2025 | FORT WAYNE TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE

Goshen College

Huntington University

Indiana Tech

Ivy Tech Community College

Manchester University

Purdue University Fort Wayne

Trine University

University of Saint Francis

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

**INTERNATIONAL BALLROOM, WALB UNION BUILDING
PURDUE FORT WAYNE**

A Collaborative Effort of Fort Wayne Area Colleges and Universities

8:00 a.m. – Registration, Coffee and Light Breakfast: (Walb 149/150 International Ballroom)

8:30 a.m. – Welcome and Introduction of Keynote & Plenary Speakers:
Dr. Newton Miller (Keynote)
Dr. Jeremy A. Rentz (Plenary)

8:35 a.m. – Keynote Speaker

Dr. Newton Miller – Keynote Speaker

Dr. Newton Miller has been committed to the education arena since 1995 when he transitioned from the engineering field. His research focuses on educating at-potential populations, with particular interest in systemic thinking that promotes equitable access to achievement, effective school cultures, and facilitation of programming and instruction that leads to the educational success of these populations.

Dr. Miller currently serves as the Lead Faculty of the Education Studies and Educator Preparation programs at the University of Arizona Global Campus. His contributions to higher education include conducting professional development sessions and keynote addresses across the country. He has received honors such as the Impact Award from the Urban League (2018), the Provost Award for Outstanding Faculty from Ashford University (2014), and the Excellence in Teaching Award from York College (2012).

Dr. Miller is the author of "Why Some Seeds Don't Grow," a book that explores principles for enhancing the education, mentoring, and parenting of urban youth. He also co-authored "Baggage Claim" with his wife, Kimberly, which shares insights into building and maintaining successful marriages. Additionally, he has authored two textbooks—"How Does Educator Look on Me" and "Life After College: Presenting Yourself to the Workforce"—currently used in the capstone courses at the University of Arizona Global Campus.

Dr. Miller believes educators are meant to facilitate the thinking that changes the world, which aligns with his mantra: **Educate … Motivate … Help Them Grow!**

Fun Fact: *Dr. Miller's dream job was as a structural engineer until he stood in front of a classroom of knowledge-hungry, inner-city students. At that moment, he realized his true purpose was to be an educator.*

Dr. Jeremy A. Rentz – Plenary Speaker

Jeremy Rentz is the Schantz Distinguished Professor of Environmental Engineering at Trine University. In this role he supports student learning by being transparent, using exceptional slides, and getting out of the way so students can do some of the work in the classroom. In the professional development arena, Jeremy champions these teaching tools and other practical strategies by facilitating faculty discussions and workshops wherever teachers are striving to improve student learning.

Plenary Title: Transparent Teaching in the Age of AI

Abstract

Ever feel like students are merely going through the motions—or turning to AI for shortcuts? Join us to explore how transparent teaching can bridge the gap between course objectives and student motivation while bringing integrity back to the forefront. By clearly communicating the why of assignments and policies, we transform anxiety and confusion into curiosity and ownership. Transparent teaching isn't just a buzzword; it's a strategy rooted in fundamental human needs and applicable to any classroom, face-to-face or online. Transparent teaching empowers you to boost engagement, reduce stress, and advance AI literacy with practical, ready-to-implement ideas that foster meaningful learning in today's rapidly changing educational landscape.

Location: Walb G08 Session: 1-A	**Teaching for Transformation: Strategies to Help Students See the World Differently** Abstract: Transformative learning is a powerful educational approach that enables adult learners, particularly college students, to engage in deep reflection, critically examine their assumptions, and shift their perspectives. These skills are essential for navigating the complexities and challenges of today's rapidly changing world. This session will provide practical, evidence-based strategies for fostering transformative learning in the classroom. Participants will explore methods to create opportunities for meaningful reflection, such as journaling or guided self-assessments, and consider ways to facilitate thought-provoking discussions that encourage students to question their beliefs and consider alternative viewpoints. Additionally, the session will highlight the importance of connecting course content to students' lived experiences, making learning more relevant and impactful. Through the use of case studies, collaborative activities, and real-world examples, participants will discover how to design learning experiences that foster critical thinking, emotional engagement, and personal growth. By the end of the session, attendees will have some actionable strategies that can be immediately implemented to deepen student engagement, cultivate a reflective classroom environment, and inspire transformative change that extends beyond the classroom and into students' lives. Michelle Blank Rentz (Goshen College)
Location: Walb 222 Session: 1-B	**Annoyingly Effective: Redefining Office Hours as a Core Part of Student Success** Abstract: It is well-established that office hours are an underutilized resource in higher education, often perceived as a last resort rather than an essential learning tool. This presentation aims to shift that perception by positioning consistent office hour attendance as a hallmark of proactive, successful students. Drawing on both personal experience and established research, this session introduces a model that reframes office hours as a regular practice for all students—not just those who are struggling. Key strategies include explicitly communicating the benefits of consistent attendance, setting expectations early, and fostering a culture of engagement through frequent reminders. This outcome-focused approach prioritizes the academic and personal gains for students over the initial motivation to seek help. Participants will explore real-world examples and evidence demonstrating how these strategies boost student engagement, understanding, and overall performance. Attendees will leave equipped with practical techniques and adaptable messaging to transform the role of office hours in fostering continuous, independent learning. Michael Smith (Trine University)

Location: Walb 226 Session: 1-C	**Lessons Learned: Excellence in Teaching Cohort Pilot Program at Ivy Tech**
	Abstract: For those interested in improving teaching quality in their own classrooms, as well as those who are tasked with providing support and instruction to new and continuing faculty in this realm; this session is designed to be a starting point for discussion about how to improve college teaching. Specifically, this session will look at a pilot program, Excellence in Teaching, developed in 2023 and facilitated during the fall 2023 and 2024 semesters at Ivy Tech. Both cohorts included new and veteran full time and adjunct instructors. Topics covered in the seminar included evaluating teaching strengths, creating a philosophy of teaching statement, creating flexible and engaging lesson plans, and classroom management strategies, among others. Sessions were spaced out every few weeks, starting in August with a kickoff session and concluding in January with teaching demonstrations and program evaluations. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in some of the activities originally created for this pilot. This session will look at the impetus for the program, how it was constructed and facilitated, and lessons learned from this pilot program over the past two years. Leigh Ann Routh (Ivy Tech Community College) Rebecca Biggs (Ivy Tech Community College)
Location: Walb 114 Session: 1-D	**Building Bridges: Cultural Awareness Training for Faculty, Staff, and International Students**
	Abstract: This presentation outlines a three-pronged approach to improving the on-campus experience of international students: We suggest providing cultural awareness training not just for international students, but also for faculty and staff. The number of international students has risen significantly on our campus over the years. Traditionally, the burden of adapting/acculturating has been resting on these students' shoulders. We argue that while it is necessary to familiarize international students with American cultural expectations and values, it is equally as important to train domestic faculty and staff on how to communicate successfully across cultures. Studies have shown that positive interaction with faculty (and staff) is among THE most important experiences that predict overall satisfaction among international students. In this presentation, we outline the (evolution of) trainings offered at PFW to international students, faculty, and staff, show what theses workshops look like, and help brainstorm how one can identify key facilitators and start similar training on other campuses. Suin Roberts (Purdue Fort Wayne) Maureen Linvill (Purdue Fort Wayne)

Location: Walb G21 Session: 1-E	**How Does Generative AI Help Us Learn about Learning? A Classroom Integration** Abstract: A recent survey shows that 66% of business leaders will not consider hiring a graduate without AI skills (Microsoft & LinkedIn, 2024). In this time of change, it is crucial that we equip ourselves and our students with the necessary skills, AI-related or not, to survive and thrive in the future job market. In the classroom of Learning and Cognition, we take generative AI (gen-AI) integration a step beyond the basics: we consider, discuss, and debate the possibility of gen-AI changing human cognition and learning processes. In this presentation, a group of five students will share their experience learning and teaching with five gen-AI platforms— ChatGPT 4o (Open AI, 2024), Copilot (Microsoft, 2024), Meta AI (Meta Platforms, Inc., 2024), Snapchat AI (Snap Inc., 2024) and Gemini (Google, 2024), while comparing their differences in accuracy, creativity, or completeness, addressing their strengths and limitations, and discussing potential applications of gen-AI to enhance learning or teaching practices. Through the students' experiences, we found that although gen-AI has great potential in designing personalized learning plans, the outcome of gen-AI assistant learning hinges on the intention of the user. Jia Cai (Indiana Tech) Alexandra Coreas (Indiana Tech) Neasia Lee (Indiana Tech) Katherine Hoff (Indiana Tech) Joelyn Tully (Indiana Tech) Isis Wagner (Indiana Tech)

| Location:
Classic Ballroom

Session: 1-F | **Interactive "Do the Reading!" Implementation and Facilitation of Chapter Discussion Questions for Student Motivation in Reading the Course Textbook (Roundtable)**

Abstract:

Faculty carefully determine reading assignments throughout the semester, indicating to students the information contained within the textbook is valuable, necessary, and integral to understanding the course material. However, faculty also express irritation and disappointment when students demonstrate non-completion of these assignments, whether through lack of class participation, failure to demonstrate material familiarity, and/or poor assessment grades. This round table discussion focuses on how the implementation of two to three discussion questions for each assigned chapter not only encourages students to complete textbook reading, but also provides a measurable practice to assess comprehension, critical thinking, and material application. Attendees will be able to discuss methods they employ to encourage student reading, suggestions to motivate students to do so, and engagement with the material. Student perception concerning motivation for reading completion, practicality, and benefit of these questions will be discussed, along with ways to create, implement, and encourage completion of this assignment with full effort. Finally, this discussion suggests avenues for further research, analysis, and practical application of this type of goal-directed assignment to reading-heavy courses, such as Social Sciences and Humanities.

Christa A. Dillman (Purdue Fort Wayne) |
| Location:
Classic Ballroom

Session: 1-G | **Using Projects Effectively (Roundtable)**

Abstract:

Projects and project based learning are hot topics in education. Many of us use projects to create a real world experience for our students. The question, however, is "Do we use assigned projects effectively?" Follow up roundtable discussion questions could include: (1) Is the project related to the content? (2) Have I established objectives and designed rubrics that will help guide students? (3) Should I provide an example of an excellent project, as developed by myself? (4) Is the project helping students develop self management skills? (5) How am I rating the interim work habits and the project's progress? (6) How am I providing feedback? Is it geared towards the objectives of the project? (7) Am I evaluating the project using the rubric provided to students at the onset?

Bryan Iddings (Garrett Keyser Butler Community Schools) |

Location: Walb G08 Session: 2-A	**Sustaining Quality Teaching - What do you need?** Abstract: We have created a reliable and valid instrument to measure your perceptions of your teaching and whether you feel you have what you need to maintain quality teaching. The instrument helps "diagnose" your teaching quality, passion, and satisfaction with teaching as a career. It also explores whether you have the necessary time, support and motivation to sustain your teaching. Come and see how you "measure" up :)! Marcia Dixson (Purdue Fort Wayne) Yvonne Zubovic (Purdue Fort Wayne) Julie Saam (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Location: Walb 226 Session: 2-B	**Session2-B: Digital Technology and Praxis in the Classroom: A Study on Using Smartphones to Discuss Design Principles and Ableism** Abstract: In the presentation "Digital Technology and Praxis in the Classroom: A Study on Using Smartphones to Discuss Design Principles and Ableism", Dr. Jacob Mertens will lead a discussion on the benefits of using praxis to bridge a conceptual understanding of ableism with a more hands-on use of familiar digital technology. Specifically, the presentation will walk attendees through a case study lab that instructs students to enable the accessibility functions on their personal cell phones, while giving students guiding questions to consider how web design coding on mobile web browsers is often not well equipped to function properly with these accessibility functions turned on. Ideally, the activity helps students critically examine the embedded assumptions of a presumed audience for digital technology, and begin to recognize the ideological underpinnings of digital media design. After the demonstration walkthrough, Dr. Mertens will then lead a discussion with attendees on the overall merits of using praxis to engage students within a broader lesson plan. Jacob Mertens (Manchester University)

Location: Walb G21 Session: 2-C	**From Kahoots to Board Games, Practical Gamification in the Classroom** Abstract: Educators have long tackled with getting students to engage with, understand, and retain material. While traditional lecturing and other conventional teaching methods have their place and are necessary, introducing a new style of teaching within the class can help students pay more attention and draw greater relevance to the material. Gamification has been studied over the years as ways to implement game-based elements into the classroom, whether through utilizing certain game methods or playing actual games. This session will focus on practical ways to start adding gamified content to your existing courses, as well as larger ways to implement game-based learning. We will explore light, medium, and heavy game-based activities that participants could take and implement into their class, through examples used within the presenter's classes. Additionally, participants will explore how to find existing game-based activities in their interest area and will brainstorm how to implement these strategies within their classes. Joanna Claudy (Trine University)
Location: Walb 222 Session: 2-D	**Quality over Quantity in Teaching and Assessment** Abstract: Students do not all learn in the same way, so it is critical to adapt instruction to meet their different learning styles. This presentation will explore the critical nature of providing quality, aimed instruction for an audience with varying learning methods and needs. It includes scaffolding learning; meaningful, relevant real-life instruction; purposeful, relationship-based feedback; and targeted, relevant assessments. Different techniques will be discussed that include audience engagement into the exploration of these. It will provide an in-depth discussion of different learning techniques appropriate for a collegiate setting. Furthermore, it will cover different types of review and assessment techniques beyond the standard testing often used in the college setting. Crysta Burke (Indiana Tech) Yun Su (Indiana Tech)

Location: Walb 114 Session: 2-E	**Bridging the feedback gap: Strategies to cultivate students' feedback literacy** Abstract: Feedback is widely recognized as essential for student learning. However, students and faculty often have differing perceptions about the purpose and usefulness of feedback (Carless & Winstone, 2020), thereby limiting its impact. Faculty can address this gap through feedback literacy. Feedback literacy is "the understandings, capacities, and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies" (Carless & Boud, 2018). When students have the skills to engage with feedback properly, they are more receptive to the powerful influence of feedback and more effective at using feedback to enhance their learning. This session will explore evidence-based strategies to enhance student engagement with feedback by fostering feedback literacy. Emphasis will be on the critical role students play in understanding and applying feedback. Presenters will guide faculty in identifying approaches for incorporating feedback literacy frameworks into their teaching. Rachel Ramsey (Purdue Fort Wayne) Andrea Bearman (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Location: Classic Ballroom Session: 2-F	**The Artificially Intelligent: Critical Thinking and Writing in the Era of AI** **(Roundtable)** Abstract: This session will explore strategies for fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and authentic writing in an age where generative AI is accessible to all students. With AI tools like ChatGPT becoming a staple in the academic and personal lives of students, educators across all disciplines face the unique challenge of guiding their students to use such tools ethically and not as a replacement for their own thoughts, voices, and ideas. Participants will be encouraged to share insights on how they are managing AI usage, or how they have struck the balance of integrating Artificial Intelligence into the classroom while emphasizing the importance of independent thought. Topics could include assignment design that encourages ethical technology use, methods that teach students the importance of analytical thinking in the classroom and beyond, and promoting practices that cultivate critical engagement with AI. The discussion will also address the implications of Artificial Intelligence on academic integrity. Jill Erwin (Trine University)

| Location:
Classic Ballroom

Session: 2-G | **Students Just Wanna Have Multiple Means of Expressing Their Knowledge: Cultivating Student Curiosity and Engagement Through Student-Centered Assessment** (Roundtable)

Abstract:

How do you get students to read course materials? How do we know that students are engaging with and learning from course materials? Many resort to regular reading responses - where students are expected to read materials and regularly write a small summary or take a comprehension quiz - to encourage students to stay on top of reading and to assess if students understood what they read. For many students, these assessments inspire them to do coursework out of sense of obligation rather than curiosity, growth, and perhaps even enjoyment, not to mention the mountain of grading that these frequent assignments create. In this roundtable, we will discuss what has inspired us to developed student-centered assignments that encourage student's curiosity and increase their engagement with and enjoyment of the learning process. We will discuss various assignments that we have developed that engage students and encourage them to develop a sense of ownership, autonomy, and understanding of their learning process. We will provide concrete examples of how we have used role playing games and integrated opportunities for both student choice and creative expression of what students are learning in class, we look forward to brainstorming how attendees can adapt and implement these assignments/assessments across different disciplines.

Stevie Scheurich (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Deborah Bauer (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Damian Fleming (Purdue Fort Wayne) |

11:45 – 12:30 PM **LUNCH BREAK**
12:30 – 1:15 PM **PLENARY SESSION | Dr. Jeremy A. Rentz**

Location: Walb 222 Session: 3-A	**Successful Strategies for Mentoring New Teaching Faculty** Abstract: This presentation will explore a mentoring program designed to support teaching faculty in their first year of employment. The program paired new faculty with experienced faculty mentors from outside their own department. In addition to monthly pair meetings, the entire cohort gathered each month to learn about the mission, history, and culture of the institution as well as best teaching practices. Cohort meetings were structured around reflective and community-building protocols, which invite deeper interaction around varied perspectives. The program was evaluated through surveys and reflections from five cohorts and interviews with past participants. Data analysis revealed that a clear structure of monthly activities and expectations, the cohort model, and careful mentor/mentee pairing were critical to the program's success. The study also highlighted the potential benefits of extending mentoring beyond the initial year. The mentoring program components and community-building and reflective protocols will be shared with session participants. Jody Saylor (Goshen College)

Location: Walb 226 Session: 3-B	**Book Bundles: Bringing Children's Books to Life in an Early Childhood Education Course** Abstract: Our paper offers relevant information pertaining to our campus library and instructor partnership for digital and print access to literature collections and the project's goal to foster student understanding of early childhood guidance course theory and content through children's books. Educators, course design specialists, and librarians can learn from our description of creating and implementing digital access to the campus library's collection of children's literature, available in both digital and print books for students in an asynchronous course. The Book Bundles project includes an IRB-approved research component in which each project objective is evaluated through qualitative and quantitative methods, including student artifacts, analysis of student discussion threads, Helmke library guide use, and circulation statistics. We will summarize our project and provide a research overview about our ongoing endeavor. It is our hope that by sharing this work, conference participants will 1) glean inspiration from this library-instructor partnership integrating technology to empower course design and student learning 2) collaborate in small groups with reading and evaluating children's books in terms of the criteria we used to create Book Bundles, and 3) report on one way in which they envision potential application of a library partnership to enhance their students' learning. Elizabeth Christian (Purdue Fort Wayne) Emily Tock (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Location: Walb 114 Session: 3-C	**Cultivating Cultural Competence in the Classroom** Abstract: This workshop aims to empower educators to foster inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms. Participants will explore the concept of cultural competence and its significance in creating equitable learning environments. Through a brief lecture, audience discussion(s), and a cultural circle activity, participants will develop a deeper understanding of their own cultural backgrounds and the diverse cultures of other. The workshop aims to provide practical strategies for incorporating cultural awareness into daily instruction, classroom management, and student-centered approaches. By the end of the session, participants should be equipped with knowledge and skills to create classrooms where all students feel valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. Dawn R. Moore (Trine University)

Location: Walb G08 Session: 3-D	**Legal and Student Engagement Considerations for AI and Teaching** Abstract: This session will help faculty think about and discuss AI's currently understood effects in their work in the following ways: copyright law; plagiarism accusations; teaching or learning outcomes; and, FERPA and student privacy. For example, do you own the outputs from AI tools you use? Should you use AI detection technology? Is there a reason to use AI in your teaching or assessments? Can teaching with AI violate a student's FERPA of privacy rights? Faculty encounter AI-related questions like these, and in this session, we'll explore these challenges together. The presenters will share insights on copyright considerations for AI-generated materials, the implications of AI on plagiarism policies, and FERPA's reach in an AI-enhanced classroom. With guidance by the presenters, participants will collaboratively identify strategies to address these topics, while gaining confidence in their responsible and legally-informed approaches to teaching in the AI era. Kent Kauffman (Purdue Fort Wayne) Rachel Ramsey (Purdue Fort Wayne)
Location: Walb G21 Session: 3-E	**Utilizing High-Impact Teaching Practices to Promote Student Success and Motivation** Abstract: In this presentation, I will introduce and discuss high-impact teaching practices. I will do so by describing the experiences of students and faculty of two different sections of first-year composition (FYC). I will explore the motivations behind how the teachers consciously (or unconsciously) implemented high-impact teaching practices in order to promote their students' learning. I will then describe the experiences of the students that completed the class, exploring what techniques they identified and appreciated as being particularly helpful. While the original research project focused on FYC classes, the high-impact teaching practices I will discuss can extend beyond this specific course context. Since this project was the result of a semester-long observation conducted at a regional campus of a midsize university, it is particularly applicable for other similarly situated institutions. Additionally, as both instructors were adjuncts, their teaching strategies and styles can show how instructors with limited time and other commitments are still able to provide high-quality teaching that their students identify and appreciate. After I introduce the high-impact practices, participants will brainstorm and discuss ways in which they can implement similar teaching strategies in their own disciplines. A.J. Rivera (Indiana University)