



ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING & LEARNING (CETL)

Newsletter, October 2023

The classroom is a space where both teachers and students
can grow, learn, and be transformed.

Bell Hooks, Teaching to Transgress

CETL – WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

How's your teaching going? If you have questions, need to knock around ideas, or are looking for resources, email us for a consultation (CETL@stcloudstate.edu). If we don't have the answer, we will connect you with someone who does.

UPCOMING TEACHING & LEARNING EVENTS

SCSU Disability & Access Week Highlights, Oct 9-13

Mon Oct 9, 9-11 am, *Commit to access banner signing* (drop by Centennial Hall, 2nd floor lounge)

Wed Oct 11, 12-1 pm, *Advancing your accessible mindset*, Atwood Glacier North

Thurs Oct 12, 10-11 am, [Virtual Keynote, Dr. Amanda Kraus](#), *Ableism by Design: Reflections on the pandemic & how we are learning to challenge assumptions and innovative practice*. (passcode: access)

Fri Oct 13, 9-11 am, Coffee, Tea, and Accessibility, MC 218.

Idea Swap Sessions (CETL)

Looking for a way to connect and share ideas about teaching, learning, working in higher ed? Join one or all idea swap sessions for a teaching demo and lightly structured conversation on the designated topic. All sessions are held **Online for easy access (waiting room, no passcode)**.

[Thurs Oct 12](#), 9-10 am, Teaching Demo - Oral STEM Exams (Dale Buske, COSE; Rebecca Crowell, CHWP)

[Thurs Nov 9](#), 10-11 am, Teaching Demo - AI modified assignment (Emil Towner, HBS)

[Thurs Dec 7](#), 10-11 am, Teaching Demo – Liquid syllabi (Maegan Jones, CLA) + changes for next semester.

Lunch & Learn (SCSU Online)

Bring your lunch and join the SCSU Online team for these short workshops & discussion on an element of online instruction, community building, or student engagement.

Wed Oct 25 & Wed Nov 8, 12-1 pm, MC 218

SCSU Women's Center

Thurs, Nov 2, 4 pm AMC, Mississippi Room

Heather Brown, *Gender, Weight, and Learning: Understanding Challenges, Supporting Students*.

NED Courses

Oct 16-Nov 5 (register by Oct 13) [Hacking your course assessments](#)

Oct 23-Nov 12 [Culturally Responsive Pedagogy](#)

Interested in discussing this book?

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (by Zaretta Hammond)

[Sign up here](#) and you will be contacted re: dates for discussion, based on group availability.

TEACHING IRL @ SCSU

ORAL EXAMS IN STEM

Several SCSU faculty use oral exams as formative or summative assessments of student knowledge. Here's what students in **Dale Buske's Calculus and Rebecca Crowell's Hearing Measurement classes** are saying:

In STEM...it's important to learn to communicate your thought processes. [Oral exams are] testing a different way to show your knowledge.

Owen Lewis, Calculus Learning Assistant

You're not just judged on what you write, you have the chance to explain it...People were skeptical about it at first, but everybody comes out smiling.

Viola Oki-Ezealah, Calculus Student

The way Dr. Crowell prepares her students for the exam, I knew how to look at charts, numbers, and a case history to arrive at an accurate conclusion...I left the oral exam with more than a good grade, but the confidence that I can take on daunting clinical tasks even as an undergraduate student.

Rhian Smith, Hearing Measurement Student

SOTL-INFORMED TEACHING

LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

Teaching and learning changes accelerated during the pandemic shutdowns. **SoTL research is helping us understand actionable changes to support student success post pandemic.** Donham and colleagues (2022) researched STEM student views of effective/supportive teaching practices during pandemic learning. They identified these teaching recommendations to start, stop, or continue.

<https://doi.org/10.1128/jmbe.00268-21>

COURSE ATTRIBUTES

Start. Use weekly modules to organize content, including an initial module introducing yourself and the course framework.

Stop. Avoid unstructured online discussions boards. Faculty or peer-facilitated discussions were more effective.

Continue. Use multiple low-stakes assignments or quizzes to support course learning outcomes.

COMMUNITY & BELONGING

Start. Create spaces for organic social interactions before, during, and after class (e.g. check-ins, grounding moments, etc.).

Stop. Avoid sending multiple non-urgent announcements; send out a single, routine weekly update.

Continue. Maintain flexibility in class policies to show understanding of students.

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

Start. Pre-record (short) lectures via zoom or another video platform.

Stop. Don't assume students have access to reliable technology. Tell them about support options such as [SCSU's library room reservations for online classes.](#)

Continue. Use zoom for chat, polling, recordings, office hours.

Do these ideas look familiar? They should. They share a Venn Diagram with Equity by Design and other quality instructional practices (ACUE, QM, NED).



#TEACHERS ARE HUMAN

WORKING WITH OUR CONDITIONED EMBODIED PATTERNS

Guest writer: Beth Berila, Ph.D.

We are all holding a great deal this semester. The ongoing impacts of COVID, years of campus resources being cut, current retrenchments and position elimination alongside the need to do more with less, world events such as attacks on Critical Race Theory and LGBTQ communities, especially trans folx. The impacts are likely different for different people, but we are all holding a lot.

Simultaneously, we care about students and what them to do well. And we ourselves deserve to also do well.

We all have conditioned, socialized patterns that arise when meeting challenging situations. *How* we react will be different for each of us, but we all have patterns. **Getting to know our patterns lets us work with them in more intentional ways.** For instance, when I am overly anxious, I get in my head; I second guess myself, and I lose connection with my more centered embodied ways of knowing and being.

What are your “go-to” patterns of reacting? See if you can explore with curiosity, not judgment. Our patterns developed to try to take care of our safety, dignity, and belonging.

The question is, *do they still serve us?* Are we showing up the way we want to when caught in our patterns. Maybe yes; maybe no. Only you will know.

When we explore our patterns, we can work with them more intentionally and, to some degree at least, show up with greater intentionality.

PRACTICING EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

ACTIONABLE IDEAS TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

[October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). The 2023 Theme is "Advancing Access and Equity." For us teachers, **it's a good time to do a self-check on accessibility of your practices.** Not sure where to start? Here are some starting points to improve accessibility. **These changes benefit individuals with a range of conditions such as visual impairment, ADHD, Autism,**

Dyslexia, etc.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION, MICROSOFT WORD, AND POWERPOINT:

1. Use accessible type fonts (e.g. Tahoma, Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman), in a text size the user can control, with high contrast between colors.
2. Do not use color alone to convey meaning.
3. Write in plain language.
4. Group similar content together in paragraphs; use bulleted or numbered lists
5. Link hyperlinks with meaningful names like [accessibility essentials checklist](#) vs. "click here." Reserve underlining for hyperlinks only.
6. Include alternative text for all images using accurate and concise descriptions.
7. In Outlook, check your email message for accessibility before you send it. For Outlook 2021, select **Review>Check Accessibility>Errors**. Often the errors are small and easy to correct. For example, the logos (e.g. SCSU; LinkedIn) in my email signature did not include alternate text. Fixed in 2 min!
8. In Word documents, use heading structure from the "styles" feature to mark heading levels.
9. In Power Point, check the reading order within slides to make sure information follows a logical order in screen readers. Select **Review>Check Accessibility** then look in the **Warnings** section for **Check reading order>Verify object order**. Drag an object up or down to change the order.
10. Once you have finished creating your slides, select **Review>Check Accessibility** to identify errors or warning in specific slides.
11. Turn on closed captioning for PowerPoint (Office 365) and all videos in face-to-face or online courses.

SOME MORE RESOURCES

- Volpe Horii & Springborg's Open Access Photobook – [What Teaching Looks Like](#) with many photos from MinnState Schools.
- [Faculty of Color Welcome Book — Inter Faculty Organization \(ifo.org\)](#)
- [Tips to support students in distress](#) and resources through the SCSU [Husky Assistance and Care Act Team](#)

CETL SEEKS FEEDBACK

- Are you new to campus?
- Teaching a single class?
- Shifting departments?
- Teaching in a different format?

Please share your questions, ideas, and feedback to CETL using [this link](#) or the QR code.



THE CETL TEAM

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