

The Joy Shechtman Mankoff
Center for Teaching & Learning presents ...

Talking Teaching Pandemic Edition Fall 2020

With Twice the Typical Events!



PLEASE JOIN COLLEAGUES FOR COMRADERIE, MUTUAL SUPPORT, AND GREAT CONVERSATIONS . . .

Modules: Advantages, Challenges, & Opportunities

Friday 18 September 2020, 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

This semester a portion of our faculty are embarking on an entirely new way of teaching--the modular course. During this event, faculty will discuss how this new pace is going and what your experiences have been three weeks into the semester. Some of the questions we will address are:

- Has the intensive time with students changed the way you are approaching teaching?
- How have you been using in-class activities or other pedagogical techniques?
- How has this changed your thinking about “coverage,” depth, and breadth?
- Has it changed how you think about attendance? Participation?

Whether you are currently teaching a module this Fall, or thinking about teaching one in the future, please join us to talk about the good, bad, and confusing of teaching on the modular calendar.

Discussants include: Joyce Bennet, Danielle Egan, Di Luo, Sarah Queen, and others.

Getting Formative Feedback about Your Teaching this Semester

Wednesday 23 September, 8:30 AM to 10 AM on Zoom (Link will be sent to registrants)

This semester much of how we are teaching is new to us, and gathering information early on about how things are going can be very helpful. In our unusual semester of teaching, what is the most effective way to get in-process (“formative”) feedback about your teaching? What strategies or models are most suited for collecting the information you would like? What information can be most helpful to help improve your students’ learning? Whether you are teaching a module or full-semester, fully remotely or in-person/hybrid, we will talk about various types of formative assessments and which might be most suitable for your needs

Remote Teaching: Successes, Challenges, Problem Solving

Thursday 24 September 2020, Noon to 1:15 PM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

Last spring, faculty discussed the challenges and difficulties of rapidly transitioning to an online teaching format. Students also highlighted the challenges they faced. After an intensive summer thinking and refining our pedagogical tools for this new format, this session will focus on what is going well, and what new challenges are emerging.

Co-sponsored by Research Support & Curricular Technology.

In-Person Teaching: Successes, Challenges, Problem Solving

Tuesday 29 September 2020, 10:15 AM to 11:45 AM Online (Link will be sent)

In-person education and the facilitation of meaningful relationships is core to the work we do as liberal arts professors. Yet, in our current situation, we may not be able to see our students’ faces, and activities as simple as “pair and share” or small group work have become logistically challenging. As we begin our third full week of in-person classes, we ask:

Has Covid and all the new measures in place to address it changed the dynamics of in-person teaching? Or, are we all so happy to see one another that the challenges associated with social distance measures, hybrid teaching methods, and potential quarantine seem to fade away with the opportunity to share an in-person space for teaching and learning? What are the ways in which the styles of our interactions with students have remained the same?—and how have they changed?

In this session we will discuss the challenges and benefits of being back in our physically-distanced classrooms, labs, and studios—and what we are learning.

Co-sponsored by Research Support & Curricular Technology.

Quizzes, Midterms, Tests: Assessing Students During the Pandemic

Thursday 1 October 2020, 3:30 PM to 4:45 PM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

Remote and hybrid modes of teaching have pushed faculty members to rethink the ways they administer and create student assessments—particularly quizzes, tests, and exams. Are you able to test your hybrid and remote students in a manner in which you are accustomed? How have you adapted to our new teaching situation? Questions of equity, accessibility to technology, and stress & learning all come into play when thinking about scheduled, timed assessments of student learning. Come learn about the creative approaches our colleagues are using are taking, such as untimed assessments and open-note exams, to assess our students' learning.

Co-sponsored by Research Support & Curricular Technology.

“Triage Teaching”: Strategies for Avoiding and/or Dealing with Burnout

Friday 9 October 2020 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

Almost seven months into pandemic life, and after a summer of intense preparation for our upcoming teaching, many of us feel as if we are juggling an impossible load. Quarantining or social distancing for our health and the health of our community; watching the death toll rise on a daily basis; grappling with how this pandemic functions as an example of the health disparities wrought by racism and classism in this nation; understanding the impossibility of full-time work when we are also managing full time childcare and/or elder care; teaching classes in a pedagogical format new to most of us; spending extra hours in meetings to decide how we should move forward; witnessing massive environmental catastrophes; and, worrying about the destructively divided state of our country and the upcoming election. Does reading this list alone just make you feel overwhelmed?!

In the midst of all this, faculty often face a triage situation. The purpose of this Talking Teaching session will be for us to think collectively about how we can avoid burnout and/or recover if we are already burnt out. We will discuss concrete strategies for making our teaching--and our lives--a little bit more manageable in these disrupted, unmanageable times.

Discussants include: Joyce Bennet, Anne Bernhard, Sunil Bhatia, Nakia Hamlet, Karen Gonzalez Rice, Karolin Machtans, Jeff Moher, and Bryana White.

Fostering Resilience in Our Students

Friday 16 October 2020, 10:30 AM to Noon Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

The term “grit” has often been used to describe BIPOC and students of color who are able to achieve success by overcoming obstacles. This vision relies upon a model of individualism and the myth of meritocracy, and obscures the influence of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of inequity which shape the educational landscape from kindergarten to doctoral programs. The costs of which are continual and compounding--and adversely impact the development of the young people and adults experiencing it. Grit disavows the need for collective commitment for structural change and it relieves those who are privileged from their complicity in reproducing--consciously or unconsciously--racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination in the classroom, including microaggressions and/or outward hostility as well as curricula empty of BIPOC and other minoritized scholars, histories, and content.

This discussion seeks to continue the discussion started on the faculty listserv about individual “grit” and think through a different framework of resilience, which demands a collective commitment to cultural change on our campus. In particular, we will examine how a trauma-informed or resilience-centered practice would ask us to rethink our teaching practices and reframe our thinking about advising to create a more conducive space for learning, growth, and empowerment for our BIPOC and other minoritized students.

Modules: What Have We Learned?

Tuesday 20 October 2020, 1:00 PM to 2:15pm Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

Reminder with Zoom link sent out 3 hours before event when pre-registration closes. After finishing with our first experiments with modules, this session will explore what we have learned and how we might use this information as we think about the spring term (and Module II). We will revisit questions considered in last month’s Talking Teaching event on the module format through the lens of what we might do differently in the future.

Given the intensive nature of module courses, how have you adapted your approach to teaching? How did your teaching evolve over the 7.5 weeks? What in-class activities or other pedagogical techniques have you used that were successful? What might you try in the next module or in the spring? Did you have to pare down the material covered? Were you still able to get through all that you planned to cover? How are you now thinking about attendance and participation? How did you engage those students taking your course remotely and/or asynchronously?

Whether you have just completed teaching a module, are about to teach a module for the first time, or are thinking about teaching one in the spring, please join us to talk about the advantages and challenges of teaching in a modular format while considering strategies for getting through the next module.

Discussants include Dave Chavanne, Lindsay Crawford, Leo Garofalo, Di Luo, and Sarah Queen.

Open Educational Resources (OER): Strategies for Using Free, Adaptable & Open Textbooks

Thursday 29 October 2020, Noon to 1:30 PM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)
Click here to register or visit <https://conncoll.libcal.com/calendar/ctl/OER>

Reminder with Zoom link sent out 3 hours before event when pre-registration closes. Are you currently using or considering adopting an open educational resource (OER) as your primary textbook? Ideal for online and traditional learning environments, open educational resources allow for faculty innovation while increasing student access and cost savings. Join a discussion about the OER adoption process, revising open textbooks, open pedagogy, and creating OER. Share ideas with colleagues who have implemented open education practices in their courses, and hear about effective approaches to teaching using OERs. We will also discuss the Connecticut College Open Educational Resources (OER) Grant which provides funding and staff support to faculty who wish to create or integrate OER into a course.

Co-sponsored by Research Support & Curricular Technology.

Discussants include Michelle Dunlap, Ariela McCaffrey, Jessica McCullough, Emily Kuder, Maria Rosa, and Derek Turner.

Teaching Post-Election: How to Think about Classroom Conversations after November 3rd

Friday 30 October 2020, 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)
Reminder with Zoom link sent out 3 hours before event when pre-registration closes.

We are in a moment of intense societal upheaval and polarization. No matter what the results of this year's presidential election, the divisions that we are facing remain. November 2016 provided how much an election could shape classroom environments in expected and unexpected ways. Given the hardships that 2020 has already wrought, it is quite possible that this year's election will have an even more powerful impact on the students in our class. This workshop will focus on strategies for thinking about teaching on November 4th and in the immediate aftermath of the election.

Preparing Our Students for the Shift Back to “In-Home” Learning

Tuesday 10 November 2020, Noon to 1:15 PM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)
After November 20th most of our students currently living on campus will be leaving campus for the remainder of the semester to a variety of situations--heading to their own home or to that of

family or friends. What does this shift to fully remote learning with our students away from campus mean for our teaching? What do these changes mean to courses that have had some in-person, face-to-face component? What are the implications for courses that have been fully remote all along?

This remote, off-campus learning will have many similarities to our sudden pivot online this past March: questions about access to technology and wifi, potential challenges related to a space that allows students to participate in class, and the disruption of teaching across multiple time zones. In addition, students will be returning to a variety of living situations, some of which might be supportive of their learning and wellbeing, while others may make learning more difficult and challenge their wellbeing and health.

We will discuss such questions as: Will your expectations about participation change? Will you change how you address the issue of cameras on or off? What can you do to help prepare your students--and yourself--for this Thanksgiving shift.

Cultivating a Community of Care

Friday 4 December 2020, Noon to 1:30 PM Online (Link will be sent to registrants)

Given all that faculty and staff are facing, how might we reframe our conception of community to respond to our shifting needs and challenges at the interpersonal and institutional level?

Nickita Valero, a Canadian-based community activist, states that a community of care involves “being there for people without them having to take the initial first step. It’s about adopting a [systematic] ethos of compassion and very intentionally applying that.” In other words, a community of care asks people to move beyond promoting a vision of individual self care by intentionally creating a community that takes the responsibility of caring for one another seriously. This approach can involve a range of acts such as checking in on folks to see how they are doing to cooking meals for folks to working for the collective improvement of our campus culture.

Some questions we will discuss include:

What could a community of care look like at Connecticut College? What are the values and practices it should involve? How does such a community relate to the larger mission of the college? How can faculty and staff actively create community together? Are there things we could do for one another, both on and off campus, that could help sustain us as whole people and make our work for and with our students more powerful?

We will consider the ways faculty and staff could work collectively in order to communicate and collaborate with each other--including senior administrators, the President and, even the Board of Trustees—to create a more active and systematic ethos of compassion at the college. This workshop will offer some tools for thinking about community and some strategies for moving forward.

Co-sponsored by FSCC and Staff Council.

Discussants include: Cheryl Banker, Anne Bernhard, John McKnight, Kim Sanchez, Ann Schenk, Jefferson Singer, Doug Thompson, Derek Turner, and Eric Vukicevich.