

# THE CETL CORRESPONDENT

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# CETL Correspondent

*A Monthly Newsletter by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

SWOSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Newsletter

December 2020 / January 2021

## *Lisa's Notes*

Our last 5C's and R presentation, Relevance is in a new format. We decided to ask faculty and staff how they made changes to help with the "new normal" we have faced this year. Ashley Walkup created a great PowerPoint to highlight information we received. The PowerPoint is in Faculty Commons, just click on the 5C's and R link found on the homepage. Thank you to everyone that contributed! SWOSU faculty and staff provided excellent instruction and assistance even in these challenging times!

Canvas has updated the Rich Content Editor (RCE) and CETL will install the updated RCE on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Steve Ray created a great video to help introduce instructors to the changes. The video can be found in Faculty Commons as well, look in Modules, under the Canvas section.

Do not forget about reviewing the "Ending a Semester Checklist" found in Canvas. This list includes best practices to follow when ending a semester in Canvas and serves as a good reminder of steps to follow each semester.

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## Focus on SWOSU Faculty



CETL is spotlighting faculty members in a series of articles called "Focus on SWOSU Faculty." These faculty have been selected as doing inspiring active learning methods 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 advance student learning at SWOSU. This month, CETL is spotlighting Renae Bagzis, Department of Associate and Applied Programs.



Renae Bagzis grew up in Cheyenne, Oklahoma in the age of green boards, chalk, and cement playgrounds. She was among the first class in Cheyenne to take a computer programming class, where they were instructed to write a program and make it run. Renae and her partner wrote a program for 4th-grade math students and saved it to a floppy disc. Renae recalls that it was kind of cool back then to watch when a 4th grader got the correct answer and saw the green stars (asterisks) blink on and off the black screen. She struggled in high school math with all the new letters introduced. "How in the world can an x and a y equal a number?" Renae would wonder.

Renae took a gap year or 18 before deciding what she wanted to do with her life (besides being married and having kids). In those 18 years, she worked in the medical field, a few convenience stores, and the tag office. Most of the time she worked at least two jobs and sometimes three. At one point, she owned a gymnastics center and found that she really loved working with kids. About three years after owning the gym, her sister decided she was going to go to school to become a teacher and their brother was already a teacher. That was Renae's first thought, that she might also like to do that. So, they went to college and graduated together, only she was an elementary teacher, and Renae was a middle school/high school math teacher. After teaching for six years, she decided she wanted to get her bachelor's in accounting. She talked to Ms. Marci Grant at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and found out that she could just get her master's.

"I mean that's a LOT better, right?? I finished my master's while teaching and leasing the concession stand from the local school. That summer I applied at SWOSU and began teaching in August of 2012. This was by far the best decision I ever made (after marrying my husband)," observes Renae.

One of Renae's favorite classes to teach is Intro to Business. This class touches on all the areas of business and helps steer students in a direction of business they may not have originally intended. Every semester she assigns projects for her students that will help them, not only in the business facet but also in life. The first project is normally a business presentation, where students must include a business letter, a memo (about my class or questions about an assignment), and a professional email (ideas, thought, or concerns about my class). The second project is a cover letter and resume. Since this semester's class was short for example, Renae gave a bonus for the students to write about their all-time favorite commercial and explain why. The third project is one stolen from Dr. Patsy Parker, (please don't tell her), but it is one of the most eye-opening and memorable assignments that Renae has ever completed. It is a 30-day spending log. Since they were studying the finance section, the students had to figure their (or their made-up) net worth and used their spending log to complete their financial budget.

Even though Ms. Bagzis' Intro to Business class is online, she really learns a lot about her students while grading these projects. Renae does not only use the projects for a grade but as a learning experience for the students.

"Most of them receive full credit with helpful hints and corrections to improve it for their real-life use. These are the classes that make it all worth it," concludes Renae.

## *Workshops Available for December/January*

### **CETL Workshops with Nathan**

#### **DropBox Training**

Learn how to link DropBox documents/videos/recordings to Canvas.

#### **Basic Zoom Training**

One-on-one Basic Zoom training. Introduces Basic Zoom features. Structured for the new Zoom user.

#### **Advanced Zoom Training**

One-on-one Advanced Zoom training. Introduces Advanced Zoom features. Structured for the experienced Zoom user.

#### **President's Conference Room System Training**

Contact Nathan for one-on-one training on how to use the sound/display system in the President's Conference Room.

Call (3077) or Email ([nathan.thiessen@swosu.edu](mailto:nathan.thiessen@swosu.edu)) to schedule training. Training times vary.

### **CETL Workshops with Mapopa**

Scheduled workshops will not take place in December or January due to the end of the semester and holiday schedules.

Dr. Mapopa Sanga will be out of the office for the majority of the winter intersession. Please direct any questions you have about Canvas, Respondus, Grading, or other topics to either Steve Ray or Lisa Friesen. Contact information is listed on Page 9.

### **CETL Workshops with Steve**

Scheduled workshops will not take place in December or January due to the end of the semester and holiday schedules.

If you have any questions about Canvas, Respondus, Grading, or other topics, please contact Steve Ray at (580)774-3147 or email at [steve.ray@swosu.edu](mailto:steve.ray@swosu.edu).

## *Workshops are Available from the Online Learning Consortium!*

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

## *Using ePortfolios in the Classroom*

Included in Canvas is an ePortfolio function. Canvas has included some helpful information on using ePortfolio in your class, in the Canvas Guides. To access the guides, click on the Help icon, located at the bottom of the navigation area in your Canvas account (the question mark icon.) This will open the Canvas guides section, and you can search for specific questions, or access the complete guide information.

Guides are in place for those who like to see information in a written format. Please keep in mind that we are also available to answer questions in CETL, and the 24/7 Canvas Support that can be found in the navigation section as well.

## *Instructor Training: LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor*

Respondus holds training sessions throughout the semester. These comprehensive training webinars are intended for instructors who plan to use LockDown Browser and/or Respondus Monitor with online exams. The session provides a detailed demonstration of both applications, including enhancements that make Respondus Monitor even more effective and easy to use. You can register at the Respondus website: <https://web.respondus.com/webinars/> or click the links below.

### Session times for December 2020 / January 2021:

- [Thursday, December 3 at 3 pm ET / 12 pm PT](#)
- [Tuesday, December 8 at 3 pm ET / 12 pm PT](#)
- [Tuesday, December 15 at 3 pm ET / 12 pm PT](#)
- [Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 1 pm ET / 10 am PT](#)
- [Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 2 pm ET / 11 am PT](#)
- [Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 3 pm ET / 12 pm PT](#)
- [Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 2 pm ET / 11 am PT](#)

## Insights from CETL's Teaching and Learning Coordinators

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### *Mapopa's Musings*

by Mapopa W. Sanga, PhD.

#### Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online

**Best Practice 1:** Be present at the course site.

**Best Practice 2:** Create a supportive online course community.

**Best Practice 3:** Develop a set of explicit expectations for your learners and yourself as to how you will communicate and how much time students should be working on the course each week.

**Best Practice 4:** Use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experiences.

**Best Practice 5:** Use synchronous and asynchronous activities.

**Best Practice 6:** Ask for informal feedback early in the term.

**Best Practice 7:** Prepare discussion posts that invite responses, questions, discussions, and reflections.

**Best Practice 8:** Search out and use content resources that are available in digital format if possible.

**Best Practice 9:** Combine core concept learning with customized and personalized learning.

**Best Practice 10:** Plan a good closing and wrap activity for the course.

(Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, p. 37).

#### References:

Boettcher, J.V., & Conrad, R. (2010). The online teaching survival guide. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

# Insights from CETL’s Teaching and Learning Coordinators

## Ray’s Reflections

by Steve Ray, III

### Active Instruction Research

College students think they learn less with Active Instruction when, in fact, studies show they don't even realize they actually learn more!

Active learning (also called active instruction) consistently produces the best results. This involves pushing students to work through problems and reason things out as an inherent part of the learning process. Even though the science on that is clear, most college professors have remained committed to approaching class time as a lecture. In fact, a large number of instructors who try active learning end up going back to the standard lecture, and one of the reasons they cite is that the students prefer it that way. This sounds a bit like excuse making, so a group of instructors decided to test this belief using physics students. And it turns out professors weren't making an excuse. Even as understanding improved with active learning, the students felt they got more out of a traditional lecture.

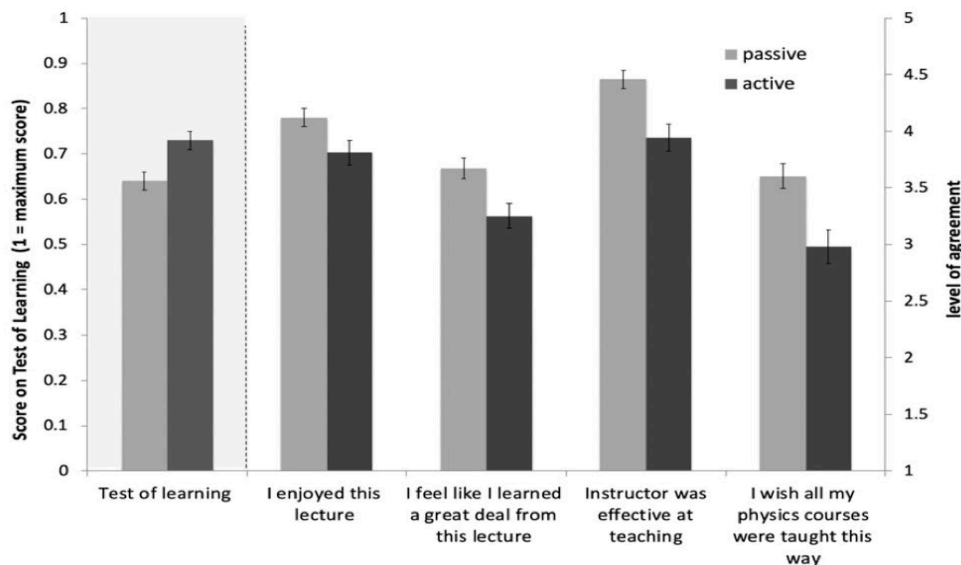
#### Testing education

One of the challenges of tracking this sort of thing is that every class will have a different range of talents, and some instructors will simply have been better at teaching. Figuring out how to control for this variability is essential if you want to understand the impact of teaching methods. Fortunately, the Harvard team came up with a clever way of doing so.

They essentially split a physics class in two. One half would get a standard lecture. The person teaching the other half would use the same slides and class materials but lead these students through an active learning process during the class. Then, two weeks later, the two groups of students would swap places; the first would now have an active learning class on a different physics topic, and the second would receive a standard lecture. That way, the same students experience both regular lectures and active learning, and the instructors would bring any talents they had to both approaches.

After each class, the students were surveyed about the experience, and they took a short quiz to determine how well they understood the subject of the class. The whole thing was done for both the spring and fall semesters of a class to provide a larger sample size.

As expected from past studies, the students in the active learning classes consistently outperformed their peers (and themselves), scoring a half a standard deviation higher on the quizzes.



While students learned more with active instruction (test of learning column), every measure of satisfaction was lower.

But based on the surveys, the students would have been surprised to find out that's the case. The students found the active learning classroom to lack a bit of coherence, and it suffered from the frequent interruptions, which made the experience frustrating and confusing. When asked how much they felt they learned, students in the active learning classroom consistently rated themselves as having learned less—the exact opposite of what the quizzes indicate. The students also indicated that they would prefer that all their future classes be standard lectures.

### Explanations abound

So why is an extremely effective way of teaching so unpopular? The researchers come up with a number of potential explanations. One is simply that active learning is hard. "Students in the actively taught groups had to struggle with their peers through difficult physics problems that they initially did not know how to solve," the authors acknowledge. That's a big contrast with the standard lecture which, being the standard, is familiar to the students. A talented instructor can also make their lecture material feel like it's a straight-forward, coherent packet of information. This can lead students to over-rate their familiarity with the topic.

The other issue the authors suggest may be going on here is conceptually similar to the Dunning-Kruger effect, where people who don't understand a topic are unable to accurately evaluate how much they knew. Consistent with this, the researchers identified the students with the strongest backgrounds in physics, finding that they tended to be more accurate in assessing what they got out of each class.

Whatever the cause, it's not ideal to have students dislike the most effective method of teaching them. So, the authors suggest that professors who are considering adopting active learning take the time to prepare a little lecture on it. The researchers prepared one that described the active learning process and provided some evidence of its effectiveness. The introduction acknowledged the evidence described above—namely, that the students might not feel like they were getting as much out of the class.

In part thanks to this short addition to the class, by the end of the semester, 65% of the students reported feeling positive toward active learning. That's still not exactly overwhelming enthusiasm, but it might be enough to keep instructors from giving up on an extremely effective teaching technique.

### References:

Timmer, John(2019,Sept, 4) "College Students think they learn less..." Retrieved from <https://arstechnica.com>.  
PNAS, 2019. DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1821936116 (About DOIs).



## *Cetl Monthly Topic*

by Lisa Friesen

### **The 5C's and R – Yearly Recap**

This year the 5C's and R were presented at a slightly different pace due to COVID-19, and SWOSU's move to virtual learning in the Spring and Summer 2020 semesters. CETL is thankful that all the topics were covered during this year and want to thank all the presenters who were willing to share their knowledge via Zoom. All the presentations can be found in Faculty Commons. Just click on the 5C's and R link on the homepage.

Below is a list of the presentations given this year:

- **January:** Creativity – Dr. Amanda Evert
- **February:** Critical Thinking – Dr. Heather Katz
- **September:** Collaboration – Dr. Sherri Brogdon and Dr. Mapopa Sanga
- **October:** Community – Ms. Cindi Albrightson
- **November:** Communication – Dr. Lori Gwyn
- **December:** Relevance – A PowerPoint presentation, with information provided by:
  - Cindi Albrightson
  - Todd Boyd
  - Stacy DiPaolo
  - Kristin Griffeath
  - Anne Pate
  - Student Government Association
  - SWOSU

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