

Subject: [Test] Untitled

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 1:15:23 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: CATL

To: Jill McSweeney



Welcome to Spring Semester 2026! CATL is here to help you start the term strong. See below for teaching resources and upcoming opportunities!

CATL February Updates

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

First Year Experience Series: Sustaining Motivation and Engagement in First-Year Classrooms

Thursday, February 5 | 4:15pm-5:15pm | Belk Pavilion 208 | [Register](#)

By this time in the year, students face waning motivation, packed schedules, and growing academic demands. This workshop offers strategies to support first-year students in becoming active, self-aware learners and how to design activities and assessments that sustain motivation beyond the excitement of the fall. Faculty will leave with tools to encourage student voice, build classroom community,

and prioritize learning throughout the semester.

★ Looking to be part of an on-going group that discusses teaching first-year students? The **Spring FYE Community of Practice** is open to all faculty and staff, and may be particularly helpful to those who teach first year students (e.g., Elon 1010, COR 1100, ENG 1100, STS 1100, or a 'gateway' course). Learn more [here!](#)

Teaching Excellence Colleges and Universities: Call for Observers

Please indicate interest by Friday, February 6th | [Interest Form](#)

Building on the well-deserved recognition of Elon's faculty for teaching excellence, the university has been invited by the Alliance for Better College Teaching to participate in a national initiative on observing and documenting teaching excellence in higher education. This project is led by [Corbin Campbell](#) (American University) and a group of higher education leaders, calling themselves the Alliance for Better College Teaching. The ABCT's work features several interlocking efforts intended to raise the profile of teaching excellence in discourse about undergraduate higher education while simultaneously enhancing teaching excellence in the US.

As part of the ABCT effort, Corbin and her team have funding for 10-12 colleges and universities to be part of the observation project underpinning this initiative. Elon will be in the first (smaller) wave of the pilot, with observations conducted in March of 2026, and the remaining pilot institutions will be observed next academic year.

If you are interested in being trained and conducting site visit observations at other institutions involved in this project, please indicate your interest on this [form](#).

Transatlantic Teaching Exchange Sessions

First Session Wednesday, February 11 | 11:00am-12pm | Microsoft Teams Call | [Register](#)

Join faculty, staff, students, and educational developers from Elon University, University of Warwick, University of Leeds, and partner institutions for a six-session virtual collaboration exploring critical questions in higher education teaching.

This partnership brings together:

- Elon's Center for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning (**CATL**)
- [Warwick's International Higher Education Academy \(WIHEA\)](#) and [Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning \(IATL\)](#)
- [Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence \(LITE\)](#)

Each session features a short presentation from one of the partner institutions, followed by facilitated small group discussions and sharing across institutions. All sessions run 11am-12pm EST (4pm-5pm GMT) via Microsoft Teams. Join us for individual sessions or participate in the full series.

Schedule:

- **February 11:** What makes teaching "excellent" in your context?
- **March 4:** Belonging and exclusion – frameworks for understanding and action
- **March 25:** How do we teach for a sustainable future – embedding sustainability across disciplines?
- **April 16:** Teaching in the age of AI – opportunities and boundaries
- **May 7:** How can assessment drive learning – not just measure it?
- **May 21:** Building transatlantic partnerships – what could we create together?

Register for sessions [here](#).

Course-Embedded Research Panel

Wednesday, February 25 | 4:15pm-5:30pm | Belk Pavilion 208 | [Register](#)

Co-facilitated by CATL and the Undergraduate Research Program, come learn from your colleagues across disciplines about how and why they have infused course-embedded research pedagogies into their courses, across disciplines and course-levels. The goals of the session are to learn about how CER pedagogies are currently being employed across campus, and to spark ideas about how you might build CER into your own courses and curriculum. Snacks provided. Please register by February 20th at this [RSVP link](#).

Book Discussion: *Shaking the Table: Survival and Healing Amongst Identity Center Practitioners*

Wednesday, March 4 | 3:00pm-4:00pm | [Register](#)

Come and discuss [Stephanie Hernandez Rivera](#) and [Jonathan McElderry](#)'s new book, "[Shaking the Table: Survival and Healing Amongst Identity Center Practitioners](#)". Identity center practitioners is an expansive view of educators as they engage in supporting students in consciousness-raising activities and educational programming that is distinct from other campus areas.

Attendees across roles (faculty and staff) can explore through the excerpts we will share:

- how educators engage in critical paradigms, perspectives, pedagogies to support their practice.
- what it means to care for self when creating space for the intellectual and holistic development of students
- what does psychological safety and healing look like within our work and alongside students, particularly around challenging topics and contentious work.

Save the date: *How subtle pedagogical choices influence student engagement, learning and belonging in the classroom*

Thursday, March 12 | 3:00pm-4:00pm | [Register](#)

Dr. Janice McCabe will be visiting Elon on March 12nd, and her visit will include a campus talk which will share insights and pedagogical practices from her research and new book on friendship and belonging in the classroom. Dr. McCabe is an associate professor of sociology and the Allen House Professor at Dartmouth College. In her new book *Making, Keeping, and Losing Friends: How Campuses Shape College Students' Networks* (The University of Chicago Press, 2025), she investigate students' friendship networks to better understand differences and similarities in how students make and keep friends as well as how their friendship networks help and hinder their academic and social success. In her first book *Connecting in College: How Friendship Networks Matter for Academic and Social*

Success (The University of Chicago Press), she explores how undergraduates' friendships help and hinder their success during and after college. Broadly, her work focuses on inequalities, identities, and networks, particularly among students.

AI Journal Club

You are invited to join an AI Journal Club this semester, a teaching-focused forum dedicated to exploring how artificial intelligence is reshaping our classrooms. AI as a digital tool for learning is potentially useful (some might even say transformative) but also has many potential pitfalls (some might even say catastrophic). The intent is to bring together colleagues from across disciplines to read, discuss, and reflect on research about AI's promises, limitations, and ethical implications for teaching and learning. With rotating facilitators and an emphasis on thoughtful, respectful dialogue, the journal club aims to support evidence-informed teaching decisions and build a shared understanding about how AI might, or might not, fit into our instructional contexts. We will aim to meet 7 times throughout the semester.

Meetings will usually take place on Thursdays at 9 AM and coffee will be provided, though we will be flexible on meeting days and formats. If you are interested in being notified of upcoming journal club meetings, please use this form to provide your contact information. We will also create a shared repository of articles which you can access. We hope you will consider joining the conversation!

Show your interest [here](#).

Use the University Events Calendar to Engage Your Courses this Spring

As a reminder, many campus events can serve as meaningful extensions of classroom learning, offering opportunities for reflection, discussion, creative engagement, and community connection. This spring, CATL encourages instructors to explore the University Events Calendar as a resource for identifying events, lectures, performances, exhibitions, and programs that may align with course learning goals.

Explore the University Events Calendar [here](#)



The Center for Grading Reform's Grading Conference 2026: Call for Abstracts and Interest in Group Registration

Given the strong interest across campus in grading practices, ungrading, and student-centered assessment, CATL is sharing an opportunity to engage with the [Grading Conference](#) hosted by the [Center for Grading Reform](#), a virtual conference held via Zoom, June 16–18, 2026.

The conference features keynote speakers Sarah Silverman, Brie Tripp, and Jesse Stommel, and includes multiple presentation formats (posters, talks, workshops, and panels). Abstracts are due February 13, 2026, with decisions expected by the end of March.

Registration is \$75 for faculty/staff and \$35 for students, with a pay-what-you-can option available. CATL is gauging interest in a discounted institutional group rate; please complete this [interest form](#) if you are considering attending.

CATL 20th Anniversary: Did you know?

Did you know: We have had nine previous Directors and Associate Directors over the last twenty years? During their collective time at CATL, they have contributed 2 books, 6 book chapters, and over 50 peer-reviewed articles on teaching and learning! Check out some highlights below:



- **Bunnell, S. L.**, Chick, N., Hamilton, M., Leoni, A. S., & Woolmer, C. (2024). Generations of SoTL scholars: Transferable lessons and new possibilities. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*, 17(1).
- Buckingham Shum, S., Lim, L. A., Felten, P., & **Uno, J.** (2023). "Belonging Analytics": A Proposal. *Learning Letters*.
- **Choplin, O.**, & Ford, E. (2024). Student-Faculty Partnerships as Intercultural Encounters: Co-constructing the Pathways to Global Learning. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 36(1), 531-562.
- **Felten, P.** (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry: The ISSOTL Journal*, 1(1), 121-125.
- **Festle, M. J.** (2020). Transforming history: a guide to effective, inclusive, and evidence-based teaching. University of Wisconsin Press.
- **Meinking, K. A.**, & Hall, E. E. (2020). Co-creation in the classroom: Challenge, community, and collaboration. *College Teaching*, 68(4), 189-198.
- **Little, D.**, & Green, D. A. (2022). Credibility in educational development: trustworthiness, expertise, and identification. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(3), 804-819.
- **McSweeney, J.**, & Schnurr, M. A. (2023). Can SoTL generate high quality research while maintaining its commitment to inclusivity? *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 17(1), 4.
- St. John, K., McNeal, K. S., MacDonald, R. H., Kastens, K. A., **Bitting, K. S.**, Cervato, C., ... & Teasdale, R. (2020). A community framework for geoscience education research: Summary and recommendations for future research priorities. *Journal of Geoscience Education*, 69(1), 2-13.

- **Winter, M.** (2025). Quick Fix: Inviting Curiosity—Exploring Lingering Questions with I Wonder Projects. *College Teaching*, 1-3.

Save the Date! Join us at the CATL 20th Anniversary Celebration on May 1st after the Faculty Meeting!



Resource for Teaching in Turbulent Times

With so much unfolding in the world right now, the POD Network has curated resources to help instructors support students and facilitate thoughtful dialogue in politically charged moments.



Teaching for Equity & Inclusion
Course and Program Design
Assessing Student Learning



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