

# Teaching Commons

## Faculty Newsletter

Teaching Commons Faculty Newsletter October 2023

To view all our upcoming offerings, [here is the link to our events calendar](#)



The Teaching Commons is a positive and safe space where faculty, graduate students, and staff from across our campuses can engage in professional development activities related to any aspect of teaching and learning. We offer a broad range of courses, certificates and other programming as well as various additional services, targeted resources, and support for scholarly teaching. Our team is ready to help you explore best practices and innovative strategies, support program renewals and course design, and offer guidance specific to York institutional priorities. We are here to help connect you to a network of colleagues, scholarly resources and evidence-based practice to explore and develop your teaching in new and unimagined ways.



## New Faculty Learning Circle

The Teaching Commons is excited to offer a forum to continue the community building started at our New Faculty Orientation events in July and August 2023. A Faculty Learning Circle (FLC) is a collaborative, peer-based group that focuses on learning, connection, relationship-building, and reflective practice. A FLC is a supportive and collegial space where members support each others growth and learning, while also celebrating individual and collaborative achievements. Drawing from concepts of a Community of Practice and a Professional Learning Community, professional learning is fostered within the context of the group, and leadership within the circle is shared.

We will be hosting New Faculty Learning Circles once per month from September to November and February to April. These events will be hosted on different days of the week to account for different teaching schedules. All New Faculty Members are welcome to join! Please suggest topics for future months by copying and pasting this link in your browser: <https://forms.office.com/r/g6UNeeDdpu>

[Here is the link to register.](#)

If you have any questions, you can contact Mandy Frake-Mistak, Educational Developer at [mfmistak@yorku.ca](mailto:mfmistak@yorku.ca)



## Trauma-Informed Pedagogies Workshop Series – Fall 2023-Winter 2024 (ONLINE)

This 10-part workshop series will introduce participants to the topic of trauma-informed teaching and offer practical strategies for supporting students and themselves while developing a trauma-informed classroom. Through participation in active learning activities, reflective discussions, and collaborative conversations, participants will explore how to apply learned strategies in their own teaching contexts and consider their own personal parameters within their teaching.

**Our next session will be held on October 2.** Please visit our [registration page](#) to view the schedule, learn more, and register.

This workshop series is co-organized and co-facilitated by the Teaching Commons and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion.

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### **New Community of Practice: Generative AI Pedagogies at York (Launches ONLINE ~ 12:00-1:00 p.m. on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023)**

This community of practice is dedicated to uniting York University educators who share an interest in generative AI. Together, we connect, collaborate, and share resources, exploring best practices and addressing the challenges and opportunities we face in integrating this technology into postsecondary education. Beyond practical tips and strategies for adapting our teaching, we foster critical conversations about the implications of generative AI. We hold regular virtual community meetings twice per semester. Additionally, all members have access to an eClass site for asynchronous discussions and resource sharing. As generative AI continues to evolve in higher education, our community will adapt, reflecting the interests and priorities of our members.

Our community of practice accepts new members at any time, and all who teach at York are welcome. **Join us for our launch event via Zoom on Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12:00-1:00!** More information will be shared with community members in the week preceding the event.

[Here is the link to join this community of practice.](#)

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## **AI and Education: A Hands-On Workshop for Course Transformation (ONLINE ~ Oct. 5-13, 2023)**

This intensive one-week workshop can count toward the [Certificate of Proficiency in Teaching for eLearning](#).

Looking to get some hands-on time as you respond to ChatGPT and other generative AI tools in your teaching? Join us for a fully online one-week intensive in the practical pedagogy of technology-enhanced teaching in the age of artificial intelligence. We will explore a range of topics and resources to determine what this new technology will mean for your course policies, your assessments, and your teaching strategies. Participants will learn by doing as they apply their learning to their own course(s) – whether you are new to generative AI or already using it in your classroom, this course will support you in developing a robust and pedagogically informed approach to its many facets and implications.

[Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)



## **Academic Integrity & Assessment: Workshop Series (ONLINE ~ Oct. 4-Nov. 1, 2023)**

Join us this fall for one, two, or all three online workshops in a series focusing on the intersections between assessment practices and academic integrity, whether you teach in a face-to-face, Hy-flex, or fully online classroom. These sessions will address both established academic integrity concerns and those raised by emergent generative artificial intelligence technologies.

**Wednesday, Oct. 4, 11:00-12:00:** [Academic Integrity and Group Work \(Register Here\)](#)

**Wednesday, Oct. 18, 11:00-12:00:** [Academic Integrity and Written Assignments \(Register Here\)](#)

**Wednesday, Nov. 1, 11:00-12:00:** [Academic Integrity and Summative Tests and Exams \(Register Here\)](#)

This series is co-hosted by the Teaching Commons and Angela Clark, Academic Integrity Officer in the Office of the VP Academic.



**The BOLD Institute: Blended and Online Learning Development - Fall 2023.  
(ONLINE ~ Oct. 11-Nov. 30, 2023)**

Are you planning to teach online, but don't know how to start designing an effective online course or learning objects? Perhaps you already have an online course, but would like to improve on it?

Join us for a fully online course to gain both theoretical understanding and practical experience with the design, development, and production of eLearning courses and objects using readily available tools in eClass, Office 365, and Zoom. This course is actively facilitated by Teaching Commons instructors, and participants will be able to ask questions, receive feedback on their work, and access further support and resources via email, in online office hours, and through the course shell in eClass at any point.

This course is 8 weeks long, and requires 3 to 6 hours of commitment per week, or a minimum total of 30 hours participant time (depending on each individual's level of engagement). Most course activities are asynchronous, with the exception of the Kick-off session (Oct. 11) and the project peer review session (Nov. 29/30) via Zoom.

**Registration for this course closes at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 10. [Here is the link to know more and to register.](#)**



## **Teaching Commons Assessment Institute (IN-PERSON ~ October 11 & 12, 2023)**

This Fall reading week, the Teaching Commons is offering a two-day, in-person intensive assessment institute. During the TC Assessment Institute, participants will work closely with peer faculty members, educational developers, writing centre colleagues, and undergraduate student consultants to redesign assignments for their courses. Through themed sessions, consultations, peer feedback, and concentrated working time, participants will leave the institute with a fully developed assessment and skills/strategies to redesign other assignments in their courses.

[Here is the link to register.](#)

To learn more, contact Lisa Endersby ([lendersb@yorku.ca](mailto:lendersb@yorku.ca)) or Matthew Dunleavy ([mdunleav@yorku.ca](mailto:mdunleav@yorku.ca)), Educational Developers, Teaching Commons.



## **Reboot Your Final: Alternative Approaches to Online Tests and Exams (ONLINE ~ Oct. 16-Nov. 10, 2023)**

This course can count toward the [Certificate of Proficiency in Teaching for eLearning](#).

Looking to rethink your tests and exams for the online environment? Interested in exploring alternative assessments that might replace a traditional final? Join us for a fully online course in the practical pedagogy of alternative assessment strategies for eLearning. Participants will learn by doing as they workshop their own current assessment plans in light of best practices for online and remote teaching. This course is actively facilitated by a Teaching Commons instructor, and participants will be able to ask questions and access further support and resources by email, in online office hours, or through the course eClass site at any point.

[Register in the course here.](#)



**York University Summit on Generative AI in Higher Education (ONLINE ~ 2:00-3:30 PM on October 18, 19, & 20, 2023)**

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Hosted by the [Teaching Commons](#), the [Institute for Research on Digital Literacies](#), and [York University Libraries](#).

Dive into the future of higher education as we explore the profound impact of generative AI at the three-day York University Summit.

- Day 1: Experience the Faculty Showcase, featuring York faculty members from across various disciplines. Learn about how they are integrating and responding to generative AI in their teaching practices.
- Day 2: Join our "Critical Perspectives on Generative AI Panel" as scholarly experts dissect the current state and prospects of generative AI research. Delve into discussions that will shape the narrative of AI's role in academia.
- Day 3: Hear directly from the primary stakeholders - the students. This panel brings together the voices of postsecondary learners, shedding light on the real-world impact, challenges, and opportunities they face with generative AI in their educational journey.

Join us as we explore the transformative role of AI in reshaping the landscape of higher education, both at York University and across the global academic community. [Click here to reserve your spot now!](#)

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## Upcoming Workshops – Pedagogy & Experiential Education

The Teaching Commons is currently offering a workshop series to support the pedagogy of Experiential Education. Additional details and links to register are below:

### **Critical Reflection as a Learned/Learning Activity (IN-PERSON Oct 17, 2-3.30pm & ONLINE Oct 26, 2-3.30pm)**

Students engaged in experiential education activities often benefit from opportunities for critical reflection. These reflection activities can encourage students to make meaningful connections between experiences and course material, while also developing skills in critical thinking, communicating new insights, and using new ideas to inform future actions.

In this workshop, we will engage in discussions and hands-on activities designed to explore frameworks for critical reflection that can be used to help students develop important skills to support their own reflective practice. Activities for encouraging critical reflection will also be explored as strategies to encourage meaningful learning in the classroom.

Register to attend IN PERSON:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=984063>

Register to attend

ONLINE: <https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=983783>

### **Strategies for Meaningful Feedback on Student Reflection (IN-PERSON Oct 31, 2-3.30pm & ONLINE Nov 9, 2-3.30pm)**

Experiential education can be a transformative learning experience for many students. However, “just thinking or having an experience do not necessarily result in learning, but rather critical thinking and reflection support and facilitate the learning process.” (Whalen & Paez, 2019, p.56) Critical reflection can help students “integrate new



understanding into [their] experiences in order to better choices or actions in the future as well to enhance [their] overall effectiveness.” (Rogers, 2001, p.41)

Students engaged in experiential learning use critical reflective activities as spaces to work through their learning. In this workshop, we will discuss strategies for providing meaningful feedback on student reflection and consider how this feedback can create space for authentic (sometimes ungraded) formative assessment.

Register to attend IN PERSON:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=984984>

Register to attend

ONLINE: <https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=985893>

**Doing and Building Access in Experiential Education (IN-PERSON Nov 14, 2-3.30pm & ONLINE Nov 23, 2-3.30pm)**

Experiential education can present an exciting learning opportunity for students, and it can also be a requirement for successful course or program completion. However, many disabled and other marginalized students face new and/or intensified access barriers in experiential education. That’s why in this workshop, we will engage with critical frameworks that can get us thinking about doing access and building access as part of our teaching practice. We will also work together to brainstorm practices that we can build into our own teaching to cultivate more accessible and equitable learning experiences with our students. The workshop will involve collaborative discussion, case studies, and active learning activities.

Register to attend IN PERSON:

<https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=1032765>

Register to attend

ONLINE: <https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=1031964>



## **Like I Said, It's in the Syllabus! (ONLINE & IN PERSON~ Nov. 14, 2023 at 11am-12:30pm)**

Have you ever been frustrated answering questions over and over again for aspects of your course detailed in your syllabus? Do you wonder if your students ever look at it beyond the front-page header? Well, it doesn't have to be that way! On November 14, come and join to brainstorm and design a syllabus that students will be eager to read and go back to. With Assistant Professor (teaching stream) Valérie Florentin, we will reframe this important document as the beginning of a positive and motivational relationship with your students and inform this work with the latest literature on the topic.

Mode of delivery: In person at Keele Campus room DB 1014, and online.

Registration: <https://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=1035514>



## **TA Mentorship Strategy #2: Clear Roles, Responsibilities, & Expectations**

Another way to help support TAs in a mentorship role is by clearly articulating their roles and responsibilities and setting expectations for the course. Establishing clear guidelines and providing TAs with information of what they need to do throughout the semester (and support on *how* to do it) will allow a course to run as smooth as possible. Not only will this increased transparency help to avoid confusion and miscommunication between TAs and course directors, but TAs will feel more confident in their roles and will be able to begin building agency in their own teaching journey.

### **Tips for incorporating this strategy:**

- Provide a comprehensive checklist outlining TA responsibilities TAs, including a breakdown of how many hours are designated for each task (e.g., grading assignments, running tutorials or labs, holding office hours)

- Set clear deadlines so TAs can stay on track with course responsibilities
- Encourage TAs to set boundaries with students and to act in a professional manner in their role (e.g., tutorial leader, lab demonstrator, marker/grader)

### **Further Reading**

Carnegie Mellon University Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence. (2007). Collected Wisdom: Strategies & Resources from TAs for

TAs. <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/PublicationsArchives/CollectedWisdom/collectwisdom-teachingstrategies.pdf>