

Teaching Commons News

Summer is here at last!

Now that the sun is shining and the snow and cold long forgotten, many of us are looking back on our teaching this year and thinking about improvements for the Fall and Winter – but of course many are still teaching throughout the summer. The Teaching Commons is here all year round – see our website for the most up to date news on events and resources on offer.

In this newsletter we have included a retrospective of the TIF conference – for those who missed it this will allow you to share in the range of contributions, but we hope will also encourage you to join us next year.

Highlights of the 2015 TIF conference



Members of the PUWTA winners' panel on Day 2



This year the TIF Conference grew. No longer a one day event, TIF expanded to two full days packed with York instructors sharing their ideas, practices and innovations.

The event got off to a wonderful start with Dean Lorne Sossin sharing some approaches already in place at Osgoode Hall Law School which could be emulated across campus. See his keynote if you missed it here (along with presentations and handouts from several sessions) : <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/tif-2015/>

New for Fall 2015

Look out for some innovative practices from the Teaching Commons for the new academic year:

Monthly Blog

We will be publishing a monthly blog on teaching and learning at York, written by and for York faculty.

Webinar series

In addition to our usual offering of in person face to face workshops and courses we will be running a series of one hour long webinars – which are designed for busy teachers who want to hear about latest thinking on relevant topics but who may not have time or ability to join in person.

See the Teaching Commons website for full details.

At the end of the first day Diane Beelen Woody, Associate Dean LA&PS and a panel of colleagues shared the highlights from the First Year Experience Conference they attended in Dallas earlier in the year.

Day 2 began with the Provost leading an inspirational panel of President's University Wide Teaching Award Winners who shared their insights into teaching, and in particular reflections on their values and teaching approaches. The audience was rapt as we listened to these leaders in teaching, and I'm sure we all felt very proud to be part of York.

The rest of the conference was equally rich with concurrent sessions throughout the days. To get a sense of reactions over the two days take a look at our Storify site - <https://storify.com/YUTeaching/see-what-everyone-had-to-say-during-tif> where you can see a collation of Tweets made by your colleagues.

Please do take the time to visit the TIF website where you can view some of the presentations – and make a note in your diary so you don't miss out next year May 19 and 20!

What is the Instructional Skills Workshop?

You may have heard a whisper around York, a whisper that is getting every louder – concerning the ISW. What is this event that seems to be having such a profound effect on so many of our colleagues?

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is an intense 3 day workshop during which each participant delivers a ten minute lesson to their peers, and gives and received feedback on their instructional style. This may not sound much, but those who have taken the ISW can't sing its praises highly enough. Take this from Jon Sufrin, for example:

“The ISW was three intense days of useful, practical feedback on my teaching. Working with three other teachers of different backgrounds, we spent three days presenting, participating, and observing each other in a classroom setting. A great Facilitator encouraged us to take chances and helped me to be more aware of both my strengths and my weaknesses as a presenter. Definitely worth my time and effort, both because of the people I met, and because of what I learned.”

If you would like to join an ISW see <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/for-cds/workshops-and-courses-for-cds/courses/instructional-skills-workshop/> We have workshops planned throughout the summer and beyond.

Course Directors who have TAs – support available

If you are a Course Director with one or more TAs engaged in your course, you may wish to point them to the support available at the Teaching Commons. We reach out directly to TAs but they may be encouraged to take up the opportunities on offer if you encourage them to do so. Please see the TA section of the website for further details: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/graduate-students/>

This newsletter is available as a .pdf at
<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/tcnewsletter/>