

Teaching Commons

Faculty Newsletter

Teaching Commons Faculty Newsletter November 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.



Managing Disruptions in the Classroom (In-Person ~ 10:00-11:30 am, November 16th, 2023)

Students who monopolize, who play devil's advocate to get a rise out of people, and who disrupt discussions on controversial issues, can be a significant classroom challenge. Students may also come into conflict with each other, or call each other out. We may have students who are genuinely unaware of how their words or views can harm others. And students may also be experiencing difficulties that reduce their ability to manage their emotions in the classroom setting. In this interactive session, we will discuss how to co-construct guidelines, manage situations, empower students to problem-solve, and ensure inclusive classroom environments. We will also cover making referrals to campus resources, and participants will have the opportunity to discuss issues they have found difficult and to share strategies.

Facilitated by Nona Robinson, Vice-Provost Students in collaboration with the Teaching Commons.

Date: Thursday, November 16, 2023

Time: 10am-11:30am

Location: In-person at DB 1014 (Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Bldg. (former TEL Bldg.))

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



New Toolkit: Facilitating Dialogue and Challenging Conversations

As our community grapples with the impact of global events, the deeply felt emotions and concerns raised by these events may naturally surface in the classroom. Whether challenging conversations come out of course learning objectives or occur spontaneously, we can be proactive in supporting accountable spaces for reflection and dialogue.

To support this work, the Teaching Commons has launched a toolkit of strategies and resources for facilitating dialogue and challenging conversations in the classroom.

[Please click here to access these resources.](#)

If you have feedback, resource requests or would like to receive individual or team support in navigating difficult conversations, please connect with Shani Kipang at the Teaching Commons (skipang@yorku.ca)



Upcoming Workshops – Pedagogy & Experiential Education

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

Strategies for Meaningful Feedback on Student Reflection (ONLINE ~ 2:00-3:30 pm, November 9th, 2023)

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.

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

Doing and Building Access in Experiential Education (IN-PERSON ~ 2:00-3:30 pm, November 14th, 2023 & ONLINE ~ 2:00-3:30 pm, November 23rd, 2023)

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.

In-Person: [Here is the link to learn more and to register.](#)

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



Access and Equity in Online Teaching and Learning (ONLINE ~ Nov. 13-Dec. 15, 2023)

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

As educators, ensuring that we create and support learning environments that are both accessible and equitable is crucial. However, access and equity in eLearning environments can present a unique set of challenges, whether we are creating and sharing course content digitally, engaging students in "hot topics"

through discussion forums, or deciding how best to administer high stakes online assessments. In this fully online course, participants will learn by doing through ongoing participation in weekly learning activities. Together we will test out strategies for using online technology to enhance access and support equity, explore relevant principles and frameworks to inform our online teaching, and troubleshoot common challenges.

[Register in the course here.](#)



Sérieusement, tout est dans le PLAN DE COURS!

Avez-vous l'impression frustrante de répondre sans cesse aux mêmes questions alors que la réponse se trouve dans votre plan de cours? Vous vous demandez si vos classes le lisent vraiment? Cela peut changer!

Le 28 novembre, de 14h30 à 16h, rejoignez-nous pour réfléchir à votre plan de cours et concevoir un nouveau document que vos classes auront envie de lire et de consulter au besoin. En compagnie de Valérie Florentin, membre du corps professoral, nous transformerons ce document important pour qu'il devienne la première étape d'une relation positive et motivante avec vos classes, en nous basant sur les recherches les plus récentes en la matière.

N'hésitez pas à apporter l'un de vos plans de cours ou vos idées pour un nouveau cours sur lequel vous travaillez.

Veillez noter que l'atelier aura lieu en mode HyFlex, dans la salle YH A304 (campus Glendon) et en ligne sur Zoom (le lien vous sera communiqué quelques jours avant l'atelier). Le même atelier a lieu en anglais (en personne, sur le campus Keele, ou sur Zoom) le 14 novembre de 11h à 12h30.

Veillez compléter [ce formulaire](#) pour vous inscrire.

Like I said, it's in the SYLLABUS! (IN-PERSON & ONLINE ~ 11:00 am-12:30 pm, November 14th, 2023 & 2:30-4:00 pm, November 28th, 2023)

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, from 11 am to 12:30 pm, come and join us 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.

You are encouraged to bring an existing syllabus or use a new course you will need a syllabus for.

Please note that this session will concurrently take place in DB 1014 (Keele Campus) online via Zoom (the link will be provided closer to the session date). The same workshop is offered in French (in person at Glendon or via Zoom) on November 28 from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

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



New Community of Practice: Generative AI Pedagogies at York (Next meeting ONLINE ~ 9:30-11:00 a.m. on November 24th, 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 next synchronous event via Zoom on Friday, November 24th, 9:30-11:00! More information will be shared with community members in the week preceding the event.

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



Course Design Intensive (ONLINE ~ December 6th to December 13th, 2023)

This is a one-week intensive and interactive online workshop to get you started designing or updating your course. The workshop is for course directors who would like to enhance an existing course or create a new course design. Packed with creative and practical advice for developing your course, we will cover principles of inclusive course design, assessment and feedback, active learning and engagement strategies, and provide you with the support and resources you need. Please note this is not about remote design and delivery per se, but is about the basis for all instruction.

There are two synchronous meetings during the workshop. Please note attendance at both synchronous sessions is mandatory, and there are asynchronous activities that you will be expected to complete during that week.

The synchronous workshops are scheduled on **Wednesday, Dec. 6th & Wednesday, Dec. 13th, 10:30 am to 12:00pm.**

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



Introducing our Student Consultants on Learning and Teaching 2023-24

Thanks to the [Academic Innovation Fund](#) (AIF), the Teaching Commons has hired our first group of Student Consultants on Learning and Teaching. The work these Student Consultants undertake is as diverse as the needs of our community: from student-centered syllabi review and classroom observations to resource creation and assessment discussions, Student Consultants work in partnership with Educational Developers to respond to

the teaching and learning needs of York students, faculty, and staff.

If you would like to learn more about the Student Consultants or work with them, please fill out this [machform here](#) or if you have any questions, you can contact Matthew Dunleavy, Educational Developer at mdunleav@yorku.ca or Lisa Endersby, Educational Developer at lendersb@yorku.ca

[You can meet our current Student Consultants on Learning and Teaching by selecting this link to our Students as Partners webpage.](#)



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 learn more and to register.](#)

If you have any questions, you can contact Mandy Frake-Mistak, Educational Developer at mfmistak@yorku.ca



Teaching Commons Syllabi & Assessment Library Call for Interest

Stemming from the generative conversations in numerous workshops, courses, and institutes, we are currently in the early planning stages of creating a teaching and learning open access library containing syllabi, assignment instruction/assessment methods, and teaching activities.

If you are a course instructor or teaching assistant willing to share your teaching material with the wider community, please reach out to Matthew Dunleavy, Educational Developer at mdunleav@yorku.ca



TA Mentorship Strategy #3 Promote Agency & Involvement in the Course

A third way course directors can mentor TAs is by promoting agency and a sense of involvement in the course. Finding opportunities to get TAs involved in the course in a meaningful way is beneficial as it gives them experience in learning the intricacies of curriculum development and establishes the idea of a teaching team with the course director. Moreover, by expanding their agency with increased opportunities for engagement, TAs can develop their own teaching competencies while simultaneously supporting course directors in achieving the learning outcomes for the course.

Tips for incorporating this strategy:

- Involve TAs in facilitating classroom activities (e.g., observing small group discussions, monitoring Zoom chat, assisting with launching polls and surveys)
- Co-develop rubrics with TAs to help ensure consistency and fairness in student evaluation
- Offer TAs an opportunity to deliver a guest lecture to gain valuable teaching experience in the classroom

Further Reading

Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation. Working with teaching assistants. <https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/ta-resources>



AI and Education: A Hands-On Workshop for Course Transformation (ONLINE ~ Jan. 8-Feb.2, 2024)

This course 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 course 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.](#)

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