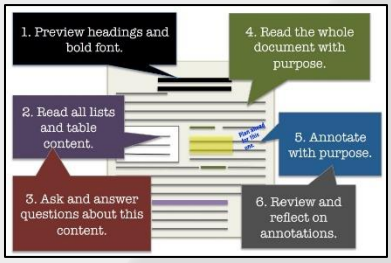
CETL Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

CETL
Teaching Tips Collection
2016-2017



Infographics and Project Design by Christina Moore
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OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at Oakland University is pleased to share this collection of more than 20 Teaching Tips from the 2016-2017 academic year.

In workshops, conferences, and teaching and learning faculty development, we often take away a small teaching tip that helps us better facilitate group work, engage more students in discussions, and motivate students to be prepared for class. We would like to offer that "Aha!" moment more often with our Weekly Teaching Tips.

Starting in Fall 2013, we have sent out a new Weekly Teaching Tip in a brief infographic that can be read and implemented that same week. These are linked to our Teaching Tips page, which offers the full content of each teaching tip. All of our Teaching Tips, more than 70 total, are found at **oakland.edu/teachingtips**.

This book offers our most recent teaching tips all in one place and in print. Flipping through the tips offers a fresh perspective on how to engage students and promote their learning.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Starting the Semester

- Student Preferred Names
- Syllabus: Active Reading from Day 1
- The ADA Discussion and Syllabus Statement
- Send and Early Introduction to Students

Planning for Teaching

- Empower Students with Habit Creation
- Hot Moments in the Classroom: A Communication Framework to Cool Down Tension
- Helping the Brain to Learn with F.A.C.E.S.
- Checklist for Service Learning Projects
- S.U.P.P.O.R.T. Students in Online Classrooms
- Prepare for Snow Days and Other Class Cancellations
- Thinking Outside of the Box
- Maps as Teaching and Productivity Tools
- Microaggressions
- Planning the Curriculum: Depth vs. Breadth

Engaging in Class Discussion

- Daily In-Class Sheets: Track Attendance and Improve Student Engagement
- Facilitating a Great Discussion
- Introverts and Extroverts: Engage the Thinker and Talker Alike
- Asking Questions for Meaningful Class Discussion

Authentic Learning Activities

- Make Learning Flexible with UDL

Collaboration

- Group Work with Google Docs

Teaching with Technology and Online Tools

- Communicate with Class Texts
- Group Work with Google Docs
- Online Tools that Make Learning More Accessible
- Creating Accessible Microsoft Word Documents

Reflection

- Improving Our Teaching Through Critical Reflection
- Reading the Margins: Student Reflection on Written Feedback
- Higher Levels of Learning at the End of the Semester

Starting the Semester

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Student Preferred Names

As national dialogue continues around a student's ability to redefine their identities, schools are considering how to best accommodate students' self-expression, including naming and other self-identifiers such as pronouns. Consider how educational systems communicate student names to you as faculty and how to communicate naming protocols accordingly.

Students Choosing Their Names

There are many cases where a student's birth name is not how a student identifies themselves on a daily basis. They may go by a nickname, a middle name, or an entirely different name. Consider ways to allow students to define their names.

On the first day of class,

- **Use desk name tags.** On the first day of class, give students a blank piece of paper and have them fold it into thirds to make a tent. Using thick permanent marker, have them write the name they go by on the two sides of the "tent" so that you and classmates sitting behind the student can see the name. This holds many benefits: you can learn names faster, while you are still learning names you can still refer to them by name at a quick glance, students learn one another's names, and you know the name students prefer to go by.
- **As students introduce themselves, be ready to record pronunciation**. Rather than going through "roll call," a sure way to mess up a student's name pronunciation, provide an opportunity for all students to pronounce their names themselves so that you can hear the correct pronunciation and write it down phonetically. Bring to class a list of student names, and mark the ones you are unsure how to pronounce. This is also a way to find out if students identify themselves by a different name than your roster reads. In this case, as the student with a different name to talk with you after class to match them up with their roster name for record-keeping purposes.

In an Online Learning Environment

- Some learning management systems (Moodle, Blackboard, etc.) automatically display students' legal names. In interactions where students see each other's names, ask students to sign off their forum posts or other communications with the name they go by. If students are responding to one another, ask students to address students by the name they go by, not the name in the LMS.
- Some online learning environments never require instructor or students to pronounce each other's names. If you will encounter a situation of "voice talking" to online students, consider prior opportunities to have students share pronunciation. If you do an introductory activity online, consider asking students to upload an audio recording rather than only text. This has many benefits: it breaks up the use of text in online learning; gives personality to each student, which increases empathy; and allows students to express themselves in a different mode.

Student Preferred Names

Continued

Other notes on names,

- **Request pronunciation.** If you aren't sure how to pronounce a student's name, try and try again! Students with names that people struggle to pronounce will appreciate your effort to pronounce their name. Every student deserves to be named, even if the professor doesn't say it very well!
- **Beware of name bias.** Getting names right is important. By giving up on remembering or pronouncing certain students' names, you could unintentionally favor attention to students with more accessible names, which often means misses an opportunity to tap into diverse perspectives.

Your Preferred Name

The name each instructor decides to go by in class is an individual and political choice. Whatever you choose, go with it and make sure students know how they should refer to you. (Understand that they have to navigate a different naming structure for each instructor they have.) Students will try to go the whole semester by not calling you anything, so repeat your name often and insist they refer to you that way!

- **On day 1, introduce yourself by your preferred name**. Announce to the class your preferred name and title. Your name in the university's communication systems may not be what you go by, so this is important for you too!
- **On day 1, make your own desk name tag.** If you have students do this activity from page 1, make your own as well. This reinforces for the student your preferred title. *Dr. Smith….Prof. Smith….Marcy…..Ms. Smith……Master Smith…….*
- **Repeat your preferred name in hypothetical situations.** Students need to see and hear your preferred name often so that they are certain this is how you want to be referred to. Therefore, say it when you are going over student questions or other hypothetical situations. *Example: "Students often ask me, 'Dr. Smith, why are we covering this issue in this class?'"*
- **Sign off emails with your preferred name.** This is what instructors most often do to reinforce this naming norm. It's repetitious and visual—a good tool to use.

***At Oakland University** in Fall 2016, a resolution passed to allow students to control how their name appears in university communication systems. The technology systems associate with this policy are currently working to fully implement this resolution.*

Resources on Naming in Higher Education

Preston, C. J. (2016 Nov 2) Do you make them call you professor? *Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://www.chronicle.com/article/Do-You-Make-Them-Call-You/238282

Beemyn, G. (2016). Colleges and universities that allow students to change the name and gender on campus records, *Campus Pride.* Retrieved from https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/records/

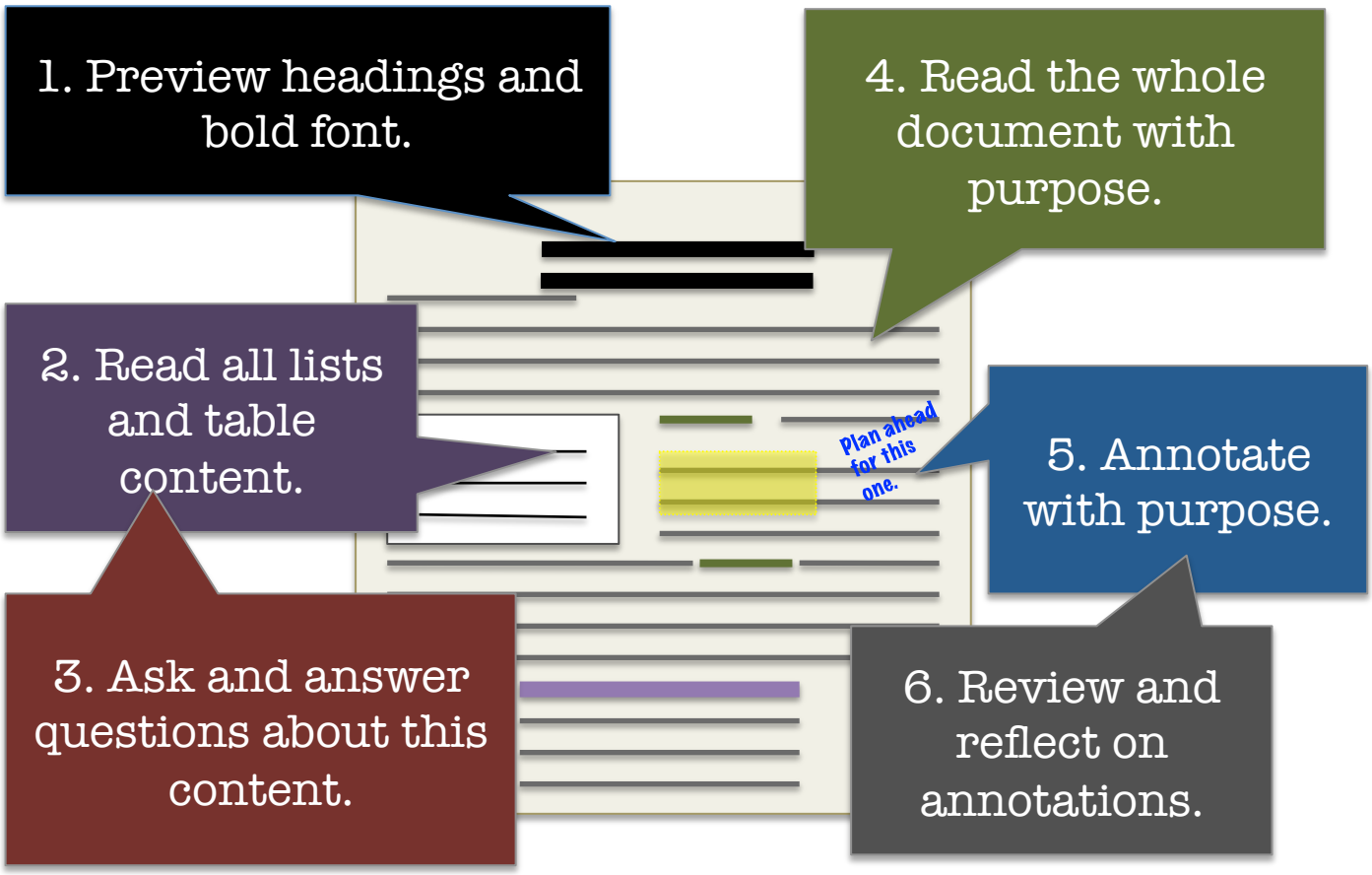
Christina Moore, CETL at OU

Published in December 2016.

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Syllabus: Active Reading from Day 1

If you want students to read well, start with the first text of the class—the syllabus! Actively engage the student in applying active reading strategies to understand the text in the syllabus.



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OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

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Active Reading from Day One

Actively engage the student in applying active reading strategies to understand the text in the syllabus. The worksheet that follows presents the instructions in an accessible format that also incorporates the use of two column notes.

Begin by helping the students to construct a purpose for the close reading of the syllabus. Your questions can lead them to state something like the following: Plan and organize their responsibilities for the semester to learn in this course and adhere to the stated policies.

Sample instructions you can give the students to follow:

For our very first class, we will read, annotate and analyze the syllabus for this class. We will work in small groups to complete the steps below. Please annotate, or write on, the SYLLABUS document that you have. There is ample room in the margins and on the reverse of each page for notes and questions.

It is important to annotate with a purpose. One may, for example, annotate a textbook chapter in order to prepare for a test, or annotate a journal article in order to use some of its ideas in a research paper. What is the purpose of annotating a syllabus? In other words, what kind of information do you hope to acquire when you read a syllabus? What do you need to remember?

Because it is important that you keep your syllabus in a safe place, I will not collect this assignment. Rather, I will look at it during class, give you feedback on your annotations and credit you 0-20 points for your first Class Assignment.

Active Reading of the Syllabus

1. **Preview** Read only the headings and bold font. Based on your preview, what sorts of assignments that you will be expected to complete? What are the policies by which you will be expected to abide?

2. **Review** Read everything that is listed, bulleted or included in a table.

3. **Ask and Answer Questions about items in lists, bullets and tables**

a) What is the purpose of the *Course Learning Outcomes*? Write this in the margin above or next to that list.

b) According to the *Grading Breakdown*, which assignments are the most important? Annotate that section with stars next to the assignments that you think matter the most.

4. **Read with purpose** Remember your purpose and read the whole document.

5. **Annotate with purpose**

a) Number, underline or highlight any information that is important to your purpose. Do not underline or highlight entire lines of text; instead, highlight or underline only key words or phrases.

b) Circle any words that are unfamiliar, so that you can look up the definitions later.

c) Ask questions. Write at least five questions in the margins.

- Write at least one question that asks for clarification on a policy or assignment.
- Write at least one question that asks for information that is not included in the syllabus.
- Write at least one question that poses a hypothetical situation in which one of the policies may be tested.

6. **Review** Reword at least three of the important ideas that you underlined or highlighted. Write in the margins or on the reverse side of the sheet.

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

The ADA Syllabus Statement Discussion and

It's the first day of class, and if you are a faculty member like me, you are in the middle of that often-repeated ritual of explaining the syllabus. While your students shift in their seats, trying to resist the urge to text, check Instagram, or whatever furtive phone activities they might want to perform, you diligently and carefully explain the course requirements, the course policies, the schedule, etc. And at some point, you will get to the section on disability accommodations. Many colleges and universities have boilerplate passages that faculty use: the college affirms its commitment to complying with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and students are directed to an office of disability services, which will help coordinate "reasonable accommodations" for "documented disabilities." And many statements also stress that it is the student's responsibility to provide faculty with accommodations forms and information. All of this is well and good. But I want to argue here for going off script and engaging in a more historically-contextualized class discussion of disability accommodations. It will benefit you and it will benefit your students. Here's how and why.

The "Capitol Crawl": From Individual to Collective

In 1990, disability rights activists gathered at the National Mall in Washington, DC, slipped out of their wheelchairs, dropped their crutches, and dragged themselves up the 83 steps of the U.S. Capitol building. The "Capital Crawl" demonstration was designed to illustrate – both literally and figuratively – the barriers that people with disabilities confront and to push for better access to political and public spheres. The subsequent ADA legislation is one of the major civil rights achievements of our time, and this rich history of disability activism has a direct connection to the accommodations we make in higher education. Talking about the ADA as a civil rights issue in your classroom – and it can be as simple as briefly mentioning this history – shifts the discussion of accommodations in important ways for students.

First, **it puts disability in a larger social and political context**, and secondly, it **shifts attention away from individual students**. This is significant because there are elements of the process of accessing disability services that are potentially stigmatizing for students with disabilities. For example, it is common for a student with a disability to be required to approach every faculty in each class every semester to discuss accommodations and to pass along paperwork. It is of course good for students to be responsible and to take charge of their learning. But at the same time, the process of having to continually ask for services, to self-identify as disabled, can be tedious at best. To be disabled is to occupy a stigmatized identity category, as the language of the ADA itself acknowledges. Some students, and in particular incoming freshmen who used disability services in high school, might want to leave that identity behind.

Accommodations As Integral to an Inclusive Classroom

But as faculty, that's exactly what you don't want. You want your students to learn. You don't want a student to struggle unnecessarily, especially when a simple accommodation like a distraction-free test environment or a recording device for lectures would have made the difference between success and failure. You want to create the conditions in which accommodations are viewed not as inconveniences but as integral parts of an inclusive classroom, an environment where our diverse bodies and minds are valued for their differences. This benefits you, and all of your students. And it reflects the true spirit behind the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is much more than legal filler on a syllabus.

Resources

NYIT Office of Accessibility Services. Retrieved from http://www.nyit.edu/health_and_wellness/disability/

Funckes, C., et al. Syllabus Statement. *Refocus: Viewing the Work of Disability Services Differently.* Retrieved from http://www.projectshift-refocus.org/syllabus.htm

Nielsen, K. E. (2013). *A Disability History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon P.

Mayerson, A. (1992). The History of the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Movement Perspective. *Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund.* Retrieved from http://dredf.org/news/publications/the-history-of-the-ada/

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Send an Early Introduction to Students

Months before meeting our students, faculty are planning for them – so why not send students a message before the semester starts and let them know? You could even make a quick video or prompt your students to read the syllabus before the first class so you can do something more substantive when you meet them face-to-face.

Get them started

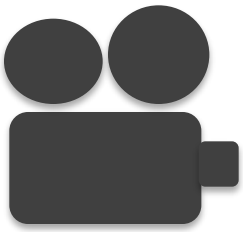
with the course basics.

- ☑ syllabus
- ☑ texts
- ☑ Week 1

Allowing students to review the syllabus and prompting them to bring questions to the first class creates a more engaging first day of class and alleviates student anxiety about beginning a new course.

Make a video

even if your course is not online.



Film yourself or use an avatar to create a welcoming environment that humanizes you and reduces beginning-of-the-semester text to read.

Why make a video?

Your students will be interested in hearing your voice and seeing you before they meet you in person. Even though creating an introduction video requires more time than writing an email, it is well worth the investment.

What information to include?

- The following information could be included in your course introductory video or email message:
- A welcome to the institution (if they are new students) and to your course
- An introduction of yourself and your enthusiasm for the topic you are teaching
- The course goals and the importance of this course, including how or why this course is relevant to them
- How/why the course design will help your students achieve the course goals
- Expectations for student participation, perhaps starting with downloading the syllabus and/or posting an introduction about themselves in a forum
- When and where you will meet the first time

Tip: If you are new to making videos, create a transcript or an outline of your talking points. Take a look at this sample video (mine) for ideas. You will notice that it's *not* perfect, but it does the job. (Next time I make a video, it will be better – and the time after that, even better. *You cannot get stuck on making a perfect video* – or you will not make any videos.)

Notice that students are prompted to:

- download the syllabus and make notes of their questions to bring to our first class
- take a quick quiz about the syllabus (Just 2 questions: "Could you download the syllabus and read it?" and "What questions do you have?")
- introduce themselves in a discussion forum

By checking on their responses to these prompts, I'll know that my students can:

- get into our LMS
- download a document
- take a quiz
- post on a message board

If we suddenly need to cancel classes, I'll know for sure that my students can connect with me and each other through the LMS and can be prompted to continue their coursework from a distance.

Resources

"Best Practices: Creating Video Course Trailers" Duke University, https://trinity.duke.edu/communications/best-practices-creating-video-course-trailers

"Tips for Creating Instructional Videos" Purdue University Instructional Development Center Blog, https://www.purdue.edu/learning/blog/?p=6696

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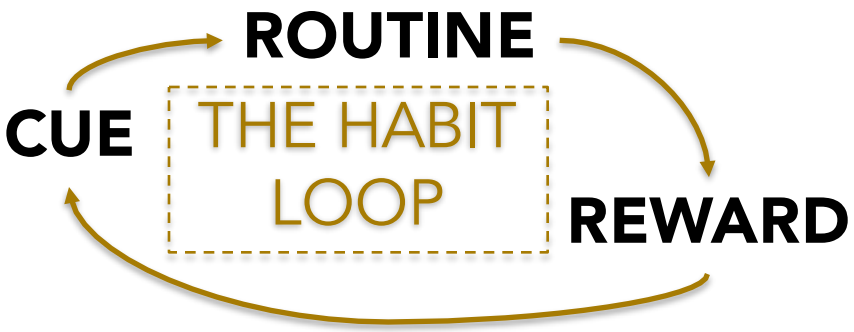
Planning for Teaching

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Empower Students with Habit Creation

Charles Duhigg's best-selling *Power of Habit* (2012) investigates the science and stories of habit as a powerful way to take control of our lives. Teach students the basic science of habit, and empower them to own their learning and plot their success. In turn, mold habits to boost your own productivity.



CUE
Stimulus that triggers a behavior

ROUTINE
observable behavior of the habit

REWARD
Signal of the completion of the routine; offers satisfaction

Taking control of habits requires three actions:

- identifying the cue, routine and reward of a habit
- commandeer old routines by supplanting parts of this cycle
- crafting new habits by planning each part of the loop

Neurological studies of the brain show that habits leave a permanent impact on the brain, meaning that old habits never truly die, but they can be hijacked by supplanting the old routine or reward with a new one.

How does this relate to teaching and learning?

1. ***Help student identify habits that hinder their learning or overall success as a student.*** Ask them to identify the cue, routine and reward, and have them consider how they can either supplant parts of this loop or override the loop with a new habit. For example, if a student always wants to eat when they smell food, and eating leads to watching TV, students should either study in a food-free environment (creating a new loop) or eat a snack while studying and make TV a reward (using the same cue to revise the routine and move part of that routine to the reward).

2. Use the habit loop in class to prepare students to learn. What are the most important learning behaviors and activities in your class? Carefully planning a few habit loops in class on a regular basis can help get students focused faster, solidify what they have learned at the end of class and even subvert negative reactions to assessments. Green slides for specific activity can serve as a cue, and a class-relevant comic or gif can be a reward.

The Power of Habit provides narratives how this science of habit can be applied to individual lives, groups, and organizations. In teaching students this loop, you may empower them to apply it in ways you wouldn't have imagined. You might just create positive habits of your own.

Resources

Duhigg, C. (2012). *The power of habit: Why we do what we do in life and business.*

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Hot Moments in the Classroom

A Communication Framework to Cool Down Tension

What can you do when a comment has been made or reaction observed that causes heat in the classroom? Despite the feelings of paralysis that take over during hot moments in the classroom, certain practices can be implemented to increase the likelihood of maintaining a supportive climate and positive learning environment. Consider using a communication framework, such as Open The Front Door to Communication (OTFD) to describe what is going on, reduce tension, and offer a positive direction. The OTFD steps (adapted from The Excellence Experience, 2015) include:

OBSERVE

Concrete, factual observations of the situation

"I noticed the volume of some people's voice getting raised.

THINK

Thoughts (yours or theirs) based on what was observed

I think there were some strong reactions to what was said

FEEL

Emotions using "I statements"

and I feel uncomfortable moving forward until we explore this.

DESIRE

Thoughts (yours or theirs) based on what was observed

I am hoping we can share our thoughts so we can unpack this and learn from each other."

The following is one strategy (of many offered) meant to be reflected upon, modified, practiced, and utilized so that you can be better equipped to effectively respond to hot moments in the classroom when they arise.

When practiced, the OTFD framework can be a tool that is quickly retrieved out of our mental toolbox to organize our thoughts and describe the situation in a way that cools down the heat. When hot moments ignite in the classroom, doing nothing is a damaging option (Souza, Vizenor, Sherlip, & Raser, in press). Instead, we can engage thoughtfully and purposively in strategies that maintain a climate that is conducive to learning by not adding fuel to the fire (Souza, 2016).

Resources

Souza, T.J. (2016). Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom: Concrete Strategies for Cooling Down Tension. In *Faculty Focus Special Report: Diversity and Inclusion in the College Classroom.* Magna Publication.

Souza, T., Vizenor, N., Sherlip, D., & Raser, L. (in press) Transforming conflict in the classroom: Best practices for facilitating difficult dialogues and creating an inclusive communication climate. In P. M. Kellett & T. G. Matyok (Eds.), *Transforming Conflict through Communication: Personalto Working Relationships*.

SuperCamp. The Excellence Experience. Learning Forum SuperCamp. Retrieved from http://www.supercamp.com/OTFD.aspx.

Warren, John T. Reflexive Teaching: Toward Critical Autoethnographic Practices Of/in/on Pedagogy. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 139-44. doi:10.1177/1532708611401332.

Submitted by:

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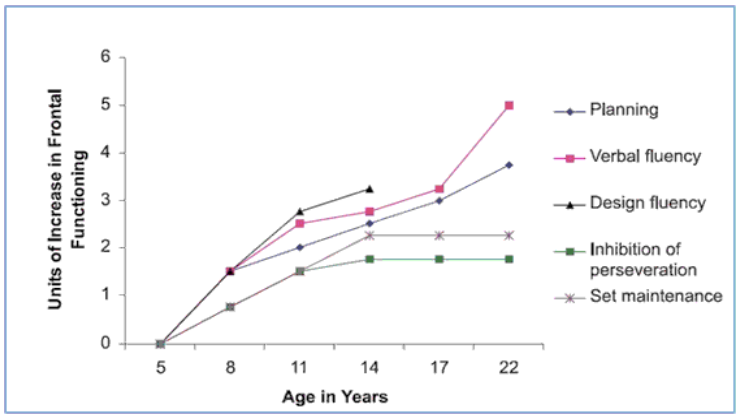
CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

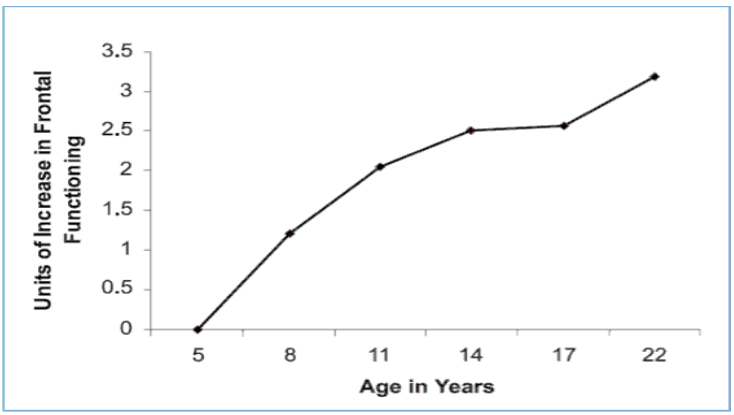
Helping the Brain to Learn with F.A.C.E.S.

Learners enter our classroom mature in some ways, but not so mature in others. These young men and women, usually between the ages of 17-25, have had several years to mature physically. However, entirely invisible from conventional observation, our students' brains are still experiencing some of their most important development during the late adolescent and early adult years. In fact, the area of the brain known as the frontal lobe – which is considered to control the "executive functions" of the brain such as planning, goal setting, self-control, abstract thinking, attention, and the inhibition of emotional impulses – general reaches full physical maturity during the years 17-29 (see Figure 1).



(Figure 1, adapted from Romine & Reynolds (2005), p. 198)

We can easily forget that we are not dealing with fully formed, entirely matured learners. Moreover, once the brain's frontal lobe reaches physical maturity at around the mid-20s, another 10-15 years can pass before a person has fully developed his or her thinking skills. Think of it like this: There are many athletically capable teenage basketball players. However, their physical bodies are still maturing.



(Figure 2, adapted from Romine & Reynolds (2005), p. 198)

Add to that, these teenage athletes are still learning to perform in specific ways. Is it appropriate to expect them to perform at an NBA level while still in their teens? Of course not. Instead, we all know that they'll need more years for their bodies to reach their full physiological maturity and then even more years for them to hone their performance skills. This also occurs in the human brain. Learners need a significant amount of coaching and practice to make the most of this crucial developmental time period (see Figure 2).

What are some of the things teachers can do to help support the full and healthy maturation of learners' brains? Here are few ideas that can be simply remembered with the acronym **FACES**:

F

FOCUS **Focus** students' attention. Brain attention span is about 7-10 minutes. That is to say, the brain will lose focus unless its attention is recaptured every 7-10 minutes. Therefore, when you are lecturing, consider dividing your lecture into equal ten-minute segments. At the end of each segment, use an activity to recapture the learners' attention. For example:

- Summarize what you have said.
- Ask students an intriguing question that leads into the next aspect of the lecture.
- Share a story.
- Do an activity.
- Ask for participation.

A

ALIGN Align assessment activities contextually with learning activities and materials. Research shows that people learn better when learning is contextualized (Bransford, Brown, Cocking, & Center, 2000). Studies have also shown more than a 15 percent gain in ability when learners are asked to recall instructions in the same context in which they received them (Medina, 2008).

C

CONCENTRATE Concentrate on Critical Thinking Skills. Like any other skill, thinking gets better with practice. Your course will help students develop more if it emphasizes the acquisition and practice of higher-order thinking skills.

E

EXERCISE The data provides strong evidence that those who get regular exercise, even if it means studying for a bit less time, achieve significantly higher learning gains (Medina, 2008).

S

SLEEP Similar to the research results on exercise, those who get regular sleep retain their learning better (Medina, 2008).

The college years provide significant opportunity for students to reach their intellectual potential. Teachers can help students make the most of this time by teaching them how to better focus their attention, encouraging exercise and regular sleep, implementing appropriate assessment activities in your classes, and convincing students to seize this critical developmental opportunity.

Resources

Baars, B. J. & Gage, N.M. (2010). *Cognition, Brain, and Consciousness: Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience*. Amsterdam: Academic Press.

Bransford, J., Brown, A., Cocking, R., & Center, E. R. I. (2000). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School.* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Conklin, H. M., Luciana, M., Hooper, C.J., & Yarger, R.S. (2004). Working Memory Performance in Typically Developing Children and Adolescents: Behavioral Evidence of Protracted Frontal Lobe Development. *Developmental Neuropsychology, 31*(1), 103–128.

Medina, J. (2008). *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School.* Edmonds, WA: Pear Press.

Rains, G. D. (2002). *Principles of Human Neuropsychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Ronnie, C. B. & Reynolds, C.R. (2005). A Model of the Development of Frontal Lobe Functioning: Findings from a Meta-Analysis. *Applied Neuropsychology*, *12*(4), 190–201.

Zillmer, E.A., Spiers, M.V., & Culbertson, W.C. (2008). *Principles of Neuropsychology* (2nd ed.). Belmon, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Checklist for Service Learning Projects

Academic service learning can be a win-win for both students and community partners when careful attention is paid to details before the term begins. Key questions to answer include:

Community Partner Expectations and Role

- ☐ What is the desired outcome?
  - ☐ What products and/or services will the students provide?
  - ☐ When and how will the students deliver their products and/or services?
- ☐ What does the partner need to provide to support project success?
- ☐ What role will the partner play in evaluating student work?

Faculty Expectations and Role

- ☐ How will the partner's desired outcome align with the course's learning objectives?
- ☐ How can the professor work with the partner and students to support project success?

Realistic Timeline

- ☐ What are key deadlines in the research, planning and implementation of the project?
- ☐ When and how will the students, their instructor and community partner representatives celebrate project completion?

Resources

Academic Discipline. Sample Service Learning Projects. Retrieved from http://www.eastfieldcollege.edu/Assets/ServiceLearning/ServiceLearningIdeasbyDiscipline.pdf

Campus Compact. Sample Service Learning Syllabi. Retrieved from http://compact.org/resource-type/syllabi/

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Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

S.U.P.P.O.R.T. Students in Online Classrooms

The acronym **"Support"** comes to mind as I reflect upon online teaching strategies:

SUPPLEMENT

material on the syllabus with interesting and informative weekly guidance lesson plans.

Since the online curriculum is often standardized, online instructors should help students explore new concepts and provide "real world" illustrations to supplement the course content. Additional information to expand upon the content on the syllabus provides students with a more in-depth examination of each topic and enhances the learning process. It is particularly important to include current examples that students can relate to from personal experience, as well as pivotal events unfolding in the media. The inclusion of charts, graphs, diagrams and other pictorial images is another vehicle to grab the attention of students and add an element of fun to the classroom. Online course lesson plans should be written in an informal, conversational style to more closely resemble the dissemination of this material in person.

UNDERSTAND

the challenges of online learning environment for students and instructors.

Students and instructors may be confronted with challenges pertaining to technological issues or navigation through the virtual/online classroom. Instructors should be prepared to provide prompt guidance and resources to manage such situations and address unexpected glitches. This is imperative for maintaining organization in the classroom and reassuring students that there are viable solutions to these problems. The online classroom structure is unique, so instructors must be aware of necessary adjustments to accommodate this educational format. Students who are new to this form of learning may need extra attention adapting to changes from more traditional models. Consideration for individual learning styles and diversity are other key elements for effective instruction in the online environment. Flexibility is an essential factor to ensure clear presentations of course material and requirements, particularly in the absence of face-to-face communications.

PROVIDE

detailed formative and summative feedback throughout the course to monitor student progress.

Instructors should provide formative assessments with detailed comments throughout the course to monitor student progress. This is extremely helpful for students – it identifies specific areas of improvement, as well as recognizes strengths that have been demonstrated. The inclusion of positive feedback is imperative to encourage students and sustain motivation to succeed. Formative evaluations at the end of the term can be a useful tool for students to apply to future coursework and target skills that need additional attention.

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PROMOTE

active engagement and communication, which creates greater community among the course participants.

Maintaining an active presence throughout the term coincides with a greater sense of community among the course participants. Instructors should serve as role models to students in the tone, style, and types of communication in the virtual classroom. Utilizing a professional, but welcoming quality in all communications (announcements, postings, course expectations, etc.) creates a congenial atmosphere whereby students feel more comfortable exchanging opinions and ideas. By demonstrating enthusiasm, interest and curiosity about the topic at hand, instructors can foster motivation, self-reflection and critical thinking on the part of students.

OFFER

support and mentorship to students in coursework and career development.

In addition to fulfilling teaching responsibilities, instructors serve as mentors to students as they work towards their academic and career goals. This necessitates the establishment of mutual respect, trust and empathy towards students for the duration of the course. In order to offer effective support and guidance, it is essential to be both approachable and available to students. Instructors should also be mindful of the stressors associated with balancing school/work/life demands faced by students as they pursue their coursework.

RESPOND

to student questions, discussions and feedback in a timely fashion.

Students appreciate prompt feedback and grading of their discussions and assignments. A quick turnaround time will enable students to make necessary corrections and set clear guidelines for areas of development. This also reinforces the instructors' expectations of students to submit work prior to due dates and reply to other posts according to schedule. Responding to student inquiries within 24 hours is optimal for addressing questions and concerns, along with facilitating a collaborative approach to learning.

TEACH

with a focus on continual growth and improvement for lifelong learning.

One of the central components of a teaching philosophy is to provide a supportive and encouraging environment for learning. This overriding objective is advantageous, in conjunction with high-quality instruction that achieves the intended learning outcomes. Education is a dynamic process for both instructors and students, which contributes to the challenge and excitement of learning. As the educational field continues to evolve, these changes must be reflected in the course content and the synthesis of new information. A passion for teaching propels educators to pass along their knowledge and interest in a variety of disciplines. With this in mind, instructors should strive to inspire curiosity and lifelong learning among students.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Prepare for Snow Days and Other Unexpected Class Cancellations

An important component of course planning is preparing for the inevitability of inclement weather or other unexpected closings. You can minimize the impact of lost class time by having a plan for how you will maintain contact with your students and readjust scheduling. To ensure academic continuity, we recommend that you perform the following preparedness activities:

- Be informed of how to get your school's alerts or notifications. *At Oakland University, this form allows you to opt into alerts and notifications: oakland.edu/uts/student-services/emergencynotification*
- Practice making clear and effective online communications for your students
- Familiarize yourself with communication and online teaching technologies
- Make schedule adjustments, as needed
- When you return to campus, evaluate the impact and reconnect with your students
- Be informed of how to get support

Preparation Checklist

Before the semester even starts, plan ahead for an unplanned class cancellation:

- ❑ Establish a communication plan to notify students of any major change.
- ❑ Make your syllabus available digitally to students.
- ❑ Post all class documents in your Learning Management System. *OU uses Moodle.*
- ❑ Have remote access to your office computer or materials stored on it.
- ❑ Review the planned material and activities and consider what is "must know", what is "important to know" and what is "nice to know."
- ❑ Evaluate what activities and material require in class time vs. could potentially be accomplished though out of class or online activities.
- ❑ Reprioritize the course based on these decisions so that you and your students are able to successfully meet the course goals.
- ❑ Update syllabus if needed and post to Learning Management System.
- ❑ Notify students of any changes to the syllabus.
- ❑ Adjust any deadlines in the LMS for assessments and activities.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Thinking Outside of the Box

Teaching students to think outside a box is a challenging but necessary endeavor for faculty seeking to help students live in the real world of a very uncertain future. Some faculty tend to concentrate on learning to regurgitate information or answer questions that have been previously discussed, with given known answers. To challenge students to think outside the box, they need practice problems that require the application of learned content to somewhat unfamiliar contexts.

The best way I have found over 3 decades of teaching to enable students to learn to think outside the box and deal with new situations without well-defined parameters and information fully given is to offer them practice problems to do such. A substantial amount of teaching in a particular field is necessary for students to be able to intelligently attempt such problems, so such teaching (and learning) must occur early in the semester. Then, as the semester progresses, students must apply such knowledge to ever newer and more complex situations even as they learn other new and complex concepts.

Start with holding students accountable for "in the box" knowledge early in the semester.

Smaller-stakes assignments that reinforce course content, such as quizzes or in-class activities, tells students they have to know "the stuff," but only so they can solve new problems with this stuff.

Then, give students new, complex problems to solve with limited parameters and direction.

Tests, group projects, and oral exams can all be useful for ensuring that students actually have learned the material and are able to apply the concepts to at least slightly different situations without complete information. (and with some information provided but not directly inside the problem or referred to therein).

Written by J. Austin Murphy, Oakland University. Edited and designed by Christina Moore.
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Requiring students to learn the prerequisite knowledge via weekly quizzes is a potential strategy to enable the students to be rewarded for at least learning the material even if they have difficulty later on in applying the material to new situations. However, I teach senior and masters level courses, and so I therefore merely assign problems for the students to practice on their own (with answers given initially for them to check their work), with only two tests (a midterm and final) as well as a group project.

My own surveys of students indicated conclusively that those who crammed the day/week before the tests were wasting their time, whereas those spending the OU-suggested 2 hours per week outside of class per credit hour were scoring top grades. Students need to learn not to procrastinate, and my tests certainly penalize them for doing so. I do offer substantial extra credit for students applying themselves that is available to all but is almost a "must" for those students wishing to pass after doing nothing but cramming before the midterm/final.

It would be extraordinarily helpful to students long-term if they were so challenged in as many other courses as possible at OU. Of course, such teaching methods can meet resistance from many students and can result a dip in positive student evaluations. However, the more faculty who engage in such teaching (or other methods for teaching students to think outside the box and apply their knowledge to new situations) can make such teaching expected (and thus less unpopular, including short-term). It is indeed a way to differentiate OU from other universities that studies have indicated fail miserably in teaching students critical thinking abilities (which once upon a time was the goal of institutions of higher learning but seems to no longer be).

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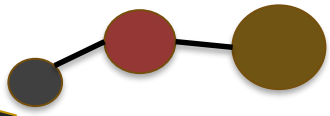
Though I have never considered myself particularly oriented toward visuals, in recent years I have come to appreciate the value of mapping from both a teaching, learning, and productivity perspective. If you haven't explored how mapping might help enhance your work, I would encourage you to take a closer look at concept and mind maps. Both are visual representations of knowledge and ideas.

Concept maps are traditionally more structured and hierarchical in terms of organization, with the most general concept at the top and the more specific concepts at the bottom (Nilson, 2010). The links between the concepts should also be meaningfully labeled.

Maps as Teaching and Productivity Tools

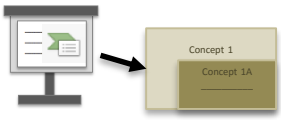
Even faculty who typically don't use visual cues in their teaching or workshop could experience a boost of motivation by mapping out ideas rather than relying entirely on lines of text.

TEACHING TOOL



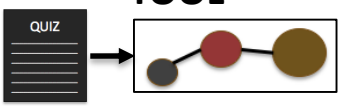
Map course content to show students how class elements are connected

LEARNING TOOL



Have students refine or demonstrate their learning by creating their own maps around a given topic

ASSESSMENT TOOL



Evaluate student learning in a visual form, using rubrics and models to guide their work.

COURSE DESIGN TOOL

Generate learning outcomes and key content areas, and how these are connected and sequenced.

Ways you might use concept or mind maps include:

- **As a teaching tool**: consider creating a map as a way to help students the structure of the day's topic or even an entire course. On the first day of class, I show students a concept map I have drawn of the course and then use that map to explain the course structure and syllabus.
- **As a learning tool**: have students refine or demonstrate their learning by creating their own maps around a given topic or the course. Note: because students can be uncomfortable with ambiguity (there's no one "right" map), this might require a good amount of coaching and guidance from you. See how this teacher uses mapping to generate student discussions and assess learning.
- **As an assessment tool**: maps can be a great way for students to demonstrate their learning in the course. Just be sure to give students clear guidelines for developing their maps (and lots of practice creating maps beforehand) and consider creating a rubric.
- **As a course design tool**: if you're designing a new course (or doing a major revision of a current course), consider first creating a map to help you generate your learning outcomes and key content areas.
- **As a writing tool**: Mapping can also be a great way to organize your ideas for a paper.

- **As a notetaking tool**: Recently, mapping and sketchnoting have become popular methods for taking notes at conferences. I now take notes at conferences this way and have also extended this practice to creating sketchnotes for books while I am reading them.
- Maps are wonderful tools for brainstorming, providing a "big picture" overview of ideas, or representing a large amount of information in a small space. They're great tools to consider adding to your teaching and productivity "toolbox."

Resources

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

microaggressions

Microaggressions are the ways language, behavior, and climate subtly communicate prejudice and other biases. While those who deliver microaggressions might not be aware of their actions, they still communicate to certain groups that they are looked at as "other."

Researchers offer different ways to classify and define types of microaggressions. Sometimes microaggression come out in well-intended compliments ("You speak English so well!" and "You don't write with an accent.") or simply trying to get to know someone ("Where are you from *originally*?"). The trouble arises in the assumptions one makes based on someone's appearance. These examples are microaggressions one might experience if their name or race seems foreign.

Other microaggressions may be less complimentary, such as words used to identify groups also used as derogatory terms ("That's so gay.") to holding lower expectations ("This writing doesn't sound like you."). Even these microaggressions may not be malevolent or intentional, but they can still offend marginalized group for valid reasons.

Criticisms claim that fixation on microaggressions can create a "victimhood culture," which could cause students to dwell on the harm such intentional or unintentional comments could cause them (if they are, indeed, microaggressions) rather than brushing them off and moving on. Some also fear that by making people afraid of committing microaggressions, people in turn will be less likely to engage with people unlike themselves for fear of saying the wrong thing. Lilienfeld (2017) finds that while microaggressions are a valid concern, the data on their impact on mental health is lacking.

Applications for Faculty

Faculty want their students to learn in an environment that is welcoming and inclusive but not at the cost of discussing challenging ideas. Faculty are not expected to perfectly know how to define and navigate microaggressions, but they should be prepared to detect and act when microaggression takes place before it disrupts the learning environment.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

microaggressions

Suggestions for Faculty

1. **Beware of setting learning expectations** Even if we are committed to treating students fairly and not discriminating, it is hard to guard ourselves from making assumptions about students from the first time we read their names in the class roster. Always suspend judgment until you have clear evidence of someone's learning and abilities.
2. **Relate microaggressions to your courses** Consider whether certain microaggressions likely to arise based on your discipline, discussions, activities, and typical student population.
3. **Mentally walk through a plan for handling microaggressions** What would you do if a student-to-student microaggression surfaced in class? Imagine the situations that could arise and how you would deal with it. If one surfaced in class, when would it warrant an open discussion with the class versus talking with the student outside of class or ignoring it. When does a microaggression warrant consultation with the Dean of Students? Hypothesizing these situations could help you make calm, sound judgments in a potentially tense moment.
4. **Reflect on your vulnerability** Everyone carries cultural biases with them. Reflect on whether things you say or judgments you make could make a student feel uncomfortable. Such practices could include assuming that a student of another race, gender, or other group can speak for that entire group (called a "token minority"). Microaggressions can surface with benign or even benevolent intentions, so we should not underestimate their power to seep into our communication with students.

Related Readings

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Sue, D. W. et al. (2007 May-Jun). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271-286. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271

Zamudio-Suaréz, F. (2016 Oct 28). "Not your language": How a classroom interaction led a student to speak out on microaggressions. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* Retrieved from http://www.chronicle.com/article/Not-Your-Language-How-a/238239

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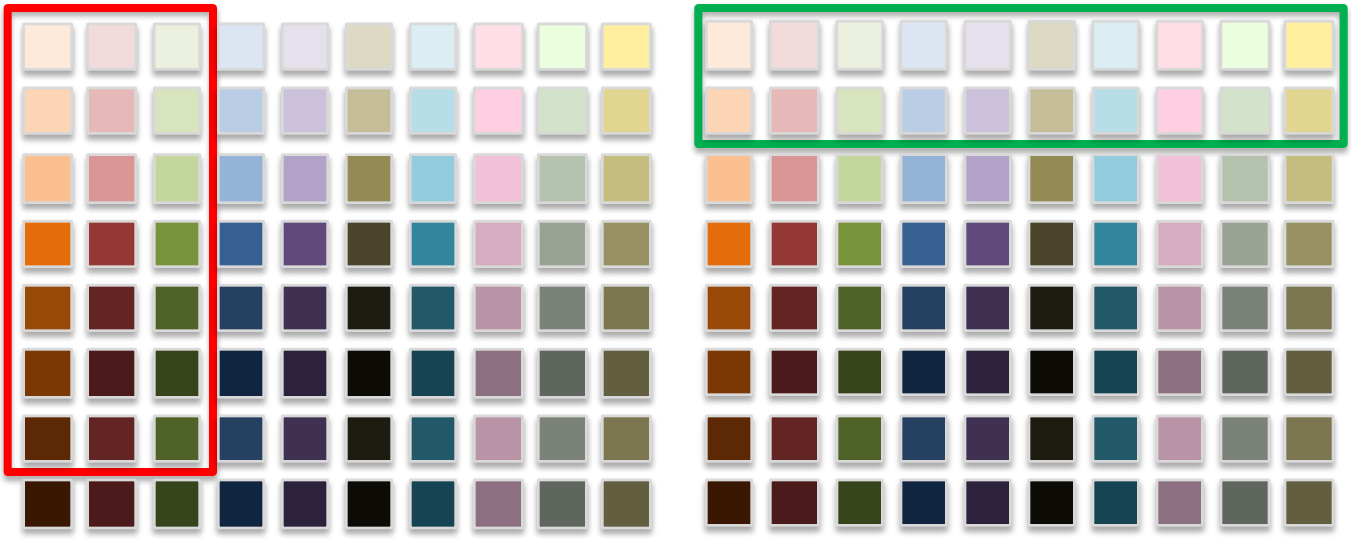
Planning the Curriculum

Depth vs. Breadth

As you plan your courses, think of the curriculum to be learned as a rectangle – with the horizontal sides = breadth and the vertical sides = depth. In this image, the area of the rectangle basically remains constant regardless of how you construct the rectangle. Which do you need for your course, greater breadth or greater depth? You cannot have it both ways.



Mathematically inclined folks will remind us that the maximum area of a rectangle with the smallest parameter is a square. Perhaps you also need to make your curriculum more of a square than a very narrow, but long rectangle.

Resources

Biggs, J. (1999). Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the student does. SHRE and Open Press.

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Engaging in Class Discussion

CETL Teaching Tips presents

Daily In-Class Sheets
Track Attendance and Improve Student Engagement

Daily in-class sheets allow you to track attendance in large classes and provide a great way to engage students actively in the day's lesson.

I. How to Incorporate In-class Sheets in Your Course

1. Include attendance as part of the final course grade. Require in-class sheets daily to create a complete attendance record for each student.
2. Use an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of everyone's attendance.
3. Ask questions periodically during class; students write the answers on their sheet (a sheet of notebook paper). Tip! Ask a question at the beginning and end of class to check for late arrivals and early departures.
4. Students turn in their sheet at the end of every class. Give the sheets back at the next class; students keep them as proof of their attendance.
5. Complete, thorough, organized, and legible answers → full credit (a ☑ as the grade on the sheet)
   Incomplete, brief, disorganized, or unintelligible answers → partial credit (a fraction or percentage as the grade on the sheet)
6. To speed grading, check for completeness, not correctness, but correct answers must also be written down if given. Tip! Each item on the sheet should be numbered so that you can quickly tell if the sheets are complete.
7. If you have time, provide brief comments periodically to let students know you are actually reading the sheets.

II. Types of Items to Include on In-class Sheets

1. Solve problems based on the current lecture
2. Solve problems based on the previous lecture
3. Express an opinion about an interesting issue discussed in class
4. Answer a thought question about an academic issue
5. Answer a question based on the student's personal experience
6. Design a question based on a *discrepant teaching event* (See the CETL Teaching Tip about discrepant teaching events.)
7. Ask something fun to establish a connection with your students (How was your winter break?)

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Facilitating a Great Discussion

Class discussion is a classic active learning activity that invites a group to challenge ideas and create knowledge together. It sounds great in theory, but we can encounter classrooms full of crickets. Consider these strategies as a way to try something new and revitalize the discussion.

CIRCULATE DISCUSSION AMONG STUDENTS

Most discussions fall into a cadence of student-to-professor interaction. Encourage students to answer one another's questions or respond to one another's comments.

"What do you all think?"

"How could we answer that question?"

ALLOW SILENCE AND PAUSE

When silence falls after we have asked a question, our impulse is to fill the void with elaboration or a new question. If you know it is the question you want to ask, let students think. Even give students 60 seconds to consult the text or write a response.

"What evidence can support that point?"

"Let's think about it."

KEEP THE FOCUS ON OUTCOMES…

What are the goals of your discussion? What main questions need to be answered? What points need to be discussed? When the discussion goes on a tangent, use questions to redirect the discussion to the main points.

"So, how does this relate?"

"Let's bring the discussion back to our focus."

…BUT BE OPEN TO THE UNEXPECTED

When your students are deeply involved in a discussion that goes in an unanticipated direction, encourage them to lead the way and stoke their enthusiasm. A good class discussion can motivate students for weeks. Allow space for these discussions by over-allocating time for discussion.

"Say more…"

"Let's go a little further."

For more teaching tips on class discussions, visit

oakland.edu/teachingtips

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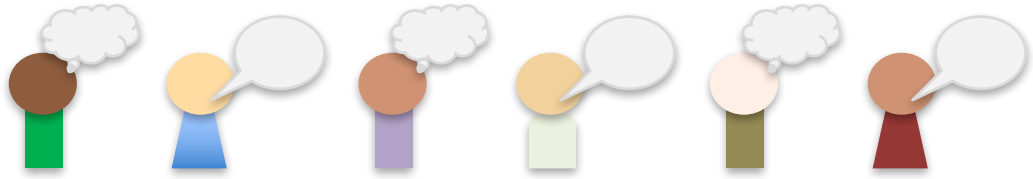
Introverts and Extroverts

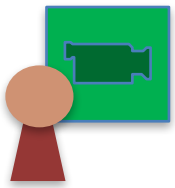
Engage the Thinker and the Talker Alike



Not all learners in your classrooms will engage with the course content and each other in the same ways. Consider these activities to encourage a broader cross section of students to delve deeply into subject matter and work toward key course outcomes.

Mix in-class discussions with online discussions in Moodle

Students who want more time to process information and present their thoughts carefully can benefit from the writing and editing process involved in online discussions. Students who are tempted to talk at length in class may find they are more focused and concise online.



Allow students to share either "live" or pre-recorded presentations

Students who feel anxious presenting to a large group can accomplish the same learning outcomes as those who are natural speakers if they are able to hone and perfect a recorded presentation in advance.

Offer office hours in person and virtually through WebEx (at the same time)

Providing a web conferencing option during your office hours can help both students who prefer to not meet in person and those who just may not be able to come to campus.

Build opportunities for reflection into the classroom and the course

By asking students to write short reflection papers, diagram their progress toward course objectives, or jot down their questions, you can encourage thinkers and talkers to think deeply about their learning.

This teaching tip fits into the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which promotes opportunities to increase access and reduce barriers to learning in order to enhance student success for all learners. For more on UDL, visit **oakland.edu/cetl/ou-teaching-initiatives**

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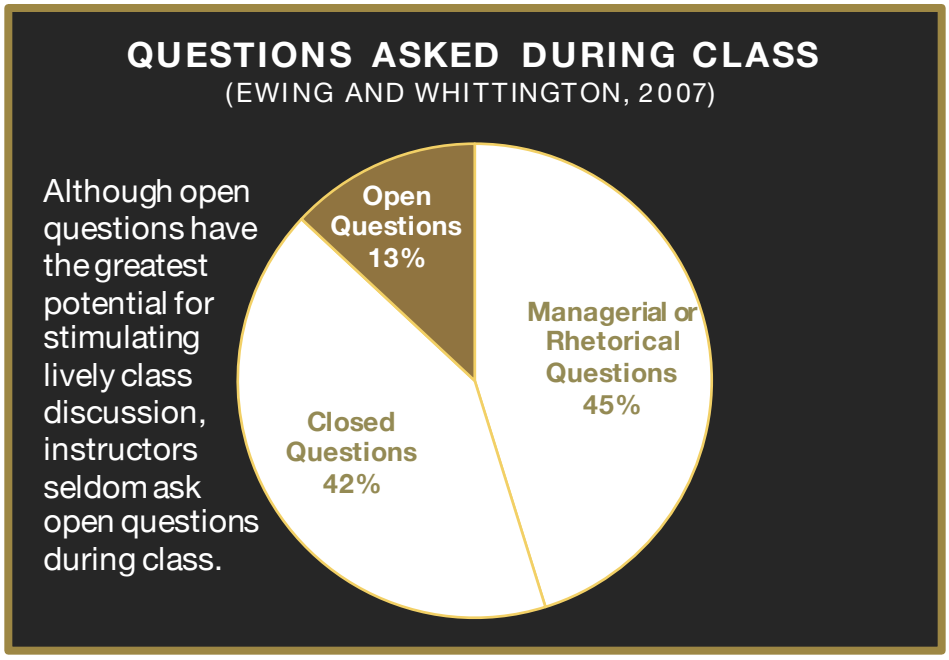
Asking Questions for Meaningful Class Discussion

Instructors ask students questions. We ask questions on exams and we ask questions in class. The kinds of questions instructors ask influence the quality of class discussion.

Questions asked during class serve four purposes (Blosser, 1975/2000):

- **Managerial questions** organize and guide class activities (*Does everyone have a copy of the handout?*). We use managerial questions to create structure and organize classroom tasks.
- **Rhetorical questions** emphasize a point or reinforce a concept (*We agreed at our last meeting that Smith's theory posed several problems that require further research, correct?*). We use these questions to create transitions and don't expect students to answer these questions.
- **Closed questions** have few options for answers. Usually only one response is a correct answer to the question (*What kind of chemical bond holds this molecule together?*). Closed questions assess current student understanding. We use these questions to determine whether students retained recent content knowledge well enough for us to build on a concept or move on to the next topic.
- **Open questions** elicit a range of relevant responses and do not have a single "correct" response (*Which of the following three businesses would be the best use for a parcel of land on Nine Mile Road and why?*). Students may answer open questions with opinions based on course principles (what defines "best use"), justify their choices with relevant evidence, apply theory to a specific example, or practice complex problem-solving skills used in the discipline. Open questions create conditions for extended discussion.



Although open questions have the greatest potential for stimulating lively class discussion, instructors seldom ask open questions during class. Ewing and Whittington (2007) found that only 13.4% of the questions instructors asked were open questions. Nearly half the questions instructors asked were managerial or rhetorical questions (45%) and 41.6% were closed questions.

Examine the kinds of questions you ask during class. If you want to promote thoughtful discussions during class, spend some time preparing open questions that require higher-level engagement with course concepts.

Lang (2008) suggests scaffolding a class discussion with a series of questions. Begin with a fact-based question to get students comfortable with answering questions. Then introduce students to questions that require students to apply concepts to practical problems that do not have an obvious solution or discuss the merits of alternative interpretations (e.g., competing interpretations of a novel in a literature class, competing diagnoses for a set of symptoms in a health-related class).

Good discussions require time. Give students time to reflect before they respond. Learn to endure at least 3-5 seconds of silence while students gather their thoughts. Some instructors give students a minute to write a response before inviting students to discuss or asking a specific student to answer the question. Blosser (1975/2000) reports that when instructors create a delay for thinking before they ask for the first student response, students engage in richer discussions. More students participate. They are more likely to include supporting evidence when they respond. Students are more likely to ask follow-up questions and engage in speculative thinking about course content.

If course goals emphasize higher-level cognitive skills (problem-solving, application of concepts), construct class discussions that require students to use these skills. Reinforce the value of complex in-class discussions by asking similar questions on exams. Students will value the in-class practice with complex questions if they encounter similar questions on course exams that require problem-solving and application. If course exams ask only fact-based memory retrieval questions, students will lose interest in class discussions that require higher-order skills and demand that their instructor spend more class time telling them the "facts" they need to know for the exam.

Resources

Blosser, P. E. (1975/2000). *How to ask the right questions.* Washington, D.C.: National Science Teacher Association. (http://www.nsta.org/docs/201108bookbeathowtoasktherightquestions.pdf)
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Authentic Learning Activities

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Make Learning Flexible with UDL

Universal Design for Learning (or UDL) is a way to "improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn" (CAST, 2015). This approach considers the why, what, and how of students' learning while reducing the barriers students may face in achieving course outcomes. UDL doesn't water down instructional expectations or standards; instead, it provides students access to opportunities to succeed.

There are three components to UDL -- they focus on providing learners with multiple means of engagement, representation of information, and options of action / expression.

UDL offers students many ways to

ENGAGE

in the course material

By providing multiple means of engagement, you can help motivate your students and give their learning a purpose. In practical terms, this principle means identifying ways you can can give classroom tasks authenticity or connect them to real-world situations. For example:

- Directly highlight where course concepts are used in careers or work environments
- Ask a guest speaker to visit your class (in person or via video) to connect his/her experiences to course content

UDL offers faculty many ways to

REPRESENT

the course material

By providing multiple means of representation of information, you can help your students to demonstrate their knowledge and resourcefulness. In practical terms, this principle means providing students access to the same conceptual information in multiple formats (e.g. video, text, lecture). For example:

- Provide all course documents in print and on Moodle
- Record class lectures or parts of class sessions for students to review

UDL offers students many ways to

EXPRESS

what they have learned

By providing multiple means of action or expression of students' learning, you can help your students be goal-oriented and strategic while allowing them multiple opportunities to illustrate their learning. In practical terms, this principle means incorporating a variety of classroom activities -- group tasks, individual projects, written exercises, multimedia presentations -- that give students opportunities to demonstrate how they're attaining your learning outcomes. For example:

- Offer both face-to-face and online discussion opportunities for students
- Ask students to present, if appropriate, and give them options for their presentation method (pre-recorded or in-person)

Created by Amanda Nichols Hess, OU Libraries. Designed by Christina Moore. Published February 2017.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Make Learning Flexible with UDL

Continued

Not all UDL strategies will work for every classroom, but there are some options you can consider -- you may already be using some or all of these ideas!

For more strategies, explanation of principles, background on UDL, and information on traditionally disadvantaged learner groups who have much to gain through UDL, visit

oakland.edu/cetl/ou-teaching-initiatives

Resources

Center for Applied Special Technology. (2015). *About UDL*. Retrieved from http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.V74FsJMrJ3M

Principles from:

National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2014, November 12). *Universal design for learning guidelines*. Retrieved from http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines_theorypractice

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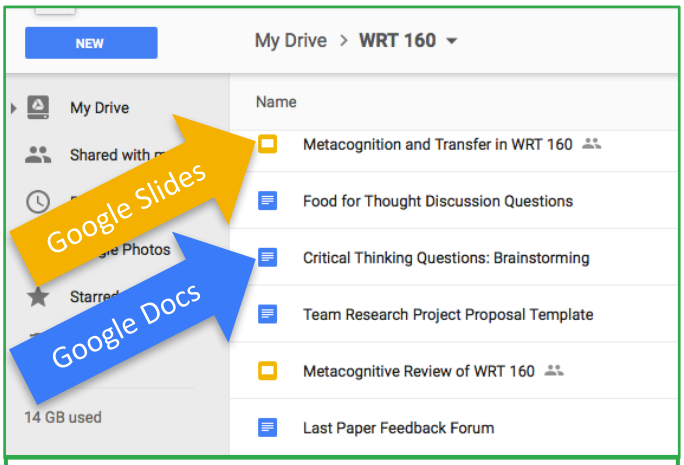
Collaboration

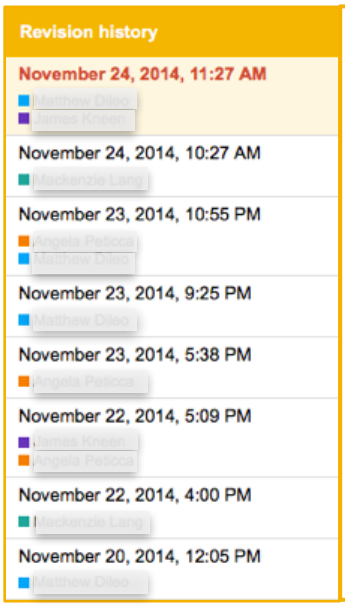
CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Group Work with Google Docs

Group work is a challenging act of balancing challenges and rewards for collective effort. We want to evaluate students fairly based on their work, but we also want to evaluate their ability to bring together different perspectives and work as a team, much the way they will do in their careers. Google Drive offers common technology used in classrooms—a Google Docs word processor (like MS Word) and Google Slides slide presenter (like MS PowerPoint)—in a format that allows seamless and recorded collaboration among multiple users.



For group work I use Google Docs to keep track of work. Each group member has access to the document (along with me).



The program highlights and tracks edits made to the document. If a group member hasn't done any work or poor quality work, then I can tell.

The Basics

- Google Docs can be used with any Gmail account. People without Gmail accounts can be invited to view documents. Anyone with a Google-powered email account (such as those with @oakland.edu email addresses) are automatically tied into Google Drive, which is where Google Docs, Slides, and other programs are available (see green image above).
- Collaborators are added to Google Docs at the creator's discretion. Creators can choose whether collaborators view, edit, or manage the document (share with others).
- Any number of people can work in a Google Doc simultaneously. You can actually see others typing in the document at the same time you are.
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For more guidance on using Google Docs, visit google.com/docs

Written by Amy Rutledge,
Special Instructor of Management Information Systems.
Created by Christina Moore. Published February 2017.

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Group Work with Google Docs

Benefits for Faculty

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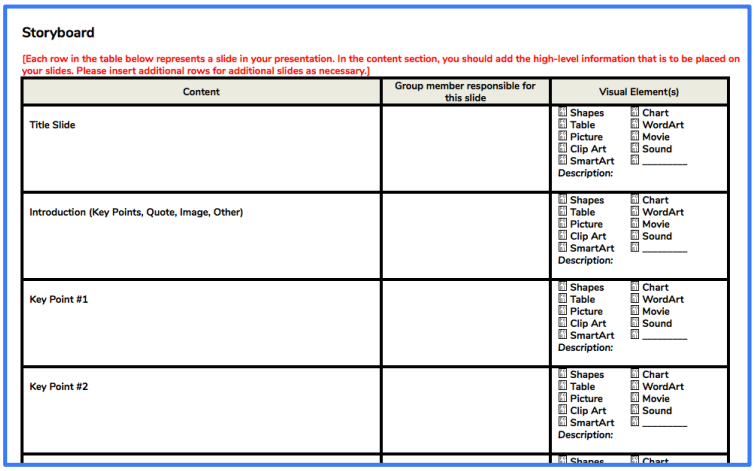
During class, the students are asked to create a basic plan for their presentation on the storyboard. As a group, they decide the subtopics and then each group member is assigned a subtopic within the presentation. The storyboard becomes a contract between the group members. They will then give me the storyboard so I know who is responsible for which subtopic. Again, they will use Google Docs to create the presentation and it tracks the work.



Storyboard

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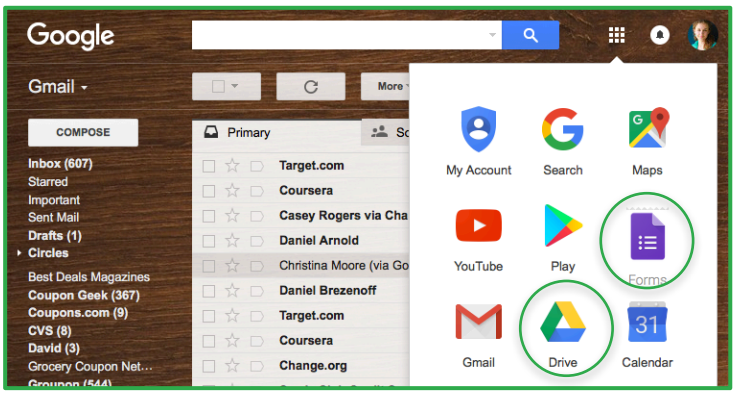

Additional Ideas

Use more tools available in Google Drive, such as Slides (like PowerPoint) and Forms (a survey tool). All of these tools are available in the same place. More on Google Drive can be found at drive.google.com

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Teaching with Technology and Online Learning

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Communicate with Class Texts

You ask students to check their OU e-mail for course announcements, but are they doing so consistently? Your students are probably not checking their e-mail as often as you would like. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that young people in their teens and early twenties use e-mail primarily for formal communication – it's for "communicating with old people."[1] An effective supplemental way to reach students is by sending out *class texts* – course announcements sent as text messages. Short course announcements can be sent in their entirety. Long announcements can either be summarized, or you can just send the header for your e-mail message as a text and ask students to check their e-mail for the full message. An important caveat with class texts is that signing up for them must be optional, whereas asking students to check their OU e-mail for messages can be required.

Convert Students' Cell Phone Numbers into E-mail Addresses

Course announcements can be sent from your OU e-mail account as text messages by way of an SMS gateway – an e-mail address with the recipient's cell phone number and carrier in it. The recipient's cell phone number is followed by the carrier's gateway (e.g. *2483215432@txt.att.net*). To create a class texts mailing list, you will need to obtain each participating student's cell phone number and carrier, and then you will need to create a mailing list with that information. The main carriers and their gateways are provided in the next section. To find the gateways for other carriers, Google "list of SMS to e-mail gateways."

Use a Moodle Survey to Obtain Students' Cell Phone Numbers and Carriers

The most convenient way to do obtain the mailing list information you need is through a Moodle survey. You can use the Survey tool in Moodle to create a "sign up for class texts" survey that collects participating students' information. After the survey has closed, you will need to download the information to create your mailing list (survey example on next page).

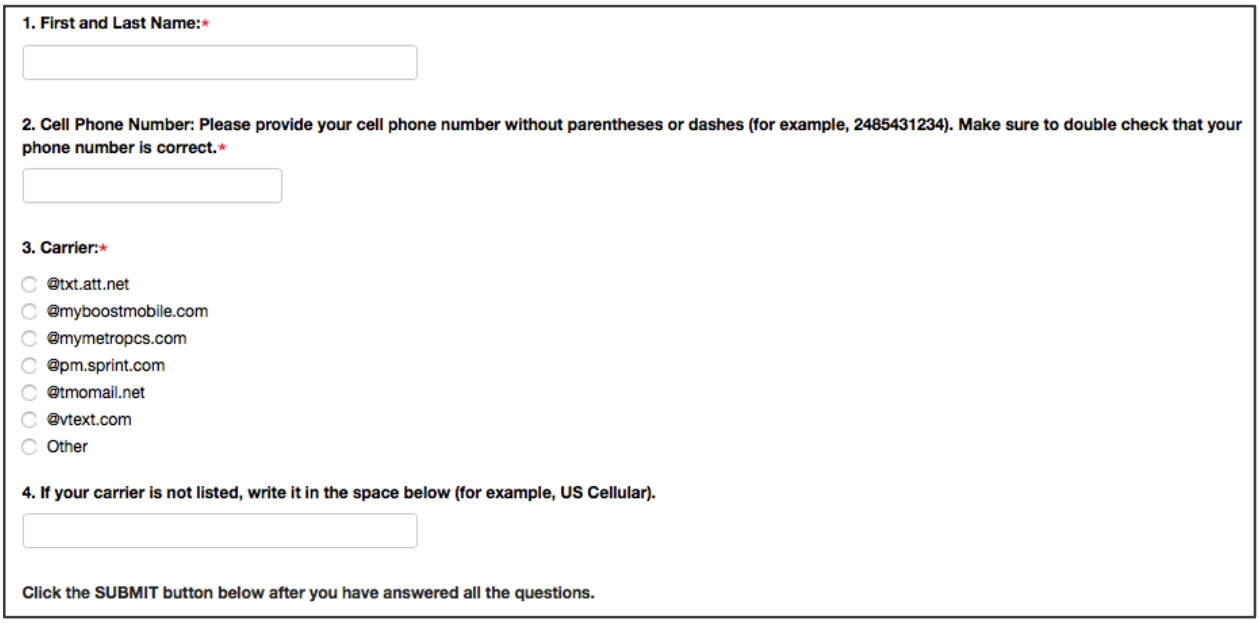
Create Your Class Texts Mailing List

You can download students' survey responses from Moodle as an Excel file. Once you have done that, delete all of the information except student names, cell phone numbers, and carrier gateways. Copy this information into a table in Word and add < > around the phone numbers and gateways. Your mailing list should look like this:

Marlon Brando	<2481234567@@txt.att.net>
Sean Connery	<2481234568@tmomail.net>
Cary Grant	<2481234569@vtext.com>

After you have your mailing list, you can copy and paste it into the BCC cell of e-mail messages you want to send out as texts.

Written by Helena Riha, Oakland University. Designed by Christina Moore. Published March 2017.



1. First and Last Name:*

2. Cell Phone Number: Please provide your cell phone number without parentheses or dashes (for example, 2485431234). Make sure to double check that your phone number is correct.*

3. Carrier:*

- @txt.att.net
- @myboostmobile.com
- @mymetropcs.com
- @pm.sprint.com
- @tmomail.net
- @vtext.com
- Other

4. If your carrier is not listed, write it in the space below (for example, US Cellular).

Click the SUBMIT button below after you have answered all the questions.

Example of Moodle survey for collecting contact info.

Reminders about Class Texts

1. The most important detail to remember is to send all class texts as BCC messages so that students' cell phone numbers are not revealed. Address the message to yourself as the main recipient and copy and paste your class mailing list into the BCC cell.

2. Tell students that they can unsubscribe at any time by sending you a message with the word *unsubscribe*. Those who withdraw from your course will definitely need to do this!

3. Remind students that if your text message is cut off, they will need to check their OU e-mail for the full message.

4. Let students know that you will begin using class texts after the add/drop period is over. This will enable you to avoid having to update your mailing list when enrollments are still in flux.

[1] Mims, Christopher. "For Generation Z, Email Has Become a Rite of Passage." *The Wall Street Journal* 11 Apr. 2016. Web. 20 Jan. 2017

Want to avoid collecting contact info? Use the Moodle Mobile App

Once students download the free app, the instructor can send a Moodle Message through the app, which will pop up as a notification on the smart devices where the app is downloaded.

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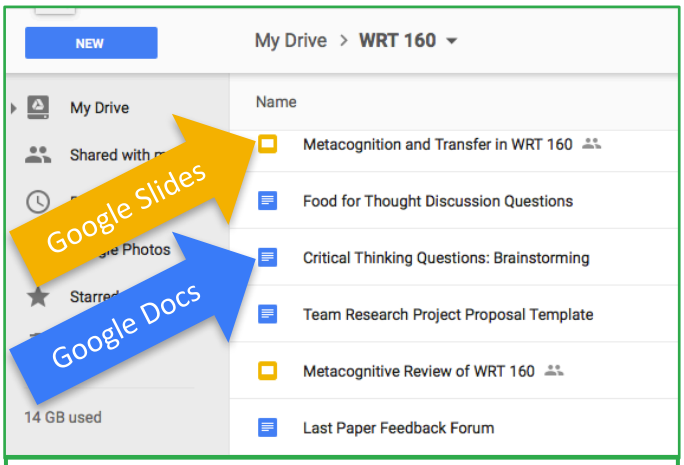

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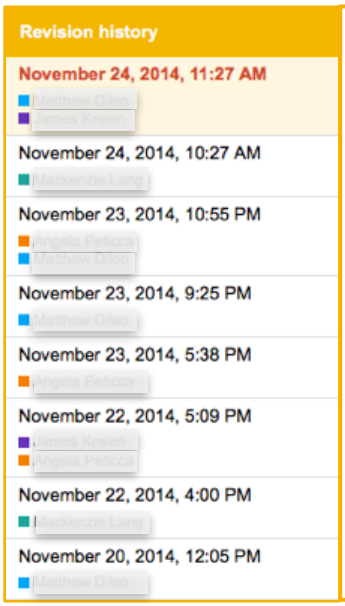

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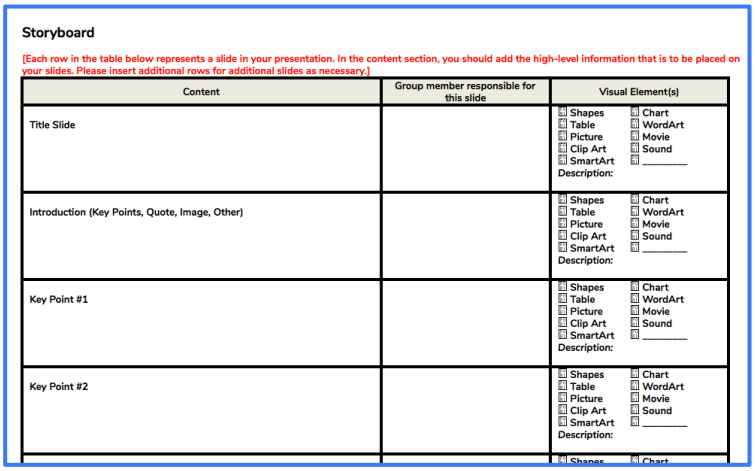

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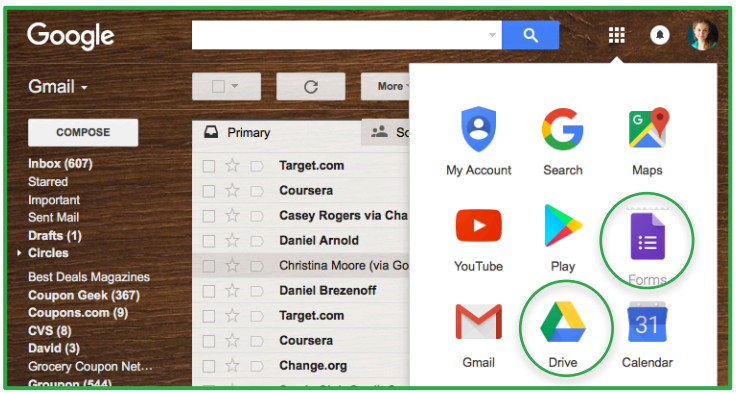

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CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Online Tools that Make Learning More Accessible

There are many accommodations that may be adopted as sound instructional practices for the benefit of more students than just for students with disabilities. First, given our current and evolving technologies, the rise of open educational resources, and the necessity for compatibility and integration among multiple devices, we simply need to monitor the functionality of our educational technology. Second, as part of brain-based learning, multisensory approaches to teaching engage students and increase their likelihood of connections to and retention of the learning material (Shams & Seitz, 2008).

Below is a list of our favorite resources to enhance teaching and learning for all of your students in all classroom modalities. The information provided will give you a general overview of the major considerations to increase student access to learning. The listed tools are multipurpose, have multiple uses, and appeal to diverse student populations and classroom environments.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ONLINE COURSES

Quality Matters (QM) Rubric Standard 8 on Accessibility and Usability (https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric) is a nationally-recognized program that relies on the QM rubric and faculty peer reviews to improve the course design of fully online, blended, and competency-based courses. Standard 8 identifies criterion that ensures accessibility and usability in your online courses. OU's e-Learning and Instructional Support has adapted its own Online Course Quality Scorecard for online learning design, which can be found at oakland.edu/elis.

Online Course Quality Scorecard
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INFORMATION ON LEARNING ACCESS

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations (https://askjan.org/links/atoz.htm) focuses on employment and workplace solutions for individuals with disabilities. However, their A-to-Z resource materials on disability accommodations are quite detailed and can be applied directly or adapted to various learning environments.

National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE) Cheatsheets (http://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/) – If you have ever experienced technology incompatibility issues with different software, apps, and devices, or if you need to make specific accommodations for your students, then you will want to refer to NCDAE Cheatsheets for Microsoft (Word, PowerPoint, and Excel) software, Adobe (Acrobat and InDesign) software, websites, and YouTube videos to create usable and accessible content.

Written by Felicity Cruz Grandjean and Julie A. McElhany, Texas A&M University-Commerce..
Created by Christina Moore. Published February 2017.

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Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Online Tools that Make Learning More Accessible

TOOLS

Amara
(https://amara.org/en/) Amara is an accessible video tool and nonprofit professional organization, which provides support for captions, subtitles, and translations for your instructional videos.

Google for Education
(https://www.google.com/edu/products/productivity-tools/) is a set of collaborative productivity tools, which includes Classroom, Gmail, Drive, Calendar, Vault, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Sites, and Hangouts. These tools help you create your course content, communicate with your students, teach, manage course activities, and track student progress.

Jing
(https://www.techsmith.com/jing.html) is a multimedia communication and collaboration tool. Specifically, Jing is a screen shot (image, audio, and/or video) and online screencast (storage and sharing) tool. Jing is beneficial for visual and auditory learners and for increasing interest and engagement with enhanced course content.

Online OCR
(http://www.onlineocr.net/) is an optical character recognition software. Some productivity software can easily be converted into PDF files while maintaining their original text and object properties. However, some PDF files are only images. If you need to identify text for the purpose of "copy & paste," or to use with a screen reader, or if you would like to activate included hyperlinks, then OCRs are useful with translating PDF documents (as images) back to its original texts and objects.

Screen Readers (ChromeVox for Chrome; VoiceOver for Apple products; NVDA for Windows, Firefox, and Microsoft; ReadSpeaker and WebAnywhere for web)
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_screen_readers) – The listed screen readers are helpful for individuals when using the associated software/applications. Screen readers are beneficial to individuals with visual impairments or blindness, visual learners, ESL learners, and others. When scrolling is necessary on a screen, screen readers help those with limited mobility navigate. Screen readers are also helpful when you use small screens, when you are on the go or multi-tasking, and with using multiple devices.

Zamzar
(http://www.zamzar.com/) is an online file conversion tool, which will allow you to provide multiple file types of the same document to ensure technology compatibility and access to the document.

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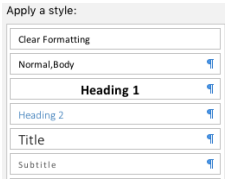
Creating Accessible Microsoft Word Documents

Accessibility is a hot topic in education. Not only is it our legal obligation to make our online materials accessible to people with disabilities; it's the right thing to do. Even if you don't teach online, you may wish to share documents electronically, either now or in the future. Creating accessible documents now will save you the trouble of retrofitting materials later. Making all course materials accessible might seem like an overwhelming task, but a few small changes to the way we work can make many of our everyday materials accessible.



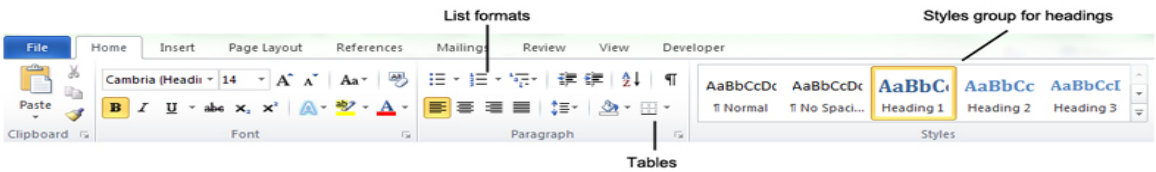
Use Built-in Organizational Features

Most faculty create text documents for our classes, for example, the syllabus, homework assignments, and supplementary material. Making these documents accessible, so that screen readers can read them to students with visual disabilities, is really just a matter of establishing a few good habits. The tools to make a document accessible are built into Microsoft Word and will help you create documents that are easier for all students to navigate and easier for you to modify.

Review Educational Guides to Accessibility

This excellent video, from High Tech Center at Taft College, demonstrates how a screen reader reads an accessible Word document versus an inaccessible one.

Most of the guidelines for making a text document accessible involve using the built-in tools to format structural elements of your document, rather than using formatting that makes something look structural. For example, rather than making something look like a heading by making the font large and bold, use the heading levels in the Styles group on the Home ribbon. If information is a list, use a list structure. If it's tabular, use a table – don't just use the tab key. And when you use these structural elements, you aren't locked into the default appearances. There are a variety of built-in options, and you can also learn to customize the way these elements appear.



Portland Community College and Microsoft have both published excellent guidelines for making elements of your document accessible. Review these brief guides to learn how to make your headings, images, lists, links, scientific formulae, tables, color, and forms accessible.

Written by Maggie Burke and Maria Wallace, Community College of Rhode Island.
Designed and edited by Christina Moore. Published April 2017.

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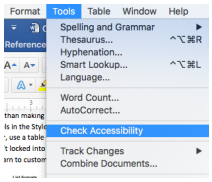

Use MS Word's Accessibility Checker

Microsoft Word also has a built-in accessibility checker. Consult Microsoft for the location of the checker in the version of Word that you're using. In Word 2010 and later for Windows, it is located in the File menu. Under Info, choose Check for Issues, and then Check Accessibility. Word will check your document and a pane will appear to the right of your document with warnings and suggestions for improvement.

Time invested learning these habits now will pay dividends down the road. Not only will your students be able to navigate your document by structure (check the "Navigation Pane" box in the View ribbon to see your document's outline), but you will easily be able to change the formatting of your entire document with a single click. If you're not teaching an online or technology-enhanced course yet, you will be better prepared for the transition in the future, should you choose to make it. But most importantly, you will have created documents that are significantly easier for people using screen readers to access.

Resources

University System of Gerogia. "Higher Education, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508." Retrieved from http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/higher_education_the_americans_with_disabilities_act_and_section_508

Taft College. "Screen Reader User's Experience and MS Word": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8XFkGMF0sw

Portland Community College. "How to make a Word document accessible." Retrieved from http://www.pcc.edu/access/word

Microsoft. "Creating accessible Word documents." Retrieved from https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Creating-accessible-Word-documents-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d

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Designed and edited by Christina Moore.
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Reflection

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Improving Our Teaching Through Critical Reflection

After teaching class or after reading your students' discussion posts in your online classroom, do you take time to reflect on how things went, how things are going, and how you and your students are experiencing your class?

Brookfield (1995) described a number of strategies to improve teaching through critical reflection. Here's one I like a lot. It's called "Keeping a Teaching Log." Brookfield maintained that "keeping a log of your private reactions to and interpretations of, the events you think are important in your life as a teacher is one way of helping you realize several things about yourself" (p. 72).

Brookfield suggested that we maintain the log on a regular basis, spending about 15 to 20 minutes a week. Eventually, patterns, common themes, recurring problems, and success strategies might emerge that could inform your practice. Here's questions to which you might want to respond (pp. 73-74):

1. **When did I feel most connected?** What was the moment (or moments) this week when I felt most connected, engaged, or affirmed as a teacher—the moment(s) I said to myself, "This is what being a teacher is really all about"?
2. **When did I feel disengaged?** What was moment (or moments) this week when I felt most discouraged, disengaged, or bored as a teacher—the moment(s) I said to myself, "I'm just going through the motions here"?
3. **What situation caused stress?** What was the situation that caused me the greatest anxiety or distress – the kind of situation that I kept replaying in my mind as I was dropping off to sleep, or that caused me to say to myself, "I don't want to go through this again for a while"?
4. **What took me most by surprise?** What was the event that most took me by surprise – an event where I saw or did something that shook me up, caught me off guard, knocked me off my stride, gave me a jolt, or made me unexpectedly happy?
5. **What would I have done differently?** Of everything I did this week in my teaching, what would I do differently if I had the chance to do it again?
6. **What do I feel most proud of?** What do I feel proudest of in my teaching activities this week? Why?

Resources

Brookfield, S. (1995). Becoming a critically reflective teacher. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Submitted by:

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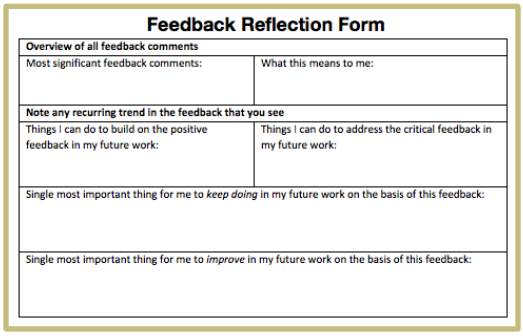
CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Reading the Margins

Student Reflection on Written Feedback

This past academic year, my students have been using self-reflection of the written feedback I provide on completed assignments. Often students do not know how to use the feedback provided, or they only focus on the grade or rubric/criteria list. I wanted them to focus on what is written "in the margins." My aim is to help them become self-regulated learners through an activity that focuses their attention on the written feedback and its meaning to them. I have adapted a strategy (Learning and Teaching Board, n.d.; Making a feedback action plan, n.d.) and use it with the most significant assignments in my course:

Students receive

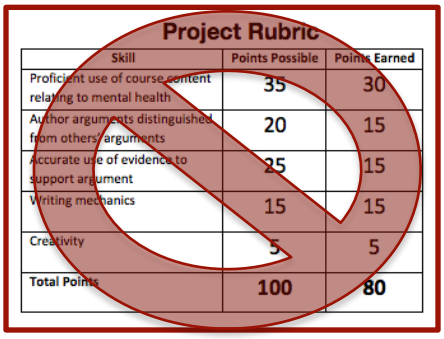


Feedback Reflection Form

Overview of all feedback comments	
Most significant feedback comments:	What this means to me:
Note any recurring trend in the feedback that you see	
Things I can do to build on the positive feedback in my future work:	Things I can do to address the critical feedback in my future work:
Single most important thing for me to *keep doing* in my future work on the basis of this feedback:	
Single most important thing for me to *improve* in my future work on the basis of this feedback:	

the feedback form
(full form on next page)

their assignment
with written feedback



Project Rubric

Skill	Points Possible	Points Earned
Proficient use of course content relating to mental health	35	30
Author arguments distinguished from others' arguments	20	15
Accurate use of evidence to support argument	25	15
Writing mechanics	15	15
Creativity	5	5
Total Points	100	80

Hold back on giving rubric with grade.

I take a few minutes (typically this is 10-15 minutes) at the beginning of class for them to read the feedback and respond to the prompts. Student place the feedback sheet in a folder that I collect. Then I hand back the rubric to them. Toward the end of the term, I have them do an analysis of all the forms in their folder in order to see trends and areas in which they have improved.

Because of this process, there is improvement in the quality of student work and my students have commented on the value of actually reading the feedback, considering what it means to their continued learning, and applying feedback guidance on subsequent assignments.

Resources

Learning and Teaching Board. (n.d.). Providing Effective Feedback to Students - Briefing Note. Edinburgh, Scotland: Heriot-Watt University. Retrieved from http://www1.hw.ac.uk/committees/ltb/resources/feedback-briefing.doc

Making a feedback action plan. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/preparing/feedback/actionplan.aspx

Student form on next page.

Submitted by:
Rebecca Clemente
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Department of Education | North Central College | Naperville, Illinois

Reading the Margins

Student Reflection Form

Considering Information about My Learning from Written Feedback
Taking the time to analyze written feedback (or at least be more systematic about gaining information from written feedback) gives you clues to:

A. Determine how you are doing and where you are in relation to course goals/objectives
B. Clarify what good performance is
C. Obtain useful information about your learning
D. Identify weaknesses in your learning so you can do something about these

One of the things we know from research on student learning is that when a student reflects, he/she improves on subsequent assignments and experiences.

Take a moment to read through your Part 1 of the Topic Strand Project. Use the guiding statements to aid you in learning something about your learning. (You will find a blank copy of the rubric for this assignment at the end of this document.)

This will be added to your file folder creating a collection on how you are developing. This will give you the opportunity to separate your *reflections* on this instance of feedback from the actual score on the Part 1 rubric so that you can distance yourself from the first thoughts you got when receiving the feedback, and move toward finding the trends that will enable you to continuously adjust your learning approaches.

Reflection on Part One – Overview of your topic strand

Overview of all feedback comments	
Most significant feedback comments:	What this means to me:
Note any recurring trend in the feedback that you see	
Things I can do to build on the positive feedback in my future work:	Things I can do to address the critical feedback in my future work:
Single most important thing for me to *keep doing* in my future work on the basis of this feedback:	
Single most important thing for me to *improve* in my future work on the basis of this feedback:	

Form created by Rebecca Clemente of North Central College in Naperville, Illinois

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Higher Levels of Learning

at the end of the semester

Towards the end of the semester, students and instructors alike are often worn out and tempted to take one of two avenues:

1) They may be enticed **to turn on cruise control**, check out mentally, and start winter break a few weeks early. This first option may be particularly attractive when final class sessions are devoted to student presentations. If students are not required to engage their classmates' presentations actively, they may be inclined to listen to each presentation only passively. Make sure all students have something active to *do* while they listen to their classmates' work, such as a presentation evaluation. In the future, also try not to pack all presentations into a few final weeks; if presentations are spread out more evenly across the second half of the semester, each class may include a combination of activities.

2) Students and instructors may be enticed **to shift into high gear**, to overwork and cram as much as possible. This second option lures students who have been slacking and instructors who have fallen behind schedule. Cramming helps no one. Students who slack and then cram may succeed in memorizing facts, but will miss out on higher levels of learning. Instructors who fall behind and then cram content into the last days of class only overwhelm their students. Moreover, they miss the crucial moment afforded by the end of semester when higher levels of learning can happen, like synthesis and application. In the future, leave open days in the semester for catch up in order to save the final class days for review, reflection, and higher levels of learning.

To promote higher level learning at the end of the semester, while avoiding both cruise control and shifting into high gear, help students reflect on their learning from the whole semester:

- ☐ Revisit the course's learning goals introduced at the beginning of the semester. Have students take a moment and consider to what degree they have accomplished these learning goals.
- ☐ Ask students to create final exam essays/questions which would measure student comprehension of the course's learning goals.

- ☐ Invite students to synthesize their learning through a creative project (e.g., a diagram, a timeline, a concept map, creative writing, or visual art).
- ☐ Revisit readings and/or assignments from the beginning of the semester so that students can appreciate what and how much they have learned.
- ☐ Ask students to prepare answers to questions such as: What are the most important things that you learned in this course? How will you apply this learning in your life?
- ☐ Have students compose a letter to future students of the course, advising them on what they need to know and how they should best go about learning it.
- ☐ Invite students to reflect on their development as learners, thinkers, and writers. Have students answer questions such as: What did you learn about yourself as a student this semester? Did you learn (or implement) any study strategies this semester that helped you be successful? What would you have done differently if you had to repeat this semester?

Resources

For those who are interested in this topic, variations of many of the tips offered here today, as well as dozens of other good ideas, can be found on many academic blogs and articles on the web; I encourage you to peruse the following:

Ball State University. *Teaching Tip: Ending a Course*.

Columbia University. *Ending the Semester on a Positive Note.*

Connor, P. *Managing the End of the Semester*.

Eggleston, T. J., Smith, G.E. (2002). *Parting Ways: Ending Your Course*. Observer *15* (3).

Walsh, M. *Five Tips for Wrapping Up a Course*.

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