**Designing Online Courses for Flexibility and Fairness**

with Morton Ann Gernsbacher

**Abstract:**

Among other revelations, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the need for online classes to be designed with built-in flexibility. The pandemic also revealed inequalities that existed prior to but were magnified by COVID-19. For example, low-income students work more hours at paid jobs and have more family responsibilities than their more affluent peers; students of color are less likely to obtain disability documentation that would otherwise provide the flexibility they need; and students from cultures under-represented on college campuses are less likely to approach faculty and staff to request flexibility. By attending this presentation, participants will be introduced to the scientific literature documenting these and other inequalities, as well as the empirical data documenting instructors' attitudes toward granting extensions. Participants will also learn how to design and implement policies that provide flexibility fairly and consistently across a variety of class experiences (e.g., attendance, deadlines, group work, office hours, and presentations). The goal is to imbue online classes with the flexibility needed for all students to succeed in a fair and consistent way during and beyond the pandemic.

**Bio:**

Morton Ann Gernsbacher, PhD, is a Vilas Research Professor and the Sir Frederic C. Bartlett Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Gernsbacher has received a Research Career Development Award a d a Senior Research Fellowship from the National Institutes of Health, a Fulbright Research Scholar Award, a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Texas at Dallas, a James McKeen Cattell Foundation Fellowship, the George A. Miller Award, a Professional Opportunities for Women Award from the National Science Foundation, a Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from the Society for Text and Discourse, a Distinguished Service to Psychological Science Award from APA, the Ernest R. Hilgard Lifetime Achievement Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Science, a Sloan Foundation - TIER (Teaching Integrity in Empirical Research) Fellowship; and the Phi Kappa Phi (Honor Society) Biennial Scholar Award.

Gernsbacher has served as President of the 25,000-member Association for Psychological Science, President of the Division of Experimental Psychology of the APA, President of the Society for Text and Discourse, President of the Foundation for the Advancement for Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Chair of APA’s Board of Scientific Affairs, Chair of the Cognitive Science Society’s Annual Convention, Chair of the International Travel Committee of the Society for Teaching of Psychology, Chair of Section J (Psychology) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, member of the Psychonomic Society Governing Board, the Medical Affairs Committee of the National Alliance for Autism Research, and NSF’s Social, Behavioral, & Economic Sciences Advisory Committee. She is an award-winning teacher, whose open-access, active-learning undergraduate courses were deemed APA’s 2018 Outstanding Educational Resource. In 1998, Gernsbacher received the Hilldale Award for Distinguished Professional Accomplishment, the highest award bestowed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty.