Teaching Commons News

Being Inclusive in Teaching and Learning

Welcome! This month we are introducing monthly themes to our newsletter, with the first being Inclusivitiy and Accessibility. This topic is timely as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) comes into place, and as you will be in full swing preparing lectures, activities and assessments for the fall semester.

What does being inclusive mean? What are your responsibilities? What should you do to comply and offer students the best chances for success? Where do you get help? We interviewed Maureen Haig, Manager of Learning Disability Services, to get some initial answers to some of these questions. Additional resources are also provided.

How would you define/describe inclusive teaching and learning?

Inclusive teaching, for me, is any practice which allows a student to be more independent in their learning, without having to come forward and disclose that they are experiencing difficulty with any aspect of a course. It is anything that I can put in place for all students (like audio recording the lecture and posting it) so that they can access the course material at any time (in or outside the classroom). It is acknowledging that everyone has areas of strength and difficulty, so I try to provide multiple and varying opportunities to demonstrate what they know - as opposed to their skill in being evaluated in one particular way (such as multiple choice tests).

Why is it important to adopt inclusive approaches? What are the benefits and responsibilities?

It makes it easier for me to focus on the business of being in the classroom - my time is not spent working with individual students to fulfill individual requests. There are always a few students who still need 1:1 individualization, but overall, it reduces my workload. It becomes my responsibility to be very organized within the first 3-4 weeks and then it is the students' responsibility to do the work, as well as to let me know if I have inadvertently not considered something in my course design. Inclusive approaches meet the needs of everyone - the student who is just disorganized, the mature student who works full time and has little time outside of class, the student who might have to be away from class - and it supports me as an instructor as it is clear up front what needs to be learned and how demonstration of the learning will take place.

What can faculty do about it? What are some top tips?

Most of the tips on the 5- minute makeover (http://facultyawareness.blog.yorku.ca/the-5-minute-accessibility-make-over/) for delivery, materials and the environment are easy to follow. The key is to provide clear course outlines - preferably electronic and posted where students can easily find what is due and when it is due. It is helpful to post the evaluation plan in advance as well as the readings (when students are registering for the courses ideally). When this is not possible, try choosing a textbook that has an e-copy that can be read by a screen reader. Also think about what the core, essential requirements of their courses are. When students approach them and

Good to know....

You can view and register for upcoming TC events by visiting our calendar http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/calendar/

Your place, or ours?

We may be able to arrange curriculum and /or teaching development workshops tailored for your Dept/Faculty. Contact teaching@yorku.ca for info.

Visit the teaching and learning resources in YULink at https://yulink.yorku.ca/group/academic-resources/teaching-and-learning1

are wondering about different methods of evaluation, faculty can have a sense of what they consider a more flexible component of their course where they could evaluate differently whilst maintaining academic integrity and what is non-negotiable. Most important is to keep an open mind about how the curriculum might and could change.

Where can faculty get more information and support?

There is an online guide for Teaching Students with Disabilities at http://facultyawareness.blog.yorku.ca/. It is also available in French, http://facultyawareness.blog.yorku.ca/files/2012/10/guide-a-lintention.pdf.

The Teaching Commons has a list of York and Ontario support resources at http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources/accessibility/

The Council of Ontario Universities' Accessibility Toolkit is at http://cou.on.ca/policy-advocacy/accessibility/educators--accessibility-resource-kit

An online AODA advice 'wizard' is available at https://www.appacats.mcss.gov.on.ca/eadvisor/start.action

York Accessibility Hub, all kinds of useful info: http://accessibilityhub.info.yorku.ca

Maureen Haig will be giving a workshop, 'Accommodation to Accessibility', on September 30th from 12-1.30 in the Teaching Commons, room TEL1014. Register online http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=70364.

News Faculty Orientation

In late August the Office of the AVP Teaching and Learning, Sue Vail, in conjunction with the Teaching Commons, welcomed new faulty members to York University with a 2-day program of introductions, information and activities related to their teaching and student learning. Around 65 new faculty members attended. The President, Mamdouh Shoukri, welcomed the group along with Provost Rhonda Lenton; Vice-Provost Students, Janet Morrison; Vice-Provost Academic, Alice Pitt, and Teaching Commons Director, Celia Popovic. Day 2 was led by the Teaching Commons and was devoted to teaching and learning issues and innovations, resources and faculty development opportunities. New faculty enjoyed the opportunity to meet colleagues from their own and other departments as well as gaining useful information. A series of workshops and a New Faculty Lunch is scheduled for December. See http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/nfo-2013/ for info.

Highlights of Upcoming Workshops and Events

Each month the TC hosts teaching related workshops in a variety of formats (90 minutes – multi-session), based on topics identified by faculty. All are welcome to join us. The workshop schedules and registrations are available at http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/workshops/ . Your suggestions for further sessions and requests for departmental workshops are also welcome: contact us at teaching@yorku.ca .

Late September/October Workshops

From Accommodation to Accessibility – September 30th, 12 - 1.30PM

Receiving individualized Letters of Accommodation can be overwhelming. Minor changes to your course can allow you to spend more time teaching and less time administrating.

http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=70364

Supervising Graduate Students @ York Course

October 24, November 28 & December 12 (all 3 days must be attended)

Supervising Graduate Students at York is a three day course delivered over three months. Participants will develop their skills as supervisors of Masters or Doctorate students within the context of York University. This course is suitable for experienced and novice supervisors alike, as we focus on the individual supervisor's personal development. For more information, visit http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/supervising-graduate-students-york/ or contact Dr. Celia Popovic, cpopovic@yorku.ca. To register, please go to http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/4588-2/ .

Course Design @ York

October 16th and 17th (participants encouraged to attend both days)

The Course Design @York workshop is 4 sessions over two days which provides participants with the opportunity to develop a new course or redesign an existing course. Participants will be introduced to the principles and good practices of course design. Participants will engage in reflection and discussions on teaching practices as well as hands-on activities. For more information and registration, please go to http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/course-design-york/ .

Experiential Education @ York

October 25th and November 22nd (both sessions must be attended)

This workshop is designed to support faculty who wish to incorporate "In-Course" or "Within - Community" Experiential Education into their teaching. The workshop is comprised of 2 half-day sessions with supplemental online materials. Participants will be provided with pedagogic and logistical support. For information and registration, visit http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/ee-york-course/ .

York eLearning Boot Camp, October 29

This one day intensive workshop is designed to provide you with 'basic training' for getting started with eLearning. The focus will be on developing your course and the most effective approaches to achieving your learning and teaching goals. However, there will be plenty of hands-on work and the opportunity to try out various eLearning tools, including some clever ones in Moodle you may not know exist! Register here at: http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=32389 .

eLearning @ York, November 5th and December 10th (attendance on both days and participation online are expected).

This is an introductory workshop for faculty members who would like to explore and develop eLearning (web enhanced, blended and online learning) in their teaching. The program has been externally accredited by the Staff and Educational Developers Association (SEDA) Professional Development Framework (PDF) award. Based on the philosophy of experiential learning and SEDA-PDF values and outcomes, the course guides participants through pedagogic theories, practical interventions and reflective

practice, to create a blended or online course. Details and information can be found at http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/elearning-york-course/ .

Professional Development Workshops for Graduate Students

These are one hour lunch time sessions organized by Teaching Commons to provide support and practical strategies and advice to all Graduate Students at York University. Participation in these workshops counts towards the 'Record of Completion' certificate. These sessions are facilitated by Teaching Commons Staff, Faculty members from across the university, and participants in our Senior Teaching Assistants program. For schedule and registration, go to http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/ta-sessions/ .

'Record of Completion' Certificate

This certificate is to honour outstanding Graduate Students for their ongoing dedication to the enhancement and improvement of teaching and learning at York University. In order to receive this certificate, graduates students are required to register, attend, and actively participate in the TA Orientation and in a minimum of five (5) TA events and/or workshops run by a Senior Teaching Assistant (STA) or through the Teaching Common within one academic year. TAs who do so will be given preference to register in the Teaching Assistant Certificate in Teaching (TACT) and the Senior Teaching Assistant Program. More information about this certificate is at http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/teaching-assistant-record-of-completion-certificate/ .

Upcoming events, conferences, publications

Teaching Commons 2nd Annual 'Teaching in Focus' symposium, May 22, 2014. We will shortly be inviting abstracts for presentations and workshops. Hold the date!

Rethinking Higher Ed: HEQCO's conference will explore {the buzz} in higher education – minus {the buzzwords} November 7-8, 2013, Sheraton Centre Toronto. www.heqco.ca/rethinkinghighereducation/en/index.htm

Higher Education conferences Worldwide: http://www.conferencealerts.com/topic-listing?topic=Higher%20Education

Publications of Interest

Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, http://journals2.scholarsportal.info/journal.xqy?uri=/19388926

Vol. 9, No. 2 of the MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching (JOLT at http://jolt.merlot.org/). 12 peer-reviewed scholarly articles, nine of which comprise the much-awaited Special Issue on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs

 Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/

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