

VOL. 1 ISSUE 6 · MAR 2023

# CITL NEWSLETTER

Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning

## Spring Ahead March Programming

BY LINDSEY HAMILTON

Our March CITL programming is designed to help you spring ahead in your thinking around creating supportive learning environments and activating deep thinking with your students. Whether you want to learn tips for supporting the success of low-income students to a how-to-get-started in Mentimeter workshop, we have an offering for you. Additionally, as always, CITL is here to be a brainstorming partner if you are thinking about any course corrections you want to implement this semester. Hope to see you this March!



A student whose deep thinking has been activated sitting at the neatest dorm desk known to stock photography.

## This issue:

Teaching challenge:  
Wait for it...  
PAGE 02

---

Mentimeter Pro Pilot  
PAGE 03

---

Flexibility vs Structure  
PAGE 04-05

---

Featured March Events  
PAGE 06

# WAIT FOR IT...

## CITL'S TEACHING CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH



### PROCEDURE:

1. Call for everyone's attention.
2. Wait a few extra seconds (about 5) until that time when you really could hear a pin drop.
3. Ask a question calmly and clearly.
4. Stop and wait again (at least 20 secs) to provide processing time before moving on or asking for a response.

**PRO TIP:** Take a drink of your water/coffee to give yourself time.

## You can do our first teaching challenge in only 30 seconds!

Learners need at least 3 seconds to comprehend a question, consider the information, formulate an answer, and begin to respond. ***On average, college professors allow less than 1 second before they call on someone or rephrase or answer the question themselves.*** Wait Time is a simple technique that encourages faculty to pause during their instruction and is designed to promote higher-level and longer responses from learners, increase engagement as students have time to process their thinking and consider their response before being called on, promote greater sense of calm and well-being, and maintain students' focus.

### Supporting Research:

Naz et al. (2013) Teacher's questioning effects on students' communication in classroom performance. *context*, 4(7).

Rowe (1986) Wait time: slowing down may be a way of speeding up! *Journal of teacher education*, 37(1). 43-50.

Stahl (1994) *Using "think-time" and "wait-time" skillfully in the classroom.* ERIC Clearinghouse.





# Mentimeter Pro Pilot Report

# 398

presentations  
created

# 3700

voices heard

# 93.4%

OF FACULTY  
FOUND  
MENTIMETER  
USEFUL FOR  
THEIR  
INSTRUCTION

It's definitely spurred me to create more inclusive lessons. Feedback from students has been positive. I find Mentimeter really helpful in engaging students quickly without having to call on them individually, and being able to assess what I'm teaching in real time.

Has been incredibly engaging and has been helpful for me to check in to see what students are thinking. Also love the easy reporting feature afterwards.

# 93.8%

OF FACULTY  
WOULD  
RECOMMEND  
MENTIMETER  
TO A  
COLLEAGUE

We first introduced Mentimeter pro licenses this fall. As interest and demand has grown, we are now expanding the pilot and have more licenses available. If you are interested in trying Mentimeter in your classes, [sign up now!](#)

**Mentimeter 101  
Webinar  
March 15th 4 pm  
[Register now](#)**



# FLEXIBILITY STRUCTURE



## CAN WE STRIKE A BALANCE?



The conversation around flexibility versus structure is often focused on the extremes, with the poles being toxic rigor to total flexibility, which serves only those with excellent executive-functioning skills. Neither extreme supports learning well. But striking the balance gets even harder in certain teaching contexts, like with larger classes. Things compound quickly if you have a lot of flexibility in a large class. Another challenge is that implicit bias leads students to perceive policies differently, depending on who has set them. So if an older, white male professor is very flexible, students might take that as a sign that he trusts them. But if a younger woman of color is very flexible, they might assume she has no idea what she's doing. We must take the context of our courses into consideration when setting policies.

Immediately after the turn to emergency remote instruction during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many professors let go of expectations. Higher education, in general, swung rapidly to not taking attendance, reducing required readings and assignments, providing alternatives to exams, and readily accepting late work. Now three years later, students still expect total flexibility. Many professors don't think this level of flexibility is working. Juggling absences and requests for recordings, extensions, and other forms of flexibility is exhausting for faculty. And, many professors suspect the extensive flexibility students now expect might be undermining their learning. Flexibility can be an inclusive practice. But so can structure. Now the question is how to balance flexibility and structure in our courses.





# FLEXIBILITY

# STRUCTURE



## TIPS FOR FINDING THE BALANCE

**Explain and reflect on the specific advantages to coming to class and how best to navigate your course.** Adding flexibility can sometimes inadvertently send the message that coming to class or meeting deadlines are not important. Overtly explaining how you see students' presence and engagement as central to the success of the class as a whole can help students feel connected to each other and facilitate a sense of mutual obligation to their peers that encourages attendance and participation. Understanding your course design can support students to engage more deeply. This can also help to uncover the "hidden curriculum," which can particularly benefit first-generation students. Furthermore, asking students to reflect on the benefits of coming to class and how they may best learn in your course, as short writing exercises or integrated into course feedback, can better help them to take ownership of their learning, figure out how to best navigate your course structure, and potentially share suggestions for better supporting their needs ([Aguilar et al., 2014](#)).

### **Keep deadlines but build in flexibility.**

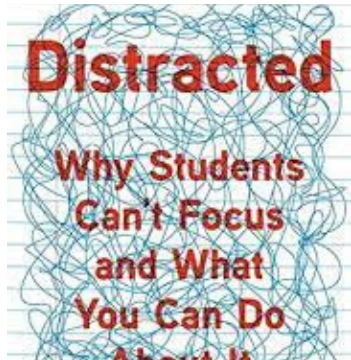
Deadlines provide an important structure to courses that keep students motivated and help them to plan out their work ([Marcis & Carr, 2003](#)), but being too rigid can lower students' grades for reasons that have nothing to do with student learning. However, having too much flexibility means instructors have to spend a lot of time keeping track of and supporting student work. Some examples of building in flexibility to assignments include allowing one late assignment, giving an extra 24 hours if a student seeks help at the Writing & Language Center, or giving students a total number of grace days that they can use strategically over the course of the semester.

### **Encourage attendance but allow for absences.**

Adding interaction to class time can help students see the value of coming to class ([Eddy & Hogan, 2017](#)). It can also help you notice students- when they are absent or when they are struggling with the material- a strong motivator for students to come to class. Adding a small grade for attendance can also be helpful ([Credé et al., 2010](#)), particularly when it is framed as important for student learning and not as a way to monitor student behavior. In larger classes, this may mean asking students to engage with poll questions ([Mentimeter pro licenses available!](#)) that count for attendance grades or asking students to work on something in a small group that is handed in. If you do keep track of attendance, allow for a certain number of absences or give students an alternative task to complete for attendance credit.

Tell us about how you balance structure and flexibility in your course for a chance to spin the CITL prize wheel.

# FEATURED MARCH EVENTS



## DISTRACTED BOOK CLUB

Wednesday, March 8th  
8:15 am or 4:15 pm, Dana 220

Join Guilt-free Book Club's discussion of chapters 4-6 chapters from James Lang's Distracted.



## ACCESS ISN'T ENOUGH

Thursday, March 9th  
4:15 pm, Dana 219

CITL, in partnership with the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, will share tips about supporting the success of low-income students.



## STAFF EDUCATORS

Monday, March 13th  
2 pm, Dana 206

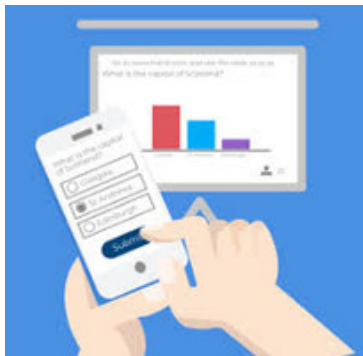
Join this Community of Practice as we break down silos and share tips about what works in our various roles.



## LAVA COMMUNITY

Wednesday, March 15th  
12 pm, Commons 211

Join lecturers, AIs, visiting and applied faculty in building community and share tips on navigating these unique roles.



## MENTIMETER

Wednesday, March 15th  
4 pm, Zoom

If you are just getting started or interested to learn more about Mentimeter, this Mentimeter Basics webinar is for you.



## INCLUSIVE STEM

Thursday, March 16th  
12 pm, Commons 221

This Community of Practice will be sharing resources and ideas for helping all students feel like they belong in STEM.



## UNGRADING

Tuesday, March 28th  
4:15 pm, Dana 220

Join this community of practice where we will explore alternative assessments and grading for growth.



## ON THE MENU

Friday, March 31st  
12 pm, Commons 221

In this On the Menu Workshop, we will be discussing how to interpret student feedback about our courses.