



TEACHING AND LEARNING SPOTLIGHT

Newsletter of Eastern's Center for Teaching, Learning, & Assessment

Issue 1 • November 2023

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA) at Eastern! These periodic newsletters will feature information about faculty development opportunities at Eastern and beyond, information on specific pedagogical topics, brief reviews of books on pedagogy, spotlights of innovative teaching at Eastern, and other topics.

In This Issue

- [A Note From the CTLA Director: Where is the CTLA and what does the CTLA do?](#)
- [CTLA website and resources for challenging conversations](#)
- [CTLA Lending Library](#)
- [Book spotlight: Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom](#)
- [Resources on AI](#)
- [Faculty development opportunities](#)

A Note From Julia DeLapp, the CTLA Director

For those of you who don't know me, I've been at Eastern for 18 years, serving as the founding director of the Center for Early Childhood Education, a research and professional development institute, as well as coordinator of the Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships. I moved into my new CTLA office in the Library in the middle of July. I've enjoyed meeting and talking with colleagues across the university in this new role, and I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months. In the first issue of this newsletter, I wanted to let you know what I've been up to for the past 4 months and what is in store for the CTLA.

Where is the CTLA?

The CTLA is located in room 425 of the Library, just down the hallway from the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). Our space features a conference table and a lending library (and a Keurig coffee maker). Faculty can stop by to chat, to enjoy a free cup of coffee, or to borrow a book.

What Does the CTLA Do?

The CTLA was created to support faculty in developing high quality, innovative, and inclusive teaching and learning experiences to meet the diverse learning needs of Eastern's students. But how will the CTLA do that?



A view of the CTLA's meeting space and lending library.

Over the past 4 months, I've been gathering information from faculty and staff about faculty development needs to determine the most important areas to focus on in the next few years—and the best methods for providing faculty development. I've met with department chairs, a few academic departments, early career faculty, groups such as JEDI and the Diversity and Social Justice Council, and individual faculty members. (I would love to come to your department meeting to discuss faculty development at any time – just [reach out!](#))

In addition, I've met with student-facing staff to learn more about the student experience on campus, including the Office of Accessibility Services, the Intercultural Center, the Pride Center, the Women's Center, Opportunity Programs, and the Academic Success Center. I'll also be meeting with student groups soon.

These conversations have led to a long list of potential faculty development needs. To help prioritize these needs, all full-time and part-time teaching faculty should have received a survey on Tuesday (11/14) to gauge interest in a range of faculty development topics and formats. Survey results will help inform some of the services the CTLA will offer. But based on feedback so far, the CTLA expects to offer a few different types of opportunities in the spring, including both formal and informal opportunities to discuss and work with peers on specific pedagogical topics, high impact practices, and ELAC learning outcomes. If you haven't already, please take a moment to complete the [survey](#) to register the topics that are most important to you and the format that best suits your own learning.

CTLA Website

The [CTLA website](#) is now live. The site currently has teaching resources on a few select topics, including resources for [navigating challenging conversations in the classroom](#). The page includes strategies for both planning discussions around controversial topics and responding to hot button moments that arise spontaneously in the classroom. Content on other topics will be added over time, and feedback and suggestions are welcome and encouraged.

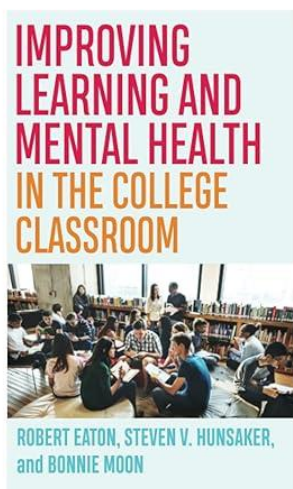
Based on feedback from early career faculty, the website features a section on Faculty Resources, which includes various funding (and award) opportunities faculty can apply for, on-campus resources that can support teaching and advising roles, and campus resources faculty can share with students.

CTLA Lending Library

The CTLA Lending Library features 75 books on pedagogy, the science of learning, and educational development. Faculty can borrow books at any time by filling out a very simple [borrowing form](#) (also available on-site by scanning a QR code – many thanks to CIT for helping set this up). The [list of available books](#) is available on the CTLA website.



If you have a duplicate or no-longer-needed book related to teaching that you believe other faculty could benefit from, we accept donations! We're also happy to receive [brief reviews](#) of excellent books on teaching topics.



Spotlight on a Book in the CTLA Lending Library

Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom

By Robert Eaton, Steven V. Hunsaker, and Bonnie Moon

©2023 by West Virginia University Press ([see publisher's description](#))

Written by a Spanish professor, a math professor, and a religion professor, this book grew out of a "Helping, Not Hindering" project of faculty who wanted to explore how professors can affect the mental health of their students. One author notes, "I just want to avoid creating crises for students who struggle with anxieties large and small. For me, it isn't about making the college... stress free for students; rather, it is about learning to avoid unintentionally increasing the tension that students already experience."

Book chapters are as follows:

1. Why anxiety and depression matter for learning
2. Become natural mentors
3. Design courses with students and mental health challenges in mind
4. Awaken students' innate drive to learn
5. Foster emotional resilience
6. Build community
7. Avoid pitfalls with active learning
8. Promote wellness practices

Interested in borrowing this book? Stop by the CTLA Lending Library in room 425 of the library, or [request the book](#) (CTLA book #27) to be sent to you through interoffice mail.

Write a Book Recommendation

Would you like to write a brief recommendation of a book focused on pedagogy for this newsletter? Please contact Julia DeLapp at delappj@easternct.edu.

Resources on AI

Many faculty have been grappling with how to navigate teaching, assignment design, and assessment in the age of ChatGPT and other generative artificial intelligence tools. The CTLA website has some initial [resources](#) you may find useful, including links to free recordings of presentations, guidance for syllabus statements, and tips for intentional use of AI in the classroom. In addition, see free webinars below.

COPLAC survey on AI

A group of faculty, staff, and administrators from across COPLAC have met this fall to discuss liberal arts skills and generative AI. To better understand how we might work as a consortium of public liberal arts

colleges and help each other address some of the creative, ethical, pedagogical, legal, and societal implications of generative artificial intelligence, COPLAC is asking interested faculty to complete [a brief survey](#) by November 27 to help shape programming in 2024.

Faculty Development Opportunities

Eastern opportunities

- Spring CTLA Calendar: Information about spring 2024 faculty development opportunities will be coming soon. Stay tuned!
- Rita Malenczyk, Director of Eastern's Writing Program, will be holding her annual wintersession workshop for FT and PT faculty planning to teach writing-intensive courses on January 8 and 9, from 9:30-12:30 each day, on Zoom. The workshop will cover assignment design, response to student writing, and other matters. If you're interested in attending, contact Rita directly at malenczykr@easternct.edu.

Free opportunities

- The Office for Teaching and Learning at the University of Rhode Island has issued a Call for Proposals for the [Innovative Education Conference](#) (March 27, 2024), a free, fully virtual, one-day event. The theme of this year's conference is "*Inclusive Teaching in an Ever-Changing Learning Environment.*" **Proposals are due December 8.**
- The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) will be hosting a free webinar entitled "[AI and Higher Education: Implications for Learning, Curricula, and Institutions](#)" on January 10, 2024, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.
- The California Outcomes & Assessment Coordinator Hub (COACHes) hosts free Friday SLO Talks on Student Learning Outcomes. This fall's focus was on Artificial Intelligence. Recordings of all past presentations are available for free on their website, including "[Writing Instruction in the age of generative AI: Evolving practices for instructors](#)," "[AI and Assessment of Student Learning](#)," and "[The Future of Grading: Using Artificial Intelligence for Formative and Summative Assessments](#)."

Other opportunities

- [AAC&U Annual Meeting](#) (January 17-19 in Washington, DC)
- [AAC&U Forum on Digital Innovation](#): Leveraging Innovative Digital Practices to Ensure All Students Learn and Succeed (one-day virtual event on February 9)
- The [Transformative Learning Conference](#) (March 28-29 in OK) is accepting proposals through **December 1.**

Newsletter Feedback and Acknowledgements

Do you have ideas for content for future newsletters? Please send an email to Julia DeLapp at delappj@easternct.edu. Thanks to the Instructional Faculty Development Committee for their suggestions so far!