Excellence in Online Teaching Awards (EOTA)

Global Learning Experiences

Focus: Intentional integration of global perspectives and intercultural learning.

Description

This award honors courses that thoughtfully incorporate global perspectives into content, assignments, and learning outcomes. These courses foster intercultural competence and global awareness, preparing students to engage meaningfully in a diverse world.

Jurors will consider the depth and intentionality of global integration across course materials, assignments, and learning outcomes. They will evaluate how effectively the course fosters intercultural competence and global awareness, as well as the authenticity and impact of student engagement with global perspectives. Attention will also be given to the coherence between global elements and course goals, and the extent to which the experience prepares students to navigate and contribute to a diverse, interconnected world.

Score Rationale

- 9-10: Global perspectives are deeply integrated across materials, assignments, and outcomes; engagement is authentic and impactful.
- 7-8: Multiple global elements are present and well-connected to course goals.
- 5-6: Some global content is included; integration and depth vary.
- 3-4: Minimal global content; relevance is inconsistent.
- **1-2**: No meaningful global integration.

Instructional Innovation

Focus: Bold, research-informed course design that fosters creativity, curiosity, and student-centered learning.

Description

This award honors courses that exemplify both imaginative and evidence-based instructional design. These courses feature creative teaching approaches while maintaining clear goals, active learning, and effective assessment. Instructors foster curiosity, collaboration, and real-world relevance, creating online learning environments that are both engaging and pedagogically rigorous.

Jurors will consider the originality and pedagogical grounding of the course design, including how well it integrates research-informed strategies with imaginative approaches. They will evaluate the clarity of learning goals, the use of active and collaborative learning, and the authenticity of assessments. Special attention will be given to how the course fosters curiosity, creativity, and student-centered engagement in a rigorous and relevant learning environment.

Score Rationale

- **9-10 – Exemplary**: Course design is highly original and grounded in best practices. Students engage in meaningful collaboration, explore ideas boldly, and benefit from clear goals, active learning, and authentic assessment.
- **7-8 – Excellent**: Creative and research-based strategies are well-integrated. Students are engaged through collaborative and relevant learning experiences.
- **5-6 – Proficient**: Some creative or research-informed elements are present. Instruction is generally effective, though not consistently innovative or rigorous.
- **3-4 – Developing**: Instructional design shows limited creativity or pedagogical grounding. Student engagement and learning outcomes are inconsistent.
- **1-2 – Limited**: Course lacks innovation and instructional clarity. Minimal evidence of student-centered or research-based practices.

Relationship-Rich Teaching Strategies

Focus

Intentional instructional practices that foster meaningful human connections and a sense of belonging in the online learning environment.

Description

This award recognizes online courses that prioritize building strong, supportive relationships between students and instructors, peers, and mentors. Inspired by the principles of the book *Relationship-Rich Education*, these courses create "inescapable opportunities" for connection, care, and community. Instructors design learning environments where students feel seen, valued, and inspired to grow—academically and personally—through authentic engagement and trust.

Jurors will consider the intentionality and consistency of relationship-building strategies embedded in the course design. They will evaluate how the course fosters meaningful connections between students and instructors, peers, and mentors, and how these relationships contribute to a sense of belonging and purpose. Particular attention will be given to the authenticity of interactions, the presence of care and encouragement, and the extent to which students feel seen, supported, and inspired to grow.

Score Rationale

- **9-10 – Exemplary**: The course is intentionally designed to cultivate meaningful relationships in the online classroom. Students experience deep care, consistent encouragement, and opportunities to explore purpose through authentic interactions with instructors and peers.
- **7-8 – Excellent**: The course fosters strong relationships and a welcoming online learning environment. Students feel supported and connected through regular, intentional engagement.
- **5-6 – Proficient**: The course includes some consistent relationship-building strategies. Students experience moderate connection and support.
- **3-4 – Developing**: Relationship-building is limited or inconsistently applied. Students may feel isolated or unsupported at times.
- **1-2 – Limited**: The course lacks intentional strategies to foster relationships. Students experience minimal connection or care.

Large Enrollment Strategies

Note: Since the max recommended class size varies from department to department, the phrase "Large Enrollment Course" is defined as a course where the class size is 2x or more than the max class size for that discipline, and the students are taught in the same section by either one instructor, or one instructor with Teaching Assistants.

Focus

Demonstrating pedagogical innovation and student success in online courses through scalable engagement strategies, effective use of educational technology, and sustainable instructional practices.

Description

This award recognizes faculty who excel in teaching large enrollment online courses where traditional face-to-face teaching methods must be reimagined for the digital environment. Large enrollment online courses present unique challenges including maintaining academic rigor across diverse student populations, creating meaningful connections at scale, providing timely feedback to hundreds of students, and ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities.

Recipients demonstrate mastery in designing online learning experiences that are both scalable and personal, using innovative digital tools and pedagogical approaches to build community, support student success, and maintain high academic standards. These courses may display sophisticated course architecture, strategic technology integration, creative assessment methods, and proactive student support systems that can effectively serve large numbers of learners in the online environment.

Jurors will consider the effectiveness and innovation of instructional strategies used to manage large online enrollments, particularly those that scale engagement, maintain academic rigor, and support student success. They will evaluate the integration of educational technologies, the design of scalable assessments and feedback systems, and the intentional creation of community and connection at scale. Emphasis will be placed on sustainability, equity, and the instructor's ability to deliver a high-quality, student-centered experience to 100+ learners in a single section.

Scoring Rationale

- **9-10 points:** Exceptional innovation in large-scale online pedagogy with clear evidence of student success, sophisticated community-building strategies, creative use of technology for engagement and assessment, and comprehensive support systems that effectively serve 100+ students.
- **7-8 points:** Strong online teaching practices with effective strategies for managing large enrollments, good student outcomes, and clear evidence of thoughtful course design for scale.
- **5-6 points:** Competent online teaching with some strategies for large enrollment management, but limited innovation or mixed evidence of effectiveness at scale.
- **3-4 points:** Basic online teaching approach with minimal adaptation for large enrollment challenges or inconsistent implementation of scalable practices.
- **1-2 points:** No evidence of specialized strategies for large enrollment online teaching or poor outcomes despite large class size.

Quality Course Materials

Focus: Organization, accessibility, and technical excellence of course content.

Description

This award recognizes courses with well-organized, accessible, and professionally produced materials. These materials support learning goals and meet high standards for usability and compliance.

Jurors will consider the clarity, accessibility, and technical quality of course materials, including how well they support learning goals and enhance the student experience. They will evaluate the organization and usability of the course structure, the visual and functional quality of content, and the degree to which materials meet accessibility and compliance standards. Emphasis will be placed on up-to-date materials and the overall professionalism of the course presentation.

Score Rationale

- 9-10: Materials are current, accessible, and visually excellent; structure is intuitive.
- 7-8: Materials are well-produced and mostly accessible.
- 5-6: Materials are adequate but may have flaws.
- 3-4: Materials are inconsistent or outdated.
- **1-2**: Materials are poor quality or non-functional.

Student Engagement

Focus: Motivation, interaction, and critical thinking.

Description

This award celebrates courses that actively engage with the course content, the course activities, the instructor and each other. These courses promote meaningful interaction and empower and encourage students to be self-directed and take responsibility for their learning.

Jurors will consider the extent to which the course fosters active student engagement through interaction with content, peers, and the instructor. They will evaluate how the course promotes motivation, critical thinking, as well as how it empowers and encourages students to be self-directed and take responsibility for their learning. Emphasis will be placed on the consistency and depth of engagement strategies used throughout the course, and how these strategies are reflected in the course evaluations.

Score Rationale

- **5**: Students are highly engaged; community and interaction are strong; critical thinking is central.
- **4**: Engagement and interaction are consistent and inclusive.
- **3**: Engagement is present but varies.
- **2**: Limited engagement or interaction.
- **1**: No evidence of student engagement strategies.