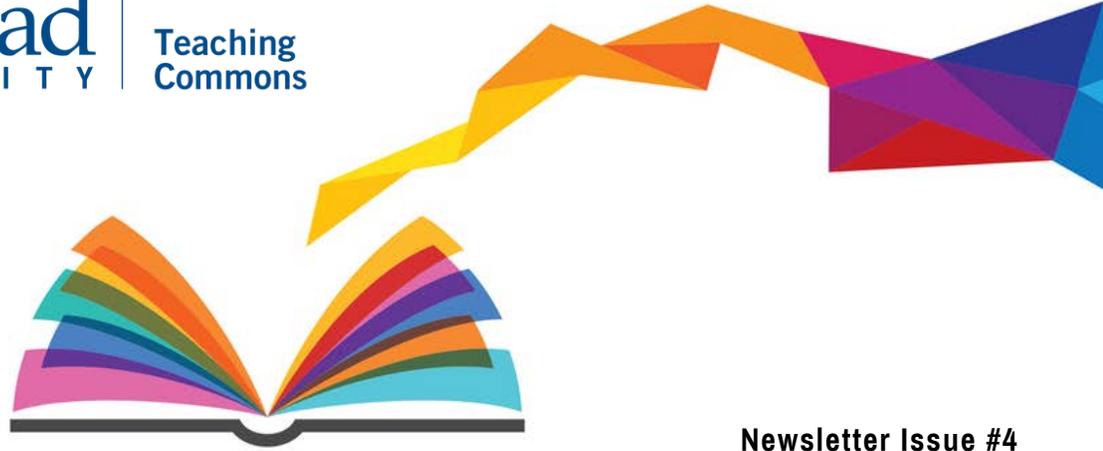




Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY

Teaching  
Commons



CONTEMPLATION | INTENTION | CREATION

Newsletter Issue #4  
December 2021



## *Reflection & resolution*

December is often a time when people pause and reflect on the year that has passed, and we may find ourselves making resolutions regarding what we will change or do differently next year. As you are wrapping up the term, undertaking final evaluations, submitting marks, and filing this term's course materials, you may find yourself thinking about what worked well this semester and what you might change the next time you offer your courses. Whether big or small, such reflections have a tremendous impact on teaching practises and learning outcomes. This issue of our newsletter is focused on understanding how reflection is an integral part of teaching and learning, for instructors and students alike, and showcases the various ways it can be integrated into teaching and scholarship.

This is also a time of year when we are able to pause the routines of work and spend some time doing whatever it is that brings us joy. From all of us at the Teaching Commons, we offer our sincere congratulations on all that you have accomplished this year and ask you to please take time to relax and rejuvenate - you deserve it! We wish you the best of the holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2022

## INDIGENOUS WAYS

# The stillness which gives us the space to reflect and find resolutions in our own lives

As 2021 comes to a close, with so many unknowns and changes to life as we know it, I wanted to share with you in this issue of reflection and resolution a bit about stillness — the stillness which gives us the space to reflect and find resolutions in our own lives. *Embers*, by author Richard Wagamese, has been an inspiring book for me to listen to (free on [Audible](#), and recommended to me by a colleague — miigwetch, Mercedes!), and I encourage you to give it a listen or read. It has allowed me to ponder my path forward in all aspects of my life, and I hope it will do the same for you! Maybe it's something you want to use for a course? :)

Wagamese (2016) shares his insight with us on stillness:

I don't know the word for it, that space between seconds, but I've come to understand for myself that it's the punctuation of my life. Between each word, each thought, each moment is where the truth of things lies. The more intent I am on hearing it, seeing it, feeling it, incorporating it, the more precise the degree to which I'm focused on my life and the act of living. I want to dive into those bits of silence. They contain the ocean of my being and our togetherness. So if I don't respond quickly, excuse me. I'm busy allowing the surf of consciousness to break over me so that I can stand on the coast of our unity and be more (Introduction).

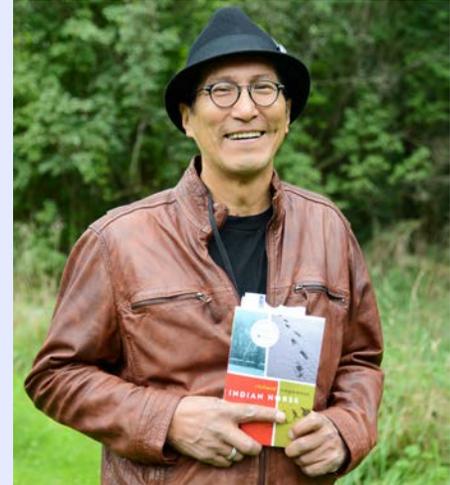


Photo by [Dan Harasymchuk](#), CC BY-SA 4.0

Sometimes, we forget to listen to ourselves, to pause and ask, “What are my truths?” My hope for the new year and for all of you is that you will find this stillness — that, in this stillness, you will find your truth and path forward in a good way, to reflect and figure out where you need to make changes to live a good life. If we want to be there for each other, we need to be there for ourselves first. My sincere best to you all in this holiday season.

## WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT

### EdMedia Protege Program

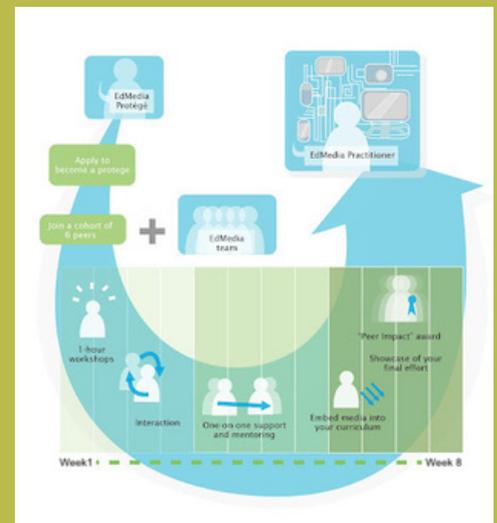
February 7 to April 1, 2022

Presented by Lisa O'Neill; Rusty Brown; Shantala Singh; Adam Thomas

The EdMedia Protege (EMP) program is an 8 week facilitated mentorship for faculty and staff interested in becoming better media creators. Program details and application instructions are provided here:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/teaching-commons/pedagogy-toolkit/resourcing-learning-with-content-media/educational-media-protege-program>

If you have 3 hours a week to invest in improving your media creator skillset apply early as seats in each cohort are limited.



## TECH-ENABLED WAYS

# Hypothesis makes reading visible, active and social for students

Hypothesis is a tool that allows readers to highlight and annotate pdf documents and websites in Lakehead University's mycourse/D2L learning management system. When a passage is annotated, it appears as a highlight on the document and readers' comments are visible to others in the class in a sidebar (similar to how comments are visible in the margins of documents using google docs or MS Word). Hypothesis allows instructors to transform reading from a form of one-way communication from author to student into a multi-directional form of communication. The annotations enable instructor-to-student, student-to-instructor, student-to-student, and even student-to-author dialogue. For instance, instructors can highlight passages or concepts in the reading and provoke students to respond to prompts soliciting their reactions to the concepts or asking them to relate the passage to their own experiences. Students can annotate a passage and critically analyse its real-life implications. Using the reply feature in Hypothesis, students can reply to one another's comments, adding layers of agreement or contention to potentially controversial aspects of the readings. Students can even be provoked to respond to the content of the reading in assigned roles to push them beyond their own perspectives to consider the implications of the text for other societal groups. Students' work can also be uploaded as pdf documents to allow peer commentary and feedback on their submissions.

 **hypothes.is**

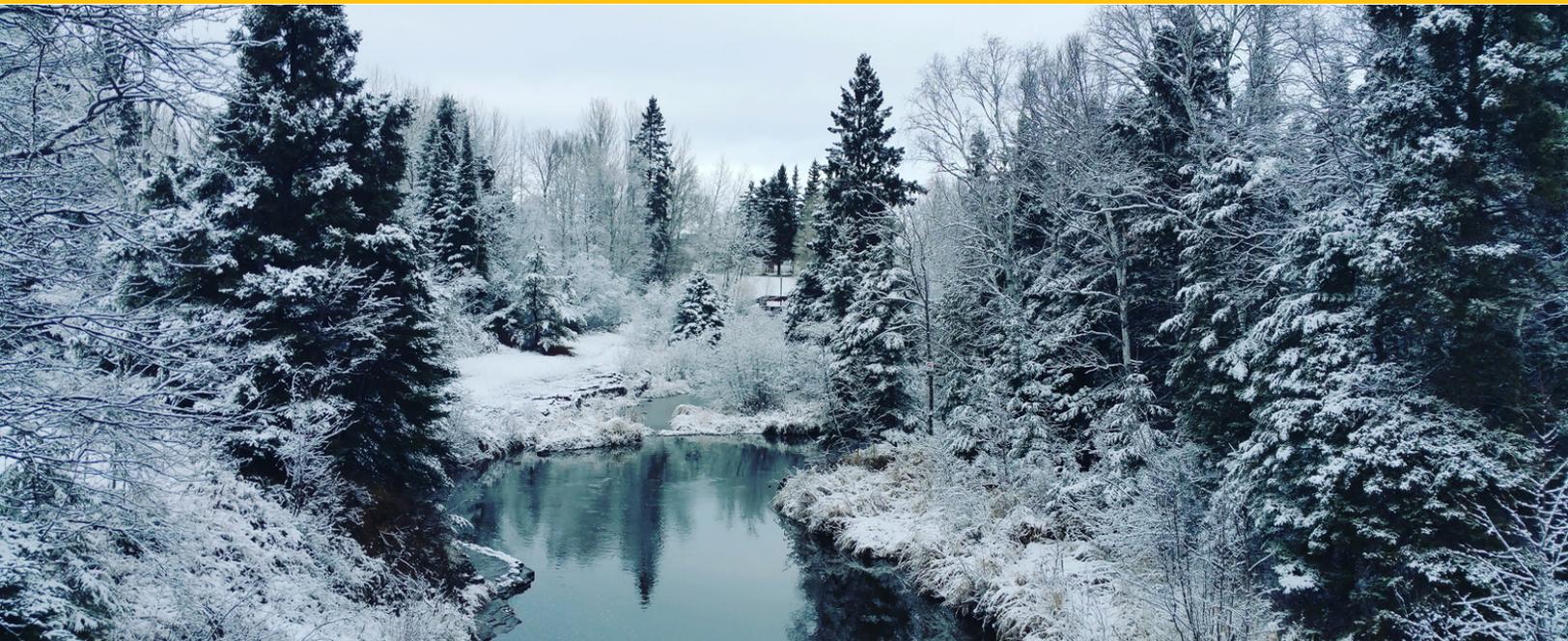


<https://youtu.be/gJVofLLeNok.0>

In these ways, Hypothesis adds an element of "humanness" to students' readings, which has been particularly helpful during the pandemic and in asynchronous online courses when they lack opportunities for social interaction with others.

Shared by Dr. Julie Rosenthal, Assistant Professor, School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism who has been piloting Hypothesis since 2020 as part of the eCampusOntario Ed-Tech Sandbox initiative.

Resources for using Hypothesis in mycourselink can be found under Help in mycourselink.



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

# Reflecting on Reflection



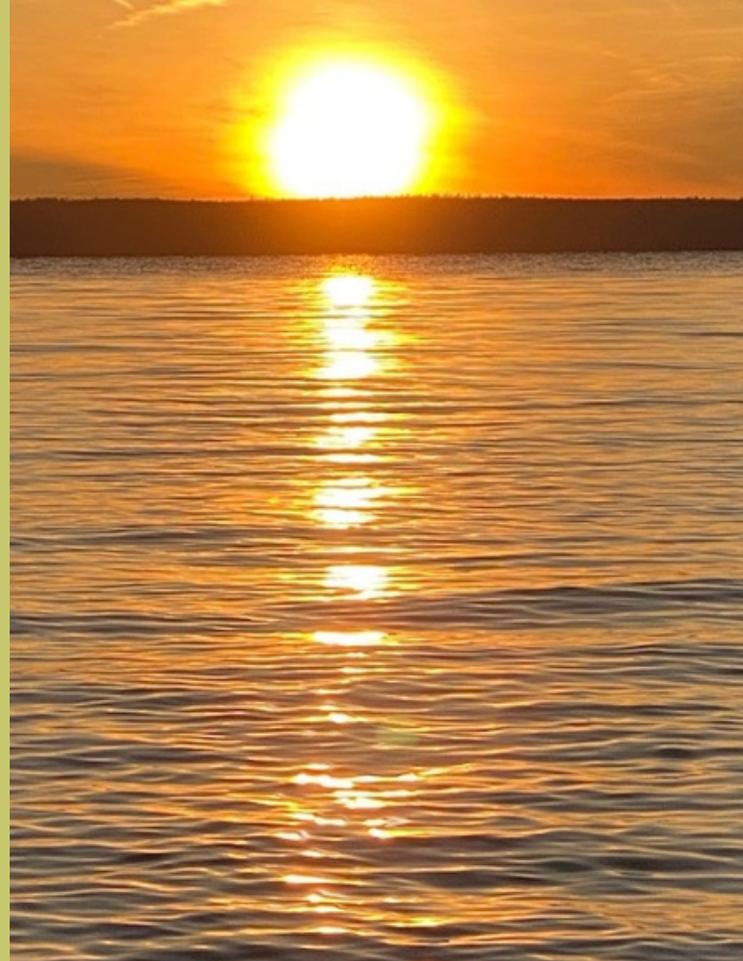
*There is a way that nature speaks, that land speaks.  
Most of the time we are simply not patient enough,  
quiet enough, to pay attention to the story.*

Linda Hog, Chickasaw academic & author

First, I wish to acknowledge the source of these words: the Light and Life within the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory in the traditional homelands of the Anishnaabeg and Métis peoples. In addition, local mentors inspired more respectful ways of being in relation with the land: Elder MaNee Chacaby, Elder Audrey Deroy, Wil Hedican, Dr. John Akweniiotha Hodson, Al Hunter, Elder Ernie Kwandibens, Elder Gerry Martin, Elder Isabelle Mercier, and Elder Sarah Sabourin. To all these teachers, I am forever grateful.

There are wisdoms living in the land's energy. These wisdoms are for everyone and yet belong to no one. For as Elder Ernie Kwandibens once shared (as I understood it), knowledge is a gift from the Creator, from Life itself. Engagement with knowledge carries responsibilities. A sacred question for reflection as educators, researchers and life-long learners becomes: How shall knowledge be used to serve all of life?

If we return to the earthiness of the word "reflection", we arrive at light. Not surprisingly, sunrises offer insights into the act of reflecting.



Photos by [Willow Curthoys](#)

They reveal a triad: the source of light, something that receives this energy, and the witness ~ the one who perceives both the giving and the receiving of light. Whether or not the witness makes meaning from any natural phenomena depends on intentional participation: reflection. One could easily think, "nice sunrise" or "that's beautiful!" End of story. However, if the witness engages with full presence, curiosity, and innocence, actively seeking meaning from and for life, new insights will certainly emerge. This is the power of the life force. Each sunrise (as with any life process, being or event) offers something of relevance to our lives, communities, and the greater world, should we choose to take time to engage. Through respectful participation with the land, life-serving knowledge emerges.

Although we are all born with the innate ability to understand the wisdom of the land, doubts in land as sentient being, as well as doubts in our own capacity to understand a more-than-human language, are often perpetuated via human-centric paradigms. One antidote for these doubts is daily intentional immersion with the land, even ten minutes a day will do.

The land is so generous with teachings. No one is excluded. Teaching various courses over the past 23 years, built on premise of “land as teacher”, we have joyfully witnessed hundreds of students reclaim their natural capacity to connect with the land in deeply meaningful ways.

We are truly fortunate at Lakehead University's Thunder Bay campus because wild teachers abound. Twisted cedars, an ever-changing river, fearless woodpeckers, a three-legged fox, curious bald eagles, cheeky squirrels, ancient rock, powerful views of Anemeki Wajiw, starry skies, and so many more teachers await the open mind.

From these wild teachers, life-changing lessons flow. Students willing to work past a westernized mindset deserve credit too. For their initial reaction to being asked to spend time with the land as teacher ranged from reluctant (I don't have time to just sit!) to confused (How do I turn off my busy mind?) to skeptical (Is this for real?). Dedicated land time combined with critical place-based reflection delivered powerful take-aways.

Here are a few examples of land-inspired wisdoms:

*I learned that time is what is important to connect with nature, you have to spend time in the forest to learn the habits and patterns of the animals. Eventually, the animals will show themselves.*

*The land reflects your energy . . . if you come in with a positive mind set and calming vibes then the atmosphere completely changes.*

*Everyday that I spend outside teaches me how to be patient, grateful and tells me to take my time and focus on the present. Whenever I'm there I sit for a bit and eventually the thought always comes that everything will be okay. I don't know how to explain it, but I look around and notice how the land surrounding me is in no rush, it takes its time and moves at its own pace.*

*Taking a step back, in addition to showing us what the land has to teach us, it allows for each of us to learn how to trust the land. I think that trusting the land goes hand in hand with allowing oneself to take a step back to fully understand how to absorb one's surroundings.*

*When you spend intimate time with the land, the relationships you develop are difficult to characterize. There is no way to describe the feeling of having your mind unburdened and negative emotions cleared.*

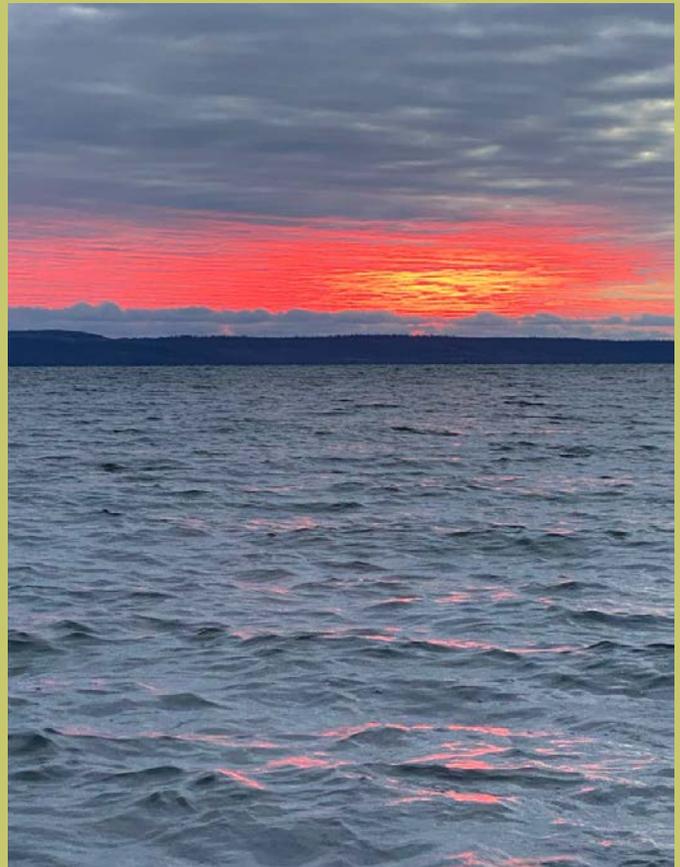


Photo by [Willow Curthoys](#)

*The land knows who we are even when we are lost, and that even when we feel like we do not belong anywhere, the land will still accept us for who we are.*

*Breathing in the mist and the smell of the black spruce, my emotions and thoughts stabilized. I had perspective again and was perfectly alert.*

*I realized that nature is a beautiful soul who just wants to help.*

I too practice daily, dedicated land time. Greeting the land at sunrise, I settle into the community's life-energy, give thanks, and surrender into my nothingness. I humbly ask permission to merge with the wisdom of the land. Through quiet, full embodied presence, meaning arrives. Through daily commitment to deepening relations with my land community, I reflect: How might I apply today's teachings to serve the wellbeing of all of life?

Show-up and Trust: the land awaits your presence.

With Gratitude,  
Willow

## HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES

# Reflection for Learning

Reflection in teaching and learning can be beneficial for both instructors and learners alike. Reflective practice can provide instructors with a better understanding of how their students learn and is an opportunity for instructors to identify any barriers to learning that their students may have. Similarly, reflection can provide learners with the opportunity to consider their experiences with the content and activities of a course and how they might improve their future performance by analyzing what they have learned and how much they have achieved.

Embedding reflection questions and activities as part of your weekly lessons, as part of a learning portfolio, or as a component of course assessments can increase a learner's awareness of the skills they have developed, the skills that still need refinement, and their strengths and weaknesses as learners. Use some of the questions below as a guide to develop reflection questions for your own teaching and learning contexts:

- What were some of my most challenging moments (during this assignment, activity, lesson, etc.), and what made them so?
- What were some of the most influential learning moments (during this assignment, activity, lesson, etc.), and why?
- What would I do differently if I were to approach this problem (assignment, activity, lesson, etc.) again?
- What have I done differently on today's assignment (activity, lesson, etc.) than what I have done on previous assignments?
- What resources did I use to help me with the content (assignment, activity, etc.)?
- Is there a specific medium (text, audio, visual) that I found more helpful than others?

## Reflection in practice

For an example of reflection in practice you're encouraged to review the [Communication Reflection Rubric](#) that Dr. Abhi Rao, Lakehead's Academic Support Coordinator, has developed and uses for writing assignments in his courses.

## SOTL SPOTLIGHT

### Legitimizing Reflective Writing in SOTL

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Using examples from a growing body of reflective writing about pedagogy, these authors encourage us to further legitimize this practice within the scholarship of teaching and learning because;

- the process of reflection is an essential component of learning;
- reflective writing captures the complexity of learning;
- reflection is an accessible form of writing for both new and experienced SoTL authors; and
- reflective writing is accessible to a wide range of readers.

### Autoethnography in the scholarship of teaching and learning

[READ ARTICLE](#)

This article presents a method for applying the process of autoethnography (placing yourself as the study subject) to our own work and contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

## SOTEL SPOTLIGHT

### SoTeL symposium 2022 announced

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

Upcoming is an opportunity to learn and develop practices that support technology enhanced learning scholarship. The Symposium brings together educators, primarily from the secondary and tertiary sectors, to:

- Share and demonstrate the efficacy and benefits of using digital technologies to enhance student learning;
- Establish research clusters and communities of practice to enable like-minded people to explore, evaluate and advance the use of digital technologies in student learning environments in all disciplines;
- Provide an annual forum for practitioners to present the results of their work to peers and other interested parties.

## UPCOMING TRAINING

### JANUARY

#### Backward Design

Kelly Brennan, Instructional Designer,  
Teaching Commons  
January 17, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

Researchers Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe have explained how the backward design approach is to look at a course, module, or lesson with the end in view first. This workshop will introduce faculty to the backward design approach. By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of the backward approach to course design
- Consider how learning outcomes can be used to design assessments
- Assess the types of multimedia and resources available to assist with student learning
- Determine the different teaching and planning strategies that might be used with a backward design approach

[REGISTER HERE](#)

#### Faculty Toolkit for Helping Students at Risk

Dr. Abhijit Rao, Academic Support Zone  
Coordinator, Student Success Centre  
January 18, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

"Faculty Toolkit for Helping Students at Risk" — This presentation will share the D2L toolkit created in collaboration with the Faculty of Business Administration. The toolkit contains a comprehensive set of resources, suggested steps, and set of communication resources that instructors could use to connect students at risk to supports across campus that would help them cope with their academic journey at Lakehead University.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

#### Our Trail to Wellness, Self-care Strategies & Tactics

Linda Henderson, Wellness Coordinator, Office of  
Student Affairs  
January 26, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

"Our Trail to Wellness", Self-care Strategies & Tactics" — This presentation will provide tactics and strategies to assist individuals in understanding and focusing on their own health and wellness self-care. It will concentrate on the nine dimensions of wellness as outlined in the Lakehead University Wellness Strategy.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

#### Beyond Cultural Competency: Enhancing Our Cultural Safety & Humility Toolbox

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Chair on Truth &  
Reconciliation  
January 27, 2022  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Cynthia will unpack some of what we already know about and suggest some additional steps towards promising practices using the 7 Grandfather Teachings.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

#### Providing Feedback Using Rubrics

Kelly Brennan, Instructional Designer, Teaching  
Commons  
January 31, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

In this workshop, we will explore the benefits of using rubrics as a form of assessment feedback. Particularly, we will focus on building rubrics using the Rubrics tool in mycourselink/D2L. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Determine what type of rubric(s) works best for their assessments;
- Consider how to build and use rubrics effectively;
- Develop a rubric in mycourselink/D2L that may be used for one of their course assessments.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## FEBRUARY

### Creative Ways to Use Social Annotation in Your Courses

Becky George, Success Specialist, Hypothesis  
February 2, 2022  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

In this workshop, the Hypothesis team will lead participants in a discussion about various discussion protocols and active learning strategies that can help make social annotation more engaging and fun. Participants will come away from this session with a variety of ways to creatively use social annotation in their courses.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### UDL: Using Choice Boards to Optimize Student Autonomy

Dr. Rhonda Dubec, Coordinator of Instructional Development, Teaching Commons  
February 9, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

Providing options for how students reach a given learning objective “can develop self-determination, pride in accomplishment, and increase the degree to which they feel connected to their learning” (CAST’s UDL Guidelines, Checkpoint 7.1, “Optimize individual choice and autonomy”). In this session, we explore choice boards as one tool for allowing students choice and autonomy in assessment while, at the same time, ensuring that the rigor of the course content and instruction are not compromised.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Photo by [Jason Goodman](#) on Unsplash

### Group work: Effective practices and strategies

Kelly Brennan, Instructional Designer, Teaching Commons  
February 14, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

This workshop is designed to discuss some of the challenges and possible solutions to facilitating group work in our classrooms. By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- share strategies you’ve implemented when teaching with group work;
- consider effective strategies for implementing group work;
- discuss a variety of ways to facilitate group work and group dynamics in face to face, blended, and online modalities.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### The Office of Indigenous Initiatives

Denise Baxter, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Initiatives  
February 23, 2022  
1:00 am - 2:00 pm

This workshop will give faculty an opportunity to meet with the Vice Provost of Indigenous initiatives where she will provide an overview of the support and services that the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Indigenous Student Services Centre has to offer faculty, staff and students.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Photo by [Chris Montgomery](#) on Unsplash

# MARCH

## Open Education Week is March 7-12, 2022

A showcase of Lakehead's VLS projects:

- The Seven Grandfather Teachings and Medicine Wheel as a framework for engaging Indigenous pedagogical approaches in online learning
- Creating quality technology-enhanced learner experiences; Open Course development & Pilot
- Enhancing the First Year Experience for Online Learners: University Seminar Course
- Professional Practice Video Series for Educators
- Projects from the Fall 2021 EdMedia Protégé (EMP) program will also be showcased.

Watch for more details to come regarding this week.

## Collaborative Learning during COVID: Lessons Learned

Wendy Parkes, Assistant Professor, Law  
March 15, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

The switch to online learning during COVID required adopting innovative ways to keep students engaged and motivated. This workshop reviews the opportunities and challenges associated with collaborative learning, including peer editing and team exercises, as applied in a professional program. It explores how lessons learned from collaborative learning can be carried forward into the post-COVID world.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Challenging Conversations in the Classroom

Jonathan Erua, Administrative and Intake Officer,  
Human Rights & Equity  
March 22, 10:00-11:30 am or  
March 23, 1:00-2:30 pm

How to have difficult conversations with students on topics related to Racism, Sexism, Ableism, Homophobia/Transphobia

[REGISTER FOR  
MARCH 22](#)

[REGISTER FOR  
MARCH 23](#)

## Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility: Lakehead University's Indigenous Content Requirement

Jerri-Lynn Orr, Indigenous Curriculum Specialist,  
Teaching Commons  
March 24, 2022  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

This workshop will provide an opportunity for relationship building while hearing a short overview of the Indigenous Content Requirement at Lakehead University. A framework for interweaving Indigenous approaches into your curriculum, and how the Indigenous Curriculum Specialist can support you in your work will be shared. There will be a time for a circle discussion and questions.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Using Google for Collaboration, Presentation, Communication, and Organization

Kelly Brennan, Instructional Designer,  
Teaching Commons  
March 28, 2022  
10:00 am - 11:30 am

In this workshop, we will discuss some of the ways that we may use Google for our teaching and learning contexts. We will explore how we can use Google applications for teaching and how we might ask our students to use them for learning. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the justification for a collaborative learning/teaching approach
- Re-introduce the "tried and true" applications of Google
- Demonstrate a variety of examples for use in-class, online, or via a hybrid/blended class model

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY

Teaching  
Commons