

CELT Newsletter: September 2025

Dear CELT Colleagues:

Welcome back! We hope you had a productive, restful, and restorative summer. The CELT theme for the 2025 - 2026 academic year is **Creating a Welcoming Classroom: Fostering Belonging**. As we begin the year, we look at ways to build community in our classroom and foster a sense of belonging. Research shows that students who feel connected to the professor and each other, learn more effectively. Join our faculty led program of workshops this week and throughout the semester for the sharing of best practices to help all of our students learn.

Begin your year with the **CELT Professional Day** on **Tuesday, August 26**. We start at 11 AM in the Brunswick Room in Crabel Hall (after the AFT meeting) with our keynote, **The Pedagogy of Kindness**, with Dr. Cate Denial followed by lunch and a workshop on the **Kind Syllabus**. We continue with workshops on all three days and throughout the fall semester. eLearning will be presenting *Access for Success* and discussing what we all need to do to make our Canvas classes accessible to all based on Title 2 requirements. We have a lot of great workshops planned. All of our workshops are posted to the [CELT homepage](#). Click on the flyer for August or Fall events and you can find the link to register or click on the link below.

Join CELT for our **Open House** on Thursday, September 4 at 2 PM in the ACE Center in JLC 230. Join us to start the year with refreshments, conversation and camaraderie!

Have a wonderful start to your semester! Susan

Register for all of our CELT Workshops on the CELT Webpage

Our registration system is on Microsoft Forms. In order to keep track of attendance, please sign up in advance and we will send you a reminder to your Middlesex College email the night before our events. Forget to register for a workshop? You are welcome to show up and join us! You can register for [August events](#) or [Fall events](#) by clicking this link. If you have any last-minute problems or questions, email: saltman@middlesexcollege.edu

Programming for Adjunct Faculty

Are you a **"New to Middlesex?"** faculty member? Consider joining the "New to Middlesex" adjunct mentoring program. We will match you with two mentors (one from your department and one from CELT) to help you as you begin teaching at Middlesex. Please reach out to Susan Altman saltman@middlesexcollege.edu with your department and the course you are teaching and we will match you to a mentor.

Please watch your email for information about events specifically for adjunct faculty. We are planning workshops and want to know what you want to learn. Please let us know!



Upcoming Events

August 26 at 11 AM: CELT Professional Day begins with *The Pedagogy of Kindness*, followed by workshops on **August 26, 27, & 28**.

September 4 at 2 PM CELT Welcome Back Celebration in ACE Center in JLC 230

September 11: Tech Thursday: Teach Smarter, Not Harder: AI Tools that Work for You

September 24: Short, Sweet and Smart: The Art of the Microlecture

Interesting Articles

In [Creating and Sustaining Wellness Cultures for Faculty, Staff and Students to Thrive](#), the authors encourage campus leaders design a work environment that enhances autonomy, cross-functional collaboration, and promotes sustainable workloads for faculty and our students to succeed.

Meet your CELT Executive Board for 2025 – 2026 and meet our new CELT Assistant

CELT welcomes **Jennifer Martinez** as the new Assistant for CELT, College Assembly, CAFD, and the ACE Center. We are happy to have her join us! Stop by the ACE Center to say hello. We want to thank Andy Rubin for his work for CELT. Andy is leaving the CELT Board for a one year to be Acting Chair of his department.

Director: Susan Altman

Full-time Faculty Board Members: Arianna Illa, Cindy Braun, Pattiann McMahon, Katalin Gyurian-Toth and Stefanie Rufo

Part-time Faculty Board Members: Melissa Ellis, Junghee Kim

CELT Mentoring Team: Shannon Pullaro and Sheri-Rose Rubin

Learning Community: The Pedagogy of Kindness

Interested in expanding on the ideas from this year's Keynote? CELT has 12 copies of Dr. Cate Denial's book, *The Pedagogy of Kindness* for a book group. This group will be open to the first 12 people who sign up and will meet online at a time convenient to all members. Once the books arrive, we will send out an email and post a link to sign up.

Pedagogy to Start off the Semester

AI in Higher Education: As we head into the new academic year, AI is constantly changing. New programs and new pedagogical strategies are being added daily. Have you assigned projects using AI in your classroom? Do you want to learn more? Join our sessions on August 27 and September 11 to learn new strategies for AI. While institutions grapple with "Best Practices" for AI, The University of Georgia has posted a downloadable [AI Guide for Students and Faculty](#). In the blog post, [Teaching Students AI Strategies to Enhance Meta-cognitive Processing](#), the author offers strategies for planning, monitoring, and reflection. Need some tutorials on AI? The University of Arizona has several [tutorials](#) that may help you expand your knowledge and offer ways to use AI in your classroom. As we think about how to use AI in our classes, there is always a concern about the environmental impact of AI. [What's the Carbon footprint of using ChatGPT?](#) looks at AI in relation to everything else we do. For Podcast lovers, listen to *Teaching in Higher Ed*, Episode 584, [A Different Way to Think about AI and Assessment](#).

Need ideas for the first day of class and how to start off the semester? As we start off the year, many faculty members are thinking about how to build community from the first day of class. In the article, [Fostering Community and Belonging](#), The Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation recommends three foundational components for building community; Identity, Experience, and Structure. [Community Building in the Classroom](#) provides strategies that you can bring to your own classroom. Prefer to listen to a Podcast? *Teaching in Higher Ed* offers Episode 470, [Building Community in the College Classroom](#) with Bonnie Moon and Rob Eaton.

Need some new ideas for **ice breakers and other strategies** to help build community? Indiana University suggests [Using Icebreakers for More than Introductions](#) with suggestions for both in-person and online classes. For example, each week in my remote live class, we have a question of the day (often based on a student suggestion) or a "how are you feeling" meme. It is a great way to build community online and have students get to know each other. Besides getting to know each other, you can use icebreakers to assess prior knowledge for your subject. **Teaching online?** Georgetown University share their slide deck in a Google Doc with [Virtual Icebreakers \(warmers\) for Community Building](#). Symonds Research offers [21 Free Fun Icebreakers for Online Teaching, Students and Virtual and Remote Teams](#). [The Ultimate List of Icebreakers for College Courses](#) is a PDF that lists 50 icebreakers that are perfect for any classroom. And last but not least, Polleverywhere offers us [17 Engaging Icebreakers for College Students to Spark Conversations](#). With all of these resources, we can certainly change our first day of class and build community for our students. Please let CELT know if you try any new icebreakers this year and which ones your students like!