

Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

University of Colorado Denver



INSIDE OUR NEWSLETTER:

New faculty event? Faculty Destress Fest - Join us!

Incorporating the Learning Resource Center (LRC) into Your Course: Support Student Learning

Get Your Students to Read by Lindsey Hamilton

November Newsletter winners & their takeaways from NameCoach

Book of the Month by Teague Bohlem, CETL Faculty Fellow

Spring 2022 Workshops & Events
[Register now.](#)

FACULTY DE-STRESS FEST

December 6th - 10th

Faculty Success - 3rd Floor Learning Commons

Monday - Friday drop in anytime between 8:30 am until 4:30 pm for coffee, tea, hot chocolate, treats, resources, or join a specific event going on (details below!). Grab a to-go cup or stay & relax.

Monday, December 6th: Bagel Bash

8:30 am - 4:00 pm | Stop in for a bagel and coffee!
Faculty Success - 3rd Floor Learning Commons

Tuesday, December 7th: Netflix & Refresh

8:30 am - 4:00 pm | Unwind with Netflix & snacks
Faculty Success - 3rd Floor Learning Commons

Wednesday, December 8th: Destress Stretch & Meditation

11:00 am - 11:45 am | Free Wellness session
Faculty Success - 3rd Floor Learning Commons

Thursday, December 9th: Faculty Mixer

3:00 - 5:00 pm | Celebrate the semester with us!
Rhein Haus - 1415 Market Street, Denver



NEW ZOOM FEATURE: EMBRACE INCLUSION BY ADDING PRONOUNS

Written by Kate Miller, Access and Usability Manager, OIT

Are you adding your pronouns at the end of your name in Zoom? We have been too, but *no more!*

Pronouns are how people refer to one another when not using their names. Using someone's correct pronouns is akin to pronouncing their name correctly. This small but significant sign of respect goes a long way in creating an environment where everyone can show up, be seen, and addressed respectfully as who they are," said Alex Schmider (he/him/his), Associate Director for Transgender Representation at GLAAD.

Some common examples of pronouns are he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs, or using multiple pronouns simultaneously to speak to gender fluidity and or non-binary identities: she/them; he/them. This [new feature in Zoom](#) will help everyone (students and faculty) feel better, express themselves fully, and respectfully address others, which ultimately leads to a stronger culture of connectivity and a sense of belonging.

CU Denver Student, Spencer Green (they/them/theirs), said, "Making pronoun features available and easily accessible allows for pronouns to already be a part of the structure of a class rather than something I would have to manually edit in my display name, which eases my concerns about if there could be an accidental misgendering or use of my legal name. By being already included instead of having to make space for myself and pronouns, I feel more valued and seen."



[Add your pronouns](#) to your Zoom account today, and encourage your students to do the same in an effort to build on the sense of belonging and inclusion.

Learn more at [CU Denver's Office of Equity, A Guide to Understanding Gender Identity and Pronouns](#), and [GSLEN: Pronoun guide](#).

INCORPORATING THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER INTO YOUR COURSE: SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

Written by LoryAnn Varela, Director of LRC

The Learning Resources Center (LRC) is an invaluable resource for students on our campus. The LRC offers both academic and learning support for students. Consider these strategies created by the Learning Resources Center and Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning for encouraging students to visit the LRC, get the support they need, learn about time management skills, and receive academic tutoring support.



- 1 Include a statement about LRC on your syllabus.**
For example, on your syllabus, you might write: "The Learning Resource Center is a free resource you should take advantage of throughout your college experience. The LRC can assist you with tutoring, learning resources, time management, workshops, and individual coaching."
- 2 Invite LRC to present in your class.**
Choose between a brief presentation on the student resources on the 1st floor of the new Learning Commons building (*Writing Center, Math, and Stats Support, and LRC*), or have LRC present on study strategies, time management, and other related topics for students. An LRC representative will come to your class and give a presentation from a 10-minute overview of resources to an in-depth presentation built for your students to support their academic careers. Submit a request.
- 3 Offer extra credit.**
Offer extra credit with verification that students attended a workshop or visited with an Academic Guide. The LRC holds weekly workshops that students can attend in person or online. In addition, when faculty consult with the LRC, sometimes additional options at convenient times for the class can be added.
- 4 Refer your students to the LRC.**
The LRC will reach out to students referred through action processes to share available resources. LRC also has a video library with 50 topics that students can view 24/7 through the Student Lingo service to build their study skills. Moreover, faculty can also suggest that students meet with LRC staff members in an individual coaching session to discuss time management, learning strategies, and study techniques. LRC works individually with students to design goals and action plans they want to implement.
- 5 Include learning strategies, study tips, and time management info in your course.**
The LRC can provide you with handouts on study support topics and develop brief video clips that can be included in studying strategies for certain subjects. If you're looking to develop new skills for your teaching, visit CETL.
- 6 Refer your students to work in the LRC.**
Have an outstanding student? The LRC needs them! The LRC hires student staff as Academic Guides, Supplemental Instruction Leaders, Intensive Preparation Facilitators, Workshop and Coaching Assistants, and Learning Hub Ambassadors. Refer them to the LRC team!

GET YOUR STUDENTS TO READ

Written by Lindsey Hamilton



UP TO 85% OF STUDENTS DO NOT READ THE ASSIGNED READINGS FOR THEIR COURSES.

As academics and educators, we know the readings we assign are crucial for helping students learn new knowledge and prepare for our class discussions. However, only 15% of students read the assigned materials (Deale & Lee, 2021)! How can we help students engage with these readings?

Over the past twenty years, studies have indicated that students are reading slower and comprehending less. In fact, today's entering university students are reading 19% slower than their counterparts from fifty years ago. These inefficient reading skills lead to difficulties with both comprehension and motivation because if the reading is super difficult, students won't find it enjoyable. Additionally, students often underestimate the significance of completing required readings. (Johnson, 2019; Shnee, 2017; Lei et al., 2010).

These reasons often result in a lack of class participation, rich conversations, and poor performance on assessments.

WHY DON'T STUDENTS READ?

A comprehensive study (Kerr & Frese, 2016) identified **four main reasons** university students don't engage with course readings:

1. Unpreparedness due to language deficit
2. Time constraints
3. Lack of motivation
4. Underestimating the importance of the readings.

"Unpreparedness" is a concerning finding, as it highlights deficits in language understanding and use. Many students have limited knowledge of technical disciplinary terms leading to additional struggles to understand the assigned readings (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2017). Additionally, students' previous experiences, including whether English is a first or primary language, can play a role in their perception of, and attitudes towards, assigned readings.

Students vary in how they manage assigned reading materials. Some review the readings, take notes, look up summaries, or translate unknown words. Some don't use any of these metacognitive reading strategies because they are not aware of effective reading skills.

Get your students to read. Ideas for in-class strategies:

GRADUALLY INCREASE INFORMED LEARNING CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

Gradually increase informed learning concepts and strategies to help students develop critical academic skills. Invite the Learning Resources Center to speak briefly with your class about reading strategies and time management techniques.

INVITE STUDENTS TO APPLY THE READINGS TO REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE

Invite students to apply the readings to real-life experience, longer assignments, or projects. Activities with clear longer-term agendas engage students and allow educators to observe how students grasp new information. Students are often more motivated to read when it directly ties to these longer-term agendas (Major & Miller, 2020).

PROVIDE A SAFE SPACE FOR STUDENTS

Provide a safe space for students to clarify confusing aspects. Weekly reading groups, talking circles, or other collaborations enable students to share and ask genuine questions (Kerr & Frese, 2016). These conversations can encourage students to tackle complex content.

Continue reading on next page >

continued...

GET YOUR STUDENTS TO READ

TAKE OWNERSHIP: DON'T BLAME THE PROBLEM SOLELY ON STUDENTS

The engagement with readings is often seen as an exclusively student-centered problem. Instead, educators need to reconsider the methods used to integrate assigned academic literature into the course design.



Research indicates that educators struggle to clearly communicate the rationale for why students need to read and how these texts contribute to their learning (Bhavsar, 2019). We need to recognize different student personalities and anxieties. We need to develop flexible ways for students to interact with academic literature.

But don't students know that reading matters? Maybe, but educators regularly engage with complex papers, books, and reports. Over the years, we develop effective approaches to tackling academic literature. Additionally, academics often forget how long it used to take to read literature.

Most students have limited, if any, exposure to such texts. Many have low reading confidence (Kimberley & Thursby, 2020). This results in situations where students face a black box (of readings) and are simply expected to know what to do with it, how to do it, and, importantly, why. This scenario is particularly likely for many first-year, first-generation, and/or international students (Zeivots, 2021).

HOW CAN EDUCATORS IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH READINGS?



➔ Use [CETL's Course Workload Estimator](#) to review how long it takes the average university student to read the number of readings you have assigned in the course.

➔ If the number of hours in the Course Workload Estimator shocks you or seems too high, think about which readings are the most crucial to your course goals. Alternatively, meet with a [CETL Instructional Designer](#) to discuss course design options to help manage readings.

➔ We have provided evidence-based pre-class and post-class practices in this article to engage students with assigned readings. Learn more about the technology and [teaching strategies on our website](#). Various techniques are effective in different contexts.

➔ Learn more and prepare your classroom for reading success in our virtual Winter Course Preparation Retreat in January 2022. [Apply now](#) or by visiting www.ucdenver.edu/courseprep

*Get your students to read
Ideas for pre-class
strategies:*

GRADUALLY INTRODUCE TECHNICAL OR DISCIPLINARY TERMS.

Trying to learn too many at once can put undue cognitive load on students (Macgregor & Folinazzo, 2017). Don't assume students know all specific terms from the start.

HAVE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES ONLINE

Canvas offers tools like quizzes and polls to provide a low-stakes or ungraded quiz after a chunk of reading that reinforces important concepts. Using collaborative tools like Hypothes.is, the new university-supported social annotation tool that embeds into Canvas, allows students to make reading more active, visible, and more social. Have students record a brief reflection and comment to each other about the reading using a tool like Flipgrid.

OFFER CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND STRATEGIES ON WHAT, HOW, AND WHY TO READ.

Demonstrate your own reading strategies to students. You can use the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSII) to help students become more aware of new academic reading strategies (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). Invite students to practice different approaches, including unfamiliar to them reading strategies.

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER WINNERS!

- Mia Fischer (CLAS)
- Gisella Bassani (Business)

CETL will email you with steps on how to claim your prize!

Last month we asked, "how do you plan to incorporate NameCoach to increase a sense of belonging for your students. If you already implemented it, tell us what impact you have seen."

“Name Coach:
It's been a
game-changer”

"I incorporated NameCoach for all my classes. It was incredibly useful for me to learn to pronounce everyone's name correctly. It was also fun. I gave them all points for doing this."



"It allows me and students to record pronouns as well. So it's a great way to build community, respect, and belonging in our classroom. The newsletter also prompted me to integrate the name coach badge in my email signature and it was actually super easy."



ENTER OUR DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DRAWING TO WIN A PRIZE:

What strategies have you found to meaningfully engage students with readings?

[TELL US HERE](#)

or scan the QR code



SPRING 2022 WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

LEARN MORE & REGISTER AT WWW.UCDENVER.EDU/CETL

[The ABC's of How We Learn \(In-Person/Virtual\)](#)

Wednesday, February 2nd, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Wednesday, March 2nd, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Wednesday, April 6th, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Wednesday, May 4th, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

[Winter Course Preparation Virtual Retreat \(virtual\)](#)

Monday, January 10th, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm

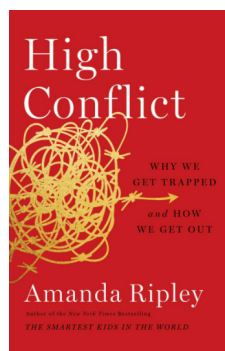
Tuesday, January 11th, *Independent Work*

Wednesday, January 12th, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm

Thursday, January 13th, *Independent Work*

Book of the Month: High Conflict

Written by Teague Bohlen, Associate Professor, English & CETL Faculty Fellow



How many times in the last five years have you shaken your head at the apparent and gob-smacking insanity of those Americans on the "other side" of the political spectrum? If it's too many to count, you're not alone. Amanda Ripley's *High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped*

and How We Get Out deals with that feeling constructively. Ripley calls high conflict "the invisible hand of our time" and says healthy conflict is constructive. Still, high conflict can force us into an "us vs. them" mentality, and that's bad on several levels, from societal norms to the way our brains support us in behaving.

Through the stories of real people in real situations, Ripley talks not only about high conflict but how it is—and indeed can be, despite how hopeless it sometimes feels—escaped. It's a mind-opening new way to think about a conflict that can transform the manners in which we all move through our shared world...just in time for the holidays and all those relatives whom you might dearly love and whose opinions drive you up a wall.

The best kind of book club - read the book or not! Books@Work isn't about deadlines or "not doing your homework" join us at our next discussion.

[Books@Work \(Virtual\)](#)

[High Conflict](#)

Wednesday, December 1st, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

[Me and White Supremacy](#)

Wednesday, February 23rd, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

[While Justice Sleeps](#)

Wednesday, April 27th, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

[Lunch & Learn \(In-person\)](#)

[Mindfulness in the Classroom](#)

Tuesday, February 8th, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

[Gender Inclusive Teaching](#)

Tuesday, March 8th, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm