

# ITLC Professional Learning Newsletter

January/February 2023

## Spotlight: Advice from a Stressed Teacher

By Jessica Dalton-Carriger

To say this school year has been challenging may be the biggest understatement of the year.... For the past several years the education system has been hit with trial after trial. Between pivoting to digital learning, to surviving quarantine lockdown, and now having to come back to a traditional education, setting we have all faced our own challenges. Faculty, staff, and students alike have been pulled in all directions and we are now picking up the pieces, trying to find our new normal. And I am sorry to say that the new normal is going to be different than it was before. Like myself, I am sure you have been stressed to the max over this school year with little hope of relief. This has been a big topic of discussion for ITLC. What can we do to improve? How do we make things easier and better for all involved? How can we lighten our burden?

These questions have spawned much discussion and to start off the semester we would like to offer some gentle advice, take it or leave it, but we hope that you will find at least one thing that aids you in the start to the new semester.

### **Familiarity:**

The students are just as tired and stressed out as we are. At least we have experience in our jobs and have gone through the college process ourselves. College is a brand-new world for many of our students and they are having a hard time navigating it.

### **Empathy and Grace:**

I could sit here and say give yourself and your students some grace, but I mean really is that helpful? It's a fine line between being a doormat and being too strict. So instead, I'm going to say think about flexibility. We all need to be flexible in our lives; just like our students, we miss deadlines, our day doesn't go to plan, or it's just "one of those days". So, we need to think about how we can be flexible enough to handle the changes that come up. But that doesn't mean we just throw caution to the wind; we still need to instill consequences in our students. No matter how young they may seem they are in college, and they are ADULTS, and decisions have consequences. This is a lesson, a soft skill, a whatever you would like to call it aspect that they need to learn about life. But at the end of the day ask yourself if you focused on some aspect or rule and it didn't go well at all, was it really worth it? Or could I have done something else to make it easier for myself and my students?



## Change it Up:

Have you been using the same book, slides, lecture notes, etc. to the point that you are even sick of hearing yourself talk about it? If, like me, you are at this point, it's time to make a change!! And I know what you are going to say I don't have time for that..... Well, if you don't make time you are going to be stuck FOREVER! Okay that was a little dramatic, but still, what if you looked at or changed one thing a day, just one thing. By the end of the semester, you could have a whole new class to teach. Effort isn't always all or nothing, often cumulative matters more.

## Permission:

We were sitting in a meeting and a Dean who shall remain nameless said the most profound thing. "We need to give teachers permission to not teach the entire textbook!" What an interesting concept. We put so much pressure on ourselves and our students to learn everything, to cover every page of the textbook. But guess what, we can never possibly teach everything given time restraints and they are unlikely to remember it ALL, so instead we need to really focus on what we need to teach, what the students really need to know. Ask yourself, what is the best way for me to go about that?



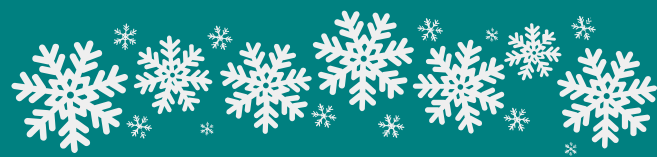
## Self-Care:

This may seem like a broken record but hey self-care is important, like really important to our health and mental sanity. So maybe it is time to take it more seriously. Now everyone is different, but at the end of the day you must find a way to release stress whether that is yoga or a kickboxing class. You are not on call 24/7, you need to have a life outside of your job as well. And while doing your job you need to self-care as well. So, some ideas to aid you in that quest:

• Actually, use your office hours to get work and grading done, make an effort to not take so much work home with you. You can put a note on your door saying you're a grading or making lectures and to please knock if you need something.

- Put time in your schedule for catch-up. We are all going to fall behind so just go ahead and put that on your schedule.
- Stand up and walk around, good gracious do we sit too much!
- Have healthy boundaries with your students. If you have a student who is constantly in your office looking for attention and not really discussing anything related to class, you need to establish boundaries with that student. This is not healthy for either of you.
- Organize, Organize, Organize. I mean seriously make a Daily Goals or To Do list - they work wonders, but, again, be flexible with your expectations.
- Have a quitting time. Again, we are not employed 24/7, you need to have a time of day when you stop working and actually have a life. Go for a walk, cook dinner, spend time with your family, or sleep for goodness' sake.

The bottom line is if you take better care of yourself, and you are going to have to do this because no one else is going to do it for you, you will improve every aspect of your life.





# Classroom Challenge

## Ice Breakers



For our start of semester Classroom Challenge we surveyed several faculty and staff on great Ice Breakers for the first day of class. These can be a fun way to get students talking and to alleviate the first day jitters.

### Questions

- What is a goal you have achieved this past year?
- Star Trek or Star Wars?
- If you could ride any animal into battle what would it be and why?
- Is there something you've dreamed of doing for a long time?
- Would you rather play a game with someone more or less talented than you?
- What does it mean to be "truly educated"?
- What is the last TV show you binge watched?
- What is one thing we would never guess about you?
- Based on what you are passionate about in life, name a college class you wish RSCC would offer.



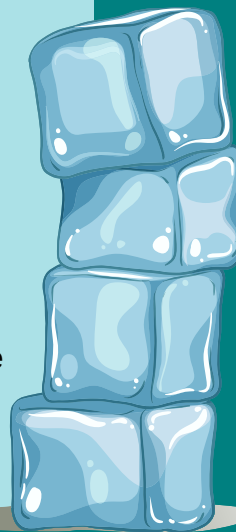
### Questions

- What comes to mind when you think of [insert your discipline here]?
- What was your favorite class in school/college?
- If you knew you couldn't fail what would you do?
- Or If you knew you would fail, what would you do anyway?
- If you were a teacher, what would you teach?
- Who is your favorite superhero and why?
- If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- What fictional character would you like to meet?
- If you could go on one reality show, what would it be?
- What commercial bugs you the most?
- What weird thing do you have nostalgia for?



### In-Class Activities

- Have students submit music requests to play during live labs.
- Have students fill out a Student Information Sheet
- Break into Pairs or Groups:
  - Interviews
  - Connections
    - What do they have in common?
- Padlet, Jamboard, or Zoom Whiteboard
  - Greatest Hope & Greatest Fear
  - Childhood Dreams
  - Upload picture describes them
  - Write one word that describes them
  - Describe themselves in a Tweet format
  - Your Favorite Quote
- Share 5-10 songs that represent the soundtrack of their lives.
- Scavenger Hunt



What a teacher is, is more important than  
what he teaches.

-Karl Menninger

## Recommended Reading

Articles:

- [How to Teach a Good First Day of Class](#)
- [Teaching: Is it Time to Redefine Class Participation?](#)

Podcast:

- [Creating a Safe, Welcoming, and Positive Environment for Your Online Students](#)

Book:

- [Why Students Don't Like School](#) by Daniel Willingham

## Upcoming Opportunities

January

- [RSCC Spring In-Service Schedule](#)
- ITLC Workshop "[A Closer Look at Assessments](#)" (Jan. 12th @2pm EST)
- CTAT Workshop "[Hybrid-Flexible AKA HyFlex- What's that mean?](#)" (Jan. 10th @3pm EST)
- CTAT Workshop "[Building a Community of Learners](#)" (Jan. 12th @1pm EST)

February

- ITLC Workshop "[Collaborative Projects](#)" (Feb. 3rd @10am EST)
- Check CTAT's Website for their February Offering!

On Demand

- [RSCC PL On Demand](#)
- [Monday Morning Mentor](#)
- [NISOD Connections & Conversations](#)
- [Grading Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity and Rigor](#)

Connect  
With Us

[Check Out the RSCC Professional Learning Website](#)

Contact: Jessica Dalton-Carriger  
[dcarrigerjn@roanestate.edu](mailto:dcarrigerjn@roanestate.edu)

