

Teaching Commons News For Graduate Students

A Chill in the Air



Very suddenly the warmer temperatures we have enjoyed have vanished and a colder wind has moved in. The Teaching Commons always offers a warm and friendly space to meet. Have you ever thought of booking our TC lounge with some colleagues to reflect, inquire, or dialogue about your teaching? Pop in to see what we have available! As we move closer to end of term (already) graduate students are also confronted with the challenge of meeting numerous and pressing deadlines. Both in your own research work and as a Teaching Assistant or Course Director. It is often difficult to feel in control of your life as you watch and feel everything spiral outwards in multiple directions. Take a breath and be mindful that you are a learner and you are "still learning".

Upcoming Workshops

What is 'Conflict' & How Might it Arise in the Classroom?

Date: November 4, 2016 from Noon to 1pm

Location: Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building DB1014

[Register for the What is 'Conflict' & How Might it Arise in the Classroom? Workshop](#)



Using Active Learning Strategies in Your Teaching

Date: November 8, 2016 from Noon to 1pm

Location: Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building DB1014

[Register for the Using Active Learning Strategies in Your Teaching Workshop](#)

Let's Talk About Social Inequalities: Addressing Critical & Often Emotionally Charged Issues in Tutorial

Date: November 16, 2016 from Noon to 1pm

Location: Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building DB1014

[Register for the Let's Talk About Social Inequalities: Addressing Critical & Often Emotionally Charged Issues in Tutorial Workshop](#)

Introduction to Course Design

Date: November 21st from 9:30am to 12:30pm

Location: Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building DB1014

[Register for the Introduction to Course Design Workshop](#)

Dealing with Classroom & Student Conflict

Date: November 24th, 2016 from Noon to 1pm

Location: Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building DB1014

[Register for the Deal with Classroom & Student Conflict Workshop](#)

"Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success."

Pablo Picasso

Designing my First Lecture

By Diane Sepa-Kishi



I was fortunate this year to be given the opportunity to create and give my own lecture as part of my TA duties for an upper year course. Naturally I jumped at the chance! I'd guest-lectured a few times previously, but the material was always provided for me, leaving little room for creativity and incorporating effective teaching strategies. This lecture was my chance to do it my way.

My initial instinct as an eager grad student ready to share my infinite knowledge was to cram as much information on my chosen topic as possible into my lecture as well as include activities to encourage active participation from the students. After a few emails with the Prof who knew the class well, my approach changed significantly and for the better. Enthusiasm is great, but I can't forget the principles I learned from the [Teaching Commons' workshops](#) and [TACT](#).

My improved lecture was a success and I hope these tips that I followed will also help you in designing your first lecture:

1. Get an idea of the student population you're teaching. Are they all from the same discipline, having taken the same prior courses? What information do they already know and can build on? What background information might you need to provide?
2. Follow the BOPPPS model. Don't let this acronym fool you; this is a great model for designing a lecture. Gather the students attention (Bridge), state clear objectives (Objectives), perform an assessment of prior knowledge (Pre-test), create an interactive lecture (Participatory learning), perform a post-assessment (Post-test), and provide a conclusion and link to next week's lesson (Summary).
3. Use teaching strategies to make the lecture interactive! Something like "Buzz Groups" is a great way to get the students chatting in groups of 2s or 3s in order to yield opinions or answer questions that may have come up during your teaching that you hadn't thought of or noticed.
4. Remember quality, not quantity. In order to learn effectively, students need time to build new knowledge onto their existence knowledge base so overwhelming them with complex slides and ideas will not be helpful. Take the time to direct their learning and help them make those connections.

These helpful tips will get you off to the right start when designing your first lecture. The Teaching Commons is another place you can go to for help. For the experienced TAs, they offer an Induction to Course Design Workshop (November 21st) to help prepare you for that first Course Directorship or enhance your current course design. **Don't forget, we are looking for submissions for the TC Grad Student News Monthly Blog. Send your submissions to maynat@yorku.ca today! (or any day)**

Teaching Critical Skills Including Writing & Research Skills Workshop for TAs

Fri Nov 18 @ 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm in Kaneff Tower, Room 626

This event is hosted by the Humanities Foundations Program aimed at Humanities Foundations TAs, but there are **limited (10) spaces** available for other TAs or graduate students at York University. A light lunch will be served. Professor Vic Shea will talk about how to teach critical skills.

The remainder of the session will be a **repeat** of the workshop "[Teaching Critical Writing and Research Skills](#)"