

March 2021

CTL's Monthly Newsletter keeps you up to date on events and support available to everyone in the UMSL teaching community and evidence-based practices for use in the classroom or online.

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Three Teaching Intentions

This section will highlight technology, activities, practices, or elements of course design for the online or on ground classroom to be implemented with intentionality. Every suggestion will not be appropriate for every context. Please see our contact information at the bottom of the newsletter to set up an individual consultation if interested in discussing these ideas in more detail.

Course Workload Estimator

Tool: Last month we discussed the workload dilemma. One approach to help students structure and manage their time and for faculty to determine an appropriate workload is to use a workload estimator developed at Rice University. Apparently a faculty workload estimator is in the works!

[Click here for version 2.0 of the workload estimator](#)

[Click here to read an article about the workload dilemma \(11 minute read\)](#)

Getting Students Thinking

Practice: As educators it is important that we model strategies that get students in the habit of thinking about their own learning. One approach is to nudge students with questions they could be asking themselves before, during and after class. As an instructor I challenged students to ask themselves questions while waiting in line instead of checking their phone or asking another student questions as a way to help format study sessions. The article below outlines 75 different examples of questions students can ask themselves to help reflect on their learning; these small practices can help shape lifelong self-directed learners.

[Click here to read an article about 75 questions students can ask themselves before, during and after teaching](#)

Tackling Misinformation

Activity: A skill that we hope to develop in all of our students is to tackle the enormous amount of misinformation available online and in the media. As experts it is obvious to us how to do this but how do we give students a structure to help them flex this muscle? One method that has garnered attention is called SIFT (Stop, Investigate, Find, Trace). The creator of this method has developed a short course that you can incorporate into your own class to train students how to use this method effectively.

[Click here for the short course on the SIFT method](#)

ACUE Faculty Spotlight

Almost 50 faculty at UMSL were selected to participate in ACUE's "Effective Online Teaching Practices" year-long program. Each month we will be featuring some practices from the program and a faculty member implementing these practices.

Dr. Michael Gearhart is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work and teaches an undergraduate course entitled "Social Work in Communities" and a graduate level course entitled "Advanced Community Theory and Practice." Below you can find Dr. Gearhart's description of how he uses the phrase "What's your Why" to motivate students.

"People are more likely to do something if they know why they are doing it. The exercise itself is simple. Ask, "What's your why?" I ask students why they decided to pursue a degree in social work. Universities use the question to encourage students to [find their purpose](#) and promote [safety during the pandemic](#). Organizations encourage [employees](#), [volunteers and donors](#) to

answer the question to tie their actions to a greater purpose.

*In the classroom, “What’s your why,” creates the opportunity for all of us to share why we are in the classroom together. In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer says, “Good teachers join self and subject and students in the fabric of life.” “What’s your why,” is a tool that allows me to share my passion for the class, and motivate students by connecting the course to their personal reason for being there.*

And yes, I have some students in my Social Work Communities Class say, 'I'm here because the course is required.' But, 'What's your why,' can still help increase motivation because we are building rapport by being our authentic selves.

About this approach a student said 'I feel as though theory has the opportunity to be very dry, but Mike really used the assignments and class discussions to apply it to real-world scenarios that we encounter here in St. Louis and at UMSL.'

If you have any questions please reach out to ctl@umsl.edu.

Anti-Racist Pedagogy: The Black Futurity Group as a Space to Listen, Grapple, and Imagine Better

The Center for Teaching and Learning at UMSL does not position itself as an expert in anti-racist pedagogy but instead is part of a larger campus effort of facilitating ways for collective education, conversations and actions towards contributing to a truly diverse, equal, and inclusive campus. This section will focus on anti-racist teaching practices and efforts around campus.

Article below written by Drs. Kimberly Welch and Lauren Obermark

As scholars and teachers of literature, drama, language, and writing, we

understand anti-racist action to encompass acknowledging the complicity of the study of English in systemic racism. White supremacy shapes the language of the discipline, the modes of expression it values, which works are canonized and taught, and the policies and practices that emerge in English classrooms. With this recognition in mind, we affirm that, as an English department, we are uniquely positioned to do powerful anti-racist work, to reject marginalizing and gatekeeping as our function. We believe in the power of English Studies to challenge, undermine, and support the overturn of the systemic racism that shapes it. Our tools are critical thought, careful analysis, language, and imagination. Our commitment is to the ethical and just application of these tools to dismantle systems of oppression.

These words are part of [our department's statement of solidarity with Black Lives Matter and Commitment to Anti-Racist Action](#), which was published in June 2020. We continue to view them as an actionable philosophy, one that results in ongoing anti-racist pedagogical work. Since the department drafted this statement, we have worked to fight anti-Black racism and more deeply understand and celebrate Black excellence through the formation of the [Black Futurity Group](#). The goal of the group is to foster discussion among students, faculty, and staff around black life and experience, particularly in the U.S. context. The hope is that by having these sometimes difficult conversations, we will help foster a community in which black precarity isn't normalized, and people become not only aware of how their actions might be contributing to oppression (e.g. through microaggressions), but also ways that they can support black life rather than black (physical and social) death. Our monthly activities range from a reading group that varies between fiction and approachable nonfiction to timely screenings with talkbacks to syllabi diversification workshops.

One particular strength of the Black Futurity Group so far is that it is broad and multi-faceted in approaches to pedagogy, recognizing that teaching and learning goes beyond classrooms and courses, and we need expertise from more than just faculty in our ongoing process of learning and doing anti-racism. As such, the group brings together many different voices and positions across campus. It is a space where students share concerns, and we invite them to plan and lead sessions for an attentive group of faculty and staff, eager to listen and learn. Further, many Black Futurity events prompt attention to the systemic nature of racism; while we may touch on who we teach or how we teach it in our individual classrooms, we also find ourselves grappling with connected

issues, like microaggressions experienced by BIPOC in academia, struggles Black students might face when attempting to start student groups or plan campus events, or the ways campus-wide budget reduction efforts often disproportionately affect Black people. By more intentionally centering perspectives of Black scholars, artists, students, and staff, listening deeply, and not shying away from the discomfort concomitant to discussing race and racism, we hope the Black Futurity Group contributes to a cultural shift across campus in pursuit of anti-racism.

We hope you'll explore our [in-progress website](#), check out our [occasional newsletters](#), and consider attending an upcoming [Black Futurity Group event!](#)

Several colleges and departments at UMSL have committed to anti-racist actions. We would love to highlight what faculty are doing in their classrooms and beyond to support an anti-racist environment here at UMSL. In the next newsletter we will continue our series to highlight these actions. If you would like to be featured please contact Erin Witteck at elwbcf@umsl.edu.

Course Evaluation System

Course evaluations are now managed in the CTL. The Faculty Senate set dates for opening and closing of course evaluation surveys, as well as when faculty can access their results.

When do students complete course evaluations for Spring 2021?

- Spring 2021 8-Week 1: March 1-7
- Spring 2021 8-Week 2: April 26- May 9
- Spring 2021 16-Week: April 26- May 9

For more information on course evaluations, please visit our [CourseEval Resource Guide](#).

Part-Time Teaching Circle

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) recently launched a new Part-Time Faculty Teaching Circle to provide support and community to our amazing part-time faculty. We invite all part-time faculty to join the group as their schedule allows.

For spring we have a full schedule of sessions scheduled based on topics identified by our Advisory Group as helpful to those of us who teach part-time at UMSL. The full schedule can be found below that also includes other events offered by the Center for Teaching in Learning including sessions around student support and assessment, and wrapping up the semester with a fun trivia hour.

Questions? Email Jennifer McKanry mckanryj@umsl.edu

[Register for the Part-Time Teaching Circle and see schedule](#)

Affordable and Open Educational Resources Summit

This year, the University of Missouri-St. Louis is proud to bring you the third version of the Missouri Affordable and Open Educational Resources Summit. This conference is organized through the Thomas Jefferson Library by a consortium of open educational professionals from around the state.

This year, we invite you to share your research, ideas, and best practices for using, creating, or adapting affordable and open educational resources. The theme of the Summit will be centered around the idea of CARE, an acronym for ****Collaborating and Adapting/Adopting Resources for Equity****. We hope to explore how the affordable and open ed community cares for others by advocating for accessibility and equity in selecting course materials.

So many virtual conference themes are centered around Covid-19 and its impact on students and faculty. With this Summit, we hope to take this concept a step further, as we collectively explore how the use of different sorts of materials can help address issues highlighted by the pandemic, particularly related to unequal access to resources on college campuses. The organizing committee hope to use the Summit to champion social equity through presentations, sessions, and roundtables about increasing the accessibility of materials to all students.

The Summit will be held virtually on March 3-5, 2021. Registration is open through the conference's start, and a final schedule of presentations will be available mid-February. We hope you will be able to join the 2021 Summit! For more information, please visit the conference website: <https://libguides.umsl.edu/MO-OER-Symposium>

[Register for Affordable and Open Educational Resources Summit](#)

Updates from the Office of eLearning at UM-System

This section will highlight news and technology updates from the Office of eLearning.

eLearning Training Opportunities

eLearning events website houses training opportunities, upcoming events, open zoom office hours and more. If you are interested in attending a Canvas, Zoom or Panopto overview, register at elearningevents.umssystem.edu.

One Canvas for all campuses

Fall 2021: All faculty, staff and students on the MU, S&T, UMKC, and UMSL campuses will use the same, unified instance of Canvas. Consolidating into one

Canvas supports cross-campus enrollment and collaborative teaching by providing a single point of access for all users. The change will remove redundancy in academic tools, reduce license fees and provide more efficient allocation of support resources. Instructors will be able to begin working on their Fall 2021 Canvas sites in March 2021, and content from current Canvas sites will be moved. To ensure that everyone is logging into the new and correct place for the Fall 2021 semester, your current Canvas web address will redirect to the new Canvas in mid-August. Please see the [Unified Canvas FAQ](#) for more information.

Questions? Need Help?

If you are having problems with [Canvas](#) or a [tool within Canvas](#) like Zoom, Panopto, Voicethread, etc. we have staff available to help you! You can talk to someone Monday – Friday 9:00am-3:00pm by calling [\(855\) 675-0755](tel:8556750755), or you can submit your question/issue/problem by emailing keeplearning@umsystem.edu.

About the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), a division of the Office of Academic Affairs, supports the professional development of those who teach and learn at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Our goals - to promote engagement in courses, on campus, and in the community - enhance the University as we align our activities, services, and consultations with the campus goals to promote excellence in teaching, research, and service.

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