TEACHING AND LEARNING SPOTLIGHT

Newsletter of Eastern's Center for Teaching, Learning, & Assessment
Issue 6 • April 2024

In the final weeks of the semester, the CTLA will be requesting feedback from faculty about offerings this spring. If you attended a Teaching & Learning Conversation, participated in a Faculty Learning Community, or attended a workshop, keep an eye out for a brief survey asking about what was and wasn't worthwhile. Your feedback will inform future offerings of the CTLA. At the same time, calls will soon go out seeking ideas for future learning communities and conversations. Please consider submitting a proposal for next year!

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May Faculty Development Workshops

The CTLA is excited to announce 4 workshops for the week following commencement. Each workshop will last 3 hours with an optional lunch before or after the session. Faculty may register for 1, 2, 3, or all 4 workshops. Workshops will address the following topics:

Designing Meaningful Assignments

Tuesday, May 21, 9 am – 12 pm (optional lunch from 12 – 1 pm)
Led by Courtney Broscious, Associate Professor of Political Science

Designing LAC 101 Learning Experiences to Address ELAC Learning Outcomes

Tuesday, May 21, 1 pm – 4 pm (optional lunch from 12 – 1 pm)
Led by David Pellegrini, ELAC Seminar Coordinator and Professor of Theatre

Infusing Sustainability Into Course Design Across the Disciplines

Wednesday, May 22, 9 am – 12 pm (optional lunch from 12 – 1 pm)
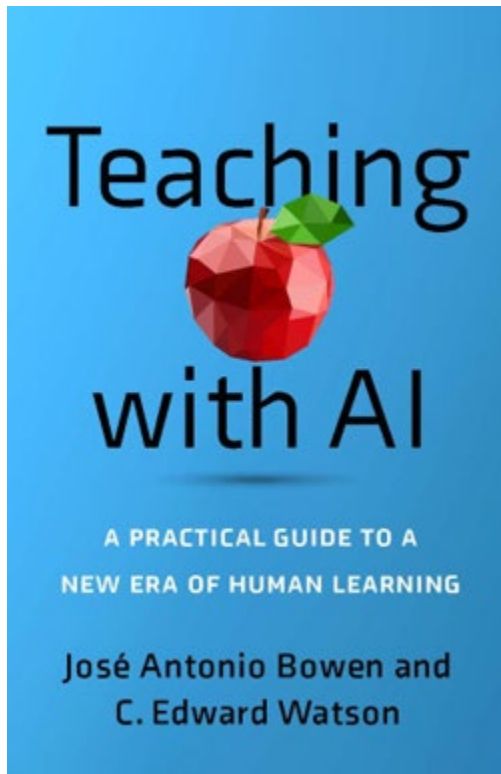*Led by Patricia Szczys, Executive Director, Institute for Sustainability*

Hope in a Time of Monsters: Supporting Faculty and Student Mental Health

Wednesday, May 22, 1 pm – 4 pm (optional lunch from 12 – 1 pm)
Presentation by Sarah Rose Cavanagh, Senior Associate Director for Teaching and Learning, Simmons University
Facilitation by Kristalyn Salters-Pedneault, Professor, Psychological Science

For workshop descriptions and registration information, visit the CTLA website.

Spotlight on a Book in the CTLA Lending Library

Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning

By José Antonio Bowen and C. Edward Watson
© 2024 by Johns Hopkins University Press (see publisher's description)

Written by the authors of *Teaching Naked* and *Teaching Naked Techniques*, this book provides ideas and guidance for using AI as a teaching tool. In the book's introduction, the authors explain their decision to focus on practical uses of AI. "On almost every page, we could have, and maybe should have, dived into ethical problems and ambiguities. We are sure someone will write that book." (p.2).

The book is divided into 3 sections: Thinking with AI, Teaching with AI, and Learning with AI. Chapters cover topics such as how AI has already affected the workplace, developing AI literacy, concerns about cheating, creating course policies, grading considerations, and designing assessments and assignments in the age of AI. Each chapter includes dozens of suggested prompts.

Although the book won't be officially released until April 30, the CTLA was able to pre-order a copy (and get it signed by one of the authors at the recent AAC&U conference!) See box below for instructions if you'd like to borrow a copy immediately.

> To borrow this book, stop by the CTLA Lending Library in room 425 of the Eugene Smith Library, or fill out a request to have the book sent to you via interoffice mail (enter **book #147** under question 1).

Access Matters (A periodic column from OAS)

End of Semester Supports for Students

With finals just around the corner, we at the Office of AccessAbility Services thought we could offer some strategies to help your students meet the academic challenges common at this time of year. Often, simply acknowledging their stress helps. Teaching students how to employ strategies to help redirect their focus constructively is sometimes all the support that may be necessary. It is important to make students aware they have access to support options. Here are some common symptoms of stress you may notice or your students may share with you:

- Physical – recurring headaches, difficulty sleeping, digestive problems, back pain.
- Psychological – anxiety, depression, comprehension difficulties, memory blocks, low motivation.
- Behavioral – absences, lack of communication, not meeting deadlines in a timely manner.

What You Can Do to Help

Some tips for the classroom include:

- Communicate clear expectations about current academic standing, upcoming deadlines, and grading.
- Make use of study guides.
- Remind students how you can support them.
- Consider offering make-ups proactively to avoid a pass/fail outcome if possible.
- Consider resubmissions if possible.

You can additionally encourage students to:

- Create study habits like finding a quiet and comfortable space to study around campus or pairing up with a buddy.
- Hold themselves accountable, or practice study strategies (like the Pomodoro Timer Technique). Learn more and [book an appointment with an Eastern Student Support Program (ESSP) Coach](#) for help with this.
- Attend the upcoming information session: *What's your Study Style* with ESSP Coach Julia Brown (April 26th and May 3rd 2:00 – 4:00 in Science Room 134).
- Build in fun and relaxing study breaks like going for a short walk, exercising, and meditating.

Offer Additional Academic and Holistic Supports

You can also encourage students to take the time to review [Eastern Campus Resources](#) to find one that may be suitable. If they feel their stress is insurmountable and they are unable to manage it on their own, encourage them to reach out for professional help. Students do not have to experience this feeling alone.

External Faculty Development Opportunities

Free (or almost free) opportunities

- May 13: Southern Connecticut State University is hosting **Focus on the First Year**, a regional conference on the first-year experience, at Southern's campus in New Haven. Registration is $25.
- May 29, 2 – 3 pm: **Tapping AI to Increase Transparency, Relevance, and Feedback in Teaching: Providing Options for Sustaining Effort and Persistence**. The 5th webinar in a series on Universal Design for Learning will discuss how using generative AI can affect efforts to create inclusive learning environments.
- June 12 – 14: The Corella & Bertram F. Bonner Foundation is hosting a virtual **Summer Institute on Teaching Social Action**. The institute will introduce faculty to an approach for incorporating student-led social action campaigns into a course. During the 3-day institute, participants will draft a syllabus and develop a teaching plan for supporting student campaigns launched mid-semester. Applications to participate are due June 1.
- June 13 – 15: **The Grading Conference** is an online conference for faculty to learn about grading practices that best support student learning; promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the classroom; and enhance student and faculty classroom experiences. The conference is organized

by eight faculty from different institutions and supported by the National Science Foundation. Registration is $50.

- July 31, 2 -3 pm: **Applying AI and UDL for Inclusive Learning: Perceptibility, Flexibility, Accessibility**. The 7th webinar in a free series on Universal Design for Learning will discuss how to use AI to meet the needs of learners by customizing the way educational content is presented.

Other opportunities

- May 20 – 22: The International Teaching Learning Cooperative is hosting one of the **Lilly Conferences** in Austin, TX. This year's theme is "Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning." Faculty participants will create an individualized professional development action plan based on what they learn during the conference.
- June 3 – 7: The University of Delaware is hosting a virtual **Problem-Based Learning Workshop**. The workshop runs from 9 am to noon each and includes daily assignments.
- June 5 – 7: The Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching is hosting its **annual ICED Conference** at the United States International University Africa in Nairobi, Kenya (online options also available). The theme of the conference is "Advancing Higher Education Ecosystems for Competency Development."
- June 13 – 14: **National Higher Education Teaching Conference**. The annual conference of the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) will be held in Minneapolis, MN. The theme of this year's conference is "Accelerating Student Success and Belonging."
- June 17 – 18: For Deeper Learning is hosting **College & University PBL with Inquiry and Services**, a workshop for faculty interested in implementing problem-based learning in their courses.
- October 2 – 4: The **International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association Conference** will be held at Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha, South Africa. The theme for this year's conference is "Universities as change agents in society: Imagining social innovation for sustainable futures."
- October 27 – 29: Indiana University Indianapolis is hosting **The Assessment Institute**, an annual conference in Indianapolis.

Opportunities to Share Your Teaching and Learning Expertise

- Due April 29: Elon University is accepting proposals for its 20th annual **Teaching & Learning Conference**, a free, virtual conference to be held August 13. This year's theme is "Divergent Teaching: Empathy, Rigor, and Beyond."
- Due April 30: Kennesaw State University's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is accepting proposals for the 31st annual **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Summit**, to be held virtually September 19-20. The interdisciplinary summit is designed to help faculty at all levels of SoTL experience grow as teacher-scholars.
- Due May 10: AAC&U is accepting proposals for their 2024 **Conference on Global Learning**, to be held October 24-26 in Washington, D.C.
- Due June 17: The **Original Lilly Conference on College Teaching** is currently accepting proposals for their annual conference, to be held November 21-23 at Miami University in Oxford, OH. This year's theme is "Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning."