



CENTER *for* TEACHING

20 Annual 18-19 Report

CFT MISSION

The Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching promotes university teaching that leads to meaningful student learning. Our offerings are available to any members of the Vanderbilt community interested in developing their teaching practices.



FROM DIRECTOR DEREK BRUFF

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the CFT launched new initiatives and resources, collaborated with new campus partners, and welcomed new staff members, while also expanding and strengthening its ongoing programs and services.

This was my sixteenth year at the CFT, counting my two years as a graduate fellow and fourteen years on staff, which means I've been a part of the CFT for half of its history. The center was started back in 1986 by founding director Ken Bain, and I'm proud to lead a center with such a rich history of helping educators develop foundational teaching skills and explore new teaching practices.

The pages that follow give a sense of that work and the impact it has on the Vanderbilt campus. I'm excited to see what's next for the CFT, as we continue to support the Vanderbilt teaching community.

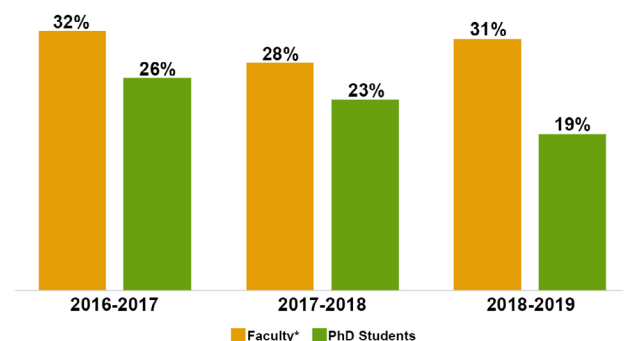
REACH

In 2018-2019, the CFT reached **1,283 faculty, staff, and students** across campus through consultations, programs, and events. That included **31%** of all **full-time, Provost-reporting faculty**, as well as **19%** of all **PhD students**, among others.



Faculty share ideas and get feedback from peers during the Course Design Institute.

Faculty and PhD Students Reached via Consultations, Programs, and Events



* Full-time, Provost-reporting faculty plus VUMC-reporting Nursing faculty

FOUNDATIONAL TEACHING SKILLS

Certificate in College Teaching

This program focuses on the research on how people learn as well as best teaching practices, preparing participants for future teaching roles in the academy. This year, **71 graduate students and postdocs** participated in the program. Of those, **42 completed** the certificate requirements. An additional **15 graduate students** completed the Certificate in Humanities Teaching and Learning program.

"Beyond providing some novel approaches towards making my teaching more accessible and interesting to the students, the [JTF] program [was] instrumental in helping me design a graduate course from scratch and have it be a resounding success the first time around."



Josh Caldwell, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows

17 faculty members were selected for the Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows program, which offers selected junior faculty opportunities to enhance their teaching and build courses that foster meaningful student learning. In addition to Fellows from Owen and a variety of departments in Arts & Science, the program included cohorts partly supported by Engineering and Peabody.

"[My consultant] guided me in exploring how to address perceived barriers in my environment and my own thinking, as well as actively use my strengths, which gave me the feedback I needed to effectively put those strategies into action."



Susan Douglas, Assistant Professor of the Practice of Human Development, Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations

Teaching Consultations

The CFT provides confidential consultation services, ranging from consultations about course design to mid-semester feedback to course evaluations and providing an opportunity for instructors to reflect on their teaching experiences and their students' learning. This year, CFT staff conducted a total of **614 consultations** with **401 unique individuals**.



Graduate teaching fellow Chelsea Yarborough leads a session with new teaching assistants.

Teaching Workshops

As part of its efforts to help instructors develop foundational teaching skills and explore new teaching practices, the CFT hosted **23 teaching workshops** on a variety of topics open to the Vanderbilt teaching community. These sessions were attended by **131 faculty, staff, and students** representing all of Vanderbilt's colleges and schools.

Topics included student motivation, leading discussions, inclusive teaching, teaching with technology, and reflecting on one's teaching. Some of these workshops were offered in August 2018 as part of the CFT's annual **Just-in-Time Teaching Conference**, two days of sessions just prior to the start of fall classes.

Teaching Innovations Blog Series

[\[https://bit.ly/2MUOaHr\]](https://bit.ly/2MUOaHr)



Faculty work with peers to develop course plans during the Course Design Institute.

10 STEPS to Getting Started

1. **Create an open and safe environment.**
How can you cultivate a welcoming environment?
2. **Set a goal for the activity.**
What do you want students to be able to do?
3. **Choose the right exercise.**
What do students need to do to reach the goal?
4. **Identify preparation for the exercise.**
What do students—and you—need to do to be prepared?
5. **Consider links to other class elements.**
How does this exercise fit within the class flow?
6. **Plan how you will introduce the activity.**
How will you explain the rationale to students?
7. **Plan the logistics.**
How long will it take? How will you monitor progress and ensure timely transitions?
8. **Consider how you will judge success.**
What matters will you use, formal or informal?
9. **Just do it.**
Active learning is productive and energizing for both students and instructors.
10. **Iterate and expand.**

For students to get the most out of active learning, it's important for them to view the classroom as a welcoming space where they can reveal their confusion, make mistakes, and try out new approaches to learning. Instructors can foster this kind of environment by emphasizing the role of active learning as an effective tool, the value of hearing different voices and trying new approaches, and the role that mistakes play in learning. Kimberly Tanner and colleagues have identified the value of *noncontent "instructor talk"* for these purposes.

2 Set a goal for the activity.

Perhaps the most important step in planning active learning is to identify your **learning objective**. Break your learning goal into specific, measurable objectives that you can use to assess whether your students are learning and be able to work with the topic. **Bloom's taxonomy** and **associated verbs** are very useful tools for this. Write down your goal and the known learning objectives that you want to achieve. Use the items to write down the goal and to use language that emphasizes what students need to be able to do.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Sanders plans goals for her students should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practice a skill - explain a concept - make an analogical transfer - identify the features of a concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shane Hutton may use active learning for students to achieve common competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practice setting up a problem - practice and explain with an abstract/complex - connect between different representations of data or relationships - practice interpreting a specific type of graph or diagram - use proportional reasoning
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Your learning objective does a lot of the work of this for you: you've identified what you want students to be able to do, so your active learning exercise gives them a chance to lead up to or practice doing it. Nonetheless, there are several pieces to consider when making this choice.

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Active Learning Cheat Sheet

The CFT hosted a learning community for faculty and graduate students interested in active learning. **21 faculty** and **6 graduate students** met seven times during the academic year to explore the literature on active learning and develop solutions to their active learning challenges. At the end of the year, the group collaborated on an Active Learning Cheat Sheet that offers ten concrete steps to help instructors get started with active learning. The Cheat Sheet was well-received on Twitter, producing more than 1100 engagements, and has become part of an Active Learning guide that is read by about 2500 visitors per month. [<https://bit.ly/2Vsywll>]

Community-Engaged Teaching

For the first year in this format, the CFT hosted a learning community on the pedagogies of community engagement. The learning community involved **7 faculty** of all ranks from five departments who met monthly to (re)design courses around service-learning, internships, and experiential learning projects. The faculty received a small stipend from their home departments; teleconference seminars with award-winning engagement scholar, Patti Clayton; and opportunities to learn from each other and CFT staff.

Course Design Institutes

The CFT offered its fourth annual Course Design Institute in May. In this three-day workshop, **14 faculty members** from **6 colleges and schools** designed (or redesigned) courses using the “Students as Producers” approach. This year for the first time, we also offered a similar program for **16 graduate students and postdocs** from **6 colleges and schools**.

"I benefited tremendously from the workshop's theoretical and practical approach to the many ways we as educators can incorporate such learning practices into our courses. I think Vanderbilt students will see immediate benefits from the work we accomplished."



Jonathan Hiskey, Associate Professor of Political Science

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

"I benefitted immensely from the conversations held throughout the year, particularly as the CFT provided a safe venue for students to voice their concerns and share their experiences. The workshops also provided me with an expanded lexicon for thinking through the challenges international students face both socially, academically, and at the university level."

Graduate student participant, 2019

International Students Learning Community

The CFT continues to host learning communities on issues of Teaching, Difference, and Power. This year's learning community focused on the assets and needs of international students and faculty. Expert faculty and staff from International Student & Scholar Services, the Writing Studio, the English Language Center, the Provost's Office of Inclusive Excellence, the Peabody Dean's Office, and various departments, along with many insightful students, helped the **25 participants** understand the experiences of international students, and develop inclusive teaching strategies for students from a wide array of national origins.

Earth Horizons Workshop

This year the CFT was honored to support Earth Horizons, a Vanderbilt University-Tennessee State University Bridge Program in the geosciences, by helping its faculty confront the challenges of inclusive teaching in a series of workshops. The goals were to help the faculty of both VU and TSU understand diverse student experiences, and to embrace inclusive pedagogies so that all students can thrive in the learning opportunities the program offers.

"The workshops [allowed] us to form deeper and more authentic relationships and to explore our own assumptions and understandings about teaching students in diverse groups in ways that have turned out to be critical to the success of our NSF-funded program, to our development as teachers, and, importantly, to opening the door to conversations on these topics in our home departments."



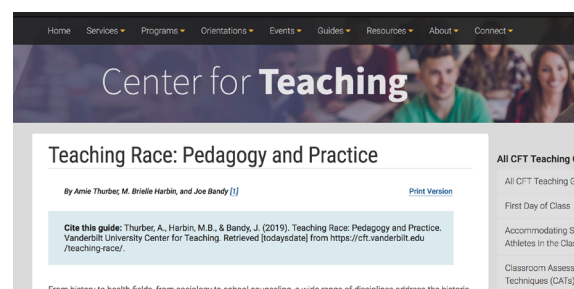
Lily Claiborne, Senior Lecturer of Earth & Environmental Sciences

Inclusive Teaching Workshops

The CFT facilitated **16 workshops** on inclusive teaching this year attended by **210 faculty, staff, and students**. Some workshops were open to the entire campus, such as "Teaching Inclusively to Diverse Groups" offered at the Just-in-Time Teaching conference, while others were offered at the request of departments, programs, and schools. Although the CFT weaves inclusive teaching strategies into most of its offerings, these sessions focused on particular aspects of inclusive teaching, including facilitating hard conversations, managing civility and conflict, and inclusive course design.

Teaching Race: Pedagogy and Practice

This year the CFT debuted a revised guide on teaching race authored by CFT graduate fellows Amie Thurber and Brielle Harbin and CFT assistant director Joe Bandy. The new guide draws on several years of CFT conversations on the topic, as well as the scholarly literature on teaching race. The guide suggests five principles for teaching race: (1) encouraging reflexivity, (2) welcoming difficulty, (3) meeting students where they are, (4) engaging affective and embodied dimensions of learning, and (5) building a learning community. [<https://bit.ly/2KSyhi4>]



Fostering Student Success in STEM Courses

In partnership with the Office of Inclusive Excellence, the CFT offered workshops in January and early February to STEM TAs in order to equip them with skills and strategies they can use to teach effectively and support all students. The workshop focused on why high-performing students might struggle in their STEM courses and the ways that STEM TAs are especially well positioned to help these students succeed. In total, **19 participants** from **11 different STEM departments** attended the event.

CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

"I really appreciated the ways [CFT staff] walked our cohort through the backwards course design process, offering personal anecdotes and concrete examples, and allowed us to share our expertise with one another as well."



Stephany Cuevas, Assistant Professor of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations

Academic Pathways Course Design Seminar

The CFT offered a Course Design Seminar to **9 Academic Pathways Fellows**. Participants attended **6 sessions** held from April through June where they learned about theory and evidence-based practices in order to help them design new courses they will be teaching or hoping to teach in the near future in collaboration with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

Immersion Vanderbilt Learning Goals

In support of Immersion Vanderbilt, the CFT collaborated with Arts & Science leadership to facilitate a series of discussions with A&S Immersion Coordinators and the campus-wide Faculty Steering Committee this spring. Participants brainstormed and debated a wide array of aspirational outcomes and potential projects, as well as administrative challenges and opportunities. This work led to the design of a rubric of immersive learning goals, which will be refined for use by students, faculty, and administrators in A&S and across the campus.

Active Learning Classrooms

Active learning classrooms feature round tables, moveable seating, whiteboards, digital displays, and other design choices that make the classrooms ideal for small group work and team-based learning. In 2018-2019, CFT staff consulted with campus planners and architects on the design and use of active learning classrooms in support of **3 major capital improvement efforts**: one focused on science and engineering facilities, another on the "historic core" buildings in Arts and Science, and a third on learning spaces in new residential colleges. The CFT also published a new teaching guide on active learning classrooms on its website. [<https://bit.ly/1TDXfyJ>]



Graduate students prepare for their teaching assistant duties during TAO.



Fellows present findings on the effectiveness of their online modules at the BOLD celebration.

Invited Workshops

In recent years, the CFT has increased its intentional collaborations with departments, programs, and schools. CFT senior staff members act as liaisons to the various parts of campus, working with area leaders to identify teaching and learning needs and then develop programming to meet those needs.

In 2018-2019, CFT staff facilitated a total of **62 invited workshops** and conversations for **28 colleges, schools, departments, programs, and units**. A total of **487 faculty, staff, and students** attended these sessions, representing all of Vanderbilt's colleges and schools.

CAMPUS OUTREACH

Open Classroom

Too often in higher education instructors do not have the opportunity to watch and discuss each other's teaching, and therefore struggle in what Lee Shulman has called "pedagogical solitude." The Center for Teaching has long worked to change this isolation by creating occasions for pedagogical community. In September 2018, the CFT hosted its second annual Open Classroom event, three days of teaching visits featuring **14 teacher-hosts** and attended by **42 faculty and graduate visitors**. Each of the three days featured open classrooms with a common challenge -- Teaching Large Classes, Teaching Writing, and Inclusive Teaching -- followed by a facilitated afternoon discussion about that challenge involving the hosts and visitors.



Stacey Johnson leads a session on creating assignments during the Course Design Institute.

Celebration of Learning

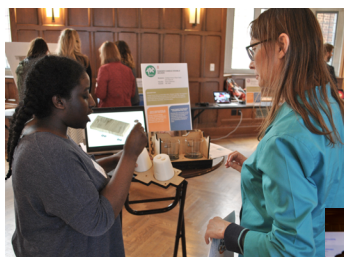
"Thanks for the chance to share our work! We loved the event, and it was so interesting to see the other projects as well. Thanks for hosting!"



Madeline Merwin, Blair '21

The CFT helps faculty and other instructors across campus adopt a "Students as Producers" approach to course design, engaging their students not only as consumers of information, but also as producers of knowledge. The Celebration of Learning provides a chance for the campus to see what engaged learning can look like across disciplines and fields. The Celebration of Learning featured **30 student projects** from across campus, and over **120 faculty, staff, and students** attended.

On February 4, 2019, the CFT held its second annual Celebration of Learning, an exhibition of students as producers. Students from all four undergraduate colleges and schools as well as several graduate programs shared research projects and design initiatives, podcasts and documentaries, inventions and board games, clothing catalogs and virtual reality simulations, and more.



Student demonstrates her candle wicking device (left). Attendee experiences a student virtual reality project (bottom).



EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Digital Literacies Learning Community

How can we prepare students for a world where they both consume and produce media in a variety of digital forms? This year, the CFT hosted a learning community for educators interested in exploring ways to teach digital literacies, that is, the skills and competences students need to thoughtfully learn, participate in, and contribute to our digital and multimedia culture. Through a series of panel conversations featuring **17 faculty and staff** from around campus, the learning community discussed critical media literacy, multimodal assignments, online communities, teaching collaborations, and universal design for learning.

Podcasts



Leading Lines

How can college faculty use technology to enhance student learning in creative, intentional, and effective ways? The educational technology podcast Leading Lines explores that question through interviews with educators, researchers, and technologists at Vanderbilt and

elsewhere. Produced by the CFT and campus partners, Leading Lines released 20 episodes in 2018-2019 exploring such topics as digital literacies, games and simulations, multimodal assignments, online education, and teaching with podcasts. Leading Lines episodes have been **played or downloaded over 23,000 times** since the podcast launched in 2016, with over **17,000 listens** in 2018-2019.



VandyVox

VandyVox is a new podcast showcasing the best of student-produced audio at Vanderbilt University. Each episode features student work from a curricular or co-curricular project, including audio documentaries, radio dramas, spokenword essays, and ongoing podcasts. Season 1 of VandyVox

was launched in February 2019 as a joint production between the CFT and Vanderbilt Student Media. The eight episodes include student audio from such diverse fields as math, English, law, and anthropology. Collectively, VandyVox episodes have been **played or downloaded 2,500 times** thus far. Season 2, featuring more critical and creative student audio productions, will drop in August 2019.

"Whenever I had a question or request, the Brightspace team was incredibly responsive and excellent at problem-solving. I utilized their drop-in hours and the service and people are first-rate."



Bill Christie, Frances Hampton Currey Professor of Management in Finance
Professor of Law

Brightspace Support

The CFT is the institutional home for Brightspace, Vanderbilt's course management system, providing both technical and pedagogical support for faculty and other instructors using Brightspace around campus. This year, the Brightspace support team led **13 workshops and orientations** for **123 individuals**, worked with **103 Brightspace users** through consultations and drop-in hours, and assisted **1,342 faculty, staff, and students** through email and phone support.

BOLD Fellows

The BOLD Fellows program supports faculty/graduate student teams in developing online learning experiences and measuring their impact on student learning. **8 teams** completed projects in 2018-2019, impacting classes in Hearing and Speech Sciences; Human and Organizational Development; Leadership, Policy, and Organizations; Leadership and Learning in Organizations; Mechanical Engineering; Psychology; and Women's and Gender Studies.

"Participating in the BOLD program provided me with a unique experience that I was able to draw on during my faculty job search. My BOLD project allowed me to demonstrate in a tangible way my understanding of evidence-based teaching practices and course design."



Natalie Covington, Graduate Student,
Hearing and Speech Sciences

OUR TEAM

Center for Teaching Staff



Derek Bruff
Director



Cynthia Brame
Associate Director



Joe Bandy
Assistant Director



Heather Fedesco
Assistant Director



Stacey Johnson
Assistant Director



Rhett McDaniel
Educational Tech.



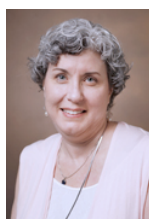
Grant Neal
Lead Inst.Tech.



Erica Brandon
Instructional Tech.



Brandon Crawford
Instructional Tech.



Tracy Tveit
Program Coord.



Juliet Traub
Admin. Assistant

Graduate Teaching Fellows



Robert Marx



Alex Oxner



Greg Smtih



Chelsea Yarborough

New Assistant Director, Heather Fedesco

At the beginning of the academic year, the CFT welcomed new assistant director, Heather Fedesco. Heather has a Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication from Purdue University and teaches in the Human and Organizational Development department. Prior to her appointment at Vanderbilt, Heather was a Pedagogy Researcher at Colorado College and previously served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Instructional Excellence at Purdue. Heather researches the ways in which features of the learning environment, especially instructor connectedness, can influence student motivation.

Democratically Engaged Assessment

Over the past five years, assistant director Joe Bandy has led a national group of community engagement scholars on developing an innovative, democratic approach to the assessment of publicly engaged scholarship (teaching and research). The result has been a series of professional workshops, institutes, and articles for several professional societies, all culminating in the "Democratically Engaged Assessment" white paper for *Imagining America*. The white paper represents a highly expansive synthesis of assessment scholarship on community engagement, and an innovative reframing of assessment methods within a democratic methodology that values full participation, co-creativity, generativity, rigor, practicability, and resilience.

Science Teaching Essentials

CFT associate director Cynthia Brame's book, *Science Teaching Essentials: Short Guides to Good Practice*, was released by Academic Press in February 2019. It provides research-based strategies and resources for addressing common teaching challenges in the sciences, health professions, and engineering. Written for current and future faculty, *Science Teaching Essentials* features short, stand-alone chapters on topics such as inclusive teaching, course design, active learning, group work, lecturing, writing exams, and rubrics, serving as a practical and easy-to-use guide.

Publications

Since its founding in 1986, the CFT has contributed to the literature on teaching and learning in higher education. Below is a list of recent articles and chapters, written by CFT staff.

Fedesco, N., Bonem, E. M., Wang, C., & Henares, R. (2019). Connections in the Classroom: Separating the Effects of Instructor and Peer Relatedness in the Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale. *Motivation and Emotion*, 43, 758-770.

Bonem, E. M., **Fedesco**, N., Zissimopoulos, A. (2019). What you do is less important than how you do it: The effects of learning environment, contact hours and active learning on course environment, student motivation and academic performance. *Learning Environments Research*.

Dewsbury, B. and **Brame**, C. J. (2019). An introduction to the Inclusive Teaching Evidence-Based Teaching Guide. *CBE Life Sciences Education*.

Dewsbury, B. and **Brame**, C. J. (2019). Evidence-based Teaching Guides: Inclusive Teaching. *CBE Life Sciences Education*.

Bruff, D. (2019). Students as producers: Collaborating toward deeper learning. In Pierard, C., Jackson, A., & Schadl, S. (Eds.), *Scholarship in the Sandbox: Academic Libraries as Laboratories, Forums, and Archives for Student Work*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.



Course Design Institute

THE CFT PROMOTES EFFECTIVE TEACHING THROUGH A VARIETY OF COMPLEMENTARY PROCESSES AND WE DRAW ON AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE BODY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON TEACHING AND LEARNING. WE PROMOTE DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES BY HELPING OTHERS CRITICALLY REFLECT ON THEIR OWN TEACHING AND THEIR STUDENTS' LEARNING.

Celebration of Learning

