

May 15, 2024, TLU Engaging Pedagogy Conference Breakout Sessions

Bridging the Gap: Strategies for Supporting First-Year Students' Transition to College Life 11:00 AM – 11:40 AM [Room 127]
Prof. Megan Pope Prof. Kelly Fouts Dr. Merritt Rehn-DeBraal
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
This panel of HSI higher-education faculty will explore the unique academic and social challenges first-year students face. This presentation will share strategies for educators to support student well-being, help faculty understand the first-generation college experience, and consider the ethical costs when choosing courseware and textbooks. Emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive learning environment will offer insights into fostering a sense of community among first-year students, helping them transition smoothly into higher education.

Creating a University-Wide Community with Classroom Assignments: Scaffolding Supportive Relationships 11:00 AM – 11:40 AM [Room 128]
Ms. Kaly Castillo Ms. Chauntel Wilson Blackmon Dr. Barrie McGee
Texas State University
On many campuses, several resources exist to support students' academic and nonacademic needs and interests. Resources, including clothing or food banks, tutoring, career advising, and other centers, can be underutilized when first-year students are unfamiliar with these support programs or their missions of helping students succeed. This session draws from the knowledge and experience of peer mentors and a first-year literacy instructor to share with attendees an easy-to-implement assignment that encourages students to explore on-campus resources and develop an in-class sense of community.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Transformative Force In Education 11:00 AM – 11:40 AM [Room 131]
Dr. Joseph Harrison Jr.
University of Phoenix
The success of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom process can be a daunting challenge. Post-secondary education exacerbates the passage. The innovations in AI ignited a refurbished interest in improving education (Gillani et al., 2021). AI can be a transformative force. For example, its self-learning proficiencies, personalized educational content, the Sustainable Development Goal 4, and calculating education paths. Conversely, AI presents a unique set of challenges. There is a responsibility to explore the less-mentioned characteristics to leverage capabilities ethically and effectively.

Making Critical Sense of Text: Multimodal Assignment as Critical Facilitator 11:00 AM – 11:40 AM [Room 130]
Cielo Perez Emma Manzer Aidan Brock Nasim Layegh
Texas State University
First-year college students find it difficult to read texts critically. In addition, explaining explicitly what they are expected to do while reading critically can be vague. To facilitate this process, instructors can use Multimodal Analysis, which gives students step-by-step instructions on watching a video, reading a relevant text, making connections between the two, and critically viewing the text and video. This session will include three undergraduate students and an experienced Integrated Reading and Writing instructor presenting the Multimodal Analysis assignment.

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Math Pedagogy: Incorporating Problem-Based Lessons, Incorporating AI 11:00 AM – 11:40 AM [Room 201]
Dr. William Hager Prof. Rebecca Clark Dr. Betseygail Rand
Texas Lutheran University
<p>A new curriculum using a problem-based approach was adopted for TLU's precalculus course. This approach is designed to improve student learning, build confidence, and improve retention of the course content. This talk will compare a typical precalculus lesson with a problem-based lesson from this curriculum. So, how has this approach translated to learning and mastery at TLU? The presenters will share results, discuss pros and cons, and brainstorm with participants ways to improve student learning.</p> <p>The introduction of ChatGPT to the CoCalc platform brought unexpected changes to TLU's Elementary Linear Algebra course. The attempt to incorporate ChatGPT into the course yielded positive results. The talk will describe CoCalc, its integration with ChatGPT, and the subsequent course changes that resulted. Attendees will be invited to discuss the impact of ChatGPT on their classrooms.</p>

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Crafting Better Generative AI Prompts: A Catalyst for Learner Engagement 1:30 PM – 2:10 PM [Room 131]

Dr. John D. Solis

St. Mary's University

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, so do the learning technologies that are at our disposal. Large language models (LLMs) by way of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot are no different. Over the last two years alone, generative AI tools have challenged the boundaries of academic integrity, ethical use of learning technology, and learner engagement. Likewise, generative AI has introduced endless opportunities to present and interact with instructional content, create personalized learning experiences, enhance critical thinking skills, and increase learner engagement through assignment/project redesign. The efficacy of LLMs across the higher education landscape hinges significantly on the quality of prompt inputs received. Thus, crafting effective prompts is an art and serves as a catalyst for increased learner engagement and more desirable outputs.

This session will address the critical role continuous prompt crafting has in interacting with LLMs (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot). Through both instructional design and faculty lenses, this session will lead the discussion on the following three themes: (1) the art of prompt engineering, (2) designing assignments that introduce AI literacy skills, and (3) strategies for fact-checking generative AI output.

1. Art of Prompt Engineering: Prompt engineering is the process of crafting and refining a specific, detailed prompt (input) – one that will yield a more desirable response (output) from a generative AI model (i.e. LLM). Although the prompt engineering process may feel complex and overwhelming, this session will present a simple yet effective prompt framework, sample prompts, and prompt templates that can be used with any LLM.
2. AI-Powered Assignment Design: Feeding initial and refined prompts into any generative AI application is often described as the premiere method for training the LLM working behind the scenes. Designing assignments that require students to generate prompts followed by instructor feedback on suggestions for improving those same prompts can empower learners to develop AI literacy skills, interact with course content in innovative ways, and cultivate essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and communication. This session will explore sample lessons that move from basic to advanced AI skill integration across multiple disciplines.
3. Fact-Checking Outputs: Despite the power and humanistic element of LLMs, they are not without flaws, inaccuracies, and other “hallucinations” that may be produced as outputs. Furthermore, AI detection tools are not currently reliable nor consistent in identifying AI-generated content. This session will highlight fact-checking strategies such as prompt refinement, peer review social annotation, and the lateral reading approach.

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Adventures in Burnout: An Interactive Workshop 1:30 PM – 2:10 PM [Room 128]
Prof. Beth Barry Ms. Sarah Westerfield, LPC-S.
Texas Lutheran University
Good teachers invest in content, pedagogy, and, most of all, students. This takes a great deal of time and energy. We cannot keep performing at high levels without understanding the inherent risks and symptoms of burnout and learning how to replenish. This session will help teachers recognize and address signs of burnout and employ various resiliency strategies for recovery. Participants will have the chance to create their burnout prevention plans and move toward greater wholeness and health in their work lives and beyond.

Constructive Play and Choice-Based Inquiry Curriculum in a Public Pre-K 1:30 PM – 2:10 PM [Room 130]
Mrs. Rebecca Hemenway Dr. Maria Luisa Illescas-Glascock Dr. Eulogia Martinez Dr. Tim Kinard
Texas State University San Marcos CISD Bonham Public Prekindergarten
The presentation will include hands-on activities along with background content of the Play and Inquiry curriculum. Participants will engage in constructive play using open-ended materials from our award-winning reuse “store,” and while participants engage in their own play and inquiry practice, presenters will share photos and videos from our collaboration, including those of university interns engaging in co-teaching and reflective practices. A copy of the standards-based assessment and documentation tool used to link the state curriculum to young learners' choice-based inquiry will also be shared, as well as a brief overview of how our collaboration came to be and continues to evolve to meet the needs of both the school and our pre-service teachers.

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Building Beloved Community: Strategies for Co-creating Spaces for Student Success 1:30 PM – 2:10 PM [Room 127]
Ms. Dierra Phillips Ms. Sophia Matys Ms. Katelynn Vela Dr. Emily Suh
Texas State University
Students' sense of mattering is essential to their success. We examine how pedagogical practices rooted in beloved community and belonging can enhance ongoing efforts to support student's academic and literacy goals. Guided by Belonging Theory (Strayhorn, 2018) and Beloved Community (King, 1968), we share examples of instructional practices, syllabus language, assignments, and classroom expectations. Session facilitators are undergraduates who will share their work as peer mentors and as current students. Attendees will leave with samples and a framework for supporting all students.

Boots2Suits: The Transition Story of African American Male Veterans 1:30 PM – 2:10 PM [Room 245]
Dr. Malukah Harvey
Texas Lutheran University
Like many veterans, African American males return home from military service eager to embark on the world of work. In 2020, a qualitative research study was conducted to examine the workplace experiences of eight veterans who had previously or are currently employed in the civilian private sector. Because understanding the transition from Boots2Suits (from the military into the civilian workplace) can be challenging, documenting their experiences as employees in the private sector became crucial. The research questions guiding the study were: (1) How (un)prepared are African American males transitioning from the military to the civilian workplace? (2) What are the workplace experiences of African American male veterans adapting to the civilian private sector? (3. a) What challenges do they face in transitioning from Boots2Suits? and (3. b) How do they navigate these challenges? Data sources included a questionnaire, interviews, artifacts, field notes, and a research journal. The study was built on military transition theory and intersectionality theory, as well as phenomenological data analysis procedures. As African American male veterans prepare to leave the armed forces and enter civilian life and the private sector workplace, this presentation will focus on the factors that can impact their transition preparedness, the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and suggestions for improvement.

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<p>Three Robots Walk Into a Bar: Meeting the Opportunities and Challenges Posed by Generative AI 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 131]</p>
<p>Prof. Amelia Koford Ms. Myla Mitchell & Mr. Jacob Rico</p>
<p>Texas Lutheran University</p>
<p>No joke. The robots have arrived, and they live in our back pockets. These smart machines have been greeted as the tech rescuers we've been waiting for and the harbingers of doom we've long feared. So, where does that leave us? How can we maximize their helpfulness and minimize their overreach? What are the pros and cons of AI use in research and communication? Where should we draw the line to promote ethical and effective decision-making?</p>

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Do the Reading! Promoting Effective Pre-Class Student Preparation 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 128]
Dr. William O'Brochta
Texas Lutheran University
<p>Students who are well-prepared for class are more likely to engage in deeper learning, make positive contributions to the class and its climate, and, ultimately, succeed in the course. Most disciplines assign and ask students to complete some form of reading or pre-class preparation. An ongoing challenge is motivating students to complete these assignments and deciding if or how to evaluate their preparation.</p>
<p>This session will use social annotation software, namely Perusall, as an example to illustrate the different factors and trade-offs involved in choosing and evaluating student completion and performance on pre-class reading assignments. Perusall is a free tool that allows students to annotate course materials with one another in real-time. Its stated objective is to improve student pre-class preparation. I have used Perusall in my classes over the last three years. By discussing my experiences with this tool, I will set up a space to discuss learning objectives for pre-class assignments. These learning objectives include but are not limited to, improving reading comprehension, increasing class participation, recalling key information, making connections to personal experiences, and engaging in conversation with other students. They apply to various assignments like reading quizzes, notes, reflective journals, and concept maps.</p>
<p>Participants will leave the session with a renewed sense of the purpose of pre-class preparation assignments and considerations to consider when designing them.</p>
<p>This session engages with the conference theme because pre-class preparation assignments are often spaces where students use AI to achieve the learning objectives for the assignment. An item for discussion during the session is how re-framing these assignments and their objectives can encourage students to participate without the AI tools. Alternatively, some faculty may incorporate AI tools into their pre-class preparation assignments, thus shifting the learning objectives beyond focusing on recalling key information.</p>

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Engaging Campus Explorations: Scavenger Hunts as Student-Centered Success 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 130]
Ms. Abi Beineman Mr. Ali Dezkameh
Texas State University
First-time-in-college students who are new on campus can struggle to find resources, establish connections, and self-advocate. Campus Scavenger Hunts provide a low-stakes opportunity for these students to explore the campus and available resources with their classmates informally. In this session, three current undergraduate students and an experienced integrated reading and writing instructor present an easy-to-implement assignment encouraging students to connect with their campus. Presenters provide recommended resources for participants to create their hunts.

Building Connections: Peer Mentors as Students' First Friends on Campus 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 127]
Ms. Jazmin Davila Ms. Angela Rodriguez Ms. Addy Hobson Dr. Rafael Almanzar
Texas State University
Transitioning to college can be exciting and daunting for new students, especially when building connections, utilizing campus resources, and navigating higher education. However, peer mentors can cultivate meaningful connections to foster student success in and out of the classroom. Attendees will learn the concept of peer mentors serving as students' first friends and how this relationship can impact student success. Attendees will hear from peer mentors and provide examples of how this concept is applied in first-year literacy courses to foster student success.

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Embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Integrated Reading and Writing 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 245]
Trina Bowers-Johnson Melodi Edizer Elahe Mahmoudi Dr. Michael McConnell
Texas State University
Texas State University's English Language Arts & Reading program (ELAR 1300) --an integrated reading and writing corequisite course--continues to experience notable growth. This presentation fulfills the audience's needs by providing theory- and policy-to-practice-based pedagogy and curriculum. Through cross-institutional interaction, practitioners can share with and learn from one another to support academic success for the state's increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and diverse young scholars in higher education.

The OLLU Faculty Leadership Program: Developing Faculty Leaders in Professional Development Areas 2:20 PM – 3:00 PM [Room 201]
Dr. Stacy Ybarra
Our Lady of the Lake University
The OLLU Faculty Leadership Program (FLP) is designed to give full-time faculty leadership experience in a professional development area. The program focuses on areas such as the scholarship of teaching and learning, leveraging the maker space, inclusive pedagogy, assets-based mindset, IDEA in the classroom, community engagement, and high-impact practices. Faculty leaders in the program work to prepare programming and deliverables in their areas of expertise that will enhance pedagogy across the university.