



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

April 9, 2024

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

Update from the Center for Teaching Excellence



Because many Alliant graduates teach in higher education settings at some point in their career, we thought it would be helpful to let them know about the resources available through the Alliant Center for Teaching Excellence. To introduce them to the CTE, a version of the Center for Teaching Excellence newsletter was emailed to all Alliant students on April 3. It featured an article on Teaching Tips for New Instructors, in addition to most of the regular newsletter content. Going forward, we will distribute a student version of the newsletter, focusing on topics of interest to new instructors, quarterly. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for relevant content.

Center for Teaching Excellence on Demand Events



GenAI Garage is a 90-minute online workshop for beginners who have a desire but little experience exploring and tinkering with Generative AI tools. Through a hands-on approach, participants will learn by doing while discovering the potential and limitations of Generative AI, creating content using various tools, and sharing insights and feedback with others.

Webinar link - [GenAI Garage Webinar](#)

Art and Science of the Prompt is a 60-minute online workshop that teaches how to craft effective prompts for GenAI tools. The workshop requires active participation from attendees, as they will be asked to write, share, and discuss their own prompts throughout the session. Participants will learn the principles and techniques of prompt engineering, practice with different GenAI tools and domains, and evaluate the quality and reliability of the outputs generated.

Webinar link - [Art and Science of the Prompt-AI-series-02152024.mp4](#)

A Guide to the Essential Canvas Features and Functions You Might Be Missing is a 60-minute online webinar suitable for anyone who wants to improve their skills with Canvas. Participants will discover and explore some of the hidden and advanced features and functions of Canvas that can enhance the learning experience and outcomes for instructors and students. They will also have the opportunity to ask questions and share feedback with the webinar facilitator and other participants.

Webinar link - [Canvas Features and Functions Webinar](#)



Presentation Skills: Improving through Personalized Feedback

Melissa Vervinck, DET

Instructor Inquiry

*Dear Online Learning Team,
Warm greetings! I'm reaching out for your guidance on enhancing our students' presentation skills.*

I've noticed some students facing challenges in this area, impacting their academic progress. As individual feedback sessions are impractical due to class size, could you direct me to institutional resources that offer structured presentation feedback?

Thank you for your assistance.

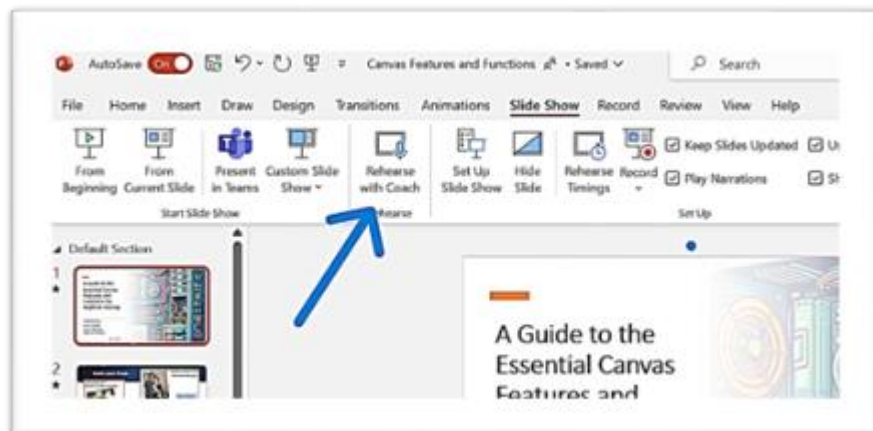
*Best,
Prof. C. M. Innovatus*

Online Learning Team Response

We appreciate your proactive approach to assisting students with their presentation skills. Learning to present effectively is crucial for students in higher education, as it hones their ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and persuasively. Strong presentation skills are transferable to any professional setting, enhancing their versatility in the job market.

At Alliant, all active faculty, staff and students have available to them, at no cost, Office 365 for Education, which includes Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and more. Thus, we would like to recommend the Presenter Coach feature in PowerPoint which is designed to provide real-time feedback on presentation delivery, including pacing, use of filler words, inclusivity, and repetitiveness. It's an AI-powered coach that offers a private, personalized way for students to practice their presentations using a technology tool that they are probably already familiar with.

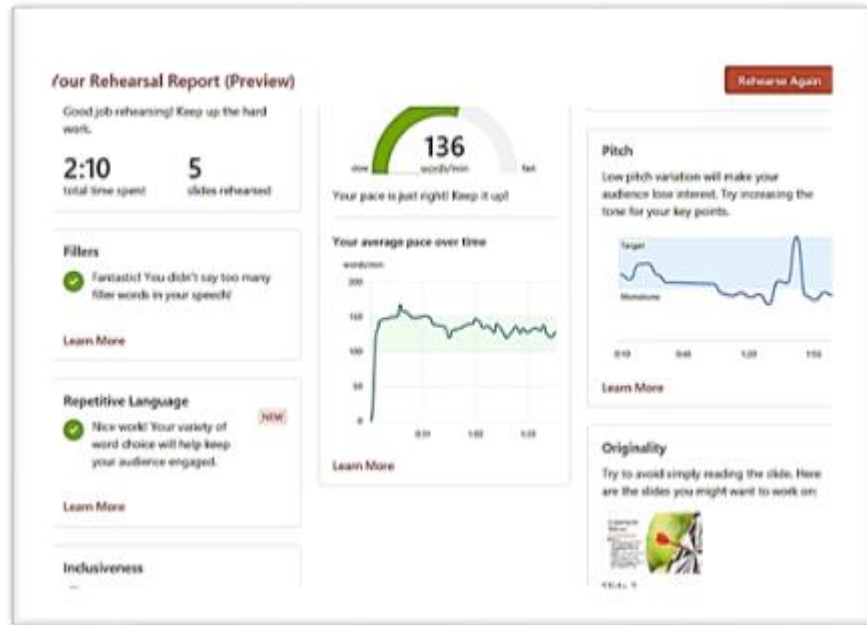
Presenter Coach in PowerPoint



Using a microphone and with an Internet connect, they will need to:

1. Open their PowerPoint presentation.
2. Navigate to the Slide Show tab.
3. Click on Rehearse with Coach.

4. Begin rehearsing their presentation and receive live guidance.
5. Review the detailed report with suggestions for improvement.



This tool could serve as a 'virtual assistant' for your students (or you), enabling them to refine their skills independently before presenting in class or via a video recording. In the coming months, we will expand our focus from sharing scenarios and solutions focusing only on Canvas to those that focus on other issues instructors may encounter involving the use of technology in higher education. If you have inquiries in which the solution may possibly be supported with the use of technology, feel free to email those to onlinelearningstaff@alliant.edu. You never know, we may use your question in a future CTE newsletter column, using a pseudonym, of course.

Teaching Tips



Activities for the Last Day of Class

Often, the last day of class is devoted to housekeeping tasks, last-minute details, final exam preparation, and course evaluations; however, it is also possible to make it a meaningful educational experience. Here are some suggestions on how to accomplish this goal:

1. Provide a synthesis/overview of the course; review the topics covered and identify common themes and recurring issues.
2. Present concluding remarks and use them to fit the class experience into the broader context of life or the profession.
3. After providing your own concluding remarks, ask students for theirs. They can focus on the class itself, on topics discussed, or on questions raised.
4. Schedule final presentations, giving each student time to show/explain their project. Ask students to address the presentation to next semester's students and then, with permission, use selected PowerPoint slides to illustrate points about the project for the following term's class.
5. Talk about your own research and/or professional expertise. Explain how you developed and nurtured these areas of interest.

6. Talk about the future of the field. Where is it going? What are the important questions/issues?
7. Talk about important people in the field and describe their work and careers.
8. Offer to answer all questions-related-to-the-topic. This is not in preparation for a final; rather, it is an opportunity for students to ask about things that may have been unclear or incomplete.
9. Ask students to speak briefly about something they accomplished in the course (e.g., learning a new skill or new information or gaining a new insight). What was their proudest accomplishment?
10. Ask students what the most surprising/interesting/unexpected things they learned were or when they were most engaged as a learner.
11. Ask students to identify the most significant idea they learned in this course or the most powerful moment they experienced, using a visual or auditory image, and indicate how their perspective or understanding of the course topic has been changed, challenged, reinforced, or deepened due to this idea/moment.
12. Ask students how they have applied at least one thing they learned in this course. How do they expect to apply what they have learned in the future (in their personal and/or professional lives)?
13. Ask students to write brief letters to future students explaining what they will be learning and doing in this course and providing them with advice or tips for success. (Ask for permission to use the letters.)
14. Tell students to imagine being asked by a friend, family member, or future job interviewer what this class was about. How would they respond in 1-2 minutes (i.e., ask them to prepare an elevator speech about the course).
15. Ask students for expressions of gratitude about rewarding experiences in the course. What are they glad to have learned? What did they appreciate about someone else in the class? What authors of course materials would they like to thank for their work?
16. Ask students to describe what you learned about teaching while taking this course and how they might apply it to their own lives.
17. Ask students to reflect on their learning processes in the course: What they learned about themselves as learners, including one strength and one challenge.
18. Talk about what you think went well or badly in the course and ask students for their thoughts. Tell students that these discussions are useful for your planning and revising the course. (This is different from the course evaluation.)
19. Thank the students for their part in the course and tell them what they did to make the class more rewarding for you (e.g., worked hard, asked questions, were collaborative, etc.).
20. Say a formal goodbye to the students and tell them how they can stay in touch with you if they wish. Provide examples of the types of questions or issues they might want to talk to you about in the future. Suggest other resources they might also use.

Other Resources



Articles

[The Case for Slow Walking Our Use of Generative AI](#)

In this Chronicle of Higher Education article, Dr. James Lang provided four principles to guide thinking about the role of ChatGPT and other AI tools in teaching. He suggested that in deciding how to include generative AI into course, instructors consider (a) Variety – treat AI as one of many possible approaches to assignments; (b) Transparency – explain the reasons for their choice of techniques to students; (c) Sequencing – be intentional about the order in which they introduce generative AI skill into course; and (d) Reflection – teach students to think about the process, even when using AI, rather than rushing from

one step to the next. She urged instructors to “adopt strategies that make clear the small, simple acts and behaviors that, in total, lead to academic success.”

[Teaching students how to be a student](#)

Emily J. Isaacs, in Chronicle of Higher Education article, wrote about the importance of teaching students to develop and practice “skills and habits that will enable them to learn.” Although it is reasonable to expect that students will have learned these skills and habits earlier in their educational careers, it is apparent that some students have not done so; therefore, it is important to be clear with them about the expectations and the reasons behind them. For example, instructors should be explicit about why students must attend class regularly, be engaged while in class, complete assignments on time, resist digital distractions, and seek help.

Shared Resources



APA Style Guidelines

[APA Style: Grammar Guidelines](#)

This website provides links to the grammar and usage guidelines in APA Publication Manual. Among the topics included are Verb Tense, Active and Passive Voice, Singular “They,” and First-Person Pronouns.

[APA Style: Inclusive Language Guide](#)

According to this website, APA’s Inclusive Language Guide “is written to raise awareness, direct learning, and support the use of culturally sensitive terms and phrases that center the voices and perspective of those who have been historically marginalized and stereotyped.” It provides information on terms related to equity and power and person-first and identity-first language (to use and avoid) for both written and oral communications.

Faculty Success and Well-Being



Well-Being

[Leadership Burnout: How to Restore Your Depleted Bandwidth](#)

In the Chronicle of Higher Education, Aaron Basko presented three ways leaders can deal with a lengthy to-do list that can create feelings of burnout: (a) categorize projects by level of importance and use these categories to determine priorities (i.e., how much time and effort to allot each project); (b) adopt a consultant’s mindset, which means determining which problems are in someone else’s purview, and for those problems consulting with the responsible people and letting them act on these recommendations (i.e., not trying to do their job); and (c) work with people who want to collaborate rather than pursuing those who are not interested in working together (i.e., create coalitions with people who are not bound by “silos”). In sum, he recommended that leaders who feel stretched and burned out consider rebalancing how they prioritize their projects and how they manage their work relationships.