UMSL | Center for Teaching and Learning

August 2022

CTL's Monthly Newsletter keeps you updated on research-informed teaching strategies, events, and support available to everyone in the UMSL teaching community.
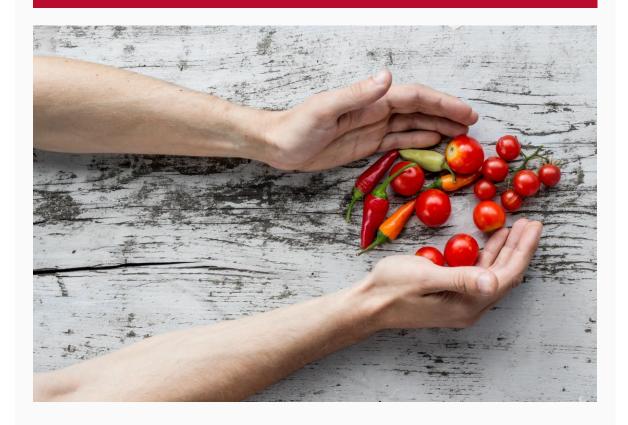

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In This Issue

The Art of Gathering

This summer, CTL Assistant Director Erin Whitteck spent time participating in professional development and reading books outside of teaching and learning; one of those books was the Art of Gathering by Priya Parker.

One form of gathering many faculty are anticipating with excitement and perhaps trepidation is being back in the classroom. The isolation forced upon us by the pandemic has given us a renewed appreciation for the opportunity to gather with others. Faculty and students are much more attuned to making the time we spend together meaningful. Priya Parker's book "The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters" has some great lessons to consider while planning gatherings. Below are some of the lessons translated to the classroom context. Note that the headings below are chapter titles from the book.
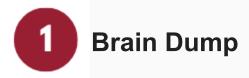
- ***Decide WHY you're really gathering:*** For every in-person class period, think critically about its purpose and "let [that] purpose be your bouncer." When deciding what to keep and what to let go, use purpose to help with those critical decisions. Is this activity essential to the purpose of this class period? How is this activity enhanced by being in person?

- *Don't be a chill host:* As the course instructor, it is unnecessary to script every second of the class period, but you must provide a minimal rigid structure to ensure everyone can succeed. With too little structure, someone in the course may fill the vacuum and disrupt the learning for others.
- *Create a temporary alternative world:* When students enter your classroom, you do not want them to focus on making missteps or guessing at expectations. As the instructor, be transparent about course expectations and create shared community norms. This practice helps students to focus on their learning.
- **Never start a funeral with logistics:** There is a temptation to start every class period with announcements, but is this the most engaging and meaningful way to start? You may want to try something new this semester.
- *Accept there is an end*: In-class periods have obvious endings, but ending meaningfully requires intention. Think about ways you can end in a way that can help solidify the learning and provide you feedback.

See the "Teaching Intentions" section below for practical implementation ideas of these concepts.

Three Teaching Intentions - Gathering Edition

This section will highlight technology, activities, practices, or elements of course design for the online or on-ground classroom to be implemented intentionally. 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.

1 **Brain Dump**

Practice: Instead of starting your in-class period with announcements, consider a more meaningful way for students to center themselves in the moment and

practice a form of retrieval. Have students take out a piece of physical or electronic paper and write down three things they remember were key points from the last class or the out-of-class work. The prompt can be modified to fit the class context, but the key is to get students to bring course content to mind.

[Click here to read about other ways to implement retrieval practice in your course.](#)

2 Community Norms

Practice: To demystify the expectations in the classroom for both you as the instructor and for interactions between you and the students, it is important to co-create community norms. Use prompts to get the conversation started on the first day of class. If you hold course discussions, what are your expectations? What expectations do students have of you as the instructor? What do you want students to call you? It is important to share these norms regularly and to use them to guide interactions. There are limitations to these community norms, but they will help set the tone that you value students' voices and that there is a shared responsibility for creating an inclusive learning environment.

[Click here for more ideas about creating community norms.](#)

3 Exit Tickets

Practices: It is important to end class in a way that allows students to reflect on their learning and give you feedback about the class period. Ask students to share three takeaways and one question. The prompt can be modified to focus students on the purpose of the class period or get feedback on a new activity. Exit tickets give you the information you can use to shape your next

class period.

[Click here for prompts to use on Exit Tickets](#)**.**

The first person to implement one of these practices in their course and get student feedback should email their reflection to CTL Assistant Director Erin Whitteck at elwbcf@umsl.edu. She will award you a copy of "The Art of Gathering" by Priya Parker and be featured in a future newsletter.

CTL's Lunch and Learn Series: Open to All Members of our Teaching Community

The CTL started a Lunch and Learn Series last fall, featuring faculty that completed the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) "Effective Online Teaching Practices" program. This year we aim to continue the program featuring innovative faculty from across campus.

Back by popular demand, we offer a virtual Lunch and Learn series one Friday per month featuring innovative faculty from the UMSL teaching community. Two faculty present their context, how and why they have implemented a particular strategy, its impact, and how they plan to iterate. Participants then can join faculty in a breakout room to ask questions about the strategy. It is a great opportunity to learn from and with colleagues and meet new faculty across campus. All members of the UMSL community (faculty, staff, and graduate students) are welcome to attend.

Event Details:

- **Date of the first Lunch and Learn:** September 16th, 12:15 - 1:00 PM
- **Presenters:** Crystal Johnson (School of Social Work) and Matias Enz (Supply Chain and Management)

- **Topic:** Graphic syllabus and interactive game
- **Location:** Virtual (see Registration below)

If you have any questions, please reach out to CTL Assistant Director Erin Whitteck (elwbcf@umsl.edu).

Register here for the Fall ACUE Lunch and Learn Series

Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference (FTTC)
Nominate a Colleague by August 29th

The Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference offers an ensemble of keynote addresses, faculty innovations during concurrent sessions, technology workshops, and vendor exhibits. The conference will take place on September 29th and 30th and is virtual and free.

Any IDEA of someone on your campus who fosters inclusion, diversity, and equity in an innovative way? Wouldn't it be great to recognize their hard work at this year's Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference (FTTC)?

This year we have adopted a two-stage nomination process. Stage 1: As the nominator, you simply have to briefly describe what the nominee did. This should take you less than 10 minutes to complete. Stage 2: The nominee will give relevant details of what, why, how, and the impact of their innovation.

Recognize Yourself or your Colleagues

Take time today to nominate yourself or a colleague for the 2022 FTTC Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Award (I.D.E.A.). Nominations are due by August 29, 2022.

1. Nominate an instructor who implemented teaching or teaching with technology innovation that has positively impacted diversity, equity, and inclusion in the learning environment
2. Nominate an instructional designer working hard to improve aspects of inclusion, diversity, and equity on campus and/or online.

Award Details

- Rubric for reviewing the nomination
- The deadline for Stage 1 is August 29th
  - o Nominees will be contacted on August 30th and will have until September 13th at 5:00 PM to submit their materials (Stage 2)

Nominate a Colleague for an IDEA Recognition at FTTC

Meet our new Team Member - Dr. Amber Burgett

We are lucky to have Dr. Amber Burgett join our Center for Teaching and Learning team as our new Learning Analytics Coordinator.

Amber Burgett, Ph.D., is a new addition to the Center for Teaching and Learning and is excited to be back in St. Louis. Dr. Burgett comes to us from Dayton, Ohio, where she was an Associate Professor of Biology and Environmental Science at Wittenberg University for the last decade. Amber was also the Director of General Education at Wittenberg and oversaw the development of their new Connections Curriculum. In this role, she developed her interest and experience with assessment. She has long championed the utility of assessment data for informing not just her classroom teaching but also for revising programs and ultimately building a new Gen Ed curriculum. She spent much of her time at Wittenberg in the classroom or out in a wetland with her students. Although she will miss being in front of a classroom everyday, she is excited to take on the challenges of her new role as the Learning Analytics Coordinator here at UMSL.

Amber is originally from Ohio. However, she attended Washington University in St. Louis for her graduate degree. She earned her Ph.D. in Ecology, Evolution, and Population Biology, studying the impact of land use on aquatic communities. She expanded that work in Ohio and focused on the impact of agricultural contaminants on amphibian behavior and aquatic community dynamics. Most of her environmental science and biology courses at Wittenberg were community-engaged classes, where she worked collaboratively with the Springfield Ohio community to address environmental challenges. Taking students to a wetland for the first time was always a favorite

experience   for   Amber;   only   rarely   did   they   get   stuck!

Amber met her husband while in St. Louis for graduate school and is very excited to move back so her three girls (ages 10, 8, and 4) can be near their very large family. If you can't find Amber on the fifth floor of Lucas Hall, there's a good chance she might be catching frogs over by the campus lake!

Fall 2022 Updates

This information was sent in an email earlier this month reminding faculty and instructional staff about changes that impact their syllabi.

Two Breaks this Fall

Per Faculty Senate's recommendation and approval, there are TWO breaks this fall. Consult the [Fall 2022 calendar](#) for more details.

1. No classes on October 20 – 23. Fall Break begins at 11:30 PM on Wednesday, October 19, and classes resume at 8 AM on Monday, October 24.
2. No classes on November 20 - 27. Thanksgiving break begins at 5 PM on Saturday, November 19, and classes resume 8 AM on Monday, November 28.

Updates for Syllabi

We have updated the UMSL syllabus [templates available online](#). You are welcome to use them as a template to build from or simply copy/paste any sections you want to update.

- Note the updated section on Student Resources with updated links and department names that direct students to help and services.
- Note the updated section concerning academic integrity.

We recommend adding the following language to your syllabus to communicate clarity about student absences relating to religious observances. DEI maintains the list of religious holy days. Contact odei@umsl.edu with questions about reasonable accommodations for religious holy days.

Recommended syllabus language to promote communication between students and faculty members about expected absences:
"If you expect to miss class due to a religious observance, let me know early in the semester so that we can discuss your responsibilities and plan so that you meet course obligations and requirements."

Updated Canvas Online Course Overview Canvas site

All UMSL students are enrolled in a Canvas course site that helps them learn how to use the Canvas tools and how to be successful learning online or with technology tools. This resource is valuable for all UMSL students that includes practice spaces to try out a SmarterProctoring test, discussion boards, assignment submissions as more. You may have a link to the earlier version of this site, so we ask you to update your link to the Canvas training site for students to this new link: https://umsystem.instructure.com/courses/83642 The transition to OneCanvas last fall resulted in a new link to this training and resource site for students. Here is some language you can use for students explaining this resource.

Recommended syllabus language to direct students to learn about and practice in Canvas
"If you are new to or unfamiliar with Canvas, consult the Canvas course site where you can learn about and practice with tools that will be used in this course. You'll learn about technologies and learning strategies to help you be successful in this course. Follow this link to temporarily leave our course and learn more about Canvas: https://umsystem.instructure.com/courses/83642 "

Note: this student resource link does NOT work for faculty. It is the link for students. Because we know that faculty and staff are curious about what is communicated there,

we also copied the site to a Faculty/Staff version. Do not share the Faculty/Staff link with students as it won't work for them. Use the link for students shared above.

Please email ctl@umsl.edu if you need any help with your final preparations for Fall 2022.

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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