Task Force on the Future of Pedagogy

THEMES AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a living document that is meant for discussion. At this stage, the Task Force's recommendations are preliminary, and they will be revised in an iterative process following broad consultation with the York community.

BACKGROUND

Under an overarching theme of enhancing engagement, the Task Force on the Future of Pedagogy seeks to energize both faculty and students around the UAP priority of 21st century learning, by providing forward-looking guidance on what it sees as 'the multiple futures of pedagogy.' While technology-enhanced learning accelerated at the University during the COVID pandemic as a pivoting, emergency response to an unprecedented crisis, we are committed to shaping how the university can thoughtfully and meaningfully *plan* more intentional, carefully designed learning experiences in multiple modalities (in-person, online, blended), with diverse pedagogical approaches, and across various teaching and learning contexts.

Having reviewed various predictions about the future of higher education, including sector-wide trends (see Appendix A), we do not believe that the future will be monolithic, and it will certainly not be experienced in a homogeneous way by all our community members. As such, our recommendations are shared with the intention of preparing the university, with its increasingly diverse students and faculty members, for multiple futures. These futures emerge from an understanding that what got us here today may not equip us well for teaching the current and next generation(s) of students.

Over the summer, the Task Force formed five Working Groups (WGs). In alignment with the Task Force's mandate, each Working Group was tasked with envisioning pedagogical futures in a particular area of teaching and learning: in-person teaching and learning (WG1); technology-enhanced teaching and learning (WG2); experiential and work-integrated learning (WG3); scaling and sustaining pedagogical innovations (WG4); and rethinking assessments (WG5). The members of each WG (Working Groups) represent a cross-section of York University's teaching community, including both professorial and teaching-stream faculty, students, and administrative staff with expertise in teaching and learning. Each of the Working Groups' preliminary recommendations and thought processes can be found in Appendix C. For a big-picture view of the Task Force's themes and preliminary recommendations, please see Appendix B.

THEMES

Emerging out of a strategic commitment to facilitate 21st century learning at York University, the future(s) of pedagogy will:

- Be accessible and learner-centred[1];
- Centre on values, knowledge and skills that prepare learners to respond to 21st century challenges;
- Be transformative[2]; and
- Focus on connections.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCUSSION

While each of the Working Groups has produced a longer set of recommendations, the Task Force sets out five preliminary recommendations for discussion. Not only do these preliminary recommendations have policy and resource implications, but they also follow from the above themes. Ultimately, 21st century learning at York ought to be a transformative[3] experience for all learners, and to achieve that outcome, the Task Force invites the York community to consider some necessary transformations in how we currently approach teaching and learning at the university.

1. Expand and enhance blended learning at the University.

In recognition of changing student expectations, and what it would mean to make university operations more sustainable (e.g., by minimizing the carbon footprint of commuting students and instructors, future-proofing the university against future pandemic-like disruptions, etc.), especially in light of increasing financial constraints, consider expanding and enhancing blended learning at York so that it becomes a more common mode of delivery.[4] To enhance student learning and their connections to each other, instructors and various campus supports, the Task Force recommends that blended learning be meaningfully integrated into courses and programs with the following suggestions: the first-year experience should be primarily delivered in-person, so that both student-centred and active learning strategies can be used to increase student engagement, collaboration, interactivity, and sense of belonging. Greater flexibility, in the form of blended learning, should be offered to students in their later years of study, as they increasingly engage in experiential education (EE) and work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities.

This recommendation is supported by the following data insights about course delivery mode from the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (OIPA):

- o **Enrolment**: While course delivery mode appears to have no significant effect on students' academic performance in a course, in-person courses have lower average enrolments per section when compared to blended and online (including remote) courses. This trend, however, was apparent prior to COVID. Overall, average post-COVID enrolments in in-person courses are down four fewer students per section when compared to COVID patterns, and seven fewer students when compared to pre-COVID patterns.

- o **Course retention**: In-person courses have lower drop percentages per section when compared to remote/online courses, but these drop percentages are not significantly different from blended courses. Online courses have higher drop percentages per section when compared to blended or remote courses. This suggests that both campus presence and the presence of synchronous components may have a positive impact on student retention, engagement and learning in a course.

This recommendation also comes with the following key actions and implications:

- Pause investments into Hyflex teaching and learning, so meaningful consultations can be had with key stakeholders on how specific classrooms can be optimized with Hyflex technologies. Although there are examples of instructors who have been able to make Hyflex teaching work with great success, more instructors have reported some level of dissatisfaction or disappointment with their current experiences of Hyflex teaching and learning.

- Investigate how course planning, scheduling, room bookings and teaching assignments can be made more flexible, to encompass non-traditional modes of learning and course delivery, as well as take into account space needs aligned with course delivery design (e.g., Lassonde is experimenting with a block model of delivery for first-year Engineering students this fall). To make flexible learning work, currently rigid systems need to be made flexible.

- Invest in (re)designing and reconfiguring in-person classrooms to facilitate active learning. Active learning can enhance students' learning experiences, improve learning outcomes, and narrow achievement gaps, especially for students in equity-deserving groups.

2. **Acknowledge that York's instructors engage in lifelong learning of pedagogy, which requires ongoing professional development and dedicated supports.**

Transform York's teaching and learning culture by first acknowledging that instructors are themselves engaged in lifelong learning, not only in terms of acquiring disciplinary-specific knowledge but also when it comes to their own teaching practices. As such, instructors require both time and space to prepare their courses, especially if they involve active learning strategies, and engage in ongoing professional development (e.g., as it relates to assessment (re)design, AI literacy, partnering with students to co-create courses, try new pedagogical approaches, etc.). This recommendation comes with the following key actions and implications:

- Consider the appointment of Teaching Fellows or Teaching Chairs as Faculty-specific pedagogical leaders.

- Create a more robust incentive structure for generating and implementing high-impact pedagogical transformations and innovations.

3. **Establish formal linkages between assessments of students and learning outcomes at the course and program levels.**

Assessments play a critical but often underappreciated role in higher education by supporting learning, accreditation, and accountability. To optimize the utility of assessments, these functions demand equitable attention and adequate resourcing. Further development of faculty and institutional competence pertaining to assessments will be a critical first step. So, too, will be highlighting the purposes of assessments in course outlines, and during curriculum development and review. To foreground learning for all

students, assessments should be explicitly linked to learning outcomes at both the course and program levels. While there is a continued need to ensure the validity and reliability of assessments, especially for accreditation purposes, the University should consider a fundamental shift from prioritizing traditional assessments *of* learning to emphasizing authentic assessments *for* learning. Engaging students in the assessment process can also positively impact their well-being and make their learning more meaningful.

4. Accelerate the expansion of community-based EE and WIL opportunities.

Classroom-focused experiential education (EE) remains important for student learning, especially in specific programs. While the university has been able to successfully expand classroom-focused EE, and we recommend that these opportunities be maintained and enhanced, it is equally important that the university build more community-based and work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities for students. When embedded in the design of a program, WIL or community-based learning can offer students both practical experiences and occasions for important interdisciplinary collaborations. These experiences help students, especially equity-deserving ones, feel more connected (e.g., to each other, their program, and to a community), as well as help them succeed at higher rates.

5. Support AI literacy among instructors, students and staff.

In alignment with universities that have positioned themselves as leading the conversation on generative artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education (e.g., UK universities that are part of the Russell Group, University of Hong Kong, etc.), we recommend that York, as a first step, support AI literacy among instructors, staff and students. To teach students to critically think about and use generative AI in discipline-specific ways, our instructors and staff need to also be AI literate. While six in ten Canadian students consider the use of generative AI on assessments to be cheating, they are looking for more guidelines on how to use generative AI 'properly.' The term 'properly' came up repeatedly during conversations with York students about their perceptions on generative AI use. Because students see the use of generative AI as a critical and necessary skill to develop, especially if they are to be successful in their future professional and personal lives, they are seeking guidance from their instructors about how to use it ethically and responsibly. In the absence of such guidance, they are turning to (mis)information provided by content creators on social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram).

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[1] 'Learner-centred' refers to all learners, including students, instructors, staff members and external partners (e.g., community and industry partners), that make up our university. It does not single out any specific group, but rather asks us to focus on the process of lifelong learning in a larger, more inclusive learning/pedagogical ecosystem.

[2] WG4's note on the notion of innovation:

We have concerns that the notion of innovation can be deployed without a critical framework for thinking about its colonial and capitalist implications, which are particularly important to consider in the context of the university. For example, the idea of innovation is often used to promote ideas that in fact have long histories in other cultural contexts, leading to the idea that the colonial institution is inventing or innovating ideas that in fact have long legacies in communities historically kept out of the university. In addition, the working group is concerned that innovation is often equated with "efficiency" or "technologization" and that this can obscure that much of our most transformative pedagogical work will at times be in moments that resist the demands for both of these outcomes. The

working group recognizes innovation as defined by the qualities of risk-taking, openness to failure, human-centredness, creativity, social and pedagogical transformation, diversification, and decolonization.

[3] According to York's University Academic Plan, the University is a 'learning community' that believes in the 'power of research, scholarship, creativity education, and dialogue to transform ourselves and the world around us for the better' (*Building a Better Future: York University Academic Plan 2020-2025*, p. 4).

[4] Please note that York's Academic Technology Advisory Group recommended that the university strategically consider eLearning integration in 2012. To enhance student learning and flexibility, the Group had hoped that, by 2017, the university would adopt blended learning as 'a common and accepted approach to course delivery' (*A Case for Change: eLearning Integration at York University – Summary and Recommended Actions*, p. 3). Had York enacted the Group's vision, the university would have been in a stronger position to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Appendix A: Sector-wide trends in higher education

Amidst city lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, post-secondary institutions pivoted to emergency online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. As instructors and students continue to reflect on their experiences of remote teaching and learning under unprecedented conditions, some pandemic-driven practices are worth pursuing in the long term, while others might be better left behind. This document offers a concise overview of future directions in higher education, especially as they pertain to the future of teaching and learning. According to a national poll of Canadian students (KPMG, 2022), more than ¾ of student respondents agreed that the pandemic had fundamentally changed their expectations of higher education experiences (78% nationwide, 80% of Ontario participants), with many of them believing that the universities of the future will bear little resemblance to those of today. Ultimately, today's educational institutions should be prepared to expand beyond their traditional learning environments, by not only offering more ways for students to connect and collaborate on campus in engaging ways, but also by modernizing learning experiences with carefully selected educational technologies (KPMG, 2022).

By synthesizing insights from relevant academic and non-academic sources, this overview takes into account both local and global perspectives on how a post-pandemic university can re-imagine post-secondary education for an increasingly diverse group of learners. In what follows, sector-wide trends in higher education are thematically organized in relation to the *UAP* priority of diversifying whom, what and how we teach.

Who: Centring the learner

Many emerging pedagogical approaches, including flipped learning, aim to shift away from more traditional modes of knowledge transmission, where instructors act as 'sages on the stage,' and towards more learner-centred models, where instructors serve as facilitators or 'guides on the side' (King, 1993; Carleton University's Teaching and Learning Services, 2022). This move can support learner-driven opportunities for skill development (e.g., by enhancing and increasing experiential learning opportunities), as well as enable the decolonization of curriculum (e.g., by allowing learners to see themselves in the curriculum, and facilitating different ways of knowing, interacting and being). As learners come to the fore, it is important to treat them holistically, by also centring what makes us all human in a world where rapid technological and societal transformations are disrupting what we know and how we know. Indeed, UNESCO (2023: 21) recently argued that 'technology should serve people and that technology in education should put learners and teachers at the centre,' reminding us that technology's 'suitability and value need to be proven in relation to a human-centred vision of education.'

While on the surface, a learner-centred approach might be simply read as a student-centred approach – especially one that can encourage more creative risk-taking, exploration and problem-solving (Davie, 2022) – a more productive interpretation would be to include instructors as learners within the context of university teaching and learning. As universities continue to engage in conversations around mental health, well-being, and decolonization,

equity, diversity and inclusion (DEDI), the outcomes and impacts of these conversations affect instructors as much as students. While much attention has focused on assessing student well-being and stressors (e.g., Deloitte, 2023; Studiosity, 2021),[1] especially as many Canadian post-secondary students engage in 'learning while earning' (Davie, 2022; Frenette et al., 2019), faculty well-being should not be ignored. Faculty well-being was negatively impacted during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the rush to adopt and adapt unfamiliar teaching approaches and educational technologies, many instructors – especially faculty of colour, women and LBGTQ2S+ – reported mental exhaustion, fatigue and burnout, due to increased workloads, minimal 'human connections' with colleagues and students, and pandemic-related work-life imbalances (Flaherty, 2020; Johnson, 2022; Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2020; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). In the coming years, it will be important for instructors to model life-long learning – the mission of higher education = to new generations of students. According to Wiley (2022), faculty learning will likely include learning about new instructional technologies, techniques and approaches, as new pedagogies become entangled with emerging technologies (e.g., Kukulska-Hulmes et al., 2023).

When, where and how: Flexible teaching and learning

In early 2020, pandemic-induced closures rapidly increased opportunities for online teaching and learning (Pelletier et al., 2021), and accelerated both the adoption and evolution of educational technologies (e.g., learning management systems, Zoom, H5P, etc.). Since the Government of Ontario invested heavily in virtual learning during the pandemic, it is not surprising that the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (2023) has a strategic plan to further build 'virtual learning capacity [in order] to set Ontario apart as a leader in the future of online learning and the knowledge economy.' According to the Ministry (2023), Ontario's plan for the future of higher education will also 'focus on a bold Micro-credentials Strategy that will be flexible, train people faster and rapidly meet labour market needs.' Both online learning and micro-credentials revolve around the possibility of enhancing flexibility, especially in terms of when, where and how students will learn.

Online and hybrid learning opportunities

Since students were able to experience online learning – sometimes for the first time – during the pandemic (see Table 1 for student perceptions on the value of online learning), their post-pandemic demands and preferences increasingly veer towards hybrid learning, where they are able to able to access 'the best of both worlds' – that is, they want the option of attending lectures in-person and being co-present with instructors and peers, while simultaneously retaining virtual access to both classes and course materials (Pizarro Milian & Janzen, 2023).[2]

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[1] According to a students need survey conducted in 2022, 25% of all student respondents identified having a mental health condition compared to 12% of the general Canadian population; moreover, students living with mental health conditions, most often anxiety and depression, reported lower levels of satisfaction across all components of their education experience (Deloitte, 2023).

[2] In a 2023 survey that compares the preferences of York applicants against those of non-applicants, more than one-quarter of York applicants said they chose universities with more hybrid options (29%), and one-quarter said they chose universities with more in-person courses (25%). Nearly half of all York applicants (51%) want one-quarter to half of their courses delivered online.

As a result, universities are now offering more opportunities to learn in-person, online or in a hybrid modality, giving students more flexibility, choice and control over when, where and how they learn. However, lessons from the pandemic have highlighted how a combination of online and in-person programming might be the most optimal way of fostering student learning and engagement (Guppy et al., 2022). Because in-person interactions will remain a crucial component of a student's university experience (KPMG, 2022), post-pandemic courses can 'optimize human interaction' by incorporating flipped classrooms (World Economic Forum, 2022a), and providing more occasions for active learning (World Economic Forum, 2022b). While recorded traditional lectures can be reviewed by students at their own convenience and pace, these learning resources cannot completely replace the value of in-person learning activities (e.g., discussions, dialogue, collaborative group work, etc.). By focusing on active learning, in-person learning activities can improve learning outcomes and narrow achievement gaps, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students (Theobald et al., 2020).

Table 1: Student perceptions on the value of online learning[3]

What is valued in online learning	Fears about online learning
- Flexibility enables students to work while studying - Convenience of learning at one's own pace - Recorded classes are available to (re)watch later - Easy access to online materials for learning and studying - Facilitates independent study	- Fear of becoming distracted (or less focused) when studying online - Getting bored if the learning experience is not engaging or motivating - Lacking (self-)discipline to complete an online course or program - Compared to in-person learning, there may be less support from instructors and peer-to-peer opportunities. In 80% of the countries surveyed, the top reason that students prefer in-person learning is because it is easier for them to get help from instructors.

Flexible credentialing options
Flexible learning pathways not only include learning in different modalities, but also alternatives or supplements to traditional four-year degree programs. Flexible (or alternative) credentialing options, such as micro-credentials, can appeal to learners who are seeking more targeted, just-in-time skill development (Pelletier et al., 2021). Those interested in re-skilling or up-skilling are not looking for a full, immersive academic experience, but rather shorter courses and micro-degrees that can be more seamlessly integrated into their lives and

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[3] Adapted from the results of McKinsey's global survey of 7000 students in higher education across 17 countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Middle East (Child et al., 2023). These survey results did not vary significantly across students from different age groups, fields of study and educational level. More importantly, they seem to align with what York University students have said about their recent, online learning experiences.

lifestyles (KPMG, 2020). According to Johnson (2022), different types of students will also prefer different modes of learning: Ontario undergraduate students are most likely to choose hybrid course offerings, while students in professional programs (i.e., programs beyond an undergraduate degree that are not part of a master's or doctorate program) are most likely to choose online offerings.

What: 21st century skills

To navigate and thrive in the future, a new set of capabilities and competencies will become critically necessary (Barber et al. 2012; Florida 2012; Zhao and Watterston, 2021). With the rise of generative artificial intelligence and related smart technologies, most critics agree that traditionally valued skills, such as those related to collecting, storing and retrieving information (e.g., memorization, repetition, and pattern-prediction), will likely be on the decline (Muro et al., 2019). In contrast, skills related to creativity, critical thinking, curiosity, collaboration, adaptability (growth mindset), and effective communication will be increasingly in demand (Government of Canada, 2021; McMaster University, 2022; Zhao et al. 2019). In particular, the need for digital skills and literacies has been amplified in the wake of emerging AI technologies.[4] Notably, universities in the UK (Russell Group, 2023) will be supporting AI literacy among instructors, staff and students, while the University of Hong Kong's generative AI policy encourages instructors to leverage the technology to optimize, customize and assess student learning (Yu, 2023).

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[4] The Conference Board of Canada projects that, within the next 10 years, 9 out of 10 jobs will require digital skills. A 2021 student survey indicated that university students expect to graduate with the necessary skills for workplace success, which puts the onus on universities to teach digital skills to learners (Deloitte, 2023: 7)

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Appendix B: Connections between overarching themes and preliminary recommendations

Emerging out of a strategic commitment to facilitate 21st century learning at York University, the future(s) of pedagogy will…

Be accessible and learner-centred[1]	Centre on values, knowledges and skills that prepare learners to respond to 21st century challenges	Be transformative[2]	Focus on connections
Flexible pedagogy and accessible learning spaces • Especially when used to reinforce DEDI and Universal Design for Learning principles, flexible modes of pedagogy can accommodate and enable our students – with their diverse needs and expectations – to access and engage in their courses. This flexibility emerges from a pedagogically meaningful mixture of in-person and online course components (WG2). Example: ECON 1000, a very large lecture course, was reimagined as a team-taught flipped classroom, where asynchronous lectures are paired with synchronous virtual/in-person tutorials taught by instructors for hands-on learning (application of concepts and theories).	Technological training/digital literacy • Students should not only learn about new technologies, but also how these tools can be approached critically and used responsibly (ethics, privacy, algorithmic biases) (WG2 on student training for new technologies, WG3). Skills that sustain and make possible interdisciplinary collaborations (e.g., soft skills related to group/teamwork, conflict management, empathy, etc.) • Authentic, interdisciplinary collaboration among students in class, especially in in-person courses (WG1) and EE/WIL (WG3), and for faculty members interested in pedagogical transformation (WG4)	Teaching and learning are transformative experiences, and they can be heightened and enhanced at York with the following transformations: Transforming learning environments: In the *DEDI Strategy*, classroom experience, is construed as a site for important transformative opportunities (in terms of what and how we teach, as well as the kinds of environments we create for our students) • While recent experiences might have molded student expectations regarding flexibility of content delivery, we suggest that the concept of *flexibility* should be understood more widely as pertaining to the *complete learning environment* (including modes of	Creating community and forming connections in in-person teaching and learning (WG1) • There is a value to in-person teaching and learning that is not reducible to content delivery. Time spent in-person should be focused on skill development (e.g., skills related to collaboration), fostering relationships and community (which can improve a sense of belonging among students from underserved populations), and active learning (e.g., discussion, problem-solving as central focus of in-person meet). First and second year are crucial for establishing relationships with peers and instructors, and for building both an academic and social community (Photopoulos et al., 2022) (WG1). There are some crucial in-person learning

Accessible learning materials and tools
- In addition to using open technological tools for course activities/assessments and portable formats for course materials (e.g., pdf, html), Open Educational Resources (OER) should be the preferred choice of course material, as they have been shown to perform as good as, or better than, traditional commercial textbooks in term of student perceptions and performance; and free OER disproportionately benefit underserved student populations (first-generation students and racial minority students) (e.g., Jhangiani et al., 2018; Nusbaum et al., 2020) (WG2).

Accessible program design
Because program structure will impact course delivery, student experiences and student success, program design should be considered in terms of how it structures degree progression, with attention paid to at-risk courses (i.e., courses with high failure, withdrawal and drop rates), structural barriers for

instruction/delivery of programs and courses, instructor-student interaction, time slots, contact hours etc.) (WG2).
  - Transforming course delivery formats (RO): Flexible course delivery guided by pedagogical principles, methods, and course content should be allowed to adapt or move beyond a rigid 3-hour, 12-week course delivery format, allowing for technologically enhanced, non-traditional formats such as hackathons, blended block seminars etc. (WG2). Example: Lassonde's first-year engineering block model, offered for the first time in Fall 2023.
  - Transforming physical teaching and learning spaces to enable more active learning and collaboration (WG1; see, e.g., *LA&PS' Design Principles for Active Learning Spaces*, April 2023)

Transforming York culture (i.e., building a culture that recognizes and prioritizes impactful teaching and

experiences that are not easily reproducible in virtual environments (e.g., labs in Science, simulations in Health requiring psychomotor skill development, etc.).

Experiential learning framed in terms of discovering a sense of being in relation to others (*Learning Experientially in the 21st Century*). Whether locally or globally, this sense of relationality can be developed through engagements, collaborations and encounters with peers, instructors, community partners and/or industry employers, etc. (WG3).

Scaling across
- Pedagogical transformations/innovations that emerge out of a 'scaling across,' by involving a greater number of collaborators, disciplines and units across the university. To utilize resources that we have to support pedagogical innovations that prioritize collaboration across the university, and greater sustainable and structural change, such as program design changes (WG4, see also Amy Gaukel, DEDI Strategy presentation).

entry/access to program, etc. (Amy Gaukel, DEDI Strategy presentation) Learner-centred approaches • Active learning, including problem-based learning (WG1) • Assessments for learning (WG5) • Diversifying curriculum (what is taught) by not only diversifying what is cited, but also by building on students' diverse lived experiences (Amy Gaukel, DEDI Strategy presentation). • Embedding EE or community-based learning in the design of a program. Practical experience and interdisciplinarity help equity-deserving students feel more connected to their program, feel a sense of community, and help them succeed at higher rates (Amy Gaukel, DEDI Strategy presentation).		lifelong learning, and not just research intensification) • Teaching Fellows (WG4) or Teaching Chairs as Faculty-specific pedagogical leaders • Enhancing opportunities for teaching-stream faculty members to pursue meaningful, impactful pedagogical projects, and imagine a rewarding career trajectory (e.g., post-tenure opportunities for educational leadership) • Create a more robust incentive structure for pedagogical transformation (WG1, WG5). Transforming structures to enhance and meaningfully scale (up) pedagogical transformations, including structures related to collegial governance (WG4), RO room scheduling (WG1) and course designations (WG2), technological selection and adoption (WG2, WG4), support structures for supporting pedagogical innovation and best practices, etc.	Strategic partnerships • Making assessments and learning meaningful to students will require strategic partnerships with academic support services, such as the Libraries, Learning Commons, etc. (WG5).

Appendix C: Task Force on the Future of Pedagogy
Working Group Reports

In-Person Teaching and Learning

Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning

Experiential Education & Work-Integrated Learning

Scaling & Sustaining Pedagogical Innovations

Rethinking Assessments

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-weight:bold">Working Group 1: In-Person Teaching and Learning</p>

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-weight:bold">Final Report</p>

August 2023

Members, Mandate, and Questions of Working Group 1

Members of Working Group (WG) 1 comprise faculty and staff representing two York campuses and four faculties [Kathleen Fortune, Health; Tamara Kelly, Science (Chair); Stephanie Marion, Glendon; Pooja Vashisth, Lassonde/Markham] in addition to two members of the Teaching Commons (Mandy Frake-Mistak and Natasha May). All members listed contributed to the meetings and the reports. We are supported by Angela Ward.

Our WG mandate was to envision the future of in-person learning and teaching. Specifically, we focused on the value added of in-person teaching and learning that does not preclude the benefits of online learning. While the Covid-19 pandemic commanded and accelerated the use of remote teaching and learning, we are now in a position where we must determine how to best view and use our physical space to maximize pedagogical outcomes and student experiences. This is particularly important as many courses use a combination of both in-person and online delivery formats. We have identified three important areas of inquiry that should guide our recommendations to the University as it prepares for successful pedagogical futures:

1. **What are the added values of in-person teaching and learning for our commuter campuses?** Given the high proportion of York University students who commute to campus, we believe it is important to know what motivates our students to come to campus and participate in academic and non-academic activities. Furthermore, we need to identify and encourage best practices of in-person teaching and learning to maximize pedagogical outcomes and maintain student motivation to contribute to campus life.

2. **Given the value of in-person teaching, how can class time and space be (re)constructed to offer students more active, evidence-informed learning opportunities (e.g., collaborative, problem-based, inquiry-based learning)?** Many faculty members know too well the frustrations of poorly designed course schedules and classrooms. Given the key contributors to successful in-person university experiences identified in the first instance, we need to identify the necessary but realistic changes that must be implemented to support an effective and prosperous in-person teaching and learning experience for both students and teachers.

3. **What supports or steps are required to widely adopt evidence-based practices that enhance the in-person experience for both students and instructors?** While the identification of best practices for in-person teaching and learning is a necessary first step in envisioning successful pedagogical futures, there are real and significant barriers to their implementations. Students and teachers must have the necessary knowledge and resources available to them for the University to expect the adoption of these best practices.

Process undertaken by this Working Group

The members of WG1 completed an initial review of the relevant literature. Given the timeline and scope of our work, and the guidelines provided by the Co-chairs of the Task Force, this literature review is by no means comprehensive. Rather, efforts were focussed on recent literature that most pointedly address our key areas of inquiry. This was achieved by using collectively determined key words and concepts (see Appendix A). Relevant findings were collected and summarized in a shared notebook on Teams. Based on these findings and discussions during meetings, we then found other literature as needed. This collective knowledge was then synthesized with our WG members' diverse and extensive expert knowledge and lived experiences as educators to finalize this report and associated recommendations.

Answers to WG Questions

1. What are the added values of in-person teaching and learning for our commuter campuses?

In a recent piece by York University undergraduate students on their motivation to take in-person classes, Ong et al. (2020) reported what some sociology students viewed as the unique benefits of face-to-face interactions. They emphasized how in-person environments facilitate the reading of social cues, fundamental for building trust and familiarity. Such benefits have been noted by pedagogical experts and some have noted a direct connection between building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging and retention, especially among underserved student populations (Banchefsky et al., 2019; Felten & Lambert, 2020; Lewis et al., 2017; Strayhorn, 2019). According to Rosenberg and McCullough (1981), in-person interactions play a crucial role in reinforcing students' perception that they matter, which can subsequently impact their sense of belonging, mental health, and academic persistence. Vaillancourt et al. (2022) also suggest that in-person classes allow informal interactions that serve as building blocks for a healthy academic climate.

While intentionally designed online courses can provide excellent learning opportunities, the online format may pose challenges in fostering these important connections with peers, as there are generally limited opportunities for informal interactions between students. In addition, during online learning, instructors may be less attuned to subtle communication cues from students and thus may be less likely to engage students (Coker, 2020), or may fail (or be unable) to notice cues of misunderstanding or fatigue that they would otherwise sense during in-person interactions (Sofianidis et al., 2021). Thus, both optimal relational development and student engagement may be maximized in an in-person learning environment. This is likely to be the case for students especially in the early years of their degree. Recent data presented by Photopoulos et al. (2023) show that a significant majority of first (85%) and second year (59%) students expressed a pronounced preference for in-person instruction. They describe these initial years as pivotal in nurturing academic relationships and fostering a sense of community.

Another important advantage that in-person learning inherently provides is that students, much like faculty, benefit from distinguishing between their work and home environments (Ferguson, 2023; Ong et al., 2020). The mere act of moving between different physical class spaces can help psychological transitions and readiness for learning of different subjects (for example, by promoting context-dependent memory) (Adler-Kassner et al., 2022). Furthermore, for first-year students, being on campus signals and facilitates the transition from high school to university, potentially aiding both in their psychological and academic adaptation (Adler-Kassner et al. 2022).

Kemp and Grieve (2014) suggest that in-person instruction may be particularly advantageous for acquiring collaborative skills. Callister et al. (2016) further advocate for the use of physical class time in honing these skills and fostering community connections. Passive listening to lectures does not leverage the in-person mode's full potential and should be explicitly discouraged as a method of course delivery. Emphasizing active learning during class hours can significantly enhance the learning experience and can even narrow the "achievement gaps" between different students from dominant groups and equity-deserving groups (Theobald et al., 2020). Despite significant advantages in relationship building, community building, and student engagement offered by in-person learning, there are some students who nevertheless prefer online classes. It would appear, however, that this preference is influenced by logistical conveniences such as eliminating commutes rather than pedagogical strengths (O'Neill et al., 2022; Photopoulos et al., 2023).

There is a concern among some peers that many instructors with limited pedagogical expertise might place undue emphasis on the potential for controlled-environment assessments as the primary—or only—benefit of in-person learning. This perspective risks overshadowing the multifaceted benefits that face-to-face instruction brings, especially in cultivating a vibrant community and supporting formative skills development. As educators, we should strive to break down the barriers that hinder students' abilities to build connections with classmates and

teachers, as they may contribute to students' inability to engage academically. This community may be especially important for first formative years of a student's academic career, and generally for young adults whose connections are largely shaped by opportunities to socially engage with each other in the school community (Allen et al., 2021). A structured apprentice model, in which students engage in peer instruction and collaboration (e.g., Mazur, 1997), is an excellent example, which, if implemented correctly, can harness the full potential of physical classrooms.

The working group notes that there is a dearth of literature of the value of in-person learning experiences as perceived by students. As well, much of the interest in this topic was precipitated by the pandemic and the forced remote learning that occurred. Because of this, we have noted that those studies that exist may be affected by when they were conducted. Further, we could not find any works that provided perceptions of students at commuter universities/colleges. For this reason, we strongly advocate for a survey of student perspectives on the value of in-person teaching and on-campus experiences. Our working group, with support from Victoria Ng from the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (OIPA) has designed a survey ([Appendix B](#)) and prepared the necessary human participants ethics protocol and informed consent (Appendices [C](#) and [B](#)) to disseminate to students who have completed at least one year at York University. This is an opportunity for York University to contribute to the literature on the benefits of in-person student experiences.

2. **Given the value of in-person teaching, how can class time and space be (re)constructed to offer students more active, evidence-informed learning opportunities (e.g., collaborative, problem-based, inquiry-based learning)?**

The physical spaces in which we teach and learn are important in enabling evidence-informed activities, particularly those that are collaborative (Adler-Kassner et al., 2022). The quality of education suffers when physical learning spaces are not aligned with pedagogical strategies (van Merriënboer et al., 2017). Moveable desks and/or tables, and multiple writing surfaces large enough to allow students to collaborate on activities (e.g., brainstorming, answer formulation) are essential to provide flexible environments that, with appropriate professional development, facilitate faculty adoption of active learning and collaborative techniques. Not only are collaboration-friendly classrooms important for optimal pedagogical outcomes, but they are also more likely to facilitate the types of formal and informal student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions that contribute to community building and student engagement outlined above. Our large classrooms, primarily used for first- and second-year courses, structurally emphasize the "sage on the stage" transmission and passive reception (but not retention!) approach. Many of these rooms have individual tablet arm seats, which in addition to providing inadequate space for student note and test-taking, do not promote active discussions and sharing of materials. Given the importance of active learning and other evidence-based practices, particularly in helping to create sense of belonging and persistence in lower-level courses, any future renovations of classrooms should aim to maximize the uptake of active learning, particularly in large classrooms, which are mainly occupied by first and second-year courses. These renovations should be designed in detailed consultation with faculty who are active learning practitioners.

Given that many courses are given as 2- or 3-hour weekly lecture blocks, it is even more imperative that classrooms be designed to allow instructors to plan lectures that keep student engagement high (i.e., by breaking up long lectures into shorter intervals interspersed with active learning opportunities, e.g., Freeman et al., 2014), which can be difficult to achieve in classrooms design for the outdated "stand-and-deliver" style of lectures, even for the most creative instructors. In addition, to support instructors implementing evidence-based active learning techniques in their classes, the Registrar's Office must assign the same classroom for all class meets (unless requested by the instructor) to provide consistency and reduce unnecessary work for instructors. This has been a problem the past two years (see [Appendix D](#)) and must be corrected.

It is not just the classrooms that enhance the in-person teaching and learning experience. If we want students to show up and stay on campus—potentially to attend multiple in-person classes—where they can participate in active discussions with their peers, engage in clubs, and gain social capital, the on-campus environment must be inviting and accommodating. There must be spaces for students to work/study individually, collaborate, and socialize when not in class, to maximize their on-campus time, particularly as York University is primarily attended by students who commute longer distances to campus. Despite this need, there is a considerable amount of under-utilized space at York University (e.g., lobbies of LSB, Lassonde, Vari Hall, ACW, ACE) resulting in insufficient seats around campus and consequently student frustration. Even centralized locations such as Vari Hall provide little seating for students, and where seating is available it tends to be benches without (or very limited) corresponding table surfaces (e.g., lobby of LSB, Lassonde; see Appendix E). If we want to make students feel welcome and invite them to stay on campus and make the most of their time, functional seating across campus must be provided, particularly in the lobbies of buildings where students will have multiple classes or labs. In comparison, other universities such as Western University and Wilfrid Laurier University—which are not commuter campuses, with many students living either on campus or within close proximity of the campus—provide considerably more seating and workspaces for their students than does York University. The common areas (e.g., lobbies) of buildings at these universities, including their recreation centres, provide extensive student seating—primarily in the form of tables and chairs, supplemented by some bench seating—allowing students to make the most of their time on campus.

Further, many students' schedules are a mix of in-person, blended, and online offerings. If we want students to truly have opportunities to succeed, they need to have spaces in which to also engage in their online courses/tutorials, some of which may require participation. Currently many of the students we have spoken to use the stairwells as a place from which they can log into online classes. When we inquired about available spaces for online course use, we found that there was no centralized system to support students accessing online courses on campus. Rather "the Faculties are addressing this for their own degree students rather than this being [the responsibility] of the division of students" (Registrars Office). In turn, we reached out to Associate Deans (FSc, etc.) and found that the move to accommodate students is uneven across the University. The LA&PS iClass spaces (Smith, 2023) are a good example of what could be done but serve only a subset of our student population; access to such spaces needs to be expanded as it is apparent that other Faculties have not progressed much on this front. As students move toward spending more and more time on campus and we have an increased mix of in-person, blended, and completely online offerings, we will need to find a more centralized solution that will not leave students as frustrated as they are now.

Accessibility should be at the forefront of considerations when scheduling in-person and online classes. For example, for many students transportation at night is difficult, either with limited transportation options or unsafe conditions. While we may need to accommodate some students' schedules by offering a subset of courses in the evenings, we could consider offering many such classes (i.e., 7 to 10 pm) online. When in-person courses are offered in the evening, it is essential that the scheduling of these classes/labs/tutorials align with local public transit offerings (i.e., classes must end prior to students' last bus home). Thankfully, York University offers its faculty members invaluable resources and opportunities (e.g., workshops and support from The Teaching Commons) to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to offer quality online offerings, when such offerings are warranted (e.g., such as evening courses).

3. **What supports or steps are required to widely adopt evidence-based practices that enhance the in-person experience for both students and instructors?**

The adoption of active learning techniques and a constructivist approach to teaching require a considerable amount of time, effort, and resources from instructors, as well as adequate physical classroom spaces that break down common barriers to implementing these techniques. Given traditional lecture rooms, significant innovation

and time are required to apply best-practices in these less-than-ideal spaces, consequently reducing uptake of best practices and stagnating teaching and learning reform. Felten and Lambert (2020) note that the classroom is the most important place on campus for meaningful relationships to start, and encourages active learning to promote deeper, more durable learning and student-student interaction. Ironically, the classes which might benefit the most from active learning are foundational (1st and 2nd year) courses (see point 1 above)—the same courses are that likely to be given in these large, "stand-and-deliver" style lecture halls. Not only do these spaces encourage traditional "sage on the stage" teaching and passive learning, but they also create increased workload for those implementing active learning as many workarounds must be employed. Given this, there needs to be a commitment from York to enhance the structural space—in consultation with faculty who employ student-centred strategies—to reduce barriers to uptake of active learning techniques and ease the workload of those using such strategies. Furthermore, for the in-person experience to be beneficial, instructors must have access to and be trained on technology that supports our in-person aims. Decisions about the type of technology present in the classroom must be made in consultation with instructors (van Merriënboer et al., 2017), and consider the needs of different class sizes.

Some Faculties at York now require new faculty members to complete an Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) within their first year of employment. While this is a good start, it does not address the need for ongoing professional development of faculty with respect to teaching. There is a need to incentivize faculty to continue their professional development at regular intervals so that emerging best practices can be learned and adopted, thus enhancing the teaching and learning environment here at York. This is increasingly important with growing awareness of inclusive teaching practices that support student success in their foundational courses. How can we incentivize? Show faculty that they are valued, that their efforts in teaching are valued, and acknowledge the high risk of burnout post pandemic, particularly for those adopting student-centred teaching practices. Provide proper supports with adequate staff complement that directly interact with and support faculty in their teaching and research, thus reducing extraneous workload for which the domain expertise of faculty is not needed. While a monetary recognition is well and good, it does not solve the problem that there are a finite number of hours in any week. Instead, serious consideration must be given to teaching release (e.g., Owens et al., 2018) for those engaging in ongoing professional development of teaching practices. Showing faculty that their time is valuable and their work to improve their teaching is recognized in a way that supports faculty as individuals can help to create a culture shift around teaching and adoption of evidence-based practices. Just as creative research requires time and space to think, so too does excellent teaching.

Adoption of evidence-based active learning and inclusive teaching strategies requires more than just a passing awareness or knowledge that the 'traditional' approach might not be the best. Evidence-informed teaching typically involves developing and delivering multiple low stakes assignments, including in-class activities, in addition to content delivery via videos, writing, etc., as well as incorporating increased flexibility to create inclusive classrooms. All these components are typically hosted in complex course websites, the programming of which can require significant preparation, administrative time, and increased communication with students. There is no escaping that the increased learning associated with evidence-based teaching/learning comes with the price of greatly increased responsibilities compared to those associated with traditional teaching strategies (Kelly et al. 2023), which can deter uptake (e.g., Griffith & Altinay, 2020; Hora, 2016). It requires time for learning about such techniques, time to understand how to implement them effectively, time to revise courses to incorporate such techniques, time to administer the modified course, and time to evaluate, in a scholarly manner, how these strategies are working. This increased workload of adopting evidence-based practices needs to be acknowledged in teaching loads.

Based on the above, we have made four **Preliminary Recommendations** and two **Supplementary Recommendations.**

Preliminary Recommendations

1. **Incentivize professional development for faculty to support adoption of teaching and learning techniques that lead to use the in-person classroom to its fullest (i.e., student-centred practices)**. This must be accompanied by an acknowledgement that designing and implementing active learning courses takes considerably more effort and thus is more time consuming (see recommendation #2).

2. **Modify existing faculty teaching loads to address the increased workload that comes with teaching using evidence-based and student-centred practices.** Many instructors are aware of the benefits of introducing active learning and experiential education in their courses, yet many continue to deliver traditional passive-listening lecture due to a lack of time, resources, and appropriate physical spaces needed to modify their courses.

3. To augment the knowledge gathered from our literature review and our members' extensive and diverse combined lived experiences, we recommend **surveying** (Appendix B) **York University's student population to learn about our specific students' needs and motivations** in a time more representative of a medium-to-long term future of the University's pedagogical landscape than what the current literature presents (i.e., beyond a pandemic context). A survey of current students about what motivates them to come to campus will be beneficial in refining our recommendations.

4. In-person classes must be built/designed with a constructivist approach in which discussions/problem solving are the central focus and in which student-student and student-teacher interactions are valued. In short, **provide rooms that are conducive to active learning without a great deal of work to improve uptake of such teaching strategies and improve assignment of rooms for courses** (Appendix D)**.** These rooms must be designed in consultation with faculty who are active learning practitioners.

5. The university must **create an environment on campus such that students who are here enjoy and want to stay on campus through provision of sufficient functional study/conversation spaces for students across campus**, thereby supporting students in developing social ties. This means having places to study or sit and chat even in informal environments. (Appendix E).

Supplementary recommendations:

1. The scheduling of in-person and online classes should consider accessibility and safety concerns. For example, in-person class times should align with local public transit offerings (i.e., classes should end prior to the last bus route).

2. Class meetings should be assigned to a consistent (i.e., the same) classroom for the duration of a course (unless requested by the instructor) to provide reduce unnecessary work for instructors and confusion for students.

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Appendix A
Keywords, topics, and concepts used during initial literature search

Keywords
- In-person teaching & learning
- Evidence-informed learning
- Evidence-based practices
- benefits or advantage or value or impact or contributions of in-person education or face-to-face instruction or in-person learning or classroom interaction
- commuter student experiences
- barriers to evidence-based teaching in higher education
- Improving classroom experiences
- Student engagement in the classroom
- Enhancing instructor-student interactions
- Fostering active learning environments
- Optimizing the physical classroom space
- classroom community
- joy/excitement

Topics/Concepts
- Student-focused & instructor-focused teaching & learning
- Including best practices (incl. evidence-based practices) in appendices so instructors will adopt them
- Steps need to be realistic and easily implemented
- How can personalized support be increased within in-person settings?
- Careful not to negate online modalities, which have their advantages too.
- How can we enhance in-person teaching & learning? A balance of both is key and sometimes online learning translates to better student experiences.
- Scholarly teaching can be used in descriptor and cross-cutting considerations can be mentioned in report. It can also be mentioned that the Teaching Commons can be reached for support.
- To help instructors differentiate between what works well with in-person and what is good to go online, we can consider including Teaching and Learning scenarios to elaborate (using examples) in-person components and online components, perhaps hybrid too.

Appendix B
Survey of students as to perceived value of in-person learning and Informed Consent

Goal of the survey: What motivates students to come to campus (not only to in-person classes)?
- o What are the elements of in-person instruction that are beneficial for learning, from a student perspective?
- o What are the out-of-classroom on-campus experiences that students value?
- *Inclusion criteria: must have completed at least one year of study at York University*

The survey was developed by WG1 members in consultation with Victoria Ng of OIPA.

Informed Consent
You are invited to participate in a research study on the value of in-person teaching at York University. The Task Force for the Future of Pedagogy is a joint endeavour from York University's Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee and Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (APPRC-ASCP). The mandate of the Task Force is to "re-examine the UAP Priority on 21st Century Learning broadly", taking into consideration the role of in-person learning and what value this brings to teaching and learning at our commuter campuses. To fully address this, we must know what students' thoughts are regarding their in-person learning experiences and the perceived value of in-person learning, particularly which teaching practices increase the value of the in-person learning experience.

For this reason, we would like to survey undergraduate and graduate students who have completed at least one year of instruction at York University on their perceptions of in-person teaching and the potential value it brings to their learning experiences. This survey would allow us to find out views specific to York University students, particularly those who have experienced both online and in-person learning in higher education, as well as to explore whether commuting distance and demographic variables are aligned with certain perceptions of in-person learning.

Undergraduate and graduate students at York University will be asked to complete a short survey (completion time ~ 15 minutes) about their experiences with in-person learning and perceptions of valuable in-person practices. Links to the survey will be sent to all York University students and will be posted to the eClass main page. Survey responses will be anonymous. If respondents wish to be enrolled in a draw for one of five $50 gift cards to a campus service (e.g., Starbucks, Aroma) they will be directed to a link to another form where they will enter their email address. This form will not be tied to the survey responses in any way and thus we will be unable to identify student responses. Emails will not be tied to answers submitted.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time before submitting your survey responses. Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is completely voluntary and will have no effect on your current academic status or future relations with York University. In the event you withdraw from the study after the responses have been submitted, there is no way to go back and remove your data as the responses are completely anonymized and have no identifiable information linking back to you. Although your participation in this research may not benefit you personally, it will help us understand how course instructors can guide their students to achieve academic success in the context of in-person classroom instruction.

The researcher(s) acknowledge that the host of the online survey, [insert name here of platform], may automatically collect participant data without their knowledge (i.e., IP addresses). Due to the anonymous nature of this survey, this information will not be provided or made accessible to the researchers. Because this project

employs e-based collection techniques, data may be subject to access by third parties because of various security legislation now in place in many countries and thus the confidentiality and privacy of data cannot be guaranteed during web-based transmission.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have questions about this project, you may contact Dr. Tamara Kelly by email (tljkelly@yorku.ca). If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

****

I have read and understand the contents of the digital consent form above. By clicking "Yes", I acknowledge this as the equivalent to signing a paper consent form.
- Yes
- No

Survey

Background Questions
1. What is your home campus?
   - Keele campus
   - Glendon campus

2. Do you live on campus during academic terms?
   - Yes
   - No

If no to previous question
3. How long does it take you to commute to campus (one-way, in minutes)? Validated number: [ ]

4. In the past year, on average, how many days per week have you come to campus during your academic terms?
   - 0 days per week on-campus
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3 days
   - 4 days
   - 5 days
   - 6 days
   - 7 days per week on-campus

5. In the last year (since September 2022), for how many of your courses did you regularly attend in-person?
   - 0

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10+

Aspects of course formats that affect preference

1. If a course you wanted to take was offered in different formats (online, in-person, hyflex), which format would you prefer?
   - Online
   - In-person
   - Hyflex (define: In a "**Hyflex**" course some students attend in-person, while others attend remotely, but all students attend course activities at the same time)

   Ranking question

Item	Online	In-person	Hyflex	Not applicable
Lectures/Class/Seminars				
Labs/Tutorials/Studios				

2. Going forward, if you had the option between attending your classes online (synchronously or asynchronously) or in-person, what factors would influence your choice? Your answers could be related to learning, social factors, practical factors, etc.

3. What do you like about attending courses in person? Your answers could be related to learning, social factors, practical factors, etc.

4. What do you dislike about attending courses in person? Your answers could be related to learning, social factors, practical factors, etc.

5. What do you like about attending courses online? Your answers could be related to learning, social factors, practical factors, etc.

6. What do you dislike about attending courses online? Your answers could be related to learning, social factors, practical factors, etc.

7. How many in-person days per week on campus would be a good schedule for you?
   - 0 days per week on-campus
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3 days
   - 4 days

- 5 days
- 6 days
- 7 days per week on-campus
- No preference

8. What kind of flexibility in terms of course format choices (e.g., online, in-person, blended, hyflex) do you think is needed to best support your learning and university experience as a whole?

Use of campus when in-person

9. Other than attending your courses, what else do you do on campus?
   - Socialize with friends and/or classmates
   - Employment on-campus
   - Access library resources (e.g. research; librarian consultations)
   - Access quiet study spaces
   - Access group study spaces
   - Access technology (e.g. software, labs)
   - On-campus employment
   - Shop at local businesses
   - Eating food brought from home
   - Eating in on-campus restaurants/cafeterias
   - Access administrative services (e.g., financial office, registrars office)
   - Access student services (e.g., writing centre, accessibility and well-being office)
   - Use green spaces
   - Use the gym
   - Other _____
   - None of the above

10. Would improvements in any of the following make you want to spend more time on campus (outside of your class time)?
    - Activities organized by student associations
    - Social activities organized by York
    - Extracurricular academic opportunities (e.g. research)
    - Employment on-campus
    - Study space availability
    - Study space quality
    - Gym activities
    - Library facilities
    - Transportation options
    - Other (please specify):_____
    - None of the above

11. Are there on-campus services that you would want to use that are not offered?

12. Have you used on-campus spaces to attend classes virtually?
    a. Yes

          i. If yes, how does the space suit your needs (e.g., is it adequate, functional)? (Not very well, Not well, Neutral, Well, Very well)

    b. No

          ii. If no, why not?

13. Have you used on-campus spaces to study or do course work (individually or in a group)?
    a. Yes
        i. If yes, how does the space suit your needs (e.g., is it adequate, functional)? (Not very well, Not well, Neutral, Well, Very well)
    b. No
        ii. If no, why not?

Background (Demographics):

1. What is your most recent completed year of study?
   - Undergraduate – first year
   - Undergraduate – second year
   - Undergraduate – third year
   - Undergraduate – fourth year and above
   - Masters
   - PhD

2. What is your age? (open-ended)

3. Are you a caregiver of dependents? Generally, a dependent is someone who relies on you for financial and/or physical support.
   - Yes
   - No
   - I prefer not to answer.

4. Do you identify as someone with a disability (physical, mental, sensory, learning, etc.)
   - Yes
   - No

5. Do you identify as someone who is a gender minority? (NB: wording from OIPA)
   - Yes
   - No

6. Do you identify as someone who is a sexual orientation minority? (NB: wording from OIPA)
   - Yes
   - No

7. Do you identify as an ethnic/racial minority?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you have anything else you would like us to know about your in-person/online learning experiences?

Appendix C
HPRC Protocol

York University
Office of Research Ethics

HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HPRC)

PROTOCOL INSTRUCTIONS

Who should complete this Protocol Form?

All faculty members (including contract, and seconded) who are conducting funded or un-funded, minimal or more than minimal risk* research that involves the use of human participants, must complete this Protocol Form. **Students who are conducting funded research, more than minimal risk research, clinical research or Aboriginal research that involves the use of human participants must also complete this form.** This includes all experiments, interviews, and participant observation.

If you are a graduate student conducting research for a thesis or dissertation and your research is non-funded AND minimal risk please consult the FGS website for the appropriate forms and submission procedures.

If you are a graduate or undergraduate student conducting course related research (including an MRP) and your research is non-funded and minimal risk please consult with the office of your Department Chair, Program Director or Program Assistant to discuss the approval process for your research.

The HPRC uses the definition of minimal risk as outlined in the SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans" (2014): "If potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk" (p. 1.5). An expanded version of this definition is available from ORE upon request.

How long will the review process take?

The average time to process minimal risk protocols is approximately twenty working days from the date of receipt in the Office of Research Ethics (ORE). **INCOMPLETE OR ILLEGIBLE PROTOCOLS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE RESEARCHER, WHICH WILL DELAY THE ETHICS REVIEW PROCESS.**

Online Ethics Review System

To submit your protocol, please use the Online Ethics Review System. Please note that the system is currently only accessible to faculty members and requires a York Passport Account. A signed hardcopy of your application is *not* required if you are submitting your protocol via the online system.

If you *do not* have access to the Online Ethics Review System, protocol submissions (with electronic or scanned signatures) may be sent by email to ore@yorku.ca.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

Please contact the Coordinator, Research Ethics Review, Office of Research Ethics at ext. 55201 or (ore@yorku.ca).

Research Ethics Guidelines: Please visit our website for guidelines that speak to a number of ethics review related matters.

HPRC PROTOCOL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Please attach the following items, if applicable, to the HPRC Protocol Application.

NOTE: Please ensure ALL fields in this application are filled out. For sections that apply please mark with an "x;" for sections that do not apply, please mark as "n/a."

1. **Consent documents (Check all that are applicable):**

	Consent Form
	Substitute Consent Form (Parental/Guardian consent) — required if your research participants are under 16 years of age or without capacity to consent
	Assent Form — required if your research involves substitute consent
	Verbal Consent Script — required if you plan to seek verbal consent for any of the research participants
x	On-line Consent Script — required if participants are asked to consent online
	Consent for Audio/Visual/ Taping Form — required if you plan to use audio recording or photographs of participants. This may be included in the regular consent form as an additional check box.
	Decisions Needed From Other REB Boards — required if your research requires ethics approval from an institution other than York University

2. **External permissions and approvals (if applicable):**

	External REB approval required – certificate attached
	External institutional permission required – documentation provided
	Internal institutional permission/approval required (eg OIPA) – documentation provided
	Medical directive
	Clinical Trial - registration
	Clinical Trial – other
	Research Agreement(s) – append all copies
	Data Use Agreements
	Biosafety Permit
	Radiation Safety Approval

3. **Test Instruments:**

X	Questionnaires and Test Instruments
	Draft interview, focus group questions

4. **Recruitment:**

	Recruitment Materials: Posters, Letters, Participant Pool Advertisement, etc.

5. **Debriefing:**

	Debriefing Letter/Information – required if your research involves deception (see Section 10, Informed Consent form for details)
	Debriefing Consent Document – required following administration of debriefing statement (if your research involves deception)

OTHER:

	Aboriginal Research Ethics Checklist
	Reviewed: Clinical Trial Research Guidelines
	Provenance of Anonymous Data
	Research Team Member Confidentiality Agreement
	Participant Images Informed Consent Addendum

2

HPRC PROTOCOL FORM

PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Name of Principal Investigator(s):** Tamara Kelly

2. **Department and Home Faculty (or Research Centre/Institute):** Biology

   Campus Mailing Address: 311 Lumbers   **Extension:** 22972   **Researcher's E-mail:** tljkelly@yorku.ca

3. **Names of any other persons involved in the data collection:**

	Name	Role	Institution/ Research Centre
a)	Mandy Frake-Mistak	Member of working group on Task Force on Future of Pedagogy	York University
b)	Natasha May	Member of working group on Task Force on Future of Pedagogy	York University
c)	Kathleen Fortune	Member of working group on Task Force on Future of Pedagogy	York University
d)	Pooja Vashisth	Member of working group on Task Force on Future of Pedagogy	York University
e)	Stephanie Marion	Member of working group on Task Force on Future of Pedagogy	York University
f)			
g)			
h)			

4. **Status of Principal Investigator:**
   - ☒ York Faculty Member
   - ☐ Graduate Student
   - ☐ Undergraduate Student
   - ☐ Other:

   If student, please provide course director's/ supervisor's/ advisor's name:
   If external researcher, provide institutional REB approval certificate number:

   (Note: External researchers must append a copy of home institution REB approval certificate to this protocol in order for the HPRC to review.)

5. **Title of Research Project:** Student perceptions of in-person teaching

6. **Is this research defined as:**

3

☒ Minimal Risk
☐ More than Minimal Risk
(Please see (*) footnote on first page for definition of minimal risk.)

Note: Full board review is required for ALL research that is more than minimal risk. A full board review requires a meeting of the HPRC for the purposes of providing final approval and which, as a consequence, may take longer to review.

7. **If your research involves the use of human tissue/ blood/ body fluid and/or invasive procedures, please refer to the Submission and [Ethics Review Guidelines](#) for Research Involving Invasive Procedures and/or Collection of Human Bodily Fluids confirm whether Biosafety approval is in place:**

☐ N - *HPRC protocol cannot be reviewed until the Biosafety Permit is in place.*
☐ Y - *Certificate number: (Please append a copy of your approval certificate to your application.)*
☒ Not applicable

For more information on Biosafety please contact the Occupational Health Coordinator and Biosafety Officer (phone: ext. 44745).

8. **If your research involves the use of radioactive materials and/or radiation exposure, please confirm whether Radiation Safety approval is in place:**

☐ N - *HPRC protocol cannot be reviewed until the Radiation approval certificate is in place.*
☐ Y - *Certificate number: (Please append a copy of your approval certificate to your application)*
☒ Not applicable

For more information on Radiation training please contact the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO), Department of Occupational Health and Safety, ext. 44745

9. **a.) Does your research involve Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples?**
   ☒ N
   ☐ Y

   b.) Should your answer require clarification, please describe in the space below why your research may or may not involve Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples:

   The following questions may assist in determining whether your research involves Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples:

(i)	Will the research be conducted on Aboriginal land (Canada; international) for which permission and/or approval from an authority (such as a band council, First Nations Research Ethics Board etc.) may be required?	☒ N	☐ Y
(ii)	Will recruitment criteria include Aboriginal identity as either a factor for the entire study or for a subgroup of the study?	☒ N	☐ Y
(iii)	Will the research seek input from participants regarding an Aboriginal peoples' cultural heritage, artefacts, or traditional knowledge?	☒ N	☐ Y
(iv)	Will research in which Aboriginal identity or membership in an Aboriginal community be used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data?	☒ N	☐ Y
(v)	Will interpretation of research** results refer to Aboriginal communities, peoples, language, history or culture?	☒ N	☐ Y

(Note: "Research" does not include literary criticism and/or history (excluding oral history) and/or primarily textual

4

activities)

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the above noted questions, then your research involves aboriginal/indigenous peoples. Researchers are required to familiarize themselves with the Aboriginal Research Ethics Guidelines and complete the Checklist - Research Involving Aboriginal people. Note that research involving aboriginal people will first be reviewed by the Aboriginal Research Ethics Advisory Group prior to being forward to the HPRC. Researchers may receive initial comments from the AREAG for which a response will be required.

10. **Clinical Trials: Additional regulatory requirements and/or registration requirements may be required for research defined as a clinical trial. Failure to obtain applicable regulatory approvals or registrations may impact the conduct of research and/or the ability to publish results. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with all relevant regulatory requirements and registrations as they speak to the conduct of clinical trials.**

   A clinical trial is defined as:

   "…any investigation involving participants that evaluates the effects of one or more health-related interventions on health outcomes. Interventions include, but are not restricted to, drugs, radiopharmaceuticals, cells and other biological products, surgical procedures, radiologic procedures, devices, genetic therapies, natural health products, process-of-care changes, preventive care, manual therapies and psychotherapies. Clinical trials may also include questions that are not directly related to therapeutic goals – for example, drug metabolism – in addition to those that directly evaluate the treatment of participants.(TCPS, 2nd edition, 2014)."

   a) **Is your research defined as a clinical trial?** ☒ N ☐ Y
      If 'Yes:'
         i. Have you registered your trial? ☐ N ☐ Y
         ii. Please provide the registration number and location:

   b) **Does your research require Regulatory Approval?** (e.g. Health Canada or US FDA)
      ☒ N ☐ Y
      If 'Yes:'
         i. Please provide confirmation of Regulatory Approval:

   NOTE: Protocols that include clinical trial research will be accepted for review by the HPRC; however, only **a conditional approval will be granted** until such time as necessary regulatory approval and/or registration has been obtained (where and when applicable)

11. **Is this a revised version of a protocol previously reviewed by the HPRC?**
    ☒ N
    ☐ Y

    If 'Yes,' please explain:

12. **Approximate dates for proposed study (mm/yy):**
    Start: 07/23   **End:** 12/23

13. **Is any anticipated funding for this project from internal (i.e., York University) sources?**
    ☒ N
    ☐ Y

    If 'Yes,' what is the funding source?

5

14. Is any anticipated funding for this project from any external (i.e., outside York) sources?
☒ N
☐ Y

If 'Yes,' what is the funding agency and/or program?

15. Does this research involve another institution? Research involving another institution (such as a school, university, business, government agency) may require additional ethics review and approval or permissions if using institutional resources (such as internal listservs, or conducting interviews on the premises of the institution).

☒ N
☐ Y

NOTE: If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring ethics approval or administrative permission, please include all draft informed consent forms/administrative permission requests. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of clearance are required, and to obtain clearance prior to starting the project.

If 'Yes', please complete the following:

a)	Does the research involve another institution or site? *If 'Yes,' specify the institution(s)/site(s), indicate if permission/ approval is required and attach copies of the permissions/ approvals :*	☒ N	☐ Y
b)	Do any of the institution(s)/site(s) require administrative permission? *If 'Yes,' specify the institution(s)/site(s) and provide a copy of the letter of permission:*	☒ N	☐ Y
c)	Has any other REB cleared this project? *If 'Yes,' please submit the original application and provide a copy of the clearance letter:*	☒ N	☐ Y

6

PART B - RESEARCH INFORMATION

1. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**
   In layperson's terms, please provide a general and brief description of the research (e.g., hypotheses, goals and objectives, etc.).
   The Task Force for the Future of Pedagogy is a joint endeavour from York University's Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee and Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (APPRC-ASCP). The mandate of the Task Force is to "re-examine the UAP Priority on 21st Century Learning broadly", taking into consideration the role of in-person learning and what value this brings to teaching and learning at our commuter campuses. To fully address this we must know what York University students' thoughts are regarding their in-person learning experiences and the perceived value of in-person learning, particularly which teaching practices increase the value of the in-person learning experience. Available literature in this area is thin--particularly with respect to students who commute--and seems to be an emergeing area. As well, of the literature that does exist, the premise is online vs. in-person, a false dichotomy that we do not want to endorse. Of the work completed recently, the framing of the questions and the answers received have been impacted by when during the pandemic the surveys were conducted. Those from the beginning of the pandemic were completed by students who were (typically) new to online courses (and many of those were not truly online courses but courses for which delivery pivoted from in-person to online when the lock-down occurred). This contrasts with those for which surveying was done after students had nearly two years of online learning under their belt and many respondents likely did not have in-person experiences in higher education. These differences have led to conflicting conclusions based on what previous experiences the respondents have.

   For this reason we would like to survey York University undergraduate and graduate students on their perceptions of in-person teaching and the potential value it brings to their learning experiences. This survey would allow us to find out views specific to York University students, particularly those who have experienced both online and in-person learning in higher education, as well as to explore whether commuting distance and demographic variables are aligned with certain perceptions of in-person learning.

2. **PARTICIPANTS**
   a.) State who the participant(s) will be: Describe the participants that will be recruited and about whom personal information will be collected (i.e., numbers, age, special characteristics, etc.). Describe the size of the group from which participants will be recruited and the estimated number needed for the research (minimum/maximum). Where active recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personal information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include (*include permission letters*).
   All students at the Keele and Glendon campuses who have completed at least one year of studies at York University will be asked to complete the survey. Links will be sent by email through the Registrars Office, as well as posted to eClass and other University websites.

   b.) Please indicate if this study will be using a participant pool ☐ Y ☒ N
   If 'Yes', please indicate which pool(s):
   ☐ URPP
   ☐ Schulich Marketing pool
   ☐ School of Administrative Studies participant pool
   ☐ KURE
   ☐ Glendon Participant Pool
   ☐ Other:

3. **RECRUITMENT**

7

a) **How will participants be recruited (e.g., snowball technique, random sampling, previously known to interviewer, telephone solicitation, etc.)? Please elaborate on each of the methods of recruitment.** Recruitment will be done via York University email and posting on York University websites by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (OIPA).

b) **Will you be using any advertisements, flyers, posters, email scripts, social media postings, etc. for recruitment purpose?**
☐ N
☒ Y - *If 'Yes,' please attach a copy of each with your application.*

4. **INDUCEMENTS:**
   a) **Will you be offering inducements to participate (e.g., money, gift certificates, academic credit, etc.)?**
   ☐ N
   ☒ Y - *If 'Yes,' please check all that apply:*
   ☐ Financial**:**
   ☐ In-kind:
   ☒ Draw: five $50 gift cards
   ☐ Participant Pool Bonus Points:
   ☐ Other:

   If you are offering, inducements/compensation, please specify the inducement/ compensation being offered. Please note that inducements/ compensation cannot be tied to completion. Participants have the right to withdraw without penalty – including financial. :

   We will have a draw for one of five $50 gift cards to a campus service (e.g., Starbucks, Aroma).

   b) **If compensation is provided, please provide the source of funding for the compensation/incentive:**

5. **METHODS:**
   a) **Please indicate <u>all</u> the research methods that apply:**

   ☐ Action Research   ☐ Ethnography
   ☐ Observation   ☒ Survey
   ☐ Documentary/Filmmaking   ☐ Focus Group
   ☐ Experimental Lab Study   ☐ One-on-One Interview
   ☐ Oral/Life History   ☐ Human Tissues
   ☐ Experimental Behavioural Study   ☐ Online Research
   ☐ Face-to-Face Research   ☐ Other:

   b) **Do any of the methods involve:**
   Audio Recording?   ☒ N ☐ Y
   Photographic/Still Recording?   ☒ N ☐ Y
   Video Recording?   ☒ N ☐ Y

   Please note that explicit consent is required to use these methods of recording. Please see Section 10, "Informed Consent" for details.

   Further, If you are using recordings, please note that you will be required to account for how they will be safely stored, eventually destroyed or archived, and how, if used in research dissemination, confidentiality will be maintained (please see section 11 "Data Security" for details:

c) What will be required of the participant(s). Clearly specify in a **step-by-step** outline exactly what the participant(s) will be asked to do in each methodology. **A separate outline is required for each methodology.** Include the settings, types of information to be involved, and how data will be analyzed. Include details about identifying participants, recruitment, procedures participants will undertake, etc. **Include copies of study instruments. Please also include the estimated time commitment required of participants for each method.**

Undergraduate and graduate students at York University will be asked to complete a short survey (completion time ~ 15 minutes) about their experiences with in-person and virtual learning and perceptions of valuable in-person practices. Links to the survey will be sent to all York University students and will be posted to the eClass main page. Surveys will be anonymous. If respondents wish to be enrolled in a draw for one of five $50 gift cards to a campus service (e.g., Starbucks, Aroma) they will be directed to a link to another form where they will enter their email address. This form will not be tied to the survey responses in any way and thus we be unable to identify student responses. Emails will not be tied to answers submitted.

d) What is the experience of the researcher/research team with this kind of research? Please provide a description of the individual team members' experience with the proposed methods, participant population, etc.

Tamara Kelly is formally trained in science education research and has discipline-based educational research experience, using both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Stephanie Marion is a psychological scientists with over 15 years of experience designing and conducting empirical research using mixed methods.

All of the faculty involved in data collection are practitioners of scholarly teaching and have a dedicated interest in improving our offerings and student experiences at York University using evidence-based methods.

6. RISK:

Please indicate potential risks that the participants as individuals or as part of an identifiable group or community might experience by being part of this research project. **Please provide a response for all sub-questions:**

a)	Physical risks (including any bodily contact; administration of any substance)?	☒ N	☐ Y
b)	Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious, upset)?	☒ N	☐ Y
c)	Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation)?	☒ N	☐ Y
d)	Data security (i.e., risk to participant from data exposure)?	☒ N	☐ Y
e)	Tied to deception involved in the study? (See DEBRIEFING section below)	☒ N	☐ Y
f)	OTHER:		
g)	No known or anticipated risk: ☒		

Please describe how each of the potential risks described above will be managed and/or minimized:

9

7. BENEFITS
What, if any, are the benefits to the participants? **Or, ☐ No benefits**

a) Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project; these might include education about research methods, useful knowledge gained about self, etc.
No direct benefits.

b) Comment on the (potential) benefits to the scientific/scholarly community or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.
This work will help us in determining student perceptions of in-person experiences such that we can elucidate the elements of in-person instruction that are valued by students including the on-campus experience attendant with in-person classes.

8. SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF DATA:
NOTE: Secondary Data Analysis is described as the analysis of data involving human participants collected for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work. Researchers are advised to review the "Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines" for further information on requirements related to use of secondary data for research purposes.

a.) Are you conducting secondary data analysis?
☒ **N – If 'No,' please go to Question 9**
☐ **Y**

If 'Yes,' please answer the following questions:

i) Are you using **Anonymous Data**? (data which never included personal identifiers)
☐ N
☐ Y - If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

NOTE: Research that relies **solely** on secondary analysis of anonymous data is exempt from ethics review.

ii) Are you using **Anonymized data**? (Data which has been stripped of personal identifiers; no potential for data linkage.)
☐ N
☐ Y - If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

iii) Are you using **Identifiable data**?
☐ N
☐ Y - If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

b.) If you are conducting secondary analysis using IDENTIFIABLE DATA, please address the following:
i) Do you plan to link this identifiable data to other data sets?
☐ N
☐ Y - If 'Yes,' please describe:

ii) What type of identifiable data from this data set are you planning to access and use?
☐ Student records (please specify in the space below)
☐ Health records/clinic/office files (please specify in the space below):

☐ Other personal records. Please specify:

iii) What personally identifiable data (e.g., name, student number, telephone number, date of birth, etc.) from this data set do you plan on using in your research? Also, please explain why you

10

need to collect this identifiable data and justify why each item is required to conduct your research.

    iv) Describe the details of any agreement you have, or will have, in place with the owner of this data to allow you to use these data for your research. ***(You must submit a copy of any data use/access agreements.)***

    v) When participants first contributed their data to this data set, were there any known preferences expressed by participants at that time about how their information would be used in the future?
    ☐ N
    ☐ Y - If 'Yes,' please explain:

    vi) How will you obtain consent from the participants whose identifiable data you will be accessing? Please explain:

    NOTE: Consent of participants is required for research involving secondary analysis of data that includes personal identifiers. Waiver of consent may only be considered if researchers meet the additional criteria. Please consult the <u>Secondary Data Analysis guidelines</u> for further information.

    vii) If you do *not* intend to seek consent of participants for use of identifiable data for secondary analysis, please provide a rationale as to why:

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
    a) Is there a possibility of an apparent, actual or potential conflict of interest on the part of researchers, the University or sponsors? (e.g. commercialization of research findings; self-funded research)
    ☒ N
    ☐ Y - *If 'Yes,' please elaborate and outline how the potential or real conflict of interest will be addressed*:

    b) Do any members of the research team have multiple roles with potential participants (such as researcher and therapist, researcher and teacher, student/supervisor, etc.)
    ☐ N
    ☒ Y **-** If 'Yes,' please review <u>Research Involving Investigators' Students</u>

      i) Describe the nature of the multiple roles between researcher(s) and any participants:
      It is possible that some of the respondents will have had (or will have) some of the researchers as professors.
      ii) Describe how the potential conflict of interest that will emerge as a result of the dual roles will be minimized or managed:
      Since participation is anonymous, and no individual researcher will actively recruit students (i.e., recruitment will be done passively by sending the survey invitation and link to the population of interest), there will be no way for researchers to know which students have participated and which have not. Therefore, students' decision to participate or not will not impact their relationship with their professors. Email addresses collected for the draw in a separate form (not linked to responses) and will be available only to a member of the research team who does not have a dual role.

    c) Are there any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information/results/data at any point during the study including completion that the funder/sponsor has placed on the researchers. (These include controls placed by sponsors, funding sources, advisory or steering

committees.)

☒ N
☐ Y

If 'Yes,' please describe:

10. INFORMED CONSENT

a) Is there a relationship between participants and either of the following:

Person obtaining consent: ☒ N   ☐ Y
Investigator(s):   ☐ N   ☒ Y

If 'Yes,' what steps will be taken to avoid the perception of undue influence in obtaining free and informed consent:
Participation in the survey is optional, as per the consent form. The consent process will be done fully online.

It is possible that some of the respondents will have had (or will have) some of the researchers as professors, however, since participation is anonymous, and no individual researcher will actively recruit students (i.e., recruitment will be done passively by sending the survey invitation and link to the population of interest), there will be no way for researchers to know which students have participated and which have not. Therefore, students' decision to participate or not will not impact their relationship with their professors. Email addresses collected for the draw in a separate form (not linked to responses) and will be available only to a member of the research team who does not have a dual role.

b) Ongoing consent is required if the research occurs over multiple occasions or over an extended period of time.
Does the research occur over multiple occasions and/or over an extended period of time?
☒ N
☐ Y

If 'Yes,' please describe the process of how you intend to obtain ongoing consent:

c) Is substitute consent involved (e.g., children, <u>youths under 16</u>, those without capacity to consent)?
☒ N
☐ Y
If 'Yes,' please elaborate on how consent and assent will be obtained (please append a parental/ guardian consent form and an assent form/ script must):

d) Is Deception involved? Specifically, do you intend to withhold any information from and/or intentionally mislead the research participants?
☒ N – Please go to Question E
☐ Y

If 'Yes:'
    i)   Please provide a description of the nature of the deception and whether it is full or partial:

Please provide a rationale as to why deception (in whole or part) is required:

    ii)   **Please append a copy of the debriefing statement.**
          The debriefing statement needs to explain three elements:
            (i)   *Why the experiment was developed and why the deception was necessary.*
            (ii)   *What the current research says about the topic, which includes providing two references (text, article, on-line reference) that the participants can reasonably access and understand (if you have an academic and non-academic population, you may need to provide more than one version of the debriefing statement or make sure that the references can be accessed by the least educated of the population).*
            (iii)   *Any additional resources that would be useful for the participant. Resources need to be appropriate and accessible for the participants. For example, if you are conducting a study on parenting, you could include community resources for parenting classes or recommendations for parenting guides. (Source: Univ. Virginia, IRB).*
          Researchers must re-obtain consent from the participants once the debriefing statement has been provided. Participants shall be provided with and sign the "Debriefing Consent Form."

    iii)   **If a debriefing statement will not be provided to the participants, please provide a rationale as to why a statement will not be provided:**

    iv)   **For studies that are not deceptive**, briefly describe the process and nature of any immediate post-study information that will be provided to participants and the rationale for providing this information (e.g., counseling or trauma resources, information links, etc.):

   e)   **How will informed consent be obtained? (Please check all that are applicable):**

☐ Informed Consent Form (please attach draft version) (and assent form if relevant)

☐ Verbally* (please attach draft approximation of what participants will be verbally told)
If informed consent is being obtained verbally, please provide a rationale regarding why a written informed consent form is not being used:

☒ Online Consent Form** (please attach draft version)
****If online consent is being obtained, please indicate the website where the questionnaire/ survey will be hosted:***
We will make this the first question of the survey?

11. DATA SECURITY:

Privacy refers to an individual's right to be free from intrusion or interference by others. It is a fundamental right in a free and democratic society. The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. Security refers to measures used to protect information. It includes physical, administrative and technical safeguards.

For a fuller description of researcher obligations surrounding confidentiality, privacy and data security issues, please consult the Data Security Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants.

In light of the above, please address the following questions:

   a)   **Will the data be treated as confidential?**   ☐ N   ☒ Y
      If 'No,' please provide a rationale as to why not:

b) Will the participant(s) be anonymous? (Note: Participants are not anonymous to researchers during interviews/ focus groups/ experimental research/ face-to-face research or where researchers have access to any identifiable information.) ☐ N ☒ Y

If 'No,' please provide a rationale:

c) Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity/confidentiality of participants -or- the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of results (such as through data anonymization).

Survey responses are anonymous. No identifying information will be collected. The researchers acknowledge that the host of the survey may automatically collect particpant data (i.e., IP addresses) without their knowledge. Although this information may be provided or made accessible to the researchers, it will not be used or saved on any researcher's system without participants' consent.

d) Explain how raw research materials such as written records, video/audio recordings, artefacts, and questionnaires will be secured, how long they will be retained, and provide details of their storage or disposal. Describe the standard data security procedures for your discipline and provide a justification if you intend to store your research materials and/or research data for a longer period of time. If you believe the raw materials and/or research data may have archival value, discuss this and whether participants will be informed of this possibility during the consent process.

e) Please describe how you plan to store electronic data securely (such as video/audio recordings and document files)

☐ Encrypted and/or password-protected USB keys, laptops and/or other portable electronic data devices

☒ Secure Server

☐ Other:

f) If you plan to collect data in hard copy, please describe how you plan to store it, i.e., consent forms and other written records.

☐ Locked filing cabinet

☒ Other: We will not collect any hard copy data as the surveys will be completed online.

g) Please describe how you plan to store other formats of data (if applicable):
N/A

h) If you plan to retain data indefinitely, please provide a justification (e.g., data use for future research, comply with funder mandates, comply with journal data availability policies, align with open science practices in your discipline, etc.):

i) If you plan to destroy research data, please provide a rationale (**e.g., it is not feasible to de-identify data, there is a high risk of re-identifying or relinking the data, exposure of the data might cause vulnerability or harm to the participants or their communities, the topic of the data is sensitive, etc.):**

   i.   Please provide a firm date by which the data will be destroyed:
     Study data will be destroyed by January 1, 2028 (5 years after we collect it). This is standard practice.

   ii. Provide details of their final disposal:
     (a.) for hard copy data (e.g., cross-cut shredder, etc.):

     (b.) for electronic data (e.g., deletion and overwriting of drives; destruction of drives; etc.):

14

All data files will be deleted, including any archived copies.

j) **Describe any limitations to protecting the confidentiality of participants whether due to the law, the methods used, the nature of the sample population, or other reasons (e.g., duty to report).**
None

k) **Identify all parties who will have access to the data.**
☒ Primary Investigator/student
☐ Supervisor
☒ Other (please specify): Anonymous data may be made available to other members of the Task Force

l) **Uses of the data: Please describe all forms of output that are anticipated to result from this research (e.g., presentations, written papers, placing data in an archive, creative works, documentary films, etc.). Describe how any potentially identifying information will be handled in each form of output.**
We plan to present our findings to other members of the Task Force as well as to include these in our working group report. The survey is anonymous so there is no identifying information. Some anonymous written responses may be used as exemplars.

m) **Subsequent use of data: Will the data potentially be used for other purposes in the future (e.g., teaching, future analysis, publishing of dataset, archiving in an institutional repository, etc.)?**
☒ N   ☐ Y

If 'No,' the data will be solely used for the purposes describe in this application and will not be used for other purposes in the future.

If 'Yes,' participants <u>must</u> *be informed of this possibility during the consent process. Subsequent use of the data for new purposes may require additional review by the REB.*

Please describe how the data will be prepared to make it suitable for future use (e.g., anonymization, storage, archiving, etc.). Please describe what future uses might occur (e.g., use within the PIs research group, transmission to other researchers, publication of the dataset, etc.). Please identify any known repositories to which data may be submitted. (The REB recognizes that all potential future uses cannot be anticipated; but does expect that data will be prepared in a manner for future uses that respects the conditions under which the data were originally collected). We do not anticipate any subsequent use, but the survey will be anonymous. We do not intend to submit this data to any databases.

12. Is there any additional information that you would like to add that may assist the HPRC in reviewing your protocol?

I hereby certify that all information included on this form and all statements in the attached documentation are correct and complete. I have examined the guidelines and principles detailed above, and the *Senate Policy for Research Involving Human Participants*, and affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, this research conforms thereto. I affirm that I have informed all members of my research team of their responsibilities as it speaks to the conduct of research involving human participants and as outlined in the Senate Policy, "Research Involving Human Participants". I have advised all research team members that all human participants in the research must have signed a written consent form or have provided oral consent for their participation in the research. I hereby undertake to notify the Human Participants Review Committee if I make any changes involving the use of human participants on this project. I will also notify the Human Participants Review Committee if any unforeseen risks not specified in the research proposal appear. In such a case, the study will be suspended pending clarification.

Tamara Kelly
---   June 5/23
Signature of Principal Investigator (PI)   ---
                                                                                    Date

---   ---
Signature of Faculty Advisor (if PI is a student)   Date

Section to insert Digital Signatures (if applicable):

                                                                                    June 5, 2023
--   ---
Signature of Principal Investigator (PI)   Date
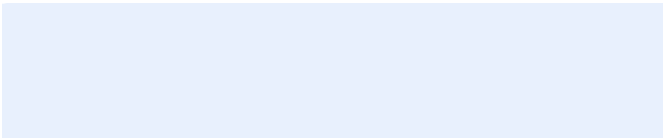
--   ---
Electronic Signature of Faculty Advisor (if PI is a student)   Date

Appendix D
Example of suboptimal room assignments

Term F   Section A

Please click here to see availability.

Section Director: Nikola Kovinich

Type	Day	Start Time	Duration	Location	Campus	Cat #	Instructor	Notes/Additional Fees
LECT 01	T	13:00	90	LAS C	Keele	K50H01	Nikola Kovinich	
	R	13:00	90	ACW 206	Keele			

Term F   Section B

Please click here to see availability.

Section Director: Tanya Da Sylva

| Type	Day	Start Time	Duration	Location	Campus	Cat #	Instructor	Notes/Additional Fees
LECT 01	T	13:00	90	ACW 206	Keele	D97Q01	Tanya Da Sylva	
	R	13:00	90	LAS C	Keele			

York University is primarily attended by students who commute longer distances to campus and thus require a place to study and/or collaborate between classes to maximize their on-campus experience. Despite this need, there is a considerable amount of under-utilized space at York University (e.g., lobby of LSB, Lassonde, Vari Hall) resulting in insufficient seats around campus. Even centralized locations such as Vari Hall provide little seating. Where seating is available it tends to be benches without (or only limited) corresponding table surfaces. If we want to make students feel welcome and invite them to stay on campus during the day to get the most out of their university experience (and reduce frustration), functional seating across campus needs to be provided, particularly in the lobbies of buildings where students will have multiple classes or labs. In comparison, Western University and Wilfrid Laurier University are not commuter campuses, with many students living either on campus or within close proximity of the campus, yet the common areas (e.g., lobbies) of their buildings, including their recreation centres, provide considerable student seating, primarily as tables and chairs, supplemented by some bench seating.
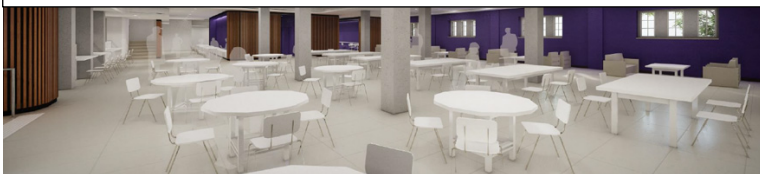
Indoors:

Western: New living wall in Thames Hall Atrium, which provides lots of seating at large
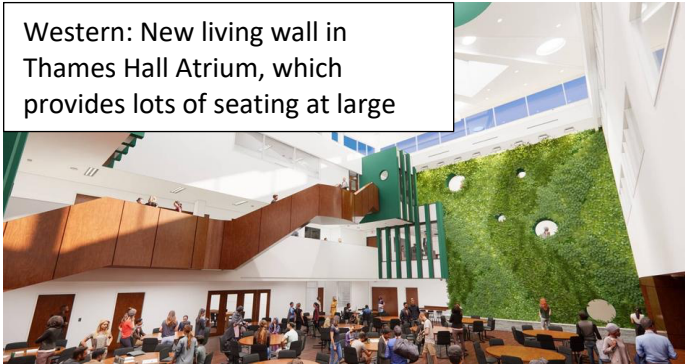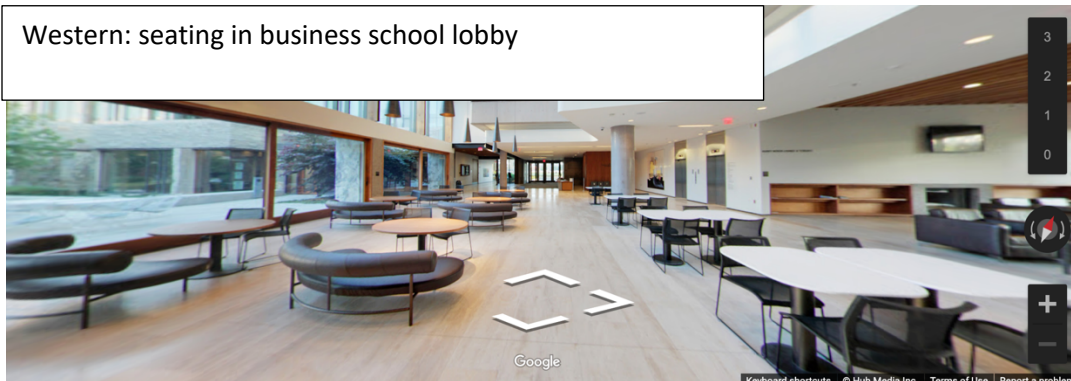

Western: Lobby of student recreation building
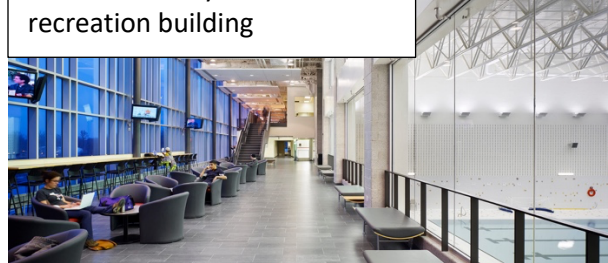
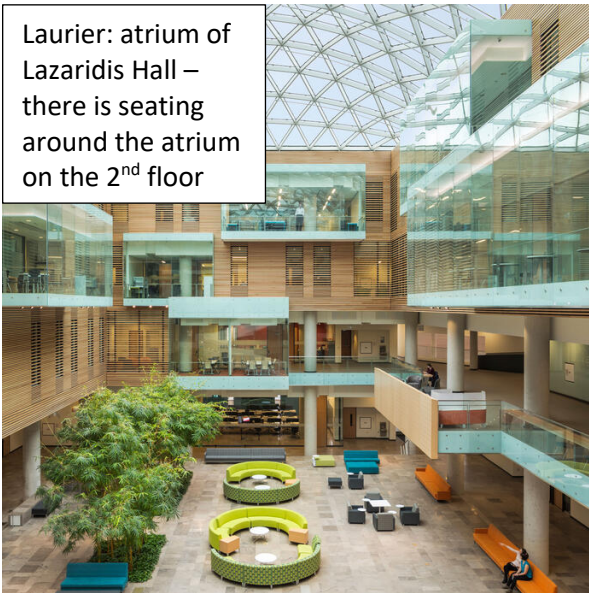Western: renovation of Sommerville House to provide more seating in common areas

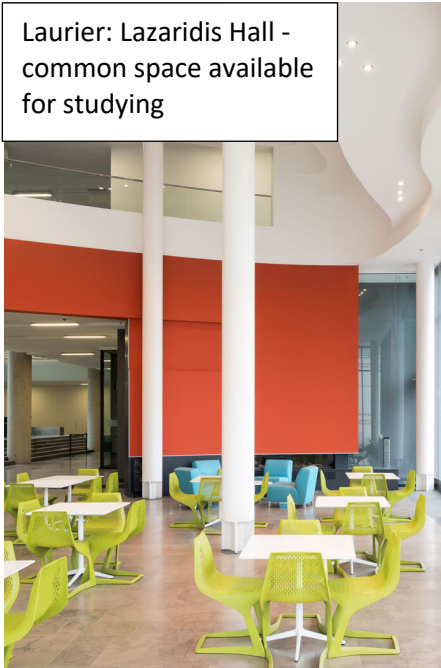Western: seating in business school lobby

Western: This building has tables and chairs in each hall, in nooks, etc. (First floor)

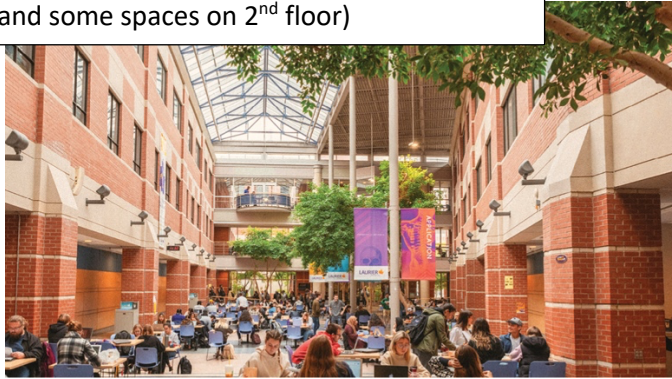Second floor – seating with tables surrounds the atrium and at each window

Laurier: atrium of Lazaridis Hall – there is seating around the atrium on the 2nd floor

Laurier: Lazaridis Hall - common space available for studying

Laurier: considerable study space in the atrium (and some spaces on 2nd floor)
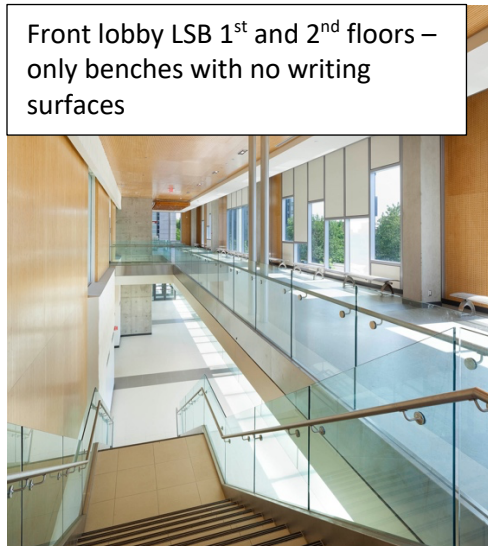
UTM: Hallway in building where lots of students have class providing study space

For comparison at York:

ACW, 2nd floor (there are no tables and only a few benches on the first floor)

ACW, 1st floor only a few benches and no tables/writing surfaces

Front lobby LSB 1st and 2nd floors – only benches with no writing surfaces
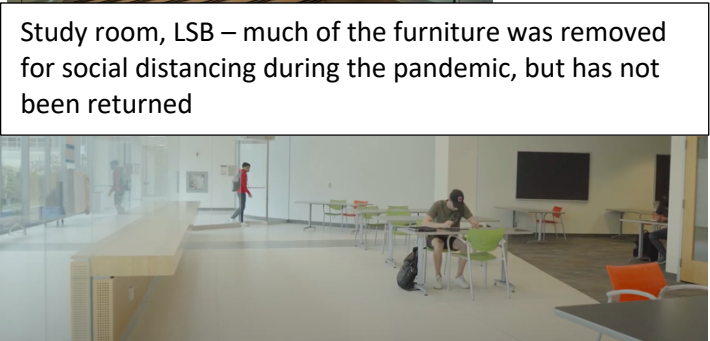
Study room, LSB – much of the furniture was removed for social distancing during the pandemic, but has not been returned

Outside seating available at Western:

The following report is the result of four online meetings, with additional material from our joint Teams notebook. Discussions were based on source material and pedagogical expertise provided by Robin Sutherland-Harris; expertise on TEL provided by Patrick Thibaudeau; and faculty contributions by Kyle Belozerov, Michael Longford, Stephanie Marion, Markus Reisenleitner, and Pooja Vashisth.

Based on the framework provided by the co-chairs of the Joint ASCP-APPRC task force, the following questions guided our discussion:

1. Moving beyond Covid-motivated perspectives, what should **technology-enhanced pedagogy** look like in the future, both short-term and long-term? What knowledge base and empirically tested best practices are we drawing on?
   Sub-questions to be considered:
   a. *Online and remote learning*: what contexts and materials lend themselves to online learning, and how should this be considered in course and program development?
   b. *Technologically enhanced in-person learning*: what can the affordances of emerging technologies contribute to in-person learning?
   c. What are best practices of *integrating online and in-person* pedagogy seamlessly ("hyflex"), and what kinds of support and infrastructure are needed to make such integration feasible?
   d. How do we approach strategies to enhance traditional pedagogies (lecture, seminar, studio, lab, ...) technologically while also making room for non-traditional and innovative pedagogies such as VR/AR, AI-enhanced learning etc.?

2. While recent experiences might have molded student expectations regarding flexibility of content delivery, we suggest that the concept of **flexibility** should be understood more widely as pertaining to the *complete learning environment* (including modes of instruction/delivery of programs and courses, instructor-student interaction, time slots, contact hours etc.). As such, we explore:
   a. What would flexible frameworks of instruction look like that enable technologically enhanced non-traditional teaching formats (e.g., hackathons, block seminars, blended courses)?
   b. What are the contexts where a hyflex mode of delivery is pedagogically beneficial for teaching and learning as well as for instructor-student interaction? (e.g., small group seminars in appropriately equipped rooms)
   c. What are pedagogical contexts in which only one mode of delivery makes sense (e.g., lectures with a strong component of multimedia material that makes online delivery better suited to the content)?
   d. How can we ensure that such frameworks support most instructors that continue to lecture (e.g., easy ways to record lectures) and those who experiment with new learning technologies and need appropriate support (e.g., VR)?

While we recognize the importance of technologies in the educational space, we are also aware of the danger that technological affordances become drivers of instructional formats and methods. Following (Fawns, 2022), we warn against common sense assumptions that essentialize and instrumentalize technologies in pedagogy. We instead suggest focusing on the **entanglements,** or mutually constitutive relationships, between technologies and learning contexts/methods.

The following **preliminary recommendations and guidelines** emerged from our discussion. They are organized under three general headings that indicate areas of priority engagement.

1. Flexibility

    a. There is clear evidence that after the COVID experiences, students at tertiary institutions expect more **flexible models** of pedagogy that can accommodate their diverse expectations, needs, and forms of accessing instruction (Ontario Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic, n.d.). While we do not endorse a solely consumer-driven model of pedagogy that orients itself predominantly towards student expectations rather than established best practices, we agree with the call for more flexibility as a guiding principle for the future of pedagogy, especially when used to reinforce EDI and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. As such, decisions on teaching, learning, and technology need to include all concerned parties, including faculty members, to establish best practices for the flexible and appropriate delivery of relevant and timely course content and material.

    b. Improving flexibility in delivering technologically enhanced courses necessitates moving away from a rigid, paradigmatic separation of in-person and remote/online courses. Rather, a pedagogically meaningful mixture of in-person and remote course components should become a standard and be related to course content and teaching methods when appropriate. Technologies, course design, and program structures should be introduced that allow for such flexibility, and instructors should be called upon, and mandated with, making decisions based upon pedagogical considerations rather than administratively pre-determined modes of delivery specifications. The "blended" model should be extended beyond allowing (some) students to listen to lectures online. Technologies should facilitate, and normalize as expected, forms of delivery, the seamless blending of remote and in-person participation where fitting, for example in seminars or group exercises. A **blended mode of delivery** could potentially become the default for NCPs (rather than in-person lecture mode). To achieve this level of flexibility, it is imperative that instructors are supported appropriately to make it possible for them to concentrate on pedagogy, rather than operational issues of classroom and/or remote technologies. When technologies are utilized for teaching and learning processes, the use of technology should be integrated as part of the critical skills of the course. Existing studies indicate that modes of delivery vary in their effectiveness for different skillsets. Skills-based courses may be more effective (i.e., better

learning outcomes) when given face-to-face than online (Calister & Love, 2016, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dsji.12093), whereas applied qualitative courses (e.g., management) may be better for online delivery than quantitative courses.

c. Flexible course delivery guided by pedagogical principles, methods, and course content should be allowed **to adapt or move beyond a rigid 3-hour, 12-week course delivery format**, allowing for technologically enhanced, non-traditional formats such as hackathons, blended block seminars etc.

2. Accessibility

a. **Open Educational Resources (OER)** should be the preferred choice of course material, as they have been shown to perform as well as, or better than, traditional commercial textbooks in terms of student perceptions and performance, and free OER disproportionately benefit underserved student populations (first-generation students and racial minority students) (e.g., Jhangiani et al., 2018; Nusbaum et al., 2020). Instructors should be recognized for, and institutionally supported in, creating OER resources.

b. While commercial ed-tech is a seductive and rapidly growing industry, we warn against relying on proprietary technologies that entail vendor lock-in and data privacy issues. Open tools should be used as much as possible as a guide to sustainable and ethical use of technologies in public education. Sufficient training resources and support should be provided to familiarize students and faculty with lesser-known open tools that might have a steeper learning curve.

c. Tools and formats used in instruction should be **portable** across multiple Operating Systems (PDF, html) and afford an extended lifespan. Proprietary formats should be avoided.

d. Accessibility should be a guiding principle in the selection of technologies. Course elements that incorporate and systematize principles of UDL should be encouraged and promoted.

3. Technologies

a. All faculty members (full-time and adjunct) should be encouraged, and provided the tools and training necessary, to adopt and implement **best practices** around tech-enabled teaching (e.g., recording lessons and making these available, using captions, using collaborative tools, developing modular content, proper use of learning management systems, etc).

b. **Student training** is equally important for the adoption of technologies in courses and programs. For example, faculty who adopt a new technology need to take the time necessary to train students on it and explain why and how it will be used as a teaching tool. Students can also benefit from explicit teachings on how to use technology responsibly in a learning context (e.g., to curb the cost of tech-driven distractions that can inhibit learning).

c. There are countless **AI and Machine Learning** tools available (see attached list for some of the currently most widely used tools). These technologies are here to stay and will evolve further, and students are currently using them and will not stop using them (nor should they). This means that students need to become AI-literate, and that this should be a university-wide initiative. When introduced in a course, AI should be used as a teaching tool in the same way as other technologies, i.e. be meaningfully integrated in teaching and learning processes. Instructors should engage students in an open discussion about AI apps and how they intersect with academic integrity, but also how they might be used as a tool for research, ideas and content generation in an open and transparent way. The Teaching Commons currently offers a range of supports for faculty seeking to learn about generative AI and adapt and reimagine their pedagogical approaches in light of this rapidly evolving technology. This includes co-hosting panel sessions and co-authoring web pages (AI Technology and Academic Integrity for Instructors) with the Academic Integrity Officer (Office of the VP Academic), regularly updated courses facilitated by educational developers (e.g. AI and Education), support and co-leadership of an emerging community of practice (GenAI Pedagogies at York), a 3-part summit on generative AI addressing scholarship, teaching practice, and student perspectives to be help October 18-20, 2023, development of a tip-sheet series for practical strategies for teaching with generative AI (in development), tailored information sessions about teaching with generative AI (available upon request at the department, unit or Faculty level), and a dedicated web page updated to reflect latest trends and offerings.

d. Faculty should consider **creative ways** of integrating technologies in the Teaching and Learning process. Technologies need not only be assessed as to whether they foster and/or inhibit leaners' abilities to acquire knowledge. Reflection and critical assessments of technology can be built into course assignments. In other words, students can assess the tools while they are using them. Many tools can also be used to encourage formal and informal peer communication and collaboration inside and outside of learning management systems (eClass). Students could be given an option to use emerging technologies such as AI text, image, video and sound generators in open, critical and creative ways in response to assignments. For example, image generators and similar tools (which many students are already using) should be included in teaching, rather than leaving it to students to deploy them.

e. Along with these recommendations is the **need for more investment** in technological infrastructure, facilities, and resources that support teaching and learning.

List of currently most popular/effective tools

a.   Text enhancements
- Grammarly
- Wordtune
- ProWritingAid

b.   Presentation creation
- Decktopus
- Beautiful.ai
- Slidesgo

c.   Image generation
- DALL-E 2
- MidJourney
- Stable Diffusion

References

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Jhangiani, R.S., Dastur, F.N., Grand, R.L., & Penner, K. (2018). As good or better than commercial textbooks: Students' perceptions and outcomes from using open digital and open print textbooks. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 9(1)*. https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2018.1.5

Nusbaum, A.T., Cuttler, C., & Swindell, S. (2020). Open educational resources as a tool for educational equity: Evidence from an introductory psychology class. *Frontiers in Education, 4.* https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00152

Ontario Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Experiences of Ontario First-year Postsecondary Students in 2020–21 – Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. (n.d.). Retrieved June 15, 2023, from https://heqco.ca/pub/ontario-learning-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-experiences-of-ontario-first-year-postsecondary-students-in-2020-21/

Working Group #3:
Experiential Education & Work-Integrated Learning Working Group
Final Report Recommendations

Today's wicked problems require interdisciplinary collaborations, and York University must build the necessary networks and policies to make it easier for faculty, departments, and programs to work together. The EE/WIL Working Group, makes the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that all students, regardless of program of study, participate in a meaningful[1] community or work focused experiential learning experience before they graduate. These experiences will support the acquisition of transferable 21st century global competencies in the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, enhancing their well-being, employability, and ability to navigate an uncertain future.
   - In order to accelerate and intensify the shift towards community-based and work-integrated learning, we recommend that York revisit and revise its Common Language for EE, so that it reflects current definitions and best practices (e.g., HEQCO: A Practical Guide for Work-Integrated Learning).

2. Shift from a primarily course-based approach to experiential education (EE) towards more intentionally designed programs with community-based and work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities.

3. Provide supports to ensure that community-based EE/WIL experiences remain meaningful for all involved parties: students, instructors, and community or industry partners.

   - Students: In addition to the supports offered by the YU Experience Hub, we recommend the creation of an introductory course, ideally across the institution, that will help prepare students to succeed in their community-based EE and WIL experiences.

   - Instructors: In addition to administrative support for placements, internships and co-ops, instructors may require ongoing professional development in order to guide students in the changing contexts of EE and WIL.

   - Community and industry partners: When it comes to cultivating and sustaining ongoing relationships with community and industry partners, the relationship should not be felt as exploitative by our partners. Students should be sent into these environments with care and only after careful preparation (e.g., see strategies used by the Jane & Finch Social Innovation Hub). There should be institutional coordination between central administrative supports and in-house Faculty EE teams when recruiting and reaching out to community and industry partners.

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[1] To understand meaningful experiential learning in community and workplace contexts, we suggest that programs consult the Common Language for EE at York University to ensure that EE experiences are designed to meet the current definitions of Community Based Learning, Community Based Research, Community Service Learning, Course-based Placements, Program-based placements, Internships, or Co-operative Education, all of which should include embedded opportunities for structured reflection.

4. Ensure that EE/WIL opportunities are anchored by the principles of access (incorporating a diversity of approaches, including in-person, hybrid and virtual site visits, learning environments and work arrangements), accessibility, and DEDI (decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion). Learners from communities that are historically under-represented and underserved in postsecondary education may especially benefit from participating in WIL opportunities, which can help build their networks and connections, increase their employability, and build credibility and confidence.

   - To help address potential issues with scalability and accessibility,[2] consider leveraging emerging technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality, as well as expanding on co-curricular opportunities.

5. Leverage the university's global physical footprint, alumni network, and emerging technologies, to offer locally or globally relevant EE/WIL opportunities built around community or business problems, and high-level business or government policy objectives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Promote interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations that bring together instructors and students from different programs and leverage problem-based or inquiry-based models of teaching and learning. For example, a team of engineering students trying to tackle a problem around sustainable cities and communities (UN SDG #11) will find entirely different—and perhaps limited—solutions when compared to an interdisciplinary team. An interdisciplinary team can build on that engineering expertise but also embed different knowledges and ways of being, by drawing from equity studies, healthcare, the arts, and any of York's other 200+ innovative programs.

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[2] Accessibility refers to not only the ability to access physical sites, but also financial affordability. While student bursaries are offered to help students offset the costs of some EE experiences (e.g., study abroad initiatives), technology can be also be leveraged to make EE more affordable and accessible to diverse learners. For work-related placements, job creation should be prioritized in the local communities where our students are most likely to live, so that they can minimize their commute time and transportation expenses.

<p style="text-align:center">Working Group 4: Scaling & Sustaining Pedagogical Innovations</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Final Report
Prepared by Chloë Brushwood Rose
September 6, 2023</p>

<u>Working Group Membership</u>

The members of the working group represent a cross-section of York University's community, including both Professorial- and Teaching-Stream faculty, graduate students, and administrative staff with expertise in pedagogical innovation and technology-enhanced teaching and learning. In addition, three Faculties are represented on the working group – Education, Science, and LAPS. Members include: Fenella Amarasinghe, Education; Chloë Brushwood Rose, Education & Office of VPTL (Chair); Tamara Kelly, Science; Markus Reisenleitner, LAPS; Patrick Thibaudeau, UIT; Michelle Sengara, Office of VPTL (staff support).

<u>Working Group Mandate</u>

Our mandate was to consider the following questions, to revise them to better reflect the ke y ideas to be explored, and to develop a set of recommendations for beginning to address them, k eeping in mind the Task Force's six cross-cutting considerations:

- How can the university celebrate, scale and sustain pedagogical innovations across time, campuses and disciplinary-specific programs?
- How can the university build more agile, flexible structures that will enable, support and coordinate increasingly diverse teaching and learning activities (e.g., course scheduling, classroom assignments, funding, etc.)?

<u>Initial Discussions and Final Questions</u>

The group began its work with an extensive discussion about the questions provided to us with our mandate, both in terms of how they might be revised and to consider the key ideas and issue connected to notions of scaling, sustainability, and innovation. From the outset, the working group was focused on developing a deeper and critical understanding of what is meant when we talk about these high level ideas.

Our discussion about **scaling** began with the observation that scaling does not always mean 'scaling up' – it is not a purely quantitative notion. Indeed, the working group identified right

away that scale might be understood as describing an initiative's increase in size (reaching more people) but it also might be understood as 'scaling across' – that is involving a greater number of collaborators, disciplines or units across the university, or creating sustainable innovations that scale across time. The working group is committed to thinking about scaling in all of these ways. The working group also addressed the importance of considering the right scale for any pedagogical innovation – bigger isn't always better. It may be important at times to support innovations that have quite a small scale for other reasons – for example, they help us diversify whom, what and how we teach, and their scale is less important than the work they do for certain sectors of the university community.

The working group felt that the idea of **innovation**, while widely used and perhaps unavoidable, is a contentious term for many of us. We have concerns that the notion of innovation can be deployed without a critical framework for thinking about its colonial and capitalist implications, which are particularly important to consider in the context of the university. For example, the idea of innovation is often used to promote ideas that in fact have long histories in other cultural contexts, leading to the idea that the colonial institution is inventing or innovating ideas that in fact have long legacies in communities historically kept out of the university. In addition, the working group is concerned that innovation is often equated with 'efficiency' or 'technologization' and that this can obscure that much of our most transformative pedagogical work will at times be in moments that resist the demands for both of these outcomes. The working group recognizes innovation as defined by the qualities of risk-taking, openness to failure, human-centredness, creativity, social and pedagogical transformation, diversification, and decolonization. We also recognize that in the same way that scale may at times need to be small (instead of big or wide), 'innovation' may at times need to focus on reparation before it can lead to transformation. If innovation is to be **sustainable**, we must consider financial, technological, spatial, and human resources, including teaching faculty workload, and also the social, cultural and environmental impacts of our initiatives.

One key observation of the working group which highlights the intersection between sustainability and innovation has to do with the nature and job security of our teaching staff at the university. Members observed that the increase in numbers of contract faculty profoundly

impacts our capacity to innovate. Due to the short term nature of their appointments, contract faculty are unable to build sustainable collaborations with colleagues and within their units. Collaboration and relationship-building are key to innovation and, therefore, units and programs with high percentages of contract faculty will find their capacity for sustainable pedagogical innovation negatively impacted.

The revised question that the working group is exploring are as follows:

- How can the university scale and sustain pedagogical transformation across time, campuses, and disciplines? What principles should guide our decisions to increase the scope or reach of initiatives?
- How can the university build more agile and flexible systems (course scheduling, funding, etc.) that enable, support, and facilitate increasingly diverse teaching & learning activities? What might those systems look like?
- How can the university better support communication and collaboration around pedagogical initiatives and resources? What might those channels for communication and collaboration look like?

Recommendations

Following our initial meeting, the working group held three meetings between early June and early August, each of which focused on developing recommendations in response to one of the three questions. Between meetings, the working group studied the resources and research provided to us by our staff support person, and also working online via Teams to begin to articulate potential ideas and recommendations. (Please see Appendix A: Resource Support Overview for more details). This combination of in-person and virtual work seemed to offer the best way for most group members to participate in discussion with one another.

Our approach was to provide broader recommendations with some specific examples and considerations for further thought and illustration. Below are the recommendations and examples we have generated.

1. To develop a set of principles for guiding the scaling pedagogical innovation and transformation, drawing on the university's existing core values and frameworks.

    o   The working group observed that innovation often happens quickly and in response to the impulse to 'chase money' and we might benefit from a clear statement of the principles clearly tied to our core values that will frame our pedagogical innovation and resource development.

2. To utilize the resources we have to support pedagogical innovation that prioritizes collaboration across the university and greater sustainable and structural change.

    o   Enhance the sharing of strategies across disciplines by prioritizing projects for funding that involve cross-faculty collaboration;

    o   Enhance sustainable change by prioritizing projects for funding that involve Faculty commitments to structural and programmatic change;

    o   Enhance the unit-specific and university-wide attention to teaching and learning by using the resources we have to support Faculty-specific pedagogical leads – possibly, Teaching Fellows – that offer strong pedagogical leadership in their respective units and collaborate with their counterparts in other units;

    o   Address concerns about pedagogical innovation, foregrounding the importance of relationship-building and collaboration, in our Faculty Complement Renewal Plan.

3. To explore the affordances and challenges of Artificial Intelligence for university teaching and learning and pedagogical change.

    o   Establish a working group to develop guiding principles and ethical guidelines for the pedagogical use of AI;

    o   Facilitate conversations that critically address the issues posed to academic integrity and consider why students (and others – faculty, researchers) turn to AI in the first place;

4. To take a thoughtful and intentional approach to choices about course delivery, whether online, in-person, blended or hyflex.

- Review how course delivery changes are made at the program and/or unit level to better understand what guidance might be helpful;
- Work with local collegial governance structures to development a programmatic approach to course delivery options.

5. To develop strategies for enhancing the attention to and celebration of pedagogy within university structures and among colleagues.
   - We need to enhance the attention to pedagogical transformation and innovation within existing collegial governance structures, within departmental and Faculty units, and among faculty colleagues;
   - Allowing for shared discussion and direction about pedagogy at the wider scale, but leaving room for customized conversations (specific to what faculties / groups of students need);
   - Emphasizing the importance of excellence in teaching in both the professorial and teaching stream, and working to better engage and elevate the expertise of the teaching stream, perhaps through a Teaching Fellows program;
   - In order to encourage more teaching award nominations, provide a central site which aggregates all of the university-wide and faculty-specific teaching awards that faculty can be nominated for, along with simple instructions and links for nomination (e.g. the Faculty of Science has a mach form for student letters, a certain number of which automatically trigger an award nomination).
   - Considering the pedagogical impact of and support needed by Teaching Assistants.

6. To create new spaces and channels for faculty discussions on pedagogy and pedagogical transformation, so they can better communicate, collaborate, and learn from one another.
   - Work with local units and with Senate to ensure that discussions about pedagogy are prioritized in collegial governance structures;
   - Adequately resource a IT innovation that can support the agile, flexible systems that enable communication and collaboration in the service of increasingly diverse teaching and learning activities;

- Utilize existing technological tools and resources to better link community members: for example, bring students, faculty and staff into the same online eco-system, ie. Microsoft office; leverage AI support and existing Microsoft collaboration tools.

Working Group #5: 'Rethinking Assessments'
Final Report

September 1, 2023

> *"Overall, our assessment planning should take a holistic, developmental view of students; focus on students' ability to integrate and apply learning to complex problems that transcend disciplinary boundaries; emphasize authentic, embedded assessment evidence, and ensure that assessment practices are culturally responsive and promote student equity. […] To ensure that these conditions are met in courses, programs, and interventions, institutions must focus on assessing the quality of experiences in addition to the outcomes of those experiences. Good assessment planning will thus include considering how students perceive, interpret, and engage in learning experiences (process or formative assessment) as a necessary complement to outcome assessment."* Hansen (2019)

This report provides the recommendations and rationale of Working Group 5 pertaining to future of the assessment function. It is the result of a series of online (5) and in-person (2) meetings and is supported by a review of relevant literature. Faculty contributors include Norda Bell, Jon Kerr (chair), Michael Longford, Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier plus former working group members (Kyle Belozerov and Kathleen Fortune) and Claire Del Zotto as a student representative.

The framework provided by the co-chairs of the Joint ASCP-APPRC task force led the working group to focus their investigation and discussions on three questions:

Question 1. What is the purpose and state of assessments in higher education?
Question 2. What are the challenges to the assessment function and how might they be addressed?
Question 3. What are best practices in higher education assessments today and for the future, including equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations.

On the purpose and state of assessments
Traditionally, assessments have served three key purposes (Archer, 2017):
1. To support learning (i.e., inclusive, authentic, formative assessments)
2. To support accreditation (i.e., internal/external certification, progress, transfer)
3. To support accountability and review of curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes

The opinion of the committee and a foundational assumption in this report is that these traditional purposes of assessments will continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future.

Although each purpose demands equitable (i.e., not necessarily equal) attention in a well-functioning educational environment, it is not uncommon for one purpose to be over-emphasized to the detriment of others. For example, instructors often conflate assessment with grading (i.e., certification) and assume a grade is indicative of student learning (Fisher, 2019). In addition, the committee has identified several challenges/trends that create tension between purposes and will likely drive and/or constrain future change in the assessment function. The priority issues identified by the committee include (for supporting literature see reference section below):

- Declining resources and increased class sizes,
- Entrenched assessment policies and practices,
- Shifts to more online course/program offerings,

- Concerns about academic integrity given trends re: plagiarism, cheating, and contracting (with artificial intelligence being a facilitating technology),
- Student expectations and perceptions (i.e., students as consumers),
- Student, faculty, and staff wellbeing,
- Diverse types of students and issues surrounding i) levels of preparedness, ii) diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness, and iii) pressures re: student recruitment, retention, progress, and success,
- Assumptions about faculty/TA's being knowledgeable, expert assessors (i.e., concerns re: literacy, objectivity, reliability, etc.).

With this context in mind, and following a review of best practices, we now attend to our recommendations.

Weaving best practices into recommendations for the future of assessments at York
Our recommendations fall into five broad but interrelated areas.

Building faculty competence
Any future transformation of assessments will fall largely on the shoulders of faculty who often lack knowledge of the assessment function, including its stakeholders, tenets/principles/best practices, EDI issues, etc. In part, this can be explained by a general lack of training in pedagogy and assessments in most doctoral programs, little requisite professional development, and relatively low levels of engagement with programming offered by teaching and learning specialists (e.g., the Teaching Commons). We also note that any action to transform assessments will depend on faculty members' motivation and ability to change. As such, to promote dialogue, understanding, and faculty learning as a foundation for transformation, we recommend:

1) Ensuring that professional development programming relating to teaching and learning, including assessments, is available, accessible, valued and encouraged, and widely promoted (e.g., representatives of the Teaching Commons and other teaching and learning units could visit each school/department annually and report on upcoming course/program offerings, certifications, enrollment statistics, etc.).
2) Formalizing partnerships with academic support services such as libraries, Learning Commons, etc., to collaborate as co-developers of assessments to (e.g.) model academic integrity and build academic literacies, digital literacy, and information literacy skills. Specifics will vary across programs, but the dialogue should be maintained at the program level.
3) Supporting institution-wide assessment activities rather than relying on faculty to shoulder an increasingly heavy workload related to assessment transformation and administration.
4) Establishing expectations with respect to continuing professional development of faculty members that includes building knowledge, literacy, and competence pertaining to the assessment function. Specifically, borrow from practices elsewhere and:
   - Require faculties/departments to include in future letters of appointment conditions that new faculty engage in a minimum number of teaching and learning workshops, including at least one pertaining to assessments.
   - Require faculties/departments to allocate a certain weighting in their T&P standards to 1) engagement in continuing personal and professional development as it pertains to teaching, including workshops on assessments, and 2) evidence of ongoing commitment to progressive modern assessment strategies.

5) Sponsoring assessment transformation through internal grants for unit and faculty member proposals to improve student learning experiences using assessment data. This can be achieved by setting aside a certain percentage of existing Academic Innovation Fund (AIF) budgets.

[Metrics = number of workshop offerings, number of attendees, number of AIF funded assessment-related projects]

Highlighting assessments in curriculum development and review
Student assessment should be part of a clearly articulated organizational strategy with the resulting assessment data used in making academic decisions at the course and program level. To this end, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) encourage teachers and curriculum planners to step back and "think like an assessor" at each stage of the curriculum development process. Best practices also encourage promoting assessments for learning, ensuring assessments are fit for purpose (i.e., 'authentic assessments'), developing assessment standards or criteria, and integrating assessment literacy into course design. Here, we find deficiencies in existing practices and recommend:

6) Changing the 'Evaluation' field in the New Course Proposal and Course Change Forms such that they go beyond requiring only identification of 'Evaluation Basis' and "% Value" to include the pedagogical rationale of all assessments in the proposed course and their role in (i) supporting student learning, (ii) accreditation, and (iii) accountability.
7) Encouraging timely collection, distribution, and use of results/feedback to support the transformation of the assessment function. For example, a process of reflection on each assessment in a course (and its purpose) could be part of the grade submission process.
8) Adding more questions to term-end course evaluations that delve more fully into assessment types, their effectiveness in support of student learning, assessment literacy, student well-being, etc. as a basis for informing future practice. Seeking semi-formal, early feedback from students about their course assessments is also encouraged.
9) Reducing the dependence on course-level assessments via development and introduction of higher-level assessments tied to program learning outcomes and how students are shaped through their university learning experience (i.e., program-level assessments).

[Metrics = student feedback on assessments, number of program-level assessments, ratio of course-to-program assessments; performance on program-level assessments]

Prioritizing student learning in an environment of scarce resources
Appropriate assessments and good feedback are crucial to effective learning and can have a greater impact on the student learning experience than most other factors (Sambell et al., 2019). This argument is supported by a wealth of literature advocating (e.g.) 'formative', 'authentic', and 'sustainable' assessments (see references below). Simply put, alignment of assessment practices with learning outcomes and teaching and learning activities enables meaningful learning and improved student engagement with the learning process. Yet despite this, those making value judgments about resource allocation and priorities often allocate fewer resources and little time to assessment practices that support student learning. We attribute this to the lack of understanding of the assessment function attended to above, entrenched assessment practices, and institutional budgetary constraints, and we recommend:

10) Requiring that all assessments be explicitly linked to course or program-level learning outcomes (see recommendation 12 below) and that most courses include some element of formative assessment with adequate resources to allow for quality, timely feedback with the expectation that students will engage with that feedback.
11) The allocation of grading, teaching assistance, and other support having budgetary implications should be driven by the nature/purpose of assessments employed in a course in conjunction with the number of students enrolled rather than being based primarily on the number of students enrolled as per item 18.33 of the YUFA Collective Agreement.
12) To the extent that budgets do not adequately support a pedagogically sound and well-conceived and articulated assessment strategy at the course and program level, they should be increased.

[Metrics = course/departmental/university averages for grades allocated to formative versus summative assessments, student feedback on assessments]

Addressing student perceptions and wellbeing
A recent letter addressed to all the deans at York University (see appendix) highlights student perceptions of (e.g.) inappropriate, unfair, arbitrary assessments with little transparency and links these to the issue of student wellbeing. The letter is compelling on its own but is also remarkably consistent with the literature (sample references provided below). Common complaints include lack of transparency in the assessment process, assessments that are not aligned with learning objectives, inconsistencies in grading within and across assessments, and inadequate feedback. To address these, we recommend:

13) Encouraging faculty to innovate and engage students in the assessment process, including (e.g.) designing assessments, establishing flexibility surrounding due dates, and engaging in self and peer assessments.
14) Publishing a statement of guiding principle with respect to assessments at York, such as:
    "York University's assessment practices will…
    - *Balance formative and summative assessments at the course and program level.*
    - *Use diverse assessment methods to enhance inclusivity, validity, and authenticity.*
    - *Be designed and explained to improve students' understanding, trust, and perceptions of fairness, and*
    - *Be innovative (e.g., self-assessment, peer assessment) and used to support good academic practice and student learning."*
15) Requiring inclusion in course outlines/syllabi of a description of the purpose of each assessment (e.g., 'to measure learning related to course LOs 1 and 2), the feedback students will receive (e.g., 'grade out of X, provision of right answers for MC questions, rubric for short answer questions, opportunity for consultation'), identification of who will be doing the grading, expected feedback date, and an explanation/justification of any ancillary grading that might occur (e.g., late marks, grades for presentation elements, etc.)
16) Limiting the weight of grades not clearly aligned with course or program learning outcomes (i.e., ancillary grading) to 10% of the total weight of any given assessment acknowledging that timeliness, accountability, and communication/presentation skills are worthy life lessons.
17) Development and delivery of workshops for faculty and TAs to build competence and consistency in the grading of assessments.

[Metrics = student feedback on assessments, number of workshop offerings, number of attendees]

Attending to academic integrity issues

Academic dishonesty has been a concern for some time and rates of cheating, plagiarism, and contracting are on the rise. Research points to myriad factors to explain this trend (see references below). These include overt promotion of contracting services, the emergence of facilitating technologies such as AI (e.g., ChatGPT), ease of cheating in online environments, and student perceptions of cheating amongst their peers. Personal (e.g., course or job-related workload, family responsibilities, and academic preparedness) and situational factors (e.g., assessment format and assessment grade weight) are also involved. Taken together, these factors are creating a perfect storm that threatens the validity of the assessment function and we recommend:

18) Increasing messaging to support a culture of integrity (supported by an educational rather than strictly punitive approach) and ethics as integral to the university learning experience. This could address the pitfalls of academic dishonesty, academic integrity literacy, publication of institutional data on detection rates and penalties imposed, and more general messaging to support positive social behaviors.
19) Ensuring that statements included in course outlines/syllabi with respect to academic honesty, contracting, the use of artificial intelligence, etc. are up to date.
20) Development and delivery of workshops for faculty focusing on the question: 'How can we ensure academic integrity and design out plagiarism, contracting, and other forms of cheating?'
21) Limiting the number of high-risk assessments by capping the grade weights of individual assessments at 20% for individual work and 35% for group projects.
22) Encouraging coordination of the timing of assessments at the program level to ensure assessments are evenly dispersed throughout a term and that a student can have no more than two assessments worth more than 10% due in any given week. Assessed tasks need to provide sufficient study time and distribute student effort evenly over time.
23) Encourage faculty to establish/re-evaluate assessments in an environment that prevents (or eliminates) the possibility of student cheating, contract cheating, or unethical use of AI.

[Metrics = number of AI incidences, data on detection of plagiarism/use of AI, number of workshop offerings, number of attendees, average number of assessments across courses, average grade weight assigned to each assessment]

References

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Hansen, M. J. (2019). Using Assessment Trends in Planning, Decision-Making, and Improvement. In Trends in Assessment: Ideas, Opportunities, and Issues for Higher Education (Eds Stephen P. Hundley, Susan Kahn), Taylor & Francis, p. 175.

Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Ascd.

For information on challenges in the assessment function, see:
1. Gaining institutional resources for assessment (Shipman et al. 2003; Singer-Freeman and Robinson 2020; Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020)
2. Opportunities for assessment-related faculty development, including necessary incentives (Shipman et al. 2003; Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020; Friedlander & Serban 2004)
3. Alignment of assessment with student learning outcomes (Shipman et al. 2003, Jankowski & Baker 2018) at the course and program levels (Friedlander & Serban 2004) via authentic and meaningful assessment (Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020; Hansen 2019; Jankowsky & Baker 2019)
4. Engage with assessment for learning through multiple assessment methods that include formative and summative measures (Shipman et al. 2003; Singer-Freeman and Robinson 2020, Elkington n.d.)
5. Foster good academic conduct, and design out of plagiarism and contract cheating (Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020)
6. Using assessment data to inform curriculum enhancements (Shipman et al. 2003), including a careful analysis of the data that serves to uncover rather than mask inequities (Singer-Freeman and Robinson 2020; Trends)
7. Inclusive assessment practices that engage students in the process (Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020; Hansen 2019; Jankowsky & Baker 2019)
8. Moved to standards-based assessment and away from norm-referenced assessment (Boud 2020)
9. Repositioning students as learners and producers able to assess their own work (Boud 2020; Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020) by engaging students productively with feedback (Sambel, Brown, & Race 2020)

For information on best practices and student wellbeing, see:
1. Designing Assessment for Inclusion: An exploration of diverse students' assessment experiences (Tai et al. 2023)
2. Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success: Transforming Assessment in Higher Education (Elkington n.d.)
3. Support for assessment practice (Bearman et al. 2016)
4. Assessment 2020: Seven Propositions for Assessment Reform in Higher Education (University of Technology Sydney)
5. Guiding Principles for Assessment of Students (Lindstrom et al 2017)
6. Student wellbeing and assessment in higher education (Jones et al., 2021)
7. A systematic review of interventions embedded in curriculum to improve university student wellbeing. (Priestley et al., 2021)
8. How universities can enhance student mental wellbeing: The student perspective (Baik, C., Larcombe, W., & Brooker, A., 2019).

Appendix: Student letter calling for mark reform

From: ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇
Date: Sunday, July 2, 2023 at 8:22 AM
To: Dean – Faculty of Education <edudean@edu.yorku.ca>, Dean of the Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change <eucdean@yorku.ca>, deanampd <deanampd@yorku.ca>, healthdn <healthdn@yorku.ca>, DeanJJMcMurtry<deanlaps@yorku.ca>, ScienceDean <scidean@yorku.ca>, Dean Lassonde School of Engineering <dean@lassonde.yorku.ca>, Sarah Bay-Cheng <baycheng@yorku.ca>, Law Dean<lawdean@osgoode.yorku.ca>, Rui Wang <ruiwang@yorku.ca>, Dean - Schulich School of Business <dean@schulich.yorku.ca>
Subject: Mark reform

To the Deans at York University,

My name is ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇. I am a second year undergraduate concurrent education student in the field of cognitive science and psychology. I'm also an ex-math major. My goal is ultimately to become a teacher and I appreciate York for helping me get there.

I am reaching out today about a cornerstone of the education system- the concept of marks. My peers and I have a big problem with the way that marks are awarded. In this email I hope to review with you what a mark is, the problem with the marking system, and what we can do to fix it.

What is a mark? If I get an 80% on a test, that means that I understand 80% of the information for that section of the course. In other words, a mark represents a students' level of understanding. This is then used to assess whether they can move on to the next level of their education, which makes sense. If you don't understand more than 65% of the information from the first course, then you won't be able to keep up in the following course. Unfortunately, the marking system became corrupt, or it was never good in the first place. It is no longer a representation of how much someone knows. Below I will explain why.

Let's start with the idea of a test. A test is a representation of what a student knows at only one moment in time. So if you had a bad day, didn't sleep last night, or have other stressors on your mind, your performance can be highly impacted. All of this contributes to the current high prevalence of test anxiety. If one was assessed on their effort throughout the course, they'd know to just try their best every day. And if they had a bad day, it's no big deal because the teacher would know it's not an adequate report of their knowledge. However, even that suggestion could easily become corrupt, as I can picture students being anxious every day while they're being assessed. This brings me to my second point. I was a math major for my first semester at York. I later learned that it is common knowledge that in the math department, the first year is hardest as the teachers are trying to weed people out. I consider this to be an extremely gross perversion of the education system. Teachers should want you to succeed and help you to achieve that goal. The people in a course aren't numbers, but lives that are being affected. Especially with the mental health crises being on the rise, can we really feel good about ourselves when we're rooting for the students to fail?

Here are some examples of the 1 AQAS2W34mercilessness shown in attempting to increase the dropout rate:

1. Math 1300 made extremely hard assignments, claiming that they just wanted the students to think. One assignment was so hard that students had to point out to the teachers that even they got the answer wrong when the answer key was posted. What kind of education system is that?

2. When I switched to cognitive science, my Phil 2160 had weekly quizzes worth 30% of our overall mark to see if we understood the reading. This is actually a model I really liked. Only 7/11 quizzes counted so I didn't feel as much pressure if I messed up. The quizzes were on 2 hours of lectures and at least 50 pages of reading. The main problem is that the professor always made the questions on the most obscure parts of the reading, so the entire class struggled. He did the same with the exam. To make matters worse, the quizzes were only out of 4. So getting even one question wrong meant a 75%. 10 questions would be a better representation of my knowledge.

"Tricks" like this cause students cram for tests or "study for the test", a phrase meaning they're only studying to remember the information for that test and will likely forget the information right after. In other words, they're memorizing, not learning. None of these students *know* the information, rather they're trying to make it from one day to the next. The truth is, so much work is being given that often there is no other option. This means that even the marks of the students doing well is not an accurate representation of what they know. This is a scary realization, as these students move on to be doctors etc. and we don't really know if they know the information they need to care for us.

Meanwhile the information that students learn and take with them is constantly improving. Let's use the idea of cells. I first learned about them and their organelles in grade 8. By the time I took Biol 1000, I knew the information like the back of my hand. If I were to take that grade 8 test now, I would get 100, which was not the case then. The education system really doesn't allow students to show that they can improve in their knowledge. Instead, it just moves on to the next set of content. This means that a mark doesn't show what I know because it doesn't show that I can improve.

In my psyc 1010 class, my teacher had 4 tests with over 100 questions in each. The topics of the short answer questions were given beforehand and she always gave more time then necessary to write. It's a little extreme, but I felt the least amount of stress with those tests, as I really felt they would give an accurate representation of what I knew.

As you can see, tests are not an accurate representation of how much of the knowledge a person understands. But what about assignments? Let's discuss their merit.
Assignments are a better model in theory because there is no time limit, it can be revised, and worked on over multiple days so your mood won't get in the way too much.
A big issue with assignments is what the teachers choose to assess. Observe the mark breakdown for this discussion question worth 2% of the overall mark in my psyc 3140 class.

Completed on Time	Word Count	Provided Support	APA In-Text	APA References
0.5	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.25

Only one of the categories, provided support, actually indicates that I understand abnormal psychology. The rest does not. Since we had 5 assignments like this, and 2/20 marks of our report was dedicated to this information, that means that a minimum of 9.5% of my overall mark is assessing my ability to stick

to a word count and do APA referencing. Further, 1% of our overall mark was lost each day that the aforementioned report was late. That means up to 20% of my final mark can be the result of nothing to do with abnormal psychology! Now, whoever is looking at my mark no longer gets an accurate representation of whether I understand abnormal psychology, but also if I can do all these trivial skills. I'm not discounting the importance of these skills, but when the period in my citation is the difference between an A and a B, that's when I have a problem. It begins to look like people are trying to find ways to decrease my mark as opposed to helping me do well. One of my teachers from outside York suggested giving one overall mark for the information and another overall mark for the extras. That way graduate school can see that this kid knows their stuff even though they may not be the best referencer. The lack of distinction nowadays is a huge issue.

Specifically, the weight given to citations means that I spend minimum an hour working on them for each assignment. When time is already stretched so thin, that means that my report suffers because I have to spend all this time perfecting my citations. You may suggest using the internet to speed it up. For one of the discussion questions mentioned above, I pasted the APA citation directly from the journal's website. I still got marks off from the TA telling me to "check OWL Purdue to see what I did wrong". This proves you can trust no one but yourself when it comes to pleasing the TA. Another issue is that oftentimes I get feedback on something that I knew, but I forgot to write about because it wasn't clear in the question, or I didn't have enough space. In discussing the Euthyphro last semester in Phil2070, one TA took off marks because I didn't write "prayer and sacrifice" and instead just wrote "prayer". In truth I was 2 words over the word limit and that is where I made the cuts as I thought the words where synonymous. Whoops! This brings me to my next point, I think having a required word count is unreasonable. In terms of having to hit a target amount of words, nowadays the "elevator pitch" is an important skill to have. If I can convey my ideas in a short and succinct, yet powerful way, why should I add fluff to hit a target amount of words? The problem is that if an investor cares about your elevator pitch, they have the ability to follow up and explore the idea in depth with you. Since an assignment is only one shot to show everything that you know, why am I cutting half my essay because of a word count? It just results in comments on my report, "expand here". Once upon a time, I did, and then I cut it because of the word count. Or the TA suggests a counter point that I thought of but didn't have space to address.

Some of these issues persisted even after meeting with the TA. In the case of "prayer and sacrifice", I spend a lot of time participating in tutorials and I knew what I was talking about. The TA even told me that if she marks me as here she marks that I commented, because I usually do. She also said not to worry about that specific assignment because she knows that I know my stuff. Then I did badly anyways (by my standards) which was really quite unfortunate.

The last issue specific to assignments is that a lot of teachers are struggling with AI and Chat GPT and how to tell if an assignment is authentic. I'm sure you have all explored that amongst yourselves, and don't need me to tell you why it's a problem. I just wanted to bring it up so I can reference a potential solution below.

Another issue with both tests and assignments is sometimes they are out of so little, that the mark is automatically disproportionate to the knowledge you have. In math 1300 I had a final exam worth 50% of my mark that was out of 20. That's crazy! How can you determine my knowledge from the whole course in only 20 marks? I just wrote a 6 page paper worth 20 marks as well. This means that the tiniest mistakes can have huge impacts. Neither that paper, nor that test is proof of what I know.

So what can we do to solve this crisis? First, in my opinion, awarding marks for citations should not be allowed. Marks should be awarded for backing up your work. Not if the title of the journal is italicised in the reference page. So having a section called "provided support" with a source attached is important and can be graded. In fact, I believe citations should still be required and commented on by the TAs, because it is an important skill for those going into research etcetera. But if you backed up your position and attempted to source it, whether or not the authors full name or their initial is given should no longer be a factor that can change your mark. If marks must be awarded for citations, it should be university policy that those marks can only effect less than 1% of someone's overall grade.

Second, penalising for late assignments is something that must be reformed. The TA is not going to mark all 150 papers between 11:59pm and 12:05am when I submit the assignment, so why am I losing so much for 5 minutes that make a difference for me but not them? When someone is so concerned with handing in an assignment on time, the quality can go down drastically because the person is just focused on getting the next thing done. I've had weeks with 3 papers due and the following 2 weeks with nothing. The opportunity for a little more time would have been a game changer that increased my marks. I recommend that the idea of due dates should be kept as a suggestion to pace everyone in the course. In order to incentivise people to hand in on time, an opportunity for comments from the TA and then revision from the student should be offered to those that hand in before the due date. This would also help with the idea that education is a constant process of growing and improvement. For those that don't hand in anything all course, a meeting with the teacher should be required 2 weeks before the end of term to come up with a mutual game plan. This can also be offered for anyone struggling with end of year projects. If that meeting is not kept and a plan not made, there will be a cutoff day before exams where that person can no longer submit anything and will receive and incomplete in the class. If it is part of that plan, students who discussed it with the teacher can still submit after the cutoff day. I struggle with depression and had to spend all of last year working with a psychiatrist and trying different medications. I never knew what side effects I would be facing each week. One drug knocked me out for 27 hours and made me consistently tired, others had me sick, and in between drugs when I was detoxing from the previous one before the next one, I've had weeks where I can't get out of bed, let alone write a paper. My IEP says the I should get extensions on assignments as needed, as I still want to do well in my classes. I once emailed a teacher to use my extension time and he said that because he used "universal design", he will not give it to me. Thank G-d, I finished the paper, but the stress involved was unnecessary and I don't think it was a reflection of what I truly know or what I can really do. This is another reason why mark reform is so important. Even for those that get IEP's, the professors don't respect them and try to find unfair workarounds. I had one class with a professor that said all the tests were timed with universal design (i.e. everyone was given double time). If that was truly the case, majority of the class would be handing their papers in at the halfway mark. Instead, everyone was working until the very end because the tests were too long, and those with IEP's got cheated out of their accommodations. The SAS kids emailed him after the final, but this whole issue could have easily be avoided if some of these reforms I'm suggesting were put into place.

One idea to defeat AI and ChatGPT is to give students more choice in their assignments. When they're passionate, they'll want to do it themselves. I had a history teacher in high school that did this. One person made a model of Spudnik, the Russian rocket, with an adjacent paragraph. Another group worked on the bulliton board outside the classroom for Remembrance Day. I spent all semester writing WW1 the musical, which I then performed with 9 girls in my class. I just wrote a whole essay to you guys about mark reform because I have something to say and I care about making change (This was 5 days of work and revisions, with ChatGPT not accessed once). By letting people's creativity shine through, amazing things can be accomplished.

In terms of tests, the time limit should be expunged. If I'm trying to prove how much I know, whether I can show you in an hour or 30 minutes should not be a factor. The marks available for a test should be at least double what the test is worth. So if this test is worth 20% of my mark then there should be at least 40 marks available to achieve. I don't have suggestions to deal with the fact that tests are a one time thing. Hopefully by getting rid of the time factor, a student will do better if they didn't sleep the night before because they have more time to think which takes longer when tired (1). Another suggestion I have involves taking into account what is considered average in academia, which is a B (about a 70). If the class average is below a B, then the entire class should be able to redo the test, no questions asked, as the failure is likely a reflection of the teacher's deficiency in teaching, not the
students' ability. If a single student gets a mark that they don't feel is representative of what they know, they should be able to meet with the teacher and discuss a method of improving their score. Perhaps being able to hold their own in a discussion setting, or being able to solve questions and give responses in class can help to supplement the mark in the test.

The rise of AI such as ChatGPT is a wakeup call. Instead of developing software to determine whether someone's paper is written by ChatGPT, we should accept the message to reform how marks are awarded. AI will just get smarter. Instead of sticking with the old ways that clearly don't work, let's work together to make something new and get ahead of the game. I know this will be hard to implement, and more work for the professors and TA's, but that's why they're getting paid! Let's encourage learning instead of using marks to tear down self esteem. We work so hard and deserve to be marked fairly so that we can see the rewards of our effort.

These are not the ramblings of a failing student who wants a better mark. On the contrary, I am a member of the Deans Honour Roll Magna Cum Laude who wants to become a teacher someday. I'm noticing unfairness and problems with the system and I want to fix it for myself and my future students. Who better to ask for advice then someone in the system, experiencing the problems firsthand? I hope you'll consider my suggestions. If you don't like them, I hope you'll meet amongst yourselves with passionate students to come up with other solutions that address the issues that can satisfy both teacher and student.

Thank you for your time,

1. https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/emotions-cognitive#:~:text=Sleepiness%20slows%20down%20your%20thought,you're%20more%20easily%20confused.