

Sarah Anderegg

From: Jonathan Eldridge
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:51 AM
To: Jonathan Eldridge
Subject: Spring 2023 Faculty Information & Updates, Volume V
Attachments: Yesterday's Gone.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear College of Marin Faculty:

This week's attached article is about questioning where we go as we come out of the pandemic—do we try to get back to the way things were? Or is that an impossible task that affords us the opportunity to create something new?

And while yesterday's gone, as the article's title indicates, the future is upon us, as is Black History Month. With the national news full of efforts to water down AP African American History curriculum and dismantle higher ed's efforts to be more inclusive, I encourage you to read and share the LibGuide below and lean into what Nikole Hannah-Jones writes in *The 1619 Project*:

Our myths have not served us well. We are the most unequal of the Western democracies. We incarcerate our citizens at the highest rates. We suffer the greatest income inequality....[we must] challenge these myths not to tear down or further divide...but so that we can truly become the country we already claim to be. Whether we grapple with these ugly truths or not, they affect us still....If we are a truly great nation, the truth cannot destroy us.

[COM Celebrates Black History Month](#)

[LibGuides: African American History Month 2023 at College of Marin: Let's Celebrate!](#)

LibGuides: African American History Month 2023 at College of Marin: Let's Celebrate!
libguides.marin.edu

Thank you for all you do.

Jonathan



Jonathan Eldridge, Ed.D
Assistant Superintendent/
Vice President of Student Learning & Success
College of Marin
Office: 415-485-9618
jeldridge@marin.edu

Yesterday's Gone: When the Cat Destroys Your Sweater, Knit Something New

Several semesters after most classes have returned in person, many students remain disengaged. Worse than that, they are sometimes resentful. That's left professors feeling frustrated.

What's going on here?

Lindsay Masland, one of the panelists during our Keep On Teaching event last Friday, understands where students are coming from. Masland, who serves as the interim lead for transformative teaching and learning at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Student Success at Appalachian State University, where she's an associate professor of psychology, said much of what students are meant to learn in college feels disconnected from the uncertain future they face.

During the session, she drew a comparison that resonated. Before the pandemic, teaching was like a sweater, said Masland. "Maybe my sweater was a different color than yours, maybe it was made out of a different material, maybe it had different sleeves," she said. "But we could look at all of each other's sweaters and be like: Yeah, that's a sweater."

"Then during the pandemic, though, our cat got to the sweater."

Ever since, Masland said, instructors have been mending furiously.

"We're trying to get the sweater back the way it was," she said. "But maybe we'd be better served to look at the ball of yarn and be like: Ya'll, I think this might be a potholder now."

What might that potholder be like? Our panel offered some possibilities:

- **Acknowledge the Bigger Picture.** "We were brought up to just walk into the classroom and say, oh, this DNA molecule is so cool, or this new Shakespeare play is so cool," said Bryan Dewsbury, associate professor of biological sciences and associate director of the STEM Transformation Institute at Florida International University. But that's not working for today's students, who face not only the pandemic but climate change and a host of other serious threats. "We have to stop pretending that the classroom and the campus and the online-course space are just completely disconnected to what's happening in the wider world — and that people are walking in and just able to shelve all that chaos and just fully be present."
- **Cut Down Content.** Higher education prizes knowledge creation and has often treated the presentation of content as the primary task of teaching. No one on the panel is saying to just do away with content, Dewsbury said. But it can be cut down substantially — even in a STEM course that's part of a sequence — to students' *benefit* in subsequent courses, as his [research has found](#).
- **Offer New Forms of Participation.** During emergency-remote instruction, much of the discussion function of classes happened in the Zoom chat. That interlude, Masland said, changed her idea of what a class discussion can be. She's tried to replicate that in her in-person classes, Masland said, to help students who "temperamentally don't love contributing to a full-group discussion" or "are less rehearsed than past students because of the effects of the pandemic" participate.

- **Be Yourself.** “I don’t think we should be trying to perform the role of what we think an engaged instructor is supposed to be according to the *Chronicle’s* article on five ways to be more engaged,” said Rebecca Glazier, a professor in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the author of *Connecting in the Online Classroom: Building Rapport Between Teachers and Students*. “We should show up as ourselves, as our real authentic selves who care about our students. And that’s when I think our students are going to show up as themselves who really want to care about our classes.”

Does Masland’s illustration of the sweater, the cat, and the ball of yarn match your experience in the classroom? Have you found a way to knit something new? What does it look like? Or do you think it’s still possible to get that sweater back?