



Alliant International University
Center for
Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

February 2025

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 News

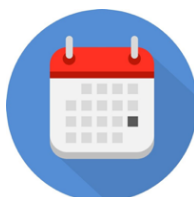


Searching the CTE Site

The CTE website is now searchable. A small magnifying glass icon has been added to the top right-hand corner of every page. It allows users to enter a word or phrase to search for a topic of interest. For example, a search for the word *diversity* yielded the following results.

- [Integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion into Course Content and Assignments](#)
- [Assignment Prompts](#)
- [Cultural Humility](#)
- [Inclusive Assessment](#)
- [Cultivating a Sense of Belonging and Building Rapport](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning](#)
- [Microaggressions](#)
- [Conceptualizing Disability: Three Models of Disability](#)
- [Fact Sheets and Webinars on Disability and Ableism](#)

Upcoming Webinars



Surviving “Online Discussion Fatigue” and Thriving Again!

[Register Now: There is still time!](#)

Friday, January 24, 2025

Moved to Friday, February 7, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)

Location: Zoom

By Jeremy Bond and Meredith Villa

Are Your Online Discussions Feeling Stale? Refresh, Revive, and Reimagine!

Join us for “Surviving Online Discussion Fatigue and Thriving Again”, a dynamic training session designed to breathe new life into your online classroom discussions! Here’s what you’ll gain:

- **Spot the Signs:** Learn to recognize discussion fatigue in both students and you.
- **Break the Mold:** Discover creative formats like debates, storytelling, and multimedia to energize participation.
- **Power Up with Canvas Studio:** Create engaging video discussions, embed quizzes, and unlock actionable insights with analytics.
- **Build Community:** Foster connection and inclusivity while encouraging deeper peer-to-peer interaction.
- **Walk Away Ready:** Hands-on activities ensure you’ll leave with tools and strategies you can implement immediately.

Don't let discussion fatigue hold you back—reignite your online discussions and watch your students thrive!

👉 Sign up today and take the first step toward a more engaging online classroom.

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments with Canvas Accessibility Tools

[Register Now](#)

Friday, February 28, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)

Location: Zoom

By Jeremy Bond, Melissa Vervinck, Rhoda Olkin, and Iris Bell

We invite you to join us for an informative and engaging webinar that will explore research highlighting the significance of prioritizing accessibility. This session will cover essential topics to enhance your understanding and effective use of accessibility features in Canvas and Canvas Studio. This session will cover:

- Learn how to make the most of the **accessibility features** available in Canvas and Canvas Studio to create an inclusive learning environment for all students.
- Gain insights from Dr. Rhoda Olkin's **research on the experiences of students with disabilities** at Alliant and learn about the implications for improving accessibility and support in educational settings.
- Meet Iris Bell and discover the valuable services offered by the Office of Accessibility to **support students with disabilities**.

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your knowledge and skills in creating accessible and inclusive educational experiences.

A Selection of AI Tools for Academia and Psychotherapy

[Register Now](#)

Friday, March 21, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (PT)

Location: Zoom

By Steven R. Thorpe. PhD, ABPP

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have been applied to business for several years, and in this webinar, Dr. Thorp will briefly describe AI, including potential benefits and points of caution. Participants will learn the policy of APA journals about AI, which can inform how instructors approach the tools. Participants will also learn novel ways in which AI could be used in coursework, preparing for licensure exams, learning academic and grant writing skills, teaching, and research. AI is already impacting the practice of psychotherapy, and some considerations about that use will be discussed. The webinar will include some examples to illustrate the use of AI tools, as well as specific apps that utilize AI.

Center for Teaching Events On Demand



Elevating Learning: The RISE Model for Effective Feedback

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

[View the recorded webinar](#)

[View the webinar slides](#)

[RISE Model](#)

In this webinar, participants explored 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

Interactive Learning with Canvas Studio

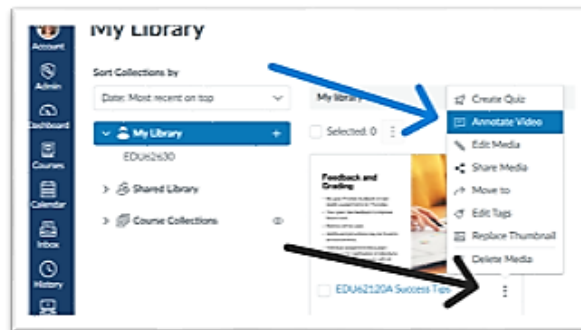


In January's CTE newsletter, we introduced Canvas Studio, a media platform for enhancing teaching and learning in Canvas. In that newsletter, video recording, editing, captioning, and quizzing were covered. If missed, check out the article: [Introduction to Canvas Studio](#). This month, two more features are explored: video annotations and timeline discussions. These features make videos more engaging while encouraging student participation and collaboration.

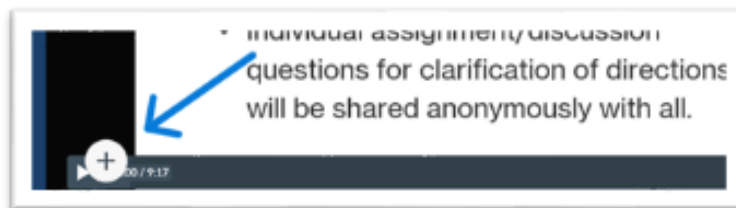
Video Annotations

Video annotations in Canvas Studio are used to improve student engagement and understanding. By adding annotations, instructors can emphasize key points, provide additional context, and guide students through complex concepts. Students can add annotations to videos to indicate specific instances they want to highlight for viewers to watch.

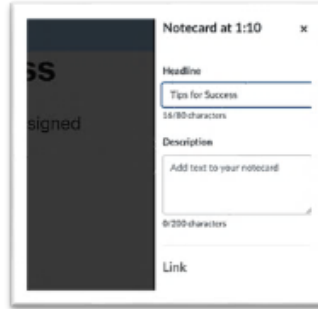
Once you have recorded or uploaded a video to Canvas Studio, follow these instructions to create video annotations. Feel free to share these directions with students to assist them in creating video annotations easily, too:



1. **Access the Video:** Open the video in Canvas Studio.
2. **Enter Annotation Mode:** Click on the three ellipsis (black arrow) and then select "Annotations" (blue arrow).



3. **Add Annotations:** Navigate to the specific point in the video where you want to add an annotation and click the "Add Annotation" button located at the bottom of the screen/video to open a panel on the right side of the screen.

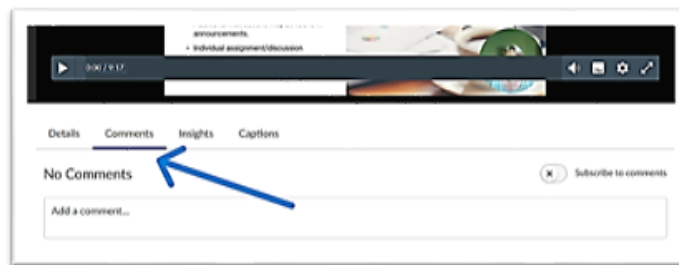


4. **Customize Annotations:** Enter information requested.
5. **Save Annotations:** Click “Save” to apply your annotations to the video.

Timeline Discussions

Timeline discussions in Canvas Studio allow students to engage with video content by commenting at specific points in the video. This feature creates a more interactive and focused learning experience, where students can ask questions and share their thoughts in real-time. They can learn from each other’s insights, as well as from the instructor. This can improve understanding and foster a collaborative learning environment. To get started with timeline discussions:

1. **Access the Video:** Open the video in Canvas Studio.



2. **Enter Comment Mode:** Click on the “Comments” tab.
3. **Add Comments:** Navigate to the specific point in the video where you want to add a comment and click the “Add Comment” button.
4. **Engage with Peers:** Enter your comment and click “Post.” You can also reply to comments from your peers, creating a discussion thread at that specific point in the video.
5. **Monitor and Participate:** Regularly check the comments to engage in ongoing discussions and respond to any questions or insights from peers and the instructor.

Next month, we will continue to review additional features of Canvas Studio. Look for information on providing feedback and grading media using Speedgrader, as well as accessing analytic features.

For questions or further assistance with Canvas Studio, please refer to [Canvas Studio: Engaging Higher Education](#) and the [Studio Guide](#) (also available via a [link on ITHelp](#)). Also, you can always reach out to Online Learning at onlinelearningstaff@alliant.edu with questions.

Teaching Tips

Teaching Statements

Applications for academic teaching positions as well as for promotion and retention within these positions often necessitate submitting a Teaching Statement. The goal of this statement is to provide a picture of the candidate as a teacher – what their philosophy is and



how they implement it in their teaching. Opinions vary on exactly what to include, but there is considerable consensus on the broad components and on the idea that the most effective teaching statements are neither too broad nor too specific and create a vivid picture of the candidate as a teacher.

Components of a Strong Teaching Statement:

- Includes a description of your teaching goals: with what content, skills, or values should students leave your course?
- Provides concrete examples of specific course topics, assignments, assessments, and teaching methods that demonstrate how you have applied your teaching philosophy.
- Is descriptive, vivid, and personal in describing your teaching, so your readers can picture you teaching their students.
- Describes the ways in which you create an accessible and inclusive learning environment.
- Demonstrates an understanding of student learning and describes how your teaching facilitates student learning.
- Tells how you provide all students an equal opportunity to learn.
- Highlights your strengths as a teacher, emphasizing what you do best.
- Describes your use of specific teaching strategies (e.g., including active learning, facilitating discussions, fostering community and belonging, providing transparency in assessment, and being flexible to your students' needs)
- Discusses lessons learned, challenges, and innovations you've made.
- Includes your goals for improving your teaching.

For more information see [Writing Teaching Statements](#).

Other Resources

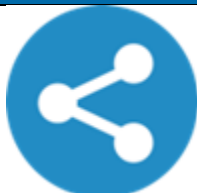


The Chronicle of Higher Education Teaching Newsletter Archives

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* publishes a weekly Teaching Newsletter featuring “insights to improve teaching and learning.” These suggestions have been submitted by instructors in response to questions by the editor, Becky Supiano. The website includes archives of these newsletters: [Teaching newsletter archive page](#). Below are links to examples of issues discussed:

- [Do You Miss Imperfect Student Writing?](#): Professors reading AI-written prose wonder how to encourage authenticity.
- [How Do You Close Out Your Course?](#) Two instructors describe end of semester activities that ask students to reflect on their experiences in the course.
- [Advice for a New Instructor](#): Ideas for instructors who might be struggling with how to balance the requirements of teaching with students' need for help.
- [Strategies to Reduce Cheating](#): A description of the multistep process a college instructor has used with students.
- [How Some Professors Are Using AI for Role-Playing](#): Chatbots can help students prepare for interviews and handle conflict, among other things.

Shared Resources



Transparent Assignments

The [Oregon State University Center for Teaching and Learning blog](#) features a post by Funmi Amobi on [Building transparent assignments to advance student learning success: Strategies and tips](#). It lays out a plan for making assignments transparent by communicating with students, in terms they will clearly understand, three factors about these assignments:

purpose, task, and criteria. Thus, “A transparent assignment focuses on making an instructor’s implicit knowledge about course assignments more explicit to students by directly articulating the purpose of an assignment, clarifying the task that students need to do, and specifying the criteria for assessing their work.” Transparent assignment design has been found to lead to greater academic benefits for students, especially those who were first generation, low income, and from underrepresented groups. The author provided the following specific advice for making an assignment transparent:

- **Articulate purpose.** Communicate to students the reason the assignment is needed and how it is integrated into the course by describing the connection of the assignment to course learning outcomes. Additionally, explain the knowledge and skills students will gain from completing the assignment and how they will be relevant to them in the future, beyond this course.
- **Define task.** To remove guesswork and lower anxiety on how to start the assignment, be clear about what students will do and how to do it. This may include listing the steps students should take and providing directions or information links on how to access resources required to complete the assignment.
- **Explain the criteria.** Give instructions to guide successful completion of the assignment. You can clarify the criteria in several ways including a rubric, a checklist, or an example of low and high-quality work to point students toward the expectations for achievement.

This clarification can be done during class time as well as in the syllabus.

Faculty Success



Writing Rituals

In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, James Lang, provided the advice about [The Power of Writing Rituals](#): “Find writing rituals that work for you. The particulars will vary from writer to writer, but the right mix of routines and artifacts can support or renew your writing focus when it has been dispersed to the many winds of academic and personal life.” He wrote about the “the effectiveness of ritual as a trigger for focus,” emphasizing that the specifics of the ritual don’t matter – only that they include a space and a transition process that help you to get started.

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