

Teaching Commons News For Graduate Students

Thankful for Teaching



If you have a Teaching Assistant (TA) position this semester, you are likely getting busier as first assessments are coming due, students are asking for support and looking for feedback and grades. If you start to feel stressed with added work and responsibility, remind yourself to look at the bigger picture and the valuable experience and benefits you gain from your TA position. Be thankful and consider reaching out for support from the Teaching Commons (TC). We have a variety of workshops to compliment and enhance your experience. For those of you that do not currently hold a TA position, you can still take advantage of the workshops we offer to contribute to and enhance your professional development and your CV. Everyone is welcome at the TC!

'Record of Completion' Certificate

Did you know that your attendance at TA Orientation, ITA Orientation, workshops and other events held at the Teaching Commons counts toward the Junior or Senior 'Record of Completion' Certificate? The Teaching Commons recognizes how hard graduate students work and how much you are involved at York University. The 'Record of Completion' Certificate is designed to recognize and honour your dedication to teaching and learning at York, as well as your own professional development. The requirements to obtain the Junior certificate are to attend at least 5 workshops or events held by the Teaching Commons. To earn a Senior certificate, you must attend at least 4 workshops and the Supporting Teaching At York (STAY) Symposium in its entirety. More information about the 'Record of Completion' certificate program can be found on our [website](#). All upcoming workshops, listed below, count toward either certificate, as well as any listed for graduate students in our [online calendar](#).

Upcoming Workshops

Supporting First Year Students in Transition and Maintaining Student Retention

Thursday October 13, 2016, 12pm-1pm in DB 1014

[Register for Supporting First Year Students in Transition and Maintaining Student Retention](#)

Making Meaningful Connections with your Students

Tuesday October 18, 2016, 12pm-1pm in DB 1014

[Register for Making Meaningful Connections with your Students](#)

Teaching in a Multicultural Classroom: Interactional Strategies for New ITAs at York

Friday October 21, 2016, 12pm-1pm in DB 1014

[Register for Teaching in a Multicultural Classroom: Interactional Strategies for New ITAs at York](#)

Participatory Learning: How to Engage your Students

Wednesday October 26, 2016, 12pm-1pm in DB 1014

[Register for Participatory Learning: How to Engage your Students](#)



Learn How to “DO” a Teaching Dossier

Monday October 31, 2016, 10am-12pm in DB 1014

[Register for Learn How to “DO” a Teaching Dossier](#)

What is Conflict and How Might It Arise in the Classroom?

Friday November 4, 2016, 12pm-1pm in DB 1014

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



Monthly Blog



Dealing with Conflict

By Jessica Whitehead

During my first year as a Teaching Assistant, my worst nightmare happened—a student was unhappy with their grade—and was sending me increasingly threatening emails. In my personal life, I avoid conflict like the plague, and I have turned ghosting into an art form. As a Teaching Assistant, I couldn't ghost my student, so I had to learn how to deal with conflict in a professional manner. I learnt a lot from this first conflict, and I found out after having a meeting with the student, that they were feeling overwhelmed in the course and the conflict was quickly resolved. Throughout my time as a Teaching Assistant, I have dealt with other unhappy and sometimes aggressive students. With these experiences, I have developed diffusion techniques, which make the inevitable conflict in the classroom more bearable.

From my experience, here are my top tips for dealing with conflict in your tutorials:

1. Keep your course director in the loop: It is important to let your course director know when there is a conflict in your tutorial and ask for their direction. They will give you good advice on how to handle the problem and may step in if needed.
2. Ditch the email: I have found that email communication often exacerbates conflict and having a face-to-face conversation helps to diffuse the situation.
3. Put Yourself in the other person's shoes: This might seem like common sense, but I found it helpful to try to empathize rather than negatively judge the other person. Most of your students have to juggle outside work, long commuting hours, and are dealing with financial struggles—a little understanding can go a long way in conflict resolution.
4. Seek Help: Despite our best intentions, sometimes conflict can escalate to an unhealthy level. At this point, you need to seek outside help. A great on-campus resource is the [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#).

With these techniques, I have become well versed in dealing with conflict, and I am now no longer stressed when a student contacts me with a dispute.

The Teaching Commons is another fantastic resource for learning how to deal with conflict. If you would like to find out more about conflict resolution, please join me on November 24th, for a workshop with Mariela Giuliano called [Dealing with Classroom and Student Conflict](#). You can submit your "burning issues" about conflicts you are dealing with confidentially, and we will help you come up with strategies on how to address your particular problems. We will also give you a more comprehensive overview of prevention and management techniques that will help you head off common points of conflict before they start.

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)

Human Rights Professional Development Training Program for Graduate Students

The Human Rights professional development training program encompasses three 1-hour training sessions on the following topics:

Accommodations & Increasing Accessibility - In this workshop, participants will receive a detailed overview of the rights and responsibilities in the accommodations process based on the Ontario Human Rights Code. Additionally, participants will learn strategies that will assist in increasing inclusion and accessibility in the workplace.

Employment Equity & Race - In this workshop, participants will receive an overview of the goals and principles of the Employment Equity program at York University. Participants will gain an understanding of the impact of microaggressions and implicit bias on racial equity in the workplace and obtain tips on reducing and eliminating these barriers.

Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace - In this workshop, participants will receive an overview of sexual harassment, its impact on the work environment and their rights and responsibilities in addressing sexual harassment. Attendees will obtain strategies and share best practices on how to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the work environment.

Positive Space - In this workshop, learn about gender identity and sexual orientation, the impact of homophobia and transphobia on employees, and how to better support LGBTQ employees.

Participants are invited to attend any of the training sessions that best fit their needs. Participants that attend three training sessions will receive a certificate of completion at the end.

[Register for any of these sessions from the Human Rights Professional Development Training Program](#)



Faculty of Graduate Studies

Do you have an amazing course director for one of your graduate classes? Consider a nomination for the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Teaching Award](#). The deadline is November 15, 2016.

Come and meet a representative from the Teaching Commons team at the [Faculty of Graduate Studies 2016 New Graduate Students Social](#) in the Scott Library, 2nd Floor Collaboratory, October 5, 3:00–5:00pm.

