



# Excellence in Teaching Matters

Volume 3, Issue 2

Spring 2012

## Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

The 2011-2012 academic year has included some exciting changes at the Center for Teaching Excellence. In addition to facilitating some new programming (pg. 2), we also had some wonderful sessions offered by Suffolk faculty and staff. One of those sessions from the fall semester is the topic of this newsletter's lead article (pg. 1).

The CTE staff and advisory board have also been going through some transitions. In the fall, we added a new part-time lecturer representative, Diane D'Souza (Sociology), to our advisory board and also welcomed Associate Dean Kathleen Engel (Law) to the board.

In December, we said goodbye to CTE's founding director, Donna Qualters (see Donna's goodbye letter to us on pg. 7),

and I transitioned into the Director role here at CTE. We had a blast at Donna's going away party wishing her well at her new appointment at Tufts University, but we were certainly sad to see her go!

This spring, the CTE staff are looking forward to co-hosting the second annual Technology Symposium with Information Technology Services. Get ready by reading this issue's book review on online teaching and checking out CTE's resources on teaching with technology in our lending library (pg. 3).

As you settle back into the rhythms of the semester, don't forget to check out our online calendar for the latest events on teaching and learning.

We hope to see you soon!



**Katie Linder,**  
Director of the  
Center for  
Teaching Excellence

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## Maintaining Teaching Excellence While Balancing Research and Service by Erika Gebo and Gini Mann-Deibert

At a well-attended fall workshop at CTE, sociology professors Erika Gebo and Gini Mann-Deibert offered suggestions for how to maintain teaching excellence while balancing your roles in research and service. Check out their tips below:

**Combine when possible:** have your students help with research through independent studies or research assistantships; teach classes in your research area; write articles on your classroom innovations and publish Scholarship of

Teaching and Learning.

**Get organized:** check in with yourself weekly regarding your teaching, research, and service responsibilities; make notes on the current status of your research projects to stay up-to-date with next steps.

**Compartmentalize:** assign certain days or locations for certain tasks; schedule time for checking your email rather than keeping it open all day; keep email off your smart phone.

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## CTE by the Numbers

### Since Summer 2011:

- **18** faculty and staff have participated in CTE's scholarly writing groups.
- **20** faculty and staff have completed the CTE Course Design Institute.

*Contact CTE to learn more about our extended communities of practice.*

*We hope you'll join us!*

## New 2012 CTE Programs

### Upcoming Events:

(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

#### 1/18—Writing Group Kick-Off Meeting

12:00-1:00pm

#### 1/24 – Afternoon Tea

*Surviving Academia as an International Faculty Member*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 1/25 - Faculty Workshop

*Writing Course Goals and Learning Objectives 101*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 1/26 – Faculty Lunch Series

12:00-2:00pm

#### 1/30 – Afternoon Tea

##### Discussion

*Addressing Those Frustrating Teaching Moments*

2:30-4:00pm

#### 1/31 – Teaching & Technology

*Assistive Technology 101*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 2/1 – Faculty Workshop

*How to Create a Climate of Learning in the Classroom*

10:00-11:30am



## CTE Pass-the-Book Group

Keep an eye out this spring for Carol Dweck’s book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, which might just show up in your campus mailbox!

The CTE is starting a new book group opportunity this spring called “Pass-the-Book Group” in which ten faculty will be mailed a copy of a recent teaching and learning book. After two weeks, those ten faculty will pass on the book to a colleague of their choice. The cycle will continue throughout the spring, until over 60 faculty have had a chance to read all (or parts) of Dr. Dweck’s work.

If you don’t happen to receive the book from a colleague, but still want to check it out, the CTE will have extra copies on hand for faculty to borrow through the CTE lending library on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont.

Dr. Carol Dweck is a leading psychologist at Stanford University who writes about best practices for motivating students to learn. Her main argument in *Mindset* is that many students have a “fixed mindset” that hinders their motivation to learn. Dweck advocates that teachers help students develop a “growth mindset” to make sure that they are achieving to the best of their abilities.

All participating faculty and staff are invited to a round table discussion of the book the afternoon of April 24th where they will have the opportunity to talk about the ideas that Dr. Dweck puts forth regarding motivating students to learn. In addition to discussing the book's arguments, participants will have the opportunity to explore how to apply Dweck’s suggestions in their own classrooms.

## “Professors as Writers” Programming

Starting in Summer 2011, the CTE began working to develop writing programs for faculty, staff, and administrators through the creation of a “Professors as Writers” programming series. This series includes summer writing groups for faculty who want to spend the summer months drafting journal articles, academic year writing groups for setting writing goals, and the creation of collaborative writing spaces for faculty and staff through “Writing Friday” and “Writing Lock-down” programs.

So far, the programs have been well-received by faculty and staff throughout the university. As one

participant noted, “my feeling of isolation as an academic writer has decreased.”

The CTE staff have also created a webpage of academic writing resources for the Suffolk community with a list of books in the CTE lending library on academic writing and research, and additional information on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for instructors who may be interested in conducting research on their teaching practices.

For more information on how CTE is supporting writing and research at Suffolk, check out the enhanced CTE website: <http://www.suffolk.edu>.

## CTE Lending Library: Online and Blended Learning

### 147 Practical Tips for Teaching Online Groups

by Donald Hanna

### 75 E-Learning Activities

by Ryan Watkins

### Building Online Learning Communities

by Rena Pallof

### Creating Successful E-Learning

by Michael Allen

### Best of the E-Learning Guild's Learning Solutions

by Bill Brandon

### Assessing the Online Learner

by Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt

### Communication and Collaboration in the Online Classroom

by Patricia Comeaux

### Facilitating Online Learning

by George Collison

### The Online Teaching Survival Guide

by Judith Boettcher

### Discussion Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning

by Tisha Bender

### E-Learning and the Science of Instruction

by Ruth Clark

### Empowering Online Learning

by Curtis Bonk and Ke Zhang

### The Online Learning Idea Book

by Patti Shank

### Online Professional Development for Teachers: Emerging Models and Methods

by Chris Dede

### Essentials of Online Course Design: A Standards-Based Guide

by Marjorie Vai and Kristen Sosulki

### Conquering the Content: A Step-by-Step Guide to Online Course Design

by Robin Smith

All available at the CTE Library!

### Book Review: *Creating a Sense of Presence in Online Teaching: How to "Be There" for Distance Learners* - Review written by Elena Garofoli

I was eager to review *Creating a Sense of Presence in Online Teaching: How to "Be There" for Distance Learners* by Rosemary Lehman and Simone Conceição because I am well aware of the importance of presence for and with students, having taught both online and hybrid-formatted courses. Lehman and Conceição do not disappoint in their 2010 publication.

Lehman and Conceição intend the book to benefit instructors who teach instructional design and instructional designers who do actual course creation, but faculty who want to know more than a "how-to" would gain from reading this as well. The book is organized into theory and application sections, with the first two chapters focusing on theory, a third chapter bridging theory to practical application, and two final chapters of actual activities to use in an online course that will facilitate the creation of presence. Three case examples further illustrate how certain activities can be implemented. Plentiful ap-

pendices conclude the book.

The concept of the book very much worked for me. In the early chapters the author's definition of presence extended the notion of presence as I had come to know it and caused me to reflect on more than just a sense of *instructor* presence, which heretofore had been my focus. I found value with the concept of presence being extended to "being together" with the students, and even to the extent that technology not hinder the learning process. I don't think schools and universities are able to implement technology invisibly, but I find the goal admirable. What also makes Lehman and Conceição's conception of presence unique is their emphasis on viewing presence from what they call an interactive perceptual process. They contend that focusing on the social, psychological, and emotional aspects of presence is essential to course design.

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### Upcoming Events:

(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

#### 2/7 – Afternoon Tea

*Designing the Course as a Drama*

2:00-3:30pm

#### 2/8 – Teaching & Technology

*Wikis in the Classroom*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 2/9 – Faculty Workshop

*How to Improve Your Students' Writing – Without All the Fuss!*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 2/14 – Faculty Workshop

*Battling Bias in the Classroom*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 2/16 – Faculty Lunch Series

12:00-2:00pm

#### 2/23 – Teaching & Technology

*Say YES! to Social Media: Innovative Approaches to Student Engagement and Peer-Centered Learning*

1:00-2:30pm

#### 2/29 – Faculty Workshop

*Making Assignments Worth Grading*

1:00-2:30pm

## Work with a CTE Staff Consultant

### Upcoming Events:

(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

#### 3/5—Faculty Workshop

Writing Course Goals and Learning Objectives 102  
1:00-2:30pm

#### 3/9—Writing Lockdown

9:00am-4:00pm

#### 3/20 – Afternoon Tea

*Hovering Too Close: The Ramifications of Helicopter Parenting in Higher Education*  
1:00-2:30pm

#### 3/22– Faculty Lunch Series

12:00-2:00pm

#### 4/19– Faculty Lunch Series

12:00-2:00pm

#### 5/11—Writing Lockdown

9:00am-4:00pm

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*Save the Dates for Summer Programming at CTE!*

#### Course Design Institutes:

May 28th-31st, 10am-3pm  
July 23rd-26th, 10am-3pm

#### Writing Group:

Kick Off Meeting, May 7th  
12:00-1:00pm

Individual faculty consultations are designed to provide support for faculty and lecturers who would like to improve their teaching or learn more about teaching strategies and learning theory. Instructors work one-on-one with a CTE staff member based on their own goals and needs.

During an initial meeting, the instructor will outline the issues that they want to explore and the CTE staff member consultant will provide resources, support, and a plan for action that may include a classroom observation, gathering additional feedback from students, reviewing previous evaluations, or meeting regularly for conversations about teaching.

Individual consultations can address a number of teaching issues and concerns including, but not limited to, assessment, active learning, the course design process, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. *To set up an individual consultation, email [cdirico@suffolk.edu](mailto:cdirico@suffolk.edu).*

## Improve Your Courses with Student Feedback

A Midterm Feedback Session is a confidential method that uses small group discussion among students to provide feedback to the instructor. The process takes about 20-30 minutes with the faculty member out of the classroom on a scheduled day.

Once a Midterm Feedback Session is requested, you will receive a form that allows you to provide us with additional details about your class. A CTE colleague will then visit your class and ask your students to respond to three questions:

1. What aspects of this course ENHANCE your learning?
2. What aspects of this course HINDER your learning?
3. What could YOU (as a student) do to make the course better for your classmates and the teacher?

The information gathered will then be correlated into a confidential report for the instructor. Once the report is ready, a debriefing session is scheduled with a CTE staff member to discuss the results and brainstorm ideas for the class.

Research has shown that faculty who conduct mid-course feedback and have a consultation raise their teaching evaluations and improve learning. To sign up for a mid-term feedback session for this semester, call the CTE office at 617-573-8222 or email Christina DiRico at [cdirico@suffolk.edu](mailto:cdirico@suffolk.edu) by **February 17th**.

## Check out CTE Online!

The CTE staff continually update the CTE website with the latest teaching and learning resources. Make sure to check out the most recent additions to the CTE lending library and our updated calendar of Spring 2012 events. We have also recently added new pages on Research and Writing and Work/Life Balance. We welcome feedback on the website and continue to work hard to provide outstanding teaching resources to Suffolk Faculty, Staff, and Part-Time Lecturers.

Also, don't forget to "friend" us on **Facebook** or follow CTE on **Twitter!**

## Spring Semester Book Groups

Each semester, the Center for Teaching Excellence hosts faculty-facilitated book groups on a variety of teaching topics.

Check out this semester’s upcoming selections and join us for some thought-provoking conversations.

**To register for a book group, contact Christina DiRico (cdirico@suffolk.edu)**

### Mindset

“World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a groundbreaking idea—the power of our mindset. Dweck explains why it’s not just our abilities and talent that bring us success—but whether we approach our goals with a fixed or growth mindset. Dweck reveals... how a simple idea about the brain can create a love of learning.” (from the book jacket)

### Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To

“Dr. Sian Beilock, an expert on performance and brain science, reveals in *Choke* the astonishing new science of why we all too often blunder when the stakes are high. What happens in our brain and body when we experience the dreaded performance anxiety? And what are we doing differently when everything magically “clicks” into place and the perfect golf swing, tricky test problem, or high-pressure business pitch becomes easy?” (from the book jacket)

### What the Best College Teachers Do

“What makes a teacher great? Who are the professors students remember long after graduation? The short answer is—it’s not what teachers do, it’s what they understand. In stories both humorous and touching, Ken Bain describes examples of ingenuity and compassion, of students’ discoveries of new ideas and the depth of their own potential. *What the Best College Teachers Do* is a treasure trove of insight and inspiration for first-year teachers and seasoned educators alike.” (from the book jacket)

### The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters

“Until very recently, American universities were led mainly by their faculties, which viewed intellectual production and pedagogy as the core missions of higher education. Today, as Benjamin Ginsberg warns in this eye-opening, controversial book, “deanlets”—administrators and staffers often without serious academic backgrounds or experience—are setting the educational agenda. As troubling as this trend has become, there are ways to reverse it. *The Fall of the Faculty* outlines how we can revamp the system.” (from the book jacket)

### What Participants are Saying about CTE Book Groups:

“Talking about teaching is crucial and critical for all of us to improve.  
The reading groups allowed for that to happen.”

“It was great to be with a group of people from different departments  
and to hear different points of view.”

“The diverse views of the group have impacted me in a positive manner...  
I am now more open to views/perspectives I was not aware of.”

## Maintaining Teaching Excellence While Balancing Research and Service by Erika Gebo and Gini Mann-Deibert

*(continued from page 1)*

**Teach efficiently:** scaffold large assignments to cut down on grading time at the end of the semester; create rubrics to make grading more efficient; organize your syllabi so that large assignments for your classes are staggered; clarify your course policies in your syllabi to cut back on student questions throughout the semester.

**Identify motivated students:** sometimes it is not the top student in the class, but rather it is the most motivated student faculty should recruit to work on research. Motivated students are more likely to complete tasks on time, seek feedback to improve, and ultimately create a win-win situation. The student gains invaluable experience and skills and the faculty gets assistance on publications. Students may not be in a position to write but they can start with printing articles, ordering ILL work, creating reference pages,

and basic academic searches. If you involve students in small, but meaningful ways initially, you can foster their development as well as save yourself some precious time. More advanced students can contribute with research and writing as well.

**Create space:** schedule time and space across your syllabi to let you complete research while teaching. Try scheduling weekly research time and integrating research deadlines into your master calendar.

**Utilize technology:** conduct online office hours through Blackboard chat functions to help with multitasking.

*Erika Gebo is an associate professor in the Sociology Department.*

*Gini-Mann-Deibert is an assistant professor in the Sociology Department*

**“Schedule time and space across your syllabi to let you complete research while teaching. Try scheduling weekly research time and integrating research deadlines into your master calendar.”**



Guy Peartree (Philosophy), Frank Cooper (Law School), Yvonne Wells (Psychology), and Carolina Garcia and Tim Albers (S.O.U.L.S.) celebrate their participation in the CTE Fall 2011 Course Design Institute with co-facilitators Pat Hogan (Physics) and CTE Director, Katie Linder.

Space is still available in the March 12-15 Spring Break Course Design Institute! Sessions are held 10am-3pm each day with lunch provided.

**Register today by contacting Christina Dirico ([cdirico@suffolk.edu](mailto:cdirico@suffolk.edu)).**

## Book Review (continued)

(continued from page 3)

The reminder to consider students' perceptions on an ongoing basis is valuable.

The second half of the book allows one to pick and choose from among many concrete examples of course activities that encourage the existence of presence. I did not find the types of activities suggested to be unique, but those less familiar with instructional design are likely to find them useful. The examples are divided by category and where in the flow of a course to use them. For example, before the course begins, you may want to send participants a "Getting-to-Know-You Survey", and a

sample survey is included. Examples of collaborative activities to use during, and at the conclusion of a course are also included.

My take-away from the book was a very useful framework about where within a course to interject presence, and I think that in general, Lehman and Conceição have written a book most helpful for instructional designers and others who want to expand their notion of online presence, as well as how to make it happen.

*Elena Garofoli is the Academic Technologist for SBS and a member of the CTE Advisory Board.*



**Elena Garofoli,**  
Academic Technologist, SBS

### **Saying Goodbye: With a Little Help from My Friends** by Donna Qualters

When I arrived as the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence in 2007, I couldn't help thinking about the song "With a Little Help from My Friends." While the Beatle's song probably dated me, it also expressed my fervent belief that the best way to achieve excellence is to work together.

As I leave the directorship of the CTE, I want to take time to thank "my friends" at Suffolk. Because without them, the CTE would not have achieved the success that it has over the past five years. With the help of "my friends" the CTE has become the heart of Suffolk's teaching mission. We have developed multiple major initiatives to promote teaching excellence, learning and assessment; worked with over 300 different faculty; interacted with teaching assistants at the University; networked and shared programming with multiple offices.

So thank you to my amazing staff, Katie and Christina. They made CTE function as if it had a staff of 25! They always made me look good and I will be forever grateful to them.

Thank you to my Advisory Board. This talented group of academic faculty, staff, and administrators set the direction for the Center, came up with brilliant ideas, acted as ambassadors across the institution, provided on-going counseling and

insight into the various colleges, and gave generously of their time and talent to make the CTE a special place.

Thank you to the many presenters and facilitators over the years. This group offered an amazing diversity of programming, shared their talent and ideas with peers, and generously agreed to help out in whatever way they could to help our students receive the best education possible.

Thank you to the Associate Deans. This group was always available to host a good idea, share their thoughts about what would continue to contribute to Suffolk's teaching excellence, and sometimes just be there to bounce an idea around.

Thank you to the Deans. They opened their college doors to the CTE and let us try new ideas and programming.

Thank you the many faculty, staff and administrators who supported and advanced the work of the CTE.

As I move on to a new phase in my life, I can look back with pride at the Center for Teaching Excellence. Now it is time to look forward. The CTE is in excellent hands, Dr. Katie Linder, the new director will bring a wealth of knowledge and new ideas to keep the CTE on its upward trajectory. Christina DiRico, the program coordinator will continue to keep the CTE on a steady course. This is the best gift I can leave "my friends" at Suffolk!



**Dr. Donna Qualters**

"As I move on to a new phase in my life, I can look back with pride at the Center for Teaching Excellence."



Suffolk University  
Center for Teaching Excellence  
73 Tremont Street 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA, 02108

Phone: 617.573.8222  
Fax: 617.570.4836  
E-mail: [cdirico@suffolk.edu](mailto:cdirico@suffolk.edu)

Please let us know if you would like to write an article, book review, or be featured in our "Professor Profile" for *Excellence in Teaching Matters*. We also welcome any suggestions that you may have to make this newsletter more valuable to your teaching.



The 1st Annual 2011  
Technology Symposium was a  
great success!

**Get your proposals ready for the  
2nd Annual  
Technology Symposium to be  
held on May 9th, 2012!**

*94% of participants surveyed plan to come back in 2012 and would recommend the symposium to a friend.*

More information about proposals will be available soon.  
We hope you'll join us this year to make  
the 2012 symposium the best yet!

## Professor Profile: Bryan Trabold

### **Tell us a little about the courses you currently teach:**

I teach a broad range of courses, ranging from first-year writing classes and Seminar for Freshmen classes to upper-level courses in literature, writing, and rhetoric.

### **What are your favorite courses to teach and why?**

There are aspects of every course that I enjoy, but teaching about the anti-apartheid struggle is the material that I find most fulfilling. My research, which I conducted when I was living with my wife in South Africa from 1998-1999, focuses on the role of two anti-apartheid South African newspapers. I have been able to incorporate material focusing on the resistance to apartheid in several different classes that I've taught here at Suffolk, including two different Seminar for Freshmen courses, World Literature in English, and Rhetoric and Memoir. As I often say to my students, the system of apartheid represents the worst of humanity; the resistance to it, particularly individuals such as Nelson Mandela, represents the best of humanity. It's gratifying to teach about this subject not only because the material is so compelling, but also because so few students have had any meaningful exposure to it prior to my classes.



Bryan Trabold is an Associate Professor of English who is also currently serving as the Interim Director of the Writing Center. He obtained his PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in rhetoric and composition. Prior to working at Suffolk University, he worked for six years at Transylvania University, a small liberal arts college in Lexington, KY. He has published three articles on two anti-apartheid South African newspapers, and he is currently working on a book on this subject..

### **What is one of your favorite teaching moments?**

I don't have one specific moment that comes to mind but my favorite moments as a teacher by far are when students say in class, "I was telling my family about..." or "I was talking to my friends about..." and they then mention one of the texts we've read in class or one of the issues we've been discussing. Whenever they do this, I always joke with them and say, "You do know that it's against the rules to discuss course material outside of the classroom, don't you?" It's deeply satisfying as a teacher to know that students have found the course material so compelling that they're actually initiating discussions about it with other people in their lives outside of class.