



The Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning (CITL) is a campus hub for faculty, staff and students. Our mission is to explore and promote innovative teaching to support transformative learning experiences in all modalities. We've compiled the following tips to help you get started for a successful Fall semester.

Pre-Semester: Approaching the Starting Line

As you approach the beginning of a new term, there are opportunities and challenges you should consider. For starters, make sure you're aware of the [campus Syllabus Policies and Requirements](#). In addition to providing critical information about your communication expectations, course assignments and grading policies, it is also an opportunity for you to teach your students how to be successful.

You'll also need to consider what digital platform will best suit the needs of your course and your students. [Illinois Compass 2g](#) is the campus-supported learning management system that offers a secure environment for you to share content, create and collect assignments, keep track of grades, and run a variety of analytics. You may find that your college or department supports [Moodle](#) as an alternative to Compass2g.

For synchronous sessions, [Zoom](#) is the campus-supported web conferencing tool that allows instructors to create virtual classrooms and office hours, making connecting with your students easier, and more reliable. If you're unsure which of these tools is right for your course, consider reaching out to CITL's Instructional Support and Training team at CITL-info@illinois.edu.

Early Semester: Off to a Running Start

The syllabus can help students understand your communication expectations, but how you communicate with students during the beginning of the term will establish the tone and patterns of your engagement. Be sure to model the behaviors you expect your students to follow. If your course is online this Fall, you may want to review these [tips on maintaining student engagement in the online environment](#). For more tips on remote and blended instruction, you may also want to review the resources on the [Transitioning to Blended Learning page](#).

Student evaluations of teaching are an important part of the feedback that instructors receive. This feedback can be especially helpful when it is collected early in the semester. We recommend you provide students the opportunity to offer [Informal Early Feedback \(IEF\)](#) within the first few weeks of your course. The feedback can provide critical information on the quality of both the teaching and learning in your class. In addition, you should be aware of classroom assessment strategies used by instructors to determine how much and how well students are learning. For details, review these commonly used [classroom assessment techniques](#), or CATs.

If you're excited about exploring more evidence-based teaching and learning strategies, be sure to check the [CITL calendar](#) for a variety of workshops, and consider completing one of several certificates available through our [Teaching Certificate program](#).

Mid-Semester: Pacing Yourself

At this point in the semester, you and your students have developed a routine. Most students have figured you out, and seem to know how to do well in your class and, in some cases, how to hide in class and do as little as possible. Why not shake them up a bit? A number of good engagement strategies were discussed previously, but faculty are often left wondering what they can actually do with students in class and online. This short article offers [tips for getting students to participate in hands-on activities](#), and offers a helpful set of 36 ideas that can be used to enhance lectures, organize content, frame discussions, and foster peer to peer instruction. Need more ideas? Contact CITL for an overview of [online collaborative tools](#) that put the active in active learning. (these links coming soon)

This is also a good time to reach out to a teaching and learning consultant in CITL who can help you think through current teaching strategies, or start planning for next semester. Faculty tell us all the time how helpful it is to have another set of eyes on something, and another person to talk to about teaching. No question is too big or too small. We can help with [accessibility](#), [copyright](#), [media production](#), [data analytics](#) and so much more. To request a consult, send a note to CITL-info@illinois.edu, or complete our [online intake form](#).

End of Semester: Nearing the Finish Line

As you near the end of the term, you'll want to learn more about the [Instructor & Course Evaluation System](#) (ICES) which is used across campus as the official end-of-semester student ratings system for faculty and teaching assistants. ICES ratings are often utilized for course improvement, promotion & tenure review, teaching award decisions, and campus acknowledgement via our [Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students](#) list. Keep in mind that with in-person instruction ending on November 20th this fall, an online version of ICESs will be used for all courses.

You can find information about final grade submission deadlines on the [Office of the Registrar website](#). Campus policy states that final grades should be submitted within 72 hours of the final examination in the course. Prior to entering final grades, please review the [explanation of grades](#) for additional information on the University of Illinois grading system.



Looking Ahead: Exploring New Horizons

As you are finishing up your semester and have a little breathing room, you might want to consider exploring CITL's Innovation Spaces, eText@Illinois, and our many other services to improve and enhance your teaching and learning in the coming semesters.

[eText@Illinois](#) is CITL's accessible, interactive, multimedia enriched online content delivery platform. Created at and for the University of Illinois, eText enables easy delivery of your original content, online educational resources, and existing course materials, and it can save students 40-75% over traditional books.

[CITL's Innovation Spaces](#) were designed to foster discovery, innovation, and problem solving to provide new opportunities for learning across disciplines. Stop by the Armory to explore our [Innovation Studio](#), a 25-seat interactive visualization space and VR classroom; the [TechHub](#), for hands-on exploration of emerging tech; and the [Virtual Reality Lab](#), for research and design of immersive educational experiences. This fall we're accepting limited reservations in our Innovation Spaces to ensure the safety of our guests, and the health of our staff.

For more information about any of CITL's services be sure to check the [CITL homepage](#). We look forward to connecting with you soon! Quick links:

[Accessibility](#)
[CITL homepage](#)
[CITL calendar](#)
[CITL's Innovation Spaces](#)
[CITL online intake form](#)
[Classroom assessment techniques](#)
[Copyright](#)
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