

NEWSLETTER

April, come she will, when streams are ripe and swelled with rain

April Come She Will (Simon and Garfunkel)



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A Letter from the Editors

Fannie Hardy Eckstrom (1865–1946) was the first woman superintendent at a Maine school. But she not only cared about education, she also cared about nature. “One never knows the idyllic charm of our northern woods who has not seen them in April, when it is all a feast of birds and buds and waking life,” she wrote in *The Penobscot Man*, a book that celebrated those who worked with lumber on rivers here in Maine.

April in Maine is wet. Beyond the de-icing of our 6,000 named lakes and ponds and our lobster- and fisher-folk returning to our 3,500 miles of Atlantic coast, it’s mud season (need tips?). And mud season, along with with the birds and buds and waking life, comes alive with April rain.

This month, we remember the warm rain at the end of the snow (p. 3) and we consider the film *Singin’ in the Rain* vis-à-vis generative tech (p. 2). As we enter April, we invite you to conceptualize what makes a good education (i.e., what is held under that umbrella of a “Bates Education”, p. 4) and imagine how you might make space for that “Umbrella Curriculum” in your work with students.

Lindsey Wells 

Final Note: Happy April 1st
See if you can spot the **April Fool’s** joke in this issue!

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN

coming to terms with new technologies



When I found Mathews's essay "When in doubt... watch *Singin' in the Rain*" the other day, I did a double take when I saw its publication date: 2013. The piece could have been written a decade later (a.k.a. now).

Mathews discusses his first viewing of this 1952 musical film that centers on the new technology of movies with synchronized sound (i.e., "talkies"). The characters, who are actors and producers, react in a staged process:



1. Doubt: "That is not possible"

2. Skepticism: "It's a toy"

3. Anger: "It's vulgar"

4. Fear: "Will they ever use it?"

5. Denial: "It will never amount to a thing"

... but as we know, it does ...


Mathews argues that when we encounter emerging technology, rather than react like these characters do to "talkies," we should ask two questions ("how do we make this technology better?" and "what does this technology enable me to do that I couldn't do before?").

Because ignoring new technologies is not productive.



As you might know, Bates is teaming up with Colby and Bowdoin this semester to discuss generative technology and its impact and potential in our learning spaces. And yes, our educators have shared similar reactions to the technology. They are **skeptical** about its pedagogical relevance; they **fear** the loss of human-writing; they **deny** that students are using it irresponsibly in their class (or deny that they aren't!). They worry about data privacy and protection, bias baked-into these systems, and environmental impacts of AI energy requirements. In community, we are trying to move beyond these understandable, though somewhat unproductive, reactions and instead exploring pitfalls and potential in tandem.

For those of you who cannot make it to these discussions, we encourage you to consider Mathews's two questions in the context of Generative AI:



There are problems with AI.
What can I do to reveal
and mitigate them?

What can AI do?
And how might it spark new ways of
interacting with learning content
and materials?

Come find us in Dana if a thought-partner might be helpful!

Monthly Teaching Challenge

April
2024

CITL offers a monthly teaching challenge—and that challenge might sound different or 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.

Incorporating the Umbrella Curriculum

We might address broader institutional goals in our educational spaces by teaching students how to learn & adapt, think & critique, and connect & make meaning. We cannot predict what specific details, content, and information our students might need in the future, but we can nurture their development of tools that will be helpful both here and beyond Bates.

Could you help students with metacognitive skills? Perhaps incorporate reflection-based activities, asking students to articulate the WHY and HOW?

Could you nurture students' critical thinking skills? Perhaps craft learning-objectives that include actions at the higher-levels of Bloom's Taxonomy?

Could you assist students as they create connections (either content~life connections OR contentA~contentB connections)? Perhaps you could have students practice mapping these connections?

Informed by [LinkedIn \(link\)](#).

What was Shared: Notes of Appreciation

"I am constantly impressed by my colleagues' capacity to care. They care about their content, their community of learners, their colleagues, their continued growth. I feel that care deeply and enjoy (and benefit from) passing it on."

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

What worked and what did not work?

We highlight individuals who share their experiences with us in next month's newsletter.

So please reach out or stop by to share.

What's on our desks?

When I first moved to Lewiston, I was told there were two books I needed to read: One Goal (2018, Amy Bass) and I Remember Warm Rain (2007, Telling Room). While the former is about Lewiston high school students specifically and details the coming-together of Somali refugees and multi-generation Mainers for soccer state championship glory, the latter emerged from a Portland non-profit that empowers youth writers. This anthology includes first-person narratives from 15 refugee and immigrant teenagers who share their coming to America (and their coming to Maine) stories.

These teens' stories are beautifully original and empoweringly unique. Yet, I also see patterns. There are memories of friends and family, landscapes, soundscapes, and foodscapes... some memories are strong, some fading, some hopefully soon forgotten, some held tight to their chests. These memories of far away are either eerily akin (soccer in the park) or in juxtaposition to ("Prayers are optional right now. Not because I've lost faith, but because of the society I live in") their new life in Maine. These memories of experiences gone are intertwined with experiences currently being gathered and experiences going to happen—"I've gained all these things, but I've lost something and I want to recover it" (Hassan J.). They are grounded by fear, courage, exhaustion, nervousness, pride, anger, and joy and come to make sense through a lens of journey and growth.

This all said, the strongest thread holding these narratives together is the hand-in-hand relationship between wanting to learn and to share.

This is what we want in the world, is it not?
Individuals who want to listen and tell their stories?

So, what's on my desk this month?

The memories of coming to a new place, a place you and I might call home, and creating community.

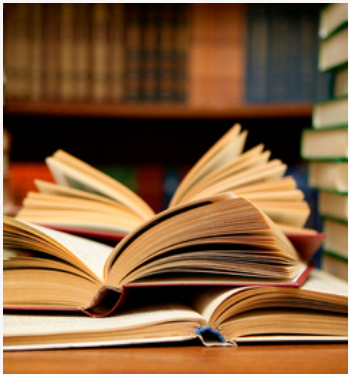
The memories of coming to a new place, a place of winter's passing and of April showers.

Wells

I remember now
a second ago
I forgot yesterday
the day before
the week before
the month before
the year before.

...
I forget what had happened.
When we got to Maine,
I remember that there was warm rain
at the end of the snow season, melting the snow.
I forget the sounds and colors and smells
of my memories, I forget the details, the moments.
I forget day-to-day life.
I remember now.

Nasra H.



I always read Beth McMurtie's pieces for the Chronicle and her recent blurb about how she has been hearing from instructors about the problem of reading. I was especially interested as this is something we in CITL have also been hearing that reading comprehension is a struggle right now! Beth describes faculty accounts of "their students having difficulty understanding and interpreting what they read. And their tolerance for difficult readings has declined. They may literally stop reading something because they don't get what the author is saying. Or maybe they are asked to describe the main themes of a reading and latch onto something they see in the first couple of paragraphs. They have trouble rephrasing arguments, synthesizing lecture notes, and contrasting and categorizing what they read."

While Beth debates why this is happening right now (lighter workloads in high school during pandemic? Not engaging effectively when remote learning took place? Digital distraction? Fundamental K-12 education structures?), the point remains that these are our students now and we need to think about how to support the development of reading skills more than ever.

How are you experiencing the reading struggles? What are your students like? How are they approaching reading? What are their attitudes and skills when it comes to the ability to understand and explain what they read? I've very interested in thinking and discussing the ways we can enhance metacognitive reading abilities and would welcome you stopping by my office or grabbing me on the quad to share your thoughts.

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.**



Pedagogical Point-of-View:

Bonnie Shulman
Mathematics Dept.



After 10 years of being happily retired, I was lured back into teaching by an offer I couldn't refuse—teaching a section of *Math and Social Justice*, a course I designed 5 years before I retired, and considered the crown jewel of my teaching career. I had taught it as a Q course—a math course for students who generally don't want to take math—and it was very popular. But after I left, the course was turned into a 200 level elective for math majors and minors and/or anyone who had taken Calculus. This was a very different audience! Thus, I spent this past fall re-designing the course (actually, starting from scratch). It was a challenging and exciting project for me.

After I retired, I worked with a homeschooled cohort of 6-16 year olds. I often used role playing as a pedagogical tool to hold their interest. The kids (of all ages) loved it. I wondered if there was some way to incorporate this into a college level class. I was on one of my favorite sites to use for homeschooling ([Zinn Education Project](#)) and found a great resource from Selene Gonzalez-Carillo and Martha Merson ([link](#)) that concerned environmental racism (our final unit). This resource gave me the idea of putting my 25 students into 5 groups of 5 and having each group a workshop on this topic. I knew it would be most effective if they actually had an audience, and here's where role playing could be used. Here is the assignment below:

Assignment


Your team has been asked/hired to design a workshop on an issue of environmental racism. This is to be more than just a presentation, but rather an interactive experience for the participants. Each team will have an hour to conduct their workshop, in class. The rest of us (including Professor Shulman) will play the roles of the audience. We will need to know in advance who we are, so we can be "in character" in our responses.

As you create this workshop, consider the following questions:

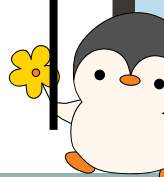
- Who are you? (teacher, community organizer, consultant, citizen-scientist)
- Who is your audience? (concerned citizens, adult ed, city council, parents' group, school board)
- What is the mathematics background of your audience? What is their motivation for taking your workshop? (get credits, address concerns, become informed)
- What is your goal? (address public health issue, educate, report on research results, advocate for change)
- What tools and resources will you employ to teach participants to understand and use data?
- What data will you use? How will you find it and/or collect it? What mathematical tools will you use to analyze it?
- How will you empower the participants to become agents of change, using mathematics?

People might make the link between math and physics, biology, or even psychology. But math and social justice? People ask if my course touches on equity issues in teaching mathematics or getting more underrepresented groups into mathematics. And certainly these are important issues to address, but just like any other applied math course, we are interested in using math in the service of social justice. And why? Students become deeply involved in mathematics, stimulated by their passion for social justice, and/or students become involved in social justice issues, through engaging with mathematics.

Thanks for
sharing,
Bonnie!



Would you like to integrate mathematics (or more broadly, quantitative reasoning) and social justice? I recommend Khadjavi & Karaali (2019): [link](#)).



Thinking about teaching and learning? What is on your mind?
We are looking for [contributions for this newsletter](#)! Reach out if you are interested.

Revisiting This Month:

Kroepsch: Pedagogy Panel



March 14

On Pi Day this year, moderator Katy Ott (2023 Kroepsch Awardee) invited panelists Erik Bernadino, Marcelle Medford, Keiko Konoeda, and Meredith Greer to share their experiences incorporating student-reflection activities and inclusive pedagogies into their teaching.

During this well-attended event, we heard about Meredith's strategy to learn students' names. And Erik mentioned how important he felt it was to humanize ourselves: We can share who we are with our students, too! Keiko connected this to how we might encourage risk-taking and support mistake-making (even modeling these vulnerable actions for our students). Marcelle pulled this all together, emphasizing the power of positive learning communities. Finally, the bobcat chimed in: Galvanize joy and belonging with high fives!

Revisiting This Year:

Annual CITL Survey

It's the end of the academic year, and we are inviting you to share your experience with and feedback for CITL. Your thoughts will help us make CITL more inclusive, relevant, and effective. It will take just a few moments to complete our annual survey. **Please please please** take 5-10 minutes to share with us. This is not the April Fool's Joke (look: 11 o'clock), this is something we **really really really** hope you complete.

**COMPLETE
SURVEY**



Final Lunch & Learn: Reflecting on this Year and Preparing for Next Year

CITL has a unique vantage point: We get to engage with educators, admin, and students all over campus from all disciplines and all types of courses. During this workshop, we will share key trends and insights gleaned from our interactions this year. We invite you to come together with colleagues to collaborate on how to leverage this information to inform and enhance our teaching and learning for the upcoming semesters. Join us Wednesday April 3 at noon in Commons 221. Go thru the Commons line for lunch on us!

REGISTER



Upcoming Events & Programs

Reflecting on this Year and Preparing for Next Year

Wednesday, April 3rd

12:00–1:00pm, Commons 221

Go through the line (password: CITL)

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Register ahead of time [here](#):

REGISTER

Pedagogy Matters Special Series: Generative AI

Thursday, April 4th

4:00–5:00pm

Zoom (link with [registration](#))

Join colleagues across Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin to discuss Generative AI (like Chat GPT). This month, CITL is hosting! We share our a brief article ahead of time, and then during the session, we discuss generative technology and its impact and potential in our learning spaces. This session will be facilitated over Zoom.

The April session will be focused on [The AI Influencers Selling Students Learning Shortcuts](#). [Register here](#) (for Zoom link).



Academic Year Wrap Up Events

**Throughout May
Across Campus**

CITL is offering a range of events to wrap up this academic year:

- Final: New Faculty CoP (5/8, Commons 211)
- Final: HHMI Learning Community (5/16, Commons 221)
- Final: Staff Educator CoP (5/17, Commons 211)
- Short-Term Innovation Program (STIP) Showcase (5/22)
- Community Building: Food Focused (5/14, afternoon)
- Community Building: Fun Focused (5/17, afternoon)



WRAP UP

Course (Re)Design Institute

August 20, 21, 22

Dana Building: 2nd Floor

Across three days, this in-person program includes guided discussions, hands on workshops, and independent working sessions and helps you intentionally design your fall (or winter, or short term) course, in which learning objectives, activities, and assessments are inclusive and aligned. We will explore how students learn and apply those understandings to inclusive teaching in your discipline(s). Finally, this wonderfully long-form program helps expand your network of fellow Bates educators—including those new to campus this fall.

REGISTER

Upcoming DeStress Fest

Tuesday, April 16 **Breakfast Club**

8-11 am drop-in
Dana 216: CITL Lounge

We will have breakfast treats, juice, coffee, and tea to keep you energized as we start finals week.

Join the CITL Breakfast Club and maybe your face can go on the poster next year!

**"You see us as you want to see us -
in the simplest terms,
in the most convenient definitions.**

**But what we found out is that
each one of us is a brain...
and an athlete...
and a bunny...
a princess...
and a Bobcat."**

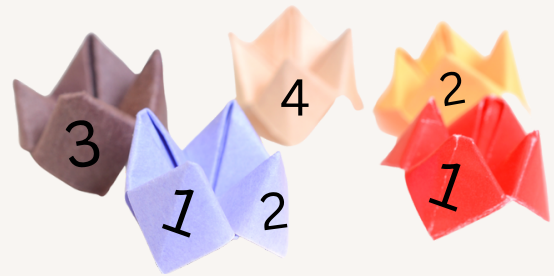


Wednesday, April 17 **Lounge Around with CITL**

All day! Drop in anytime!
Dana 216: CITL Lounge

Stop by the CITL Educator Lounge (you all have access to it via card reader if you ever stop by and the door isn't open!) any time today for a delicious snack and a pick-me-up coffee/tea/soda.

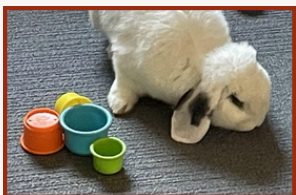
Additionally, we will have fun craft activities as well as some trivia to answer and possibly win a prize!



Thursday, April 18 **Grade In Community**

1-4 pm drop-in
Dana 216: CITL Lounge

Are you looking at a big stack of grading and dreading it? Make the experience better by grading in community with us in the CITL Educator Lounge. We will provide the energy-boosting snacks and drinks, a focus playlist of light music, a soft bunny in the next room to pet, and even some fun colored pens. You bring whatever you need to grade! You can come for twenty minutes or stay the whole three hours. We will be there to give you a pep talk!



EXTRA EXTRA:
**Pippin will make a special
appearance today!**

**Pippin usually works Fridays,
so if you miss him on Thursday,
you are welcome to visit him in his office
at the end of any week!**

Friday, April 19 **Lunch & Play**

11:30 am - 1 pm
Commons 221/222

A new take on the classic "Lunch & Learn," this "Lunch & Play" is exactly as it sounds. Come eat lunch on CITL and play with LEGOs, PlayDoh, and other fun "toys." There is no agenda. This is just a great opportunity to come relax and have some fun with colleagues to end finals week on a high note.

