With Spring Comes Renewal

With warmer weather and more sunlight, spring brings a sense of excitement for what’s to come. At the Teaching Commons, we took this as an opportune time to pause to reflect on successes and challenges and plan for next steps during our annual retreat, held on March 23, 2018. The day started with the building of a team trophy as a creative outlet to express our appreciation for one another. The rest of the day was filled engaging conversations around student-faculty partnerships and other initiatives that the Teaching Commons plans to roll out in the near future.

Meet our Team Trophy

Built around metaphors that capture how we work together, our team trophy includes a number of symbolic images, including a garden, chainlinks, a deck of cards, waves, an orchestra, a cake, a baseball team, and a diamond in the rough. It will be awarded monthly as an appreciative gesture to a team member. If you and your co-workers would like to make your own, you can find the instructions on how to facilitate this activity in YU Link, under the Employee Resources tab (Peer Recognition heading).

The Teaching Commons in the broader educational developer community

Mandy Frake-Misktak and Natasha May are co-chairs of the Council of Ontario Educational Developers (COED), a group of educational developers (EDs) across the higher education sectors in Ontario that advocate for best practices in teaching, curriculum, graduate student & instructor development. As co-chairs, they are implementing unique initiatives for connecting EDs in Ontario, sharing resources and engaging in activities to promote the work of educational developers.

Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier is on the editorial board of The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, a peer reviewed, trans-disciplinary, open-access electronic journal focused on understanding and enhancing learning in higher education through scholarly inquiry.

Lisa Endersby is the EDC Institute Coordinator for the Educational Developer’s Caucus (EDC). Her work involves supporting the development and delivery of a yearly intensive professional development opportunity for Educational Developers across Canada.
Using LEGO in the Classroom

**Thursday, April 19 9-11am, DB 1014**

This workshop is designed to showcase new and innovative ways of using LEGO as a teaching tool in your classroom. LEGO is a powerful tool to help develop skills and demonstrate understanding beyond our traditional text-heavy learning activities while also overcoming some common challenges in unlocking our students’ creative potential. Using a variety of interactive activities, participants will learn new strategies for incorporating LEGO into lessons teaching creativity, communication, and problem solving, as well as using these versatile building blocks for gathering formative assessment data. Participants will also learn from the facilitators’ experiences as both learners and teachers using LEGO in the classroom while discussing tips for how to use LEGO as an important classroom resource. Space for this session is limited.

[REGISTER for Using LEGO in the Classroom here](#)

April Journal Club

**Tuesday, April 24 from 2-3:30pm, Teaching Commons Lounge**

Join us at the Teaching Commons for an informal discussion of *The Case for e-Book Literacy: Undergraduate Students’ Experience with e-Books for Course Work*. Journal Club participants are asked to read the article in advance and come prepared to discuss their ideas, reactions, and questions with fellow colleagues interested in exploring innovation in teaching and learning.

[REGISTER to attend the April Journal Club meeting](#)

The Writing Circle

**Friday April 27, 12 pm to 4 pm in DB 1014**

The Writing Circle offers dedicated, on-going writing opportunities for the purpose of making progress on a writing project, preferably but not limited to being focused on teaching and learning in higher education. It is structured to enable writing and reflection about your writing and offers the opportunity for feedback among peers.

[REGISTER for our next session here](#)

Teaching in Focus (TiF) 2018

This year, our two-day conference will take place on **May 16th & 17th, 2018** and focus on student engagement. The program will be available soon. Please check this link for updates:

[http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/conferences/york-conferences/](http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/conferences/york-conferences/)

[REGISTER for TiF here](#)
**Instructional Skills Workshops**

The ISW is a 3-day intensive experiential learning program designed to develop teaching skills for both new and experienced instructors. The workshop encourages reflection and examination of one’s teaching practices with feedback focused on the learning process rather than on the specific content of the lesson. The ISW engenders participatory learning and the building of community that can transfer back into the classroom and the institution.

We still have a few spaces left in the following workshops:

- June 11, 13, 15
- July 25, 26, 27
- August 20, 22, 24
- December 10, 11, 12

**REGISTER for an ISW here**

**EducATE**

Beginning in July and running to May, faculty will meet once a month with core members of EduCATE or as part of an Action Learning Set. Through a peer-based structure, participants will form a Community of Practice as they develop, discuss, collaborate, and support each other while working through personal goals and a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research project. Participants will have the opportunity to observe and provide feedback to their peers in a classroom environment.

To learn more about the course or to register:

**Conference Reports**

With York’s Globally Networked Learning (GNL) team, Lisa Endersby recently participated in the COIL Conference in NYC, where they presented their work on GNL. You can read her report [here](#).

This year’s Educational Developer Caucus Conference had a record breaking number of presenters from the Teaching Commons (you can read the full report [here](#)):

- Principles of good practice in publication: The inside track for educational developers (Celia Popovic with colleagues from other universities)
- Teaching at the edge: The role of educational developers in supporting contingent instructors (Mandy Frake-Mistak)
- Drawing interest in SoTL research: Where do we go from here? (Mandy Frake-Mistak, Alice Kim, Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier, & Celia Popovic)
- Building (on) reflection: Using LEGO in the classroom (Endersby & Popovic)
- Thinking in the Round: A Discussion of Roundtables for Developing Critical Skills (Lisa Endersby)