Teaching Matters and Assessment Center

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Director's Note

I open this newsletter with news of two upcoming TMAC events to put on your calendar: A hands-on workshop on using Voicethread (embedded in Sakai) as a tool for classroom projects and for commenting on papers. That is scheduled for Thursday, November 3, 3:00-4:30 pm in the Writers House (light refreshments). We'll send an invitation for you to rsvp shortly. Then on Monday, November 14, TMAC offers "Help! My Students Can't Write: Here are 7 Things You Can Do." This presentation will be in the Faculty Lounge, 12:20-1:20 pm (pizza).

Finally, we share the results of the Campus Survey on Writing: Faculty Perspectives that TMAC conducted last Spring. Thanks to the over 100 respondents who contributed to this useful portrait of what and how writing is taught in the College of Arts and Sciences. We encourage you to discuss the report with your colleagues. We look to gather student perspectives with a related survey at the end of this semester

Let's Talk Teaching

In recent years, educators have used technology to develop virtual classrooms. Many thought that these digital learning spaces would help close the education gap between students of diverse backgrounds. However, this recent article from *The Atlantic* argues that "Virtual Classrooms Can Be as Unequal as Real Ones."

In an article for *Teaching* Philosophy, Dennis Earl presents the "four sentence paper" – a simplified template to introduce students to argumentative writing. While some argue that such an approach might be reductive, Earl maintains that the template acts as an accessible introduction to composing arguments.

What do *you* think? Let us know at teaching.matters@camden.rutgers.edu!

Designing Assignment Sheets

When it comes to best practices for communicating your expectations to students, well-designed assignment sheets can go a long way! Check out Leigh Ryan's reasons for implementing formal assignment sheets in the classroom (University of Maryland).
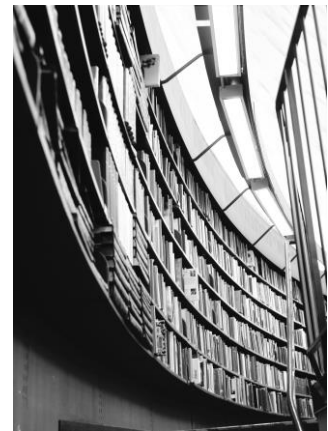
If you'd like to implement assignment sheets for the first time, start by asking yourself these generative questions from Stanford University, or consider using these nine strategies from Fayetteville State University.

Already use assignment sheets in your classroom? If so, check out these tips for revising and revamping existing documents for the new semester!

Mentoring Undergraduate Research

Are you interested in mentoring your students to conduct authentic research? To learn more, check out these articles on inquiry-based learning, the "independent researcher model," and integrating archival research in the classroom.

If you want to help your students contribute their work to the field, consider sharing these tips, tricks, and strategies for creating research posters, or encourage them to submit to one of these journals that publish undergraduate research!

Tools and Technology

If you want to foster collaborative work between students both in and out of the classroom, visit this resource published by Carnegie Mellon's Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation.

Interested in using Twitter in your classroom? Ryan Lytle lists five unique ways that you can incorporate the platform in your teaching.

Games can be great learning tools! Check out this resource for ideas on how to "gamify" your classroom.

From the Bookshelf

Engaging Writers with Multigenre Research Projects, a new text from Nancy Mack, works well for both high school and college classrooms. The book focuses on assigning, scaffolding, and assessing multigenre research as an alternative assignment to the expanded five paragraph essay.

Conferences and Events

Ta-Nehisis Coates, journalist and author of *Between the World and Me* and *The Beautiful Struggle,* will speak at Temple University on Wednesday, October 26th. Follow the link to learn more and purchase tickets!

Visit us at tmac.camden.rutgers.edu. Send us your questions, links, and comments at teaching.matters@camden.rutgers.edu