



Teaching Excellence Awards 2026 Recipients' Dialogue

CENTRE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

CapU Teaching & Learning Symposium

TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS





Participation:

- Phone w/ camera
- Device w/ internet

Tong Chow



Students' nominating words:

"Tong has made the daunting endeavour of learning Chinese a memorable and intellectually stimulating experience."

Tong's words:

"I facilitate stories of scholarship, learning, connection, and growth, igniting a spark that brightens what is possible."

Tong's question for us to consider

How do you facilitate students' connecting the subject matter to their futures?

Inviting their futurities
into the room with them



Using real world
examples and data

Work integrated
learning!

Knowledge of general,
widely-applicable skills

Getting them involved in
their local communities

Being honest about the
professional
expectations.

Simple and complex in
the same time:
education IS life! <3

Alumni guest speakers
who can speak to that
connection

Tong's question for us to consider

How do you facilitate students' connecting the subject matter to their futures?

Asking them what they are interested in

Presenting new horizons of thinking and possibility that hopefully sparks creative agency and imagination

Bringing in guest speakers who work in the field.

Giving them the latitude to personalize the work to connect to their interests, future goals, and lived experience.

To ask their dreams for their future jobs and amusement by using their learned knowledges .

Bringing in guest speakers and grads who can help make the career connections

Focus on working on real projects (WIL) and activities that will give them hands on real work experience aside from just the academics

Activities and assignments all relate directly back to work they're already doing in practice outside of the institution.

Tong's question for us to consider

How do you facilitate students' connecting the subject matter to their futures?

I normally ask students to bring their own experiences and after class we reflect in how they have improved and how to apply it to life.

Visual literacy is increasingly important to critical understanding of images and how they shape our world. Learning how to look and critique is a life skill.

Bobbi-Lee Copeland



Students' nominating words:

“Bobbi encourages us to share our own stories, allowing us to connect and reflect with each other.”

Bobbi's words:

“I gift my traditional knowledge by guiding relationships through the sharing of stories.”

Bobbi's question for us to consider

What is one way you make it easier for a student to ask for help?

Learn their name

I'm still figuring it out

Encourage vulnerability

Asking them for help as well. Normalizing the process.

Make sure to share with students that I am available to connect. Taking sometime at the end of class to connect with students.

Providing different kinds of opportunities - informal chats, support hours, zoom meetings.

This is hard!!!

Creating a safe environment and not being afraid of being vulnerable in front of them.

Bobbi's question for us to consider

What is one way you make it easier for a student to ask for help?

Putting a weekly (optional) check in on eLearn

Cultivating a safe and warm physical environment for the help to take place

I share my own vulnerabilities and that asking for help is a sign of strength.

Be approachable, kind and never shame them

By talking about my own struggles as a student

Be in the classroom before and after class.

Giving multiple platforms for them to reach out based on their comfort level

We talk about diversity and how it's important to understand that different is not bad. We also talk about being vulnerable and if you ask for help you will be helped.

Bobbi's question for us to consider

What is one way you make it easier for a student to ask for help?

Offering an anonymous option first A different option from face to face meeting

Invite learning strategist into class to do an activity. Would like to do it with the writing centre in the future if possible

I share my struggles with them to relate with them.

It all starts with building rapport & establishing true two-way communication. Being open with students from day one is critical, & that starts with your own intro; setting the tone beyond surface lev

I work to humanize myself by sharing information about myself, my hobbies, etc, including embarrassing facts to make myself less intimidating.

Sarah Hennessy



Students' nominating words:

“Sarah treats us as whole people by trusting, respecting, and supporting the connections we make from beyond the classroom.”

Sarah's words:

“I mediate co-learning communities with everyone working side-by-side as both teachers and learners.”

Sarah's question for us to consider

As a teacher, how can you model bravery by checking your assumptions about why a student is asking the question?

thanks brad

Verbalize that I might review the assessment to make sure my intentions were clear (i.e. admitting that communication might be faltering on my end)

Never underestimate students' intelligence; never overestimate their knowledge.

Same as last question, I share my own vulnerabilities. I'm also learning to slow down to make space for questions.

Admitting when I don't have an answer to a question and invite students to help me find the answer.

Recognize own mistakes or misunderstandings

Use the reducing polarization technique.

Admitting I don't know many things and need to check.

Sarah's question for us to consider

As a teacher, how can you model bravery by checking your assumptions about why a student is asking the question?

Thank them !!! Share your humility, not perfection

Always think why they ask the questions even I explained and answered before the questions are asked.

They don't ask questions, so how do I change my approach that facilitates questioning and inquiry

Encouraging the students to explain a bit more. Asking the other students to provide input. Shutting up to put it frankly

What can I see?

Shelby Page



Students' nominating words:

“Shelby makes us feel respected as individuals by offering her knowledge and experiences in a personable, kind and fun way.”

Shelby's words:

“I facilitate bridge-building practice by weaving individual passions into celebrations of collaboration.”

Shelby's question for us to consider

What is one (1) way you offer meaningful feedback, when a core issue is the student's effort or engagement?

Appreciate the process more than the product

Thanks Brad! Asking them about their motivations first.

I keep it unsaid because I'm afraid of the conflict triggered by past personal experiences. How to be compassionate not critical

Ask Brad to give the feedback

Begin with genuine curiosity to get to them and what's going on for them in life

I think language we use is very important, Brad...

Checking in to see what's up for them. So often it's about them feeling overloaded in life and not about not being engaged by choice

Make the feedback unique to the person and provide it in more than one way.

Shelby's question for us to consider

What is one (1) way you offer meaningful feedback, when a core issue is the student's effort or engagement?

Treat it as more so a conversation to get at why they are not engaging, and offer multiple ways they can improve/engage

Those who are not serious about their course work, I make sure that they are comfortable with their peers as well as me. Often they start helping each other.

Spend time with them, create opportunities for connection. What do they need? Time, support, etc

Creating a collaborative community agreement at the start of term

Co-create Community guidelines

Sera Oh



Students' nominating words:

“Sera helps us see education as a path to building happiness, independence and responsibility.”

Sera's words:

“I nurture supportive learning relationships by weaving the growing sense of shared responsibilities to their intentional practices.”

Sera's question for us to consider

What student [pre-] learning experiences do you facilitate that promote respectful collaboration during group work?

Personal values assignment, shared values assignment

I share my own mistakes and success stories for them to reflect while we they work with their peers.

Engage in critical reflection on what perspectives and understandings they are bringing to the course.

Letting students self select a group based on the direction in which they want to personalize the project. Takes a bit of time for some speed dating classmates to share interests first

Scaffolding a circle call and response activity where each person creates something, a sound or phrase or movement, etc. that sets up a space for contribution and amplifying others

Talk about shared goals and values.

A self-reflection of their strengths

I am offering time for them to get to know each other... one of the first invitations is to go outside and take a "group-selfie" and add the names to the photo.. It will start taking away anxiety...

Sera's question for us to consider

What student [pre-] learning experiences do you facilitate that promote respectful collaboration during group work?

Discuss self and identify and normalize individual differences