[The] Jack pine...in the calligraphy of its shape against the sky is written strength of character and perseverance, the survival of wind, drought, cold, heat, disease; all made more challenging by the harsh restrictions and meager resources of its rocky hold upon the earth.

**Yet here it is rooted, here it stands…It speaks of a rugged humility, wholeness and harmony, integrity that comes from being what you are and belonging where you are**.

- Douglas Wood, Fawn Island

Photo Attribution: Joshua Mayer from Madison, WI, USA, CC BY-SA 2.0

## CETL – We're here for YOU!

How is 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

**Student Success & Retention Summit**
Join Academic Affairs, Strategic Enrollment Management, and Division of Student Affairs for updates and dedicated to discussion about providing "individualized support to student success."
**Thursday, Nov 16, 2-4:30 pm, AMC Cascade**
https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/95176080689; *Passcode: 315527*

## Instructor Idea Swap (CETL)

Looking for a way to connect and share ideas about teaching, learning, working in higher ed? Join an Idea swap for a teaching demo and lightly structured conversation. All sessions are held **Online for easy access (waiting room, no passcode). Post event recordings are available.**

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

Missed an Idea Swap? Here are video links from past sessions:
- Oct 2023- Dale Buske Oral Exams in Calculus
- Nov 2023 - Emil Towner, Reconfiguring Assignments using AI as a Teaching Tool

*We're looking for spring semester teaching demos. Contact us if you have a method to share.*

## 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 Dec 6, 12-1 pm, MC 218**

Take a **NED Webinar or Online Course**

# TEACHING IRL @ SCSU

## OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
Co-authors: Katie Kuiper & Janet Tilstra
Hearing buzz about OERs, but not sure where to start? Here are some facts & ideas:

## Facts

Many students have to choose between basic needs & course materials - COST matters.

- 64.2% of college students did not purchase a required textbook due to the high cost (AAC & U, 2023).
- 11% of college students skipped meals in order to afford books & course materials.

OERs can have a major impact on equity on a college campus (Colvard et al., Park, 2018)

- Students in courses solely using OER had higher GPAs than those in courses using traditional textbooks.
- DFW rates decreased in courses using OERs
- Non-Pell eligible|Pell-eligible student and non-white|white student GPA gaps narrowed in courses using OER.

OERs reduce financial burden AND ensure that every student has immediate access to the same materials

OERs empower educators to innovate in their teaching methods.

- OERs can incorporate multimedia, interactive elements, and allow instructors to continuously update materials to match course needs.
- Instructors can ADOPT, ADAPT, or CREATE course materials (OERs).
- Creation of OERs can apply towards IFO Contract Article 22 in both criteria 1 (effective teaching) & 2 (scholarly/creative achievement or research).

  SCSU librarians are leaders in making course materials affordable and accessible to students.

## Getting Started with OER

- See the Affordability and OER libguide at SCSU library for ideas and resources
- Complete the self-paced D2L Course on Textbook Affordability. Faculty who successfully complete the course will earn a $250 stipend.
- Place textbooks or other materials for your course, on reserve at the Miller Center
- Use library licensed resources which are free to SCSU students such as ebooks; streaming media; articles
- Donate textbooks to the library at the end of the semester & invite students to do the same.
- Look on OER sites such as OpenStax, Open Textbook Library (peer reviewed), or broader, but less curated  Mason OER Metafinder
- If you are using articles in pdf format, make sure they are accessible for screen readers. If the pdf is a scanned image, screen readers will not be able to read the text. In Adobe Acrobat, look at  Tools>Accessibility>Accessibility Check>Accessibility Report.
- Schedule a consultation with SCSU's own, Affordability & Digital Initiates Librarian, Katie Kuiper. katie.kuipers@stcloudstate.edu

**Check you Mindset:**

**Academic Belonging & the Fundamental Attribution Error**

Author: Janet Tilstra

Each student's sense of connection, motivation, and achievement is shaped by both institutional and academic factors. **At the heart of academic identity is the Faculty-Student relationship**. **Small actions from teaching faculty influence academic identity (for better or worse).** If it's been a few years since you were in formal educational training, it's easy to lose sight of the impact your words, actions, and teaching practices have on students. If your own learning experiences were in highly competitive academic settings, the context of teaching here, at SCSU, a regional comprehensive university, may feel quite different – even frustrating at first. Henderson's (2006) text, *Teaching at The People's University* (2006) was impactful for me. At state comprehensives, **we're in the business, not just of IDENTIFYING talent, but of CULTIVATING it.**

**An important first step to support student belonging is to check your mindset.** As humans **it's easy to attribute a problem as a fundamental, unchangeable character trait in someone else.** Think back to someone who cut you off in traffic…your first thought was probably something like, "UGH what a jerk!!"

You probably assumed the individual drives this way always (character trait). It's possible they were driving erratically because of a personal emergency, but that is not where our minds tend to go. In contrast, we tend to be more generous with ourselves and attribute behaviors to situational factors (e.g. I was late grading because I had so many things pulling at my time). **Psychologists label this pattern the Fundamental Attribution Error. We are more likely to attribute other's behaviors to implicit character traits and our own behaviors to changeable situational circumstances.**

**If you hear yourself saying… "My students are…(unmotivated; lazy; unprepared; uptight; etc.)" take a beat. Consider whether you are attributing patterns to unchangeable character traits or identifying changeable behaviors.** Often these statements come up in moments of frustration (we're human!), but in order **to problem solve and make changes, a shift in mindset will help.**

## Mindset 1

My students are unmotivated. They don't care about their learning.

### *Solutions*

- Get new students
- Get a new career

## Mindset 2

**Describe behaviors….**

1. My students seem to be finishing their work at the last minute.
2. Student quality on this assignment was lower than I expected.

### *Solutions*

1. **Identify possible explanations for the behavior (hypotheses?).**
   - Assignments in multiple courses were due at the same time
   - Students did not understand the expectations for the assignment
   - Students are nervous to ask clarifying questions
   - Some part of the content is confusing
   - Students believe they can complete an assignment at the last minute (mindset doesn't match university coursework)
   - Students lack organizational tools to complete assignments in stages
2. **Check out (confirm or refute) your hypothesis**
   - Anonymous feedback from students is a good starting point
   - Muddiest point questions

3. **Make a change and see if there is a difference**
   - You may already have an idea of what to change
   - You can speak with an experienced colleague (or call CETL)
   - You could search in the SoTL Research or within your field's Disciplinary Based Pedagogy Research for ideas
   - Measure the effects of your change (student work; attendance; speaking up in class)

4. **If the first change doesn't work, try something else.** (repeat #3 as needed)

*Note: Mindset 2 is the heart and soul of scholarly teaching*
*You're a Teacher Scholar!*

### Holding Ourselves and Others When the World Is Hard

Guest Author: Beth Berila

It seems like there have been so many heavy world events in the past several years. As educators, part of our job is to hold space for that. To support with compassion, to deepen learning, to help build community.

Many of you are deeply skilled at this, so what I offer here are a few practices I try to engage in moments like this one. May they be of support to add to what you already do.

1. **Pause and Notice.** Business as usual can't go on without pausing to acknowledge and hold what is happening, what people are feeling in the moment. It is both a disrespect and people who are impacted often cannot learn until their pain is acknowledged.
2. **Offer practices for support.** This can be a breathing practice, a grounding or compassion practice, a connection practice. It could be a poem a song. Something that relates to what is happening and offers a supporting practice for ourselves and students.
3. **Educate ourselves.** We may not know all the ins and outs of what is happening. The events in Gaza and Israel are long-standing and deeply complex. Taking some time to educate ourselves and our students is a way to honor the situation.
4. **Practice not knowing.** Sometimes hard events have simple answers but most of the time they do not. This may not be the time for solutions, and even if it is, better people than I have tried to find them. How to feel, honor, connect, without clear knowing is also a practice.
5. **Take action where possible and doing so can help**. Many people heal through organizing. So what do our communities, and those most impacted need? Where/how can we help?
6. **Apply the course content where it can support the moment**. For those of us who are teaching courses that are directly relevant to what is happening, we can directly apply tools of social justice to the current moment.
7. **Support ourselves** as teachers, program leaders, and facilitators. We often hold space for others, but we, too, are in the moment. What do WE need in order to continue supporting others? This is particularly important if we are part of the identity group(s) being targeted by the events of the moment.

In one of my classes, we are reading Dr. Shawn A. Ginwright's book, *The Four Pivots: Reimaging Justice, Reimagining Ourselves. He quotes Benjamin McBride asking a question that I have been deeply pondering:*

*Who do we need to become...to meet this moment? ...to heal and deepen connection?*

# PRACTICING EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

**GRADING FOR EQUITY**

It's the final stretch of the semester and you are probably reviewing some of your instructional practices. Let's talk grading. How can course grading be more meaningful to both instructors and students?

Check out this quick read from Steve Mintz, (InsideHigherEd.com) or resources from the Bok Center on grading and giving student feedback. Below, are a few key points from these sources.

**Determine what you wish to grade**

- Process (thoughts and application)?
- Effort?
- Active engagement?
- Progress from starting point?
- Outcomes?

**Weave course assessment throughout the semester**

- Before the semester starts – position yourself as someone who will provide trustworthy, helpful feedback.
- During the semester – create low stakes assignments early on (graded or ungraded) to let students get a sense of your expectations, style, and receive feedback on their work.
- Use rubrics to communicate standards. There is a sweet spot between too vague and too prescriptive, but rubrics clarify expectations for student.
- When responding to student work.
  - Re-read the prompt and rubric before grading.
  - Make notes as you grade.
  - List specific strengths first.
  - Address areas of improvement using examples from the rubric to provide actionable guidance to the student.
  - Limit your feedback to 3-5 areas that students can focus on as top priorities.
  - Avoid using the word "but." (Instead write 2 separate statements: The thesis of this paper was clearly stated. ~~(BUT)~~ Make sure to include specific examples to illustrate your points.)

**Explore grading models.**

Assessment specialists advocate these approaches to equitable grading:

- **Standards-based (or competency) grading**. Students demonstrate proficiency on course objectives
- **Achievement-based (or contract) grading**. Grades are based on how far student go beyond minimal expectations

- **Mastery-based grading**. Students retake assignments until acceptable mastery is achieved.
- **Specifications grading**. Detailed specifications are outlined for each assignment and students are required to show they have met these specifications.

## SOME MORE RESOURCES

1. [These podcasts from Teaching in Higher Ed](#) – Episodes on Grading and Assessment of Learning
2. [This NED Educational Development Digest on Interleaving, Retrieval Practice, and Using Intelligent Agents to Create a Culture of Caring](#)
3. [This TED talk on the Power of Not Yet](#) and Believing You Can Improve (Carol Dweck)

## CETL SEEKS FEEDBACK

**ISO QUESTIONS & IDEAS**
- 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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