



Alliant
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University

Center for Teaching Excellence – Newsletter

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November 2025

CTE News You Can Use

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 **Dialogue** yields the following results:

- [Facilitating Difficult Dialogues](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Teaching Tips for New Instructors](#)
- [Cultivating a Sense of Belonging and Building Rapport](#)
- [Microaggressions](#)
- [Preparing Students to Teach](#)
- [Facilitating Class Discussions](#)
- [Creating a Positive Class Climate](#)

Past Events Available On Demand



Supporting Students' Collaboration with AI: Promoting Responsible Use and Practical Application

By Melissa Vervinck, D.E.T. and Amy Bond, M.S.A.

[Recording](#)

[View Webinar Slides](#)

Discover how to shift the narrative from AI as a tool for shortcuts to AI as a collaborative partner in learning. This webinar will provide practical strategies for integrating AI education into your curriculum, emphasizing the importance of guiding students from misusing AI to mastering it as a way that is useful, accurate and ethical.

Designing with Intelligence: Embedding AI into Programs, Pedagogy, and Practice

By Meredith Killgore Villa, M.Ed., M.M.

[Recording](#)

Artificial Intelligence is transforming education—not just through tools, but also through how we design learning itself. This webinar explores how educators can thoughtfully integrate AI into academic programs, create assignments that leverage AI's strengths, and empower students to use AI tools ethically and effectively.

Starting Strong: More Features in Canvas You Might Not Know About

By Jeremy Bond, D.E.T.

[View Webinar Slides](#)

[Recording](#)

Are your newest courses several screens of scrolling away? Do students seem to miss your

announcements altogether? Are they watching your videos? How do you know? From taming an ever-expanding dashboard, to getting students to read announcements, and engage with your videos, with a few other useful things tucked in between, little known and even lesser-utilized Canvas features will be covered in this interactive session.

Resources from the Online Teaching Team



Bytes of Brilliance: Real Faculty. Real Strategies. Real Impact.

Bytes of Brilliance is a video series hosted by Dr. Jeremy Bond, Director of Online Learning, featuring Alliant faculty sharing teaching strategies they use that make a real impact in their courses. Each short episode features an instructor sharing a real-world technique or tool that boosts student engagement and learning. Whether you're teaching online, in a hybrid format, or face-to-face, you will find practical ideas you can use right away.

In the second episode, the series explores how technology can be used to deliver personalized feedback the way we all used to do it. Dr. Samantha Guber, CSPP faculty, demonstrates how using an iPad for handwritten feedback in Canvas restores the personal touch of traditional grading, improves student writing, and streamlines the grading process. Practical tips for easy adoption and positive student responses to this method are shared. This builds on the inspiration provided in the premier episode, where Dr. Donna Block introduced customizable “Course Understanding” statements to clarify expectations and streamline communication. Be sure to watch the first episode if you have not already and stay tuned for more innovative teaching tips in upcoming installments.

- [Bytes of Brilliance Featuring Dr. Samantha Guber](#)
- [Bytes of Brilliance Featuring Dr. Donna Block](#)

Do you have a technique or strategy you are using in your own teaching, your own byte of brilliance? Email us at onlinelearningstaff@alliant.edu to appear in a future episode.

Teaching Tips



[Exam Wrappers: Using Reflections on Study Habits to Support Student Learning](#)

According to Dr. Shauna McLeod, Assistant Instructional Professor, all students can benefit from reevaluating their study strategies and time management skills. In this post, on the University of Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning site, she described an activity she developed to help her students do just that. In these exam wrappers “students answer questions related to their experience before, during, and after the exam. How did they prepare? How did the exam go? What, if anything, will they change for the next exam?” The activity allows students to review their exam results and feedback and make an improvement plan for future assessments. It is a way for students to develop metacognition skills, so they better understand how they learn, which will allow them to use resources and study strategies that are beneficial for their learning. She calls this exercise Midterm Reflections & Opportunity. It includes 14 questions that are a mix of multiple choice, Likert-type ratings (scale 1-5), and open response questions. Below are the questions she uses, without the response options. The results can not only inform students’ study plans but also guide conversations between instructors and students seeking help. For the complete document, see [the Appendix here](#).

PART I. Review Exam Results:

1. I verify that I have reviewed [my exam].
2. Before completing this reflection, have you taken the time to compare your responses to the posted [answers] and identify why you answered individual [questions] incorrectly?

PART II. Study Strategies & Time Management:

3. When did you start specifically preparing for this midterm?
4. How much total time did you spend preparing for this midterm?
5. What activities or strategies did you use to prepare for this exam?
6. If you answered "other" in the previous question, please elaborate on what other tools or strategies you used to prepare for the midterm.

PART III. Reflect on Exam Preparedness & Results:

7. How prepared did you feel coming into the midterm?
8. How stressed did you feel coming into the midterm?
9. How confident did you feel about your performance on the midterm immediately after completing the assessment?
10. Did you perform as well as you wanted to on the midterm?
11. Did you perform as well as you expected to on the midterm?
12. Did the questions on the exam feel similar to ones you have seen before in problem sets, in class problems, or the previous midterms?
13. What topics in the midterm did you feel unprepared to answer, if any?
14. What changes to your studying, if any, do you intend to make before the next exam (in this course or a future one)? What will you continue to do?

For more information on metacognitive strategies and exam wrappers see this CTE site: [Metacognitive Strategies](#).

Other Resources



[Grading for Growth](#)

In this blog post, Dr. David Clark used an example of two students with very different test performances to "to illustrate how traditional grades can badly misrepresent student learning." One student earns consistent scores of 65% across three exams and the other improves over time from 0 to 100%. Their mean scores are the same. Should they get the same grade? One shows evidence of learning, while the other does not. He argued that "averaging penalizes the learning process" and that alternative grading addresses this problem by allowing for reattempts without penalty and using a grade that represents final level of understanding to replace grades on earlier attempts. (He goes on to expand on these ideas and also acknowledges that this example is a simplification made to illustrate his point.)

[An Opinionated Guide to Using AI Right Now](#)

In this Substack post, Ethan Mollick presented a chart with different uses for AI that can help you determine whether you should use a free model or upgrade to an advanced model that must be purchased. He believes that the four most advanced AI systems are Claude from Anthropic, Google's Gemini, OpenAI's ChatGPT, and Grok by Elon Musk's xAI. His most general advice is "Some free systems (like Gemini and Perplexity) do a good job with web search, while others cannot search the web at all. If you want free image creation, the best option is Gemini, with ChatGPT and Grok as runners-up. But, ultimately, these AIs differ in many small ways, including privacy policies, levels of access, capabilities, the approach they take to ethical issues, and 'personality.' And all of these things fluctuate over time. So pick a model you like based on these factors and use it." If you are considering upgrading to a paid account, he suggested starting with the free accounts from Anthropic, Google, or OpenAI. He then went on to give advice on how to choose among the available models.

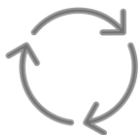
Shared Resources



[Want to navigate AI in your classroom with confidence?](#)

The Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning provides a comprehensive set of resources for learning about AI and its potential use in college courses. The site is organized into four areas: (a) [Explore](#) AI's capabilities and limitations, (b) [Create](#) materials and experiences tailored to your course goals, (c) [Engage](#) students in learning through integrating AI into your course, and (d) [Measure](#) student outcomes to determine the effectiveness of your approach and make improvements. Each section provides examples (e.g., developing creative assignments, using prompt libraries, building quizzes, creating rubrics).

Faculty Well-Being and Success



[The Art of Saying “No”](#)

In this archived article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the author gave advice about saying “No” to academic requests. She provided five principles regarding what to say and not say in such cases: (a) Volunteer someone else and be strategic about it. If the opportunity is a good one, suggest someone for whom this will be a career-building opportunity; If the opportunity is an undesirable one, suggest someone competent but underutilized. (b) Don't explain or try to defend your decision. No need to apologize or bargain. (c) Explain when you have a reason that will make it clear that you are not the appropriate person and will preclude further requests. (d) Set your own policies; these guidelines can be stated publicly or held privately. (e) Just hit “delete” for unreasonable or inappropriate requests. No need to respond to them.



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