaching (e.g., [How to Give Your Students the Grace We All Need](#)) should continue in the fall. Over the past few weeks, she has been sharing examples of responses.

Some people [firmly believe](#) such flexibility harms students and professors. These instructors thought that pandemic-era accommodations did not work well for their courses and their students. They believed that they lead to unrealistic expectations and poorer performance among students and increased pressure and stress for instructors.

She also heard from instructors [who felt](#) those modifications were necessary to keep students enrolled and engaged. These instructors planned to continue with flexible deadlines and attendance policies, which make classes “more accessible to students with disabilities, complicated lives, and unanticipated circumstances”. The goal was to increase student engagement through building relationships between instructor and students as well as among students.

Finally, she reported on the thoughts of people [in the middle](#). These instructors advocated for “flexibility with guardrails” – having clear rules and expectations, but also allowing for exceptions under certain circumstances. The emphasis was on the importance of instructors creating clear boundaries while also showing understanding and compassion for students.

Student Mental Health

[Professors’ Part in Maintaining Student Mental Health](#)

This *Inside Higher Education* article/infographic reports on the results of the Student Voice survey of 2000 undergraduates and lists seven ways instructors can prioritize student wellness and mental health. These include: (a) get to know students’ top stressors; (b) take an active role in student well-being; (c) show empathy by being flexible and mindful about deadlines; (d) include wellness resources in syllabus and class sessions; (e) strive for equity and assess in the classroom environment; (f) participate in training to pick up on signs a student is in crisis; and (g) make time for self-care since constantly supporting students can be draining.

Podcasts

[Engaging Your Students with Mini-lectures, Pre-discussion Posts, and Interactive Starter Activities](#)

This 15-minute podcast sponsored by [Faculty Focus](#) covers getting students to engage with the course content so they better retain it as well as how to engage them in discussion so that everyone is talking. Specifically, it covers how to incorporate min-lectures, the importance of a

pre-discussion posts, and how to use drawings, a multimedia starter, or social activity to engage students with the content.

Blogs

[Doomed to Zoom?](#)

In the Learning Innovations blog from *Inside Higher Education*, the author describes a new set of norms that have developed regarding meetings: (a) the default option is virtual meetings; (b) participants join meetings regardless of activity or location; (c) scheduled meetings are replacing informal conversations. Questions remain about the implications of these changes for academic workplace culture.

Shared Resources



Resources to Share with Students

Instructors may want to share these resources with their students (and may also want to use them themselves).

[When You Need to Write a Literature Review](#)

Writing a literature review is a specific skill. This APA blog details the key takeaways from a Psi Chi webinar about writing literature reviews. It summarizes 15 points and provides links to the recorded webinar as well as to the slides and related resources. [Check out this blog post](#)

[How to Transform Your Dissertation into a Journal Article](#)

In this *Inside Higher Education* article, the author offers 10 guidelines for successfully transforming a dissertation into an academic article. His ten steps include (a) Determining if and why an article based on your research is worth publishing; (b) Taking time to acquaint yourself with primary publication in the field; (c) Trimming down your research to the most relevant findings; (d) Considering extracting more than one article from your study; (e) Making good use of your dissertation abstract; (f) Determining the most appropriate citations; (g) Including a pared down Methods section; (h) Clearly stating the results. (i) Concluding with an analysis section in which you make meaning of the findings; (j) Including only the directly relevant references.

Faculty Success and Well-Being



Leadership

[Leadership Lessons](#)

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the author offers “a bit of unrequested advice to academic leaders from a member of the rank and file”. His perspective is that “success is a shared endeavor in higher education”. He acknowledges that some faculty members do not want to become academic leaders but still need people who do administrative work and want them to succeed, in part because it is in their collective best interests. Toward this end he offers 12 pieces of advice to academic leaders.

[Faculty Leadership](#)

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the author advocates for faculty members assuming leadership roles even though they may not be in formal leadership positions. She believes that “faculty leadership can and should come from the middle and lower ranks of the institutional hierarchy”. She suggests starting small by taking the lead on an issue of interest and carving out a unique path and offers four specific strategies for doing so.

[Learning to Say No](#)

In this 2020 Advice article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the author suggests six strategies for “how to say no while maintaining a long-term positive relationship, a bond of trust, an atmosphere of professionalism, a feeling of mutual respect, and a sense of fairness”. These include six approaches: (a) let the data speak for you; (b) look for alternative pathways to yes; (c) don’t say know if somebody above will say yes; (d) don’t be mysterious about your reasons; (e) set aside your academic passions and be dispassionate; and (f) show your care in tone and manner. The idea is to “learn to say no without undercutting what other people are trying to achieve”.

[Learning to Accept No](#)

In another 2020 Advice article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the same author counsels that “learning to accept defeat gracefully as an administrator when *you* are the one who has to take ‘no’ for

an answer” is crucial. He advises (a) determining the kind of advocacy culture that best suits you; (b) being at piece with not getting what you want rather than seeing it as a personal defeat; (c) assessing the decision to determine whether it is really over – is possible to revise and resubmit? And (d) is it worth continuing to fight – “how much political capital, energy, effort, and even stress are you willing to expend?” The author believes that “by accepting defeat with grace, you will acquire a reputation as someone who is collaborative and a trusted partner”, which will be helpful when you make requests in the futures.

Compensation

[Results of AAUP Annual Survey](#)

Based on the results of the American Association of University Professors faculty-compensation survey, included in its [annual report](#) , the *Chronicle on Higher Education* reported that “average full-time faculty salaries decreased by 5 percent in the 2021-22 academic year when adjusted for inflation.” The full-time faculty salaries in 2021-22 were 2 percent higher — essentially flat — than in 2020-21, which actually was a big pay cut in real terms. Adjusted for inflation, faculty salaries fell at 95 percent of institutions that were surveyed in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. Additionally, “the AAUP’s report also says that faculty salaries for women during the 2021-22 year were 81.9 percent of those for men”; this pay gap has remained largely the same in recent years.

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