The Inclusive Academic:
Strategies for Maintaining Balance in a Changing Academic World

18th Annual Teaching Matters Conference – Abstracts by Session

Friday March 13, 2020

Session 6 – 8:00 – 9:00am

A - Instructional Complex (IC) 111
Reflecting and Recharging
Dr. Louis Camara, Ms. Tamara Gray, Dr. Shannon Hu, and Mr. Daniel Lin, Middle Georgia State University

Understanding the critical needs for intentional reflection on our teaching and intentional recharging to maintain a great professional balance is a topic of continuous research. Educators may find themselves struggling to navigate promotion requirements while maintaining teaching effectiveness. This presentation will provide an explanation on how to achieve an ideal reflecting and recharging balance for educators.

B - Instructional Complex (IC) 207
Interdisciplinary Uses of Poetry: Where STEM and Humanities Overlap
Ms. Scarlett Peterson, Georgia State University

Plato once said, “Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history.” This panel will expand on that concept by sharing various methods for incorporating poetry into the classrooms, including social sciences, political sciences, foreign language, math, and traditional science classrooms. In this session, participants will be presented with information on Poetry of Witness, as well as poetry rooted in science, such as Jane Hirschfield’s work, fixed-form poetry which focuses on numerical patterns, and poetry in translation which may be useful for foreign language classes.

Poetry of Witness can be used to address any political or social movement in history. Poetry that addresses scientific topics is readily available. Fixed-form poetry allows students with more literary-skills to understand how numerical patterns, such as iambic, rhythm, and metrical patterns, can come together and compose a work of art. Translations provide language students some insight on the process through which editors and poets come together to share a work of literature to broader audiences.

A packet will be provided to all panel attendees that includes thematic poetry across disciplines, as well as lesson outlines. Poetry can be used as a means to garner student engagement in subjects they may otherwise find difficult to engage with. This panel seeks to expand general knowledge on how poetry can be used as a tool for exploration. In the spirit of creative productivity, the panel will conclude with a prompt for panel attendants to try themselves.
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Triple Dipping: How OER Courseware Balances Teaching, Service, and Professional Development in a Rapidly Changing World
Dr. Jessica Traylor, Gordon State College and Ms. Manuela Ambrosino, Lumen Learning

It is well documented that open educational resources (OER) impact affordability and access, and we’re just beginning to unlock the potential for OER to strengthen student success by applying principles of learning science and user-focused design to openly licensed content. Another benefit of OER is that we can now collaboratively create cutting-edge courses with integrated learning tools. Imagine the benefit of working with other subject matter experts to create and continually revise learning activities to maximize learning outcomes. That is the ultimate teaching, service, and professional development.

OER courseware can provide helpful learning data to pinpoint where students struggle and inform the faculty member and the student about how learning is progressing. It can also introduce nudges and interventions aimed to address common challenges in the educational experience, especially for disadvantaged or historically underrepresented students. Additionally, OER learning outcomes can be analyzed and refined on a large scale to identify which learning activities are most beneficial for students.

This workshop will explore the impact of next-generation OER courseware on faculty and students in addition to highlighting how faculty can become more involved in OER research and development. Participants will learn how using, refining, and creating OER courseware has changed their approach to teaching and student engagement. They will also share the lessons they have learned along the path of converting to using OER as well as digital courseware designed using OER.

Session 7 – 9:00 – 10:00am

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Abstracts for the poster session can be found using the QR code associated with the page in the program.

Session 8 – 10:15 – 11:15am

A - Instructional Complex (IC) 111

Is Your Job Making You Sick? Perspectives on Job Stress, Social Media, and Strategies for Balance
Dr. Laurie Walters, Dr. Susan Durr, Dr. Rebecca Nees, and Dr. Amanda Chase, Middle Georgia State University

Work can make you sick (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). In academia, it’s typically not exposure to toxic chemicals, high accident rates, or faulty workplace designs that are the problem. Rather, it’s another potential danger – stress. According to an APA survey, 74% of the respondents cited work as their primary source of stress and of those, over half had thought about quitting their job because of stress (Anderson, 2008). Job stress affects not only an employee’s health, but also productivity and job satisfaction (Eagan & Garvey, 2015). This is a costly problem for employees and employers.

We will look at the physical and cognitive components of stress and then discuss factors that contribute to job stress. We will also focus on social media and how it affects life/work stress for both professors and students. Finally, suggestions will be given on how to better manage stress, recharge, and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
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Finding Balance in the Chaos: Life Lessons from World Literature
Dr. Nathanael Gilbert, Middle Georgia State University

An ancient text may seem like a strange place to go for advice about the good life. As academics, we tend to question, challenge, and criticize the status quo of just about everything, and racism, sexism, classism and other forms of bigotry are all too evident in the literature of past cultures.

However, I would like to share how my students in the World Literature courses I teach have helped me do more than offer scathing critiques of the ideological failings of our ancestors. In spite of their lack of critical acumen—or perhaps because they still see the world through fresh, hopeful eyes—these budding scholars can appreciate Gilgamesh’s transformation from a bad king to a wise ruler, respect Rama’s decision to seek truth instead of revenge, and feel the rightness of Odysseus’ observation that few things are better than a good meal in good company.

We don’t always have to go looking for solutions in the latest self-help bestsellers; sometimes the answers have been right in front of us for very a long time. Taking a less-cynical approach to world literature has produced some new insights for me, including the following formula for achieving better life balance: take a step back, consider what is truly important to you, and then pursue your goals with passion.

Teaching, Service, Scholarship: Debunking the False Trichotomy
Dr. Alan Burstein, Gordon State College

We see ourselves evaluated by formula: “70-15-15” at Gordon State, for example, or “40-40-20” at the research university where I started my career. An internet search of “Teaching-Scholarship balance” yields no shortage of resources on how to pursue the “successful” academic career. No one size, of course fits all. Variation abounds not just by discipline, which much of the “balance” literature addresses, but more importantly by mission. My experience at a research university 35 years ago was straightforward: publish a book, gain a national reputation, show up for (most of) my classes, and perhaps get tenure, clearly belying the “40-40-20” formula. We’re told that teaching is given more weight in such institutions today than in the past, but I’m confident that this formula would still work well. At an institution like Gordon State in the twenty-first century, however, the pathway to “success” isn’t so clear. First and foremost, we teach. But the expectation of scholarship, reframed as “professional development” lurks in the background right along with what often seems like constantly increasing demands for service. Part of our problem, I think, is that having “come up” through research universities, many of us maintain compartmentalized mindsets which perpetuate the trichotomy. It needn’t be so. A review of our faculty handbook reveals a wide variety of avenues for both service and professional development, adding that there can be other possibilities. An exploration of the teaching-service-scholarship activities available to us reveals many opportunities to engage in professional development and service, not in “silos,” but rather in ways which inform, enrich, and integrate with our primary mission of teaching. My presentation will aim to elaborate on those opportunities, arguing for change from a compartmentalized to an integrated mindset of teaching, research, and scholarship and suggesting ways to present that integration to “the powers that be” when evaluation time rolls around. My presentation is aimed primarily toward faculty at teaching oriented institutions like Gordon State, and while it will, without apology, be highly subjective, I will nonetheless draw on a number of sources to support my opinion.

Self-Care, Mindfulness, and Work-Life Balance for Task-Oriented Introverts
Dr. Marcus Johnson, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

The first half of this presentation discusses personality profiles, with a focus on task-oriented introverts, who tend to enjoy working, want to be intellectually engaged, don’t especially enjoy hanging-out, and who tend to be labeled conscientious and productive, if somewhat aloof, employees and colleagues. The second half of the presentation discusses my personal efforts to avoid the complete absorption into work and the stress that characterizes the workaholism that task-oriented introverts are prone to develop. In the end, this is a case study of work-life balance and self-care.
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**Finding Balance: Blended Learning in the Corequisite Classroom**
Prof. Tammy Hinson, and Prof. Sherri Newberry, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

How can instructors use an online platform to create a self-paced, student-driven learning community in a corequisite classroom?

This engaging, interactive presentation captures a look at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College’s online, integrated reading and writing tutorial used to accelerate students’ academic reading and writing skills to help meet the requirements of ENGL 1101. Panel members will discuss the college’s implementation of blended learning pedagogies, innovative approaches for classroom instruction, and how the pilot impacted their teaching practices and provided students with just-in-time academic support for Gateway courses.

Using contemporary tools, technologies, and teaching strategies shown to be effective for delivering active and engaged student learning in online environments, this presentation will demonstrate how to find balance in corequisite classrooms and meet the diverse needs of students.

From discussions on how the tutorial was designed to further develop students’ academic vocabulary, academic research and writing skills, and the ability to read and think analytically and critically about the written word to hands-on example of weekly tutorial content, participants will get the opportunity to view the tutorial in action. Data results shared will demonstrate how the combination of face-to-face instruction and online learning opportunities has proven to provide individualization, flexibility, and greater chance for student success.

Additionally, participants will be invited to pose questions and share their own successful strategies and programs that promote student-centered assignments and assessments for finding balance in co-requisite remediation.

**Networking Lunch – 11:30am – 12:30pm**

*Highlander Hall*

**Session 9 – 12:45 – 1:45pm**

**Ungrading: How to Assess Student Learning through Socratic Seminars and Conferencing**
Dr. Julie Little, Gordon State College

It’s no secret that students and faculty alike stress over testing and grades. Students worry about studying the correct material and whether or not their notes are comprehensive enough. Faculty concerns include providing appropriate instruction and feedback to adequately prepare students for testing. Both groups feel pressure about the timeliness of grades: Students: Will I have time to improve my grade? Professor: Will I have time to thoroughly grade all the assessments? So, how do we alleviate this stress while we simultaneously keep our teaching fresh, maintain an engaging classroom environment, and build positive relationships with our students? Ungrading through Socratic Seminars and conferencing.

Doing away with grades doesn’t mean we stop assessing student learning. Utilizing Socratic seminars and conferencing allows instructors to observe students formulate solutions to problems, have collegial discussions when opinions differ, and share research and information beyond the scope of the textbook or lecture. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on, then enhance their work and exhibit more understanding than a multiple choice test allows.

In this session, you will meet a former public educator turned college professor who has taken a leap of faith and done away with traditional grading. Students will also share their experiences and demonstrate concepts with audience participation.
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Balancing Mind, Body, and Spirit – The Essential Triad
Dr. Tonya Moore, Gordon State College

During this session participants will have an opportunity to learn more about the science behind balancing the mind, body and spirit equally. Session participants will have the opportunity to assess their current score in all three domains to identify strength and opportunities areas. Additional strategies and tools will also be provided for faculty to use in the classroom to encourage students to do the same. Research will be provided on the increased productivity an individual has when all three domains are in synch (Bloom, Kretschmer, Van Reenan, 2009).

This interactive session will provide a new meaning for individuals who are feeling stressed and overwhelmed by life’s daily challenges. Meaningful reflection prompts will serve as a guide to continue the self-care work of individuals who find themselves last on the care list. It is important to understand that balancing all three domains will mean different things to different people. The balancing process is a very personal thing and individuals will learn during this session how to decide the lifestyle that works best for them. As individual practice structuring their day, they will experience increased productivity while at work, which can result in more free time to relax outside of work. Regardless of goals and priorities individuals can utilize this system to make sure they are conducive to a healthy work-life balance. Implementation of basic self-care management strategies with unleash creativity in transformational ways.

C - Instructional Complex (IC) 207

Preparing Teachers with a Global Perspective: A Comparative Study of Teaching in South West Georgia and Ghana
Dr. Anthony Owusu-Ansah, and Ms. Charrell Hunter, Albany State University

Teaching in schools today demand enough knowledge about different cultures, people and teaching strategies that work well with students. Added to this are technological advancements, the unending search for innovative ideas and research-based practices in teaching and learning which have spurred the need for new methods of teaching, understanding the children we teach and ultimately the diversity of ideas and dispositions they bring to the classroom. There is also a need to know about best practices from other countries that can possibly be incorporated in strategies used in American schools to meet our students’ needs. This research and presentation compares teaching and instructional delivery in Ghanaian elementary and middle schools to those in Southwest Georgia. Data from interviews with teachers, school administrators, parents, students, stakeholders and personal experiences from student teachers are analyzed and presented to support the differences and similarities in teaching within the two regions.

Understanding the Needs of Adult Learners in Online Environments
Dr. Ric Calhoun, Gordon State College

Online learning is becoming more prevalent as an instructional delivery method in higher education at all levels. This comes as colleges seek to maintain enrollments and meet the increasing demand for this kind of instruction. In addition, adult learners are becoming a more important pipeline of students for colleges as the number of traditional age college students dwindles. It is important to understand the challenges and needs that confront the Adult Learner in an online environment as this instructional method grows in importance and the number of adult learners grow in a college’s enrollment mix.

The complete definition of an adult learner is debated across the landscape of education; however, most revolve around the age of the student as well as the circumstances that define their life such as fully employed and supporting dependents. Although these factors themselves may not create the differences that we find in the way adult learners approach higher education, these factors contribute to a mindset that results in behavior typically not observed in most traditional age college students. These differences, as well as other factors that can be found in
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the adult learner, provide implications for the faculty member delivering courses to this important demographic group in the classroom, but more so, in the ever increasingly utilized online environment.

Critical Patient Care? There is an App for That!
Dr. Douglas Masini, Georgia Southern University

The 'pedagogy of technology' allows us to develop an engaging classroom that adds functionality in any learning space. Participants in this immersive forum will learn how to assess student learning preferences, and view novel training options that use applications (or Apps) that turn the classroom into a simulation laboratory. App technology encourages creativity, where the scholar makes these 'fun Apps' useful in teaching, learning, and teambuilding.

D - Instructional Complex (IC) 209

Keeping Teaching Fresh
Dr. Crystal Williams, Gordon State College

The role of educators has changed from sage on the stage to facilitator. Educators are faced with the daily challenge of competing with social media and cell phone use. It is more important for teachers to not only deliver great content but to also keep teaching fresh. The goal of this workshop will be to provides participants with an opportunity to see how I use technology to increase student engagement. Participants will participate in hands-on digital platforms and learn high leverage practices that will surely keep teaching fresh.

Session 10 – 12:45 – 1:45pm

A - Instructional Complex (IC) 111

No Laughing Matter: Exploring Comics and Graphic Novels in the Classroom
Mr. Perry Ivey, Dr. Erik McCarthy, and Dr. Cortney McLeod, Gordon State College

While "comics" have historically been considered as "light," with a lack of complexity, this roundtable seeks to highlight that comics and graphic novels actually offer a rich landscape for both educators and students. Comics and graphic novels, today, offer a less intimidating way to explore complex (and political) subjects—such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. The format and topics offer a unique way to promote student engagement, especially in a time when students are less likely to read books. Comics/graphic novels offer students a particularly dynamic reading experience; the texts allow for unique benefits—including accessibility, engagement, control over the reading experience, as well as exposure to literary devices and historical events with less intimidation.

The roundtable will explore the effective use of comics/graphic novels in the classroom, as it relates to inclusiveness, literary complexity, multi-module literacy, and versatility. The texts are also cross-curricular, and can be used in a variety of courses (e.g., English, Sociology, and History). The roundtable will discuss particular texts (for various courses) and ways to approach those texts in the classroom; the roundtable will also discuss new and exciting types of graphic novels that incorporate cross-genre aspects.
Role-Playing Simulations as a High-Impact Practice
Dr. Steven Elliott-Gower, Georgia College

We will apply Kuh and O’Donnell (2013) eight “key elements” of high-impact practices to four National Security Council simulations conducted in spring 2019, and assess (from both faculty and student perspectives) how successful the simulations were in terms of these key elements. Our presentation will demonstrate the power of role-playing simulations in creating engaging classrooms.

Mindset and Metacognition
Dr. Jennifer Randall

Both students and instructors can become more engaged and energized within the classroom by implementing metacognition and mindset assignments that hinge upon personal experience and self-analysis. Even incorporating one assignment at the beginning of a class can change the course of the semester and yield beneficial results, creating a comfortable and receptive class atmosphere where instructors and students explore core concepts together in fresh ways. These more mindful assignments engage students and instructors in honest and narrative approaches, leading to past, current, and future reflections and to feeling recharged and refocused. Students do not necessarily have to read Carol Dweck’s book on Growth Mindset, but implementing a mindset discussion of Dweck’s core ideas and at least one assignment within the first two weeks of class can create a more heartfelt classroom experience full of memorable stories that lay the groundwork for increased student dedication and focus. Likewise, adding a metacognition activity and assignment can offer students and instructor valuable insight into class dynamics, leading to improved instruction and greater student understanding. Several mindset and metacognition focused assignments will be shared within this session, as well as the results of implementing these assignments within an English 1101 classroom.

A Wonder Elixir to Avoid Mid-Career Burnout: Reflections on Using Reacting to the Past in the Classroom
Dr. Nicholas Steneck, Wesleyan College

While there is little doubt that teaching is rewarding, prioritizing student success can take a psychological, intellectual, and professional toll, especially for those of us who work at teaching institutions. In this presentation I reflect on how using a specific pedagogy has had the unintended consequence of helping me avoid intellectual and personal burnout while coping with the challenges of today’s higher education environment. For roughly a decade, I have used Reacting to the Past games in my courses. In these historical simulations, students play characters, and through extensive engagement with primary sources try to work out solutions to the questions at the heart of pivotal movements in history. There is considerable evidence to show Reacting games provide deep and significant learning experiences for students. My experience with Reacting also suggests using it in the classroom can benefit instructors. I will discuss how incorporating Reacting games into my courses has improved my teaching and ability to mentor students. I will also reflect on how Reacting has broadened and deepened my understanding of history, which in turn has helped me mature as a scholar. In the final part of my presentation, through a brief review of a recent study on Reacting instructors, I will situate my experience within a broader context.
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C - Instructional Complex (IC) 222

25 Active Learning Strategies
Dr. Simeco Vinson, and Ms. Jaclyn Queen, Georgia College and State University

We have created a repository of active learning strategies faculty can use; however, faculty will be provided with
clear guidance on how to make decisions on what strategy to use and when. Since there are so many strategies out
there, faculty need support when making decisions and this workshop will help promote the balance this conference
seeks to encourage.

D - Instructional Complex (IC) Fourth Floor Lobby

Burnout Prevention: Yoga and Mindfulness Meditation
Ms. Moriah Bray, Georgia College and State University

As educators, we know too well the mental and physical demands of creating an engaging learning environment.
From constructing syllabi, planning lessons, and leading discussions to offering constructive feedback and attending
department meetings, the tasks we execute often leave us fatigued and stressed. Many have heard (perhaps too
many times) the self-care analogy of placing one’s own oxygen mask on before helping others in the event of an
aircraft emergency. Cliché as it may be, it is an unavoidable truth that we cannot help others when we are incapable
of helping ourselves. As professors and instructors, it is our responsibility to find methods of self-care that will
prevent teaching burnout. This workshop will offer educators an opportunity to see the benefits of yoga asanas and
mindfulness meditation practices. The first half of the workshop will be a discussion on the history of yoga and
meditation, the adoption of these practices into Western healthcare, and a review of statistical data on their health
benefits specifically for educators. In the latter half of the workshop, I will lead attendees through an asana practice
(“yoga flow”) and brief meditation. To conclude, there will be a question and answer session.