Correspondent
Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Marci's Messages
Online Learning Consortium
Professional Development Available for Faculty

Help get the word out!

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has scholarships available for faculty to attend any following Online Learning Consortium workshops. 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. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship to attend one of the following workshops, please complete the Registration form.

These workshops cover a wide array of topics that are relevant to both traditional and online faculty, a couple examples of workshops:

Creating Effective Presentations
Presentations need to creatively engage students to help them process and understand content.. In this workshop you will discover elements of an effective presentation that support learning, explore a process for creating presentations, and develop skills for preparing presentations. You will have the opportunity to practice easy-to-master graphic and information design principles that will increase the effectiveness of your presentations.

New to Online: Essentials Part 1-Getting Started,
An essential component of successful online teaching is experiencing online learning for yourself. This workshop will provide you with an important online learning experience as you explore the basics of online teaching and learning. You will learn the critical differences between online and face-to-face courses, including faculty and student expectations, role adjustments, and course design and evaluation. Your explorations will include research-based readings, presentations and discussions with other new online teachers.

Exploring Learning Analytics,
This workshop provides an introduction to the field of learning analytics, geared mainly towards faculty, instructional designers and other professionals who are interested in exploring the fundamentals of learning analytics. Learning analytics is a growing area of interest across the academy. New technologies can enable faculty and administrators to gather data about how students are interacting with digital learning environments, such as the campus LMS, and other institutionally provided platforms. This data can be used to inform the future design of courses, platforms and even the development of predictive tools that can guide individual students towards success. However, the understanding of a practical approach for educators is often missing. During this one-week workshop, we will learn about the fundamental concepts and approaches used in this quickly evolving field and review basic terminology and concepts related to learning analytics. We will look at analytics from an individual teacher's perspective as well as program or institution-wide uses.

Designed with the practitioner in mind, this applied analytics workshop will include examples of learning analytics approaches and projects happening within higher education as well as highlight methods of building capacity towards an analytics project or strategy. Participants will learn how to identify small scale, proof-of-concept learning analytics projects and methods that they can try at their own institutions. In addition, they will see practical examples of learning analytics to help track student engagement, early warning alerts and other methods of "in-semester" uses of analytics and create a mini project to apply the concepts learned in the workshop.

Introduction to Learner Experience (LX) design Methods
Learner Experience (LX) Design utilizes well-established user experience (UX) design, service design, and design thinking methods to focus the design of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences on those who matter most: the learners. Try as we might, no course design is perfect for every learner. Drawing from methods used in user experience design, learning design, and service design, this introductory workshop provides a basic overview of what LX Design is, and a taste of how it can help you identify and solve some of the difficulties your students may encounter in your course.

Designing Gamified Learning Environment
Game environments encourage collaboration, inquiry-based learning, repetition, practice and control. In this workshop, you will use theories and principles from game design to develop learning environments that motivate and engage students in a creative way. By understanding elements of game design theory, you will begin to adopt and incorporate these elements which promote engagement into your online and blended courses. You will explore elements such as role playing, point systems, competition and collaboration.

Focus on SWOSU Faculty

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is spotlighting faculty members monthly in a series of articles called "Focus on SWOSU Faculty". These faculty have been selected as doing inspiring active learning activities 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 advances student learning at SWOSU.

If you wish to nominate someone to be spotlighted in the "Focus on SWOSU Faculty" article in upcoming CETL Correspondent Newsletters, please complete the nomination form.

This month, we are spotlighting **Ms. Tommye Davis, Instructor, Department of Biological Sciences / Department of Chemistry and Physics** as CETL's October 2018 spotlighted faculty.

Ms. Tommye Davis earned her BS in Chemistry from SWOSU. Soon after graduation, she was employed as a chemist for Energy Systems Co. (a chemical incineration company) in Arkansas to analyze water and fuel waste stored on the plant site prior to incineration. She was later employed as a scientist by Mason & Hanger-Silas Mason Co. Inc. in Texas (a weapons contractor for the DOE) to maintain control of analytical testing of weapon components. She was promoted from scientist to project scientist within a ten-year span. She had fifteen years of training and application in the areas of industrial safety, applied statistics, analytical instrumentation operation, management skills, waste management and the "right-to-know" laws of chemical management. In 1990, she began teaching at SWOSU at Sayre in areas of life and physical science. By 1993, she had earned her M.Ed in Natural Science from SWOSU, and in 1996, she was granted tenure.

Tommye loved her work in both industry and education, but acknowledges that teaching has been the toughest career by far. Teaching at a branch campus creates added pressure to insure the success of students as they go forward in their set majors. The goals listed below are ones she has set in teaching the introductory sciences and she continually adds new goals as technology advances and as curriculums change:

1) to get students to like science and, if that is too extreme, to appreciate its ever-present existence in their lives.
2) to stress the importance of computer usage, applied statistics and technical writing ability, which are areas that have benefited her industry.
3) to promote reading and research while encouraging students to be investigative, of what they want to know and what others say they know.
4) to be aware of environmental issues and to be good stewards of the land, water and air around them.
5) to prepare students for advancement into upper level courses.

Over the years, Tommye has used various delivery methods in teaching, such as telecourse, ITV, blended, and online. She has tried various ways

to teach CHEM1004 General Chemistry and CHEM1004L General Chemistry Lab. She firmly believes that General Chemistry is all about cooperative learning because when students have problems or scenarios to work out, the students start helping each other, making for a great teaching and learning environment. She quizzes students over the chemistry lab procedure, calculations and results, to see if all individual students understand what they were trying to accomplish while they were so busy completing their labs. Students have a tendency to double check their work when they know they are individually responsible for their results.

Tommye has also tried various ways to deliver BIOL1004 Biological Concepts. She took over this course during the days of telecourses and has developed it into an online offering, which is one of the most time-consuming and challenging ways to teach.

Her 20+ years of teaching have been a real joy—and she has learned a great deal while doing so. She takes pride in her past experiences and her present responsibilities at SWOSU, especially in relaying information to the student. Pride in teaching comes from her former students getting back to her and letting her know that they are succeeding in their degree or in life.

Tommye is married and has two sons. Her husband, Roger, received his PharmD degree from SWOSU and is a pharmacist for Clinton IHS. Her oldest son is married, has a degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma and plays professional basketball in Europe (going on ten years now) with the support of his wife, Mara. Tommye's youngest son, Wil, has graduated from SWOSU in Chemistry and is currently at OSU pursuing a chemical engineering degree. She is looking forward to the arrival of her first grandchild in February.

The focus is you.

Workshops Available for August-September

CETL Workshops with Nathan

Basic Zoom Training
Contact Nathan for one-on-one Basic Zoom training. The training introduces faculty to all of the basic Zoom features. It is structured for the new Zoom learner.

CETL Workshops with Mapopa

Using Speedgrader, Docviewer and Turnitin
This three in one workshop walks faculty through using Speedgrader, making annotations using Docviewer and also managing Turnitin submitted assignments.

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Tuesday, October 9, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Tuesday, October 23, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Tuesday, October 30, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Using the Scheduler Tool
This half hour workshop introduces faculty to using scheduler in the Canvas calendar. The workshop takes a hand-on approach to using Scheduler as a Calendar tool that creates appointment groups within a course or group.

Wednesday, October 3, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Wednesday, October 17, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Wednesday, October 24, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Wednesday, October 31, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Using Attendance and Rollcall
In this workshop, we will hold an in-depth discussion on using Attendance and Rollcall in Canvas.

Thursday, October 4, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Thursday, October 11, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

Thursday, October 25, 2018 .... 1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
     Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/960339908

LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor Workshops

*In this 45-minute webinar put on by Respondus, see an in-depth demo of LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. You will learn about the all-new **"Priority Review"** system which makes it easy for instructors to identify exam sessions requiring deeper scrutiny. We'll also show the new instructor dashboard, including **"timeline"** and **"milestone"** features. Learn best practices, ask questions, and get tips on how to quickly get started.*

Thursday, October 11, 2018 .... 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Sign up Now

Tuesday, October 23, 218 .... 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Sign up Now

CETL Workshops with Veronica

Intro to Canvas
Learn about basics of setting up a course, announcements, assignments, quizzes, gradebook, files, importing content.

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 .... 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
     In HEC 208 or Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/570994059

Microsoft Access: An Intensive Afternoon
Learn how to create tables, keys, Forms, Relationships, Queries, and Reports

Tuesday, October 12, 2018 .... 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
     In HEC 208 or Join this workshops via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/307493552

Pressbooks and Beacon – free e-textbook and e-book makers (editors)
Learn the basics of the environment/creating an e-book, Editing, Publishing options

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 .... 2PM HEC 208
     In HEC 208 or Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/440190980

Respondus 4.0.7.03 (Test creation software)
Learn how to import publisher content, create new quizzes, Canvas Integration

Tuesday, October 25, 2018 .... 11:00 a.m. to noon
     in HEC 208 or Join this workshop via ZOOM: https://zoom.us/j/179475717

Introduction to Smartboards
(by arrangement as we will need you to identify a Smartboard we can use for instruction)

Time and Date for your convenience.
Contact Veronica: (580) 774-3147 or veronica.mcgowan@swosu.edu

NOTE: all workshops will be recorded and placed in Faculty Trainings/Workshops in Canvas at some date after the live workshop

Course Development Workshop (OCD) with Mapopa

OCD is a fully online workshop, which gives faculty first-hand experience of teaching a fully online course. It makes faculty understand an online course as an environment whose basic rules are different from those of a physical classroom. The workshop introduces you to key concepts, including online course design, digital content planning and construction, communication management, and troubleshooting. Faculty will learn to plan, design, build, react, communicate, troubleshoot and connect in an entirely online environment. Most importantly, OCD gives faculty a hands-on opportunity to create and implement various aspects of their online course in the context of the Canvas interface. Faculty will receive a certificate from CETL upon completion of the OCD Workshop. Register by calling Ashley at extension 3149 or emailing ashley.walkup@swosu.edu.

Insights from CETL's Teaching and Learning Coordinators

Mapopa Musings
By Dr. Mapopa Sanga

Using the Situated Cognition Construct to Close Gap Between Learning and use

Knowledge transfer from the classroom to the world outside it is one of the paramount cornerstones of 21st century education. While it is not an easy task to measure transfer, one learning theory that can promote transfer is situated cognition.

Herrington and Oliver (2000) provided a nine element framework which effectively details the principles of situated cognition and provides some guidelines for implementation:

(1) provide authentic content that reflects the way knowledge will be used in the real life – nonlinear design, no attempt to simplify,

(2) provide authentic activities – activities that have real world relevance,

(3) provide access to expert performances and the modeling of process- access to social periphery, access to expert thinking,

(4) provide multiple roles and perspectives –the opportunity to express different points of view,

(5) support collaborative construction of knowledge – classroom organization into small groups,

(6) promote reflection: opportunity for learners to compare with experts,

(7) promote articulation – publicly present argument to enable defense of learning,

(8) provide coaching and scaffolding – complex open-ended learning environment and

(9) provide for authentic assessment – multiple indicators of learning.

The philosophy advocated in the situated cognition contradicts the emphasis in school and university which has been about extracting essential principles, concepts, and facts, and teaching them in an abstract and decontextualized form where information is stored as facts rather than as tools (Brown et al., 1989; Cole, 2005). Herrington and Oliver (2000) actually reiterated that much of the abstract knowledge taught in schools and universities is not retrievable in real-life problem-solving contexts, because this approach ignores the interdependence of situation and cognition.

A good example of the need to close the gap between learning and use comes from the work of Miller and Gilder (1987) who worked on vocabulary teaching. Their work described how children are taught words from dictionary definitions and a few exemplary sentences. They compared this method with the way vocabulary is normally learned outside school. They concluded that people generally learn words faster and successfully in the context of ordinary communication. Brown et al. (1989) complemented this work by contending that learning from dictionaries, like any method that tries to teach abstract concepts independently of authentic situations, overlooks the way understanding is developed through continued, situated use. Brown et al. (1989) went on to elucidate the notion of learning and enculturation. They argued that from a very early age and throughout lives, people consciously or unconsciously adopt the behavior and belief systems of new social groups. Given the chance to observe and practice in situ, the behavior of members of a culture, imitate behavior and gradually start to act in accordance with its norms. But then they observed that so too often, the practices of contemporary schooling deny students the chance to engage the relevant domain culture because that culture is not in evidence. For example, students may pass examinations but still not be able to use a domain's conceptual tools in authentic practice.

References

Brown, J.S., Collins, A., & Duguid, S. (1989). Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(1), 32-42. doi: 10.3102/0013189X018001032

Cole, M. (2005). Cultural-historical psychology: A meso-genetic approach. In L.M. Martin, K. Nelson, & E. Tobach (Eds.), *Sociocultural psychology: Theory and practice of doing and knowing* (pp. 168-204). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Herrington, J., & Oliver, R. (2000). An instructional design framework for authentic learning environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *48*(3), 23-48.
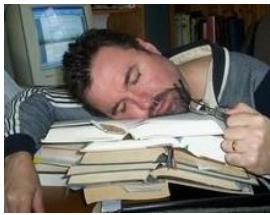
Miller, G. A., & Gilder, P.M. (1987). *How children learn words. Scientific American, 257*(3), 94-99.

Veronica's Vibes
By Dr. Veronica McGowan

Students thinking about course content

So, placing your textbook under your pillow in order to foster osmosis won't help (although many have tried this experiment), what may help is to have students think about course content right before assessment experiences. A recent study at Stanford University found that group usage of a 15-minute online survey that probed what students would need to know for an upcoming exam and what resources could help them prepare significantly outperformed the control group that simply received a text reminder about the exam date (Chen et al., 2017). In addition, other studies have shown that when students are asked to consider a strategy for their learning, such as in work and mentoring\coaching experiences (Althauser, 2015; Grim, 2018), academic performance improves. Meta-cognition strategies, such as pre-planning a learning task, self-monitoring text comprehension, self-evaluating task progress, and assessing and self-correcting, have been shown to have positive effects on work fluency and learning flexibility (de Kamp, et al., 2015) and knowledge retention (Palennari, 2016).

from www.freeimages.com

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Althauser, K. (2015). Job-embedded professional development: Its impact on teacher self-efficacy and student performance. *Teacher Development, 19*(2), 210-225. doi:10.1080/13664530.2015.1011346

Chen, P., Chavez, O., Ong, D. C., & Gunderson, B. (2017). Strategic Resource Use for Learning: A Self-Administered Intervention That Guides Self-Reflection on Effective Resource Use Enhances Academic Performance. *Psychological Science*, *28*(6), 774 – 785. doi: 10.1177/0956797617696456

Grimm, K. (2018). Prelicensure employment and student nurse self-Efficacy. *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development, 34*(2), 60-66. doi:10.1097/NND.0000000000000431

Palennari, M. (2016). Exploring the corelation between meta cognition and cognitive retention of students using some biology teaching strategies. *Journal of Baltic Science Education, 15*(5), 617-629.

Higher Ed's Biggest Gamble

Written by John Schlueter https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/06/07/can-colleges-truly-teach-critical-thinking-skills-essay

The university seeks to foster in all its students lifelong habits of careful observation, critical thinking, creativity, moral reflection and articulate expression."

"… University fosters intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, preparing graduates who will serve as effective, ethical leaders and engaged citizens."

"The college provides students with the knowledge, critical-thinking skills and creative experience they need to navigate in a complex global environment."

These are but a tiny sampling of the mission statements from higher education institutions around the country where critical thinking is a central focus. Indeed, in many ways, critical thinking has become synonymous with higher education. Yet we have not found evidence that colleges or universities teach critical-thinking skills with any success.

The study that has become most emblematic of higher education's failure to teach critical-thinking skills to college students is Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's *Academically Adrift* (2011). The researchers found that college students make little gain in critical-thinking skills, as measured by students' scores on the Collegiate Learning Assessment. This study has been criticized for relying too much on the CLA, but that overlooks a much more fundamental issue underscored by a growing body of research: we don't know what critical thinking actually is, and we can't be sure that it even exists.

Those of us who work in higher education have assumed that we know what critical thinking is -- how could we not? Don't we see it happening every day? Don't we do it? Yet, if we realize that "critical thinking" implies a set of general thinking skills that transfer from one subject or domain to another, then the task of identifying exactly what those skills are becomes extremely difficult, and perhaps impossible, to accomplish.

It's becoming increasingly clear that higher education has gambled on critical thinking, and it makes sense: given that so much information is accessible via digital technology, and given the rising costs of tuition, classrooms must move beyond being places where content is delivered and become places where students learn how to process that content -- or, in other words, where they learn to think.

The question remains, however, can we actually teach students that skill?

The Thinking Skills Debate

The debate over whether or not general thinking skills, or GTS, actually exist is well traveled within a relatively small circle of researchers and thinkers, but virtually unknown outside of it. Given our belief in the importance of critical thinking and our assumption that students learn it, I would argue that this debate is one of the most overlooked and misunderstood issues in higher education today.

As the name implies, GTS are those skills that supposedly transfer from one discipline to another. A key question in the debate, therefore, is whether thinking skills can exist independently from discipline-specific content in a meaningful way such that transfer is possible. [Writing on this](), Tim John Moore, a senior lecturer at the Swinburne University of Technology in Australia, called this "the generalizabilty debate."

On one side are the generalists, who believe "critical thinking can be distilled down to a finite set of constitutive skills, ones that can be learned in a systematic way and have applicability across all academic disciplines." Some notable proponents of this position are Robert Ennis, emeritus professor of philosophy of education at the University of Illinois; Peter Facione, former provost at Loyola University of Chicago; and Richard Paul, director of research and professional development at the Center for Critical Thinking.

On the opposing side are specifists, or those who argue that "critical thinking … is always contextual and intimately tied to the particular subject matter with which one is concerned." Thinking, in other words, is always about *something*. John McPeck, professor of education at the University of Western Ontario; Daniel T. Willingham, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia; and, to a certain degree, Moore himself have defended the specifists' position.

The generalist position, the one that many of us simply assume to be true, is the philosophical basis for the stand-alone, generic "thinking skills" course, in which students supposedly learn skills that *transfer* across subjects and domains. But [Daniel Willingham]() points out that evidence shows that such courses "primarily improve students' thinking with the sort of problems they practiced in the program -- not with other types of problems." That suggests that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate the thinking skill from the content. In other words, Willingham argues, critical thinking is only possible after one acquires a significant amount of domain-specific knowledge, and even then, it's no guarantee.

As educational researcher Stephen P. Norris wrote in [*Teaching Critical Thinking*](): "There is no scientific legitimacy to [the] claim that critical-thinking ability involves ability to control for content and complexity, ability to interpret and apply, and ability to use sound principles of thinking. If anything, scientific evidence suggests that human mental abilities are content and context bound, and highly influenced by the complexity of the problems being addressed."

More recent research that Moore has conducted continues to support the finding that the existence of a set of thinking skills applicable across disciplines is indeed dubious. In [*Critical Thinking and Language*](), he explored how critical thinking is understood and taught by faculty from a range of disciplines at an Australian university. While he outlined certain relations among disciplines, he found nothing to suggest that the complexity of those relations could be reduced to a core set of cognitive skills.

Again, given the rising cost of education and the increasing accessibility of information, instructors and professors must move beyond being deliverers of content to remain relevant. Yet, what to do if the research is telling us that teaching GTS is extremely difficult, if not impossible?

Moving Forward

If higher education is to come to terms with its promise of producing critical thinkers, it must take some specific measures. First, no matter what they teach, professors must become much more familiar with the thinking skills debates occurring in the cognitive science, educational psychology and philosophical domains. In fact, if institutions disseminated essential readings in this area as a sort of primer to get people started, it would be time and money well spent.

With a wider appreciation of the debate, faculty members must then begin to think about thinking within the context of their own disciplines. It does not make sense to impose some set of critical-thinking skills onto a subject area independent of the content being taught. Rather, professors of literature, science, psychology, economics and so on must reflect on how they think as scholars and researchers within their own disciplines -- and then explicitly teach those cognitive processes to students. If there is one thing that we know for sure, it is that thinking skills, general or otherwise, can't be learned if they're not taught in as overt a manner as other content in college courses.

Finally, we need to adjust the metaphor of "transfer" that drives how we view thinking skills in general and critical-thinking skills in particular. That metaphor leads us to look for a packaged set of thinking skills that apply with equal relevancy to virtually any situation or domain, when, while still debatable, it seems increasingly clear that no such skills exist.

When it comes to thinking skills, it would be much more productive if we stop thinking "transfer" and start thinking "overlap." That is, once thinking skills become more explicitly taught, especially in general education classes, both professors and students will notice how thinking in the context of one domain (say, economics) overlaps with the kind of thinking processes at work in another (biology).

Moreover, the metaphor of overlap -- like a Venn diagram -- makes the differences between sets of thinking skills as instructional as the similarities. So, as thinking skills become explicitly taught in different subjects, the student, proceeding through college, will gather overlapping investigative experiences based on his or her efforts to employ said thinking skills in various courses. The student can then manage those overlapping experiences as a kind of portfolio that shows him or her how content is processed and problems are solved. If a core set of thinking skills can be distilled from this portfolio, great. If not, the student still has a rich picture of how different ways of thinking overlap, even if they are always tethered to a specific domain or problem.

Ultimately, we in higher education must recognize that money is on the table. We have gambled on critical thinking, and if we are not to lose our shirts on this bet, we can no longer expect students to magically become critical thinkers. Instead, we must move toward a pedagogy that foregrounds the explicit teaching of thinking skills.

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We, in the Center, are here to help, feel free to give us a call.