

JANUARY 10, 2022

# Happenings at the *Faculty Development Center*

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## CONNECT Teaching Conference

Keynote address: Thursday 2/10 | 7:30pm | 300 Halle  
Conference continues Friday 2/11

The Bruce K. Nelson Faculty Development Center is proud to host the CONNECT Teaching Conference on February 10 and 11, 2022. Our conference begins with a keynote address by Dr. Mays Imad on the evening of February 10, and follows with a day of presentations, workshops, and discussions on the 11th. You'll have an opportunity to learn more from your colleagues and to hear about FDC programs in which you can partake. Join us for all or part of the conference; the conversations you share and connections you make will enhance the work you do with our students.



### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

*If you have a topic of interest related to teaching and learning, we welcome your proposal! The due date for conference proposals has been extended to January 21 - you can propose to lead a workshop, or do a shorter presentation. Click or scan to QR code to learn more*



**Dr. Mays Imad**

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Imad is a Gardner Institute Fellow and an AAC&U Senior Fellow within the Office of Undergraduate STEM Education. Dr. Imad's research focuses on stress, self-awareness, advocacy, and classroom community, and how these impact student learning and success. Through her teaching and research she seeks to provide her students with transformative opportunities that are grounded in the aesthetics of learning, truth-seeking, justice, and self-realization.

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Imad works with faculty members across disciplines at her own institution and across the country to promote inclusive, equitable, and contextual education—all rooted in the latest research on the neurobiology of learning. A nationally-recognized expert on trauma-informed teaching and learning, she passionately advocates for institutions to make mental health a top priority and to systematically support the education of the whole student.

# Teaching Blog #1 | Checking In

Dr. Perry C. Francis

Have you ever walked into your classroom and felt as if the students were on edge? I'm not talking about the free-floating anxiety that appears just before an exam. I'm referring to that feeling you get when the tone of the room just doesn't feel right. Maybe they're talking a bit too much, or there's that eerie silence like you just walked into a mausoleum. I recall just such an occasion during the time when EMU was struggling to respond to the racist graffiti that appeared on some buildings around campus. That incident lit the flames of unrest and unease among many of our students. It was a feeling that permeated many of our classrooms; whether the subject was chemistry or cartography, photography or physics, our students were ill at ease.

It was at that moment I began to institute a check-in time with my classes. I would take the first five to ten minutes of the beginning of class and process the day's events with my students. During the aforementioned time at EMU, it led to a rich, albeit brief, discussion about race relations on campus and how we as a community might react to it. Some student shared resources, others expressed their dismay at what was occurring on campus, and still others offered words of empathy to their fellow classmates. I listened patiently and offered whatever guidance I could and tried to guide the discussion so that all felt safe in expressing their opinions or comments.

I teach in the professional counseling [graduate program](#) and am a practicing psychotherapist, so listening and responding empathically comes naturally to me. You might even note that beginning this practice would seem to fit in a class about counseling skills, but not so much in

biology or art appreciation. Besides, you might point out, there is only so much time you can spare in any given class period. But I would suggest that the simple act of checking in with your students on occasion and listening to their concerns can enhance the learning environment and help your students focus.

Often times, the simple act of talking about what concerns us or sharing those negative emotions with someone, like a trusted teacher or fellow student, can have a positive impact on our immune system, [reducing distress](#) and helping with concentration and learning. It also offers us the opportunity to learn about our students and what concerns them.

Now this might work well in a small class of 15 to 25 students, but what about those large lecture sections of general education classes held in auditoriums that require binoculars to see the back of the room? Perhaps a simple acknowledgement that you are aware



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## Submit a Blog Post

*We welcome blog posts from faculty, lecturers, and interested others on teaching and learning topics. Email us at [faculty\\_development@emich.edu](mailto:faculty_development@emich.edu) with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!*

of the tension on campus and an offer of information [where students can go for help](#) in processing their thoughts and emotions. A word of understanding and empathy can also be offered to demonstrate your own humanity in the midst of the turmoil.

During this time of a pandemic that seems to insist on continuing despite our best efforts, a wise colleague of mine has created an addendum to her syllabi that acknowledges the struggles of learning on-line, especially for those students who are not internet natives or struggle with technology issues due to various constraints. In it, she acknowledges the stresses and strains our current situation has on our environment. Some of our students are parents, others have medical issues that raise the stakes of getting infected, and still others just do not like Zoom learning. During the first class, she checks in with the students and shares her commitment to be flexible in this time of COVID chaos and to help each individual learn. It promotes wellness and helps learning.

What might this look like in your classroom? [Cathleen Beachboard](#), an instructional coach and teacher, makes the simple suggestion of starting the class with a poll. This can be easily accomplished using the Zoom polling feature. The poll question can be a simple one, for example, *How am I doing today?* The choices can be I'm Great!, I'm OK, I'm struggling, or I am having a hard time and need some help.

This will allow the students to give you anonymous information about the class, their mental state, or just how the day is going. Having a resource sheet available with different options is a way to promote student wellness, enhance learning, and sharing your humanity.

Checking in is a simple act, one that promotes wellness, and one that you can institute fairly easily. But most of all, it promotes connection between you and your students on a person-to-person level. And isn't that what teaching is all about... making a meaningful connection with others as you share with them knowledge that will not only benefit the students, but all who come into contact with those students?

All my best to you in your teaching.

## Upcoming Events

### Internal Research Award Workshop Part 1

Friday 1/14 12:00pm

- Professor Natalie Dove will go over the application requirements and strategies for writing successful proposals

### Research Writers Collaborative

- This seminar will help faculty and lecturers work in groups to meet their writing goals

### Writing Across the Curriculum

- Five Speaker Spotlight sessions with a focus on creating a more welcoming experience for historically marginalized students, through videos, a book study, and guest speakers

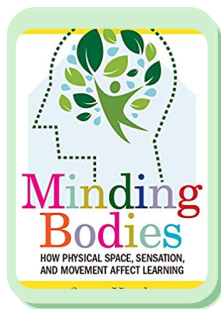
### News Literacy Event Series

- Learn about concepts you can integrate into your curriculum to provide your students with skills to navigate a complex and ever-changing information landscape



Click or scan the QR code to learn about about these and other upcoming events, including dates and times

## book spotlight



**Minding  
Bodies**  
by Susan  
Hrach

[click here to read](#)

## teaching spotlight



**Dr. Catherine Gammon**

*Assistant Professor of Exercise Science  
Health Promotion and Human Performance*

click [here](#) to read  
about one of EMU's  
many exceptional  
instructors

Nominate an educator  
for a teaching spotlight  
by emailing us at  
faculty\_development  
@emich.edu

## Learning Communities

**Click on the title of each Learning  
Community for more information!**

### **Online Teaching Trailblazers:**

due: 1/21 | 5pm

- The FDC is seeking the input of up to eight faculty members or lecturers across campus who are using emerging technologies or teaching strategies in their online courses. Selected participants will work with Sarah DeWard (Sociology) and Michael McVey (Teacher Education) to develop a learning module based on your tool/strategy for use in an asynchronous professional development course disseminated in Summer 2022. Each selected participant will earn a stipend of \$400.

### **Critical Pedagogy on Sexual Violence:**

due: 1/18 | 12pm

- By supporting faculty in prevention and education approaches that go beyond “compliance,” this Zoom seminar will provide space for faculty to discuss and evaluate the literature on sexual violence prevention and education, and foster ideas for how to effectively teach about sexual violence prevention as we confront our roles as teachers, researchers, and advocates. The seminar, facilitated by Dr. Marilyn Corsianos and Dr. Christine Hume, will have ten participants selected from those who apply. Each participant will receive a stipend of \$300.

### **General Education Assessment:**

due: 1/21 | 5pm

- These communities provide faculty with the opportunity to share learning activities and enrich GE teaching and learning practices at EMU. Participants will earn a \$300 stipend for their work in the learning community they belong to. It is our goal that the existing Quantitative Reasoning and Effective Communication GE groups will be joined by infrastructure for three new communities: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

### **Transforming the Classroom Through a Wellness Paradigm:**

due: 1/18 | 12pm

- Wellness and wellbeing have become very buzzy concepts in the world of higher education, but many of us wonder what they really mean and how are we as educators meant to apply them in our practice? In these workshops, we will explore the ways in which we can enhance wellbeing in our educational environments and the ways in which wellness is deeply rooted in the reciprocity of our relationships. Educators who complete the seminar will receive a \$300 stipend.