

JANUARY 17, 2022

Happenings at the *Faculty Development Center*

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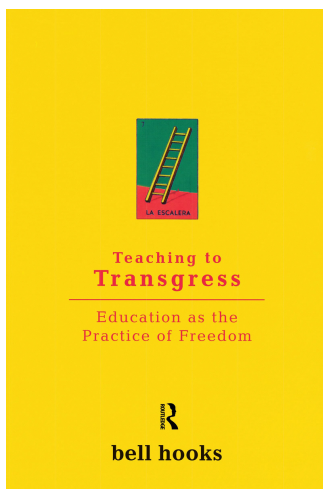
Highlighting our Learning Communities

Join a Learning Community!

Looking for a way to build your online teaching expertise? Are you concerned for the wellness of students and the impact it has on the classes you conduct? Curious to expand on other topics that pertain to the classroom? The FDC has a learning community for you! In the Winter 2022 term, we will offer four communities to join, which include Critical Pedagogy on Sexual Violence, Online Teaching Trailblazers, General Education Assessment, and Transforming the Classroom Through a Wellness Paradigm. Working in a community with others is a great way to enhance your teaching and research endeavors. We hope you will consider signing up for a learning community of interest to you. [Click here to learn more.](#)



book spotlight



This week we feature *Teaching to Transgress* by the late bell hooks, a profoundly important educator.

As we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. today, we also reflect on Dr. King's work in education. This work echoes his sentiments of inclusivity and accountability in education, lessons that remain relevant today.

[click here](#) to read the full spotlight

teaching spotlight



**Dr. Carmen
McCallum**

Associate Professor
Leadership & Counseling

[click here](#) to read about this
extraordinary educator

Teaching Blog #2 | What's the Story?

Dr. Edward Sidlow



Dr. Edward Sidlow

*Professor of Political Science
(Recently Retired)*

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 with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!

I walked into the room where our department faculty meetings were held. Several faculty members were there and the meeting was to start in a few minutes. The department head had not yet arrived. One faculty member engaged in a diatribe about how miserable our students are. "They don't do the reading. They don't know what's going on in the world. They don't engage in discussion; getting them to talk is like pulling teeth. Their writing is awful, and they are not intellectually curious." When she took a pause, I filled the void with a simple statement. "You should hear what your students say about you." The room went silent, but at least the tirade ended.

Indeed, our students do talk about us. They claim some of us are arrogant and full of ourselves. Others are disorganized and much too slow to return written work. Still others are pushing a point of view and intolerant of students who disagree with them. Some appear not to care and are so self-absorbed and egotistical that by mid-term, students find it hard to go to class. And, the students say, more than a few professors don't know how to dress.

But all is not lost. Some of us seem decent and caring, even compassionate. Some of us are quite organized in the presentation of our material and appear thoughtful, open to questions, handling disagreements gracefully.

Some of us make class discussion fun at best and, at minimum, interesting. These professors are the ones who have full classes and waiting lists. They are also the faculty who are recommended by students to their friends. Some of us even know how to dress. There is an active and dynamic student grapevine, and yes, our students talk about us.

I served as a faculty member at three universities over the past 40+ years. The demographics differed a bit with each, but the presence and character of the student grapevine was the same across all three. I had the good fortune of being sought out by students, and while I fear appearing immodest, the grapevine spoke well of me and I won teaching awards everywhere I taught. Early on, I accepted my success grudgingly, but over time, I embraced it.

My teaching covered American politics and government and I was determined to never have my classes thought of as boring. To that end, I immersed myself in biographies of American political figures. I also did research that had me in state legislatures and Congress, and always managed better access to the players than I deserved. My projects involved interviewing legislators and/or their support staff. And every interview protocol had a question or two for the classroom. Typically, I asked what was the strangest (funniest, saddest, most gratifying) thing you've seen or experienced in your time here in Congress (statehouse)? The biographies and the research provided a deep well of interesting stories, and the stories were what kept students coming back. No matter how strange the story, it had to illustrate an important point in the day's lecture or discussion. I know now that it was never me, or the academic material, that the students came to class for. It was the stories.

SAVE THE DATE
**Faculty
Scholarly
and
Creative
Activity
Showcase**
Thursday, March 17
4:00-6:30 pm
Details to follow

When I was a young faculty member in my 20s and 30s, I bristled at the comments from students to each other or on class evaluations that said, "he tells such wonderful stories." I wanted to be a serious academic and I taught at prestigious places. I wrote articles for journals, and books. I wasn't a damn storyteller. To get under my skin, my graduate assistant one year, who would stop at my office to pick me up for the walk to class, would say as we approached the classroom, "Let's go tell a few good stories."

I started teaching decades before email and the Internet. It took these technological innovations for me to recognize fully that my use of stories had real meaning in the classroom. Students from schools where I taught before I came to EMU find me on the university website, and connect with an email. Often the message will be, "I was watching the news and saw something that reminded me of a story about... that you told us in class 30 years ago." It's nice to be remembered.

My students have taught me that telling relevant stories can be a successful teaching strategy. I have recently retired, and have made my peace with being a storyteller. But there is another, equally important story here, and that's the story that our students tell about us. And that story is a large part of our legacy. Our teaching, writing and academic service are the hallmarks of our professional careers. Teaching has the greatest impact on our students, and they talk about us. They go home for holidays and tell stories about their professors and their classes. I think it would serve us all well to remember that the stories that we tell in class are only part of the story, and they are certainly important. It is also wise to remember that the stories that our students tell are important as well. It is our good fortune if the stories we tell in class allow our students to tell stories about us that we can be proud of.

What's Coming Up

Click or scan the QR codes for more info



Internal Research Awards Part 2

January 24, 11:00am | January 27, 12:30pm

- Dr. Natalie Dove (Psychology) returns to help participants workshop their applications for sabbaticals and Faculty Research Fellowships. Dr. Dove will be joined for the second session by Dr. Alexis Braun Marks, University Archivist and faculty member in the Library.



Research Writers Collaborative

Mondays, 1:30pm-3:30pm | Tuesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm | Thursdays, 1:00pm-3:00pm

- An opportunity for EMU faculty to support each other while achieving realistic writing goals. Sessions focus on developing healthy writing habits, creating realistic writing goals and boosting writing productivity. Choose one of these times for your writing group.



Focus Groups and Listening Sessions

January 26, 3:30pm-4:30pm

- Join Dr. Gregory Plagens (Political Science) for a session designed to enhance participants' understanding and implementation of focus groups in the academic setting. The discussion will cover the purpose of focus groups and the proper execution of them.



Addressing Misinformation, Bias, and News Literacy Session 1

February 2, 2:00pm-3:30pm | February 22, 2:00pm-3:30pm | March 17, 2:00pm-3:30pm

- This three part virtual series will enable instructors to integrate news literacy concepts and strategies into their teaching. The first session will cover the tools and skills needed to verify the authenticity of information and create engaging fact-checking investigations.

CONNECT Teaching Conference

Keynote address by Dr. Mays Imad: Thursday 2/10 | 7:30pm | 300 Halle

Conference continues Friday 2/11

In 1993, Lee Shulman argued against “pedagogical solitude,” suggesting that for teaching to be most effective, we must “go public” more. We need more conversation about teaching, more opportunity to share what we do to promote student learning, and more venues in which this can happen.

To provide such a forum, 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 for a workshop or presentation! The due date for conference proposals has been extended to January 21 - submit a proposal today!

Click or scan to QR code to submit a proposal or learn more.

Questions about a proposal? Contact us at faculty_development@emich.edu