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## *Grieving the Semester*

### ***Professor Ann Steffen Reflects on COVID-19 in the Context of Grief and Loss***

I've been asked by CTL to write about what we know from the behavioral sciences on responding to loss – through the lens of our current experiences as UMSL faculty members and graduate student instructors. Initially, a sense of loss was probably low on our list of emotional reactions to COVID-19. The first wave of stress triggered by the sudden transition to remote teaching, however, is subsiding for some of us. Our daily routines of instruction and connecting with students now involve different types of coordination amid the needs of our families and households. All of this change has occurred in the context of very reasonable fears about the well-being of loved ones and the implications of COVID-19 for our professional and personal futures. Anxiety and perceived stress were thus part of the first wave of reactions.

Right about now is when we begin to become more aware of the losses that this pandemic brings. As a community, we are grieving the death of our first student to lose her life to this virus, Judy Wilson-Griffin. We are experiencing other losses as well. Many faculty and instructors are missing their face-to-face interactions with students, staff and each other. Important research and scholarship activities have been put on hold, along with professional conferences and the opportunity to meet with colleagues and collaborators in person. In our professional and personal lives, we are missing life-giving celebrations for the near future. UMSL's postponement of May Commencement ceremonies is just one of many graduations, weddings and promotion dinners that are being deferred for now.

We live at a time where a large number of myths and misconceptions about grief and mourning are reinforced by movies, books and media. What do we know from the scientific literature? Loss is difficult for most people, and some losses are harder than others. Experiences of grief and mourning can impair daily routines, concentration, and take us by surprise. Longitudinal research studies show a very wide range of grief reactions, with no one pattern considered “healthy.” The presumed “normal” pattern of moving from high to low distress is found in no more than 10- 40% of participants in research studies. Minimal grief reactions are just as common, where individuals experience brief periodic spikes in distress but have generally low levels of depression and maintain daily roles and responsibilities. Individuals who show minimal signs of grief immediately post-loss are no more likely to develop problems later on than other individuals. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross helped focus attention and resources to the needs of the dying and the bereaved, but she was not a scientist nor did she conduct systematic research. There is no empirical support for specific stages of grief reactions; despite wide popularity, stage theories do not hold up in light of scientific evidence. Experiences and expressions of positive emotions are also very common after a range of losses. Research now includes attention to how individuals find meaning in daily activities, and how this “meaning making” leads to positive affect. Positive emotions are a way to broaden our attention; they lead to increased flexibility and creativity in responding to stressful life events, including our experiences of loss. For all of us, we can honor and respect the loss or losses we are experiencing, and trust our preferences for how we manage our reactions to loss.

Ann Steffen, PhD, ABPP

Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences



### ***Shout-Outs: Giving Thanks***

As you know, the focus of our work in the Center for Teaching and Learning completely shifted to supporting faculty and students navigate the world of remote teaching and learning. We were in no way alone in this endeavor. We have been grateful to the Office of eLearning, the Learning Resource Lab, and all the faculty alumni of Online in 9 who volunteered their time to help colleagues with this transition. We are humbled by the commitment and empathy of UMSL faculty to create the best learning environment possible for students during these extreme circumstances. Many faculty had to completely rethink how they would deliver their content and assessments. Other faculty had to adopt technology and systems they had never used before while dealing with personal complicated situations including taking care of family members, remote schooling children, or their own health challenges. All faculty should be very proud of what they have accomplished over the last few weeks. It has been no small feat.

A [practice centered around gratitude](#) has been shown to have numerous health benefits. Please [take a minute and acknowledge one of your colleagues, a student, staff member, or an administrator](#) who has meant something to you during this transition to remote teaching. We will send out a message to the nominee and will include some shout-outs in our May newsletter.



### ***Cloaking Students in Compassion***

"Trauma results in a fundamental reorganization of the way mind and brain manage perceptions. It changes not only how we think and what we think about, but also our very capacity to think." - Bessel van der Kolk M.D.

Preparation and publication of the March newsletter feels like a lifetime ago. The world has changed and will never be the same due to COVID-19. All of us are experiencing and dealing with the pandemic in different ways. Some students have lost jobs, loved ones, or are trying to balance work and care of family members, or schooling children, among many more complications. The long term mental health implications of this stress, and prolonged isolation are yet to be seen but some might characterize this experience as traumatic. Regardless, trauma-informed pedagogy is a way to cloak students in compassion during this difficult time.

#### **During this Time Students may have a hard time doing the following:**

- Difficulty focusing, attending, retaining and recalling
- Tendency to miss a lot of classes
- Challenge with emotional regulation
- Fear of taking risks
- Anxiety about deadlines, exams, group work, or public speaking
- Anger, helplessness, or dissociation when stressed
- Withdrawal and isolation

#### **Teaching through a lens of trauma-informed practices:**

# Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Examples

<b>Physical, Emotional, Social, &amp; Academic Respect</b>	<p>Efforts are made to create an atmosphere that is respectful and accepting for all class members in both individual and group interactions, including opportunities to make and learn from mistakes.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>scaffolding or integrating low-stakes assignments that provide opportunity to receive feedback and learn from mistakes prior to evaluation; modeling assertive, non-violent communication skills; providing content warnings prior to viewing discussing sensitive material</i></p>
<b>Trustworthiness &amp; Transparency</b>	<p>Trust and transparency are enhanced by making course expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, and maintaining appropriate boundaries.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>articulating clear policies and implementing them consistently; providing detailed assignment sheets and grading rubrics; responding to email within the communicated time-frame; avoiding all-or-nothing or zero-tolerance policies that are difficult to enforce consistently; consistent with course navigation and design, creating class routines or rituals</i></p>
<b>Support &amp; Connection</b>	<p>All class members are connected with appropriate peer and professional resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>providing referral information for campus and community resources such as advising and writing services; announcing campus and community events; facilitating peer groups and peer workshops; inviting guest speakers</i></p>
<b>Collaboration &amp; Mutuality</b>	<p>All class members act as allies rather than as adversaries to help ensure one another's success. Opportunities exist for all class members to provide input, share power, and make decisions.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>implementing policies and practices that foster success; involving students in creating or revising policies, assignments, and grading; doing with rather than doing for students (e.g. editing papers for students); facilitating student-led discussions and activities</i></p>
<b>Empowerment, Voice, &amp; Choice</b>	<p>All class members emphasize strengths and resilience over deficiencies and pathology; they empower one another to make choices and to develop confidence and competence.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>building in choices where possible (e.g. readings, paper format); integrating active learning; implementing realistic attendance policies (e.g. statements in syllabus to reach out to instructional team if you will be absent before a class); facilitating large and small group discussion so students have multiple opportunities and modes to speak</i></p>
<b>Cultural, Historical, &amp; Gender Contexts</b>	<p>All class members strive to be responsive to historical, cultural, and gender contexts in order to respect one another's diverse experiences and identities.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>addressing microaggressions; being aware of personal and disciplinary biases and how they impact teaching and learning (e.g. privileging or disparaging certain dialects, writing styles, or research methods); providing choices to self-identify identities (e.g. choice to identify or not identify pronouns); taking responsibility to address burdening of students to speak for or represent/explain their entire identity group (e.g. if a student is asked to speak for their ethnicity, the instructor addresses this)</i></p>
<b>Resilience, Growth, &amp; Change</b>	<p>All class members recognize each other's strengths and resilience, and they provide feedback to help each other grow and change.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> <i>providing formative &amp; summative assessments; pointing out what was done well; assigning multiple drafts; holding one-on-one conferences; facilitating peer feedback; rewarding success &amp; effort; soliciting feedback from students to improve the course; conveying optimism</i></p>

Adapted from: Carello, J. (2019). *Examples of trauma-informed teaching and learning in college classrooms*. Retrieved from <https://traumainformedteachingblog.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/examples-of-titl-in-college-classrooms-7.2019-color.pdf>

By the time they reach college, 66 to 85 percent of youth report lifetime traumatic event exposure, with many reporting multiple exposures. It is better to assume that a student has experienced trauma, and teach through a trauma-informed lens, rather than assume the opposite.

It is also important as an instructor to take care of yourself. You can't help your students in a productive way until you take care of yourself. [System-wide resources for faculty and staff can be found on a central website](#). One idea is to create a self-care emergency care plan that works for you. You can put this on a post-it note or tape up a list next to your computer. If you get receive something that is triggering you will have a go-to list of things you will and will not do. Consider four general areas:

1. **Make a list of things that will be good for you** (breathing, exercising, cooking, etc.). [I really like this one-minute breathing exercise](#).
2. **Make a list of people you can contact for support** (family, close friends, spiritual leader)
3. **Make a list of positive things to say to yourself** (e.g. "perfection is the nemesis of good enough")
4. **Make a list of who and what to avoid** (e.g. I will avoid eating that entire chocolate cake)

*This article was inspired by Dr. Mays Imad and her webinar entitled "Trauma-Informed Pedagogy." and that of Dr. Johanna Creswell Baez and Matthea Marquart and their webinar entitled Trauma-informed teaching and learning (TITL) Online*

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### ***Get ready to go online for the summer***

*"As we continue to provide a path so our students can keep learning over the summer, we will transition the summer catalog fully online. The Office of eLearning, in collaboration with the CTL, has created an accelerated program to assist our faculty to thoughtfully develop the quality courses students have come to expect from UMSL." --Interim Chancellor and Provost Kristin Sobolik*

Sign up and learn more about the 4-Week [Online Course Design Basics workshop](#). UMSL's instructional designers will be leading the workshop, and the first cohort begins April 20 for faculty teaching a course starting May 18. Other cohorts will be offered throughout the summer. *If you're participating in the cohort that starts April 20, please register before April 15.*

### **Session Cohorts**

1. April 20 - May 18
2. May 4 - June 1
3. May 18 - June 15
4. with more sessions coming!

**Questions about the workshop?** Contact Emily Goldstein ([emily.goldstein@umsl.edu](mailto:emily.goldstein@umsl.edu)), Interim Director of eLearning for UM-System's Office of eLearning

**Start Here: Online Course Design Basics** is a four-week workshop with a focus on ensuring online course quality and student engagement. Unless your course was developed already through Online in 9/DIY, all faculty teaching this summer are required to participate as they transition their summer face-to-face courses to online delivery.



This 4-week workshop is meant to help you work efficiently and effectively in a flexible way. It is asynchronous and participating faculty will be provided with templates, resources, and helpful boilerplate language to aid in the quick development of their own online courses. Activities are designed to promote the rapid development of their online courses.

**The program will focus on:**

- Creating a quality online course in 4 weeks.
- Providing resources and templates to faculty that will help them ensure an engaging, quality learning experience for all students.

**You will learn how to:**

- Explain how learning goals impact course structure
- Define the goals for your course
- Make a plan for how you will connect with your learners
- Make a plan for how learners will connect with each other
- Connect course assessments to your course vision
- Create accessible and inclusive course materials

Sign up and learn more about the [Online Course Design Basics workshop](#).

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## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & COLLOQUIA



eLearning Instructional Designers and Technologists have 4 upcoming sessions for faculty across UM System in the month of April. Questions are welcomed throughout the sessions.

***No registration is necessary.***

**Thursday April 9th, 12 – 1pm:** *High Impact Practices for Digital Accessibility*

Zoom Link: <https://UMSLCanvas.zoom.us/j/760395297>

**High Impact Practices for Digital Accessibility Description:** How to make your digital documents universally accessible to all, especially to support students with a wide range of disabilities. eLearning Instructional Designers will host a webinar featuring high impact practices to address digital accessibility requirements across various formats of documents (i.e., Word, PDF, PPT).

**Thursday April 16th, 3 – 4pm:** *Engaging Online Students*

Zoom Link: <https://UMSLCanvas.zoom.us/j/760395297>

**Engaging Online Students Description:** Join this one hour Zoom session to learn about meaningful ways of transforming in-classroom activities into online. Let's have a conversation about possible vs impossible and how can we better student experiences online during this time of transition.

**Thursday April 23rd, 12 – 1pm:** *Instructional Design Q&A Working Session*

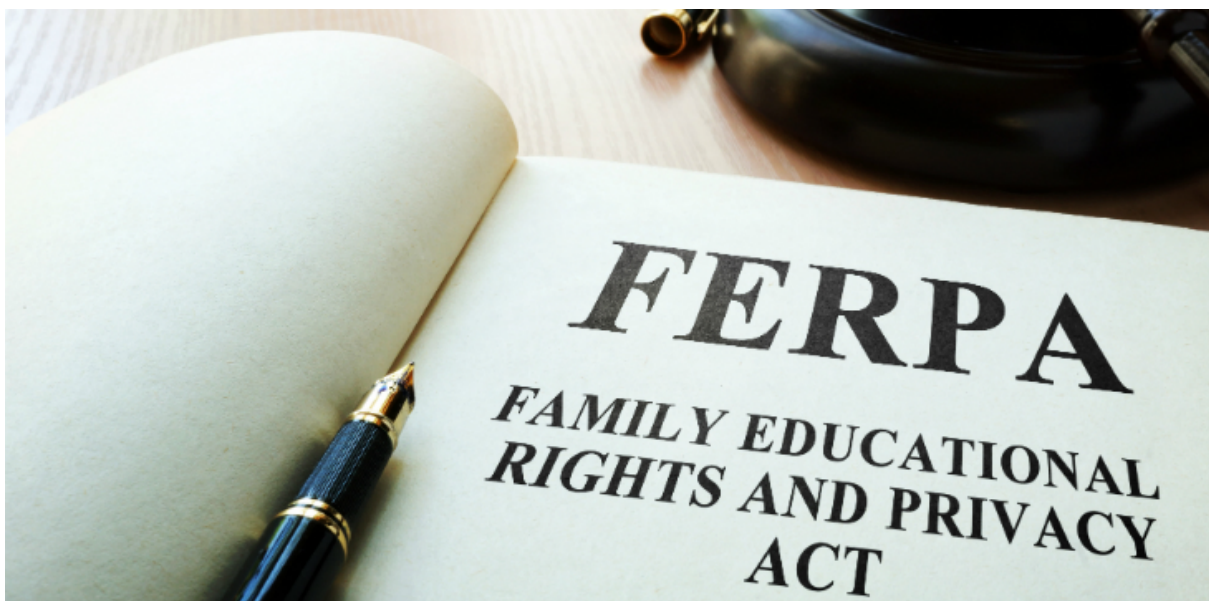
Zoom Link: <https://UMSLCanvas.zoom.us/j/760395297>

eLearning Instructional Designers and Technologists welcome any questions faculty have about teaching online. This is an open forum available to faculty across the UM System.

**Thursday April 30th, 3 – 4pm:** *Best Practices for Online Summer Courses*

Zoom Link: <https://UMSLCanvas.zoom.us/j/760395297>

**Best Practices for Online Summer Courses Description:** eLearning Instructional Designers and Technologists will host a webinar featuring effective online teaching strategies in preparation for summer. How to transition courses online while preserving pedagogical quality and student engagement will be discussed.



### ***FERPA Reminder***

Recorded synchronous class sessions containing student video or audio (through Zoom or other software) are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and **cannot** be shared with future classes without written consent. You may, however, post those recordings in Canvas for your current semester students. More information about recording and FERPA will be provided on the Registrar's website very soon.

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## TOP 10 WAYS TO SAVE TIME TEACHING ONLINE



### ***Strategies to help navigate this new online landscape***

The pivot that we have made to remote teaching has caused many of us to rethink how we teach. Learning new technology, new ways of communicating, and assessing is very time consuming. In order to help you in this endeavor Dr. Jen McKanry has created an infographic with 10 ways to save time teaching online. If you prefer a video you can also [watch this VoiceThread to get this information](#). If you have other time saving tips to suggest please e-mail Erin Witteck at [elwbcf@umsl.edu](mailto:elwbcf@umsl.edu)

# TOP 10 WAYS TO SAVE TIME TEACHING ONLINE

## #5 Have an Agenda for Each Module

Agenda - all assignments due by Friday at 11:59 PM CST:

1. Read Chapter 2 - Scope (pages 15 - 25) in your text.
2. Discuss with your classmates in the [M2 Google Search for "Event"](#) Discussion Board
3. Complete the [Wiscala EdU Assignment](#)
4. Take the [M2 Survey Quiz](#)

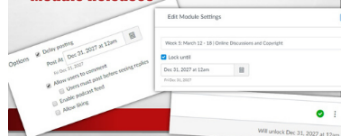
Objectives:

1. "Know what you don't know" to identify any information gaps
2. Identify which types of information will best meet the need
3. Identify the available search tools, such as general and subject specific resources at different levels
4. Identify different formats in which information may be provided
5. Demonstrate the ability to use new tools as they become available

**Let students check their own knowledge before submitting anything to you.**

Low stakes quizzing, also known as retrieval practice, can be a powerful study tool for students to make sure they understand content. There are many self grading tools available (Canvas, Kaltura, Panopto) that let students practice before submitting final "summative" material to you for grading.

## #3 Preprogram Announcements & Module Releases



**Reduce time in grading final papers and teach valuable.**

- Be sure to be very clear on your expectations for what peer review is.
- Provide a rubric or specific list of question prompts for students to use in response to their peers.
- Give them lots of opportunities to practice this skill building up the expectation over time.

## #1 Use Rubrics, Lots and Lots of Rubrics!



**Have everything for the week located in just one place.**

- In Canvas you can include detailed instructions, links, and videos right in the page.
- Keep typed in due dates general to save time with updates each semester. Instead use the due date tool in each assignment which can automatically move forward when you copy from semester to semester!

## #4 Create Low Stakes Self Grading Quizzes

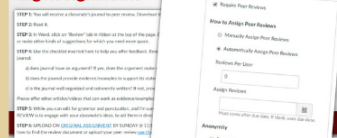
- Canvas quiz tool
- Kaltura video quiz
- Panopto video quiz



**Setting up dates for your announcements and modules to come available will reduce your burden to be as on top of things.**

- Announcements and release of module can be set to occur at pre-programmed times.
- Like due dates, these can also automatically adjust when you copy a course from semester to semester.
- Helps remind YOU what is coming up for the week :-).

## #2 Use Peer Review for Early Drafts of Big Assignments



**Who doesn't like one click grading or the ability to reuse comments?**

- Canvas has many ways to use rubrics to provide clear expectations and one click grading.
- Standard rubrics - just click on the rubric for each criteria to award points.
- Free form comments allow you to save and reuse the same comment from student to student.

FOR INSTRUCTIONS SEE THE CANVAS GUIDES:  
<https://bit.ly/2JNC2AY>

# TOP 10 WAYS TO SAVE TIME TEACHING ONLINE

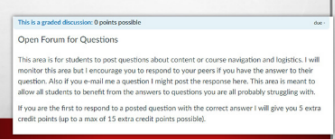
## #10 Provide Detailed Instructions for Assignments



## Speaking can be faster than typing.

This not only can be a quick, easy way to provide feedback. It can be a great way to establish a personal connection with students online.

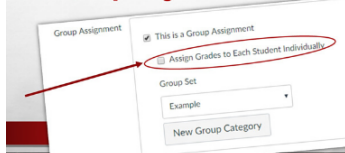
## #8 Create a Watercooler discussion



## Clear expectations help reduce questions and followup.

Many students have unrealistic expectations for what an online class is. Be clear from the start what this course will entail. Example language is available in the Online Syllabus Template (see CTL website).

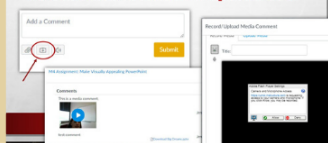
## #6 Use Group Assignments



## This saves you and students time in Q&A about expectations.

In Canvas you can include detailed instructions, links, and videos right in the assignment.

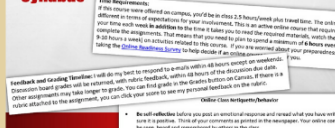
## #9 Use Video Feedback in SpeedGrader



## Let students be their own source for basic Q&A.

- Encourage students to check here first when they have questions.
- Consider extra credit for students answering questions here.
- Respond to emailed questions with a general post on this discussion so you are only typing responses once instead of multiple times to the same question.

## #7 Set Clear Expectations in Your Syllabus



## Just grade once for the whole group.

- Among the many reasons group assignments are beneficial is the decreased time in grading for you.
- Be sure larger assignments have multiple parts so students build up their team coordination over time.
- If concerned about unequal distribution of work effort you can have a separate grade for effort.

FOR INSTRUCTIONS SEE THE CANVAS GUIDES:

<https://bit.ly/2jnc2av>



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SAVE THE DATE:  
September 24-25, 2020

FOCUS  
— on —  
TEACHING & TECHNOLOGY  
a St. Louis regional conference

**Calling all great ideas!**

The [Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference](#) Planning Committee is now [accepting proposals for the 2020 conference](#) to be held September 24 & 25, here on UMSL's campus. Proposals are due by April 30, though the deadline might be extended. Proposal authors will hear from the committee in the beginning of June.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal or you would like to brainstorm ideas, Center for Teaching and Learning staff are able to assist.

Email [mckanryj@umsl.edu](mailto:mckanryj@umsl.edu) to arrange a consultation. We would love to see a strong contingent from UMSL sharing all the amazing things you do with our regional partners!



#### [Hope Matters](#)

- During this time of uncertainty it is important to not only focus on the technology but the ways in which we can sustain emotional connections with students. This article describes 10 teaching strategies to create a sense of hope for our students.

#### [Why You Should Ignore All That Coronavirus-Inspired Productivity Pressure](#)

- On social media it is easy to find posts about faculty that are using this time to write that paper they have been meaning to write, design experiments, or catch up on long lost projects. It is easy to fall into the trap of feeling guilty about not being as productive as we would like to be. This article describes what is more important than productivity during this time.
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