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## DUNCAN ELKINS, Ph.D.

Duncan Elkins is the Data Literacy Lecturer at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. After ALSI 2021, he redesigned FANR2010 – Introduction to Natural Resources Statistics. He is the recipient of the 2023 Warnell Alumni Association Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching.

**I am excited to talk to you about:** Group problem-solving activities, “productive struggle”

### Office hours:

Fridays (8/18, 9/15, 10/13, 11/17, 12/8) 10-11am (or by arrangement: <http://bit.ly/WarnellDataLit> )

### Most Used ALSI Concepts & Skills:

TiLT, Concept Mapping

### Biggest Surprise in your ALSI Redesign:

It's so much easier to teach a well-organized course and designed backwards from a few SLOs. I know what's supposed to happen in each class period and periodic review sessions, in particular, practically run themselves when we start from the SLOs and sort the class examples and activities into them.

### Greatest Triumph in your ALSI Redesign:

I've added a fairly low-stakes “project” module to the course with a variety of project options, which allow students to apply the approach and techniques developed in our labs. They regularly go well beyond the assignment in following up on an interesting and novel side-analysis or in interpreting results when it's their own question that's motivating them.

### Words of Wisdom:

“No battle plan ever survives contact with the enemy.” Field Marshall Moltke (and later Mike Tyson) notes that it's not the plan, it's how you react when things inevitably deviate from the plan that determines your success. Focus on why you're doing something and what you want the students to gain, not the particular mechanics of the activity. You can (and should!) revise the handouts for next semester.

### Most Meaningful ALSI Memory:

I still use the day-1 activity I developed for my micro-teach and have developed it into a conceptual anchor for several later lecture topics.

### Advice for Overcoming Roadblocks:

Don't be afraid to just try something. Once you have the active-learning mechanics installed in a class, the students will still get something out of an activity, however imperfect. Take the opportunity to debrief with a “OK, how was that *supposed to go*” discussion. TiLT is more than just a cover-sheet!