

CELT Newsletter: September 2026

Dear CELT Colleagues:

Welcome back to the Fall 2026 semester! We hope you had a productive, restful, and restorative summer. The CELT theme for the 2026 - 2027 academic year is **Growing and Adapting in an Evolving World**. As we begin the year, we are thinking about how we can respond to the many changes that are happening in Higher Education. How can we use evidenced based strategies to support our teaching along with the new technologies that are changing how our students learn?

Begin your year with the **CELT Professional Day** on **Tuesday, September 1**. We start at 11 AM in Cafeteria A & B (after the AFT meeting) with our keynote, **The Science of Learning Meets AI: What Helps, What Hinders and What to Do Next**, with Todd Zakrajsel, PhD followed by lunch and a hands-on workshop on **AI and Education: Shiny Tools, Real Learning**. CELT thanks the Office of the Vice President and The Middlesex College Foundation for support for our speaker. We continue with workshops on all three days and throughout the fall semester. We have a lot of great workshops planned and hope you will join us! All of our workshops are posted to the [CELT homepage](#). Click on the flyer for September or Fall events and you can find out more about our programs. Click the link to register or click on the links below. Join CELT for our **Open House** on **Thursday, September 10** 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 on our [CELT Webpage](#) for [September Professional Week 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. CELT is here to support you in your teaching practice.

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 in the first few weeks of the semester.



Upcoming Events

September 1 at 11 AM: CELT Professional Day begins with *The Science of Learning Meets AI: What Helps, What Hinders and What to Do Next*, followed by workshops on **September 1, 2, and 3**.

September 10 at 2 PM CELT Welcome Back Celebration in ACE Center in JLC 230

September 29: All the World's a Stage: Using Pedagogical "Props" to Foster Student Engagement

Interesting Articles

The 10-minute challenge from the *NY Times* invites you to "look deeply" at a work of art for 10 minutes. What do you see? Can you use this exercise to help your students be more present and observant?

[Lois Dodd](#)

[The Ceiling at Grand Central](#)
[Romare Bearden](#)

Meet your CELT Executive Board for 2026 – 2027 and meet our new CELT Assistant

CELT welcomes **Ime Mark** as the new Assistant for CELT, eLearning, CAFD, and the ACE Center. We are happy to have her join us! Stop by the ACE Center in JLC 230 to say hello, or join our **CELT Open House** on **September 10** and meet **Ime**.

Director: Susan Altman

Full-time Faculty Board Members: Arianna Illa, Cindy Braun, Diane Ratner, Katalin Gyurian-Toth, Andy Rubin, and Stefanie Rufo

Part-time Faculty Board Members: Natasha Welcome

CELT Mentoring Team: Sheri-Rose Rubin, Andy Rubin and Dan Grek

Pedagogy to Start off the Semester

AI in Higher Education: As we head into the new academic year, AI is still joining the conversation. Come to our sessions during the first week of September to learn more about AI; from our *Keynote* to our workshops including *Using Project-Based Learning to Build AI Literacy, Creativity, and Student Agency*, *Teaching Smarter: Leveraging AI Literacy in the STEM Classroom*, and *Using AI to Elevate Student Writing Through Revision*. These workshops share ideas on how to incorporate AI into your classes to support learning. A major concern that faculty have with AI is cheating. *Inside Higher Ed* shares the story of a [Brown Professor Suspects Majority of His Class Used AI to Cheat](#). While the Professor changed his final exam to an in-class paper exam, the University was looking at ways to adapt and respond to AI developments. How can we utilize AI as a learning tool and avoid students using it to cheat? In a survey conducted by the College Board, [Faculty Express a Near-Universal Concern That Student AI Use Undermines Original Writing and Critical Thinking](#). Is this really the case? Over the summer, you might have read about a History Professor at Alcorn University who hid a [“secret prompt”](#) in his exam and caught students cheating. Why do we need to trap students? Students have always cheated in a number of ways. How can we teach students to use AI ethically as a tool for learning? The University of Central Florida has a OER book titled, [Show Your Work: Assessment in the Age of AI](#). This OER book has lots of positive ideas on how to use AI in your classes including: using AI to research credible sources, using AI to brainstorm, revise, and reflect on student created research questions, using AI to generate ideas with student reflection, using AI to strategically in the drafting process, and more.

Need ideas for the first day of class and how to start off the semester? Need some new ways to start off the semester and build community. The Chronicle of Higher Education has [6 Ideas to Perk Up Your First Day of Class](#). Click on the link and register for your free account. Inside Higher Ed offers [Teaching Tip: A More Strategic Syllabus Day](#). Northern Illinois University recommends Strategies for [Starting the Semester Well](#) including involving students with content from the start, giving students a reason to be in your course, and establishing a rapport on day one. New to teaching at Middlesex? While this article is from 2014, [Learning to Teach: Ten Tips for Professors](#) is still relevant. I love that one of tips is to “learn from mentors!” If you are a “new to Middlesex” adjunct faculty member, reach out! We are happy to find you a mentor to support your teaching. Need some new ideas for **ice breakers and other strategies** to help build community? [Creating a Community in the Classroom through Icebreakers: A Student Perspective](#) offers a list of ice breakers to use to start your class. [20+ Icebreakers for College Students: A Guide for Professors](#), has a lot of ideas to get you started. While [research](#) shows that icebreakers enhance student engagement and create a greater sense of community, be sensitive to students who may have anxiety or may feel uncomfortable sharing personal information early in the semester when everything is still new. Despite this information, icebreakers are a low-stakes way to build community, get your class to know each other, and become engaged with your course content.

Working on your syllabus? We all know that it is a challenge to get students to read the syllabus. *Every Learner Everywhere* recommends [4 Alternative Syllabus Formats that Promote Equity](#) including a Liquid Syllabus, an Interactive Syllabus, a FAQ Syllabus and a UDL Syllabus. [5 Suggestions to Create an Effective Syllabus](#) offers more ideas. What new innovations have you brought to your syllabi this year?