

## Ep. 027: In the Good old Summertime

Spring has just about sprung its last. As we wrap up the end another semester, it's a great time to look forward to a summer of some meaningful "me" time. Claire and Jim discuss the benefits of summer professional development in general and some of the highlights of CTLT's Summer Institute in particular. Explore some of the philosophies behind course design, helping students write, and thriving despite the stress of life in the academy.

Podcast: <https://prodev.illinoisstate.edu/podcast/2017/ep027.shtml>

### Transcript

JIM: Hi there. I'm Jim.

CLAIRE: And I'm Claire.

JIM: Let's Talk Teaching.

JIM: 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 today, Dr. Claire Lamonica, our director. Hi, Claire.

CLAIRE: Hi, Jim.

JIM: Hey, today we're talking about...

CLAIRE: Summer.

JIM: Summer. You know, we started this podcast at the end of last summer. And we didn't actually really talk about what goes on here at CTLT over the summer at that point, because we were looking forward to the fall semester and, and preparing for that. But summer is a great time in terms of professional development for teachers on a on a university campus, right? Because not only do you have a little bit more time, and you may not be have quite the teaching load if you're teaching at all, but there's some other, you know, laudable goals to try to set yourself.

CLAIRE: Well, you know, I think right now, even just with summer, just two weeks away, it's kind of hard to be thinking about summer, if you're in the classroom, because all you can really see is this pile of work that you have to get done before before you can move into summer. But that's exactly why summer. Why get so excited about our Summer Institute, because it really is a chance to kind of put the the sort of exhaustion maybe a little bit of burnout, maybe a little bit of...

JIM: Exasperation.

CLAIRE: Oh, maybe a little bit of cynicism.

JIM: Yeah.

CLAIRE: You know, we, you know, we kind of end that we start every semester with such great hopes, and no semester ever lives up to those. And by the time we get to the end, we're like, yeah, I was a fool.

JIM: Yeah. And I think this this calendar year of 2017. So the spring of 2017, when we're talking right now, I think this year, for some reason, has hit me particularly hard in terms of teaching, because just the way the calendar has fallen. We're going deep into May. It feels I know, I know, it really isn't, but it feels like that we're going deep into the finals or not until the second full week of May

CLAIRE: Graduation isn't till May 14, I was just you know, are well, it's actually the 12th. And the 13th. Mother's Day is May 14, I was just whining about that this morning. Mother's Day isn't till the 14th of May this year.

CLAIRE: So late, and I won't ever plant anything in my garden until after Mother's Day. Yes. So, I'm like chomping at the bit, you know, well, not today, because today's a miserable day. But, you know, typically, I want to get out there and start planting. So anyway, I think, and you know, because ah watch segue from a metaphor. Okay, because summer is a great time for us to grow.

JIM: I know.

JIM: Yes.

CLAIRE: Either horticulturally or are professionally. So, it really is you've got a little more time you have time to sort of engage in some professional development and then reflect on it. Maybe while you're working in your garden, maybe while you're mowing the lawn, you know, whatever. Right? And sort of let ideas, oh, here it goes again. Let ideas take root.

JIM: Oh, that's good.

CLAIRE: And then you know, then you really, you really can grow your teaching for the summer.

JIM: Well, I think I found the title for this episode. So so there you go. And let me let me just let's torture the metaphor a little bit more, shall we? Okay, because now's the time to plant the seeds for all of that hard work.

CLAIRE: Yeah.

JIM: Summer because because now that now is in all seriousness, now is the time to think about it, because and I actually find it's a little bit of a to kind of start planning out what am I going to do this summer in terms of my professional development, as I am trying to get everything graded, and feedback to students and get ready for the final

projects and all that other stuff. So so, let's talk a little bit about what what we here at CTLT tried to accomplish, working with faculty members through our Summer Institute, which which by the way, should mentioned is is not like a one day thing, or a five day thing. It goes on for three months.

CLAIRE: It's all summer long, it's all summer long. You can come here any day of the summer, with the exception maybe of Fourth of July week, and there will be multiple professional development opportunities. So there there really is there really is a lot going on. I was just thinking about how much when I was an undergrad, even a grad student, but especially maybe an undergrad I love I loved reading the course catalog. I was just I know that so geeky. But I did. I just loved reading the course catalog and looking at all the courses that I could take. And which is probably explains why he graduated from undergrad school with like 140 hours or something. Because I wanted to take them all. But you know, just that looking ahead and seeing what the opportunities are. So we just this week, got all of the summer programming up on the CTLT website and I'm sure you're going to plug that later on. I'm going to say that You know, our our goal here at CTLT is really to let people grow in the direction that they want to grow. So, we try to offer a variety we do we have our keys to teaching excellence, you know, and you can explore one of those by by selecting one on the website and looking to see what workshops are, are offered that relate to that key. But you can also you can, you can sort of do ala carte learn a little bit, this little bit, a little bit of that, you can engage in an extended experience through one of the course design cohorts, you'll probably get the equivalent of three and a half days maybe, or more. If you do that really tensely thinking about a particular course, we have some themes, I think, really what we're looking for is, you know, you have a chance to sort of make your own theme this summer, I'm going to think about X. So, we have a couple of workshops on collaboration. One of them is here at CTLT. One of them is new in the collaborate in the new collaboration classroom, at Milner. So, you can that was one of mine. Jim's raising his eyebrows at me

JIM: No, no, no.

CLAIRE: As I plug my own workshop first.

JIM: In fact, I was gonna ask you that because I know you're working on a couple of workshops for this summer. And the collaboration one is one you did piloted this spring. And of course, you're also doing Design Your Course

CLAIRE: I am.

JIM: So which we've talked about a little bit on this podcast, but what does it...

CLAIRE: Design courses is for early career faculty, so faculty in their first three years of teaching at Illinois State, and it really is an opportunity to just sit down and really design a course. And we have, we have a process that we work through we we follow the D. Fink's 12 step process for designing your course. But I this summer, I'm actually departing from that a little bit and I'm revamping the I'm, I'm revamping, like I'm redesigning my course design workshop. So, we'll be doing some, we'll be talking a

little bit more about the student experience. And adding some things in about assessing your own course in your own teaching and sort of the teaching experience. So, it'll be a little broader than it has been in the past. So, I'm pretty excited about that. But we also we have five other course design cohorts. So, design your courses, kind of the foundational one, but anybody who's already taken design your course are is you know, anybody actually can sign up for the other courses and courses. Now some of them are full.

JIM: Some of them are full.

CLAIRE: Some of them are really close to full.

JIM: Right.

CLAIRE: But we do still have seats I know in a couple of really good ones. We still have seats in the design your course for diversity workshop, which Dana Karriker and Mayuko Nakamura facilitate. That's a great experience for really thinking about who your students are, and how you can better help them help meet their needs in your classroom. Is a civic engagement one full?

CLAIRE: Huge hit.

JIM: I believe the civic engagement one is full. Some of our workshops require, some of them are just you registered for them. Others require you to either be nominated or you have to apply for it. Civic engagement is one of those. The other one that's full this summer that we have a lot of people interested in is AIM online. And we'll be doing more podcasts about about what we do here at CTLT. And online teaching in general. But that's one that we piloted last summer, and it was very successful. And so again.

JIM: Yeah, a huge hit. The other one that we should mention, which of course is also full, but for graduate students. This was this this actually closed registration for this closed a while ago, we also do an online, largely online learning experience called instructional design for future faculty. So, we actually also have something in place to help those graduate students who want to teach in the academy to design their course too. And then tell us very briefly about the collaboration, one that you're doing. And then we have to also talk about your writing one, because that's kind of a that's a perennial favorite. I would call it.

CLAIRE: As I understand.

JIM: I love.

CLAIRE: Well, the collaboration. One is that is, as I said, there are two workshops on collaboration. And the first one is facilitated by Dana Karraker, here at CTLT. And she's going to be talking about basically how to integrate collaborative learning into any class, okay? And what collaborative learning is and then how to integrate it into any class and then Jennifer Sharkey, and I will be following up on that with a workshop in the collaboration classroom, where we'll be sort of introducing that learning space,

introducing the technology but also the also the theory behind it. So that workshop actually guides participants through a collaborative experience, first, a cooperative learning experience and then a collaborative learning experience and so we get to use the classroom in the way that in one way that it could be used. So that's those are fun. And the student writing one, as she said, is that's kind of a perennial.

JIM: Yeah.

CLAIRE: This one always fails, and we always teach it.

CLAIRE: Well, I think the title has a lot to do with it. The title is.

CLAIRE: Well, the title is when quote, students can't write...

JIM: Yeah.

CLAIRE: And unquote. And so, it's probably a little bit of a dig on my part, because we hear this all the time, you know, students can't write.

JIM: Right.

CLAIRE: And as someone who spent a lifetime supporting developing writers, that's I find that to be something of an overstatement. I don't find it to be entire I think that students do struggle to write well. And they particularly struggled to write well, in the wide variety of writing situations that they encounter in the academy. Right. And so this workshop is really focused on how you, as somebody who doesn't teach writing, can help students develop as writers in your discipline, or become better writers for your class. So, that's kind of the that's kind of the focus of that one. Cool, pretty excited. I always I always like doing that. I always that's fun. It's, it's a little grueling. It's two days. Well, by the end of the second day, we're all like, oh, but, but it's a good time along the way. So, I think people, people generally have a really positive response to it.

JIM: So that's, that's certainly what I've heard. So. So, I'm going to be working on a couple of I'm going to revise a couple workshops this summer as well. Well, you know, so I do this one called your Tete your, what is it called Your Classroom Technology Policy? Yeah. And it, I haven't done it about a year, I did it last summer. And I didn't do it in the fall, I didn't do it for spring Institute. And so, I have to update a lot of trends and data and stuff that that support it. But I used to talk about kind of just one way of framing a conversation with your students about that the whole goal of this is to, as a classroom community, decide how you're going to use devices that can be distracting, right, what you're going to do, how you're going to deal with it in situations when they are distracting. And it empowers students, because it gives them a say, but it also prevents you from having to be a thug all semester and tell them to put their bleeping phone away. And it's not a perfect, there's no perfect solution. And of course, a lot of it depends, you know, how you have this dialogue? I have this conversation with your students, it depends in part about the teaching situation itself. What's the room? Like? How big is the room? How many students do you have; that sort of thing. So, I'm drawing on some feedback that I've gotten from folks that have done this before going

through this workshop before. And I'm hoping to expand it out and talk about a variety of different techniques, as opposed to kind of sticking to just one. So that'll be interesting. And then I'm going to do one again, that I did over the summer or over the spring, our spring break on the teaching hero. So, this is more of a It's not about teaching thesis. It wasn't it was it that so myths and heroes, the stuff was the band, how that's used in communication. That's how the that was the basis of my thesis. But so, it's talking about how we as teachers can identify ourselves as heroes along that particular hero's journey, that sort of thing. So, and, you know, we did it was a very small group over the spring, and it actually worked out rather well, the feedback was really good. So, we'll we'll see if we can, we'll see if we can tweak it a little bit. Yeah, maybe a little bit.

CLAIRE: Yeah. Another really... Another thing that I'd like to, at least to mention is our Faculty Fellows Program.

JIM: Yeah, we really should. Yeah.

CLAIRE: Yeah, that's, that's really exciting for me, because this draws on the expertise of faculty members on our campus. So, we have see, we have, gosh, almost a dozen faculty members who are going to be contributing to these. And I think we've got about a half dozen, or maybe a little more workshops. But these, these are really great, because these people work very hard at they actually to teach a Faculty Fellows workshop, the faculty member has to come here to CTLT and do a workshop on creating a workshop, right, yeah. And then they have to go away and design their workshop. And they have to send us the design for the workshop and to get some formative feedback from us. And then they have to come in, they teach the workshop, and then they go away, and they reflect on the workshop and how it went the process of developing it, the process of implementing it. And you know, what they might do differently in the future. So, we have some great, we have some great people coming to do those. And they've got some great topics lined up. So that's worth a look at the CTLT website. Yeah, well, under Faculty Fellows.

JIM: Yeah. And we'll certainly link to that on to the Show page as well. And I to add to that, these are also folks, a lot of them have been very active here at CTLT in the past, so they're familiar with some of our programming that we've done before. And I think that especially this year, I've had a sense that what we have lined up what they're bringing really complements and it doesn't repeat But it complements what people have gotten here before. And there are a couple of them that are that, you know, folks came to us and proposed topics because of, you know, they see a situation in the academy that they want to address. Talking about media literacy and, and whatnot. That's one of them. And I'm sure that's the theme we're going to be revisiting at some point.

CLAIRE: Some of them are drawn from recommendations. They were originally proposals. I'm sorry, they were originally sessions at the symposium. Yes, January. Yeah. So, they're sort of by faculty, for faculty at the request of faculty, you know, to a great extent. So that's that those are kind of those are very exciting.

JIM: So, as we wrap up kind of talking about what our hopes are for summer, there are a couple of events that we're doing this summer, that are not workshops, per se. We didn't we tend to think a lot in terms of workshops over the summer, we have a for the first time since I've been here. So, this is my fourth or fifth summer here. We have a reading group that we're doing over the summer. That is based on this book called *The Slow Professor: challenging the culture of speed*. And so, it's much more of a it's less of a how to teach and more of a-

CLAIRE: An approach to-

JIM: To living in the academy. Yeah.

CLAIRE: An approach to living in the in the academy.

JIM: Yeah, living as an EMIC life. So, it's one of those again, we have some workshops that kind of fall along those lines. We also have the portfolio circles that we do. These are for folks that have been nominated for university teaching awards.

CLAIRE: Yes, folks who have been nominated for university teaching awards, can attend these anybody who's developing a teaching portfolio for any reason. So not just not just nominees for outstanding university teaching award winners or university teaching awards, but also college level teaching awards are, perhaps your professional organization has a teaching award. And you've been asked to submit a portfolio, lots of different reasons that people put teaching portfolios together, but these so these circles can help with that.

JIM: And then the great thing that we started a couple years ago is that at the end of the summer, we have a showcase now and so folks that have gone through and done work over the summer, have an opportunity to share what they have learned with the rest of our colleagues on campus. So, folks should keep an ear out in an eye out for that. I'm sure you'll be getting an email about it sometime soon. Over the summer. And we'll probably talk about it a little bit more in this podcast too.

CLAIRE: So yeah, yeah.

JIM: Great.

CLAIRE: So, a lot going on.

JIM: A lot going on. And you'll hear much more about it. Of course, we're not done for spring yet. So, I'm sure we'll be you know, as folks are working on, they're wrapping up their spring, we're here to support them for that too. So.

CLAIRE: Absolutely.

JIM: And that's all the time we have for this week's episode of Let's Talk Teaching. You can go to our website [CTLT.Illinoisstate.edu](http://CTLT.Illinoisstate.edu). Click on the workshops link, and you'll see a link there to Summer Institute, and you can see all of the workshops and events and

much more that we talked about today. For Dr. Claire Lamonica and everyone here at the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, until we talk again, Happy Teaching!