

NEW FACULTY GUIDE

to Teaching & Learning at McMaster





McMaster University

The New Faculty Guide to Teaching and Learning at McMaster (2014)
was adapted from:

Teaching and Learning at McMaster, created by Beth Marquis

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and Excellence in Teaching

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Welcome to McMaster University

A Message from Arshad Ahmad

Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning

Director, Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

Welcome to McMaster University and the many communities it serves. We hope the New Faculty Guide will support your new role as you join McMaster University's *research-intensive, learning-centered* culture that makes for a world-class institution.

The New Faculty Guide is one of several resources that the MacPherson Institute has made available to new faculty members to create engaging learning experiences we wish for our students.


The New Faculty Guide includes practical information and links to articles on key aspects of the teaching and learning process, ranging from topics like civility in the classroom to how to ask engaging discussion questions in your classes. It is my hope that this Guide can provide some ideas and stimulate discussion on questions you have. Our staff are available to support your pedagogical needs, so please do not hesitate to contact the MacPherson Institute for assistance.

The MI has focused on three main areas— Research, Program & Educational Development, and Educational Technologies . The MacPherson Institute's role is to enhance teaching and learning experiences by supporting, encouraging, and honouring teaching achievement, integrating research and practice in the scholarship of teaching and learning, fostering active communities of practice, and delivering exceptional design and technology for digital learning.

Some of the specific supports and programs we offer include the Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellowship, Teaching Development Grants, blended and online course design and redesign, personalized program consultations, mid-course feedback facilitation, graduate courses on university teaching and learning, and more. The MI works to create the best educational experiences for students and faculty alike while leading the way in research and practice related to teaching and learning.

We value and respect the vital work you do in the teaching and learning process. We prize the many collaborations that have grown between ourselves and the community at McMaster, and we seek to see such collaborations grow and flourish.

Once again, welcome to McMaster! I sincerely wish you every success in your career.



Arshad Ahmad,

Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

Director, Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

McMaster University

Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

The MacPherson Institute provides leadership in teaching and learning by encouraging, supporting, and collaborating with the teaching community in the scholarly exploration, innovation, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of teaching and learning practices. The MI's focus in this work is on three key areas: purposeful collaboration with students, innovative research that enhances and responds to teaching and learning practices, strategic growth and enrichment in both the human and technological resources supporting excellence in teaching and learning, and deliberate enhancement of McMaster's reputation as a national and global leader in teaching and learning.

The MacPherson Institute works to connect students, staff, faculty, and community to:

- Support, encourage and honour teaching and learning achievement
- Develop mutually responsive research and practice
- Enhance McMaster's ability to lead in teaching and learning
- Foster a community of teaching and learning
- Deliver exceptional design and technology

You can find us at:

Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching
Mills Library L504

McMaster University

Hours: 8:30am – 4:30pm, Mon to Fri

905-525-9140 Ext. 24540

<http://mi.mcmaster.ca>

Teaching Matters

The McMaster Mission

“At McMaster our purpose is the discovery, communication and preservation of knowledge. In our teaching, research, and scholarship, we are committed to creativity, innovation and excellence. We value integrity, quality, inclusiveness and teamwork in everything we do. We inspire critical thinking, personal growth, and a passion for lifelong learning. We serve the social, cultural, and economic needs of our community and our society.”

Current Priorities: Forward with Integrity

In [Forward with Integrity](#) (FWI), a 2011 letter written by President Patrick Deane to the members of the university community, enhancing the student experience, and undergraduate education in particular, is named as a central priority for McMaster in the coming decade. President Deane challenges all members of the university community to find ways to build on these successes, to reconsider entrenched assumptions about how students learn, and to improve the educational experience for all students. In particular, he urges Instructors, Departments, and Faculties to integrate **experiential, self-directed, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities** into their courses and programs wherever appropriate.

For more information about McMaster’s signature pedagogies and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, contact the MacPherson Institute at 905-525-9140, ext. 24540, or view some of the resources on the MacPherson Institute website: mi.mcmaster.ca

Forward with Integrity funds were made available to support projects and initiatives that advance the principles of Forward with Integrity. To learn more about Forward with Integrity and the ongoing discussions and initiatives it has spurred, visit: <http://fwi.mcmaster.ca>.

Students at McMaster

An essential part of good teaching is knowing the students you teach. The following statistics are from McMaster's [Office of Institutional Research](#) for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Undergraduate Students¹

- 22,020 full-time, 3,154 (12.5%) part-time
- 23,698 domestic, 1,476 (5.9%) international
- 11,597 male, 13,577 (53.9%) female
- 3,575 live on campus, 21,519 (85.8%) live off campus

Graduate Students²

- 3,436 full-time, 801 (18.9%) part-time
- 3,507 domestic, 730 (17.2%) international
- 2,149 male, 2,088 (49.3%) female

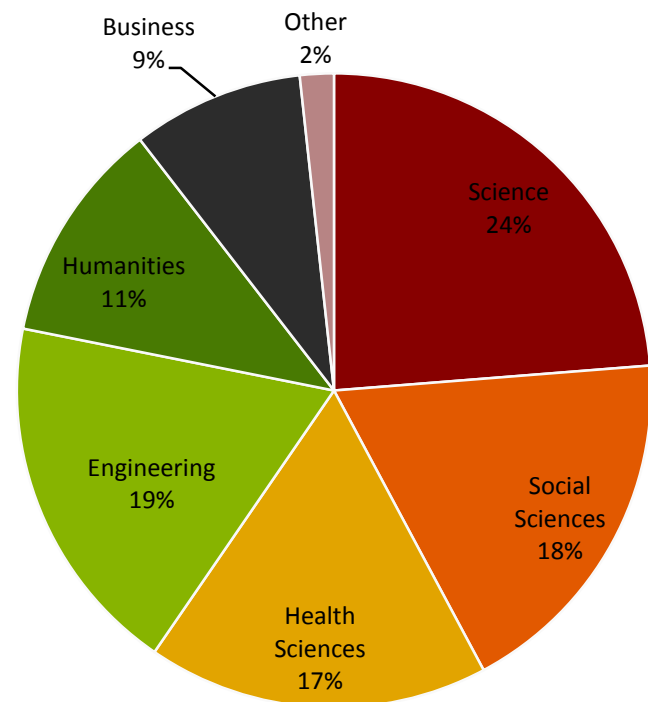
Students with Disabilities³

- 1,102 students (undergraduate and graduate) registered with Student Accessibility Services

First-Generation Students⁴

- 4,603 first-generation students enrolled in the 2012-2013 academic year

Undergraduate Enrolment Distribution by Faculty, 2012-2013



¹ From the [2012-2013 Fact Book](#), Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, McMaster University.

² Ibid.

³ [2012-2013 Multi-Year Accountability Agreement Report Back](#), Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, McMaster University.

⁴ Ibid.

Preparing for Classes

Practical Questions for the Start of a New Semester⁵

*Connect with the
Administrative
Coordinator in your
Department.*

- Does your course have a teaching budget? Have TAs been assigned to your course? When does your department require a course outline? Does your department provide support for copying or for the preparation of teaching materials, such as syllabi/course outlines?
- Visit the classroom(s) in which you will be teaching. Is the classroom appropriate in terms of class size, physical arrangement, and A/V equipment? Is another classroom required? If so, speak with your department timetable representative.

*Connect with [Classroom
Audio Visual Services](#)
(CAVS)*

- Do you need to book equipment in addition to what is already available in the classroom?
- Do you need instruction on using the equipment?
- Do you know the necessary codes to access the equipment?
- Will you need in-class technical support for use of a Smart Board, Smart Podium, document viewer, projector, etc.?

*Connect with
[Avenue to Learn Support](#)
at the MacPherson
Institute.*

- Do you wish to set up an Avenue to Learn (McMaster's primary online Learning Management System) course shell for students to access course materials, submit assessments, engage in online discussions, see their grades, etc.?
- Would you like to use iClickers in your course?

*Connect with
[The Campus Store](#),
McMaster's campus
bookstore.*

- Have textbooks and/or custom courseware been ordered for your course?

*Connect with the
[McMaster University
Library](#)
faculty support.*

- Have course materials been placed on reserve if necessary?
- Does the library have the materials students need for assessments?
- Do your students need training and/or orientation to access library services and resources?

⁵ Questions adapted from "Preparing to Teach." Teaching Support Services, University of Guelph, 2000.

Avenue to Learn

Avenue to Learn (often referred to simply as Avenue) is the primary learning management system used at McMaster. Although there are many tools that one may use within the Avenue system, the most popular tools utilized include:

- **Classlist:** The classlist tool can be used for you to track your students' progress. The tool enables you to view user (e.g., student): profiles, personal homepages, learning portfolios, blogs, and course progress. It also permits you to print the classlist, send a page or email, and check enrollment statistics.
- **News:** You can use the news tool to post messages, course information, and other news updates. News items appear in the news widget, but students can also receive instant notifications about postings through email, SMS, and RSS feeds.
- **Content:** The content tool can be used for you to post course materials so that students can access them.
- **Discussions:** You can use the discussions tool as a collaboration area for students to post, read, and reply to threads on different topics, share thoughts about course materials, ask questions, share files, or work with their peers on assessments and homework.
- **Online Rooms:** With the online rooms tool, you can collaborate with students in an online environment via Blackboard Collaborate.
- **Quizzes:** The quizzes tool can be used for you to have students to take a quiz, review their quiz results, and see class statistics for a quiz.
- **Dropbox:** You can use the dropbox tool to enable students to submit assessments electronically by simply uploading their submission to the appropriate dropbox folder. Optionally, submissions to the dropbox can be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.com.
- **Grades:** The grades tool can be used for you to enable students to check their grades on assessments. They can see their individual grades and comments, as well as class averages and feedback.
- **Learning Portfolio:** The Learning Portfolio is a personal portfolio tool that you may ask students to use for storing, organizing, reflecting on, and sharing items that represent their learning. They can include items such as documents, graphics, audio files, videos, presentations, and course work to demonstrate their improvement or mastery in certain areas. They can control what items they include in their portfolio, how they are organized, and who they want to share them with. When they share items with their peers, mentors, or potential employers, they can give them permission to view items, edit items, see or add comments, and see or add assessments to receive feedback. The Learning Portfolio website at McMaster can be found at <http://mi.mcmaster.ca/learning-portfolio/>

To learn about how to use these features, go to <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/support.html>

To login to Avenue, go to <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/> and click the login button. You will need to have your MacID activated before you are able to login.

To request an Avenue site for your course, go to the Avenue to Learn Course Request Form for Registrar Courses at http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/course/course_request_check.php. All courses are created in an inactive state – you, the instructor, will be able to see the course, but students will be unable to see it until you make the course site active.

For questions or concerns, Avenue support is available from Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM at (905) 525-9140 ext. 22911, or via email at support.avenue@ccl.mcmaster.ca. For technical issues, please use their [Support Form](#), which allows the support team to serve you better.

Online and Blended Learning

Uncovering the transformative possibilities of blended and online learning strategies requires a thoughtful pedagogical-driven approach. Both are continually evolving as best practices emerge and technologies advance. The growth of open education resources and Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) are a testament to a demand for increased learner choice. In response, higher education institutions are housing full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities, textbook materials, games, simulations, and many more resources online for students to access, often in a personalized way. Both models offer a learning experience that is enhanced by technology in one or more of the following ways: expository learning, where the knowledge is transferred digitally through a device; active learning, where the students move through inquiry-based manipulation of digital artifacts (quizzes, wikis, simulations) and interactive learning, where the students participate together on inquiry-based collaborative activities (Means et al, 2009). In this section you will find definitions of blended and online learning, followed by an annotated list of resources to direct further pursuit of the subject.

Blended Learning is the meaningful integration of face-to-face classroom experiences with online learning experiences. Often described as “the best of both worlds,” blended learning combines the social and instructor-engagement opportunities offered in face-to-face classroom learning with the technology-enhanced learning made possible online. A well-planned blended learning format builds pedagogical value by using online methods of content delivery and assessment to prepare students for application of knowledge during inquiry-based, collaborative discussions within the allotted class time. In this manner, instructors act more as facilitators or coaches, and students are given greater ownership over their learning. An effective blended learning opportunity encompasses:

- a shift from a lecture-centered to a student-centered course
- increased student-instructor, student-student, student-content and student-resources interactions.
- expanded opportunity for various formative and summative assessment pieces

Online Learning moves all face-to-face classroom experiences to an online format. Moving a face-to-face course (or creating a new one) to an online format is a complex undertaking that holds tremendous teaching and learning potential. Determining which online learning activities effectively support the course learning outcomes requires a great deal of planning. Activities can include a mix of asynchronous (student-paced) and synchronous (real-time) activities. Asynchronous activities offer students the ultimate in scheduling flexibility, while incorporating synchronous elements (e.g., webinars and group work through the use of Webex) to build community and engagement.

Online learning is most effective when the course design allows for the following:

- student-led activities (e.g., discussion posts, webquests, peer review)
- a high level of interaction between students (e.g., collaborative assignments)
- a community of learning through intentional means of building social, cognitive, and teaching presence.

The MacPherson Institute has been a catalyst on campus for technology-enhanced learning experiences and can provide encouragement, support, and collaboration for McMaster’s teaching community. Our Instructional Designers and Digital Media Specialists are available to consult with instructors on blended/online course redesign, including making evidence-based recommendations on course sequencing, outcomes/assessment alignment, instructional materials adaptation, active online learning activities, and quality assurance. For more information, please visit: mi.mcmaster.ca/educational-technology/

Further Resources

Webex

WebEx is a very powerful and attractive tool designed to facilitate online meetings, online classes, student group work and other collaborative ideas. WebEx is divided into 4 centres, all with different capabilities and purposes. The "Training Centre", meant for online classes has functions such as audio/video, chat, whiteboard, breakout rooms, quizzing and polling. Sessions can be recorded in this centre. The "Meeting Centre" is similar to the Training Centre but without the functions normally associated with classes (breakout rooms, quizzing, polling). This centre is meant for online meetings or virtual office hours. There are two other centres, the "Event Centre" (allows large events to be broadcasted – up to 3000 users) and the "Support Centre", which will be explored later.

<http://mi.mcmaster.ca/web-conferencing/>

Blended Learning Toolkit

Based on a long history of offering blended learning, the University of Central Florida has developed and continues to refine this useful resource for faculty who are considering adopting a blended learning approach. Main sections include: Process, Model Courses, Effective Practices, Evaluation Resources, Faculty Development and Research.

<http://blended.online.ucf.edu>

Bloom's Digital Taxonomy

Based on the original developed by Benjamin Bloom, this revised digital taxonomy aligns the lower to high order thinking verbs/skills to various digital verbs/skills.

<http://burtonslifelearning.pbworks.com/f/BloomDigitalTaxonomy2001.pdf>

Contact's North Ontario Online Learning Portal for Faculty & Instructors

Contains a wealth of resources, research and case studies within the theme of blended and online pedagogy. Visitors can also subscribe to their weekly "Online Learning News" email containing the latest trends and innovations within online learning in Ontario.

<http://contactnorth.ca>

Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever

Ideas for using technology to implement Chickering & Gameson's original "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education."

[Chickering, A., & Ehrmann, S., \(1996\). Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever. AAHE Bulletin, October, 3-6.](#)

<http://contactnorth.ca/home>

“Considerations in Online Course Design”

Drawing upon Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) principles of good practice, five principles for online course planning and design are discussed: collaborative learning; connecting course concepts; instructor social presence and interaction; balancing the amount of course information with student commitment and persistence; and matching course outcomes with technological options.

[Creasman, P. A. \(2012\). Considerations in online course design. *Idea Paper* \(52\), 1-9.](#)

“Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies”

A systematic review of research conducted over the period of 1996 - 2008 used to compare and contrast findings around online vs. face-to-face conditions and achievement of learning outcomes. The resulting meta-analysis of these studies concluded, on average, more positive effects of blended/online learning over face-to-face instruction.

[Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., Jones, K. \(2009\) Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies. Report for the U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service.](#)

“Effective Online Instruction in Higher Education”

Breaks “Effective online instruction” into three parts: Course Design; Instructor Preparedness and Interaction among Course Participants, with evidence-based suggestions around each.

[Crawford-Ferre, H. & Wiest, L. \(2012\). Effective online instruction in higher education. The Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 13\(1\), 11-14.](#)

“Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework Principles, and Guidelines”

Focuses on setting up a community of inquiry and putting blended learning into practice. Provides results of some surveys regarding student experience during a blended course.

Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Available at McMaster’s University Library.

The SAMR Model

The Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition model offers instructors support on how to reimagine activities with the use of educational technologies.

<http://www.schrockguide.net/samr.html>

The Syllabus

McMaster Syllabus Guidelines

One of the first steps to creating a syllabus at McMaster is to familiarize yourself with the university's policies related to teaching and learning, including the [McMaster's Undergraduate Course Management Policies](#) document. Compiled into one document, the undergraduate course management policies cover:

- **Guidelines** on what you should include in your syllabus at McMaster (for example, contact information and office hours, a list of course learning objectives, course overview and assessment, academic integrity and academic accommodation for students with disabilities statements, and more).
- **Policies** on early feedback requirements, assessment bans, Turnitin.com, retention of examinations and other graded materials, and conflicts of interest.
- **McMaster-approved language** for course syllabi in regards to academic integrity, Turnitin.com, online elements of a course, and academic accommodation of students with disabilities.
- **The McMaster University Grading Scale**
- **Sample course syllabi**
- **Links to related policies**, including [McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Considering the Purpose of the Syllabus

Instructors often see their course syllabi as a contract that protects and informs both faculty and students. Slattery and Carlson (2005) state that “syllabi are a paper contract between faculty members and their students, designed to answer students' questions about a course, as well as inform them about what will happen should they fail to meet course expectations” (p. 163). For this reason, referring to [McMaster's Student Code of Conduct](#) comprises an important first step in developing course syllabi.

Slattery and Carlson are careful to point out that while the syllabus is often seen as an administrative requirement articulating a contractual agreement, seeing the syllabus exclusively as such underestimates its potential value. They conclude that:

“highly effective syllabi are characterized by completeness of information . . . , motivational comments, and a style of communication that engages students as effective collaborators in the learning process. Rarely, however, will a syllabus be ‘perfect’ the first time” (p. 163).

Beyond the Contract

Eberly, Newton, and Wiggins (2001) point to three main purposes that syllabi serve: administrative, course development, and interpersonal, and propose treating syllabi as an important learning tool. Similarly, Slattery and Carlson advocate recognizing the syllabus as a tool that facilitates teaching and learning by communicating the internal coherence of a course or field, and by connecting what students will do in a course with what and how they will learn. Cardozo (2006), an English Professor, advocates for actively engaging students in the process of crafting and reflecting on the course syllabus; she considers ways in which instructors might invite students to reflect on the values of her field, the pedagogical intent of the course, and their relationship to both by asking students to draft their own introductory course syllabi.

“When the focus is on all the logistical details, all the terms of this particular learning deal, we miss an opportunity to generate enthusiasm for the course, indeed, for learning” (Weimer, 2011, p. 1).

Scholars like those cited above advocate an approach to the syllabus that sees it as more than a proactive document in defense of student misconduct or misunderstanding. In [The Teaching Professor Blog](#), Weimer (2011) argues that when syllabi focus “on all the logistical details, all the terms of this particular learning deal, we miss an opportunity to generate enthusiasm for the course, indeed, for learning.” Weimer wonders “if we don’t err on the side of being too defensive in our syllabi.” [In her blog post](#), Weimer poses a series of questions for instructors to reflect on as they craft their syllabi. Here are just a few:

“Does your syllabus convey the excitement, intrigue, and wonder that’s inherently a part of the content you teach? Does it hint at or openly state your enthusiasm you feel about teaching this great subject? . . . If you read this syllabus, would you say the course is taught by somebody who loves learning?” (Weimer, 2011, p. 1)

Further Resources for Developing Course Syllabi

Accessibility & Inclusion in Syllabi

The following resource was drafted by scholars working in Disability Studies, which the authors define as “an academic discipline dedicated to investigating disability not as an individual problem or deficiency but as a category of identity constructed in historical, medical, and social contexts” (Wood & Madden, 2014, p. 1). It offers practical strategies for building a syllabus that communicates inclusive principles, advocates for the adoption of Universal Design for Learning in pedagogy, and includes a number of sample syllabus statements on accessibility and Universal Design for instructors’ reference.

To read their recommendations for crafting a course syllabus that can aid in the creation of an inclusive and accessible learning environment, visit: [http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/tiki-index.php?page=Suggested Practices for Syllabus Accessibility Statements](http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/tiki-index.php?page=Suggested_Practices_for_Syllabus_Accessibility_Statements)

Syllabus Tools

To view a template that may be used to construct a syllabus at McMaster, please see [Appendix A](#).

Copyright

Copyright is the exclusive legal right to produce, reproduce, publish or perform an original literary, artistic, dramatic or musical work. Therefore permission should be sought from the owner of the copyright-protected work that an Instructor wishes to use, unless the Instructor can fall under one of the Copyright Act exceptions, such as fair dealing. Where the Instructor has created their own copyright works for course instruction, such as power point presentations or course notes, students should be informed that taking Instructor’s copyright-protected work and using it other than for its intended purpose, may not be permissible without the Instructor’s permission. For example, posting an Instructor’s course notes on various note-sharing sites would not be permissible without the Instructor’s permission. Instructors, who are concerned about this, should inform their students either via the course outline that use of Instructor copyright-protected works should only be used for review and private study and should not be posted on any note sharing sites.

Fair Dealing

The fair dealing provision in the Copyright Act permits use of a copyright-protected work without permission from the copyright owner or the payment of copyright royalties. To qualify for fair dealing, two tests must be passed. First, the “dealing” must be for a purpose stated in the *Copyright Act*: research, private study, criticism, review, 15 news reporting, education, satire or parody. Educational use of a copyright-protected work passes the first test. The second test is that the dealing must be “fair.”

The McMaster University Fair Dealing Policy applies fair dealing in a non-profit setting and provides reasonable safeguards for the owners of copyright-protected works in accordance with the Copyright Act and the Supreme Court decisions. McMaster University's Fair Dealing Policy and guidelines can be found here - <http://www.copyright.mcmaster.ca/docs/Fair%20Dealing%20Policy%20Nov%202013.pdf>

For questions related to copyright and fair dealing please go to www.copyright.mcmaster.ca or contact, copyright@mcmaster.ca

Tips for the First Day of Class

“The First Day of Class”

For a list of potential topics to cover in the first day of class, see “The First Day of Class,” a chapter from Gross Davis’ practical [Tools for Teaching](#) (1993) available online and in hard copy at the [McMaster University Library](#). Gross Davis offers tips for the first day of class, including how to handle administrative tasks, how to create a positive environment, and how to communicate course expectations.

Gross Davis, B. (1993). *Tools for Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

“Making the Most of the First Day of Class”

Clement offers some answers to common questions about the first class session, what it should accomplish, and how it relates to the rest of the semester in this interview published on *Faculty Focus*.

Kelly, M. (2010). [Interview with Mary C. Clement. Making the most of the first day of class.](#) *Faculty Focus*.

“Create a Climate for Learning”

A pair of posts by Weimer from her *Teaching Professor Blog* lay out a two-pronged approach to the first day of class: first, she establishes five essential goals for the first day in [“Five Things to Do on the First Day of Class”](#) (2013), including: showcasing course content, getting students talking, being personable, giving students a reason to read the syllabus, and being authentic. These five goals reflect Weimer’s philosophy of teaching and learning. The goals you may wish to establish will likely be different and unique to you. However, the first day of class is an important opportunity for instructors to “set the tone” for the course. This means that for Weimer, who wishes to establish an interactive classroom environment, active learning and student interaction must be initiated on day one. In [“First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning”](#) (2013), Weimer shares four activities instructors can use to accomplish the goals she established in her previous article. These activities encourage students to recognize their responsibilities as learners in shaping the classroom learning experience.

Weimer, M. (2013). “Five Things to Do on the First Day of Class.” *Faculty Focus: The Teaching Professor Blog*.

Weimer, M. (2013). “First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning.” *Faculty Focus: The Teaching Professor Blog*.

“Create a Climate for Learning”

A pair of posts by Weimer from her *Teaching Professor Blog* lay out a two-pronged approach to the first day of class: first, she establishes five essential goals for the first day in [“Five Things to Do on the First Day of Class”](#) (2013), including: showcasing course content, getting students talking, being personable, giving students a reason to read the syllabus, and being authentic. These five goals reflect Weimer’s philosophy of teaching and learning. The goals you may wish to establish will likely be different and unique to you. However, the first day of class is an important opportunity for instructors to “set the tone” for the course. This means that for Weimer, who wishes to establish an interactive classroom environment, active learning and student interaction must be initiated on day one. In [“First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning”](#) (2013), Weimer shares four activities instructors can use to accomplish the goals she established in her previous article. These activities encourage students to recognize their responsibilities as learners in shaping the classroom learning experience.

Weimer, M. (2013). “Five Things to Do on the First Day of Class.” *Faculty Focus: The Teaching Professor Blog*.

Weimer, M. (2013). “First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning.” *Faculty Focus: The Teaching Professor Blog*.

Teaching Strategies

It is an oft-repeated maxim that many university educators teach in the manner that they were taught as undergraduates. The resources in this section are designed to support an alternate approach, describing an array of common pedagogical methods from which instructors might choose based on their content and teaching goals. While many of the cited articles point to connections between the strategies discussed and improved learning outcomes, Weimer (in the first article below) reminds us that there is no singular set of best practices that applies to all teaching situations. Given the fact that this point is often overlooked, Weimer’s article is reprinted here in full.

“Finding the Best Method”

“All too often in education, pundits, and some researchers for that matter, seem to believe that they have found the method which all teachers should use.” So writes Noel Entwistle, a noted scholar with a career of research on teaching and learning in higher education to his credit. He (and others) are concerned about the pressure that educational researchers feel to discover “what works.” He notes that 50 years of educational research has failed to find that definitive set of best practices.

Searching for the best way to teach assumes a kind of simplicity about teaching and learning that just plain does not exist. Start with the fact that teaching is used to accomplish a variety of different educational aims. It is used to help learners acquire knowledge of a vast panoply of subject matters and is aimed at students from all sorts of backgrounds, with varying degrees of cognitive ability and at different levels of intellectual maturity.

Those who do the teaching share a wide diversity of backgrounds and have experiences that cross the continuum from novice to expert. The host of factors that influence teaching makes clear the preposterousness of imagining that there could be one or even several best methods, approaches, styles, or practices.

However, a tentative approach to pedagogical methods feels counterintuitive. Once a teacher finds something that works with her content, her students, and her style of teaching, it is natural for her to want to recommend that way to others. And making those recommendations is not inappropriate so long as they are presented as something a colleague may want to try—not as the answer that will fill the colleague’s instructional needs. Becoming an advocate for a particular method is difficult to resist when research offers evidence of that method’s positive impact.

Research may verify that a method works under a certain set of conditions; if it’s good research, its findings may apply to other teachers—but never to all others. So, one can advocate for certain methods just as long as that advocacy does not definitively exclude other methods. A particular method may gain “best practice” status as more and more faculty jump on the bandwagon after having used the approach and found it successful. As more and more faculty adopt a method, it can become faddish. Across the years, the popularity of various instructional methods has waxed and waned.

But does this mean that all educational practices are equal, that there are no general principles that might guide individual faculty or those working together on a curriculum who want to pursue what promotes more and better learning for their students? Entwistle’s answer is intriguing: “In the end, ‘best practice’ is whatever helps students to engage more deeply with the subject and to become more actively responsible for their own learning.”

So, all educational methods are not equal. No method is ruled out so long as it engages students and makes them responsible for learning. But some methods accomplish those goals less frequently than others.

Take lectures, for example. They can be highly successful at involving and engaging students. Most faculty can attest to that power firsthand. However, in practice, most lectures do not engage students or motivate them to take responsibility for what and how they learn. Lectures tend to encourage passivity and make students dependent on the teacher. As a result, faculty are rightly encouraged to rely less on lectures and to explore other methods. But that advice results from the way lectures are used, not from their inherent inability to promote significant learning.

It would be lovely if a box of best practices could be handed out to new faculty members as their careers commence. Even mid-career faculty might queue up for the box. If only teaching and learning were that straightforward; but they are not. On the other hand, their complexity and variability provide enough intellectual challenge to keep even the brightest faculty member engaged. It can take a career just to figure how the learning of a particular kind of content is promoted, given a particular blend of students.

Note: The Entwistle quotes come from a paper prepared for an international symposium called “Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education,” held April 25-26, 2008, in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Weimer, M. (n.d). Finding the best method. In Weimer, M. (ed.) *Effective Strategies for Improving College Teaching and Learning*. Faculty Focus Special Report. Madison: Magna Publications, pp.11-12. Reprinted with permission.

“Improving Lectures”

Lectures are the most common teaching strategy employed in universities, despite numerous critical evaluations of their ability to promote student learning. This brief article, by Weimer, summarizes ten key ways in which to increase the pedagogical value of this most common teaching tool.

Weimer, M. (2008) *Improving Lectures*. Faculty Focus.

“Lecturing for Learning”

In this chapter, Horgan offers a more extended discussion of the lecture, expanding on some of the points raised in the Weimer article above, and also outlining several additional means of enhancing the lecture’s efficacy.

[Horgan, J. \(2002\). Lecturing for learning.](#) In H. Fry., S. Ketteridge, & S. Marshall (Eds.) *A Handbook for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education. Enhancing Academic Practice* (2nd ed.) London: Kogan Page, pp. 66-79.

“Six Keys to More Effective Class Discussions”

Like lecturing, in-class discussion is a pedagogical tool called on by numerous university instructors. In “Six keys to more effective class discussions,” Weimer provides a synopsis of work by Sautter (2007), which outlines a set of suggestions for improving the structure and success of classroom interchange.

[Weimer, M. \(2010\) Six keys to more effective class discussions.](#) *Faculty Focus*.

“What Questions Engage Students”

This is a one-page document that offers [advice on asking discussion questions](#) that are likely to encourage student participation in classroom discussion. Adapted from Rasmussen, R.V. (1984). Practical discussion techniques for instructors. *AACE Journal* 12(2), 38-47.

“Formed ‘Teams’ or ‘Discussion Groups’ to Facilitate Learning”

This ‘Idea Item’ by Zakrajsek offers a rationale for using group work as a teaching strategy, and provides several hints about how to make this process successful.

[Zakrajsek, T. \(2005\). Formed ‘teams’ or ‘discussion groups’ to facilitate learning.](#) *POD-IDEA Center Notes on Instruction, IDEA Item 5*.

“Teaching Practices that Promote Student Learning: Five Experiential Approaches”

In this article, Wurdinger and Bezon describe several common, evidence-informed alternatives to the lecture method, including project-based learning, problem-based learning (PBL), service learning, place-based learning and active learning.

[Wurdinger, S. D., & Bezon, J. L. \(2009\). Teaching practices that promote student learning: Five experiential approaches.](#) *Journal of Teaching & Learning*, 6(1), 1-13.

Classroom Management

Maintain a welcoming, civil, respectful classroom environment in which learning can flourish.

“The Thin Line Between Civility and Incivility”

The issue of classroom civility has been a topic of increasing attention in recent years. In this piece, Marini draws upon bullying research to develop a model of classroom incivility that offers insight into ways in which this phenomenon might be prevented.

[Marini, Z. \(2009\). The line between civility and incivility: Fostering reflection and self-awareness to create a civil learning community. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 2, 61-67.](#)

“Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom”

This tip sheet produced by the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University sets out some practical strategies for transforming charged and potentially uncomfortable moments in the classroom into rich learning experiences.

[Warren, L. \(2006\). Managing hot moments in the classroom. *Derek Bok Centre for Teaching and Learning Tip-Sheets*.](#)

“Building Inclusion: Engaging Diversity in the Classroom”

[The Equity and Inclusion Office](#) at McMaster offers a number of services to the McMaster community (including faculty, staff, and students). This one page document offers tips for creating an inclusive classroom that engages difference; like the resource above, it also offers tips for dealing with “hot” topics. Be sure to check out their website for more resources relating to inclusivity, accessibility, harassment, equity, and human rights.

[“Building Inclusion: Engaging Diversity in the Classroom.”](#) Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University.

“Creating, Resisting or Neglecting Change: Exploring the Complexities of Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities”

Finally, this article by a team of McMaster researchers discusses the results of semi-structured interviews that examined the ways in which students with and without disabilities, instructors, administrators, and staff perceived the accessibility and inclusiveness of teaching and learning at the institution.

[Marquis, E., Jung, B., Fudge-Schormans, A., Vajoczki, S., Wilton, R., Baptiste, S., & Joshi, A. \(2012\). Creating, resisting or neglecting change: Exploring the complexities of accessible education for students with disabilities. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 3\(2\), 1-21.](#)

Assessing (for) Student Learning

“Assessment for Learning”

Brown argues that assessment can and should be used to help students learn, rather than simply providing the means by which we arrive at student grades. She urges instructors to think carefully about the why, the who, and the when of assessment, in addition to the what and the how, and to focus on more than the short-term regurgitation of content.

[Brown, S. \(2004-05\). Assessment for learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 1, 81-89.](#)

“Giving Tests and Projects that Cover the Most Important Points of the Course”

This brief paper by Walvoord provides a set of step-by-step instructions for creating and administering assignments that align with – and help students to meet – the course learning objectives.

[Walvoord, B. \(2005\). Giving tests and projects that cover the most important points of the course. *POD-IDEA Center Notes on Instruction, IDEA Item 12.*](#)

“Making the Most of Multiple-Choice Questions”

Multiple Choice Tests are one of the most common forms of assessment in university settings, particularly when classes are large. This essay by DiBattista describes ways in which instructors might construct multiple choice questions that test more than simple recall, asking students to demonstrate an understanding of content and/or an ability to apply, analyse or evaluate ideas.

[DiBattista, D. \(2008\). Making the most of multiple-choice questions: Getting beyond remembering. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 1, 119-122.](#)

“The Dos and Don’ts of Student-Oriented Grading”

Grading can be a frustrating experience for students and instructors alike. Students frequently seem surprised by the marks they receive, or confused about the criteria guiding the assessment process. Instructors, on the other hand, are often disappointed that students seem to ignore or object to the constructive feedback that has been offered. The following guidelines, authored by assessment scholar Runte, outline ways in which university teachers might make their marking more student-oriented, and thereby avoid some of these unnecessary issues.

Do

- Provide comments that link the grade received to the scoring criteria
- Comment on **all** aspects of the assignment, not just subject-specific content
- Provide a discipline-based rationale for scoring criteria
- Focus on the 2 or 3 improvements which are the highest priority for the student
- Provide typed feedback
- Make as many positive comments as negative comments
- Tell students what they are doing correctly
- Build on student strengths
- Check your marking for reliability and bias

- Develop explicit scoring criteria
- Include discipline-specific criteria in the scoring rubric
- Provide direct instruction on the writing process as it relates to one's discipline
- Keep scoring criteria flexible

Do Not

- Cover the student's paper with red ink
- Circle each spelling, grammatical, mechanical or formatting error
- Allow discipline-based assumptions to become implicit scoring criteria

Extracted, with permission, from Runte, R. (2000) Student-oriented grading. Paper presented at the *Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Conference*, Brock University, June, 2000.

For more information, visit Runte's website on [student-oriented grading](#).

Grades at McMaster

McMaster University Grading Scale⁶

| GRADE | POINTS | EQUIVALENT PERCENTAGES |
|-------|--------|------------------------|
| A+ | 12 | 90 - 100 |
| A | 11 | 85 - 89 |
| A- | 10 | 80 - 84 |
| B+ | 9 | 77 - 79 |
| B | 8 | 73 - 76 |
| B- | 7 | 70 - 72 |
| C+ | 6 | 67 - 69 |
| C | 5 | 63 - 66 |
| C- | 4 | 60 - 62 |
| D+ | 3 | 57 - 59 |
| D | 2 | 53 - 56 |
| D- | 1 | 50 - 52 |
| F | 0 | 0 - 49 |

Uploading and Submitting Grades

To upload and submit grades, login to [Mosaic](#) (hosted by University Technology Services [UTS]) with your MacID and password where you will find the **Online Grades Submission System**. The grades submission system allows instructors to submit their final grades electronically, and involves an approval process for Faculty and Departments. Once final approval is achieved, the grades are uploaded to the Student Record on the Student Information System.

For instructions on how to upload grades to the Online Grades Submission System from Avenue to Learn, as well as how to submit grades manually to the system, visit Mosaic's [Online Grade User Guide](#) step-by-step instructions.

⁶ From the [McMaster Undergraduate Course Management Policy](#).

Advice for Early-Career Faculty

In *Advice for New Faculty Members*, Robert Boice lays out a set of ‘rules’ for early-career faculty. He advises beginning faculty members to work in short, regularly-scheduled sittings, for example, to avoid pessimistic thinking, and to seek help and support wherever possible. The resources in this section likewise offer advice to academics near the beginning of their teaching careers. They are drawn from a collection of ‘teaching mistakes,’ in which experienced instructors share some of the early missteps they made as educators in the hope that others might avoid making similar errors.

Boice, R. (2000). *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Available in [Mills Library](#).

“The Things I Did Badly: Looking Back on my First Five Years of Teaching”

Graham Broad

Like birthdays, anniversaries are occasions for reflection, and as I approach the fifth anniversary of my teaching career, I find that my thoughts are drawn to the things that I did badly. Here’s a list of five teaching mistakes I have made. I share them in the hope that they will cause others to reflect, and perhaps will help new professors avoid making these same mistakes.

Not taking advantage of research on pedagogy. It’s curious: as a graduate student in history, I was trained to maintain the highest evidentiary standards in my scholarship, to situate my research in a body of existing literature, and to scrutinize every claim I made for any possible error. And yet, when it came to teaching, I went entirely on instinct, teaching the way I was taught, assuming that was good enough. It wasn’t. Nearly a year passed before it occurred to me that there might be scholars in the field of pedagogy, too, and that maybe they’d written useful material about how to teach! Was I in for a surprise. Keeping up with that field is a major scholarly undertaking. So I limit myself to two journals specific to teaching in my field, and over the years, I’ve attended workshops and compiled a modest collection of books on teaching. I’m glad to say that my instincts weren’t entirely off, but I also know that I’m a much better professor now for having learned from the pedagogical literature.

Chastising the whole class. We all get exasperated at times, and the temptation to let a whole class have it is sometimes hard to resist. In my third year as a professor though, I had a “eureka” moment in the midst of bawling out a class for its poor attendance. It suddenly occurred to me, “I’m talking to the people who are here.” I was making them resentful—and doing nothing to reach the people who were the source of the problem. Ever since then, I’ve dealt with problems on a one-on-one basis, except in cases where nearly everyone is doing something wrong.

Being defensive about student complaints. Yes, there is something presumptuous about undergraduates, who often are still teenagers, griping about their professors. Have they taught? Studied pedagogy? Don’t they realize how good they have it? More and more, however, I remind myself that, since I’m training them to critically assess every reading and, indeed, every truth claim placed before them, I can hardly object when students turn those very faculties of critical inquiry on me. Instead, I’ve moved toward greater transparency in my teaching methods. I also took the advice in Gerald Graff’s book *Clueless in Academe* and made my own pedagogy part of the discussion.

Answering student e-mail at all hours. I'm considered a student-friendly professor, one who is always willing to lend a hand. Last year, however, I inserted a passage in my course outlines stating that I would answer student e-mail during regular business hours only: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. I think one of the damaging ideas conveyed by various inspirational books and movies about teachers who make a difference is that teachers are not entitled to private lives, that they must be on call for their students at all times. If the purpose of education is, as the ancients believed, to help us lead "the good life," what kind of example am I setting if I live entirely to serve my students? A corollary: I no longer answer e-mails that ask me questions that students can answer for themselves using the course outline and other resources (e.g., "What is the final exam worth?"). Some students complain that I'm slow to respond to e-mail, but I remind them in a good-natured way that students somehow muddled by for thousands of years without e-mail at all.

Egotism. At some point in the past year, I decided that my initial beliefs that I could reach all students and that all teaching problems could be resolved through correct pedagogy weren't optimism, but rather egotism. Some students, I have come to understand, just aren't that into me. I give all students the same benefit of my time and experience, and I tell those who are slipping that they can stand upright. But I realize that some of them choose not to, so I have decided to respect that choice, even if I believe that it's the wrong one. Above all, I have come to realize that the division between teacher and scholar is an artificial one. Over the past five years, my teaching has improved by leaps and bounds whenever I have applied the same standards of critical scrutiny to my pedagogy that I have always applied to my research. I can only assume that, in another five years, I'll be shaking my head at some of the methods I'm employing now.

Broad, G. (2010). The things I did badly: Looking back on my first five years of teaching. In Bart, M (Ed.) *Teaching Mistakes from the College Classroom. Faculty Focus Special Report*. Madison: Magna Publications, p. 4. Reprinted with permission. Available online at: [Faculty Focus](#) (Sign up to download the free report).

"Things My First Unhappy Student Taught Me"

Sherran Deems

My first year as an instructor was also my first grade appeal. As a beginning professor I thought I had covered everything clearly, was appropriately encouraging, and worked hard to meet the individual needs of my students.

As a graduate student I had taught painting and drawing to art majors but this was my first experience teaching non-arts majors. What a world of difference between the students. I thought I was doing the right thing by pointing out the strengths of the student's painting along with the areas for improvement. The student, however, only heard the "good" information and did not perceive the negative as having any impact on her grade. This was in sharp contrast to the two classes of art students I taught who heard the negative and had to be reminded of the positive.

In my initial conference with the student concerning her grade I discovered that the course had been taken for an easy A. The student operated under the idea that anyone could make art and that there were no clear criteria for determining good versus bad art. I had relied on several very short lectures and a couple of demonstrations, in addition to stating the minimum criteria for passing the course. What I had not anticipated was the student's need for something much more readily quantifiable and more defined. I had certainly not thought that anyone would take the course for a guaranteed A. And, I was shocked when I discovered she anticipated receiving an A because I had complimented her on sections of her paintings and had not been forceful enough in stating the negative. Did I handle myself well in this first conference about grades with an

unhappy student? In retrospect I would have to say ‘No.’ I know I became defensive and spent more time defending my position than listening to hers. I think, and this is embarrassing to admit, that I may have even resorted to sarcasm in our conference. I was so dismayed that someone would question my sincere efforts and I took the questions very personally.

But, what a valuable lesson to learn so early in my career! It taught me very early on to clarify instructions and to try and anticipate issues that might arise. Thanks to this student I developed a project survey that I continue to use each time I introduce a new project. Students are asked for their feedback on the clarity, value, and structure of the project, and projects are revised based on the feedback. Also, thanks to my first unhappy student, I began to develop clearer criteria and expectations with regard to grades. I now use a grading rubric, and have for the last 12 years, for every project and for the end of term portfolio review. This allows students to see how they were evaluated and gives us something concrete to discuss should a question about the grade arise.

I also learned about the necessity of documenting every conference with a student and keeping very accurate records. The end result is that I no longer am confronted with confusion and dismay —on both my part and the student’s —since I can simply pull up their information and we can go over it. It also assists when I am contacted for a reference for either employment or graduate school.

Does my ego still get in the way sometimes in a conference with a student? Yes, it does, but I no longer look at myself as failing the student and have come to view, with a great deal of humor, the fallibility of being infallible.

Deems, S. (2010). Things my first unhappy student taught me. In Bart, M (Ed.) *Teaching Mistakes from the College Classroom. Faculty Focus Special Report*. Madison: Magna Publications, pp.11-12. Reprinted with permission. Available online at: [Faculty Focus](#) (Sign up to download the free report).

“If I Tell Them, They Will Learn”

Nancy Doiron-Maillet

Eighteen years ago, I began as a new teacher in the bachelor of nursing program. Preparing lectures seemed easy – I simply tried to cram everything I knew about the topic into a lesson and then impart all my wisdom upon my students within the 50 minute, 1.5 hour or three-hour classes that I taught. I was convinced that whatever I had to tell my students they would incorporate into their learning. “Tell them and they will learn.” However, time after time while working with students in clinical practice, I found myself saying “but I just covered that in class!” I have learned a lot about teaching and learning during the past 18 years, but I believe the most valuable lesson has been the realization that students need to engage with the content in order to truly enhance their understanding. “Telling” students information does not translate to learning. Opportunities to apply what they are learning are very significant in this process of building knowledge. I continue to lecture, but do so in much more confined periods of time. As a teacher, I think it is my responsibility to help students understand complex issues, to break the more difficult ideas down into smaller, more palatable parts, and then give students a chance to chew on the information. Application is such a key component to learning, particularly in our profession of nursing (but true in many disciplines, I would think).

Importance of student engagement

So, what does “engage with the content” really mean? It begins with an understanding that students are not open funnels waiting for the information to be poured in. Students need to actively involve themselves with

the material that is being introduced in the classroom. In doing so, I believe that they take greater responsibility for their own learning, increasing their motivation to learn and actually finding meaning in what they are learning.

We can help students engage or interact with the content in various ways. Having students come to class with a beginning understanding of the material is essential. Students have a responsibility to prepare for class. I fully believe that if teachers assign a reasonable amount of class preparation, then class time can be used much more effectively. An important point here, however, is “reasonable” preparation. All too often, teachers assign an astronomical amount of reading as preparation for class. If students perceive that the amount of reading or preparation is unreasonable or overwhelming, then they simply will not do it. Some may say, “that is their choice”, which is true; however, if we believe in our role as teachers to facilitate students’ learning, then helping them come to class prepared is very beneficial. Class preparation can be any number of activities. One activity that I have found particularly helpful in facilitating students’ engagement with the content is the “muddy water” question. I frequently assign readings from the students’ textbook and then ask them to write two or three questions that they continue to struggle with related to what they have just read – ‘what about the content remains unclear or muddy?’ At the beginning of class, students hand in these questions for me to look over while they are working through a short activity. Inevitably, many of their questions will be covered in what I have already planned for the class, but there are always some areas that I had not planned on addressing. What is really important to the success of this activity is that I allow time to address their questions. If I do not follow through with this level of accountability, then the exercise is meaningless.

Interactive learning activities

There are a number of interactive activities online that I have found to be particularly beneficial. Wisconsin Online Repository for Teaching and Learning (www.wisc-online.com) is an excellent resource for online animation activities. The activities found on this website are very interactive and really foster students’ engagement with the content. I assign activities from this website on a regular basis as it allows students opportunities to work with the content in a fun and interactive manner. Some students complete these interactive learning activities prior to coming to class; some students work with the activities after class; and some choose not to do them at all. It is their choice.

I have learned to appreciate the benefits of using games in my class. In particular, I find a crossword puzzle a great way to engage students with the content. I originally thought that this would take up too much of “my” time to lecture, but have since realized that I cover just as much, and sometimes more, by having the students actually ‘play’ with the content in a game or a puzzle. In addition, Jeopardy templates are available online and provide teachers with another fun and effective vehicle to cover a number of topical categories. I have developed a Jeopardy game to leave on my Blackboard component of a pharmacology course and students can play it at their leisure.

Students need opportunities to apply what they are learning while they are learning. Throughout class, I often have an application question or exercise for students to demonstrate their understanding. In nursing, providing students with ‘real’ patient situations to apply concepts discussed in class help to make it more meaningful. Use of Wordles, or word clouds, is a great way to summarize important points about complex concepts. If you have not used a Wordle yet, give it a try at www.wordle.net– you will be surprised at the effectiveness of this little visual aid.

Even after 18 years, there is no doubt that lessons about teaching and learning occur each and every time I step into the classroom. Being committed to this level of on-going growth is essential to my continued development as a teacher. It takes work, but it’s also energizing. Facilitating students’ ability to engage with

the content is a valuable way to expend that energy.

Doiron-Maillet, N. (2010). If I tell them, they will learn. In Bart, M (Ed.) *Teaching Mistakes from the College Classroom. Faculty Focus Special Report*. Madison: Magna Publications, pp.10-11. Reprinted with permission. Available online at: [Faculty Focus](#) (Sign up to download the free report).

Further Resources at McMaster

Student Services

A number of student-focused service units at McMaster provide support to students to help remove barriers to learning. The following is a list of service units and programs to which you may refer students.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

[Student Accessibility Services](#) provides support for students who have been diagnosed with a disability or disorder, such as a learning disability, ADHD, a mental health diagnosis, a chronic medical condition, or a sensory, neurological or mobility limitation. SAS assists with academic and disability-related needs, including:

- Learning Strategies
- Assistive Technologies
- Test and Exam Administration
- Note-taking
- Accommodations for Courses
- SAS Lounge and Events

Please note that the decision to disclose disability-related information is personal and confidential. SAS advises that it is important not to ask students for their disability diagnosis. If students wish to disclose, they will do so on their own. The [SAS Faculty Procedures](#) page describes each of these supports, explains guidelines around accommodation requests, and includes a helpful FAQ section.

Student Success Centre (SSC)

The [Student Success Centre](#) offers a wide range of student supports to enhance students' learning experiences. These supports and programs include:

- Orientation Week events in September
- Service Learning opportunities through the MacServe Program
- Experiential Learning opportunities, including mentorship, career experience, and experience abroad
- Volunteering and Community Engagement
- Learning Portfolio Support
- Academic and Writing Skills Support
- Career Services Support

Academic Skills and Writing Support

Academic Skills Assistants and Writing Assistants work through the Student Success Centre to provide one-on-one support for undergraduate students with things like note-taking, studying skills, establishing learning goals, time management, and course-related writing. Assistants are undergraduate and graduate students studying at McMaster, so they provide undergraduates an excellent opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer learning.

Students can make an appointment with an Academic Skills Assistant or a Writing Assistant online via [OSCARplus](#) by using their MacID and password. Assistants often hold workshops throughout the academic year; students and faculty can find the workshop schedule on OSCARplus.

Student Career Services

The Student Success Centre also offers a variety of [career services for undergraduate students](#), including (but not limited to) one-on-one career advising and counseling. Check the career services site for their schedule for drop-in appointments, or direct students to register for an appointment on [OSCARplus](#).

MSU Peer Support Line

The [McMaster Student Union's Peer Support](#) line is a confidential phone line that any McMaster student may call to discuss stress, crisis, or concerns seven days a week, from 7:00pm-1:00am. Peer listeners are trained student volunteers who will listen to students' concerns and can provide information regarding on- and off-campus resources. Calls are confidential, no call display is used, and peer listeners will not ask callers for personal information unless they have concerns for the safety of the caller or of others. The McMaster Student Union Peer Support Line number is: 905-525-9140 ext. 28888.

Student Wellness Centre

The [Student Wellness Centre](#) offers a wide range of counseling options, medical services, and wellness education resources to undergraduate and graduate students at McMaster. At the Wellness Centre, students can book an appointment with a doctor, naturopath, counselor, or psychological counselor.

Who is eligible?

- Full-time undergraduate students
- Part-time undergraduate students who have purchased a Student Services Card (\$25.00 per year)
- Full- and part-time graduate students
- Partners of eligible students may be seen for medical/nursing care and counseling services

Who is not eligible?

- Divinity students may be seen for medical/nursing care, but not for counseling services
- MBA International students who reside in the Hamilton area may be seen for medical/nursing care, but not for counseling services. Partners are not eligible to use SWC services
- MBA non-international students are not eligible to use SWC services
- Medical residents, visiting PhD students, post-doctoral fellows, and Centre for Continuing Education students are not eligible to use SWC services

What is required?

- A McMaster University student card
- For medical/nursing services, a provincial health card or UHIP card
- International students without a UHIP card must provide proof of coverage with a pre-approved insurance plan from the International Student Services Office

Students can make an appointment in person at the Student Wellness Centre or by phone.

Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 27700

Location: MUSC B101

Hours during the 2016/2017 school year:

Monday-Thursday 8:30am-7:45pm

Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Closed for lunch Fridays 12:30-1:30pm

Teaching and Faculty Support

[Classroom Audio Visual Services \(CAVs\)](#)

- Classroom Directory (a directory of classrooms and their capacity, A/V equipment, room style, seat style, and which office to contact to reserve the room)
- Equipment Booking
- Equipment Use Manuals
- Internet Access in Classrooms
- Laptop and Maintenance Services

[Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\) 3906](#)

CUPE 3906 represents almost 3,000 workers at McMaster, and currently represents three units.

- Unit 1: Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants
- Unit 2: Sessional Faculty and Hourly Rated Sessional Music Faculty
- Unit 3: Post-doctoral Fellows
- If you are a Sessional Faculty member of CUPE 3906, Unit 2, you can refer to the [Sessional Faculty Notes](#), which includes updated information about the cancellation of class, security at McMaster, deferral of examinations, student course evaluations, and more.

[Equity and Inclusion Office](#)

- Human Rights Program
- Equity Services Program
- MACcessibility

[MacPherson Institute](#)

[See above.](#)

[McMaster University Faculty Association \(MUFA\)](#)

MUFA represents the interests of faculty members and senior academic librarians of McMaster University. MUFA is not a union, but a professional association responsible for collective bargaining with the Administration.

- [MUFA Faculty Handbook](#)

[McMaster University Library Faculty Support](#)

- Creating Course Reserves
- Information Literacy and Research Skills for Students
- Linking to e-resources on Avenue to Learn
- Media Booking
- Research Data Management
- Open Access Publishing
- Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship
- 2.0 Toolbox (Blogs and Wikis)

University Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Undergraduate Course Management Policies

Compiled in one convenient document is [McMaster's Undergraduate Course Management Policies](#), which includes policies on course outlines, grading, assessment bans, early feedback requirements, academic integrity, and more. This is the place to start when familiarizing yourself with policy on teaching and learning at McMaster.

Students and Academic Studies

You can also visit [University Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines](#) to find any University policy, including policy around tenure and promotion, PhD supervision, Academic Integrity, anti-discrimination, and more. For policy related to student life in particular, visit their [Students and Academic Studies policy](#) page.

Appendix A

University Name
Department Name
Course Code: Course Name
Semester and Year

Class Meeting Day/Time/Duration and Location:

Tutorial or Lab Meeting Day/Time/Duration and Location (if applicable):

Instructor:

Contact Information:

Office Hours (or how/when available):

Teaching Assistant(s) (if applicable):

Contact Information:

Office Hours (or how/when available):

Prerequisites:

Course Description:

Course Format:

Course Intended Learning Outcomes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5.

Required Course Materials and Fees (note all required materials and any additional expenses that may be required – not tuition costs):

Course Assessments:

| Assessment | Due Date | Weight |
|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. | | % |
| 2. | | % |
| 3. | | % |
| 4. | | % |
| 5. | | % |
| | | TOTAL: 100% |

Description of Assessment #1 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Description of Assessment #2 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Description of Assessment #3 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Description of Assessment #4 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Description of Assessment #5 and Its Evaluation Criteria:

Submission of Course Work (note how work is to be submitted):

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 2: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 3: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 4: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 5: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 6: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 7: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 8: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 9: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 10: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 11: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Week 12: Date

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topics: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Readings Completed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">••• |
| Due: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties:

Other Relevant Policy Statements:

Academic Integrity: (see Appendix I on page 6 of the McMaster Undergraduate Course Management policy document) ...

Turnitin.com (if applicable): (see Appendix I on page 6 of the McMaster Undergraduate Course Management policy document) ...

On-line Elements (if applicable): (see Appendix I on page 6 of the McMaster Undergraduate Course Management policy document) ...

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities: (see Appendix I on page 7 of the McMaster Undergraduate Course Management policy document) ...

Course Modification: (see the last paragraph on page 11 of the McMaster Undergraduate Course Management policy document, as well as point 3 on page 2) ...