

TEACHING TUESDAYS



Term: Spring 2026 | [Issue 141](#) | Date: February 10, 2026 | Editor: Danielle Harris

BELLISARIO BULLETIN



By [Juliet Pinto](#) | Acting Associate Dean and Associate Professor

When classroom discussions go sideways, what can we do to maintain the integrity of the learning environment and refocus the conversation, instead of freeze? Yesterday's *Teaching Tuesdays in Real Life* featured a discussion with the Schreyer Institute's Beate Brunow and Chas Brua to discuss proactive and reactive strategies to deal with heated conversations, disruptions and microaggressions. For anyone who could not make the presentation, today's Teaching Tip gives an overview of the ACTION framework for mitigating the potential damage to the learning environment, and the  [PPT slides from the talk are here](#).

Clarity is kindness, especially when it comes to grades. Today's Canvas Cue offers a refresher on how to set the grading scheme in a Canvas course. Doing so will help provide consistency between the grading scale described in your syllabus and what students see when visiting the Canvas gradebook. Don't forget to run the accessibility reports in your Canvas courses to ensure compliance with the April deadline (see the links below), and please contact Danielle or Steve if you have any questions.

Best wishes to Bob Martin and his team, and the students headed to Success in the City tomorrow! Thanks for all you do to advance student success.

Important Items of Note

- **! Accessibility Action Item** | Run the [Ally Course Accessibility Report](#) in your course(s). |

[Anthology Ally](#) will help identify content with accessibility concerns and make recommendations for improvement. | Utilizing this tool will help our College meet the [April 2026 deadline](#) for ensuring all digital content placed into a course is accessible. | Most of us are *not* accessibility experts, so please contact [Danielle Harris](#) for help making these improvements.

- **Accessibility Learning Path** | The Accessibility Learning Path courses are migrating to a single sign on environment, most of which you can access now. | Learn more from the [Penn State Newswire](#) or go directly to the [Accessibility Learning Path](#) webpage.
- **Student Research Into How Students and Faculty Use AI: Insights for Teaching and Learning** | January 2026 (attached)

Careers/Internships

- **February 11** | 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. | [Success in the City](#) | Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 W. 18th St., New York, NY
- **February 11** | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | [Films and Friends](#) | Dolby Sound Studio, New York City
- **February 12** | 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. | ["How Things Get Made in Advertising: From Concept to Creation"](#) | Ken Kitch ('98) | 62 Willard Building
- **February 16** | 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | [Student Journalist Workshop](#) | Al Tompkins, Barbara Allen | Bellisario Media Center, Carnegie Building

Upcoming Events

- **February 10** | 10:35 - 11:50 a.m. | [Designing for Student Engagement](#) | Virtual
- **February 10** | 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | [Microsoft 365: Key Tools for Storage and Collaboration](#) | Virtual
- **February 11** | 10:10 - 11:25 a.m. | [How Culturally Responsive Teaching Can Benefit Your Students](#) | Virtual
- **February 11** | 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. | [Rethinking Assessment in the Age of AI + Optional 30-Minute Design Sprint](#) | Virtual
- **February 12** | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | [Canvas: Embedding External Tools](#) | Virtual
- **February 12** | 10:35 - 11:50 a.m. | [Making Sure Disruptions Don't Derail Student Learning](#) | Virtual
- **February 12** | 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. | [Film Screening](#), "The Vanishing" (1988) | Carnegie Cinema (113 Carnegie Building)
- **February 17** | 10:35 - 11:50 a.m. | [Identities We Inspire in Our Students](#) | Virtual
- **February 17** | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | [Learning Tool Exploration: Technologies for Digital Accessibility](#) | Virtual
- **February 24** | 4:00 p.m. | Dr. Matt Goldberg | ["Strategic Climate Communication Research](#)

[for Real-World Impact](#)" | We hope you (and your students) will attend! | Foster Auditorium, Paterno Library

TEACHING TIP



Taking ACTION: A Framework for Responding to Disruptions and Microaggressions

Adapted from [Souza \(2018\)](#) and [Pittman \(2021\)](#)



PennState

**SCHREYER INSTITUTE FOR
TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

All instructors will need to address a course disruption at some point in their teaching career. When instructors do not have response strategies that can be activated in that moment, it can lead to undermine student confidence in you and may send the wrong message to those who have been targeted. The phrases below can be adapted so that you are prepared to use them.

Tasha Souza, Director of the BUILD Program at Boise State University, developed this [interactive communication framework](#) for instructors to use in the immediate moment. Most of the phrases below are Souza's, but Schreyer Institute faculty consultants have a additional phrases.

Read the examples and explore what language and phrases might work for you when responding to disruptions and microaggressions in your courses.

ASK clarifying questions to assist with understanding intentions

- I want to make sure that I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that...?
- Can you clarify the point you're trying to make?

CURIOSITY not judgement

- Can you tell me what you were hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Can you please help me understand what you meant by that?
- When you say x, what do you mean by that?

TELL what you observed as problematic in a factual manner

- I noticed that...
- My sense/observation is that...

IMPACT exploration: ask for or state, the potential impact on others

- What do you expect people to think when they hear that type of comment?
- Using that word impacts/hurts people in this room.
- As you know, all words send a message. What message do you think such a comment sends?
- Are you aware that what you just said is derogatory?
- That word/phrase carries more weight than you might be aware of and is hurtful to others.

OWN your own thoughts and feelings around the impact

- When I hear your comment, I think/feel...
- Many people might take that comment to mean...
- In my experience, that comment can perpetuate negative stereotypes and assumptions about... I would like to think that is not your intent.

NEXT steps: Request appropriate action be taken

- Our class is a learning community, and such comments make it difficult for us to focus on learning because people feel offended. So I am going to ask you to refrain from stating your thoughts in that manner in the future. Can you do that please?
- I'd appreciate it if you'd consider using a different term because it is inconsistent with our course agreement regarding X...

Additional Phrases

- Can you connect this to our text/topic/question?
- This word/phrase has no place in this classroom.
- I don't know where you are going with this, but let me stop you here.
- Let me stop you here, this is not moving us forward in our conversation.

Adapted from:

Souza, T. (2018). [Responding to microaggressions in the classroom: Taking ACTION](#). *Faculty Focus: Higher Ed Teaching Strategies* from Magna Publications.

Pittman, C. (2021, May 14). [10 In the Moment Responses for Addressing Micro and Macroaggressions in the Classroom](#). *The Scholarly Teacher*.

CANVAS CUE



Setting a Course Grading Scheme

By [Danielle Harris](#) | Instructional Designer

The [video tutorial](#) below will offer a brief overview of how to enable a grading scheme for your course.



SHARE A TEACHING STRATEGY



Share the phenomenal things that you have been doing in your classroom! Do you have a teaching technology or strategy that you've seen succeed and would like to share in the *Teaching Tuesdays* newsletter? If so, please [share your idea](#) for an upcoming issue.
