



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

August 7, 2023

The Center for Teaching Excellence monthly newsletter provides information about events sponsored by the CTE as well as around the university and beyond. We also highlight resources available to Alliant faculty on the CTE site and elsewhere.

Dalia Ducker

Center for Teaching Excellence Events



Beginning in September, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Department of Online Learning at Alliant will host a three-part webinar series to explore topics related to the use of AI software in higher education. The aim is to provide guidance and best practices and stimulate discussion. Whether you are new to generative AI tools or already familiar with them, this webinar series will help you learn more about AI's potential and limitations in a higher education context.

- September – A look at the process and details of an evolving conversation in one Alliant program about the use of LLMs, including how they approached the discussions and their actions to date.
- October – Invited speaker to discuss uses for generative AI in higher education.
- November – Information about the use of generative AI detectors as well as approaches to creating learning environments in which activities and assessments using LLMs by students and professors do not sacrifice academic integrity.

Here is information on our first webinar in the series:


- **Date: & Time:** September 29, 2023, 9:00 – 10:00am Pacific time
- **Title:** Teaching in the age of AI
- **Presenter:** Dr. Afarin Rajail, assistant professor, CFT program, Alliant International University
- **Description:** We will discuss how the CFT program got curious about generative AI and ChatGPT, what the faculty have researched and learned about it, the reaction of different faculty to some of the findings, and how the program is proceeding. The workshop aims to initiate conversations about confidence and adaptability needed to work in the dynamic landscape of AI-driven education and generate ideas for other faculty and programs considering these issues.

Other Events


This fall, the Provost's Office will sponsor a series of workshops for new faculty members, organized by Dr. KJ Conner, Assistant Vice President of Academic Administration. The goal is to help core faculty members with their transition to Alliant and provide additional information on their new faculty role.

	<p>Tues, Sept 12 12-2pm: Teaching Tips, Feedback, & Evaluation</p> <p>Thurs, Oct 5 12-2pm: Faculty Expectations, Evaluation, Promotion, & Retention</p> <p>Mon, Oct 23 12-2pm: Admin. Structure, Faculty Governance Structure, & University Values</p> <p>Mon, Nov 13 12-2pm: Student Services & Mentorship</p> <p>Thurs, Dec 7 12-2pm: Scholarship Opportunities & Resources</p>
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The Center for Teaching Excellence

	<p>News about The CTE site: We are moving</p> <p>The Center for Teaching Excellence site is now a website. It is available at Center for Teaching Excellence and can be accessed by faculty, staff, students, alums, and the public. Currently, it has all the content of our SharePoint site, including resources for teaching, videos of past webinars, and an archive of newsletters. We have also updated it with sections on new topics (e.g., ChatGPT and AI, Gender Inclusive Teaching, Balancing Structure and Flexibility, and Universal Design for Learning). As always, we welcome your input; please send ideas, suggestions, and feedback to Dalia Ducker at dducker@alliant.edu.</p> <p>We want to continue to prioritize offerings that meet the interests and needs of faculty. To this end, the CTE is collaborating with the Office of Online Learning to offer additional opportunities for faculty support and development. To determine faculty interests and needs, we need your help. Be on the lookout for the CTE Qualtrics needs assessment survey, which you will receive in late August. It takes 5-10 minutes to complete, and responses are anonymous. Please fill it out so that we can use your input to plan out webinars, website updates, and newsletter. Thank you for your help.</p>
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Teaching Tips

	<p>Teaching Tips</p> <p>The Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning has created this Google.doc with guidance for faculty on teaching with ChatGPT and other generative AI tools.</p> <p>Here are their concrete suggestions for teaching with ChatGPT and similar tools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Try it out: Explore ChatGPT for yourself, and for your particular discipline. Prompt the tool with some of your actual assignment prompts (essay questions, homework assignments, test questions, etc.) to see what kind of output you get. Is the output wildly inadequate, could it pass as an acceptable answer, or does it produce something? Going through this exercise gives you a point of departure for adapting your assignments, to continue to foster “deep thinking” in your students. It is worth noting however that ChatGPT is not consistent with responses - your testing will not
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produce the same results next time.

2. Emphasize process, not just product: Shift your assignment focus away from the final product and place a greater focus on the process. An easy way to do this is to scaffold your assignments and to include steps such as proposals,

first drafts, chunking, revisions, and reflections. This encourages students to focus on the learning process afforded by the assignment.

3. Foreground meta-cognitive awareness: Include meta-cognitive components in your assignments whenever possible, to help students become aware of their own learning and be able to describe it. For example: ask students to describe the process they used in completing a given assignment, what they learned both from the assignment itself, and their reflection on it, and what lessons they are taking away for the future. "Explain your thinking" prompts can also be effective.

4. Spell out your learning goals: In a similar vein, make sure that students understand the learning goals behind their assignments and learning activities, so they can better evaluate whether using a tool such as ChatGPT would get in the way of accomplishing these learning goals, or whether it might assist them in their actual learning.

5. Rely on peer feedback: Consider including peer reviews, critiques, or responses in your assignments, to engage students in a constructive dialogue

about their work and their thinking. Peer review can be a very effective learning tool in a wide range of disciplines but works best when carefully set up, and deliberately modeled for students.

6. Personalize assignments: When possible, personalize your assignments,

asking students to draw on their own experiences, to connect ideas, and to create content that is personally relevant and authentic. Including a reflective component with these kinds of assignments can make them especially powerful and engaging

7. Analyze AI-generated content: Lean in to teaching with AI technologies. For example, ask students to feed an assignment prompt into ChatGPT and to critique the output. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Was it accurate and factual? Useful? Specific or generic? What, if anything, gives it away as AI- rather than human-generated content? Can you compare and contrast it with writing authored by humans? For the given task or problem - does it make sense to use AI tools? Why or why not? What becomes the role of the human in such a scenario?

8. Reimagine writing with your students: Experimentally, re-envision writing as a process of prompting, editing, and revising - and build in reflection on whether and how this changes the writer's thought and learning process.

9. Create options: Offer dual versions of an assignment: one in which use of generative AI tools is permitted, one in which it is not. Prompt a discussion on how mastery of your learning goals might be demonstrated, even in the AI-assisted scenario, and require students who opt for this version to do so."

For more on teaching with ChatGPT and generative artificial intelligence, please see the CTE website. <https://cte.alliant.edu/chatgpt-and-generative-artificial-intelligence/>

Other Resources



Articles

According to the author of this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, “The traditional lecture endures as the default instructional mode of many postsecondary classrooms,” despite evidence of its limited effectiveness and, in some cases, the greater effectiveness of active learning. The longevity of the traditional lecture is due, in part, to its popularity among students, who have been found to equate a lecturing with instruction. The author made the following recommendations for increasing student acceptance of active learning: (a) continue to lecture, but only sparingly; (b) routinely ask students for feedback; (c) be transparent about the reasons for your choices about pedagogical practices; (d) manage student anxieties about active learning; and (e) help students unlearn their beliefs about effective teaching. [How to ease students off the lecture and onto active learning](#)

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the author described the role artificial intelligence can play in graduate students’ teaching and research. He discussed the issue with monitoring student writing for plagiarism and recommended three steps to consider. He also discussed the “positive role” AI can play in graduate students’ research and writing and suggested ways it can be used, including AI to brainstorm ideas and to help with details such as bibliographic format. He also cautioned graduate students not to “rely on AI to know things instead of knowing them yourself” to be able to detect error and retain authorship of the product. [Artificial intelligence – a graduate student users guide](#)

Podcast

This episode of the Key podcast, sponsored by Inside Higher Ed, presents excerpts from a session on “Promoting Students’ Well-Being in Today’s Learning Environments.” It includes a discussion of strategies for dealing with the growing number of students who are studying partially or fully online. The three panelists spoke about how their schools have created educational experiences that build a sense of community and belonging for students and respond to students’ social and psychological needs. [Promoting student well-being in today’s learning environment](#)

For more information on this topic, please see the CTE website section on [Cultivating a Sense of Well-Being and Building Rapport.](#)

Shared Resources



Using Gender Inclusive Language

The Oregon State University Center for Teaching and Learning has a handout on Using Gender Inclusive Language in the Classroom. It includes a table with pronouns and another with gender inclusive terminology. [Using Gender Inclusive Language](#)

For more information on [gender inclusive teaching](#), including many references, please see the CTE website.

Faculty Success and Well-Being

Teaching Evaluations



The author of this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, a professor at UCLA, summarized some of the literature on the correlates of students' teaching evaluations of faculty. "I found almost 80 peer-reviewed [papers](#) demonstrating the gender and racial bias afflicting teaching evaluations, going back to 1979. Study after study showed increasingly disturbing statistics: Women were routinely rated lower than men, younger women were evaluated as less professional than their older female or male counterparts, women of color were rated as less effective than white women, and so on." He advocates for not using these evaluations in faculty retention and promotion decisions although some faculty members may want to use them for individual feedback. [Teaching evaluations are racist and sexist and often useless](#)

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