CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

NEWSLETTER

Evergreen trees... may still grow roots in the wintertime, so long as they're underground where it's warm enough. While there's not enough light for significant photosynthesis... they can make some energy from their needles

Evergreen Fact on Chopmytree.com

What's inside?

A Letter from the Editors

As fall leaves settle, crinkle, and brown here in Lewiston, we are thinking about evergreens here in Dana. Our lounge, Dana 216, has comfy couches, tasty beverages, and bite-sized snacks to get you through your next class—and it's only modestly green, unlike our stairwell.

With a mug of coffee or tea in hand, come chat with a colleague, grade exams, or read senior thesis drafts. We look forward to sharing this space for all educators (staff and faculty)!

Lindsey & Wells

Teaching within
# a hurting and a healing community

Our college, our community, our state has experienced a great trauma with the mass shooting here in Lewiston. Incidents like this one can activate emotional responses in both educators and students. Here are a few thoughts to be mindful of as we move into this post-attack space and time and teach within a hurting and healing community.

Trauma affects us in different ways and manifests itself in different ways: Beyond this, the way that you feel and act and the ways that each of your students feel and act might even change day to day. And that is okay. The important thing is to keep an open line of communication with your students and ask questions instead of making assumptions.

Trauma will be cognitively processed in different ways: There are different ways to think about, reflect on, and remember a trauma. According to Wozniak et al. (2020), intrusive rumination concerns the negative thoughts centering on the fear and anxiety one felt during that trauma. Deliberate rumination concerns intentional reflection, with a goal of identifying purpose or understanding. As we ask students to take a moment of silence or relate trauma to course material, it is important to keep this distinction in mind.

Trauma will be actively processed at one time and kept at a distance the next: As Davidson (n.d.) puts it, "while recovering from trauma, people often move between actively processing the event and using adaptive behaviors to distract themselves, remain optimistic, and focus on moving past the event" (p. 13). Rather than view these behaviors and mindsets as at odds, Davidson suggests recognizing them as coping flexibility, associated with resiliency. Resiliency is also bolstered through social support--and social integration (i.e., embeddedness, Galatzer-Levy et al., 2012) is thought to be more important than the size of the social network. Thus, keep in mind to emphasize quality, not quantity, of social connections whenever encouraging collaborative work.

How can we support our students? We recognize there is a balance between being flexible & empowering and being predictable & creating structure. On the one hand it is important to provide grace to your students, recognizing them as humans processing in different ways, and it is important to provide them opportunities for decision making, nurturing their sense of control of their lives. On the other hand routines and structure contribute to a feeling of safety. There is not one, right way to navigate this balance. We believe in you to make solid steps towards a productive path for you, your students, and your course. Though, if you do have pause, you are welcome to stop by Dana and use us as a sounding board anytime.
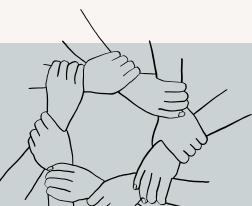
We really mean it. Come find us.
Dana 216, 217, and 220

What's on Our Desks?

Returning to live in Maine, participating in a Wabanaki REACH workshop, and preparing for an approaching Thanksgiving--**Indigeneity**, **Colonization**, and **Decolonization** are not just on my desk, they are on my mind.

A month or two ago, Joe Hall recommended I read *Decolonization is not a metaphor* by Tuck and Yang (2012). These authors describe how educators often hear that we must decolonize our schools, our teaching methods, our students' thinking, yet conversations surrounding these topics leave out the repatriation of Indigenous people's lands and materialize as ways of talking about social justice, critical methodologies, and settler perspectives. Decolonization as a metaphor, they write, turns the term into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation.

Decolonization is to free people and land from colonial oppression; decolonizing would mean settlers become landless because colonized people have overthrown an occupying power or negotiated their freedom (thank you for explaining this, Sarah Trembath). Tuck and Yang argue that such work is challenging, if not incommensurable. They leave the reader thinking: A decolonized world is unsettling, literally and figuratively. So, where should we direct our efforts? What might we do here at Bates? How might we be mindful and respectful of Native Peoples and Understandings, and yet not make decolonization a metaphor?

Could we de-center the colonial perspective? Could we de-canonize our reading lists and course topics? Could we be de-colonial in our work, which is a mindset or praxis to route out remnants of colonial eras. I foresee a small mountain building on my desk as I learn more about these.

Wells

Bard. BingChat. ChatGPT. Claude. DALL-E. Humata. Llama 2.
Generative AI is on my mind a lot these days. I've been reading a variety of pieces from different lenses including:

Bearman et al., (2023) CRADLE Suggests... assessment and genAI.

National Artificial Intelligence Taskforce (2023) Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence.

Farrokhnia et al., (2023) A SWOT analysis of ChatGPT: Implications for educational practice and research

Hommel and Cohen (2023) Reducing AI Anxiety Starts by Talking with Students

Questions on my mind:
- What do critical and thoughtful approaches to using AI tools through the lens of equity look like?
- When should we integrate the use of generative AI into our course activities and assessments?
- When should we try to work around AI by designing assignments that are AI-resistant?

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

November 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.

The Exit Ticket

Consider using an exit ticket, which is a brief activity completed at the end of class that can serve to:

- gauge student learning (e.g., "Score yourself on a 0-3 scale on your understanding of today's lesson)
- improve student metacognition (e.g., "What did you accomplish today?")
- provide some targeted feedback about students' experience (e.g., "How well did the group activity improve your learning?")
- create lines of communication (e.g., "What might I do next class to help you better understand today's material?")

They can be anonymous (greater student honesty) or attached to names (a way to track attendance). It is recommended that they are graded as complete/incomplete, reducing stress and increasing honesty. They can be on slips of paper or through an online poll.

Adapted from Inside Higher Ed (9/12/2023)

What was Shared: The Minute Paper

"Minute papers allow my students a moment to pause and collect their thoughts and allow me one as well."

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:

Pavel Bacovsky
Dept. of Politics

I'm a big fan of games and sci-fi and fantasy universes, like Dungeons and Dragons, Star Wars, and Warhammer. To make my courses more engaging, I took a page from Jessamyn Neuhaus's book *Geeky Pedagogy*. I use my love of pop culture as a frame for the course material. This creates a fun and exciting learning environment for my students and makes it easier for them to relate to the material. It also reminds students that educators are not "all business." In my process to incorporate my nerdiness into my course design, I also utilize the gameful pedagogy (LINK) toolkit, as well as several principles from ungrading.

In my classes, students don't complete "assignments," they embark on quests. They don't earn grades, they earn experience points. They can also choose what quests they want to tackle. I understand—and know from experience—that going all-in on the gameful and ungrading path takes a lot of time and effort. The good thing is that you don't need to. You'd be surprised how much a seemingly silly naming change from "exam" to "boss battle" changes the student's attitude towards an assignment.

Below, I provide a sample assignment to show you what I mean. We all struggle with getting our students to read the syllabus, which is especially crucial if you run a class in a non-standard fashion. So, I borrowed this tool from an earlier CITL workshop and tweaked it to fit my specific framework.

Example of Pedagogical Practice

Main Quest: Syllabus Reconnaissance – 50 XP
"It's dangerous to go alone, take this!" – Old Man, The Legend of Zelda.

Before the class starts, it is important we are all on the same page. To incentivize this, I ask you to look over the syllabus document before the start of the course and identify:

- At least one (1) provision of the syllabus that you are excited about. Annotate it/them with an exclamation (!) mark.
- Two (2) provisions of the syllabus that you have questions about. Annotate them with a question (?) mark.
- Three (3) provisions of the syllabus that you think are especially important. Annotate them with an asterisk (*).

- Optional: Write down your own quote for each section of the syllabus and get ready to share with the class!

Bring the thus-annotated syllabus to the first meeting of the semester.

P.S.: Don't worry if you are not into games, sci-fi, or fantasy. Just lean into your favorite hobby and utilize Syllabus Reconnaissance to spark fun discussions with your students. May the Force be with you!
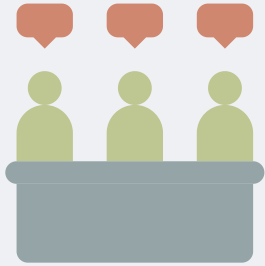
Thanks for sharing, Pavel!

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

UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS

Beyond Binaries

Thursday, November 30th
12-1 pm, Commons 221
Lunch provided! Go through the Commons line (charge CITL)
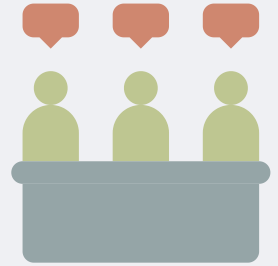
Besides contributing to a more inclusive classroom, expanding beyond gender (and other!) boundaries and binarisms can enrich possibilities for creativity, learning, understanding, and joy. In Part One of several workshops organized by **CITL Faculty Fellow Erica Rand** (Gender and Sexuality Studies/Art and Visual Culture), short presentations by faculty in widely varied fields about their own creative and research practices will introduce a conversation about the generative potentials of thinking beyond binarisms in the work we can do and facilitate. Participants include **Brian J. Evans** (Dance/American Studies), **Hanna McGaughey** (Asian Studies), **Ian-Khara Ellasante** (Gender and Sexuality Studies/Africana, and **Kat Anderson** (Biology).

Access our Calendar to Register Now

Bundays: Hosted by Pippin Castonguay
Every Friday, Dana 217
Stop in for scritches
(also to chat with CITL)

Guilt-free Book Club: Geeky Pedagogy
Tuesday, November 14th,
8 am or 4:15 pm
Dana 216, snack provided

On the Menu: Ethical Pedagogy
Tues December 5th, 12-1 pm
Commons 211
Go thru the line for lunch

www.bates.edu/CITL