

NEWSLETTER

**"I'm so glad I live in a world
where there are Octobers
- Anne of Green Gables -**

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A Letter from the Editors

We, like our up-the-coast neighbor Anne (with an "e"), are glad to live in a world with Octobers. Octobers are after *beginnings* but before *ends*, a time when new and fresh are still possible and palatable.

In this vein, have you considered checking in with your students mid-semester (p. 2, 5) to better understand the impact your course is having? Or could you integrate the monthly teaching challenge into your current teaching (p.4)?

We look forward to hearing about your October — stop by Dana anytime!

Lindsey & Wells



Group Instructional Feedback Technique (GIFT)



Interested in having the CITL perform a non-evaluative midterm focus group with your class? Request one soon! We anticipate being able to support up to 15 Group Instructional Feedback Techniques (GIFT) for this fall semester and spaces fill up quickly!

WHAT ARE BATES FACULTY SAYING?



WHAT AND HOW? You request a GIFT, which will entail CITL visiting your class for 20-30 minutes to lead a focus group. Students are encouraged to create constructive feedback using open ended questions in small groups and then in a full group discussion to reach consensus. You get a full confidential report on what your students are thinking!

GIFT has been empirically tied to higher student satisfaction as measured by students' perception of the course, the instructor, and their motivation towards learning (Mauger, 2010; Gray and DiLoreto, 2016). GIFT allows students to feel heard, allows you to receive constructive suggestions mid-semester allows time for educator adaptation, until waiting until the end of the semester. Examining your teaching through the student lens is an important reflective practice.

"I found the entire process to be very helpful and rewarding as my students felt heard."

"I particularly enjoyed the coaching on how to talk to students about the feedback."

"This was an excellent tool and I got a lot of feedback about the course and course design that I was able to incorporate into my pedagogy during the class and it helped me connect with my class more effectively."



"Can I do it again every semester?"

**Would you be interested in having GIFT in your course this semester?
Please reach out to us (soon) and we can schedule this!**

What's on Our Desks?

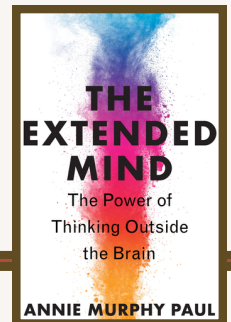
I am neither a philosopher nor neuroscientist, so I may be the wrong person or I may be the right person to pick up the book: *The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain* by Annie Murphy Paul. A colleague recommended the book and he has good taste—though truth be told, he is a Carly Rae megafan and I'm not.

Within the pages I found terms I knew: *embodied cognition, situated cognition, distributed cognition*. Paul suggests that it is not just “using your head”, it is also using your body, your space, and the people around you to center, explore, and realize. As I read, I asked myself:

- Might we encourage moving information from our heads into the world through journaling, gesturing, or making shared memory?
- Might we (re)examine how we best think (e.g., after exercise? with peers? in nature?) and then productively alter our own state while engaging in mental labor?
- Might we transform information into artifacts to label, feel, tweak, and share?
- And HOW might intentionally thinking about these phenomena change our work (hopefully for the better!) here at Bates?

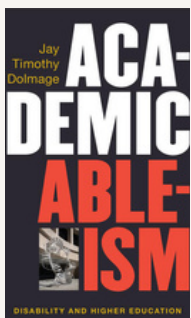
I paused, questioned, and looked up information while reading this book (though, isn't that what learning is all about?) and I'm not (yet) sure what I'm taking from this book. I believe I need more pausing, questioning, and information. Come join me: Dana 217.

Wells



I've been ruminating lately about *Almond* by Won-Pyung Sohn (translated from Korean by Sandy Joosun Lee). The main character is Yunjae, a young boy diagnosed with Alexithymia, a condition where people are unable to identify or express their feelings, and the almond of the title refers to the underdeveloped almond-shaped amygdala in his brain. He doesn't fit in well because of his inability to act interested or happy in appropriate situations.

Did I read this book because RM & Suga of BTS recommended it? Yes, I read this book last spring before seeing the concert featuring a song written in partial inspiration. But the book has stuck with me. Now I'm thinking about it in new ways related to neurodiversity and education as I re-read *Academic Ableism* by Jay T. Dolmage.



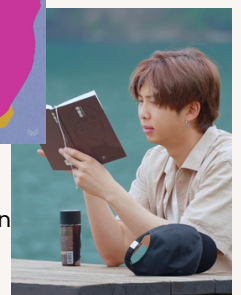
Higher education was definitely made to be compatible with neurotypical individuals. How can we take a more strengths-based approach to supporting neurodiverse learners?

Is higher education failing neurodivergent students by conflating all neurodivergence with disability? How can we be more flexible or individualized in our approach to neurodiverse learners while balancing our own time and effort to do so?

Lindsey



RM of BTS reading the original Korean version of *Almond*.



Do these topics interest you too? Do you know similar pieces or pieces in dialogues with these? Please reach out or stop by our office to offer your thoughts or to recommend what might be “on our desks” next month.

Monthly Teaching Challenge

October
2023

CITL plans to propose a monthly teaching challenge—and that challenge might sound different, it might sound difficult, but we encourage you to try it out and see if it works for you, your course, and your students.

In addition, we would love to hear from you during the month. What has it been like to incorporate **this** teaching challenge into your current course? Write us or stop by Dana to share.

The Minute Paper

Consider incorporating a minute paper exercise into a class period as a formative assessment. A minute paper is a short, written response to a question that offers students an opportunity to reflect (writing-to-learn activity), while also providing the instructor with feedback on what students are understanding.

Students might (a) type out, then email you, their minute paper OR (b) handwrite, then pass in, their minute paper. And you can let them make this choice!

Also, you might grade for completion (rather than content knowledge) to encourage creative answers!

If you do try out this teaching challenge, please consider letting us know how it went.

What worked and what did not work?

We hope to highlight the individuals who shared their experiences with us in the next newsletter. So please reach out or stop by to share.

Pedagogical Point-of-View: Lindsey

I'm a big fan of Alanna Gillis' *Reconceptualizing Participation Grading as Skill Building* (2019). She discusses how instructors often do not explain how participation will be evaluated. Then, at the end of semester, we may assess participation by recalling who spoke up in class or a count of times students spoke. But these methods relying on our own memory and observations are likely to be biased at best and faulty at worst. Gillis (2019) argues for conceptualizing participation grades as opportunities to incentivize and reward skill building based on objective, measurable, and individualized goals. Make a copy of the forms to try out yourself!

Participation Self-Assessment Google Form

Based on this, I've been using a google form at the beginning of the semester, at a mid-semester check-in, and at the end of the semester to have my students self-evaluate based on 5 dimensions of participation.

1. **Attendance and tardiness:** coming to class every day, being on time, and not leaving early
2. **Preparation for each class meeting:** completing readings, taking notes, reviewing quiz questions
3. **Participation in small group discussions:** actively sharing thoughts, listening to group members and considering their perspectives, being respectful, and remaining on task
4. **Participation in full class discussions:** actively sharing thoughts, listening to classmates and considering their perspectives, being respectful, and remaining on task
5. **Participation in other ways:** a variety of activities including but not limited to attending office hours, going to the writing center, sharing notes to the class, using working groups, peer editing papers with a partner, and discussing course material outside of class with peers or friends

On a scale of 1-5, with one being needs a lot of improvement and 5 being excellent, please assess how well you have been doing in this class so far for each category. Also write at least one sentence to justify the score you are giving yourself.

Preparation for Each Class Meeting: Completing readings, taking notes, reviewing * quiz questions, etc.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you proud of an aspect of your teaching?

Are there pedagogical questions twirling around your head?

What could you share with the Bates community about your teaching?

We are looking for contributions for this newsletter! Reach out if you are interested.

UPCOMING OCTOBER EVENTS



Ongoing Services

CONSULTATIONS

CITL offers one-on-one and group consultations on a wide range of pedagogical practices with the goal of having faculty who are excited to teach and whose students are excited to learn. CITL's goal is to tailor each consultation to meet your needs. Use the form to request a consultation.

**REQUEST A
CONSULTATION**

OBSERVATIONS

CITL uses a collaborative observation model for classroom observations where we first meet with you to discuss your pedagogy and what you want the focus of the observation to be, then attend your class, and then meet with you to share our feedback and reflections. All class observations are confidential and formative.

**REQUEST AN
OBSERVATION**

Featured October Events: Register Now



**Ungrading
Community of Practice**
Wed October 4th, 4-5 pm
Dana 216
Snacks Provided



**Build Your FYS Course
A proposal workshop**
Tues October 10th
2:30-4 pm
Commons 226



**On the Menu:
Accessibility isn't Scary**
Fri, October 31st, 12-1 pm
Commons 221
Go thru the line for lunch