

Sarah Anderegg

From: Jonathan Eldridge
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 10:20 AM
To: Jonathan Eldridge
Subject: Spring 2023 Faculty Information & Updates, Volume VI
Attachments: What is Pedagogical Wellness.pdf

Dear College of Marin Faculty:

I recently came across a University of California Irvine resource from their Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation. At first I wasn't quite sure what to make of the web page title, 'Pedagogical Wellness,' but when I looked through the resources under the *Student Pedagogical Wellness* and *Instructor Pedagogical Wellness* tabs, I was struck by the concrete ideas and resources in areas ranging from assessment/grading and course design to participation/communication and course policies. I encourage you to take a look here:

<https://dtei.uci.edu/initiatives/pedagogical-wellness/>

I have also attached some of the site's content to this message for your convenience. While some language is UCI-specific, I hope you find it useful.

Also this week, an update on the construction activities for the LRC project:

1. Soil testing at various locations around the site
2. Excavating and preparing areas on the site that will be used as staging
3. Removal of debris from the site
4. Completion of demolition of concrete paving, flat work and retaining walls (Location A)

Soil testing will require a drill rig and other equipment. You may feel vibrations associated with this work.

If I can be of assistance in any way at any point, please do let me know.

Jonathan



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What is Pedagogical Wellness?

Pedagogical wellness is the art and science of integrating evidence-based wellness strategies into the teaching and learning environment to support the health and well-being of faculty and students. Resuming normal activity after the COVID-19 pandemic, we suggest a “**flexibility with guardrails**” approach, which helps give some level of autonomy for students, but within boundaries. These approaches will help decrease your workload and allow you to spend your time getting to learn more about your students and their learning process. The goal is to strike a balance between student and instructor wellness.

Student Pedagogical Wellness Syllabus

- Add a **welcome letter** to your syllabus to introduce yourself and that you care for your students.
- **Transparency:** Tell your students what type of pedagogical approach you are taking whether it be inclusive, trauma-informed, and/or contemplative pedagogy.
- Send out the syllabus **prior to the first day**.
- Make sure it has an **inviting tone**.
- Add a **visual pattern of assignments** of what is due each week.

Assessment and Grading style

- Rethink **high-stakes exams**. Include both formative and summative assessments.
- Consider **flexible weighting** strategies
- **Specifications grading** can alleviate stress for instructors and students.

Assignments

- Consider **revise and resubmit options**.
- **Assess course workload**. Remember that students have competing demands like other courses, work, and lives beyond the classroom.
- **Give students choices** for projects and/or submission format.
- Make sure assignments allow for **reflection and connection to life, other students, and the world**.
- Allow students a **soft deadline and a hard deadline** to give some space for flexibility.
- Consider **project-based learning**.

Class Environment/ Participation

- **Ice breakers and brain breaks:** mindfulness activities, stretch breaks, dance breaks, class outdoors.
- **Consider not having an attendance policy** or at least some flexibility (for example: allow 2 missed classes)

- Give **content/trigger warnings** when teaching about sensitive topics like violence, sexual assault, racism, or traumatic events.
- Give **alternatives or an opt out option**.
- Have **multiple forms of participation** and integrate digital technology in the classroom.
- Use **reflections, mindfulness activities, and gratitude journals** to allow students to deepen their appreciation of class content.
- **Use either structured or unstructured brain breaks** every 30 minutes to get students to refocus their attention.
- Encourage **self-care such as eating, sleeping, exercising**.

Communication with students

- **Co-construct class norms/ agreements** at the beginning of the quarter.
- **Check-in with your students** about their mental well-being at the start of each class or have a process for collecting frequent feedback (e.g. using reflections, Canvas discussion board, or midterm feedback).
- **Remind students of your availability** to discuss topics during office hours.
- **Talk about student resources** on campus

Instructor Pedagogical Wellness Course Design

- Set **manageable grading deadlines** for yourself.
- Use **grading strategies** (e.g., setting a timer, peer reviews, contract grading) that help you keep track of your time and workload.
- **Incorporate assignments that require less grading time**. Give options for assignments that may take less grading time (e.g., infographics, videos, modeling vs. long paper submissions).
- **Break up large project assignments** in the short, weekly assignments to allow students to gauge their progress and allow you to avoid long hours grading toward the end of the quarter
- **Use technology** that you are comfortable with while seeking to expand your capacity as well over time.
- Use **support resources** like DTEI's consultation services to help with designing and implementing your course.
- If you build in wellness exercises or activities, **participate in the exercises or activities alongside students to normalize well-being in the classroom**.

Course Policies

- **Allow students to drop 1 or 2 assignments/quizzes “no questions asked.”** This saves time and energy negotiating over emails.
- **Avoid attendance policies or build in attendance flexibility** (e.g., 2-3 free sick days). Avoid asking for proof as this increases the burden on you as the instructor to verify.
- **Structure assignment deadlines either with a soft/hard deadline or allow a grace period.** (e.g., set deadline at 10 pm, but allow additional 24 hours in case anything arises) to avoid student extension requests

Communication

- **Set email boundaries** (e.g., 24 hours to respond and longer on weekends)
- **Use the syllabus to communicate** with your students about expectations, deadlines, assignments, and communicate how to avoid needing to discuss individually with your students you plan to communicate with your students.
- **Including assignment expectations in multiple places** may also help to decrease confusion about assignments.
- **Consider hosting group office hours** instead of one-on-one office hours.
- **Faculty are human too!** Communicate that illness, family issues, disabilities affect us as well sometimes.

Support

- **Find your support hub** of peer instructors who may be experiencing similar things in terms of teaching and/or research responsibilities.
- **Connect with your teaching community** via existing programs.
- **Find out what kind of support your department can offer** if you need to be on leave for any reason.
- **Utilize professional support such as DTEI consultations** to assist with building your course and/or troubleshoot any issues throughout the quarter.