

# Teaching Times

BALDWIN CENTER FOR LEARNING & TEACHING

<https://www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center>



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**MAY 21, 2020**

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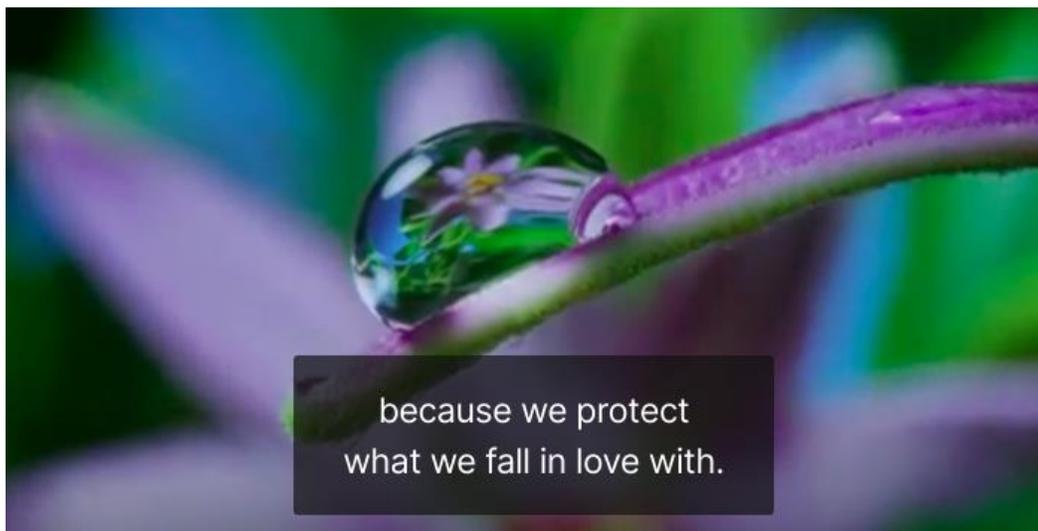
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“People are just exhausted and can’t understand why they can’t do what they used to do,” she says. “We’re not taking the time to celebrate our accomplishments. We’re not taking the time to be open.”

So let go of traditional notions of productivity, she advises. Connect with others. Show compassion, but set boundaries. And find your sense of purpose.

**Nature. Beauty. Gratitude with Louie Schwartzberg (8 min watch)**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/louie\\_schwartzberg\\_nature\\_beauty\\_gratitude#t-79143](https://www.ted.com/talks/louie_schwartzberg_nature_beauty_gratitude#t-79143)



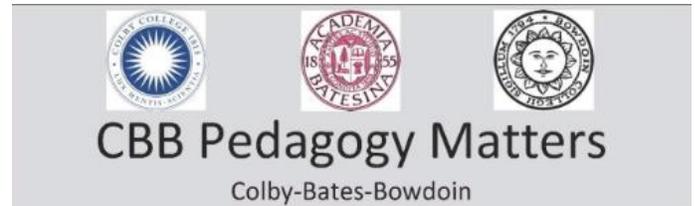
## Colby, Bates, Bowdoin (CBB) Pedagogy Matters May Institute:

### Learning from our Remote Past

May 26-28, 2020, Online

Register: <https://bit.ly/CBBRegFormMay2020>

FMI: <https://cbbpedagogymatters.com/> OR <https://www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center>



Connect with colleagues at Bowdoin and from Bates and Colby to engage in dialogue, reflection and planning sessions focused on learning from our pivot to emergency remote teaching this semester. Open to teaching faculty and instructional staff.

#### Morning Sessions on Remote Teaching & Learning (10-11:15am EST)

- Building Community (Katie Byrnes)
- Reaching Across the Divide: Fostering Connections in Remote Learning (Shauna'h Fuegen-Bates)
- Transparent Assignment Design and Rubrics (Carol Hurney- Colby)

#### Birds of a Feather Lunches (12-1pm EST)

- Course format (Lecture, Lab, Discussion, Performance, Studio Art, Writing)
- Faculty appointment (Pre-Tenured (Assistant), Tenured (Associate), Tenured (Full), Lecturers, Lab Instructors, Visiting, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic partners, Department chairs)
- Academic Disciplines (Humanities, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, Foreign Languages)

#### Bowdoin-specific afternoon sessions

- Tuesday-Thursday First-Year Writing Seminar Faculty Cohort Meetings (Meredith McCarroll)
- Tuesday-Thursday Online Course Design Consultations (Katie Byrnes)
- Tuesday- Remote Special Collections (Marieke Van DerSteenhoven)
  - Join this session to participate in a series of brief activities that demonstrate some of the possibilities for engaging collections in remote instruction, plus ample time will be dedicated to discussions about how SC&A can best support your courses.
- Wednesday- Clicker Questions and iPad/White Board Uses in Remote Teaching (Eric Gaze & Paul Benham)
  - A conversation about using clicker questions (Poll Everywhere) and iPad's as a whiteboard for engaging students and optimizing learning in online teaching environments.
- Thursday- Creating digital course materials that are accessible for all (Juli Haugen & Jennifer Snow)
  - The workshop will introduce the differences between Universal Design and Accessibility when preparing digital course materials, and explore how to identify accessible vs. non-accessible materials. The participants will use the accessibility checker in Microsoft Word and finally, produce an accessible PDF.

## Summer Opportunities

Take an online course on Coursera or EdX like “The Science of Well-Being” with Professor Laurie Santos of Yale University

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being?>

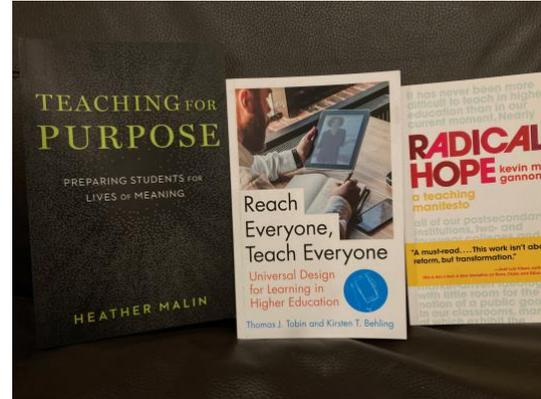
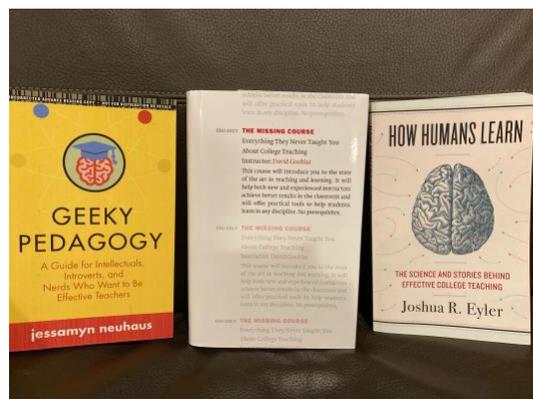
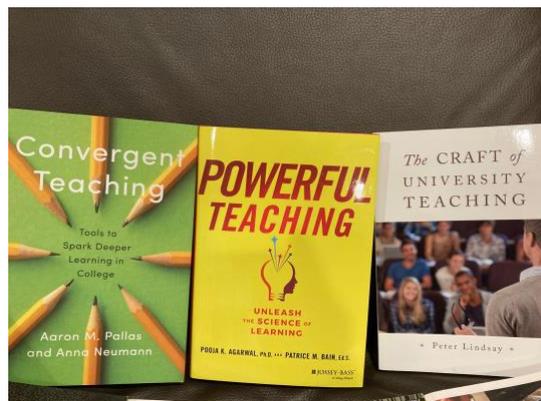
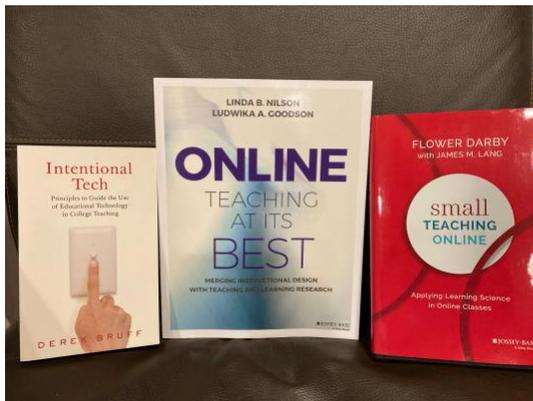
In just the past month, more than 600,000 people in an increasingly housebound world have signed up for Yale’s free online course “[The Science of Well Being,](#)” originally taught on campus in the spring of 2018 by Yale psychology professor Laurie Santos.

Attend a CIRTL course or teaching institute

<https://www.cirtl.net/>

The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) seeks to enhance excellence in STEM undergraduate education through development of a national faculty committed to implementing and advancing evidence-based teaching practices for diverse learners. This summer the CIRTL Network’s online programming includes [3 courses](#), [1 MOOC](#), [3 teaching institutes](#), and [3 online teaching office hours](#). Courses and teaching institutes require advance registration during defined registration periods; MOOCs and office hours do not.

Read:



## How to Manage Burnout

Rebecca Pope-Ruark was the kind of professor whom other professors could be forgiven for envying. Hard-working, accomplished, and inventive, she spent years at Elon University happily teaching professional writing and rhetoric. She wrote a [book](#) on how to juggle the many responsibilities of being an academic. And when the chance to build a capstone project for juniors and seniors came up, she dove in with enthusiasm. It was a complex challenge, requiring hours every day negotiating with multiple service-learning partners, other faculty members, and students.

Then something strange happened. In the spring of 2018, Pope-Ruark began feeling anxious and depressed. She started having panic attacks. She would find herself standing in a stairwell for half an hour trying to figure out what to eat for lunch. At home, as soon as she began reading journal articles after dinner, she would fall asleep. Perhaps most troubling, she began avoiding her students. “My entire career was dedicated to students,” she recalls. “And suddenly I couldn’t stand them.”

She felt ashamed and embarrassed. Professors are supposed to be productive, she thought. Reputation is the coin of the realm. If she admitted something was wrong, wouldn’t that prove she was a fraud or, worse yet, replaceable?

It took well over a year, but eventually Pope-Ruark regained her equilibrium. She began by reading about burnout and recognizing herself in its symptoms, which include emotional and intellectual exhaustion as well as cynicism about the people you’re supposed to care for. She entered therapy. And she told her colleagues, who, she says, were unfailingly supportive. It turns out they had been worrying for a long time about her overextending herself.

As the novel coronavirus has forced thousands of professors to work longer and harder than ever before to do something —teaching remotely — that many find deeply unsatisfying, Pope-Ruark is seeing those same warning signs in others. Instructors are being run ragged. They feel cynical about the experience, a view that extends sometimes to their students. And they wonder whether their extra work is even valued.

Having lived through burnout and come out of it stronger and wiser, Pope-Ruark has been [sharing her experience](#) with others, in hopes of offering support and

advice for how to deal with teaching during a pandemic. Coping with burnout at this juncture, she says, when remote teaching might last for several more months, is critical to everyone's mental health.

"People are just exhausted and can't understand why they can't do what they used to do," she says. "We're not taking the time to celebrate our accomplishments. We're not taking the time to be open."

So let go of traditional notions of productivity, she advises. Connect with others. Show compassion, but set boundaries. And find your sense of purpose.

Pope-Ruark, who is [writing a book](#) about professor burnout, eventually left Elon and moved into a different kind of academic career. She is now a teaching-and-learning specialist at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she has recently helped to support instructors in the shift to remote teaching.

She let go of ambitions of leadership as part of her career change, she says, and is happily part of a team. She says she recognized that academe's coin of the realm, productivity, was not working for her anymore, and that she needed to reconfigure her ideas about what a truly meaningful academic life means.

"Who are you if you're not doing?" she recalled her mind-set at the time. "I spent a lot of time not feeling. Doing was kind of the way I defined myself. And I couldn't do it anymore."

In today's crisis, when faculty members are "stuck in a grief cycle that never ends," she says, it's particularly important for academics to remind themselves of why they do what they do in the first place. Although that is central to professional satisfaction, Pope-Ruark says, purpose is often tough to articulate. Yet having those conversations, both individually and collectively, is important.

"For me, teaching was what I loved, ultimately: helping people learn," she says. "Teaching is still my passion, but in a different way. Now I'm teaching faculty how to better help their students."

She advises faculty members to go back to that "beginning moment" that got them into academe. Then try to separate what they loved about it from what they're dealing with now — the pandemic, campus politics, or other stressors.

She knows people who have been able to rekindle their sense of purpose by taking professional-development courses or joining groups that help them focus on that core identity. “That puts them in a position to support their purpose when they come out of this.”

She advises professors who feel burned out to create connections with their peers and show compassion for their students. “The more we isolate, the worse it gets,” she says. “Reach out to people. Let yourself be vulnerable.” For example, she and her office colleagues each lunch together every week via Zoom, where they can talk about anything.

It’s also OK to discuss stress with students, she says, to let them know that, yes, this is a weird time. At the same time, it’s necessary to set boundaries. Don’t just create an open Zoom channel for anyone to hop in. Set up one-on-one and small-group conversations with students. Start a Slack channel, or a text thread. Also, clearly delineate work hours. Build in transition time to your home life.

She also advises people to give themselves a break when it comes to productivity. As long as you’re meeting the learning objectives of your course, even if it’s not of the same quality as it would be normally, let go of guilt. “It’s OK to be a little mediocre right now.”

And be sure not to take out your frustration on students. Pope-Ruark has watched with concern some of the complaints playing out on social media with a “hyperfocus” on student cheating. “If you don’t have a language for compassion fatigue, for that exhaustion, for that ‘Why can’t I do what I usually do?’,” she says, “it becomes unhealthy, and it trickles down to our students.”

Pope-Ruark’s advice reminds me of an [essay](#) we ran in March, “Why You Should Ignore All That Coronavirus-Inspired Productivity Pressure,” by Aisha S. Ahmad. She, too, suggests that academics stop trying to power through these strange times by being extra-busy and efficient. Ahmad advises embracing the new normal and understanding that this is a marathon, not a sprint.

<https://www.chronicle.com/page/Get-the-Teaching-Newsletter>

## **The Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching**

The Baldwin Center promotes *intentional, equitable, and effective* learning and teaching environments. We are committed to inclusive excellence and to helping all students, faculty, and staff grow as learners and teachers. The programs housed in Kanbar 102 serve as a location for discussions, tutoring, mentoring, and advising. Tutoring, mentoring and writing assistance occur Sunday-Thursday nights in Kanbar 102 between 6-10pm. Students may schedule appointments at: [www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center](http://www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center) or drop in for peer-to-peer support or make an appointment directly with Baldwin CLT Staff listed below. Faculty may make an appointment for a consultation directly with staff.

### **Administrative Contacts**

**Kathryn Byrnes, Director** 102D Kanbar 207-725-5035 [kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu](mailto:kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu)

**Tammis Donovan, Administrative Coordinator** 102G Kanbar 207-725 3006 [tdonovan@bowdoin.edu](mailto:tdonovan@bowdoin.edu)

### **ACADEMIC COACHING**

**Tina Chong, Assistant Director**, [cchong2@bowdoin.edu](mailto:cchong2@bowdoin.edu)

Tina consults individually with students to strategize plans and schedules, develop techniques for acquiring new knowledge and skills, and manage their workload while maintaining health and well-being. [Make an appointment here!](#)

### **ENGLISH FOR MULTI-LINGUAL SPEAKERS (EMS)**

**Lisa Flanagan, Advisor**, 102B Kanbar 207-725-3056 [lflanagan2@bowdoin.edu](mailto:lflanagan2@bowdoin.edu)

Students, faculty, and staff who are multi-lingual or who have parents who are non-native speakers of English may work with EMS Advisor Lisa Flanagan. They may seek help with understanding assignments and reading strategies, grammar, outlining, revising, editing, and the conventions of scholarly writing.

### **THE Q (QUANTITATIVE) REASONING PROGRAM**

**Eric Gaze, Director**, 301 Kanbar 207-725-3135 [egaze@bowdoin.edu](mailto:egaze@bowdoin.edu)

**James Broda, Assistant Director**, 222 Kanbar 207-725-7148 [jbroda@bowdoin.edu](mailto:jbroda@bowdoin.edu)

Provides support to students in understanding and using numerical information. Peer tutors lead study groups and individual tutorials for students in quantitative courses. Supports faculty in the design and analysis of quantitative material in coursework.

### **WRITING AND RHETORIC**

**Meredith McCarroll, Director** 102E Kanbar 207-721-5056 [mmccarro@bowdoin.edu](mailto:mmccarro@bowdoin.edu)

Students in any discipline may work one-on-one with a trained, peer writing assistant to improve their writing process and strengthen their writing. Writing assistants work with students in selected courses, semester partnerships, and drop-in workshops. Directs the First Year Seminar program and supports faculty incorporating writing and oral presentations in their classrooms.

### **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT-TEACHING**

**Kathryn Byrnes, Director** 102D Kanbar 207-725-5035 [kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu](mailto:kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu)

Provides support to faculty on course design, learning goals, syllabi, assignments, assessment, mid-course feedback, Bowdoin Course Questionnaires, challenges with students, and other aspects of teaching and student learning. Supports Baldwin Faculty Fellows program and Teaching Triangles reflection program. Organizes August, January, and May Institutes on teaching and learning.