

# Teaching Commons

## Graduate Students Newsletter

York University Teaching Commons Graduate Students Newsletter, February 2021



### Teaching Commons

Welcome to the Teaching Commons

Develop your teaching in new and unimaginable ways

At the Teaching Commons you will find a collection of engaging teaching practices  
relevant to the student learning experience.

### QUICK LINKS

Home Page

Resources for Teaching

Workshops for Graduate Students

Workshops for Undergraduate Students

## Introducing our New Website

The Teaching Commons launched our new website on January 25<sup>th</sup>. We hope you will enjoy the layout, and visual appearance. Are you having any trouble navigating this new site? Are you able to find everything you usually look for on our site, and maybe something new? Everything that we offer for graduate students is available [HERE](#), and all events for graduate students are [HERE](#). The site is still under construction, so more will be added soon, including resources for TAs. If you are looking for a resource you cannot find, please contact Natasha May, [maynat@yorku.ca](mailto:maynat@yorku.ca)



## Sessions by Senior Teaching Assistants

The [Senior Teaching Assistant \(STA\) Program: Exploring Educational Development](#) is the second of two EDC-accredited courses we offer. This winter, Senior Teaching Assistants will be offering all of the workshops for graduate student TAs. Join us for as many sessions as fit your needs and schedule.



## **Creating an Interactive Classroom in an Online Environment** **Thursday February 11, 11am-12pm EST via Zoom**

Over the past year, many teaching assistants and course directors have struggled with engaging students online. This webinar will introduce different strategies and accompanying technologies to make your online classroom more interactive, making your online lectures more engaging and ultimately, more effective. This webinar is an interactive session. It will begin with an open discussion on barriers to student engagement in virtual spaces, before exploring various tools and technologies to help boost student engagement. Participants will have the opportunity to experience these technologies firsthand through participating in live demonstrations. By the end of this session, participants will be able to implement these tools in their virtual classrooms in order to increase student engagement.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **How to Create and Upload Exams for eClass: An Interactive Tutorial** **Thursday February 11, 12:30-1:30pm EST via Zoom**

As all examinations are now online, it may be necessary for TAs to learn how to translate paper exams into online ones. However, this process can be surprisingly difficult due to eClass's unfriendly interface and design. In this interactive webinar session, you will create an online exam using eClass. Additionally, you will receive instruction on the multitude of options available in eClass, along with some tricks that will make the process more efficient. We will also discuss related tasks, such as showing/hiding grades, setting up exceptions for students with accommodations, and implementing measures to prevent cheating.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **Upping Your Teaching Game: An Introduction to Universal Design for Education**

**Thursday February 11, 2:00-3:00pm EST via Zoom**

In this workshop, participants will learn about universal design for classrooms and anti-oppression. As many of us know, marginalized folks, particularly disabled folks, experience barriers to education. This results in lower numbers of marginalized students succeeding in classes and graduating. This is unacceptable. We will be discussing theories and strategies to mitigate some of these barriers in the aim to create a classroom where all students can achieve their goals and thrive.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **Is Science Compatible With Remote Learning? - Navigating the Challenges of Teaching Science Labs Online**

**Thursday February 18, 11am-12pm EST via Zoom**

Institutions around the world have had to rapidly remodel their teaching methods and shift to remote learning, in conformance to guidelines arising due to the current pandemic. Although some disciplines are more online-friendly, resulting in a seamless transition from in-person to remote learning, other courses are more hands-on. Some science labs, specifically those in chemistry and biology, require the use of hazardous chemicals and special equipment that can only be accessed while on campus. Can watching videos and demonstrations effectively allow students to master the skill sets specifically required to handle experimentation and other basic techniques within the field of science? As teachers, it is important for us to analyze the resulting challenges, search for solutions or alternatives, and modify current teaching methods in science to ensure that students are still meeting the learning outcomes and are equally prepared if they were attending labs in person. In this webinar, we will discuss the challenges with teaching science labs online and brainstorm ways we can make science more compatible with remote learning.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **Engaging Students Virtually and Developing your Teaching Style in an Online Environment**

**Friday February 26, 10am-11am EST via Zoom**

As online learning becomes an integral part of education for many university students, teaching in an online environment must also evolve to engage students behind computer screens. Online learning provides students and TAs with flexibility but also presents many challenges. In this workshop, we will explore such challenges, how educators can overcome them and help TAs develop a teaching style that works in an online environment. This interactive webinar will provide participants with an opportunity to work with others in small breakout rooms. One of the goals of this workshop is to equip TAs with strategies that will keep their students motivated online and to deliver learning content in new and creative ways. We will also be discussing ways to support students online and mitigate some of the barriers associated with remote learning.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **Increasing Active Engagement and Motivation of Learners in an Online Teaching Environment**

**Monday March 1, 12-1pm EST via Zoom**

As online learning continues to evolve, so must our ways of delivering information as educators. While the virtual environment provides the opportunity and flexibility to reach many individuals, it also has presented a great deal of challenges. One particular challenge educators face is to create an environment where learners can actively engage and be motivated to learn. This webinar aims to offer an array of ideas that educators can use to increase participation and transform their current delivery of online content. Participants will take part in small groups (breakout rooms) to discuss the challenges of online teaching and explore new creative ways to increase student learning through larger group activities. The strategies provided in this interactive webinar will be based on pedagogical frameworks that are designed to provide educators the toolbox to enhance the online teaching and learning environment.

[Here is the link to register](#)



## **Reading in a Vacuum: Strategies to Help Students Engage with Texts in an Online Teaching Environment**

**Tuesday March 2, 12-1pm EST via Zoom**

The current online teaching context that has been created due to the pandemic presents many challenges for both students and instructors across disciplines. For LA&PS students, the move to virtual classroom spaces highlights questions of relevancy and application—how can reading works of literature, and how they are read, enhance a student’s university experience?

This workshop will present strategies for promoting and supporting student engagement with texts—focusing on helping students develop skills in critical reading and textual analysis in virtual learning environments. This interactive webinar is designed to provide participants with strategies for engaging students with textual material in online classroom environments, as well as opportunities to brainstorm questions, ideas, and strategies for enhancing student learning and development with fellow Teaching Assistants. While the focus of this workshop is on first- and second-year LA&PS courses, the strategies discussed are applicable to a wide-range of course materials, subjects, and disciplines.

[Here is the link to register](#)



### **Connect with Us!**

Follow us on social media to stay up to date on all our upcoming workshops, new resources, and other materials related to teaching and learning.

Follow and connect with the Teaching Commons on [YouTube](#) and on [Instagram/Facebook/Twitter](#): @YUTeaching

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