

# TEACHING TUESDAYS



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## BELLISARIO BULLETIN



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

One of the hallmarks of the Bellisario College is the wealth of professional experience our faculty bring into the classroom. In today's Teaching Tip, Jill Mott shares how she incorporates her own career trajectory into the learning environment, and the surprising thing her students value most hearing from her. As she says, "They begin to understand that skill isn't magic. It's built."

Wishing you had more Canvas skills? Danielle Harris shows how to maximize the functionality of course modules in today's Canvas Cue.

Have a great week!

### Important Items of Note

- **Penn State Powwow** | March 28 - 29 | 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. | C3 Sports Complex (200 Ellis Place, State College, PA) | [MORE INFO](#)
- **Teaching Tuesdays in Real Life** | March 30 | 11:30-12:30 | 103 Willard | Factors influencing student learning and development: BALANSE model of student success | Dr. Kevin Hulburt, Director of the Journey Success Center and Mindfulness | [REGISTER](#)

### Careers/Internships

- **March 24** | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | [Cover Letter and Resume Workshop](#) | Bob Martin | 362 Willard

Building

- **March 26** | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. | [The New York Times: How to Build a Journalism Career in an Era of Change](#) | COMM Career Conversations | 162 Willard Building
- **March 28** | 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. | [Right to Know Workshop](#) | Participants will have a chance to earn a badge/certification from the Bellisario College's News Lab. | Multipurpose Room

## Upcoming Events

- **March 24** | 12:15 - 4:00 p.m. | [2026 Schreyer Conference on Alternative Grading](#) | Register Today
- **March 24** | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | [Teaching Students About AI: Beyond Detection and Policing](#) | Virtual
- **March 25** | 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | [Getting Started with Penn State's Generative AI Tools: Copilot and Gemini Overview](#) | Virtual
- **March 26** | 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. | [Film Screening](#), "Bad Day at Black Rock" (1955) | 113 Carnegie Building
- **March 27** | 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. | [A Pre-Powwow Celebration](#) | Flavors and Stories of Indigenous Culture | Bellisario Media Center
- **March 28** | 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. | [Accepted Students Event](#) | Bellisario Media Center
- **March 28 - 29** | 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Penn State Powwow | C3 Sports Complex (200 Ellis Place, State College, PA) | [MORE INFO](#)
- **March 30** | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | [Canvas: Transition Your Canvas Course to a New Semester](#) | Virtual
- **March 30** | 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Teaching Tuesdays in Real Life (TTIRL) | Factors influencing student learning and development: BALANSE model of student success. | [Register](#)

## TEACHING TIP



### The Power of Forgetting the Film

By [Jill P. Mott](#) | Adjunct Lecturer COMM215 Basic Photography for Communications for Penn State World Campus



*This collection of portraits serves as a visual celebration of Namibian identity, focusing on the intersection of cultural heritage and individual resilience. By bringing together women from diverse tribes, the series highlights their shared narrative of strength and pride.*

*Photos by Jill P. Mott | Otjikoto, Namibia*

I know this sounds silly, but when I first started teaching, I didn't want to share too much about my professional experience with my students.

It felt braggadocious. Like, I might come off as high and mighty. As if talking about my career would create distance instead of connection.

Which is ironic, I was hired because of those experiences.

I loved my professional path, even though it looks very different from what our students pursue today. Working as a newspaper photojournalist for decades was fast, unpredictable, humbling, and deeply human.

When I get the occasional student who is singularly focused on becoming a photographer, they usually say they want to work for National Geographic. Who doesn't? The dream of travel and storytelling fills our imagination: tribes in Africa; colorful, bustling markets; and landscapes so distinct they leave no doubt we're somewhere entirely new.

Of course, when I graduated from college, I thought that National Geographic would just find me, and I would be sent on a six-month adventure to cover the plethora of tribes in Namibia. Embedding myself into their culture and spending days on end creating photos that would fill the pages of Nat. Geo.

Then reality set in.

Ahh. That probably isn't going to happen.

So what's next?

Internships. Small newspapers. Different regions where, although we technically spoke the same language, the culture felt entirely different. I soon realized that "different cultures" weren't only across oceans. They were in my own backyard.

The front page of a small-town newspaper can be just as complex and human as the pages of National Geographic. The scale may be smaller, but the stakes are deeply personal.

Those early years gave me something far more valuable than an exotic assignment: they gave me room to make mistakes.

Big ones.

I made them close to home — where the consequences were real but survivable. I learned how to fail in places that allowed recovery. That training ground mattered long before I ever stepped into bigger spaces.

Ironically, the stories my students love most are not the successes. They can read my bio for that.

They love the mistakes.

Like the time I went up in a hot air balloon over rolling fields of green and gold, another balloon drifting below me in what would have been a perfect composition — and I hadn't put film in the camera.

Or when I was sent to photograph something at a federal courthouse during an internship. There was a sign on the door: *No Photography*.

I saw others walking in with cameras. I assumed it would be fine. My boss had sent me there.

So I ignored the sign.

I was arrested.

That moment taught me more than any perfect image ever did. It taught me to pay attention. To read the rules. To take responsibility for my own decisions — even when someone else sent me there.

Those moments were painful. They still sting a little.

But in the classroom, they're powerful.

When students apologize because their assignment isn't perfect, I congratulate them. I tell them mistakes are good. I want to see you make mistakes. Because mistakes mean you tried something. They mean you pushed beyond safe.

When we only show students our polished portfolios, they see product without process. Success without the missteps that built it. When we share the mistakes, they see the pathway.

They begin to understand that skill isn't magic. It's built.

Sharing our mistakes doesn't diminish our expertise. It humanizes it.

It's not about oversharing. It's about modeling reflection, resilience, and growth. It's about creating space where students feel safe enough to take creative risks.

Students can read our biographies if they want to see awards and accomplishments. What they can't read in a bio is how many times we forgot the film, missed the exposure, or watched an almost-perfect moment slip away.

When we share those stories, we give students something far more valuable than credentials.

We give them permission.

Permission to try.  
Permission to miss.  
Permission to grow.

## CANVAS CUE



### Managing Modules

By [Danielle Harris](#) | Instructional Designer

The [video tutorial](#) below will offer the basics of how to manage Canvas modules to organize content in your Canvas course(s). Learn how to lock modules until a specific date, set prerequisites, as well as add and organize content!



## 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.