



Alliant International University

Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

August 6, 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

Center for Teaching Excellence Upcoming Events



Leveraging the Library to Make Your Job Easier and Your Instruction Richer [Register Now](#)

September 19, 2024
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)
Location: Zoom
By Scott Zimmer, JD, Ed.D.

Participants will learn how to incorporate library resources into their courses at every stage of the course life cycle, from course design and development to resource selection, to skill development and evaluation. Need a textbook for a course you are designing? The library can help find ones that allow institutional purchase, so students can use the library eBook instead of buying their own. Looking for a set of articles for students to compare and contrast? The library can help you search for them, provide you with copies, and check permissions to make sure you can use them. Wanting to scaffold students' understanding of plagiarism and APA style, without losing class time? The library has tutorials and quizzes that you can assign to your students. We'll cover these and other strategies you can use to build or improve your course, while not adding to your workload.

Finding Balance: Integrating AI While Fostering Authentic Student Learning [Register Now](#)

October 17, 2024
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)
Location: Zoom
By Jeremy Bond, D.E.T. & Melissa Vervinck, D.E.T.

Explore strategies to strike the right balance between using AI as a tool and fostering authentic student learning. This 60-minute webinar covers designing assessments that encourage original inquiry and problem-solving. It also covers adapting assignments to embrace AI while encouraging students to use skills like creativity, analysis, and reflection, all while promoting ethical AI usage. Gain insights into integrating AI responsibly to support student inquiry while promoting essential critical thinking and lifelong learning skills.

Elevating Learning: The RISE Model for Effective Feedback [Register Now](#)

November 21, 2024

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)

Location: Zoom

By Jeremy Bond, D.E.T. & Melissa Vervinck, D.E.T.

In this webinar, participants will explore the RISE Model, developed by Emily Wray, which focuses on providing feedback with the elements of Reflection, Inquiry, Suggestion, and Elevation. The model transforms feedback into a collaborative dialogue, encouraging students to use their skills of self-awareness, critical thinking, and agency. By emphasizing the unique human characteristics that contribute to rich learning experiences, this approach fosters meaningful discussions between students and instructors. By implementing the RISE Model, instructors can create a supportive learning environment that fosters student growth, engagement, and long-term success.

Resources from the Department of Online Teaching



Formative Assessments Without AI: One-Minute Paper Responses in Canvas

By Melissa Vervinck, D.E.T.

In higher education, three assessment types dominate: summative, diagnostic, and formative. Summative assessments, like signature assignments and project presentations, measure student learning at the end of an instructional period. Diagnostic assessments, such as pre-tests, identify a student's knowledge before instruction. Formative assessments are important for ongoing evaluation and can be effectively implemented using Canvas. By doing so, the focus is on a deeper engagement with the material rather than grades, reducing reliance on AI for assignments.

The Importance of Formative Assessments

Shifting the focus from only summative assessments to incorporating formative assessments can enhance the learning experience for adult learners and prepare them for future careers. These assessments prompt students to apply knowledge and build analytical skills essential for problem-solving in their professional lives. Using Canvas, instructors can create feedback loops where teachers provide constructive feedback on students' work, and students use this feedback to make improvements. This approach encourages learners to monitor their progress, increasing confidence and motivation. It fosters independent thinking and skill development, potentially reducing reliance on AI, and helps adult learners to develop a deeper understanding of the concept at hand while sharpening skills needed for their future professional roles.

Implementing a Formative Assessment in Canvas

One effective formative assessment is the One-Minute Paper. Using Canvas's graded survey feature, instructors can have students quickly summarize their learning or highlight areas of confusion. Using a rubric that emphasizes learning and improvement, scoring should focus on clarity, relevance, and depth of reflection, reducing reliance on AI-generated responses.

To create a One-Minute Paper in Canvas, follow these steps:

1. **Navigate to Quizzes:** In a Canvas course, go to the "Quizzes" section.
2. **Create a New Quiz:** Click on "+ Quiz" to create a new quiz.
3. **Select Graded Survey:** In the quiz settings, choose "Graded Survey" as the quiz type.

4. **Add Questions:** Add a question prompt asking students to respond to questions such as summarizing what they have learned, reflecting on a specific topic, or identifying an area of confusion. Example questions include:
 - “What was the most important concept you learned from the readings and resources in this course module?”
 - “What questions do you still have about [topic]?”
 - “Summarize the key points of this week’s discussion forum responses in one or two sentences.”
 - “How can you apply the concepts learned about [topic] in your future career?”
5. **Set Points and Due Date:** Assign points for completion/rubric scoring and set a due date for the survey.
6. **Set Time Limits:** To ensure the activity remains brief, set a time limit of two to three minutes for students to complete the survey.
7. **Add a Rubric (optional):**
 - Go to the “Assignments” section and find the quiz that was created.
 - Click on the quiz title, then click “Add Rubric.”
 - Create a rubric with criteria such as “Identification of Key Points,” “Relevance,” and “Reflection on Learning,” assigning point values to each criterion.
8. **Publish the Quiz:** Once the settings are configured, click “Save & Publish” to make the survey available to students.

By incorporating One-Minute Papers, a more interactive and responsive learning environment can be created that supports student success.

Examples of Formative Assessments Using Canvas

Canvas offers various tools to facilitate formative assessments, emphasizing ongoing student learning rather than final evaluation. These tools include:

- **Ungraded Quizzes and Surveys:** Create short, low-stakes assessments to check for understanding and identify areas needing additional support.
- **Discussion Boards:** Encourage students to post initial thoughts, ask questions, and engage with peers, providing insight into student understanding and allowing for additional help and support.
- **Practice Assignments with Detailed Feedback:** Offer opportunities for students to submit work-in-progress and receive constructive feedback throughout the term on major assignments or presentations. Use rubrics to guide students.
- **Peer Review Exercises:** Enable students to evaluate each other’s draft work, fostering collaborative learning and self-reflection.
- **Interactive Modules with Self-Check Questions:** Embed formative check-ins throughout learning modules, including reflection prompts, comprehension checks, or application questions for self-assessment.

Insights from formative assessments enable faculty to revisit complex topics or provide additional materials to ensure understanding of important concepts. The focus is on the learning process, not just the final product.

Conclusion

Formative assessments are valuable tools for promoting learning. While they may not significantly impact the final grade due to their typically lower point values compared to summative assessments, their value lies in enhancing student learning beyond just achieving a good test grade. These assessments focus on the learning process, encouraging students to engage with the material and develop critical thinking skills. Canvas provides tools so that these assessments can be an essential part of the educational experience.

Additional Resources

Testerman, K. & Halinger, P. (2022, September 20). [Best practices for formative and summative assessments in Canvas](#). *Instructure Community*.

Ogg Straub, E. (2023, December 11). [Formative assessments](#). *U of M Online Teaching*.

Trefny Innovative Instruction Center. (2023, March). [Minute papers](#). *ASU Learning and Teaching Hub*.

Teaching Tips



Five Quick Teaching Tips

Here are five simple teaching strategies and practices that are related to successful teaching:

1. Clarity: Provide clear, explicit in class communications including (a) Highlight key terms, (b) Giving multiple examples of a concept, and (c) Pointing out practical applications of a concept.
2. Organization of each class: (a) Provide agenda/outline, (b) Note transitions in topics, (c) Highlight how topics connect to each other and to course as a whole, (d) Periodically review key concepts and summarize.
3. Feedback: Provide timely and specific feedback, with suggestions for improvement.
4. Active learning: Use active learning strategies that emphasize the relevance of course material to students' lives and careers.
5. Expectations: Focus on learning outcomes, set high expectations for students, and provide scaffolding for attaining them.

Go to [Course Evaluations](#) for more information on this topic.

CTE Resources



Teaching Feedback

Gathering feedback while a course is in progress allows instructors to make adjustments that can alleviate or prevent specific problems, improve student learning, and benefit classroom climate. It allows them to make teaching changes and improve their courses midstream. Instructors can gain insights about what is working and recommendations for improving their teaching.

This page provides information on [Developing and Implementing Midterm Feedback](#) surveys and using the results. It also has links to sites that provide further information and examples.

A related page on the CTE website provides a discussion of [Reflective Teaching](#), with ideas on how to assess and examine one's own teaching.

Shared Resources



[Solving a Teaching Problem](#)

The Eberly Center for Teaching Innovation and Educational Excellence at Carnegie Mellon University offers a website called "Solve A Teaching Problem" that they envision as a supplement to individual teaching consultations. It includes a list of problems divided into categories such as:

1. Attitude & Motivation (e.g., Students don't participate in discussion and Students don't keep up with the reading)

2. Prerequisite Knowledge & Preparedness (e.g., Students don't know how to do research and Students can't write)
3. Critical Thinking & Applying Knowledge (e.g., Students don't demonstrate critical thinking and Students can't apply what they've learned)
4. Grading & Assessment (e.g., Students complain about grades and Students complain exams are too hard)

For each problem, it suggests possible reasons, and for each reason, it suggests possible strategies. For example, for the problem "Students don't participate in discussion," it offers several potential reasons, including:

- Students' individual styles or personalities may inhibit their participation.
- Students' cultural values and norms may inhibit their participation.
- Students may not have experience participating in discussions.

For the reason involving individual styles or personalities, it suggests and elaborates on these possible strategies:

- Help students to prepare in advance.
- Involve all students.
- Use groups.

Examples of involving all students include:

- Require all students, at some point during the class, to contribute. This could be as easy as going around the room to brainstorm a list or as complicated as giving each student a specific number of chips (e.g., three to five per week) that they deposit each time they contribute.
- An example of using groups involves allowing students time to work in pairs or groups with the requirement that they rotate the responsibility of reporting back to the class. This strategy gives everyone in the class an opportunity to speak and supports those students who are more confident and less anxious speaking for a group rather than just for themselves.

Faculty Success and Well-Being

When Science Communication Gets Personal



When presenting their work, researchers are often advised to appear approachable; they are told to be relatable, be funny, and share a personal anecdote. This report by Marlene S Altenmuller summarizes the results of an investigation of the effectiveness of sharing personal details in science communications. Dr. Altenmuller and colleagues conducted six studies in various contexts, comparing perceptions of researchers who shared personal details in their science communication to those who did not. Looking across all the studies, researchers who used self-disclosure were perceived as higher in warmth-related and lower in competence-related trustworthiness. However, the effects were quite small. They concluded that because both the positive and negative effects of self-disclosure were minimal, providing personal information in research presentations may ultimately be a matter of personal preference.

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