Collaborative Learning Spaces

The University of Arizona has made a strong commitment to the improvement of teaching quality. Hundreds of studies show that students learn more and fail less when active learning strategies are used. To this end, Collaborative Learning Spaces (CLSs) that facilitate collaborative active learning have been created. In these spaces, faculty members are using innovative teaching and learning strategies that promote higher order thinking that leads to better understanding and improved ability to transfer knowledge to other applications. These rooms are an important component of the University's commitment to continuous improvement and culture change.

NEW! The process for requesting a Collaborative Learning Space (CLS) has been updated. Faculty who are committed to teaching in a manner suitable for the CLSs can now apply to become a CLS Preferred Instructor which will be taken into account during the schedule optimization process.

As before, departments express their preference for a CLS by selecting the Room Characteristic (35-Collaborative Learning Space) during Open Scheduling, but they no longer indicate their preference for specific rooms - the optimization software selects the rooms based on capacity needs and region of campus.

Please see How To Request a CLS and the Application to Become a CLS Preferred Instructor to learn more about the new process.

Zoom is an online meeting tool with microphones, cameras, screen sharing, and whole lot more that can create an opportunity for active learning with real time conversations. Many of the teaching practices that you utilize in a face to face physical classroom setting can be tweaked and used in a Zoom meeting.

For instructions on using Zoom use the links below or use the navigation menu items on the left under Instructor > More > 3rd Party Software > Zoom.

Zoom Instructions for D2L - Go here if you will be using Zoom within a D2L course.

Zoom Instructions for Web Portal - Go here if you WILL NOT be using Zoom for a D2L course.
**Title IX: The Law**

Title IX states that "no person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

The law forbids sex discrimination in all university student services and academic programs including, but not limited to, admissions, financial aid, academic advising, residential life, athletics, discipline, recreational services, health, wellness and support services, academic assignments and grading. Title IX also forbids sex discrimination in university employment and recruitment consideration or selection.

Sex discrimination includes a variety of behaviors which can limit or negatively impact educational opportunity. These behaviors include: sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, relationship violence (dating, domestic and intimate partner violence), gender identity, gender presentation and sexual orientation discrimination.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education is responsible for enforcing Title IX. OCR engages in compliance enforcement to ensure that institutions which receive certain federal funds comply with Title IX.

**Source:** U.S. Department of Education website, [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html)

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**Having trouble adding writing assignments to your courses?**

A PhD student in Writing Studies here at UA is working on her dissertation research and needs professor-volunteers. **Adele Leon** is seeking participants for a case study titled “Low-Stakes Writing as a WAC Recruitment Tool and High-Impact Education Practice.” This project grew from a successful pilot last spring, when Adele collaborated with an MBA professor to restructure his curriculum from assigning one big midterm essay to assigning a series of Low-Stakes Writing. The professor loved the results because he didn’t have to spend as much time grading writing and he was still meeting the Writing Emphasis requirement that his department set. Sound familiar?

**How much time will this take?** Adele will only need to meet with you for ~3 hours this fall and will then request a 1-hour recorded interview (online or f2f) at the end of the following spring semester. She will create Low-Stakes Writing assignments for your class based on your needs and the needs you can anticipate your students will have. You will not be responsible for creating these prompts.

**What are the benefits?** Adele reported positive results from her pilot for both teacher and students. The professor reported that students were more engaged in class, that they verbalized the helpfulness of the prompts, and that they seemed to have a deeper comprehension of course content. Benefits for the professor included feeling more confident assigning writing, more easily meeting the WE requirement, and gaining insightful feedback from students throughout the semester as opposed to TCEs after the semester had ended. Finally, Low-Stakes Writing can be graded for completion. It doesn’t require feedback, and it is low-pressure for students.

**Who qualifies to participate?** If you are interested in learning about different forms of writing assignments in a 1-on-1 environment with a profession in the field, you should participate. If you are teaching in spring 2019, you should participate. If you’re not teaching this spring, but still want to assign LSW in fall 2019, you should participate. If you are open to a quick and easy positive change to your curriculum, you should participate.

**How to get involved?** Contact Adele Leon via email at Adele@email.arizona.edu with the subject line “Participate in LSW.” She will send you a consent form that you can electronically sign (for IRB approval), and any additional information you want to have. You can schedule a time and place to have your initial meeting.

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Got any ideas for Gen Ed News stories? Want to brag about something great and innovative you are doing in Gen Ed? Send ideas or content to evm@email.arizona.edu
Assignments asking students to “Analyze the text” may be confusing to a student being asked to analyze in different ways in different courses.

A recent analysis of National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey results showed that clear teacher expectations were correlated with deeper learning on undergraduate student writing tasks (Anderson et al., 2015). This finding raises important questions for assignment design, especially considering that seemingly common terminology takes on new meanings in as students take classes in different disciplinary communities.

Consider *analyze*, a term often used in assignment design that causes unforeseen trouble for students. In Melzer’s (2014) meta-analysis of over 2,000 syllabi from courses across the curriculum, he found the word “analyze” used differently in different fields. In the natural sciences, analyzing usually means collecting, organizing, and assessing data, often in the form of charts or tables, while in the humanities, analyzing requires students to respond to ideas in texts, consider historical contexts, or theorize and make generalizations (p. 65). In certain fields, this term can take on even more specific meanings. In a literature course, for example, the analysis process might require students to critique a text as a narrative that arises from a specific cultural or ideological position. This is all to say that assignments asking students to “Analyze the text” may be confusing to a student being asked to analyze in different ways in different courses. When they’re confused, students will often revert to an information-based, book report-style writing. Other similar terms with disciplinary implications include *describe*, *explain*, *summarize*, and *compare*, among many others.

As you’re designing your assignments:

Make sure you know what it is you want your students to do, and make that explicit to students

Avoid some of these fuzzy terms in your assignment, or clarify these terms to students in the assignment guidelines

You may want to practice by explaining your expectations for an assignment in your course to your students in writing. Feel free to do this for an assignment you’ve already created. Some possible sentence starters include:

The goal of this assignment is…

An effective [analysis essay, research report, book review, etc.] in this class generally includes the following sections…

When you analyze in this course, you should…

References


2019 Student Success Conference: Call for Proposals
Accepted until Friday, November 30th
Submit your proposal here

The Objective
The purpose of the conference is to engage the campus community in a regular discussion of how we teach, guide, and support our students. The conference will highlight innovative approaches to student success across UA as well as spark new ideas and partnerships. The conference will advance a community that supports growth mindset and sense of belonging. The conference will focus on guiding students to become lifelong learners, build resiliency, and feel part of a community. In order to build this discussion, we will:

- Bring in local and national experts to talk about growth mindset and sense of belonging best practices
- Identify common approaches and communities on campus that already practice growth mindset and create a sense of belonging

Continue the conversation on retention and degree completion with the campus community on a regular basis to keep focus

Anticipated Outcomes
- Bolster a campus-wide commitment to student achievement and success - increase retention and degree completion
- Provide tools for the campus community to help develop or increase a growth mindset and sense of belonging on campus

Identify ways to implement or expand best practices through collaboration

Proposal submissions will be accepted until Friday, November 30th, and proposal selections will be made by Friday, December 21st.
Questions? Contact studentsuccess@email.arizona.edu

Learn more about the conference, including conference updates, here: https://studentsuccess.arizona.edu/student-success-conference

Direct link to submit proposal: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxfuV_i2yx-kaIbMh37QyXm_qJg06g2L5DBVCVBjur--XDg/viewform