

## Bonus Episode: 2018 Summer Reading Challenge

Podcast: <https://ctl.t.illinoisstate.edu/podcast/2018/epb001.shtml>

Learn about a new summer reading program for faculty, staff, and graduate students at Illinois State University. In this brief bonus episode, Claire and Jim discuss how this new initiative, in partnership with Milner Library, challenges participants to move a little out of their comfort zones to explore new aspects of teaching and student learning.

### Transcript

JIM: Hi there. I'm Jim.

CLAIRE: And I'm Claire.

JIM: Let's Talk Teaching Welcome to Let's Talk Teaching a podcast from the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology here at Illinois State University. I'm Jim Gee, joining me again, Dr. Claire Lamonica. Our director, Hi, Claire. Hi, Jim. Hey, happy summer!

CLAIRE: It is summer.

JIM: I know.

CLAIRE: Well, okay. Or it will be by the time people are listening to this.

JIM: Well, we're going to turn this around very quickly. So, it's, it's finals week. Spring 2018. It's finals week. I just had my last class last night. And we're going to turn this round yet this week, because we have an event coming up next week that we want to talk about.

CLAIRE: We do, we do. We want everyone to come out to CTLT, on Tuesday from 11:30 to 1:00 for the kickoff of our Summer Institute, and especially the kickoff of our summer reading challenge.

JIM: So that's going to be Tuesday, May 15. And yeah, so we want to talk very briefly, this is a little bonus episode today. And we just want to talk very, very briefly.

CLAIRE: At no additional charge to you, our listeners.

JIM: Yeah, exactly. Just a small investment of time that we think will be well worth it. Do you remember what the impetus for this was? Why we came up with this?

CLAIRE: You know, um, I don't.

JIM: I don't remember either.

CLAIRE: It's one of those things that sort of popped into the CTLT consciousness. I heard a rumor that it was originally based on an idea of Mayuko Nakamura.

JIM: Okay.

CLAIRE: But as all ideas do here at CTLT, they somebody throws something out, and it grows, and it morphs and it changes and people add things and take away things. And pretty soon, the original owner of the idea doesn't even recognize it.

JIM: Right.

CLAIRE: So, I'm not sure at all what Mayuko had in mind, but I'm pretty excited about where we ended up.

JIM: Yeah, exactly. And we, you know, we've talked before on this podcast about why summer is a good time for faculty and staff to turn towards professional development. It's just you're in a different space. Yes, literally and figuratively, or metaphorically or whatever, in every sense. So why are you excited about the Reading Challenge? What is the challenge?

CLAIRE: Okay, so the challenge is, we at CTLT challenge you, Illinois State University, faculty and staff and graduate students, to read three books this summer, we are challenging you to go a little bit outside of your comfort zone, your, your reading, comfort zone, maybe explore a genre that's unfamiliar, maybe explore a topic, or even a discipline that's unfamiliar, and maybe sort of inhabit the unfamiliar world by reading an author who is a different demographic than you are reading about a place that is this far from your home. So, all of the books that we have chosen are in some way related to teaching learning the academy, it's everything from memoirs to detective fiction.

JIM: So, it's not just so we're not just talking about, we want you to read three how to teaching books.

CLAIRE: No, no, as a matter of fact, we have. So, we have three categories, nonfiction, memoir, and fiction. And those are, of course, very broadly defined.

JIM: So, we're not we're not just talking about research-based practices, and all of that other stuff. And I think that's kind of a lot that's there. Oh, yeah, certainly some of that there. But I also think it's exciting because, you know, over the last five years working here at CTLT, and having the opportunity to still teach on the side, and it's, it has become a sort of cyclical thing for me it, it's almost a feedback loop and that my teaching informs my work here and my work here has certainly informed my teaching.

CLAIRE: I'm happy to hear that.

JIM: Well, yes, it's paid off. But I've, you know, the tips, the research-based practices, those are all important, but the mindset with which you approach teaching, I think is, is I've become, I've come to appreciate that much more over the years. And I think this reading challenge is something that kind of feeds that because you don't have to be reading something that is really prescriptive. One of my favorite words from our podcasts of old but something that is just inspirational in some way that informs teaching.

CLAIRE: Yeah, I suppose you know, especially I think some of these memoirs are you know, are you'll find to be very inspirational. Some of the fiction you'll find to be just kind of a nice break. Um, and, and of course, then, you know, some of the nonfiction you'll find that kind of some of them you, you will find more evidence-based practice or whatever, but you'll find a pretty broad range there too.

JIM: Okay, and so we're using the website good reads to kind of help people find things to read, right there's some suggestions on there and others will be contributing as the summer goes along.

CLAIRE: Right, so you can, you can use you can use the website, either to get ideas for books are to make suggestions about books. So, if there's something you've read that fits into one of these categories, we hope that you'll join us on Goodreads and, and add some of the books that you would suggest to the bookshelf so it's a private group. Not anybody in the whole wide world can join this summer reading challenge is actually limited to people who have ULIDs, ISU ULIDs. So, when you go there first, you'll be asked to verify that you are a member of the ISU community teaching community by providing your you ULID.

JIM: Yeah. Yeah, your university email addresses and is what we're looking at.

CLAIRE: Just the first part of it. And once you've done that, you know, we'll, we'll get you in there. And you can start browsing the bookshelves and making your own suggestions. And then adding creating some discussions, you can start a discussion, you can join an existing discussion. If you do that, if you read three books over the summer, and contribute to some discussions, then in the fall, we'll give you a campus dining certificate, which you can use to go to lunch with a colleague and talk about the books you read.

JIM: Awesome.

CLAIRE: So, it's kind of completes the circle

JIM: It does. So, this is going to be going on all summer. We hope people will come for the kickoff on May 15. But if you can't make it, you can still be part of the reading challenge, of course, and I think people will be joining all summer long.

CLAIRE: Oh, I hope so. Yeah, yeah.

JIM: All right, Claire, thank you so much.

CLAIRE: Thank you, Jim.

JIM: And that's all the time we have for this brief little bonus episode of Let's Talk Teaching. You can find out much more about the Summer Reading Challenge and how to sign up and about all of our summer institute workshops. Go to [CTLT.IllinoisState.edu](http://CTLT.IllinoisState.edu). You'll see the Summer Institute logo right there on the front page for Dr. Claire Lamonica for all of my colleagues here at the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology until we talk again, Happy Teaching!