Guide to Spring 2020 Symposia

In our symposia, campus experts provide evidence-based tools to strengthen teaching and learning, as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. All classroom instructors are welcome. No prior registration is required.

Creating Spaces of Belonging: Telling stories and making connections

Facilitated by Enrique Sepúlveda, Assistant Professor, Ethnic Studies. Many students feel they don’t belong in the academic setting or to the larger university culture. This is especially true of first generation college-going students, immigrants, queer students and students of color. This presentation calls for professors to consider and address the larger social context in which our teaching and learning is embedded, via the power of narratives and the practice of storytelling.

Stories are personal, as well as social and communal. When deployed effectively they can help us to contextualize our experiences and emotions, especially experiences and feelings of displacement, transgression and social fragmentation that new students often experience. Integrating stories into our teaching can raise levels of consciousness and provide the connective tissue that allows us (faculty and students) to further explore and examine key questions pertinent to our disciplines.

Please join Enrique Sepúlveda as he narrates his educational journey from a near high school dropout to becoming a “university learner” with the help of professors who went beyond a technical view of teaching and learning that frames the learning process as simply a matter of content mastery and acquisition of technical skills. Using storytelling as a pedagogical tool to transform teaching and learning, Enrique will provide examples of how teaching and learning are situated in a social context, where learning is viewed as a feature of membership in a community of practice.

*Wednesday, Jan. 22nd, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351*
From Arm's-Length to Arm-in-Arm: Building student rapport

Facilitated by Dave Brain, Associate Professor, Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences. Rapport is a beneficial but sometimes under-appreciated component of a student’s experience in a course, or college in general, and has been linked to student motivation, participation, and satisfaction with a course. In this symposium we’ll review the benefits of building rapport, and share and discuss strategies for fostering closer relationships (both instructor-student and student-student) during lecture and outside of the classroom. We’ll also discuss some of the challenges and perceived negative consequences associated with knowing students better (including issues pertaining to boundaries, expectations, and time), and how to handle them. As a result of our discussions we might even get to know each other better!

Monday, Jan. 27th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Understanding and Addressing Student Mental Health Concerns in the Classroom

Facilitated by June Gruber, Assistant Professor, Psychology and Neuroscience. Challenges to student wellness on college campuses are a growing concern nationwide, with one out of three first-year college students reporting serious mental difficulties and up to half of students rating their mental health as below average or poor. Despite widespread agreement and scientific findings indicating that optimized mental health is critical for fostering student success and engagement, relatively little guidance is typically provided for instructors on best practices for addressing common and serious student mental health concerns arising in teaching and mentoring settings. This workshop will focus on common student mental health concerns instructors may encounter, practical strategies for addressing them effectively and sensitively, and areas to further enhance student wellness in the classroom and campus at CU Boulder and beyond.

Tuesday, Jan. 28th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Preparing a Teaching Portfolio for Review and Tenure

Facilitated by Michele Moses, Professor, School of Education. This seminar will explain both the method for assembling a teaching portfolio and the type of material it should include. It should help pre-tenured faculty prepare to create this important part of their tenure dossier by offering an outline of the process and by including concrete examples from portfolios created by successful tenure candidates in the past.

Friday, Jan. 31st, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351
Inclusive Pedagogy through Classroom Dialogue

Facilitated by the co-recipients of the CU Dialogues Program’s 2019 inaugural faculty fellowship, Anne Becher and Nina Molinaro (Department of Spanish and Portuguese), together with CU Dialogues Director Karen Ramírez, Assistant Director Pilar Prostko and Graduate Research Assistant Jennifer Pacheco. Classroom dialogue is an alternative to traditional discussion that can be used when the instructor’s goal is to create an inclusive space in which all students are invited to share their own experiences and perspectives. It is appropriate to use when the goal is to elicit multiple perspectives in addressing a subject of study, including the voices of students less comfortable with speaking up in a traditional instructor-led discussion. A classroom dialogue connects personal experience to academic content and provides narratives which in turn help to make course content more memorable. A dialogue can spark the evolution of participants’ ideas and awareness and foster a sense of belonging in the classroom.

Curious and interested in learning how to design and lead a dialogue in your class? Wondering about the possible benefits of holding a dialogue with your students? This workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about dialogue as an inclusive pedagogy and to think about how to use dialogue in your own classroom.

Wednesday, Feb. 5th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Technology that Increases Learning and Technology that Decreases It

Facilitated by Doug Duncan, Lecturer, Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences and Fiske Planetarium Director. Technology is changing a lot about the way we live, and learning is no exception. Instructors are presented with a dazzling suite of new tools, and not always much information on how to use them. At the same time, laptops and phones are ubiquitous, and the challenge of preventing students from being distracted by them is mounting. Prof. Duncan is the author of Clickers in the Classroom, a guide to making clickers work for you, so bring all your questions on clickers. He will also present some interesting new research on how to reduce students’ texting in the classroom, as well as showing the need and ways for getting students minds more engaged.

Thursday, Feb. 6th, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Team Based Learning

Facilitated by Eric Vance, Associate Professor, Applied Mathematics and Director of LISA, the Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis. Group work is often recommended as an active learning activity to add to a class, but it is difficult to keep the workload balanced, the grading fair, and the students on task. Team-Based Learning (TBL) is a structured approach to group work that helps you get the full benefits of improved student learning and engagement while avoiding those pitfalls. TBL pedagogical strategies also help in flipping the classroom and focusing on problem-based learning. In this workshop Prof. Vance will explain TBL and talk about his personal experience with using it in his courses.

Tuesday, Feb. 11th, 12:30pm – 2:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351
Flipping the Class for the Skeptic
Facilitated by David Brown, Professor and Chair of Political Science. This segment of the FTEP program addresses common hesitations, misperceptions, and challenges involved with flipping a classroom. Prof. Brown will lead participants through the evolution of a happy lecturer to a strong proponent of active learning. Why flipping the class is not for everyone, how to get your feet wet, and how it can change your perception of research, teaching, and students will also be covered. Different tools and methods which have been successful and not so successful in Brown’s experience will be candidly discussed. New technological tools which facilitate the flipped classroom will be presented along with their advantages and disadvantages.
Friday, Feb. 14th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Designing Hybrid Learning Environments
Facilitated by Diane Sieber, Associate Professor, Herbst Program of Humanities in Engineering. Over the past ten years, blended learning has matured, evolved, and become more widely adopted by institutions of all types. Designing courses that seamlessly blend face-to-face and online interaction, instructors can address learners’ specific needs and customize the learning environment rather than rely on a one-size-fits-all approach. Further, class topics can extend beyond the physical space of the classroom to become more relevant and integrated into students’ lives. This workshop will explore design opportunities for instructors from all disciplines, from Engineering to the Humanities, Social Sciences and Business. It focuses on deploying existing university IT resources as well as free apps.
Wednesday, Feb. 19th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Teaching the Intro Course
Facilitated by Marcia Yonemoto, Professor, History. Large introductory classes pose a particular challenge for the instructor due to the wide range in students’ levels of preparation and interest and, in many cases, their ability to manage college life. This workshop will build on twenty-plus years of experience (read: trial, error, research, repeat) teaching a 1000-level introductory history course, and will focus on enhancing two key aspects of effective teaching in large intro classes: classroom management and student engagement.
Thursday, Feb. 20th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Hands-on humanities: Pedagogies of doing, moving, and making
Facilitated by Thora Brylowe, Assistant Professor, English. Research suggests that student-led inquiry helps students retain what they have learned. This session offers ideas for project-based learning in the humanities classroom, including a couple of brief demonstrations and some examples of collaborative projects that instructors could adapt to suit their own classroom situations. We will also discuss possible modes of evaluation and assessment for group-based or full-class projects.
Monday, Feb. 24th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351
Creating Inclusive Classrooms for Students of Diverse Genders and Sexualities
Facilitated by Scarlet Bowen, Director of Education, Center for Inclusion and Social Change. This interactive presentation introduces participants to best practices for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for LGBTQ students and other students of diverse genders and sexualities. After reviewing demographic and campus climate data, we will develop inclusive strategies for classroom management, facilitating class discussions, selecting course content, designing assignments, and mentoring students in office hours.
Tuesday, Feb. 25th, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Bringing Our Research into the Classroom
Facilitated by Paul Hammer, Professor, History. You’ve heard it before: Budget your time, and don’t allow teaching duties to encroach on your research. Such counsel is ubiquitous, but putting it into practice is not easy. Teaching, many of us find, consumes all the time available, especially for those not expected to be in a lab on a daily basis. One solution is to integrate your research into your teaching. This strategy can benefit students and faculty alike.
Friday, Feb. 28th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

A Case Study on Enhancing Learning Motivation
Facilitated by Angela Bielefeldt, Professor, Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering. Students’ motivation to learn is closely linked to their interest in course material. This can make it challenging to engage students’ interest in classes that they must take to fulfill requirements. In fall semester 2019, Prof. Bielefeldt experimented with the course design of a senior level civil engineering course that is required for a major engineering accreditation. She made two major changes to the course design to increase students’ interest in the course and motivation to study. She focused the course on coupling the learning activities to students’ individual future job and career aspirations, in order to make the utility value of the course clear to students. She also added more opportunities for students to make their own choices in the course. Come hear Prof. Bielefeldt explain her study design and the initial results from the research.
Wednesday, Mar. 4th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351
Engaging Students in Reading and Discussion Outside of Class

Facilitated by Phoebe Young, Associate Professor, History. In a perfect academic world, our students would have all the time and appropriate background they need not only to read required texts before coming to class, but also to reflect and prepare thoroughly and thoughtfully. However, we know that many students often struggle to get the reading done in ways that best support our plans for in-class work and discussion and their own success. This session will explore technologies and methods to help students keep up with reading assignments and engage with content and classmates with greater impact. Collaborative online reading tools (including one affiliate with Canvas) can provide effective platforms to advance multiple teaching and learning goals in varied disciplines. We’ll talk about how to use such tools to support regular student engagement with the reading, embedding hints and techniques for effective studying, encouraging students to help each other, identifying bottlenecks in student understanding, and planning for class discussion.

Thursday, Mar. 5th, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351

Mental Health in the Classroom: Challenges, skills and resources

Facilitated by Tina Pittman Wagers, Teaching Professor, Psychology and Neuroscience and Colleen Ehrnstrom, Clinical Psychologist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services. Though there are many indicators of rising rates of mental health disorders in college students around the country and on our campus as well, what do we know about what may be contributing to our students’ struggles? More importantly, how can we recognize and communicate effectively with our students when concerns arise? In this symposium, we’ll review the data about campus mental health, explore theories about what may be contributing to the rising rates and discuss some of the biases we may hold around mental health disorders. We will identify and practice some skills for leveraging rapport with students to have valuable conversations around sensitive issues when they arise and learn how to make effective, informed referrals to resources on campus.

Wednesday, Apr. 1st, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, CASE Building Conf. Room E351