

CELT Newsletter: Jan/Feb 2026

Dear CELT Colleagues:

Happy New Year! CELT hopes you had a restful and restorative break and are ready to begin the Spring 2026 semester!

The CELT Board has planned an engaging program for the Spring 2026 semester and we are looking forward to you joining us for our workshops.

As always, we ask you as faculty - What are you interested in learning? What do you need to support your teaching practice? Please let us know how CELT can help you with learning and teaching. Do you have an interesting idea for a workshop or would you like to lead a workshop? We welcome your ideas, and welcome you to present for CELT. We have already started working on our Fall programming so let us know what you need.

January and Spring 2026 workshops are posted to our [CELT Home page](#). Watch your email for information on our CELT Elections and an opportunity to attend an online conference about online teaching. CELT has a lot going on and we welcome your ideas and suggestions. CELT is by the faculty and for the faculty. Join us!

Have a great start to the Spring 2026 semester!
Best, Susan and the CELT Board

Register for our January and Spring 2026 CELT Workshops

To help us keep track of attendance and facilitate sending reminders to registered faculty, please sign up in advance on Microsoft forms to join us! If you forget to register, you are still welcome to attend and bring a colleague! Register for our [January](#) workshops and our [Spring](#) workshops.

Save the following dates for CELT Events! Detailed information for these workshops is listed on our website and in our CELT flyers and Newsletters.

January 14 and January 15: CELT Workshops (before the semester begins)

January 22: *CELT Open House in the ACE Space in JLC 230*

February 12, March 5 and April 9 at 2 PM: *CELT Tech Sessions*

February 24, March 24 and April 28 at 2 PM: *CELT SOTL Sessions*

CELT Mentoring Program:

The CELT Mentoring Program was published in the journal, *New Directions for Community Colleges* with the article, [Supporting New Faculty at Community Colleges Through Mentoring Circles](#). This article was written by Susan Altman in collaboration with Crystal Quillen (now at Rutgers University) and Christine Harrington (now at Morgan State University) both whom worked on mentoring at Middlesex. Susan presented our program at the Annual POD Conference where it was well received as an exemplary model for mentoring. Thank you to everyone who works as a mentor to our new faculty colleagues and have worked with CELT on the program. We appreciate your dedication and hard work!



Upcoming Events

January 14: CELT Workshops

January 15: CELT Workshops

January 22: CELT Open House in JLC 230, Join us for snacks, conversation, and camaraderie

February 6: Deadline for submission of support materials for faculty awards (nominees have been notified)

February 12: Tech Thursday: Focus on H5P

February 24: To Be or Not to Be Funny in the Classroom? The Benefits and Drawbacks of Creating a Humorous Learning Environment

Helpful Articles

In *Inside Higher Ed*, read [3 Teaching Exercises for Mindfulness in the Classroom](#). This article shares ideas to connect with your students as they express their ideas and build community in your classroom.

CELT Learning Community for Full-time Faculty – Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The CELT Learning Community on **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** is off to a good start with their first meeting during the week we return from break. Thank you to the office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the Middlesex College Foundation for supporting this CELT Learning Community. We look forward to seeing what new projects and ideas come out of this faculty collaboration.

Interested in knowing more? Learn more about **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** in [5 Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies](#) from Northwestern University. The National Equity Project talks about 4 key components in their article on [Culturally Responsive Teaching](#). In their Equity-minded Digital Strategy Guide Series, *Everylearner Everywhere*, shares the PDF [Putting Equity into Practice: Culturally Responsive Learning and Teaching](#).

New Ideas/New Pedagogy

AI: A Continuing Conversation: We are very excited to hear from students on January 14 at 11 AM about their thoughts on AI and how they use it or not use it in their classes. As always, student panels are always informative and eye-opening! Faculty are still concerned about the ethics of AI and worried about cheating. In *The Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, AI ethics and integration are discussed in the article, [The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale \(AIAS\): A Framework for Ethical Integration of Generative AI in Educational Assessment](#). *Educause* shares ideas on the need for AI literacy in the article, [A Framework for AI Literacy](#). Are we doing a disservice to our students by not teaching them to use AI in an ethical and honest way? *Forbes* Magazine states that [90% of Students Use AI: Higher Ed Needs AI Fluency Support Now](#). What do you think?

Starting the Semester with Community Building: The start of the semester is always exciting! It is an opportunity to meet a new group of students and try new pedagogical strategies. Tired of the same old icebreakers? The [University of Florida](#) has several new ideas for ice breakers including ones that have students draw! As an artist, I love the idea of drawing why they are taking the class and sharing it with a partner. The Iowa University Center for Teaching shares a student perspective in [Creating a Community in the Classroom Through Icebreakers: A Student Perspective](#). Professor Wendy Smooth from the Ohio State University shares [Icebreaker Activities](#) that help build community at the start of the semester. She likes to share quirky or obscure questions that help students to really get to know each other in a low stakes way and helps to build connections and conversation between their common interests. What activities do you do on the first day of class to build community?

New Approaches to Grading: We hope you will join us on January 15 when Jennifer Applebee and Giuseppe Rotolo present *Do Grades Measure What Students Know?* This workshop promises a lot to think about. As you know, there is always a discussion on grading and we can continue the conversation with the article from *Education Week*, [We Urgently Need Grading Reform. These Three Things Stand in the Way](#). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (please register to read this) says [Grading is Broken](#) and talks about how A's have lost their meaning. Harvard shared their own recent [research](#) and update on grading and how grades are continually rising. Duke University shares [Alternative Strategies for Assessment and Grading](#). The American University shares [6 Alternative Grading Systems that Foster Student Development](#). Columbia University's Center for Teaching and Learning suggests [Alternative Grading Approaches: Grading for Learning](#). What new ways have you approached grading in your classes?

Teaching Online: Are you teaching an online class? CELT will have limited tickets available in early February for the *Rutgers Online Teaching Conference* on March 16. Watch your email to sign up. Read up on online teaching in [Inclusive Teaching Online: Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Student Success in Higher Education](#). [Designing and Preparing for Asynchronous Courses](#) is another helpful resource for online teaching.

Reading into Spring Semester: CELT has 12 copies of *The Pedagogy of Kindness* by Dr. Cate Denial who was our Fall keynote speaker. Are you interested in reading and discussing it with other faculty members? We will come up with a schedule that works for you! Interested in joining? Please [sign up](#) and CELT will get in touch with the first 12 participants sometime after the start of the Spring semester. We are also open to ideas for other books on pedagogy – let us know what interests you.