



Alliant International University
Center for
Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

May 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 searchable. A small magnifying glass icon appears at 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 Engagement yields the following results.

- [Peer Instruction](#)
- [Interactive Learning with Canvas Studio](#)
- [Writing Teaching Statements](#)
- [Introduction to Canvas Studio](#)
- [Academic Rigor](#)
- [Course Ground Rules](#)
- [Collaborative Learning](#)
- [Teaching Students How to Succeed](#)
- [Teaching Tips for New Instructors](#)

Center for Teaching Events On Demand



AI, Originality, and Accountability: Navigating Student Conversations

By Diane Zelman, PhD, and Jeremy Bond, D.E.T.

[View Recorded Webinar](#)

[View Webinar Slides](#)

Join us for an engaging and interactive webinar focused on strategies for facilitating constructive, respectful conversations with students when there are concerns about the use—or overuse—of AI tools in course assignments. Using real-world examples, we will explore how to approach these sensitive dialogues in ways that uphold academic integrity while fostering student learning and growth.

Designed for faculty members, this session will support the development of mentorship skills, encourage reflection on evolving perspectives about AI, and promote thoughtful accountability in students' use of emerging technologies.

Topics will include:

- How to introduce the topic in syllabi, class discussions, and one-on-one meetings
- Setting and communicating clear expectations
- Engaging students in dialogue about originality and learning goals
- Guiding responsible, creative, and informed use of AI tools

A Selection of AI Tools for Academia and Psychotherapy

By Steven R. Thorp, PhD, ABPP

[View the recorded webinar](#)

[View the webinar slides](#)

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.

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments with Canvas Accessibility Tools

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

[View the recorded webinar](#)

[View the webinar slides](#)

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.

Surviving "Online Discussion Fatigue" and Thriving Again!

By Jeremy Bond and Meredith Villa

[View the recorded webinar](#)

[View the webinar slides](#)

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.



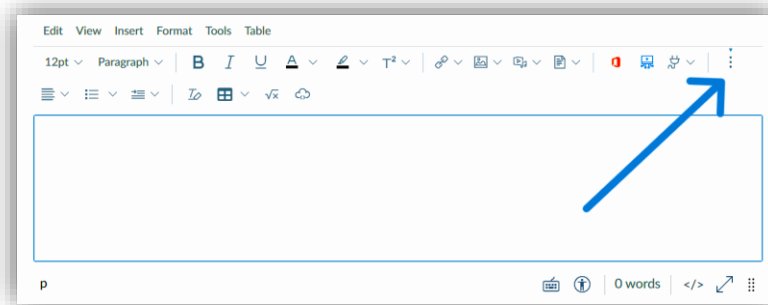
Beyond the Basics: Adding Hyperlinks and Embedding Videos in the Rich Content Editor (RCE)

By Melissa Vervinck, DET

The [Rich Content Editor \(RCE\)](#) in Canvas is a handy tool for creating and formatting course content and is available within various Canvas features, including Announcements, Assignments, Discussions, Pages, Quizzes, and the Syllabus. With the RCE, faculty can embed videos, upload files, and insert external resources, all while keeping the interface user-friendly and accessible. This tool is key to creating a learning environment where course materials are easily available, informative, educational and visually appealing.

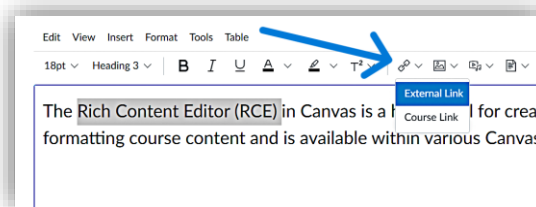
To move beyond the basics when using the RCE this month, let's focus on two helpful features that you may not have used – inserting hyperlinks and embedding videos.

View the Rich Content Editor



To [access the RCE](#), select any of the areas mentioned previously. The RCE opens by default when creating or editing an announcement, assignment, discussion or page. You can type text or copy and paste information from other sources here, and use [formatting tools to add or modify it](#). To enhance engagement and provide supplementary information, incorporating hyperlinks and embedding videos is recommended.

Click on the ellipses, indicated by the arrow, to access additional tools and features that may not be immediately visible in the toolbar.



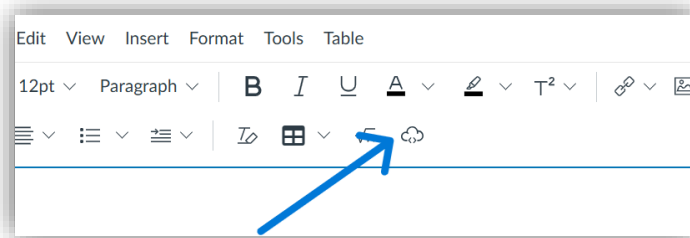
Adding Hyperlinks

1. **Highlight the Text:** Select the text that you want to turn into a hyperlink. This could be a word, phrase, or sentence.
2. **Insert Link:**
 - Click on the **Link** icon in the toolbar (it looks like a chain link).
 - A dialog box will appear.
 - External Links
 - Choose **External Links** for links that are not within the

- course in Canvas
 - **Enter the URL:** In the dialog box, paste the URL of the external website you want to link to. Make sure the URL is correct and starts with http:// or https://.
- Internal Links
 - Choose **Internal Links** for links to items or files that are within the Canvas course.
 - **Select the item** from the menu on the right side of your screen.
- 3. **Save:** Click **Done** or **Insert Link** to create the hyperlink. The selected text will now be underlined and clickable.
- 4. **Save Changes:** Finally, make sure to save your changes to the page, assignment, discussion, or quiz.

Embedding a Video

1. **Find the Video:** Locate the video you want to embed. If it's a YouTube video, go to YouTube and find the video.
 - Click on the **Share button** below the video and then select **Embed**.
 - **Copy the Embed Code:** A box will appear with the embed code. Click on Copy to copy the entire code.



2. In the Rich Content Editor in Canvas, click on the **Embed Image/Media icon** (it looks like a cloud with an arrow).



Teaching Tips



PowerPoint Dos and Don'ts

The CTE site has a page that includes a series of Fact Sheets on Disability and Ableism. Among the documents written by Dr. Rhoda Olkin is one on preparing PowerPoint presentations.

PowerPoint Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- Use good contrast of lettering and background.
- Use font size of ≥ 32 point.
- Keep text to a minimum.
- Make it visually clean and easy to follow.
- Make it visually interesting.
- Use some graphics or pictures that help with the concepts.
- If you can use white or light lettering on a dark background do this only for contrast and not too often; it is hard on the eyes.
- Use lots of headers that describe what is to follow so that information is easy to find.
- Label each set of slides with clear labels.
- Follow the order of the slides when lecturing (or you lose your audience while they search for the right slide).
- Have sufficient information on the PowerPoint presentation that students don't have to madly write as you talk.
- Make your PowerPoint slides available in advance or at least at the beginning of each class session.
- Use lots and lots of examples.
- Use vocal modulation and facial expressions as you talk.
- Take pauses as you talk, allowing information to sink in and for students to ask questions. It can be helpful to stick in a slide with "???" on it or a summary slide every so often to remind everyone to breathe and catch up.
- Build in practice time between major points (e.g., after teaching about confrontation of clients, have students practice with each other; after showing a formula and its use, have students use the formula alone or in small groups).
- Use the principle: I do it, we do it, you do it.

DON'T:

- Put up word documents; they have too much writing on them.
- Put too much text per slide.
- Use text that does not contrast well with the background (e.g., medium blue text on pale blue background; yellow on red).
- Make all your slides white or light lettering on a dark background; that gets visually exhausting.
- Read your slides word for word.
- Speak in monotone.
- Change the order of the slides that students have already.

For additional Fact Sheets, see [Fact Sheets on Disability and Ableism](#) on the CTE website.

Other Resources

Alternative Grading

In this podcast, Grading for Growth, David Clark and Robert Talbert, both faculty members in the Mathematics Department at Grand Valley State College and authors of Grading for Growth, discussed alternative grading systems that encourage students to recognize that learning from mistakes is a normal part of the learning process. They argued that traditional



grading systems provide incentives for students to focus on maximizing grades rather than on their learning and suggest principles for alternative ways of assessment.

This is a recording of a webinar by Dr. Talbert that was sponsored by the MIT Teaching + Learning Lab. Titled [Grading for Growth: Toward more humane, authentic, and trustworthy ways to evaluate student work](#), the presentation discussed the four pillars of alternative grading:

- **Clearly Defined Standards** that outline what students need to know and how to demonstrate what they know.
- **Helpful Feedback** that is brief, specific, descriptive, encouraging, targeted, and timely and connects students' work back to the clearly defined standards.
- **Marks Indicate Progress** that the student has made, indicating what they did well and what needs improvement. (Note that alternate grading approaches do not always include "marks," e.g., ungrading.)
- **Re-attempts Without Penalty** are allowed on assignments and/or certain types of assessments.

In this [Grading for Growth](#) newsletter/blog, Drs. Talbert and Clark include posts about research, news, and ideas on alternative grading practices. Recent example includes [Improving the feedback given to students](#) and [The enigma of "Exemplary"](#).

Shared Resources



Collaborative Learning

The Oregon State University Center for Teaching and Learning has a handout on [Implementing Successful Collaborative Learning: Structure and Strategies](#). The brief document provides information on (a) preparing for group work, (b) facilitating group process, (c) clarifying group task/project, (d) monitoring process, (e) monitoring task/project, (f) scheduling presentation of task/project, and (g) including reflection on process and product. It also lists additional relevant resources.

For more information, see [Collaborative Learning](#) on the CTE website.

Faculty Well-Being



Using Technology in Daily Life

In this Wonder Tools Substack post, [A Day in My Life](#) (Part 1), Jeremy Caplan listed and described the apps and digital tools he uses in a typical morning. These include tools for wellness, productivity, and thinking. He begins the day by checking his [Oura Ring](#) and ends the morning crafting a presentation. In Part 2, he described his [noon to night "tech stack"](#). These activities included preparing to teach, holding a meeting, and, finally, his pre bedtime routine.

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