

Teaching Commons @ Lakehead U

ADAPTIVE | INCLUSIVE | RESILIENT

Issue #1
February 2021



TAKING A BREATH OF FRESH AIR IN 2021

For our inaugural newsletter, we chose a theme that reflects what the past year has required of us all: Adaptability, Inclusion, and Resilience. As we moved into 2021, we discussed how the pandemic has required instructors to adapt their course content, course design, and ways of delivering their classes. We noted how the pandemic has highlighted the importance of inclusion (especially the need for better communication with/among our students) as well as the hazards of exclusion, whether from unstable internet or more systemic causes. We discussed how amazed we've been at the incredible resilience of both instructors and students during these challenging times. We realized that, together, these words (Adaptability, Inclusion and Resilience) spelled AIR.

As an opportunity to share new perspectives on, and offer inspiration for, teaching and learning we hope this issue will be just that -- a breath of fresh AIR!

Strategic Ways

Lakehead University's Strategic, Academic, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Sustainability Plans each have a series of goals related to teaching and learning. In our newsletter, this space will highlight elements of these related to each theme.

The goal to "Promote excellence in teaching and learning" is this issue's strategic spotlight. This goal was fundamental to the work of Dr. Ken (Mac) Brown, and his legacy continues to inspire us. He strove to elevate the importance of teaching to the same level as that of research. Dr. Brown wanted us to provide exceptional learning opportunities through our course design and delivery, ensuring that we are not only teaching but teaching *for* learning. Read the Faculty Spotlight on page 2 for more about Dr. Brown.



Workshop Spotlight

Have you had the time to invest in FLO lately? Experience [mycourselink](#) as a learner to enhance your teaching.

We are offering Fostering Learning Online (FLO) - The Basics from March 1-5 2021. All you need is (approximately) 45 minutes per day to participate. Register for one of our few remaining spots!

[REGISTER](#)

Indigenous Ways

Dr. Lana Ray & Ms. Ivory Tuesday ([Indigenous Learning](#))

Dr. Lana Ray and Ms. Ivory Tuesday ([Indigenous Learning](#)) received the [2020 Teaching Innovation Award](#) for building a traditional wigwam with students on the Thunder Bay Campus Sweat Lodge site. The wigwam provides a space for all students to build relationships and connect to the land on which Lakehead University is situated, the traditional territories of Fort William First Nation, signatories to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850. Dr. Ray views the teaching lodge as "an advanced technology that supports relational pedagogy through architecture and embodied practice. It provides a space to negotiate Indigenous-settler relations and privilege Indigenous pedagogies and knowledges. By assisting in the construction of the lodge, the students actively engage in Indigenous protocols and governance principles such as respect, gratitude, responsibility and mutual aid, developing the necessary foundation to engage with Indigenous knowledges."



Students tying and securing poplar trees to create the structure of the teaching lodge.



Tech-enabled Ways

COVID-19 didn't discourage the dedicated teaching staff in the departments of Biology, Physics, and Environmental Sustainability. They adapted and moved their Winter 2021 labs online wherever in-person options were not possible or permitted.

Thanks to the eCampusOntario Virtual Labs pilot, the staff and students have access to [Beyond Labz](#), an online lab simulation platform for STEM disciplines. It allows instructors to quickly and easily incorporate virtual lab activities into the curriculum.

Through realistic, interactive, online experiments, students are not only acquiring and developing the necessary skills, concepts, and "virtual" hands-on experiences to successfully satisfy lab requirements, but they are also preparing for their future careers.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Ken (Mac) Brown (1942-2020) was an accomplished academic, with a 30-year career in the Faculty of Natural Resources Management. It is, however, his contributions to teaching and learning, both in his discipline and through service to Lakehead University, that we wish to recognize in our inaugural newsletter. While his home Faculty knew of his contributions to student learning and the profession, many may not be aware of the profound impact Dr. Brown had on the teaching and learning culture of Lakehead. Among many other things, he was the founder of the Office of Instructional Development (the precursor to the Teaching Commons), and so it seems most appropriate to honor him through this first "Faculty Spotlight".

[Read full tribute on page 4](#)



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WILLING TO SHARE WHAT YOU ARE DOING IN YOUR COURSES?
PLEASE TELL US MORE SO WE CAN SPOTLIGHT YOUR WORK IN A FUTURE ISSUE.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Spotlight

1. Kathy Snow works with faculty at her institution in support of transcultural skills development. During the delivery of a community-based program and paralleling an on-campus program, she developed a model of blended learning for cultural understanding: Snow, K. (2020). Different Worlds Same Province: Blended Learning Design to Promote Transcultural Understanding in Teacher Education. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcea.2020.3.8303>.

2. The [Teaching and Learning Research Annotated Literature Database](#) contains summaries of key SoTL literature that can support your practice. This is a useful space in which to begin considering SoTL through your own contextual lens. Search for problems you've been trying to solve or opportunities worth taking. It also has an extensive set of tags for easy browsing.

Scholarship of Technology-enhanced Learning (SoTeL) Spotlight

1. A recent collaborative publication on open educational practices (OEP) shares a framework to analyze specific process-centric forms of OEP including the following:

- Collaborative annotation
- Wikipedia editing
- Open networked courses
- Virtually connecting
- Public scholarship
- Learner-created OER

Bali, M., Cronin, C. and Jhangiani, R.S., 2020. Framing Open Educational Practices from a Social Justice Perspective. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 2020(1), p.10. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jjime.565>.

2. To evaluate authentic learning environments for Graduate Entry Nursing (GEN) students, the authors used educational design research (EDR) as a reflective and iterative approach to develop and adapt the programs teaching and learning strategies, content, and delivery:

Macdiarmid, R., Winington, R., Cochrane, T., & Merrick, E. (2021, 2021/01/07/). Using educational design research to develop authentic learning for Graduate Entry Nursing students in New Zealand. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 102965. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2021.102965>.

[Working on a SoTL project? Tell us about it so we can spotlight you!](#)

MORE UPCOMING TRAINING



March 16th & 17th: An Online Activity/Assessment Primer - (Lisa O'Neill)

In this approximately 5-hour course, we explore different activities used during online teaching/learning and consider ways we can assess learning through technology.

Registration Link:

<https://forms.gle/QFnKYDEhHQvSAegP9>

March 18th: Journeying Together: An Introduction to Implementing Indigenous Epistemologies & Pedagogies into Your Curriculum (Jerri-Lynn Orr)

Take this opportunity for relationship building while hearing a short overview of the Indigenous Content Requirement at Lakehead University. Learn how to braid Indigenous approaches into your curriculum.

Registration Link:

<https://libcal.lakeheadu.ca/event/3595263>

March 18th: Third Thursday Talks (Rhonda Koster)

These monthly informal discussion sessions provide an opportunity to talk about teaching, receive support, and learn from our colleagues.

Registration Link:

<https://libcal.lakeheadu.ca/event/3595243?hs=a>

A TRIBUTE TO DR KENNETH BROWN

by Rhonda Koster

With contributions from the following;
Dr. Ulf Runesson (Dean, NRM)
Dr. Jane Crossman (Professor Emerita, Kinesiology),
Mr. Laird VanDamme (Alumni)
Dr. Moira McPherson (President and Vice-Chancellor)

Dr. Brown was a student-focused professor who both challenged and supported his students. He understood the relationship between good teaching and student learning. In fact, his first publication at Lakehead reflected this commitment to pedagogy, dealing with how to better teach a course on dendrology (Brown, 1977). As Dr. Ulf Runesson (Dean of the Faculty of Natural Resources Management) shared, “Ken’s teaching philosophy was to teach with purpose and respect and be outcome-focused”.

Dr. Brown was instrumental in the creation and implementation of the Writing Across the Curriculum program in NRM, and he led a number of initiatives to establish a similar program for the university. Ultimately, these efforts resulted in the Writing Centre, now part of the Academic Zone. Dr. Brown also helped develop the MScF program in the NRM Faculty where he was known for his support of graduate students and their work as well as his ability to make courses such as research methods engaging. Beyond his Faculty, Dr. Brown was the intellectual leader of the Ontario Advanced Forestry Program, which started in 1988 as a collaboration between Lakehead University and the University of Toronto’s forestry programs to design a professional development course for mid-career forest professionals.

Dr. Brown's contributions to the culture of teaching and learning at Lakehead University were profound. As Dr. Jane Crossman (Professor Emerita, Kinesiology) shared, “From the onset, it was evident to me that Mac was passionate about increasing the awareness of how important quality teaching is at Lakehead University. He dedicated innumerable hours to raising the awareness of the faculty, staff, and students to his belief that teaching deserves as much respect in the university system as does research and service.”

Raise awareness he did. Dr. Brown played a key role in the creation of four different initiatives approved by the Senate in 1987 to improve teaching and learning: the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Office of Instructional Development, the Office of Learning Assistance, and a program of teaching awards.



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A TRIBUTE CONT'D

Dr. Brown subsequently served on the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, he was the Instructional Development Advisor, and he led the development of the first Lakehead University Teaching Dossier Guide (1991/92).

To further foreground the importance of teaching for university professors, Dr. Brown was the founding editor of a publication entitled, *The Lakehead University Teacher*. This newsletter was published regularly and featured articles written by Lakehead professors including techniques to improve classroom practice, anecdotes regarding teaching experiences, and other articles teachers at Lakehead University would find useful.

Dr. Brown was keen to partner with colleagues on presentations to various groups on campus, such as orientation sessions for Graduate Assistants and workshops on study skills for undergraduates. His calm, reasoned demeanor garnered him the respect of his students, colleagues, and staff. And, for his significant, 30-year contribution to the betterment of teaching at Lakehead, Dr. Brown was awarded the Distinguished Instructor Award in 1999, the institution's highest honour.

Throughout his time with us, Dr. Brown's commitment to student learning resulted in a culture of teaching and learning excellence at Lakehead that has continued to positively affect student experiences across the university – a legacy he would humbly say was a result of many people's efforts.

Brown, K. 1977. "Regional Dendrology: An Innovative Approach to a Traditional Subject" *Journal of Forestry*, 75 (11), 724-725. https://ocul-lhd.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_LHD/bi3o58/alma994432603405155