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Correspondent

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Marci's Messages

New Gradebook features coming to Canvas in May

Canvas has been revising all the gradebook features during the past couple years. Since the current Canvas gradebook will be deprecated in June or July, SWOSU will be changing to the New Gradebook on May 7. All grades will transfer over appropriately.

Go to <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-13745> to view the guide for the New Gradebook.

The ability for faculty to replace a student's final grade calculated through Canvas activities with a manually entered grade is in the near future. This change allows instructors to adjust the final grade for a student if needed in the course, such as before sending course grades to a student information system. This feature cannot be turned off once it is enabled. SWOSU currently does not send grades from the LMS to the PX; we may be able to do this in the future with Colleague.

CETL Recruiting Participants for Class 2 SWOSU Instructional Excellence Academy



The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is recruiting participants for the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Instructional Excellence Academy **Class 2**.

The SWOSU Instructional Excellence Academy (SWIEA) will begin its second class in August 2019.

The SWIEA is a two-semester hybrid learning experience for 10 faculty members in each class, encompassing both online and in-person activities. Class 2 participants will begin in the fall semester.

Academy website:

<https://www.swosu.edu/administration/distance/instructional-excellence-academy/index.aspx>

Application:

<https://www.swosu.edu/administration/distance/instructional-excellence-academy/application.aspx>

Important dates:

First Thursday of April (April 4) – 12:00 p.m.

Course launch (course experience demonstration of the course for interested faculty and administrators) – Cookies/water available

Third Friday of April (April 19)-(5:00 p.m.)

Class 2 Application Deadline

Last Friday of April (April 26)

Faculty notified of acceptance into the program

IN THIS ISSUE..... Page

- Marci's Messages 1
 - *New Gradebook features coming to Canvas in May*
 - *CETL Recruiting Participants for Class 2 of the SWOSU Instructional Excellence Academy (SWIEA)*
- Focus on SWOSU Faculty 2
 - *Mr. Warren Akers*
- 2019 Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit 2
- 5Cs & R Luncheon Series 3
- Workshops Available
 - *CETL Workshops with Nathan*..... 3
 - *CETL Workshops with Mapopa* 3
 - *CETL Workshops with Steve*..... 4
 - *Online Learning Consortium Workshops are available* 4
 - *LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor Workshops*..... 4
 - *Respondus 4.0 (test making) videos* 4
- Free Webinars Available
 - *Free Professional Development Webinars* 4
 - *Four Strategies to Enhance your Presentation Skills: The Academic's Guide*
 - *Using StudentLingo to Help Meet Curricular & Co-Curricular Outcomes*
 - *Supporting The Transition to College: Partnering with Parents & Empowering Students*
 - *A Strengths-Based Approach: Foundations, Benefits & Outcomes*
- Online Course Development Workshop 5
- Complementary webinar
 - *Teaching Content & Critical Thinking Skills Simultaneously*5
- Insights from CETL's Teaching and Learning Coordinators
 - *Mapopa's Musings*..... 5
 - *Guiding Learners to Engage Online*
 - *Ray's Reflections* 6
- FacultyFocus.com
 - *Plagiarize Proof Your Writing Assignments*6
 - *Office Hours Alternative Resonates with Students*..... 7
- Team Contacts for CETL..... 7



Focus on SWOSU Faculty

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is spotlighting faculty members monthly in a series of articles called "Focus on SWOSU Faculty". These faculty have been selected as doing inspiring active learning activities in their courses and have agreed to share some of their activities with the SWOSU community. One SWOSU faculty member will be spotlighted per month who is using transformative and other exciting active learning methods in their teaching which advances student learning at SWOSU. This month, CETL is spotlighting Mr. Warren Akers, Department of Mathematics as CETL's April 2019 spotlighted faculty.



Warren Akers was born and raised in Southeast Alaska. Although the geography encouraged outdoor activities, the climate made it necessary to have indoor types of interests. Warren became an avid reader. As a child, non-fiction made up a very large part of his reading and he developed an intense curiosity of the world around him. Even today, Warren's reading includes large amounts of non-fiction, especially history. This curiosity is what actually led him to

go to college -- as he tells people around him, there was only one reason he chose to go to University: "I wasn't done learning," says Warren. He attended the University of Alaska in Fairbanks where he earned degrees in physics and mathematics.

He then went to the University of Colorado in Boulder where he worked as a research assistant at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics where he also eventually earned a Master's degree in physics. Warren then spent several years teaching secondary school physics in Tanzania as a Peace Corps volunteer.

"The Peace Corps was a very rewarding experience, on that I always recommend to others who are considering" observes Warren.

When he returned to the United States, he enrolled in the University of Oregon in Eugene studying functional analysis. He later left Eugene with a Master's degree in mathematics. By this time, he had discovered that he enjoyed teaching. Although teaching in Africa suggested the possibility of a teaching career, it was Mr. Akers' experience as a teaching assistant in Eugene that finalized his decision to teach at the post-secondary level. Mathematics turned out to be more logical choice for Warren than the physical sciences because mathematics problems were much closer to the types of logic problems that he has always enjoyed solving. Between viewing mathematics as logic problems needing to be solved and the satisfaction he has when he can help someone understand the core ideas behind them, made teaching mathematics the obvious choice.

Warren Akers' use of active learning in the classroom has developed mostly for the GE and developmental courses here at SWOSU. He notes that many of the incoming students are not as prepared to succeed in a university-level mathematics course, as one would like them to be. His observation is that most have a very basic understanding of what they need to do, but they need much more practice on the tasks at hand than they have done in the past. For that reason, most of Warren Akers' active learning consists of having them work on



problem sets themselves where someone - other members of their work groups or himself- can give them immediate feedback. The purpose, according to Mr. Akers, is to develop and reinforce the basic skills that they need for the course.

Warren goes on to point out that there are several components to this. One is that the students have to try to do as much of the work as possible and attempt to figure out as much as they can themselves. For this reason, he would usually step out of the room for ten to fifteen minutes to eliminate the temptation for them to immediately ask him for help when they become "stuck". It also forces them to find a group to work with when they do encounter difficulties. Warren says he has noticed that students will often take the work more seriously when they see that their peers are engaged. Once he come back and sees that they are working, he then makes himself available to assist them when they need help. In fact, once they are working on the problems, Mr. Akers can usually pass out an answer key so they can check their final answers. The immediate feedback is also important according to Mr. Akers. It helps to see that they have made an error right away and to correct it themselves (or to ask for assistance, if necessary) while the problem is fresh in their minds.

Warren explains that a large part of this collaborative assignment consists of more basic questions to reinforce the skills that are meant to be acquired. These basic questions will also include problems meant to catch very common errors. He expects that most students will spend most of the time to get through these. Some will not finish this part, but he does not intend for all the problems to be completed before the end of the class period.

For those whose understanding comes quicker, Warren would put some "advanced questions" at the end. These questions sometimes involve problems that take more care to solve and will very often be questions that they have not discussed in class but can be solved using the knowledge and skills that were learned. Sometimes, Mr. Akers will include questions that lead the student to a basic understanding of topics that are a little more advanced than is usually presented in the course. When done correctly, the faster students will find these problems interesting. In fact, Warren explains that he has noticed that the students who have less need to practice the basic questions will often jump right to the advanced questions.

Mr. Warren Akers concludes by confessing that unfortunately, he has not yet perfected this method and he considers it a "work in progress". However, he does contend that he noticed improvement in most students' abilities regardless of how much assistance they need or how little they can do on their own initially.

2019 Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit

The 2019 [Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit](#), a "blended" professional learning opportunity for educators in the State of Oklahoma will take place April 1 – 12, 2019 focusing on advancing excellence in online and blended learning, with particular emphasis on higher education settings. This opportunity is facilitated through the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Council for Online Learning Excellence](#).

There will be a wonderful schedule of professional learning opportunities focusing on trends, issues, and techniques for online and blended learning. The Summit includes [live online webinar sessions](#) and [on-demand lessons and resources](#) covering topics relevant for leaders and educators in Oklahoma. **The Summit is offered free of charge to participants.** To register for the summit and for more information about ways to participate, visit <http://www.onlineexcellence.onenet.net/>. You can also connect with other educators during the Summit by joining the [Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit Facebook group](#).

In conjunction with the Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit, the Academic Online Excellence Consortium Steering Committee is offering a free workshop for faculty. The session will be limited to 20 seats, so if you are interested please complete the registration as soon as possible.

Starting Strong in Online Teaching -- Thursday, April 4, 2019 | 2:30pm-4:30pm

Registration link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StartingStrong2019>

If you have never taught online, recently began teaching online, or would just like a refresher, consider joining us for this 2 hour session focused on helping educators begin their online teaching journey. The session will be interactive and include several examples. Some of the topics that will be covered are:

- Faculty readiness
- Needed technical skills and how to strengthen those skills
- Creating an online community
- Re-thinking the instructor's role in an online class
- Ideas to help student's start strong in an online class
- Examples of consistent organization & navigation

5Cs & R Luncheon Series

On March 26 and 27, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning continued the **5Cs & R Luncheon Series** in conjunction with the SWOSU Instructional Excellence Academy. The series features presentations from two SWOSU faculty related to one of six teaching components that can improve student learning in the classroom: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Community, Communication and Relevance.

The topic for March was **COLLABORATION** with Brett Chase and Nathan Brooks from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering Technology and Dr. Tami Moser from the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences presenting. Short presentations were provided on how they incorporate collaboration in their courses. After the presentations, those in attendance worked in small discussion groups to record various ways they can incorporate **COLLABORATION** into each of their own courses. It was great seeing and hearing the 44 faculty in attendance discussing how they could include collaboration in their classes and more importantly, glean ideas from others on how to update current assignments to incorporate **COLLABORATION**.

The next topic in the 5Cs & R Luncheon Series will be **COMMUNICATION** and is scheduled for September 2019. More information will be coming as we get closer to September.



Workshops Available for March

CETL Workshops with Nathan

DropBox Training

Nathan is taking DropBox training to the departments. Please call (3077) or email (Nathan.Thiessen@swosu.edu) and schedule a day and time for Nathan to come and do DropBox training especially how to link dropbox documents/videos/recordings to Canvas.

Basic Zoom Training

Contact Nathan for one-on-one Basic Zoom training. The training introduces faculty to all of the basic Zoom features. It is structured for the new Zoom user. Please call (3077) or email (nathan.thiessen@swosu.edu) and schedule a day and time for training.

Advanced Zoom Training

Contact Nathan for one-on-one Advanced Zoom training. The training introduces faculty to advanced Zoom features. It is structured for the experienced Zoom user. Please call (3077) or email (nathan.thiessen@swosu.edu) and schedule a day and time for training.

CETL Workshops with Mapopa

Using Attendance and Rollcall

In this workshop, we will hold an in-depth discussion on using Attendance and Rollcall in Canvas.

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshops via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshops via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Tuesday, April 16, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshops via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshops via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Tuesday, April 30, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshops via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Using Speedgrader, Docviewer and Turnitin

This three in one workshop walks faculty through using Speedgrader, making annotations using Docviewer and also managing Turnitin submitted assignments.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Wednesday, April 24, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

How to end a Semester in Canvas

This hands-on Workshop walks faculty through ending a course in Canvas at the end of a semester. The workshop covers steps such as export a copy of a course, exporting a copy of the gradebook, downloading student submissions, locking files and folders, removing unwanted courses from the drop-down menu, archiving conversations in the inbox and others.

Thursday, April 4, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Thursday, April 11, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>

Thursday, April 18, 2019 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/960339908>



CETL Workshops with Steve

Introduction To Upswing

In this workshop, you will learn the basics of Upswing.

Monday, April 8, 2019 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Monday, April 15, 2019 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Respondus Lockdown Browser

This workshop will help familiarize you with how to use and update the RLDB

Monday April 22, 2019 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Monday April 29, 2019 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Using Lynda.com

In this workshop, I will show you how to navigate Lynda.com

Thursday April 4, 2019 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Thursday April 11, 2019 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Thursday April 25, 2019 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join this workshop via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/9123629032>

Online Learning Consortium Workshops are Available

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has 20 scholarships available for faculty to attend Online Learning Consortium workshops. Go to <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/workshops/> to see the various workshops that are available. These workshops are not just for online faculty, there are topics that pertain to all areas.

If awarded, upon completion of the workshop, a certificate must be sent to CETL for their records. The cost of the workshops is \$170, so, if awarded and you cannot attend, please contact CETL as soon as possible (prior to the workshop) so that a scholarship may be awarded to another faculty member.

The following are examples of some of the workshops that are offered

- Creating Infographics for Learning,
- Designing with Accessibility in Mind,
- Designing a Flipped Classroom,
- Strategies to Improve Retention,
- Strategies to Increase Faculty Motivation,
- New to Online: Essentials Part 1-Getting Started,
- Exploring Open Educational Resources, Part 1,
- Creating Rubrics,
- Exploring Learning Analytics,
- Strategic Planning for Web Accessibility,
- And many, many more

If you are interested in applying for a scholarship to attend one of the following workshops, please complete the [Registration form](#).

LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor Workshops

Instructor Training for LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor: Prevent Cheating During Online Exams

This comprehensive training webinar is intended for instructors who use LockDown Browser and/or Respondus Monitor with online exams. Includes a detailed demonstration of both applications, including new enhancements that make Respondus Monitor even more effective and easy to use.

Thursday, April 11, 2019 1:00 p.m. CT

[Sign up Now](#)

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 2:00 p.m. CT

[Sign up Now](#)

Additional Videos

[Respondus Monitor Overview](#), [Preparing Your Exam for Respondus Monitor, Student Overview](#)



Respondus 4.0 Test Making Videos (transfer publisher test banks to Canvas)

[Creating and Formatting Questions with Respondus](#)
[Using Publisher Test Banks with Respondus](#)

[Importing Questions with Respondus](#)

Free Professional Development Webinars for Faculty

[Professional development for innovative educators.](#)

Four Strategies to Enhance your Presentation Skills: The Academic's Guide

When was the last time you attended a presentation from a colleague who displayed slides that were all bullet-point text and then just read aloud what was on the slides to everyone? In this free webinar from Innovative Educators, you'll learn how to avoid "death by presentation" and get your audience members—whether they are students, colleagues, campus leaders, or conference-session participants—engaged, enthused, and eager to learn more about your ideas.

We will explore what the best presenters do differently from most people, and you will learn four simple but profound ways to enhance:

- How you use the time you have
- What to do with visuals and text
- Where to put the details of your ideas
- When to interact with your listeners

Each of these key strategies is backed by the cognitive neuroscience of how human beings learn. While we won't dive as deep as, say, the acetylcholine and norepinephrine uptake pathways in the nucleus accumbens, we will tie each of the best practices to brain science and uncover why certain approaches lead to greater listener retention and engagement. In this session, you will definitely "get meta" and see all of the best-practice strategies enacted right in the webinar, so come prepared to interact, share, and up your information-presenting game

Thursday, March 14, 2019 2:00 pm CT

[Sign up Now](#)

Using StudentLingo to Help Meet Curricular & Co-Curricular Outcomes

Pierpont Community and Technical College serves 13 counties, often making the consistent delivery of curricular and co-curricular support services "spotty." This workshop will discuss how the college uses a single resource tool to not only support students across a vast service area but supports internal departments as well. Each workshop within the tool was aligned with our new Gen Ed outcomes/competencies, which fostered buy-in from our campus community and allowed us to best serve our students in a holistic fashion. We have also aligned the

workshops to HLC accreditation criteria with regard to the assessment of teaching and learning and co-curricular efforts on campus.

This webinar will share the story of one college's StudentLingo investment and its dividends. From General Education projects to using it as a welcome tool for prospective students, Pierpont Community & Technical College has earned college-wide support for this initiative. Learn from the college's Director of Advising & Assessment and a professor of Paralegal Studies how StudentLingo has been put to use in the classroom and beyond. Attendees will be encouraged to think about how their own colleges can "reuse/recycle" these ideas for recruiting, retention, and student success initiatives at their home institutions.

[Sign up Now](#)..... On Demand Training

Supporting The Transition To College: Partnering With Parents & Empowering Students

Parent involvement in higher education positively impacts student success and completion rates. Attend this webinar to learn about resources that institutions can use to partner with parents in supporting students.

[Sign up Now](#)..... On Demand Training

A Strengths-Based Approach: Foundations, Benefits & Outcomes

Overcoming deficits is an essential part of the fabric of our society. The stories we tell often feature the underdog who triumphs against all odds. Many organizations, schools, and families use a model that focuses on fixing weakness and ignoring strengths. However, decades of research show that going down the path of weakness fixing is the path of more resistance. Have you ever been told to "just keep trying" to do something that you are clearly not good at? Writing? Math? Public speaking? Being emotionally aware of people? These are talents. Some people have them; some do not. Trying to get better doing something that you do not have the talents for can be frustrating, time-consuming, and typically does not yield a good return on the investment of time and energy.

A strengths approach turns this idea on its head: you will get more return on your investment if you focus on what you have a natural talent for, what energizes and motivates you. People who are able to use their strengths are six times more likely to be engaged their jobs

We will discuss how to identify your strengths, how to leverage them, and be more productive, engaged, and happy.

[Sign up Now](#) On Demand Training

Course Development Workshop (OCD) with Mapopa

OCD is a fully online workshop, which gives faculty first-hand experience of teaching a fully online course. It makes faculty understand an online course as an environment whose basic rules are different from those of a physical classroom. The workshop introduces you to key concepts, including online course design, digital content planning and construction, communication management, and troubleshooting. Faculty will learn to plan, design, build, react, communicate, troubleshoot and connect in an entirely online environment. Most importantly, OCD gives faculty a hands-on opportunity to create and implement various aspects of their online course in the context of the Canvas interface. Faculty will receive a certificate from CETL upon completion of the OCD Workshop. Register by calling Ashley at extension 3149 or emailing ashley.walkup@swosu.edu.

Complimentary webinar: Teaching Content & Critical Thinking Skills Simultaneously

Key Takeaway: Participants will learn how to cover content in the humanities and social sciences while teaching critical thinking at the same time.

Challenge: Perhaps the biggest challenge to educators is to find time to teach students to think while covering course content. Often, this leads to content coverage at the expense of intellectual activities that enhance critical thinking. Moreover, some instructors assume that by covering content and asking challenging questions, students will attain critical thinking skills. The webinar will address these problems by providing a proven method to cover course content and enhance critical thinking skills simultaneously.

Overview: This webinar will provide attendees with concrete tools to learn how to teach critical thinking skills while covering content. By the end of the session, participants can expect to be able to create actual lesson plans based on content from any discipline in the Humanities or Social Sciences that will enhance critical thinking skills. Participants will also learn how these skills can be measured easily and accurately.

[Register Here](#)

Insights from CETL's Teaching and Learning Coordinators

Mapopa Musings By Dr. Mapopa Sanga

Guiding Learners to Engage Online

The student's role as an engaged learner develops over time (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). According to Conrad and Donaldson (2011), interaction and collaboration is not intuitive to many adult learners who have been educated in a predominantly lecture-based environment. Initially, a learner may be more comfortable in a passive student role and will need guidance and the opportunity to become more involved in an online learning environment.

Conrad & Donaldson, (2011) go on to argue that an online learner must quickly establish comfort with the technology, comfort with predominant text-based communication, and comfort with higher level of self-direction in a traditional

classroom. If this comfort is not reached, contend Conrad and Donaldson, the learner will walk away from the course in frustration.

In addition to these elements, learners have the additional uncertainty having to quickly build trust and interdependence with others that they may meet face-to-face (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). According to Conrad and Donaldson (2011), it becomes the instructor's responsibility to make sure that learners find others in the learning environment with whom they can build collaborative relationships. To do this, the online instructor must design course elements that encourage the growth of learners in these new relationships.

References

Conrad, R., & Donaldson, J. A. (2011). *Engaging the online learner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ray's Reflections By Steve Ray

"We Choose to Do These Things... Not Because They Are Easy But Because They Are Hard"

-John Kennedy

The famous quote above by John F. Kennedy was taken from a speech given at Rice University in 1962 which helped gain support for America's mission to the moon. It has numerous interpretations, but I have always thought it meant that *Real growth comes from a commitment to figure out how to excel at something you have never done.* I thought about that quote during the last couple of weeks of Advisor training.

As a Q.M. Certified Instructional Designer/Trainer, I have held numerous Faculty/Staff trainings and workshops from changing to a new LMS at the

University of Oklahoma (My ears still burn sometimes from that one) to Advisor training for the new ERP system here at SWOSU. When I reflect back on *all* of those interactions, I can say with confidence that the Faculty, staff and students here at SWOSU are as committed as any group I have ever worked with.

That said, I realize we are all humans and we get frustrated and vent in *private*, I have actually heard stories, but the professionalism exhibited in *public* during the Advisor training sessions is something that needs to be recognized and commended, and for that, I simply want to say Thank You, JFK would be proud!

FacultyFocus.com – March 4, 2019

Plagiarize-Proof Your Writing Assignments

Christina Moore

Plagiarism seems like a clear-cut crime: if the words of another author appear in one's writing without appropriate attribution, that writer has "stolen" those words. U.S. higher education institutions take the offense seriously: minor cases often result in probation, suspension, or expulsion. This black-and-white perspective toward plagiarism, however, does not effectively identify, prevent, or resolve writing issues.

Plagiarism may flag instances of knowledge gaps or poor writing skills rather than malicious intent. In order to avoid academic conduct hearings involving your students, consider how the design of writing assignments can detect writing issues before they evolve into serious academic conduct issues. Consider these four strategies to help "plagiarize-proof" your course.

Evaluate your expectations for student research literacy.

Make a list of skills you expect students to possess on the first day of class. Consider also their level of expertise using action verbs from Bloom's taxonomy. (For example, do you expect students to be able to distinguish the difference between a direct and indirect quotation, or do you also expect them to correctly write indirect quotations?) Start your list of items with this phrase: "Students should be able to..." and be as specific as possible to get an accurate assessment of your expectations of students' prior knowledge. Here are some examples:

- Articulate and identify the difference between direct and indirect quotation.
- Write a basic author/year/page in-text citation from memory, and find more complex citation rules in an APA style guide.
- Distinguish between an empirical article and a literature review.
- Synthesize research by citing at least three articles in one paragraph.

After developing these written expectations, reflect on the students you teach.

- Have their educational paths so far guaranteed that they come to your course with this knowledge?
- Are there reasonable barriers that may make this knowledge incomplete?
- What learning opportunities can bridge the gap between your expectations and their knowledge?

Reflecting on your expectations and your students' preparation can help you determine whether expectations appropriately align with the course learning outcomes. For instance, someone teaching a research writing methods course should expect their students to be novices at research writing at the college level, which could result in mistakes in documentation and attribution.

Include unique or individualized elements into assignments.

Some writing assignments are more vulnerable to plagiarism, such as using writing prompts that haven't been altered in several years or ones that are generic in nature. A paper about "climate change debates in the United States" is more vulnerable to plagiarism than one about "climate change issues as discussed in local high schools." If your writing assignments must be broad, consider how the incorporation of student reflection into writing on these assignments can help you assess how well students understand the content they write. The next steps will also help.

Require an annotated bibliography before the assignment due date.

Procrastination can motivate risky and desperate writing behaviors. Students scrambling to finish a research paper two nights before it is due (even though it was designed to take weeks) are more likely to make poor writing decisions. To minimize the possibility of these poor decisions, require students to show that they have begun conducting research by submitting an annotated bibliography. I have directed students to annotate each source in four sentences: summarize the main argument, describe its research methods, share questions/analysis, and explain how it will contribute to the student's research project.

The extent to which you have students show their research in progress depends on course level and size. If you teach a larger class, you could merely scan whether they have sources relevant to the assignment rather than fully grade and provide feedback. In my freshman composition course on research writing, I adapted one colleague's practice of requiring a paper's topic and sources to be "locked in" well ahead of time, meaning they could not add or drastically change the research they consult in the last stages of the writing process. This better ensures students avoid drastic last-minute changes or procrastinate their way into the plagiarism danger zone. Additionally, it encourages students to engage deeply with the research at hand.

Collect stages in writing development.

Similar to requiring students to show the progression in their research work, require students to engage in the writing process over a period of time. This can be done in a variety of ways that vary in how much time you dedicate to reviewing students' writing process:

- Use weekly journals for students to share their progress, barriers, and questions.
- Facilitate peer review and encourage students to help one another with documentation and attribution.

- Allow students to report more objective evidence of engaging in the writing process, e.g. visiting the university writing center or working with your institution’s librarians to locate or create instructional material on plagiarism.

While it is not possible to entirely “plagiarize-proof” a course, even minor changes to a writing assignment can reduce plagiarism and strengthen students’ writing abilities. *Christina Moore is a virtual faculty developer with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Oakland University.*

FacultyFocus.com – February 15, 2019

Office Hours Alternative Resonates with Students

Maryellen Weimer, PhD

Faculty regularly face the problem of getting the students most in need of help to come to the office for help. Not only do a small number of students take advantage of office hours, typically those who show up are not those who most need to be there. In previous issues we have reported on research that offers some reasons why this happens. When students start getting feedback that they are doing poorly, some begin to doubt their abilities. They conclude that they just don’t have what it takes and so getting help isn’t going to make any difference. Other times, it’s the stress of having to face the professor with their failure. Some students are so lost, they don’t even know what to ask, and their confidence is so shaken, they have trouble processing helpful information when it’s delivered.

Two professors report on their experiences with a reformatted kind of office hours: something they call “course centers.” They scheduled one- or two-hour time blocks in unoccupied classrooms. Students were invited to come individually or in groups, and they could work on whatever they wished during that time. The course instructor and/or TA were available during the time block. If students wanted help, they could ask for assistance. Otherwise the instructor just floated around the room, moving from group to group. Students were free to come and go as they wished during the session.

The professors of these two courses (an introductory physics course and an introductory symbolic logic course) wanted to create an environment in the course centers in which students felt like they were just spending time studying, rather than explicitly getting help; where students felt welcome getting together with other students for a study session; and where they felt no pressure to have a set of questions ready to ask the instructor.

Course centers, these instructors stress, did not replace traditional office hours—they supplemented them. In the physics course, the instructor still had two office hours a week and three to four course center sessions. In the logic course, there were four weekly office hours and one weekly two-hour course center session. Students were invited to get help at either: during traditional office hours or at one of the course center sessions.

The instructors surveyed the large student cohort involved in multiple sections of these courses during the three semesters course centers were used. The results indicate the effectiveness of the approach. Students were asked to list all the options they knew of for getting help in the class. Ninety-three percent listed the course center versus 68 percent who noted the traditional office hours. When asked if they had to choose between the instructor’s office hours and the course center for getting help which they would select, 54 percent said the course center versus 46 percent who said office hours. But the most telling response was to this question: “Did having a course center in the class make you more likely to get help?” **Seventy-nine percent said yes.**

In response to several open-ended queries, students identified those features of the course center they most appreciated. They listed convenience, although it was not clear how or why a course center was more convenient than traditional office hours. They also noted that they could get one-on-one help during the course center sessions. They could get that same kind of help during office hours too, so faculty found this response equally puzzling. Students further reported that they found the opportunity to work in groups useful during the course centers. Not only did they get help from other students, but several noted how reassuring it was to see other students also struggling with the content. And finally students indicated that they like the “laid-back” atmosphere of the course centers. They felt as though the instructor and TAs were more approachable in that context.

The professors conclude with this summary: “Although instructors will need to continue offering traditional office hours, alternative formats such as a course center can do as good or a better job of delivering help and of motivating students to seek that help.” (p. 257)

For more articles on office hours, take a look at these articles from *The Teaching Professor*:

- [Office Hours: In Need of Better Branding?](#)
- [Why Students Don’t Attend Office Hours?](#)
- [Tips From the Pros: How to Manage Online Office Hours](#)

Reference: Chung, C., & Hsu, L. (2006). Encouraging students to seek help: Supplementing office hours with a course center. *College Teaching*, 54(3), 253–258.

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