



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

July 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 Upcoming Events



Upcoming

When you encounter the terms Large Language Models (LLMs) or generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), what thoughts spring to mind? If these concepts are unfamiliar, you might recognize specific names, such as Chat GPT, Bing Chat, or Google Bard. These powerful assistants can generate natural language texts based on user inputs. Summaries, stories, essays, emails, and more can be created quickly and easily, depending on the keywords and parameters provided by the user. A resource such as Chat GPT has many uses in higher education, but it also poses some challenges, including questions about upholding academic integrity.

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.

- **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 sacrificing academic integrity.

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. More information and details about each event.

Other Events



ChatGPT Unleashed: What to Expect This Fall and How to Prepare

This is a link to a presentation sponsored by Alchemy about [ChatGPT Unleashed: What to Expect This Fall](#)

These are links to the [slide deck](#) as well as a [transcript](#) of the chat.

There is also a list of [resources](#) related to ChatGPT and AI shared during the webinars. Included in the list are “[ChatGPT Prompts to Accelerate Learning](#),” which is a downloadable document.

The Center for Teaching Excellence



News about The CTE site

We are moving [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 will continue to expand and update it with new topics and updated information (e.g., new sections on 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.

Teaching Tips



Infusing Inclusive Practices

In the spring of 2021, Dr. Kim Case, professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, presented a webinar for the Alliant CTE: Syllabus Challenge Infusing Inclusive Practices. Dr. Case has subsequently revised and updated that document. Below is the link to the Google doc with her most recent version, which is meant as an outline for examining a syllabus with an eye to making revisions that infuse inclusive practices. She makes suggestions regarding all aspects of a syllabus, including course description, learning outcomes and goals, texts and readings, topics and themes, schedules, assessments, and course policies. For example, among her suggestions regarding texts and readings are to


- Consider and try to minimize the cost of required texts and materials.
- Make sure all texts and materials, especially those that are required, are available in advance of the start of the course.
- Examine whether readings represent a range of topics and perspectives.
- Examine whether readings represent authors from a range of backgrounds.

Among her suggestions regarding assessments of student learning are to make sure that


- Instructions for all papers and projects are clear and easily understood by all students in the course.
- Expectations and boundaries for group projects are clear so all students understand them.
- Assignments involve real world applications and problem solving that allow students to relate them to their own backgrounds.
- Rubrics are provided in conjunction with sample work from previous classes, transparent and clear grading policies, and discussions of what


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| | <p>constitutes a high paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams are accessible to all students, make-up policies are clear, and examples used represent a range of social identities. <p>Dr. Case suggested that instructors interested in making their syllabi more inclusive choose one of their syllabi, use the Challenge document to conduct a step-by-step analysis of that syllabus, and make changes, even if only a few at a time.</p> <p>For more information, go to Syllabus Challenge: Infusing Inclusive Practices</p> |
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Other Resources

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|  | <p>Article</p> <p>In this article in the <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, Dr. Flower Darby, associate director of the Teaching for Learning Center at the University of Missouri at Columbia, articulated “4 Steps to Help You Plan for ChatGPT in Your Classroom.” Her four strategies for helping instructors learn about and become comfortable with ChatGPT – whether or not they intend to use it in their own teaching include the following: (a) Get familiar with generative AI tools by reading about them (she provides some basic references) and by trying them out; (b) Get ready to talk about it in class, including having discussions on cheating and plagiarism; (c) If you suspect students of AI-related cheating, don’t rush to hand out Fs; instead carefully analyze the talk with the student about their writing process; and (d) If you use plagiarism-detection tools, do so with a hefty degree of caution; they are not as accurate as initially claimed and policing students in this way is not the most effective way to encourage academic integrity.</p> <p>How to plan for ChatGPT in the classroom</p> <p>Podcast</p> <p>In this episode of <i>Teaching in Higher Education</i>, the host interview two faculty members about “Building Community in the College Classroom.” The discussion covers a range of topics such as interdisciplinary teaching, the importance of feedback that acknowledges a student’s humanity, and practical ways to show care for students. The episode also features an interview with an instructor who shares his experience of disclosing his Parkinson’s disease to his class and how vulnerability builds community and connection between students and teachers.</p> <p>Building community in the college classroom</p> |
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Shared Resources

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|  | <p>How to use AI to do practical stuff</p> <p>In this post on his blog, One Useful Thing, Dr. Ethan Mollick, associate professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, presented “How to use AI to do practical stuff: A new guide.” He provided a chart listing six large language models, describing what they can do, and major thing people get wrong about them. He then described which and how each of these options can be used to (a) write</p> |
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| | <p>stuff, (b) make images, (c) come up with ideas, (d) make videos, (e) code, and (f) learn stuff. In each section, he provided examples and explanations, as well as “some things to worry about.”</p> <p>How to use AI to do practical stuff</p> |
| Faculty Success and Well-Being | |
|  | <p>How to manage course evaluations</p> <p>According to the two authors, the purpose of this Chronicle of higher Education article, “Measuring Up: How to Manage Those Dreaded Course Evaluations” is to “offer advice on how to (a) take advantage of the most useful feedback and (b) build a proper defense against the most hurtful critiques”.</p> <p>They suggest that (a) When faced with critical comments, divide them into two categories: legitimate constructive criticism and irritants to be ignored and use the former as a source for professional development. (b) Consider the reliability of the students’ ratings in light of other factors (e.g., attendance, anticipated grade, workload). (c) Although post-Covid “crankiness” that has led to more negative and nasty evaluations, use class time to discuss what is and is not working about a course. (d) Be sensitive to inclusion issues by emphasizing your commitment to helping all students succeed. (e) Try to prevent false accusations and personal attacks by emphasizing that you use feedback to make improvements in the course, but if they do occur, think about the underlying issues that may have generated this hostility to see if there may be any positive lessons. (f) Try to increase response rate by giving class time for filling out the form or offering incentives for a higher group response rate. They provide additional advice for instructors and administrators.</p> <p>How to manage course evaluations</p> |

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