



Alliant
International
University

Center for Teaching Excellence – Newsletter

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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 **Mentor** yielded the following results:

- [Mentoring Junior Faculty](#)
- [Mentoring Students](#)
- [First Generation Students](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Role of Dissertation Committee Chairperson](#)
- [Writing Teaching Statements](#)
- [Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching](#)
- [Course Ground Rules](#)

Future Events



Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to announce that new events are in development. Stay tuned for more details on these webinars coming soon!

Chairing Dissertations: How to Successfully Guide Students through the Dissertation Process

By Dr. Rebecca Bokoch

February 13, 2026

Alternative Grading Online and in the Classroom

By Dr. Rhoda Olkin and Dr. Cindy Pancer

March 19, 2026

GenAI in Practice: Real-World Integration by Alliant Faculty

April 16, 2026

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](#)



Coming January 2026: Canvas Options to Streamline Your Course Setup

Beginning in January 2026, two options will be available in Canvas to help you save time and minimize repetitive tasks during online course setup. While all online courses will still include Blueprint content for consistency, faculty will be able to more efficiently reuse materials like announcements or assignment instructions from previous courses, making content updates easier.

Here's a summary of the new features and a preview of two upcoming step-by-step guides, which will offer screenshots and more detailed instructions.

1) Copy To: Move Individual Items with Precision

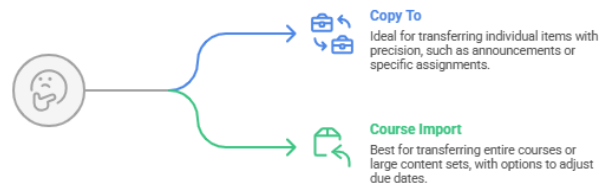
The [Copy To feature in Canvas](#) is designed to help you efficiently transfer individual items from one course to another. This will allow you to selectively move a single announcement, assignment, quiz, page, file, or discussion. This makes it the perfect solution if you want to bring over just a few specific materials to your new course.

There are several scenarios where **Copy To** will prove especially useful. For instance, if you need just a few items from a previous course, such as your weekly announcements or the instructional resources you use each term, you can easily copy those resources without affecting other content. Faculty who consistently add curated resources or personalized explanations each term will appreciate the ability to quickly carry over select materials.

2) Course Import: Bring Forward an Entire Course or Large Content Sets

[Course Import](#) enables you to bring an entire course or large groups of content into your new Canvas course shell with ease. Whether you need to transfer everything or just select specific modules,

Which Canvas feature should be used to transfer course content?



Made with Napkin

assignments, or settings, this feature offers flexibility and efficiency. Additionally, you can conveniently adjust due dates during the import process to ensure your timelines and content availability match the new term.

Course Import is ideal if you want to reuse a significant amount of materials from another course with only minor updates, or if you're moving a sequence of modules, a full unit, or a package of related resources. It's also particularly useful when you've made several small updates to another course and want to streamline your setup. Before importing a prior term's course in full, be sure to obtain approval from your program director. Careful planning is encouraged when using this.

3) Reset Course Content: Use with Caution ONLY when You Need a Clean Slate

[Reset Course Content](#) provides a fresh start by removing all existing materials from your course shell. This option is especially valuable when you're preparing to import an entire course and want to ensure there are no content conflicts. For the best results, use Reset Course Content with careful consideration as this action is permanent and cannot be undone. It should only be performed before your course begins, and always with prior approval from your online program director. After you reset, your course shell remains intact, but all content is cleared away, allowing you to seamlessly bring in the resources you need for your upcoming term.

Optional Tools for Course Preparation

While Blueprint content is automatically included in courses by default, the tools described above are optional resources available to further streamline your course setup. By allowing you to integrate materials you already use and trust, these tools help maintain consistency across your courses, improve your time management, and reduce the likelihood of errors when getting ready for new sections and terms/semesters/ trimesters. This allows you to focus on teaching and engaging students instead of administrative tasks.

Step-by-Step Video

To support your success, in addition to the two comprehensive guides linked above, a video is also forthcoming – to walk you through the features and processes discussed. In addition to step-by-step directions, as the guides provide, the video will also highlight common pitfalls, so you can avoid challenges.

Teaching Tips



Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) focuses on systematically investigating effective means to improve student learning. It involves conducting research on instructional strategies, course design, or assessment methods to determine their impact on student learning. SoTL differs from scholarly teaching, which involves reading about new teaching methods, reflecting on teaching practices, attending workshops, or asking for peer feedback on teaching. “Conducting SoTL research can enhance instructors’ teaching skills, strengthen their sense of satisfaction with teaching, and contribute to departmental efforts related to assessment and accreditation.” [Scholarship of Teaching & Learning](#)

The process for conducting and sharing results of a SoTL study is similar to that for doing other empirical research; however, it is also different in that it often begins with an instructor's experience of teaching.

Step 1: Explore your own teaching experiences and challenges, looking for questions to investigate.

Step 2: Select a topic and formulate a research question. Common SoTL questions include:

- What works? (evaluating evidence about the relative effectiveness of teaching approaches).
- What is? (describing teaching approaches and how students learn),
- What could be possible? (inquiring about unmet or new goals for teaching and learning),

- What broader theories exist? (building the theoretical framework behind new SoTL research). [Getting Started with SoTL](#)

Step 3: Explore the literature, looking for prior work that can provide a larger context for your study.

Step 4: Select a design and data collection methods, with ethical and practical considerations in mind. Common data collection methods include interviews; surveys and questionnaires; observations; focus groups; tests, assignments, and other performance measures; content analysis; case studies; and secondary analyses.

Step 5: Apply to the university IRB and, after your study is approved, collect and analyze data, following the procedures you described in your IRB application. Analyze the data using qualitative and/or quantitative data analysis techniques. Ethical issue to consider include:

- Informed consent
- Right to privacy
- Protection from harm
- Dual relationships
- Power differences
- Data storage and usage [IRB & Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#); [Alliant IRB](#)

Step 6: Disseminate results: Write up the study and submit manuscripts for publication or presentations. The results should be circulated widely, so they can be used for course or curriculum improvement not only by you, but also by colleagues and a wide range of instructors.

For more information see [SoTL Guide](#)

Other Resources



[AI has Joined the Faculty](#)

Beth McMurtrie, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, reported that “According to a [recent survey](#) by Tyton Partners, about one in four faculty members had used AI to save time in creating more engaging in-class activities or generating quizzes and other assessments. About one in five had used it to create writing assignments or grading rubrics. Another [survey](#), by *The Chronicle*, found that 52 percent of faculty members had used generative AI to enhance course materials.”

McMurtrie described competing visions of the future of teaching. “In one version, AI raises the bar, freeing professors from tedious hours of labor so they can spend more time with students and create engaging courses. In another, AI leads to a breakdown in foundational relationships, chipping away at trust and authenticity as professors and students mediate their interactions through an often-unreliable technology.” She provided examples – both successful and problematic – of AI use for course design, grading, and tutoring.

[Using AI Without \(Really\) Cheating](#)

This episode of the podcast, *College Matters*, from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, addressed the issue of AI use by students with guest, Beth McMurtrie. Where is the boundary between efficiency (e.g., using generative AI to help with tasks such as outlining and brainstorming or clarifying concepts skimmed over by a professor during a lecture) and academic dishonesty? It asked how colleges weigh the promise of AI against its much-discussed perils?

Shared Resources



[How to Get the Quiet Ones to Speak Up](#)

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the author described her plan for encouraging students to participate in class. She described her efforts as using the following three techniques:

- Lowering the bar to speaking in class by setting up the moment in advance.
- Gently reinforce a reluctant speaker’s participation when it happens.

- And if the problem persists, rehearsing and reinforcing class participation with the student one on one during office hours.

She provided specific examples of applying this approach and emphasized the importance of student class engagement. In her view, “A classroom in which everyone there has anted up as a contributing citizen is a better — more effective, more dynamic, more transformative — classroom than one in which some people are holding back from being full participants in our communal inquiry”.

Faculty Well-Being and Success



Evaluating Teaching Evaluations

According to the [Lafayette College Center for Integration of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship](#), although student evaluations of teaching maybe problematic as performance metrics, they can offer valuable insights into students' experiences in classes (e.g., reactions to course design, assignments, and class climate). Instructors can use students' qualitative comments and overall feedback as information for personal reflection and growth and to inform future teaching practices. Here are some things to keep in mind as you read these evaluations:

- **Look for patterns:** Do certain comments or themes appear repeatedly? If so, there is likely something concrete to consider and potentially address or adapt.
- **Focus on teaching goals and learning objectives:** Do your students' comments align with what you intended to achieve in the class and what you hoped they would learn? And if not, what can you learn from the comments to meet learning objectives in the future? Try to separate what students say they “liked” from what they actually “learned.”
- **Iterate and Revise:** Can their feedback help you sharpen aspects of your course or do more of what's working well? For example, could you make the purpose behind certain assignments or assessments more explicit or transparent for students? Could you incorporate more “active learning” approaches into the course the next time that you teach it?

They concluded that student feedback can be valuable as one (among many) tool to promote effective and inclusive pedagogy. For more information on interpreting Alliant teaching evaluations, see [Interpreting End of Semester/Term Course Evaluations](#)



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