TEACHING & LEARNING COLLABORATION
2019-2020 HANDBOOK
Teaching & Learning Collaboration

Fostering a culture of teaching excellence and innovation at U of T Mississauga

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Welcome

The Teaching and Learning Collaboration at UTM aims to build a community centered on a shared interest in teaching and learning. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to join a workshop, participate in a reading group, or attend one of the many other offerings we host throughout the year. Whatever format you prefer, we hope the TLC offerings provide an avenue for you to collaborate with others in our community. We are proud of the talented, creative, dedicated group who participate in our offerings – faculty, sessional instructors, librarians, staff, teaching assistants, graduate students, and post docs – everyone brings a unique perspective that enhances our teaching practice. We look forward to connecting with you this year!

Heather M.-L. Miller
Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning

Fiona Rawle
Associate Dean, Undergraduate

Dianne Ashbourne
Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

CONTACT US

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LISTSERV: TEACHINGLEARNING-UTM-L@listserv.utoronto.ca
Connect with the TLC

Creating opportunities for educators to come together to discuss topics related to teaching and learning

Chat about teaching and learning over coffee, tea, or lunch

The “Colleague Connections” section of the TLC website lists your colleagues and the topics they are interested in discussing over coffee, tea, or lunch. If you are interested in joining the list, please complete the form at www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/collleague-connections.

Join a pedagogical reading group

Each term we select one or two books to read. Throughout the term, we meet to discuss our thoughts, reactions, and how the reading influences our own teaching. All participants who commit to regular participation in the group receive their own copy of the book. Meeting dates and times are determined by participants’ availability. To vote on this year’s books and to register your interest in joining a group, please complete the form at www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/reading-groups.

Attend a Teaching & Learning Exchange Lunch

Is there a teaching strategy, assessment, or technology tool you would like to try in your classroom? Reaching out to colleagues to hear about their teaching experiences can be invaluable in times of uncertainty. Join us for Teaching & Learning Exchange lunches once a month throughout the fall and winter terms to learn from and with your colleagues. Teaching & Learning Exchange lunches provide instructors with an informal space to share pedagogical knowledge and to troubleshoot challenges with other instructors.

Participate in a workshop, seminar, or panel

Check out the at-a-glance calendar on pages 3 and 4 for the dates of upcoming TLC sessions. Session descriptions can be found on pages 5-10.

To register for events, please visit the TLC website at www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events.
## TLC Calendar

### Fall Term 2019

<table>
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<th>MONTH</th>
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<tr>
<td>SEPT</td>
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<td>TUES</td>
<td>10am – 3pm</td>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>Ready, Set, Teach Day</td>
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<td>SEPT</td>
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<td>12 – 1pm</td>
<td>Colleague Connection</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Learning Exchange Lunch</td>
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<td>OCT</td>
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<td>THURS</td>
<td>1 – 3pm</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Webinar</td>
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<td>OCT</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>FRI</td>
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<td>Deadline</td>
<td>Proposals for International Student Experience Fund (ISEF) IMPACT Grant due for internal review</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>THURS</td>
<td>11am – 12pm</td>
<td>Lightning Talks</td>
<td>UTM Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Showcase</td>
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<td>Tips for Preparing a Teaching Development &amp; Innovation Grant Proposal</td>
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Register for TLC events at [www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events)
# TLC Calendar

## Winter Term 2020

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<td>11am – 12pm</td>
<td>Lightning Talks</td>
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<td>FEB</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>THURS</td>
<td>2 – 3pm</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>Mid-Term Instructor Check-In</td>
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<td>FEB</td>
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<td>WED</td>
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<td>Panel</td>
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<td>1 – 2pm</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Curriculum Mapping</td>
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<td>APRIL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>THURS</td>
<td>10:30am – 12:30pm</td>
<td>Showcase</td>
<td>Teaching with Technology Showcase</td>
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<td>APRIL</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>TUES</td>
<td>10:30am – 12:30pm</td>
<td>Showcase</td>
<td>Active Learning Classroom (ALC) Show and Share</td>
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<td>APRIL</td>
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<td>TUES</td>
<td>12:30 – 2pm</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>TLC Year-End Lunch</td>
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## Summer Term 2020

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<td>MAY</td>
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<td>Symposium</td>
<td>University of Toronto Teaching and Learning Symposium (hosted annually by CTSI at UTSG)</td>
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<td>JUNE</td>
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<td>MON</td>
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<td>JULY</td>
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<td>TUES</td>
<td>11am – 12pm</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>Prepare to Teach: Syllabus Clinic</td>
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<td>TUES</td>
<td>11am – 12:30pm</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
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Ready, Set, Teach Day

Tuesday, September 3
10am – 3pm

How do I start off on the right foot on the first day of class? How can I protect my students’ and my own wellbeing throughout the term? What are active learning classrooms and what pedagogical opportunities do they offer? What support and resources does the UTM campus offer instructors? The fall term can bring both excitement and uncertainty, but Ready, Set Teach Day will help set you up for success as you jump into the new term. All sessions will provide opportunities to learn from and with other UTM instructors.

Setting Up Student Teams for Success: A Workshop on the Agile Method of Project Management as Applied to Team-Based Undergraduate Research Projects

Thursday, October 10
1 – 3pm

Paul Piunno, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences and winner of the 2018-19 President’s Teaching Award.

This workshop will begin with an overview of the Agile method of project management and why it may be the preferred project management technique for engaging students in team-based research projects. The online Agile project management system, Kerika, will be demonstrated, with attention focused on how it may be used to effectively engage students as members of high-performance teams. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop computer so that they may set up their own Agile storyboards.

Mid-Term Instructor Check-In

Wednesday, October 16
11am – 12pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology & Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

Reflecting on your teaching practice is critical to your learning and development. It can help you find solutions to challenges that arise within the learning environment. This session provides an opportunity for you to reflect on how the term has been going, to ask any questions that may have come up, and to check-in with your colleagues.

UTM Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Showcase

Thursday, October 24
11am – 12pm

This session provides an opportunity for instructors to share their pedagogical research with colleagues in a short, 10-minute presentation. The SoTL Showcase is a great opportunity to gather ideas and learn more about the innovative teaching and learning initiatives happening on the UTM campus. For a list of presentations, please visit: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events.
Tips for Preparing a Teaching Development & Innovation Grant Proposal

Thursday, October 24
1 – 2pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology, UTM

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) investigates teaching and learning issues to find context-relevant and evidence-informed solutions. In this workshop, we look at how to get a project started and different approaches to SoTL work. Bring your SoTL idea and explore possible forms of evidence and approaches to analysis as well as considerations for ethics and funding. We also look at where to find more resources and how to make SoTL work public.

Talk to your colleagues – a lot of them – within and across disciplines. The experience, enthusiasm, creativity, etc, regarding teaching is vast on this campus so capitalize on this resource. Also, be genuine when teaching. Show your passion for your area of expertise, explain why you love it, and acknowledge your biases. This is key for engaging students on multiple levels. Finally, recognize you will never capture everyone in a class. But there are always students in the room who really want to learn from you. Focusing on this incredible opportunity to share your knowledge and spark interest makes teaching fun and rewarding.

- Melissa Holmes, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Faculty Showcase: Innovative Assessment

Monday, November 18
11am – 12pm

Learn about some of the innovative ways UTM instructors are assessing student learning. Join us for four lightning talks meant to spark ideas for new assessment strategies you could try in your own classroom. Showcased assessments include:

- Student-produced podcasts (Historical Studies)
- Cross-curricular case competition (Innovat-ED – Language Studies)
- Team-based capstone project (World Building – Earth Science)
- Problem-based learning (Virtual Mystery Project - Anthropology)

For a list of presenters and more details, please visit: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events.
How You Can Help Students Develop Their Foundational Academic Skills

Tuesday, January 28
11am – 12pm

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

If students are to be successful both in specific courses and in their academic careers, they need to master a number of academic skills - and instructors can help them do that. In this workshop, members of the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre will provide attendees with resources and activities to help students develop the foundational academic skills they need, with the emphasis on activities that do not require a great deal of preparation, that can be done in 10 minutes or less, and that can be integrated with your teaching of content.

The session will provide activities and tips for helping students with the following five academic skills:

- effective reading;
- notetaking;
- study planning & distributed practice;
- academic integrity; and
- problem solving

Mid-Term Instructor Check-In

Thursday, February 20
2 – 3pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream,
Department of Biology & Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

Reflecting on your teaching practice is critical to your learning and development. It can help you find solutions to challenges that arise within the learning environment. This session provides an opportunity for you to reflect on how the term has been going, to ask any questions that may have come up, and to check-in with your colleagues.

It’s all too easy to become cynical about student engagement and motivation. But if you find yourself feeling this way, resist the urge to blame your students and instead hang on to the idea that the time you have in class with students is precious! One of the best ways I’ve found to stay grounded and motivated is to connect with instructors who inspire me. Fortunately, this has been easy: we are surrounded at UTM by incredibly talented people who have thought deeply about their teaching, and care deeply about student learning. Reach out, go to a TLC workshop, and find out what is happening in classrooms around campus!

- Alex Rennet, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream,
Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences
TLC Winter 2020 Events

Faculty Panel: Encouraging Attendance, Engagement, and Preparation

Wednesday, February 26
11am – 12pm

- Jade Atallah, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology, UTM
- Rosa Jungwha Hong, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Language Studies, UTM
- Steve Szigeti, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Institute of Communications, Culture, Information and Technology, UTM

Join us to engage in a critical discussion focused on encouraging student attendance, engagement and preparation. Panel members, representing a variety of disciplines, will comment on the challenges of encouraging student attendance, engagement and preparation and will share ideas and advice. The panelists will address the following questions:

- Are there any instructional strategies that have worked particularly well for encouraging student attendance, engagement, and preparation?
- Are there any instructional strategies that you implemented to try to encourage student attendance, engagement, and preparation that did not work as you expected?
- When it comes to student engagement, where do you draw the line between the responsibilities of the instructor and the responsibilities of the students?
- What are your thoughts on making attendance and/or participation part of the grading scheme for a course?

Demystifying the Dossier Series: Preparing the Teaching Dossier

Thursday, March 12
11am – 1:30pm

Megan Burnett, Associate Director, Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto

At the University of Toronto, teaching dossiers must be submitted as part of the review process for tenure or continuing status. This session will provide an overview of the content and structure of an effective teaching dossier, focusing on dossiers prepared for a review process, and with an emphasis on how to align this document with divisional and institutional expectations. Session participants will review the distinctive qualities of a teaching dossier, and will develop a plan for assembling and strengthening their own dossiers. They will also be led through the first steps of composing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy.

Register for TLC events at www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/upcoming-events
TLC Winter 2020 Events

Curriculum Mapping

Wednesday, March 25
1 – 2pm
Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology

This workshop will outline how to engage in effective curriculum mapping, and will highlight the opportunities that can arise from the mapping process and dissemination of the maps themselves. We will discuss mapping at the assignment, course, and program level, and will explore different ways to both use and disseminate curricular maps.

Active Learning Classroom (ALC) Show and Share

Tuesday, April 21
10:30am – 12pm
Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

The active learning classrooms (ALCs) at UTM, which feature shared, round tables for students, moveable chairs, and interactive whiteboards, afford new opportunities to facilitate active learning activities and encourage the search for answers to challenging questions. During this session, instructors who have taught in the ALCs will share insights they have gained through their experience teaching in UTM’s technology-enhanced ALCs, and will reflect on how the opportunities provided by the physical space have affected both teaching and learning. This is a hands-on session with opportunities for all participants to test out the features of the room. All are welcome to attend - no experience teaching in an ALC is necessary.

Teaching with Technology Showcase

Thursday, April 16
10:30am – 12:30pm
- Simone Laughton, Head, Library & Instructional Technologies, UTM Library
- Kenneth Berry, Instructional Technologies Specialist, UTM Library
- Angie Cappiello, Instructional Technologies Specialist, UTM Library

This session will highlight how UTM instructors are enhancing learning environments for their students by integrating technology into their courses. The goal of the session is to spark new ideas and to facilitate a conversation about the effective use of technology to support and enhance instructional practices.

TLC Year-End Lunch

Tuesday, April 21
12:30pm – 2pm
Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology & Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

This is your chance to share and showcase teaching & learning successes and challenges from the past year. Please join us for lunch followed by several informal sessions, sharing opportunities, and discussions of challenges.
**Prepare to Teach: Syllabus Clinic**

Tuesday, July 7
11am – 12pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology and Ann Gagné, Educational Developer, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

With about 8 weeks before the start of the new term, now is a perfect time to update your syllabus, or start a new one from scratch. This session will help you avoid common syllabus mistakes, saving you valuable time later in the term. We will discuss strategies for managing the administrative load of teaching, and will provide an overview of additional resources you can turn to for help when needed.

**Prepare to Teach: Inspiration and Suggestions for Using Quercus**

Tuesday, July 14
11am – 12:30pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology and Simone Laughton, Head, Library & Instructional Technologies, UTM Library

This session is an opportunity to learn what has worked well (and what hasn’t) for other instructors using Quercus. We will profile strategies that instructors are using for Quercus, and will also have an opportunity to troubleshoot challenges you might be facing.

**Prepare to Teach: What do I do if?: Dealing with Difficult Issues in the Classroom**

Tuesday, July 21, 2020
11am – 12pm

Fiona Rawle, Associate Dean, Undergraduate & Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology and Andrea Carter, Assistant Dean, Student Wellness, Support & Success

What do I do if my students aren’t coming to lecture? If some students are being disruptive in class? If there is an emergency in the classroom? If a student has disclosed a private matter to me? If one of my students is in crisis? This session will provide an overview of difficult issues you may face as an instructor, and will highlight strategies and resources to use in order to deal with them.
Teaching & Learning Grants

University of Toronto Mississauga Opportunities

UTM Teaching Development & Innovation Grant (TDI)
Provides a maximum of $5000 for a UTM faculty member to support the implementation and assessment of innovative practice in an undergraduate course at UTM.

UTM Teaching Development Travel Grant (TDT)
Provides a maximum of $2000 for a UTM instructor to present at a pedagogical conference or in the pedagogical track at a disciplinary conference.

UTM Teaching & Learning Conference & Colloquia Fund (TLCC)
Provides a maximum of $1500 to support the organization of teaching & learning focused conferences or colloquia that take place at UTM.

Writing Development Initiative Program (WDI)
Provides financial support for projects that integrate writing instruction in core courses across the curriculum.

English Language Learner Support Initiative (ELLI)
Provides financial support for instructors who wish to implement specific ELL programming within their courses.

Numeracy Development Initiative (NDI)
Support projects that integrate instruction and learning activities on numeracy (quantitative literacy) into core courses across the curriculum.

University of Toronto Opportunities

Learning and Education Advancement Fund (LEAF)
Provides support for developing and enhancing the research, assessment, and application of high-impact teaching practices within learning environments at the University. The Fund is intended to support projects that will anticipate, leverage and create positive changes in both the modes and mechanisms of undergraduate education at the University of Toronto.

Instructional Technology Innovation Fund (ITIF)
Provides opportunities for technology-mediated teaching and learning projects that explore and implement promising practices at different stages of their development and implementation, and creates a pathway for projects from their initial inception to their full potential.

International Student Experience Fund (ISEF)
Intended to support academic and non-academic initiatives that: enhance the experience of international students; foster intercultural and international-to-domestic student, staff and faculty engagement; and internationalize the University of Toronto student experience.

Undergraduate Course Development Fund (UCDF)
Aims to foster ongoing, mutually beneficial teaching relationships between graduate-only divisions and units and divisions that offer undergraduate degree programs.

Links and deadlines are available at: www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/funding-award-opportunities.
Teaching Excellence Awards

University of Toronto Mississauga Awards

UTM Teaching Excellence Awards (Faculty)
These awards recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching at the University of Toronto Mississauga. The award recipients will receive $3000 for teaching-related initiatives/research.

There are three divisions:

1. Senior Faculty (E.A. Robinson Teaching Excellence Award)
2. Junior Faculty (for Assistant Professors and early Associate Professors)
3. Sessional (for Course Instructors and Sessional Lectures at any level)

University of Toronto Awards

The President’s Teaching Award (PTA)
Honours excellence in teaching and significant contributions in educational leadership. PTA winners receive an annual professional development allowance of $10,000 for five years.

The Early Career Teaching Award (ECTA)
Recognizes faculty members who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to student learning, pedagogical engagement, and teaching innovation. Up to four awards of $3,000 each will be offered annually.

The University of Toronto Teaching Fellowships (UTTF)
Provide funds for up to five faculty members in the teaching stream focused on supporting pedagogical innovation and research, and intended to promote emerging leaders.

More information: www.provost.utoronto.ca/awards.

Links and deadlines are available at www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/funding-award-opportunities
Glossary of Terms

Active learning
The defining characteristic of active learning is that students are dynamic participants in their learning and that they are reflecting on and monitoring both the processes and the results of their learning (Barkley, 2010 cited in Finkelstein, 2016). Students are engaged in constructing their own understandings.

Backward design
In this approach, teachers design courses beginning with the learning goals they want students to reach, and then they design the course to help students get there. See Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). Understanding by Design, 2nd edition.

Curriculum mapping
According to Dyjur and Kenny (2015), curriculum mapping is “the process of associating course outcomes with program-level learning outcomes and aligning elements of courses (e.g., teaching and learning activities, assessment strategies) within a program, to ensure that it is structured in a strategic, thoughtful way that enhances student learning”. Curriculum maps are used to analyze how individual courses contribute to program outcomes.

Formative Assessment
Formative assessments are used to monitor student learning and provide opportunities for feedback. They can help students target areas they need to work on and can help instructors recognize where students need additional assistance. They tend to be process-oriented and no-stakes or low-stakes. In-class activities like clicker questions or short writing activities are examples of formative assessments.

Learning Outcomes
“Learning outcomes are statements that describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular assignment, class, course, or program, and help students understand why that knowledge and those skills will be useful to them. They focus on the context and potential applications of knowledge and skills, help students connect learning in various contexts, and help guide assessment and evaluation” (Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto).

Instructional Scaffolding
According to Skene and Fedko (2014), scaffolding is a technique for designing learning experiences that involves breaking learning objectives down into smaller, manageable parts that gradually increase in complexity. Instructors provide support and feedback for students as they work through the learning sequence. For example, a scaffolded term paper might ask students to first submit an outline, then an annotated bibliography, and then a draft of the paper, with feedback recieved between each part, before submitting their final term paper.

For more terms or to suggest terms to be added, please visit www.utm.utoronto.ca/tlc/resources/glossary-of-terms
A great strength of UTM is that we’re a medium sized university within a very large university. From a student perspective, this means they can explore many ways to improve their university experience by getting involved in groups and clubs, and the scale even of first year classes is manageable in a way that is not always possible on the St George campus. As a professor, the size of UTM allows me to learn from some incredibly dedicated and smart instructors across disciplines. I try to take any opportunity to work in cross disciplinary teams for research and service.

- Steve Szigeti, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Institute of Communications, Culture, Information and Technology
Instructor Resources

UTM Academic Handbook
The Office of the Dean has created a UTM Academic Handbook, a resource for instructors covering all aspects of course delivery, including regulations and guidelines for dealing with issues ranging from term tests to academic integrity. Access the handbook here: www.utm.utoronto.ca/dean/academic-handbook.

Accessibility Services
Accessibility Advisors are always available to meet with instructors to discuss the delivery of in-class accommodations for students with disabilities. Learn more by visiting www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/.

Equity & Diversity Office
The Equity & Diversity Officer is able to meet with instructors to discuss issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion that might arise in the classroom and course content, including classroom dynamics and religious accommodations. Learn more at www.utm.utoronto.ca/equity-diversity.

Indigenous Centre
The Indigenous Advisor is available to offer guidance to faculty on Indigenous cultures, to provide information about local Indigenous organizations and agencies, and to speak at class discussions. Learn more at www.utm.utoronto.ca/indigenous-centre.

Information & Instructional Technology Services (I&ITS)
I&ITS provides support for faculty, instructors, and TAs including: instructional technology (e.g. iClickers, UTORSubmit, use of the Scantron); research computing; software licensing; and classroom technology (e.g. podiums, projectors, & microphones). For assistance go to uoft.service-now.com/utm/.

UTM Library
Liaison Librarians
Book an appointment with a Liaison Librarian to discuss classroom instruction collaborations/tutorials; creation of tailored online research guides for courses/assignments; research consultations; research services; and collection development. For a list of UTM Liaison Librarians, visit liaison.library.utoronto.ca/utm.html.

Quercus help (U of T’s new learning management engine)
Learn more at www.library.utm.utoronto.ca/faculty/canvas.

Teaching with technology
Learn more at www.library.utm.utoronto.ca/faculty/teachwithtech.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Research Guide
The SoTL Research Guide can help you get started with SoTL projects and searching the literature. It can be accessed here: https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/SOTL_journals_databases.

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC)
The mandate of the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre is to support and promote teaching and learning in a range of contexts across UTM. The RGASC collaborates with instructors, TAs, librarians, and staff on teaching and learning activities including assignment / course design, teaching innovations, and the assessment of a given intervention’s impact. Faculty and staff appointed at the RGASC have a range of specializations, including academic peer support, academic writing instruction, educational development, English language learning, numeracy, scientific literacy, and supplemental instruction. Learn more at www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/faculty-instructors.

Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI)
The Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI) is a hub for teaching and learning at the University of Toronto, supporting instructors, graduate students and teaching assistants on all three campuses. CTSI offers year-round programming, resources, consultations on educational technologies and pedagogy, research on teaching, online course evaluations and professional development. Learn more by visiting www.teaching.utoronto.ca, www.tatp.utoronto.ca.
How do you encourage student participation in class?

I highlight an often forgotten aspect of science – ‘The human Dimension’. I always remind students that the material we are tackling has been discovered by individuals, just as themselves, carrying out research in laboratories next door to our classroom and at other institutions around the world. This encourages students to take responsibility, motivates them, boosts their confidence in their abilities, fuels their critical thinking, and most importantly, energizes the classroom and increases participation in our collaborative problem solving efforts.

-Jade Atallah, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology

How do you increase student engagement in class?

I try to make use of some sort of short student engagement activity every 10 to 15 minutes to keep students engaged. These can be as simple as presenting a prompt that students have a minute to discuss with their neighbors, or more sophisticated such as a series of pre-designed questions that students respond to using an online polling system where we can see the results in real-time. At a more basic level, my most effective technique is by establishing an atmosphere where students know that my job is to present philosophical positions in the most convincing way, and their job is to figure out what is wrong with these positions. Since all my materials are available online, students need not focus on note-taking and memorization, and instead are encouraged to be actively engaged with the main ideas through critical thinking and reflection. This means that even if students are not directly participating in the class discussion, they are still engaging with the content.

- Alexander Koo, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Philosophy

Students in my classes are responsible for helping (in part) to determine, shape, and deliver the content. This level of responsibility naturally brings with it increased engagement and leads to greater participation.

-Katherine Rehner, Associate Professor, Department of Language Studies
How do you create connections to the "real world" in your class?

All of my courses integrate the development of "real world" skills alongside the acquisition of subject-based knowledge. I concentrate primarily on students’ research and writing skills because I know from my previous career in the federal civil service that these aptitudes are particularly valued by employers. I use a variety of strategies to help students strengthen their ability to craft persuasive arguments and communicate clearly, including scaffolded assignments that break the research process down into its component parts, as well as assignments that allow students to experiment with different writing genres, including op-eds, infographics, field journals, and policy briefs. I also encourage students to take advantage of the workshops offered by the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre.

- Erin Tolley, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

How do you create a personal and meaningful learning experience for your students?

I do this by bringing in stories from my adventures establishing and working in start-up biotechnology companies (i.e. the "real world"). I make connections between what I teach and that which lies beyond the doors of the University, which really seems to resonate with most students. I also keep my door open when in my office and welcome unannounced visits. In this way, students feel free and welcomed to contact me and communicate all things related to their learning experience.

- Paul Piunno, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences

My relatively short teaching experience leads me to believe that it’s important to let students know how much I care about their progress and performance. This is particularly important since I teach large classes. I try to maintain a sense of pragmatism when I interact with students – keeping in mind that my course is only one of the many important obligations they may have. I believe that being thoughtful during one-on-one interactions with students builds mutual trust, raises students' expectations for themselves and for the course, and is therefore a crucial complement to the pedagogical tools we use to make our teaching more effective.

- Tenzin Yindok, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Economics
Today’s students are facing unprecedented challenges for time management, as many activities are competing for their attention—schoolwork, afterschool jobs, social media, sports, etc. As a result, important but unurgent tasks such as completing weekly reading assignments and making weekly progress on term papers are constantly pushed down to the bottom of their routine to-do-list. One solution is to create an accountability system that assist students commit to weekly investment into each course. For example, requesting a weekly reading reflection in writing before class will ensure that students read and come prepared for class. Pre-class writing with a revised reflection writing after class would facilitate students to stay on track for important discussions during class meeting and give them an opportunity to correct errors and/or elaborate on ideas originally written in the reflection. The repetition also deepens their understanding of the course materials and enhances knowledge retention.

- Liye Xie, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology

I want to inspire my students and to teach them how to think rather than what to think. To do this, I need to break down preconceived notions that students have about what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a learner. One of the ways that I can do this is through active classroom discussions. Sharing viewpoints is valuable for our domestic and international students as well as for our English Language Learners (ELLs) because the topics raised provide insight into the unique community we have at UTM. Learning from a professor is important, but understanding the diverse perspectives of others is invaluable.

-Laura Taylor, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Specialist, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

As an educator, I believe that communication is the best way to build a link between my students and I. The tighter this link, the more it will enhance my teaching and, in turn, benefit my students. Therefore, I always cultivate communication when I begin a new class. I provide students multiple ways (raising hands, socrative surveys, emails etc.) of communicating with me whenever they have questions or on confused on a concept. I really value and reward those students who go beyond just facts and memorization, such as those who ask a probing or theoretical question about the subject matter.

- Yuhong He, Associate Professor, Department of Geography

Back-and-forth conversation, even in the largest of lectures, can bring out new threads of inquiry that neither the students nor we would anticipate. This is perhaps the best part of teaching: conversation not only emphasizes the creative possibilities of historical scholarship, but reminds students and professors alike that as participants in writing and thinking about the world, we all share a stake in the work we do.

- Daniel Guadagnolo, Sessional Lecturer, Department of Historical Studies
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