

NEWSLETTER

*When the geese are flying south
And the sky is grey, my dears,
Close your eyes and lift your nose;
Listen with your careful ears.*

*Feel the winter coming on;
Hear it in the crackling trees;
Note the crisping, quivering wind
Sharply snapping at their leaves*

Barbara Vance

What's inside?

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A Letter from the Editors

If you happened to stop by our lounge for a coffee, a moxie, an applesauce, or a bag of chips in early November, you most likely saw our message:

At a conference; be back soon!

We were indeed at our annual POD Network conference: Five days of karaoke, improv, long hugs, and well-run workshops. Oh, and also really excellent research on and insights into teaching and learning. As we enter winter and the new calendar year, we are delighted to share with you a bit of what we have learned at the national and our campus level (we have new-to-Bates, new-to-teaching Dr. Nick Manganaro from Chemistry sharing his pedagogical point of view). It's a quick, light read this month. Phew!

Lindsey & Wells

New Research and Insights in Teaching and Learning

Confronting Our Deficit-Based Thinking

The deficit narrative can go something like this: “Kids these days! They don’t know A, can’t do B, and won’t care about C. And it’s my responsibility to get them on the right path; I have to teach them A, B, and C, as well as the X, Y, and Z they are here for! And it’s gonna be hard, because kids these days just aren’t prepared.”

And one might substitute that “kids” with “colleagues,” “professors,” “staff,” or “admin.”

At one conference session, we were asked to consider how deficit based thinking is further complicated by a high expectations and rigor, disciplinary standards and tropes, and a fairness mindset, such as “they used to do this, so this group should too” or challenges posed by accessibility accommodations. The following advice emerged from this session:

- Refrain from treating individuals as monoliths (e.g., as a single identity of “kids these days”)
- Define individuals by assets and aspirations before noting the challenges they face
- Reframe your “problems to fix” (“I have to teach them X, Y, Z and A, B, C) as “opportunities to explore” (“I get to teach them X, Y, Z and A, B, C)
- Forgo “gotcha” feedback (“Points off for 1 and 2; you missed X”) for “I got you” support (“It seems 1 and 2 were challenging; luckily, here are some resources on X to explore”)

Considering A 4-Corners Debate

We learned by doing at a session on “4-Corners Debate.” This class activity has various permutations (e.g., [link](#)), but this is how we experienced it:

1. Educator crafts a topic statement that has plausible nuanced arguments (e.g., “This is good in these contexts, but not these”), can be represented by respected values on both sides, and does not have correct answer
2. Educator grounds the activity (what are we talking about), describes the activity (what we are doing), and empowers students to take part (what participating looks like)
3. Educator shares the topic statement and lets learners put themselves in one of four corners of the room: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
4. Learners then talk with those in their corner (those who agree with them) about why they hold this opinion of the topic statement. A representative from each corner shares with the room.
5. Learners are handed an article/text that asks them to consider various viewpoints, read through this text as a corner, and continue their conversation
6. Learners are invited to change their opinion and relocate to a new corner
7. Learners are asked to offer their thoughts about the topic and their participation in the four corners debate, such as through a quick write.

Why might you consider using the 4-corners debate in your learning spaces?

- Allows for a spectrum of “sides”
- Balances “easier discussion with those of the same opinion” with “hearing and considering those of a different opinion”
- Normalizes open-mindedness and changing one’s opinion based on new evidence

What's on Our Desks?

What's on my desk this morning? This [piece from Insider Higher Ed](#) (12/2/24, Mowreader). Mowreader cites the May 2024 study that 55% of college students believe their professors (instructors, educators) are at least partly responsible for being a mentor, with that percentage increasing to 67% at private nonprofit institutions. And it's not just the students who think so, a complementary survey of student success professionals found that 51% of this population agree.

Mowreader interviews Roel Snieder, the Chair of Professional Development Education at Colorado School of Mines, who describes an effective mentorship as having the following ingredients: trust, fun and perspective. "A mentee must trust their mentor to have difficult conversations and be honest, the pair should enjoy spending time together, and the mentor must see their mentee for who they are, not as a clone of themselves." Other methods include: Demonstrate care within and beyond the classroom; encourage a constellation of mentorship; and create opportunities for all students.

I want to point out that the article includes two important caveats:

- 1) Prior research shows some educators are more likely to take on the emotional or invisible labor of caring for students, such as individuals of color or those belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.
- 2) Students are not very proactive in making mentorship a reality. Students are willing to say mentorship is the responsibility of others, but may not take that responsibility on themselves.

The article doesn't provide a whole lot of help here, naming "standardizing formal mentorship" as a pathway to address the first and educate students on the value of mentorship (e.g., as share this article with them) to address the second. Thus, I'll keep my eyes peeled for more information and get back to you all!

Wells

You know how you jot down references during a conference or snap a photo of a slide, only for those notes to disappear into the void of forgotten files? No? Just me? Well, I've decided to try something different and tell you why it might work for you too. At a recent professional conference, I experimented with handwriting/doodling all my notes instead of typing. Writing by hand made me pause and decide if something was truly worth noting, leading to more intentional engagement. After the conference, I revisited and reorganized my handwritten notes into a Google Doc, keeping only the ideas I wanted to act on. This approach not only helped me stay focused during sessions but also made following up with colleagues and expanding on key takeaways much easier. I challenged my FYS to try this note taking strategy this week too and they said, "It made my notes less overwhelming!" and "I found it helpful."

My notes from one session:

Purposes of PD, with growth mindset

- **Validate:** existing practice
- **Articulate:** common language
- **Refresh:** prior forgotten knowledge
- **Stretch:** learn new practices



My notes after reorganizing and fleshing out:

A framework for understanding the purposes of professional learning when approached with a growth mindset: Professional learning helps **validate** existing practices, providing confidence and affirmation in what is already working well. It encourages participants to **articulate** a common language, fostering shared understanding and collaboration. Learning also serves to **refresh** prior knowledge that may have faded, bringing valuable insights back to the forefront. Most importantly, it challenges us to **stretch** into new practices, embracing opportunities to grow and innovate in our teaching and support strategies.

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
2024

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.

Ask: What will you remember?

In our recent conversation with Dr. Nick Manganaro (Chemistry; p. 5), we chatted about outcomes of learning experiences. It's not just we hope our learners now know X, do Y, and value Z, we hope they take something lasting from their time with us and hold onto it, remember it.

Our monthly teaching challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to ask your learners: What do you think you will remember in [time period, e.g., five years, next semester]? Below are a few versions of this activity:

1. If you want to know their answers: Have learners anonymously submit a note card with their answer.
2. If you want them to have their answers: Have learners write an email to their future selves and select "schedule send" for a future date.
3. If you want them to know your answer: Have them note down their answers, then share yours, and then have them pair up and answer: Was my answer surprising to you?

Last month's: Stop by the lounge

"I got to interact with so many colleagues this month!
I learned: We really like cookies,
but aren't fans of blow pops.
And it's really nice to share both groans and smiles."
Wells



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: Nick Maganaro

Chemistry

There are just a few hours before Thanksgiving break, but Nick Manganaro (Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry) has made time for me and my questions. This is not only Nick's first semester at Bates, it is also his first semester teaching. And he is glowing.

For this month's POV, I share the takeaways of our conversation together. He chatted about what makes teaching so wonderful. It was heartwarming, and I am delighted to share it with you.

Wells: In your opinion, what is the role of a college educator?

Nick: My first thoughts? It's taking something that you really love and showing others how and why they can love it as well. It's showing them how cool and beautiful the field and loving the field can be. You model how [chemistry, or insert your field] is not just something learners have to do but something they can do, have the opportunity to do. And that opportunity can be enriching and fun, even if they might not become [chemists, or insert your field specific occupation]. **Ultimately, the role of a college educator is to be an ambassador to the discipline.**

Wells: I love that framing! Any advice for educators? How do they do that?

Nick: First: Be excited about your learners, about your content, and about the time you have been gifted to do this work. Second: Be a learner yourself. Collaborate with others on your campus and beyond, because there are really great people out there with lots to share. Ask your students questions you don't yet know the answers to. Have your teaching be surprising and worthwhile for learners, as well as for you. Class will go by faster.

Wells: And I love that as well! Surprising. Worthwhile. What does that mean to you?

Nick: I've been thinking about something you actually said during new faculty orientation: 5 years after a student leaves my class, what do they remember? And I know what I want them to get, but I've been wondering what they think they will get. Just a few weeks ago, I had a student tell me she will **remember crushed cashews and crack cocaine.**

Wells: Crushed cashews and crack cocaine?

Nick: They look alike! And forensic scientists use chemistry to distinguish; there was this one case we talked about in class. Things aren't always what they seem to be. And my student told me she would remember that forever. You can never be sure what anecdotes they find surprising and worth remembering. All you hope is that students have an answer to the question: "What do you hope you will remember in five years?" If they have an answer, the class was worthwhile.

Wells: Well, now I'm curious. What do you hope they remember?

Nick: In my Gen. Chem. course, I hope they remember that there is **power in looking at things at a basic, fundamental manner.** In Forensic Science, I hope they remember that we all live in a legal system that is guided by science to pursue justice. But **science is done by people and people are fallible** and can be greedy. I hope my students understand this and use this to both be critical and be a part of better science. It's not that they can't err, self-reflect, and grow. It's that they do their best.

Wells: Not to sound like a broken record. But I love that. Thank you for sharing all this with the Bates community.

Thanks for
sharing,
Nick!

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.



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 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		10 CRAFT	11 SIP!	12 "HIKE"	13 GAME	14
15 GRADE	16					

Dec. 10th all day

Snowflake & Bracelet Making

All materials provided in Dana 216 for mostly mindless snowflake cutting and bead stringing. Mindless in a good, seasonal, colorful way!

Dec. 11th 8:00-10:00am

Drinks on us @ The Ronj

Lindsey and Wells will be posted up at the Ronj with coffees, teas, and even a CITL specialty drink! Stop by for one minute or sixty!

Dec. 12th. 9:00, 11:00, & 3:00

Make the "trek" up Mt. David

Join others for a 20-30 minute brain break, fresh air, and body moving. Happening three times, meet outside Dana on Alumni walk at either 9am, 11am, and/or 3pm.

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

Game and Lunch with us in Commons!

This agenda-free event is just a time to get up from your desk, play some fun games, and eat lunch! Go through the line (code word: CITL) and find us in Commons 221 for good food and good conversation.

Dec. 16th 1:00-4:30pm

Grade in Community

Didn't grade as much as you hoped during the weekend? No problem! Come grade with others in Dana 216. CITL will be hanging in the lounge with treats and encouragement to grade!

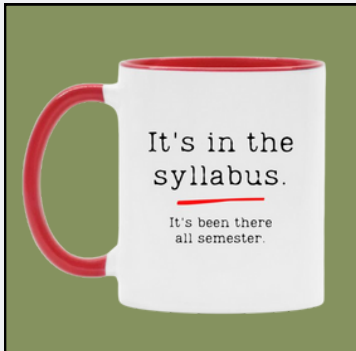
Want a reminder/calendar invite for any of these events?



www.bates.edu/CITL



Winter Programming



Brunch

Syllabus Finalization Workshop

Friday, January 3, 10-11:30 am, Commons 221



Bring a solid draft of a Winter course syllabus to this workshop and focus on getting it finalized! We will share information about syllabus messaging and encouraging students to read the syllabus, along with resources like the syllabus template. Do this all while enjoying brunch through Commons Dining!

REGISTER HERE



Five Communities of Practice

Staff Educators

1st Tuesdays: 12:00-1:00pm, Commons 211

For all staff educators (those who design learning materials or facilitate learning spaces)!

2025 FYS Instructors

2nd & 4th Tuesdays: 9:30-10:30am, Dana 216

Prepare for your fall instruction of the W1 with this community of practice!

New Faculty

1st Fridays: 12-1pm, Commons 226

Place for faculty in their first, second, or third year at Bates to share tips and find community.

RPPC Courses

2nd & 4th Fridays: 2:40 - 4 pm, Dana 216

For those interested in working thru proposing, designing, and teaching RPPC courses.

Inclusive Teaching

**Alternating Wednesdays: 8-9:15 am (Dana 216)
OR 12-1:15 pm (Commons 226)**

For all educators (staff and faculty) interested in working on and discussing theoretical and practical applications of inclusive teaching.

One Campus-Wide Book Club



**Alternating
Thursdays
starting
January 9th**

You are warmly invited to join the **Office of Equity and Inclusion** on an exciting design thinking adventure! Using Susie Wise's book as a guide, we will explore how a sense of belonging is nurtured in our workplaces through our physical spaces, rituals and events, communications, and more. Beginning in January, participants will work in self-selected, collaborative teams over the course of seven sessions.

This opportunity is open to all staff and faculty regardless of prior experience with design thinking. **Registration information coming soon!**

JOIN HERE



www.bates.edu/CITL