

FDC HAPPENINGS

November 28, 2022



This photo features a wooden table with a notebook and folder of papers laying open, a tablet placed on top.

SoTL Learning Community

Deadline for Applications: December 2, 3:00 pm
Meetings monthly starting January 2023 and going through April 2024

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement aims to enhance the value of teaching in higher education by focusing on the role of rigorous, scholarly inquiry in developing best practice. This seminar, facilitated by Cam McComb (School of Art and Design) and Cynthia Macknish (Department of World Languages), will bring together for three semesters faculty and lecturers who are interested in exploring student learning in their classes through a SoTL project. Participants will work in a seminar format to develop a research question about student learning in their classes, gather data to address this question, and go public with the results of their inquiry in presentations and/or publications. Projects will be implemented in Fall 2023 and participants should evaluate and write up their results in Winter 2024. Participants will receive a \$600 honorarium upon meeting identified targets, with \$200 being distributed at the end of each semester. For more information click [here](#).

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CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS:

Crowd-Funding for Student Wellness Mini-Grants

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Earlier this year, the FDC debuted our Mini-Grants for Student Wellness initiative, in collaboration with the Dean of Students Office. Due to an abundance of applications, we have decided to continue providing these mini-grants in the future. Read below to see how you can support this initiative.

From the FDC

In recent years, we have observed some students doing exceptionally well despite the pandemic and other stresses, but we can do more to help those who struggle. Even the smallest things can make a big difference in a student's life! The Faculty Development Center and Dean of Students Office recognize the challenges that members of our community are facing and, in an effort to support their wellness through these times, we have collaborated to fund faculty in their efforts to support student wellness in their courses. The recipients of these awards have been granted up to \$250 for their proposed idea and will implement their wellness initiative during the Winter 2023 semester. A few of these initiatives include: "Be Mindful of Burnout: Raising Awareness and Promoting Prevention," "Guiding Teachers Candidates to Integrate Academics and Wellness," and "A Doggone Good Idea: A Paws-ative Wellness Intervention for the College Classroom." You can read more about the funded proposals [here](#).

We look forward to implementing these initiatives and to sharing the benefits that they bring to students and the community at large. Given the positive and excited responses that we have received about this initiative, we intend to continue providing these mini-grants to EMU faculty and lecturers in the coming semesters. These mini-grants, for which we seek your financial support, work to both support student wellbeing and to educate our community on the positive impact that these wellness practices can have on our students.

A gift of \$250 can fund one of these projects, but any amount you can give will make a difference for our students. Please scan the QR code or click [here](#) to donate to our wellness efforts. If you wish to give a gift to sponsor other FDC programs, please contact [Jeffrey L. Bernstein](#), Director of the [Bruce K. Nelson Faculty Development Center](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS

READING IN
PRINT?
scan the QR code to
access the links in
this issue



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Planning Your Scholarly Agenda for the Winter Semester

December 8, 3:30pm-4:45pm
109 Halle or [Zoom](#)

Let's take an hour or so to think about what our winter semester writing plans will be, and set ourselves up to achieve our goals. Join Sarah Walsh, the facilitator of this year's Research Writers Collaborative, to find effective ways to set and achieve our writing goals, even with the pressures we all face. Click [here](#) to learn more or click [here](#) to register for the event.

Earlier this semester, we hosted a series of presentations about Internal Research Awards, focused on the Summer Research Awards. Our second round of presentations focuses on applying for Sabbaticals and Faculty Research Fellowships (applications due January 31st), intending to both inform attendees on the application process itself and to provide feedback on any materials provided. If interested in attending, click [here](#) to learn more and view workshop details or click [here](#) to register.

Internal Research Awards

See [website](#) for workshop details
FRF and Sabbatical Applications due
January 31, 2023

Faculty-Led Travel Program

January 17 & 24, 2023
109 Halle or Zoom
See [website](#) for times and Zoom links

The Office of Study Abroad & U.S. Travel Programs and the Faculty Development Center will be hosting two workshops during the winter 2023 semester. In the first workshop you will learn strategies for creating a pedagogically valuable experience for students, how to build your travel course itinerary, how to prepare a budget, and can receive help in submitting a proposal. Our second session will focus more on logistics of travel courses, including how to address issues of health and safety while traveling.

Join us on Thursday, February 9, for a keynote address by [Dr. Alison Cook-Sather](#), in which she will introduce the background and importance of pedagogical partnerships, including how this work has begun at Eastern and how it can expand on our campus. The next day will feature sessions from EMU faculty, lecturers, and staff on a wide range of teaching and learning topics.

We invite program proposals for presentations or workshops on effective teaching practices, supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom, supporting student wellness, strengthening student-faculty partnerships, and more! Submit a program proposal [here](#). Click [here](#) to learn more about the CONNECT Conference.

2023 CONNECT Conference

February 9 & 10, 2023
Halle Library
See [website](#) for more details

UPCOMING EVENTS

DON'T FORGET!

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Research Writer's Collaborative

Every Thursday, 1:30pm
via [Zoom](#)

Come join us to "Shut Up and Write" with a supportive group of faculty.

Call for Fulbright Alumni

If you are a Fulbright Alum,
contact [Carla Damiano](#).

Join in coming together with other Fulbright alumni, share stories, and discuss how to best support EMU Fulbrighters.



Secondary Teacher Preparation Program

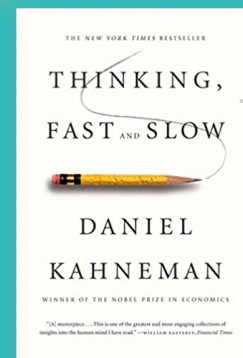
December 9, 10:00am
via [Zoom](#)

Join us for our next, and last, session on December 9 when we share what we have learned and how we can implement teacher preparation lessons in our disciplines. Participants will receive an honorarium. Click [here](#) to learn more.



SPOTLIGHTS

This week's book spotlight is *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman. In this groundbreaking work, Kahneman takes us on a tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. Kahneman exposes the extraordinary capabilities—and also the faults and biases—of fast thinking, and reveals the pervasive influence of intuitive impressions on our thoughts and behavior. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight or to see other books in our library.



This week we are spotlighting Dr. Dyann Logwood of the Department of Women and Gender Studies.

In her teaching spotlight, Dr. Logwood discussed the type of academic service learning experiences she is able to offer as well as how she approaches each class, reminding herself to "teach a class she'd want to take." To read the full spotlight, click [here](#).

Dr. Dyann Logwood
Assistant Professor
Women and Gender Studies

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Before COVID, I considered myself an educator committed to teaching for student engagement. I worked to create courses that would stimulate students to participate actively, and to see classes as a co-created educational space, rather than an entertainment product to be consumed (or not) passively, or a box to be cynically checked off. Through active discussion, problem-based learning and writing prompts, role-playing and debates, I pushed both students and myself to achieve more. These were not easy classes, for students, or for me as an instructor, but the engagement made it worthwhile.

Of course the sudden March 2020 move to online learning presented challenges to this model. Creating the same sense of active participation in a learning community by our students, even when we were not together synchronously, took some retraining.

By this fall, though, a bit over a year since returning to largely face-to-face classes, I found myself ready to do the reverse: to incorporate lessons from the pandemic into my “normal” classes. Many of these lessons had less to do with course content than with understanding what life is like for our students now. For example, I’ve learned from teaching – and grading – asynchronously that firm deadlines are not as necessary as I used to believe. I now generally give a “submission window” for assignments, and tell students I will be as accommodating as possible when their lives require a slightly different schedule than the one I had laid out for the group as a whole.

And their lives can be complicated indeed. Our students not only work long hours in paid jobs while taking a heavy credit load, but are often also primary caregivers for their own children, grandparents, or younger siblings. The load of

By Mary Strasma

caregivers also increased exponentially during the pandemic, as everything from supervising children’s schooling to locating and preparing food became considerably more complicated. My syllabus now has explicitly parenting-friendly language.

I have also begun to learn about trauma-informed teaching. We have students who have experienced both personal trauma and losses related specifically to these times. While social isolation has eased with the return to on-campus classes, students continue to be affected by the political environment. Expressions of extremism may be experienced as existential threat, on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation, or more broadly as the threat to democracy and the rule of law that we all depend on for civil society, and education, to function. This can manifest in difficulty with focus and concentration, which adds to the complications of completing a heavy course load along with other responsibilities.

With this new knowledge, then, I debated whether to return to the high-involvement, heavy-workload active learning approach of my pre-pandemic courses. I had previously us-

SUBMIT A BLOG POST

We welcome blog posts from faculty, lecturers, staff, and students 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!

ed the Reacting to the Past role-playing "game" *Defining a Nation: India on the Eve of Independence, 1945* in an upper-division world history course that I center on the theme of

nations and nationalism, and wanted to do so again. The unit requires everything that we have been finding students have struggled with: long hours, concentrated reading of source material, showing up and being focused in the moment to respond quickly to the work of classmates, and connecting with each other to accomplish group tasks outside of class time. How would pandemic-era students fare? Was I expecting too much?

The answer, to my amazed delight, was that *this class* absolutely *shone*. These students knocked it out of the park, and they did so as a group, not just a few standouts. They did everything we want them to do in our major: researching and using sources effectively in making persuasive arguments, viewing events from multiple perspectives, and diving deep into exploring why people took the actions that they did. Of greatest delight to me is that they pushed each other to be better. When they made arguments from their assigned roles, they questioned, responded to, and challenged each other's ideas, in character, in the moment.

Why did they do so well? While perhaps some of this year's success is due to my increased exp-

erience and knowledge of how to scaffold the activities, I was left to wonder whether the pandemic had taught us something we didn't already know about the value of active learning. The beginnings of an answer came during the debriefing session. One of the prompts that I offered students was to thank a classmate whose work pushed them to be better. A student spoke of how she had experienced a personal crisis during the time of the assignment. But rather than say that this made it harder to complete the work, she explained that it was knowing that she got to come to this class in which she would be working actively in a team, with other students, instead of just sitting quietly in forward-facing rows, that carried her through what was happening in the rest of her life. Another group singled out for praise one student who put in many hours researching and coordinating the plans that they presented. That same student, in turn, indicated that it was a student in an opposing faction who, on the first day, made him realize that he was going to need to significantly up his game from the limited amount of work he had initially planned on putting into the course.

I continue to work on my awareness of things that students might need to be different post-pandemic. For example, although I assigned roles randomly this year, I allowed students to opt-out of a role that they would find difficult to engage with for whatever personal reason they may have. And while the structure of a Reacting to the Past game doesn't allow for making up missed classes or late submissions of many assignments, I am newly flexible on due dates wherever it is practical.

But the surprising takeaway from this semester's outstanding work is that active, engaged learning that allows students to work with each other is not only better for student's learning outcomes in the ways that we already knew. It also allows students to reach higher standards, precisely because they are there for and interacting with each other. I can't wait to see where we can go from here.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Strasma is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Philosophy.

She regularly teaches courses in Latin American and global history and research and writing for historians. Her research interests include place and memory, justice in global political transitions, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.