

NEWSLETTER

*Yet my heart loves December's smile
As much as July's golden beam;
Then let us sit and watch the while
The blue ice curdling on the stream.*

Emily Brontë

What's inside?

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A Letter from the Editors

Last month, we (along with CITL staff fellow, Shauna'h Fuegen) met up with over a thousand colleagues in Pittsburgh at the annual POD conference. The POD (Professional and Organizational Development) Network is the largest higher ed. educational development community and represents 1,300 centers for teaching and learning around the world.

We now reflect on our Pittsburgh excursion—guided by the monthly teaching challenge (p. 4) and inspired by Keiko's response cards (p. 5)—and share some of the most intriguing, interesting, and insightful takeaways with you about Gen Z students, climate justice, and AI (p. 2). These topics continue to sit on our desks (p. 3) and we invite you to pop your head in our door to chat with us about them before heading out for semester break.

Lindsey & Wells



New Research and Insights in Teaching and Learning

Browsing through POD conference presentation titles, a handful of terms surface again and again:

1. Gen Z students characteristics, needs, & wants
2. climate and environmental justice
3. generative technology and AI
4. inter- and transdisciplinary teaching
5. human- and student-centered pedagogy
6. equity-minded practices

In this newsletter, we discuss the first three and, in January's newsletter, we will address the last three.

Gen Z Students

Here are a few statistics: 57% of the Gen Z (b. 1996-2010) population will enroll in college (44% have a college educated parent), 42% have a mental health condition, and they are less likely than previous generations to have a driver's license. They tend to live in an app-based, online world through phones and tablets (not really computers), and that world seems to be synonymous with global connectivity, fake news & AI; the climate crisis, war, & terrorism; financial instability & capitalistic pressures; and COVID-19 & mental health concerns. Many stand for inclusivity and equity, but they're also lonely and isolated, risk averse, and lacking interpersonal skills.

So, what does this all mean for our classrooms? Our students are looking for courses that emphasize skill building and center open communication and understanding of differences. They want to add their voices, e.g., co-creating course materials, but they are also looking for immediate feedback from others, as they want to know that they are doing what is asked of them. Sometimes they just won't pass in their work or come to class—they feel their work isn't good or they haven't prepared enough for class; they are embarrassed. Not only are they struggling to pay attention and find relevance in our courses, they were never taught how to take notes and leave our class periods with empty pages and questions they were hesitant to ask.

There is a lot here. Let's start small: Can you emphasize skill building or TILT assignments, helping students see relevancy in completely work and be successful in it (see [here](#))? Can you get to know your students, their hopes, and interests (and help them get to know another as well)? Or can you share what has worked and not worked with colleagues here at Bates by contributing to our newsletter or joining us for an event?

Climate & Environmental Justice

To forefront climate justice in your teaching, might you include a sustainability statement in your syllabus, discuss with students how climate change impacts your discipline, or reserve time and space in your syllabus for indigenous voices and climate activists? Could you reimagine the materials and resources you are using through a more eco-friendly lens? Might you adopt ungrading practices or place-based practices, in an effort to withdraw from a competitive, capitalistic model of higher education? Perhaps [Teaching for EcoJustice \(Turner\)](#) or [Climate Change Education at Universities \(Hill et al.\)](#), might help jumpstart this work? To learn more about climate justice in general, you might take out the following from the library: [Generation Dread \(Wray\)](#), [All We Can Save \(Johnson & Wilkinson\)](#), [This Changes Everything \(Klein\)](#)—or if looking for fiction, Wells recently read [Venomous Lumpsucker \(Beuaman\)](#) and we've heard that [The Overstory \(Powers\)](#) and [The Man with Compound Eyes \(Ming-Yi\)](#) are worthwhile reads.

Generative Technology and AI

This is a BIG (capital BIG) topic in all sectors, but in higher education, we are not just navigating AI for our own work, but preparing the next generation as well. In this vein, here at CITL, we have three approaches to disseminating and discussing research and information about Gen-AI.

- You can join our winter 2024 semester reading group on this topic (see page 8 of this newsletter)
- You can work through our SHORT (capital SHORT), [postcard-sized flipchart \(LINK\)](#) of Gen-AI information.
- You can come chat with us about your worries, questions, or dreams. Email us or just stop by Dana.



**Any of these topics catch your eye?
Come find us in Dana 216, 217, and 220**

What's on Our Desks?

I remember a conversation I had with my mom, possibly summer 2011, that went something like this.

My mom: "Is that one of the library books?"

Me: "Yes. It's *Before I Fall*"

My mom: "What's it about?"

Me: "You know. Life"

And it was about life. Well, it was about the life of Sam, who was worried about friendships and love, being cool and weekend parties, faking interest and lying easily, being scared and feeling lonely. Sam relives the same day over and over again, and everything changes and nothing changes, and she is definitely the only one experiencing this. It may not have not have been my life exactly, but I related and I sort of, kinda, maybe wanted my mom to read it. Then she'd understand.

In the past few months, I have been channelling this younger self who understood life through reading young adult novels. And I have not only enjoyed, but learned a lot from, books such as **Dear Martin** (Stone), **All American Boys** (Reynolds & Kiely), **The Hate U Give** (Thomas), and **Punching the Air** (Zoboi & Salaam) which center on our current systems of racism, privilege, and police brutality. I've also spent late nights reading **We Are Not From Here** (Sanchez) and **All My Rage** (Tahir), which illuminate the challenges of immigration—both the journey to the US and the trials once in the promised land. Some of these novels [e.g., **Which Side Are You On?** (Wong) and **Lark and Kasim Start a Revolution** (Callender)] are intensely intersectional, and I struggled with the complexity the characters navigate every day. Wong's main character, Reed, is a 21-year old Asian American student at Columbia protesting the the death of a Black man shot by an Asian American police officer within the delicate world of Black-Asian allyship. Meanwhile Lark is a non-binary, Black high school student (and who might be neurodivergent, they've concluded) whose online presence spirals after lies beget lies beget lies about love and race and queer-ness. Acrid comments accrue and Lark struggles with loving themself, let alone those around them and those in their painstakingly constructed online worlds.

What unites all these books? Their authors create multidimensional characters who make mistakes, hurt others, hate themselves, and give back to their communities all within 200 or so pages. What also unites them? Through all this reading, I've learned so much about what this generation of college-aged people might feel, believe, and care about. And I have more on my desk as well: **The Poet X** (Acevedo), **We Are Okay** (LaCour), **Lawn Boy** (Evison), **Don't Ask Me Where I'm From** (De Leon), and **Slay** (Morris).

Hopefully, I can take what I've learned and help create learning spaces here at Bates that work for this wonderfully complex student population.

Wells

At the POD Network Conference, I attended a talk titled, "Maintaining Student Attention in a TikTok-Driven World." While it was interesting, I found that I disagreed on one of their main points. They led with this True or False quiz, which I present below. Which one do you think I disagree with?

- 1) Student attention peaks after 10 minutes of a lecture and drops steadily after that.
 - **THEY SAID FALSE.** However, students might experience increasingly frequent interruptions to their attention, with decreasing intervals of attention.
- 2) The attention span of students has changed over the last two decades.
 - **THEY SAID FALSE.** There is no clear evidence that attention span has changed.
- 3) The best way to assess a student's level of attention is by looking at their body language and eye movement.
 - **THEY SAID FALSE.** Behavioral observations are often not aligned with cognitive attention.
- 4) Multi-tasking negatively impacts a students' ability to pay attention and learn.
 - **THEY SAID FALSE.** There is little conclusive evidence for this claim.

I don't agree with #4 and will be reading more to back my argument. There are still problems with multi-tasking! For example, if a student tries to both pay attention in class and study for another class (or check social media, etc.), the problem is that if the student is pulled more deeply into the alternate activity, they will lose focus on the class, and will effectively stop multi-tasking. Additionally, students (and us!) may not be great at regulating their attention in the face of distractions and multi-tasking.

Lindsey

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

December
2023

CITL offers 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.

Reflection Questions at Semester's End

At the end of the semester, we face a tough paradox: We are done. Our students are done. But there is so much that can be learned from both our own and our students' semester-long experiences. Consider reserving some time in the last week to not just pose questions for students, but field field questions from students.

It is more common to ask students to reflect, asking them to consider how their thinking shifted during the semester or what they will now do differently because of their learning. Consider going in a different direction as well this semester; gather reflection questions (for you) from your students. Ask them what reflection questions they feel are important for an educator to answer at the end of the semester. You don't need to answer them right there, on the spot, but write them down and respond when you have time. If you think some of your reflections are important to share with your (prior) students, send out an email early in the next semester!

What was Shared: The Exit Ticket

"I gained valuable information from the students regarding what they wanted and expected from the class, and was able to adapt my teaching accordingly."

Danley et al., 2016

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.

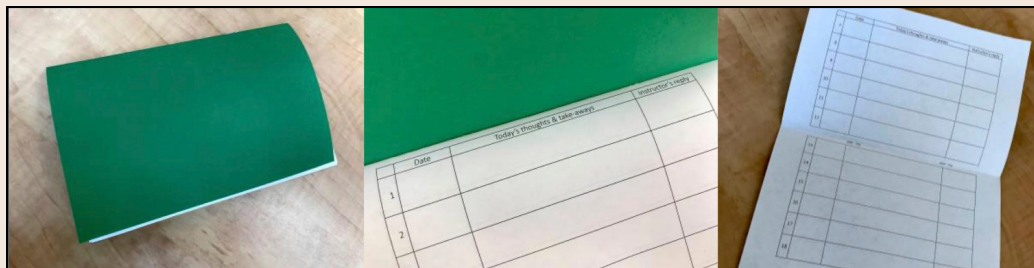
Pedagogical Point-of-View:

Keiko Konoeda
Asian Studies Program

I have always been interested in learning how students are understanding the class. In courses with discussions, sometimes the discussions feel productive, but at other times not everyone participates verbally. I am left unsure what students are taking away.

That's why I was fascinated when I heard about Response Cards from a teacher in Japan. They are like Exit Tickets (see CITL's November newsletter) in that students fill them out at the end of class to reflect on that class. What's different with Response Cards is that students use the same card for every class, and the instructor can briefly respond.

Here is an example of the Response Card for my Fall 2023 First Year Seminar:



To introduce students to Response Cards, I use the following language in my syllabus:

"Attendance & response card is a semester-long sheet to record your thoughts from each class. A few minutes at the end of every class will be reserved for you to write down a take-away or lingering question, and the instructor will respond whenever possible."

I really enjoy the opportunity to hear directly from each student and respond to them individually. When students and I exchange thoughts by hand, it creates a unique form of communication, different from speaking or using technology. Having a consistent booklet for the entire semester allows students to look back on what they wrote in previous weeks. It also establishes a routine where students know they will be writing a short comment at the end of each class. Sometimes they already know what to write by the end of class and other times they take a moment to reflect on what they have learned. Additionally, there is something special about personally handing out and collecting the cards at the beginning and end of class.

Will it require a lot of time? Typically, students can complete this task in just a minute or two. I might respond with "That's a really good point" or "Let's discuss this question next," and 20-30 minutes is enough for me to write to all my FYS students, but I managed to do it in less than 10 minutes when I was pressed for time! It's graded based on completion and counts towards participation.

Note: This is ideal for smaller classes with 10-20 students, such as first-year seminars, that meet once or twice a week. I also use it with my upper intermediate Japanese course that meets three times a week, and I encourage students to write the comments in a combination of Japanese and English.

Thanks for
sharing,
Keiko!

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 EVENTS



Ethical Pedagogy

Tues, Dec 5th 12:00-1:00,
Commons 211
(Go thru line for lunch)

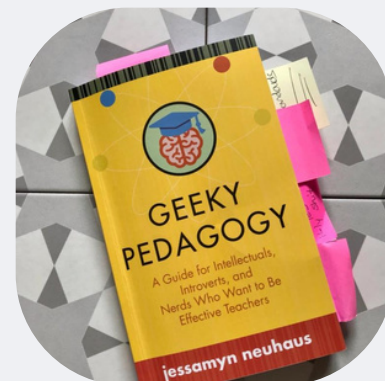
Wells hosts a workshop on what we inadvertently teach our students through our pedagogical decisions. What does grading blind or taking a stance on a controversial topic communicate to your students about you, the discipline, and their world(s)?



Inclusive Teaching MOOC: Info Session

Mon, Dec 11th 11:30-1:00,
Commons 211
(Go thru line for lunch)

HHMI BioInteractive recently launched a new Inclusive Teaching MOOC, covering many inclusive teaching topics. At this info session, we will share more about the course, and a panel will share how these learning communities and other support have influenced our teaching at Bates. Also see page 10 in this newsletter.



Guilt-free Book Club: Geeky Pedagogy

Tues, Dec 12th
8:00 or 4:15 in Dana 216

Haven't been able to join us yet this semester to talk about teaching and learning? No problem. Stop by even if you haven't (yet) read the book and just want to think aloud with us!

[Access our Calendar to Register Now](#)



Syllabus Finalization Workshop

Friday, January 5, 10-11:30 am, Commons 221

Bring your Winter syllabi to this workshop and focus on getting them finalized! We will share information about syllabus messaging and getting students to read the syllabus, along with resources like the syllabus template and inclusive syllabus guide. Do this all while enjoying brunch through Commons Dining!



DeStress Fest

In our now semesterly tradition, CITL is bringing you some community-oriented events in the last week of classes and during finals week. We hope you can join us for one or all of these drop-in events!

December 2023				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7 	8 
11 	12 	13 	14 	15

Dec. 7th 7:00-9:30am

Drinks on us @ The Ronj

Lindsey and Wells will be posted up at the Ronj with coffees, teas, and even a CITL specialty drink!

Dec. 8th all day

Bunday with Pippin Castonguay

Stop by Dana 217 for scratches and cuddles with Pippin! Leafy greens will also be provided and you can give Pippin a treat.

Dec. 11th 1:00-5:00pm

Grade in Community

Didn't grade as much as you hoped during the weekend? No problem! Come grade with others in Dana 216.

Dec. 12th. 9:00-11:00 am

Bracelet Making (CITL's version)

Inspired by Taylor Swift's concert friendship bracelets, we will have supplies to make your own bracelet (and we have snacks for you too). Stop by Dana 216.

Dec. 13th 11:00am-1:00pm

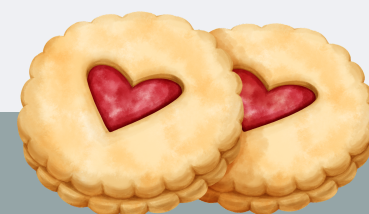
Lunch with us in Commons!

This agenda-free event is just a time to get up from your desk, catch up with colleagues, and eat up! Go through the line and find us in Commons 226 for good food and good conversation.

Dec. 14th 4:00-5:00pm

Cookies!

Wells and their mom are making dozens of cookies Thursday morn. Stop by Dana 216 to snag one and say hi.



Winter Semester Programming

1/3



CBB AI reading and discussion group

Join colleagues across Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin for a 3-session reading group. Each month, a brief article or video will be shared. These sessions will be facilitated over Zoom by all three colleges' teaching centers.

Attend any or all sessions on Zoom: 4-5 pm

- **Tues, Feb 13th**
- **Thurs, Mar 7th**
- **Wed, Apr 3rd**



Fall FYS Instructors **Community of Practice**

Anyone teaching an FYS in the fall can join this group for a series of working sessions using the book *Engaging Ideas* by John Bean and Dan Melzer. CITL will use the book to guide our planning of FYS assignments and assessments. We will meet the 2nd Thursdays of the month from 4:15-5:15 pm in Dana.

- **Jan 11th**
- **Feb 8th**
- **Mar 14th**
- **Apr 3rd**



NEW PROGRAMS

Winter Semester Programming

2/3



BRING YOUR OWN ASSIGNMENT

CITL is offering a series of working sessions to develop or refine a course assignment(s) of your choosing!

Week 1: Developing a Rubric

- “The very process of creating a rubric helps me as an educator understand the targeted “performance” better. The better I understand it, the better I can assess it. Also, though, the better I understand it, the better I can teach it” ([Gareis, 2021](#))

Week 2: Assigning Peer Review

- “Peer review of student writing can deepen conceptual understanding, improve writing skills, and familiarize students with what constitutes good versus poor work” (Topping, 1998, described by [Cathey, 2007](#))

Week 3: Providing Meaningful Feedback

- “Giving feedback on writing is a special responsibility. If you ask students to write thoughtfully to you, it would be hypocritical of you not to write (or speak, if your feedback is oral) thoughtfully back to them. And students will notice!” [Susan Brookhart, author of *How to Use Grading to Improve Learning* (2017) & *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* (2017)]

“What should I bring?”

- An idea for...
 - The beginnings of...
 - A previous version of...
- a writing, creative, or group-project assignment

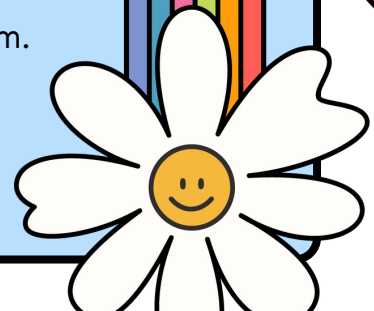
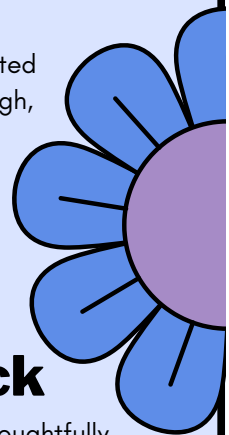
“Do I have to attend all 3 sessions?”

Nope!
Come to whichever session(s) are
useful for you!

“When and where can I find you?”

We are offering each session two times a week in Dana.
Each session will be at Tuesday at 11 am & Friday at 9:30 am.

- January 16th or January 19th – rubrics
- January 23rd or January 26th – peer review
- January 30th or February 2nd – feedback



Winter Semester Programming

3/3

CITL, HHMI IE, & HHMI BIOINTERACTIVE

INCLUSIVE TEACHING

ONLINE COURSE & LEARNING COMMUNITY



ONLINE COURSE

HHMI BioInteractive recently launched a new [Inclusive Teaching MOOC](#) designed by Dr. Bryan Dewsbury and other experts in Inclusive Teaching. The course consists of six modules and includes developing an action plan, interrogation of self and systems, empathy, classroom climate, teaching strategies & assessment, and support structures.

**MONDAY,
DECEMBER 11TH
11:30 AM-1 PM
COMMONS 221**

Learn More



Join the [interest session](#) to learn more! We will share more about the course, and a panel will share a bit about how these learning communities and other support have influenced our teaching at Bates. Lunch is provided (go through the line in Commons, charge CITL) and join us upstairs.

LEARNING COMMUNITY

We will plan to meet biweekly in the Winter semester to discuss how these themes fit into our work at Bates. The modules do represent about 3 hours of “homework” between meetings, but we hope to bribe you with food and good company. We especially encourage faculty who are new to Bates in the past two years and STEM faculty, but **everyone is invited to participate**. While HHMI IE focuses on STEM and STEM-adjacent fields at Bates, the themes of the MOOC are widely applicable beyond STEM.