

CELT Newsletter: May 2025

Dear CELT Colleagues:

Congratulations on another successful semester of learning and teaching at Middlesex College. Thank you for joining us for the many CELT activities this past year and for sharing your ideas and teaching strategies. We also want to thank the faculty members who volunteered to lead workshops and share your successful classroom pedagogy. You are doing great things in the classroom and we appreciate your participation in our CELT activities.

As we finish up this very busy year, the CELT Board is busy planning our programming for Fall 2025. Our theme for the coming academic year is **Creating a Welcoming Classroom: Fostering Belonging**. Save the date for our **CELT Professional Day** on Tuesday, August 26 starting at 11 AM after the AFT meeting. We will have workshops on all three days, August 26, 27 and 28. All CELT programming is open to all full-time and adjunct faculty. Please watch your email in mid-July for details on our programs for August and Fall semester and how to sign up. Please join us!

Have a good end to the semester and thank you for all you do for teaching and learning at Middlesex College. Wishing everyone a restful and restorative break and a fun summer. See you on August 26!

Best regards, Susan and the CELT Board

Meet your CELT Board for 2025 - 2026

Director: Susan Altman

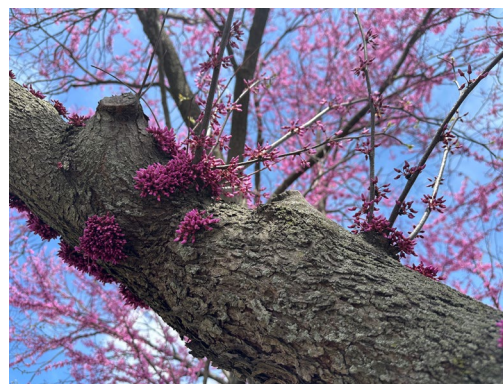
Board: Full-time faculty members are Pattiann McMahon, Stefanie Rufo, Cindy Braun, Katalin Gyurian-Toth, Andy Rubin, and Arianna Illa. Representing the adjunct faculty are Melissa Ellis and Junghee Kim.

CELT Mentoring: Shannon Pullaro and Sheri-Rose Rubin

A gigantic thank you to Shannon Pullaro and Adrianna Mamay who are cycling off the Board. Their commitment to leading workshops for CELT and their contributions to programming has helped improve teaching and learning at Middlesex College and we will miss their ideas and presence on the Board. We also give a gigantic thank you to Chris Drew for his work with the mentoring cohorts.

Suggestions for Summer Reading:

Would you like to have a CELT Book Club? We know people have busy schedules, but let us know if you would be interested in reading together. Perhaps we can meet on ZOOM in the fall and discuss books about teaching! While we hope you find a good beach read for your summer reading, we also recommend some of the following books on pedagogy.



CELT Theme 2025 – 2026

Creating a Welcoming Classroom: Fostering Belonging

We will be exploring strategies to foster belonging and help each student feel welcome.

Save the date for our **CELT Professional Day!**

Tuesday, August 26 @ 11 AM

Workshops on 8/27 and 8/28

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Helpful Articles

Here are some articles to support your teaching.

In [Twist on a Classic: Anchoring a Classic with a 3-2-1 Report](#), the author encourages students to reflect on their learning and figure out where they need help.

In [Don't Just Fade to Black: Ending a Course with Purpose](#), Todd Zakrajsek stresses the importance of the end of the course and being intentional in your last class. He lists 7 specific strategies including revisiting big ideas to help end your class with impact.

In *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning* by José Antonio Bowden and C. Edward Watson, the authors give ideas to harness AI as a teaching tool. *Becoming a Critical Reflective Teacher* by Stephen Brookfield emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and encourages this process to help faculty improve their teaching practice. *Small Teaching Online: Applying Learning Science in Online Classrooms* by Flower Darby and James Lang gives practical advice for the online classroom. In *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High*, the authors share ways to communicate effectively in many different situations. A last book idea is *What Inclusive Instructors Do: Principles and Practices for Excellence in College Teaching* by Tracie Marcella Addy, Derek Dube, Khadijah A. Mitchell and Mallory E. SoRelle. This book offers concrete advice on how to connect practice and research that support inclusion in the classroom. **Happy reading!**

New Ideas/New Pedagogy

AI in Higher Ed:

[Leveraging AI for Equity in Teaching and Learning](#), an article in *Community College Daily*, suggests ways that community college faculty can support AI users in the classroom and help students to use AI in an ethical way. In an opinion piece, [Empowering Community Colleges Through AI: A New Era of Access and Economic Mobility](#), Mordecai Ian Brownlee discusses ways to use AI to enhance human connection. Interested in more data on AI in Higher Ed? Read the *Educause AI Landscape Study*, which looked at the [Future of AI in Higher Education](#). In response to this survey, Dr. Aviva Legatt suggests that [Universities Must Act Now to Close the AI Readiness Gap](#) and that institutions need to catch up with their students.

Working on syllabi for Fall: As we reflect on the past semester, it is a good time to think of new ideas to shake up your syllabus. In [Starting off Right with the Syllabus](#), the authors offer some concrete ideas to create a more engaging and inspiring way to start your class. *The Center for Teaching Innovation* at Cornell University give ideas on [How to Write a Course Syllabus](#) and how the syllabus sets the tone for the class. *Stanford Teaching Commons* recommends 4 ways to build an [inclusive syllabus](#), including using a warm and welcoming tone, centering around student learning, accessible design and promoting policies that are supportive and understanding. If you like technology, consider a liquid syllabus. Several years ago we had a presentation on the Liquid Syllabus, and *Inside HigherEd* offers some ideas to provide barrier free access for students in [For Frictionless Syllabus Access, Some Professors Bypass the College](#). Michelle Pacansky-Brock gives instructions for creating a liquid syllabus on her [website](#), which she stresses “humanizes” the syllabus and sends the cue “I will be a partner in your learning.” [The Liquid Syllabus: Are you Ready?](#) will give you some ideas on how to start. Once the syllabus is handed out and added to Canvas, consider [5 Activities to Encourage Students to Engage with the Syllabus](#) and assess their understanding. CELT workshops have suggested numerous ways to engage with the syllabus including quizzes, games, treasure hunts and escape rooms to [help students read](#) and understand the syllabus. You may want to consider hiding an “Easter Egg” or a hidden task in your syllabus? Maybe have everyone email you a photo of a penguin or a meme about your subject?

Wellness in the Classroom for Students and Faculty:

In a recent survey, students conveyed that [Physical Health and Wellness Linked to Student Success](#). Most students surveyed felt that reducing stress was their top wellness goal. One of the ways faculty at Middlesex help our mental health is our start of the semester Yoga class. Join us on Thursday, August 28 for our Yoga class taught by Arianna Illa. You can also bring wellness and mindfulness into your classroom. [Fostering Academic Wellness in the Classroom](#) has some ideas to help reduce stress for your students. [3 Teaching Exercises for Mindfulness in the Classroom](#) also has good suggestions to support your students. [Role of Mindfulness Practices in the College Classroom](#) from the *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education* confirms that mindfulness has a positive impact on teaching and student learning. [Seven Mindfulness Techniques for College Students](#) has 7 techniques to share with your students to help them manage their mental health as they start the busy Fall semester.