



EDUCATION EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

The traditional meaning of the inukshuk (depicted left) is “You are on the right path.” As the Humanities 101 program was being conceptualized, program founder Dr. Christina van Barneveld photographed this inukshuk on campus, made out of snow near the Bora Laskin Building. “I appreciated that someone had the vision and took the opportunity to create a symbol of beauty, grace, inclusion, hope, and direction,” she says. The image of the inukshuk was adopted as a symbol for the program.

Humanities 101 Opens Doors to Education and Empowerment

Lakehead’s Humanities 101 program was created 19 years ago, with a goal of giving marginalized community members a chance to access a university educational experience despite social or financial barriers in their lives.

“Universities can be intimidating places for some people,” explains Dr. Gerald Walton, Professor and Acting Director of the Humanities 101 program (Thunder Bay campus).

“Some have never considered that post-secondary education could be an option for them. Humanities 101 gives them that opportunity—and often points them in a direction that can help them build, or rebuild, their lives.”

Humanities 101 is a 12-week, non-credit university course that is free to participants who are recommended into the program through social service agencies.

Founded in 2005 by Dr. Christina van Barneveld (Associate Professor, Thunder Bay), it was developed specifically for people hindered by challenges such as homelessness, low income, social isolation, long-term physical or mental illness, and/or past negative experiences with formal learning.



Dr. Gerald Walton, Acting Director of Humanities 101

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Class Themes and Instructors of Humanities 101 Program, Fall 2023

- Opening with Elder Gerry Martin
- Spelunking Plato's cave (Dr. James Czank)
- We're getting warmer. Or, when it's not good to be hot (Dr. Paul Berger)
- What is music for? (Michael Lyngstad, PhD student)
- Perspective, learning and Indigenous education: Transforming education through *Kinoo' Amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad* (Dr. Paul Cormier)
- Rebel Art (held at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery) (Vanessa Magee, visual artist and graduate of 2011 Humanities 101 program)
- What I learned from Daisy or: What's all the fuss about gender (Dr. Gerald Walton)
- Superhero culture wars: Politics, marketing, and social justice in Marvel comics (Dr. Monica Flagel and Dr. Judith Leggett)
- Pathways week (led by representatives from various community organizations)
- Fat-inclusive outdoor recreation (Dr. Leigh Potvin)

We welcome your feedback, ideas, and content suggestions.
Email us at newsletter.education@lakeheadu.ca



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of
Education

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During the program, students attend one evening class a week, which starts with a meal and informal chit chat. The classes are led by university instructors and community members who volunteer their time to provide engaging, dynamic lectures, with each class devoted to a topic from the Social Sciences or Humanities (see the sidebar, above, for a list of topics from the Fall 2023 program).

Students are invited to express their ideas through optional class assignments and presentations that can take diverse forms (e.g., as writing, poetry, art, music, video, or anything else).

In addition, students are aided by program mentors—graduates of the program who support the students in various ways, such as encouraging them to share their own stories and experiences by doing an assignment.

Gerald notes that overseeing the program for the past two years has been “a tremendous honour. One of the most rewarding parts of it is seeing what it can do for the students, for whom the program is often a stepping stone: not only for intellectual stimulation, but also to something else in their lives.”

Two Graduates Share their Humanities 101 Experiences

Two graduates of the Fall 2023 class—Rebecca Janzen and Jana Peterson—shared their stories about the program.



Rebecca Janzen, age 33

“Humanities 101 was my first opportunity to be a post-secondary student. It’s such an important program because it empowers people, and shows you there’s room to grow and that you’re not stuck in the box you’ve been put in.

I deal with anxiety, PTSD, and night terrors, and I went through school as an undiagnosed autistic person. Some of my previous teachers in school did real mental damage to me, always giving me detentions and telling me I was lazy and not applying myself. Then, some of my family members rejected me when I came out of the closet.

Now that I have graduated from the program, my perception of myself has changed. Humanities 101 helped me realize I am not lazy or stupid, and I can do it! I can do something with my life; I can go to university or college, I can have a career.

I am looking into becoming a social worker, to try to help people who are experiencing the same problems I’ve had—like the next lesbian to come out of the closet and have family turn their back on them, or the next autistic person who is struggling with learning. I want to step in and say to them: You can do this.

I can’t say enough good things about the program. Every week got better and better for me! I also made a friend, which is significant for me as it’s hard for me to make friends. I had some great discussions, I did a presentation to the class about how pockets are gendered, and I was proud to bring my wife to the graduation ceremony. I finally have some direction in my life.”



Jana Peterson, age 50

“I was born in Deep River, grew up in Thunder Bay, and lived in Halifax for 16 years. I found myself in a bad situation in Halifax, surrounded by people with addictions. I came back to Thunder Bay to be here for my dad.

I’ve never gone to university but I am a college graduate, and I used to work as an accountant. Then I had a stroke and brain injury, and needed to re-learn many things.

It was my best friend and former boyfriend, Jeff, who inspired me to try Humanities 101. Jeff went through the

program himself and said I should take it, because the professors talk about how things work in society. Jeff had struggles of his own and has since passed away, but he continues to be my inspiration. He helped me in many ways—to get moving and walking, and to try university.

Being in the program and learning new things, with new people, helped me. I struggle with a bit of social anxiety, but I felt like I could talk to people and I loved learning. The professors and my classmates were fun to work with. I also appreciated that there were vegan options for me, with our weekly meal.

The most impactful class, for me, was led by Dr. Paul Berger (“We’re getting warmer. Or, when it’s not good to be hot”). I’m really interested in ecology and concerned about weather patterns, like the big rain storms or the mass hurricane that happened in Halifax. I am looking to pursue studies in ecology in first-year university classes, next fall.”

It Takes a Community

The program’s overall success is reliant on a community of dedicated people, including instructors, mentors, volunteers, and social service organizations. Gerald, who has now finished a two-year term as Acting Director, extends thanks and gratitude to Dr. Christina van Barneveld, the founder of the program, who will reprise the role of Program Director next term.

“The program plays a key role in building community relationships, and bringing Lakehead into areas of the community where universities generally aren’t all that relevant,” says Gerald. “Most importantly, it helps people realize that seeing themselves in a more positive light and pursuing a post-secondary education *is* possible.”

Collaborative Research Project Examines Cultural Safety and Ethical Spaces for Indigenous Students and Instructors

Indigenous cultural safety is the focus of a SSHRC-supported research project that examines the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors in teacher education courses at Lakehead University (Thunder Bay campus), the University of Winnipeg, and the University of Manitoba. The study is led by Haudenosaunee scholar Dr. Jennifer Brant (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), with co-investigators Dr. Frank Deer (University of Manitoba), Dr. Leisa Desmoulins (Lakehead University), and Dr. Jeannie Kerr (Simon Fraser University).

Jennifer explains that the research, which began in 2019, emphasizes Indigenous cultural safety and the fostering of ethical spaces, amidst nation-wide moves toward Reconciliation education.

“The research grew out of my experiences teaching mandatory Indigenous courses in teacher education programs across three different universities,” she says.

“At all three institutions, student responses ranged from a willingness and eagerness to learn to disengagement, resistance, and denialism. I was most concerned about the resistance from settler students who were called to reckon with Canada’s history of colonial violence. As an Indigenous instructor, this led me to consider what it must feel like for the one or two self-identified Indigenous students in these classes. This prompted my desire to examine these courses across Canada and develop a vision for Indigenous cultural safety and ethical space in teacher education.”

As the research idea developed, Jennifer reached out to Leisa, who had been a member Jennifer’s PhD committee. Given that Lakehead University was the second post-secondary institution in Canada to include a mandatory Indigenous course in their BEd programming (the first was the University of Manitoba), it seemed a logical fit to examine the experiences of students and instructors at Lakehead (Thunder Bay campus), along with the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba.

“We deliberately chose to pilot the study at these post-secondary institutions because of the heightened racial tensions associated with the cities of Thunder Bay and Winnipeg,” Jennifer says. “The intention was to gather educational narratives from Indigenous students and instructors, to support promising practices for racial literacy and develop a vision of Indigenous cultural safety and ethical spaces in teacher education.”

Sharing Circles and Elder Contributions

Indigenous research methods guided the study, with students invited to share their experiences through a series of Sharing Circles held over the last two years. One-on-one interviews were conducted with participating instructors, as well, with a goal of exploring the extent to which their courses are effectively responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada’s Calls to Action, and the host institutions’ commitments to Indigenization.



The researchers met at the University of Manitoba’s *Gaa-Maamawabing* (Indigenous Community Meeting Space, Faculty of Education). From left to right: Dr. Leisa Desmoulins, Dr. Jeannie Kerr, Dr. Jennifer Brant, Jessica Trickey (Research Assistant), and Dr. Frank Deer.

Elders from each region have been actively involved in the research, assisting with the analysis of the student data.

“We are committed to doing this research in a good way,” Leisa explains. “We pushed back against the model of ‘focus groups’ in favour of Sharing Circles, and are grateful to have the input of Elders, who are helping to guide the study.”

Gakinoomaagewin in Education Course Offered at Lakehead

At Lakehead’s Faculty of Education, the newly named *Gakinoomaagewin in Education* course explores Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, knowing and doing, with a focus on topics including residential schools, Truth and Reconciliation, land-based pedagogy, holism, treaties/treaty rights, and contributions to school systems from Indigenous perspectives.

When a required Indigenous course was added to the Bachelor of Education programming some years ago, all students in BEd programs completed it as part of their degree. More recently, however, with the significant restructuring of the Keewatinase (Indigenous Education) Department, Indigenous students now complete a separate schedule of Indigenous-focused programming, and the *Gakinoomaagewin in Education* course is optional to them. Leisa notes, however, that Indigenous students may still choose to take the course—and some do.

“Some Indigenous teacher candidates have not had an opportunity to learn about their culture, and it is their first time learning some of this content. We have Indigenous students who take this as one of their courses, and thus this research, examining their experiences, is very important. As an institution, we have a commitment to providing an environment of cultural safety. A goal of this study is to examine the extent to which we are achieving it.”

The study, titled “Indigenous Student Experiences Post TRC: Indigenous Requirement Courses in Teacher Education” is currently in the data analysis phase, with plans to disseminate findings widely, including to Indigenous communities, to universities across Canada, and through academic channels such as conferences and journal publications. This project is supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Development Grant.

Faculty News



Dr. Wayne Melville Renewed as Dean of Education

Lakehead's Provost & Vice-President (Academic), Dr. David Barnett, has announced the renewal of Dr. Wayne Melville as Dean of the University's Faculty of Education.

"Wayne is a proven leader who has worked closely with faculty and staff members in developing a culture that supports students as well as his colleagues," he said.

Under Wayne's leadership, the Faculty of Education has seen continued enrolment growth, expanded the programming offered at the Orillia campus, now offers a Technology Education program, is developing community and Aki (earth) based Indigenous education programs, and has fostered an environment of collegial governance.

Building on a long history in teacher education and education research, while also looking forward to the future, the Faculty is guided by two main documents. The first is the **Faculty of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2023**, which highlights where the Faculty plans to be over the coming years. The second is the **Flourishing as a Faculty document**, which encapsulates the values of the Faculty such as equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and empowerment, both within the Faculty and in its relationships with the wider world.

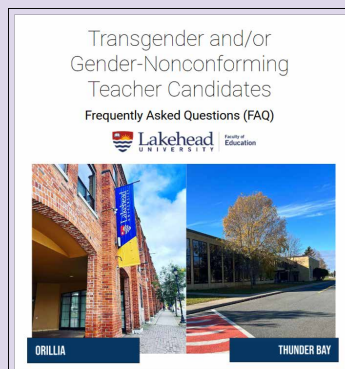
Wayne notes that "across both Orillia and Thunder Bay, we are fortunate to have students, staff, contract lecturers and full-time faculty members who are committed to making the faculty a welcoming place for teaching, learning and research. It is a great privilege to be the Dean of such a faculty, and we look forward to making the most of the exciting opportunities ahead of us."

Background: Dr. Wayne Melville

Wayne earned both MSc and PhD degrees from Curtin University of Technology. In 2005 he joined the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University as an Assistant Professor in Science Education. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 2009 and to Professor in 2016. From 2014 to 2018 he served as Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Education and served as the Chair of the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee from 2009 to 2015.

Over the past 18 years he has published extensively on the role of the secondary school science department in shaping, and being shaped by, the professional learning of science teachers. His work includes 68 peer reviewed articles, four books, and eight book chapters. He is currently a Co-Editor in *Chief of the Journal of Science Teacher Education*.

In 2017 he was awarded Lakehead's highest honour for teaching, the Distinguished Instructor Award. He is an active member of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, and also serves as the External Examiner for the science education program at the University of Hong Kong.



Faculty Publishes FAQ Resource for Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Teacher Candidates

The Faculty has published a new resource, "**Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Teacher**

Candidates: Frequently Asked Questions." This resource, written in a Q&A style, addresses policies, protocol, and processes that relate to supporting transgender and gender-nonconforming teacher candidates in the Bachelor of Education program. It addresses questions concerning how to change one's name in Lakehead's records and online systems, where to find gender-neutral washrooms on campus, what options exist for honorifics to be used on practica (e.g., Ms., Mr., or Mx—pronounced "mix," among other options), and more.

In the document, the Faculty acknowledges the valued participation of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the teaching profession—and recognizes that transgender teacher candidates and those who are gender non-conforming (but not necessarily transgender) are "preparing to join a profession with norms that have historically referenced a strict gender binary." For example, in the current political climate, some transgender advocacy and programming has been met by fervent attempts to stifle that progress.

The Faculty thanks Dr. Lee Airtton and Dr. Michelle Searle from Queen's University, who created a template for the document and shared it with Lakehead and other Faculties of Education.



Dr. Gerald Walton Receives Contribution to Teaching Award

Dr. Gerald Walton (Professor, Faculty of Education, Thunder Bay) has received a Contribution to Teaching award for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The Committee noted Gerald's commitment to excellence in teaching and dedication to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. In

particular, the Committee recognized that Gerald's teaching "stands out for its adherence to humane educational principles, as well as advocacy for the needs of all learners."

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They further noted that Gerald's efforts to create a sense of belonging among students has not gone unnoticed, as the students who nominated him spoke of his "unwavering support in all dimensions of academic life, going above and beyond to ensure their success."

Gerald explains that "it is a big honour that I was nominated by international students. Apart from guiding them on how to achieve at the graduate level, I felt it was important to validate challenges that many experience such as language barriers, culture shock, loneliness, homesickness, and even racism, that I have never had to face in my studies. I admire their courage to leave their home countries to study here and I said so a few times in class. I hold students to high standards, but I also wanted to recognize the hurdles that many, perhaps even most, international students face. It's wonderful to receive such praise in the form of a nomination for this award."



Lakehead Participates in Collaborative Project to Enhance Supports for Associate Teachers

What if faculties of education, teacher federations and school boards collaborated to provide a menu of supports for associate teachers?

That is the question guiding an ongoing project by the Ontario Teachers' Federation, involving Faculties of Education and local school boards at Lakehead University and Western University. The participants are working together to explore ways to enhance supports for Associate Teachers, culminating in the recent publication of an interim report.

As noted in the report, the role that Associate Teachers play in the professional learning and growth of teacher candidates cannot be overstated. Associate Teachers "serve as first mentors to our newest teachers, providing ongoing consulting, collaborating and coaching support during and often well beyond the practicum placement." As such, a goal of the project involves identifying ways to improve a faculty's relationships with Associate Teachers, as they work to induct teacher candidates into the profession.

The work began in 2022, with working groups comprised of members of school boards, Faculties of Education, and representatives from the Teacher Education Liaison Committee (TELC) and the Ontario Teachers Federation.

At Lakehead, the working group has focused on creating a tangible 'menu of supports' and opportunities for Associate Teachers to build relationships with the faculty, TELC, and board partners. The menu of supports centre around two major themes: (a) Heightened attention to the role and importance of Associate Teachers; and (b) Development of relationships characterized by trust, collaboration and reciprocal learning across roles.

Emerging from these two broad themes, multiple next steps have been identified, including hosting AT appreciation events, enhancing communication through the creation of an online information centre for Associate Teachers, using mentoring materials from AQ courses on leadership, and paying particular attention to mentoring needs for First Nations community-based Associate Teachers.



Dr. Ellen Field (left) and Sidney Howlett (right)

School Boards Must Do More to Address Climate Change: Research Findings from 2023 Review

A new report from Faculty of Education researchers highlights the need for greater commitment from Canadian school boards to address the climate crisis.

The report, "**Climate Leadership Within Canadian School Boards: 2023 Review**," published by Dr. Ellen Field (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education) and Sidney Howlett (MEd student and research analyst) benchmarks climate leadership practices across 380 Canadian school boards through policy indicators such as the existence of Climate Action Plans, climate emergency declarations, and the integration of climate change and greenhouse gas reduction goals into strategic or environmental and sustainability plans.

Overall, the report reveals a mixed landscape, where progress is limited but the potential for impact is immense. Other findings include:

- Among the review of policy indicators of the 380 school boards, only four had published Climate Action Plans: Toronto District School Board, Trillium Lakelands District School Board, Richmond School District, and Greater Victoria School District.
- Five school boards have environmental and sustainability plans, and nine have strategic plans that mention climate change or greenhouse gas reductions.
- Only 10 school boards in Canada (all in British Columbia and Ontario) have declared a climate emergency.

"School boards are pivotal actors in shaping the educational landscape and inspiring future generations," says Ellen. "The potential impact of school board leadership across all schools in Canada, if greenhouse gas emission targets were set and acted upon in line with the Paris Agreement, could have a ripple effect in reducing emissions and improving climate literacy across Canada."

In addition to the report, Ellen and Sidney have provided resources for school boards to support the development of climate action plans, including specific examples of school board leadership, a pledge for superintendents to commit to driving climate action within their school boards, and a way for school boards to provide updates on new climate policies.

Six Faculty Instructors Present at the International Symposium on Democracy, Global Citizenship and Transformative Education

Six Faculty of Education instructors—Dr. Elanur Yilmaz Na, Dr. Leigh-Anne Ingram, Dr. Ellen Field, Dr. Gary Plum, Dr. Sharla Mskokii Peltier, and Dr. Michael Hoechsmann—participated, as presenters and/or Chairs, in sessions of the “UNESCO International Symposium on Democracy, Global Citizenship and Transformative Education.”

The three-day **Symposium** in October had a theme of “Peace, Culture and Social Justice.” The Faculty of Education instructors presented on content including global citizenship, climate communication, Indigenous knowledge, and Indigenous data governance.

The Symposium included more than 50 sessions online and in person, and attendance was free-of-charge via Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube.



Dr. Elanur Yilmaz Na (Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Contract Lecturer, Orillia) was a panelist at a Symposium session titled “Disaster-risk reduction of climate communication and education: Exploring fossil fuel industry’s reach into information and education spaces.” Elanur is a disaster risk specialist, an educator and a futurist, and is currently working as a postdoctoral research fellow under the supervision of Dr. Ellen Field.



Remembered: Dr. Stan Dromisky

A passionate educator and “a kind man with a tremendous amount of time for students”, as described by one of his former students, Dr. Stan Drominsky was a Master at Lakehead Teachers’ College, served as a Trustee on the Lakehead Board of Education for 13 years, and culminated his career in education as a Professor at Lakehead’s Faculty of Education.

As noted in his **obituary**:

“Stan was always looking for ways to help others. His first teaching position was at Franklin School in Thunder Bay, where he

was offered the Principalship. As a principal, he made the effort to visit the parents of every student in the school and started the first ‘Home and School Association’ to ensure that no child went hungry. He also taught at Kingsway Park and Francis Street schools where he continued to show his unparalleled devotion to his students.

In 1988, Stan retired from Lakehead University as Professor Emeritus to embark on a zestful new journey into politics. He was

elected as Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay-Atikokan in 1993 and remained the MP for 11 years. Serving the community was essential to Stan and he was tireless in his humanitarian efforts, both locally and abroad.

Some of his more memorable contributions included a vast coordination of efforts to collect and deliver medication, clothing, school supplies, library books and bedding to the Children’s Hospital in Cuba, with similar extensive humanitarian and scholastic efforts in nations all around the globe. He was also a member of many local committees and associations, most notably Kinsman, K-40, Shriners, Masons, and the Rotary Club.”

Stan’s ultimate pride and joy was his family. As they wrote in his obituary, “Already, we miss Stan’s incredible sharp wit, sense of humour, his utmost compassion, kindness and endless wisdom, as well as his innate gift for capturing everyone’s attention with his vivid stories. He always believed in helping each other, being good to one another, being true to yourself, and most importantly—letting people know that you love them.”

In memory of Stan, the ‘Dr. Stan Dromisky Memorial Undergraduate Award’ was created. This award is for a full-time student entering Lakehead University in any program based on financial need and high academic standing of a minimum 80% average. Preference is given to students who have attended a high school in the District of Thunder Bay.

Photo by D. Malcolm



MEd Students Share Research on Generative AI and its Responsible Uses in Education

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), and its applications, are making headlines across the world, with countless fields being potentially impacted. The field of education is no exception, as the advancement of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, brings about new opportunities for learning and teaching. The technology also raises some serious academic and social concerns, however, including threats to integrity, bias and fairness issues, concerns regarding

a loss of critical thinking, and the threat of a depersonalized learning experience with reduced human interaction.

This past October, Lakehead University's annual "Teaching and Learning Week" focused on generative AI, and future AI capabilities in education. As part of the week's events, two Master of Education students—Himanshi Nagpal and Nicholas West—presented their research.

Himanshi Nagpal: "Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines: Are Universities Effectively Ensuring Academic Integrity in the Era of Generative AI?"

Himanshi (pictured right) explained in her presentation that ChatGPT can simulate human conversation, write convincing essays and research papers, and learn from user interactions to improve over time. For all of these reasons, it's an extremely powerful tool, but also one that raises serious questions relating to academic integrity and ethical AI use.

"Digging deeper into the policy implications of the rising use of generative AI in the academic field, I am working on a thesis with an aim to analyze the changes to Academic Integrity Policies of universities in Canada, written to deal with generative AI advancements that threaten academic integrity, with issues like plagiarism. My research throws light on the effectiveness of the changes done to the academic integrity policies of some universities, and whether Lakehead University should follow suit," she says.

In her presentation, she spoke to the content of Lakehead's web page: [Can students use ChatGPT and other AI tools at Lakehead?](#) and reviewed policies released by other universities to guide the use of AI in post-secondary institutions.

As one example, she noted that McGill University's policy surrounding AI use endorses five principles: (1) The University community is educated about what generative AI tools are, how they work, and the opportunities and challenges they entail; (2) University leadership and instructors ensure that when used, generative AI tools play a positive role in the accomplishment of the academic mission; (3) Instructors have autonomy to decide whether they will use an approved generative AI tool for their teaching and assessments; (4) Instructors remain responsible for comporting themselves according to the highest standards of academic integrity in



their use of generative AI tools; and (5) Students remain responsible for maintaining academic rigour, which involves both verifying the accuracy of information generated and acknowledging the use of generative AI tools, if applicable.

Himanshi highlighted the importance of fostering discussions about ethical AI use in the student community. She noted that students must understand the plagiarism concerns associated with ChatGPT, and honour instructors' individual decisions on whether (or how) its use is permitted. In instances where the use of ChatGPT is authorized, it should be cited and its use acknowledged, as uncited use equates to academic misconduct.

She also outlined pedagogical approaches for instructors who want to deter the use of ChatGPT in their courses. Some of the ideas discussed included designing multi-modal assessment strategies that are non-textual and skills-based; modifying assessment questions so that answers are to be applied to students' individual contexts, and requesting that students use only sources that require an institutional subscription, as ChatGPT cannot access such content. She also suggested that the staged submissions of papers (e.g., as outlines, notes, and drafts-in-progress), and using peer review in the classroom, can be helpful.

Ultimately, she suggested that the development of policies is important: "They are key to promoting ethical AI use, in this era of generative AI."

Nicholas West: "Generative AI as Teaching Assistants"

AI models are beginning to revolutionize classrooms, Nicholas West explains, and they may be used in productive ways as "teaching assistants."

Nicholas approached his research with the elementary school classroom in mind, examining possible uses of ChatGPT

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in the classroom. Some of these applications he outlined in his presentation included:

- Simplifying text. ChatGPT can simplify text to make it easier for young audiences, English language learners, and struggling readers to understand. As an example, Nicholas entered some text from *Harry Potter* into ChatGPT and asked it write a simpler version of the story, appropriate for very young readers.
- Translating text: ChatGPT can translate from some languages to others, making texts accessible to broader audiences.
- Editing text: ChatGPT can edit text, helping to refine drafts of students' work.
- Brainstorming ideas for lesson plans: Nicholas showed ChatGPT's suggestions for lesson planning after entering the prompt, "What are some ways for demonstrating sound as a wave to students?" and "incorporating Indigeneity in the Grade 5 Ontario science curriculum."
- Brainstorming ideas as a class: ChatGPT can generate writing prompts or questions for further exploration of given themes.
- "Ask the Robot Station": A classroom computer can provide a space for students to ask questions and extend their learning independently.

The use of ChatGPT in classrooms with younger students can bridge gaps in traditional teaching methods, but should be monitored, Nicholas noted. Tool training is needed on how to best use it, and in what contexts or circumstances. He added that "as we integrate AI further into educational settings, it's imperative to prioritize accuracy, constructive feedback, and data privacy, ensuring that the technology augments, rather than replaces, the human touch in teaching."



Above: a screenshot from Nicholas West's presentation. He stressed that as AI is further integrated into educational settings, it's important to make sure it is done in ethical, constructive ways.



Anishinaabemowin Phrases and Language Revitalization

Anishinaabemowin Boodawe means lighting the fire (*boodawe*) to keep the Ojibwe language (*Anishinaabemowin*) alive—and language revitalization is at the heart of the work of the Anishinaabemowin Boodawe Committee, an educational group in partnership with Red Rock Indian Band, Kinoomaadziwin Education Body, Superior Greenstone District School Board,

Superior North Catholic District School Board, the Ministry of Education, and Lakehead University's Keewatinase Indigenous Education (KIE) Department. Above are some of the committee's recent "Anishinaabemowin Phrases of the Week."

For information on events and language revitalization initiatives happening in schools, please see their [Facebook page](#).

Alumni Profiles



Jerri-Lynn Orr **Indigenous Curriculum Specialist, Lakehead University Teaching Commons**

Graduated from the Master of Education program, specialization in Indigenous Education (2020)

A member of the Cree/Metis community from Winnipeg, with family roots in Bigstone Cree Nation, Jerri-Lynn Orr received an Aboriginal Languages diploma and BA/BEd through a joint program with the University of Winnipeg and Red River College, before moving to Thunder Bay and working for seven years as Lakehead's Indigenous Transition

Year Program Coordinator. During this time, she also completed the Master of Education program. Jerri-Lynn has extensive experience in curriculum development focused on Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, and has taught in high school, adult education, and post-secondary education contexts. We sat down with her to learn more about her role, her perspectives on reconciliation, and advice for faculty looking to advance the Indigenization of higher education.

Tell us about your current role at the university.

"I joined the Teaching Commons in May 2020. As the Indigenous Curriculum Specialist, I work with all levels of the university towards Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. These are ongoing processes that involve a lot of learning and unlearning of settler colonialism. One of my goals is to give people a foundation of understanding, which goes back to what happened pre-contact, all the way up until residential schools, and the policies and legislation put into place that led us to where we are today.

I facilitate many workshops inside and outside of the university. The Teaching Commons is hosting a series of workshops with the university Deans, as we know that a commitment to decolonization and Indigenization needs to come from leadership. We are also hosting a series of ongoing workshops with Student Affairs, asking the question of how we can Indigenize the part of the university that supports students throughout their whole journey, from admission to graduation.

There's a lot of community engagement with my job. I'm part of different Education Councils and have done reconciliation training with the Thunder Bay Police. I regularly connect with Indigenous communities, knowing how important consultation with the community is.

I am also part of the Provost Task Force on the Evaluation of the Indigenous Content Requirement, to review it and establish a framework for academic units to use in developing courses. We have some amazing people on the task force who have done a lot of research and community consultation, to ensure we are working in a good way."

You are a co-founder of the national Indigenous Curriculum Specialist Network (ICSN). What is the role of this network?

"The ICSN is a national network that formed three years ago, with my friend and colleague Mona Tolley from the University of Ottawa, and grew with the support of our friend and colleague Sara Mai Chitty from Western University. It's currently comprised of Indigenous Curriculum Specialists from across the nation. We have two streams: ICSN for anyone who supports Indigenous curriculum development in a post-secondary institution, and ICSN Tea Time, specifically for those who self-identify as Indigenous.

We founded the network to share challenges, successes, strategies, techniques, tools and resources with each other. Together, we work to support faculty and staff at post-secondary institutions in engaging respectfully with Indigenous Peoples' knowledges and histories.

This past October we had our inaugural ICSN Gathering, which was our first in-person meeting after working together remotely for three years! It was a three-day event where we were welcomed by Kitigan Zibi Anshinabeg First Nation for on-the-land-learning, which involved learning the Pike Teaching, moose hide tanning, and other things. The next two days we worked at the University of Ottawa in the Faculty of Social Sciences to collaborate on resource development, and held a Zoom webinar for all of our universities to join as we presented our work."

What drives you to do the work that you do?

"My mom, my Kohkom, and other family members who were/are residential school survivors are the reasons why I do this work. I've seen the impacts of the residential school era first-hand in my family, and I do the work in honour of them.

Doing this work can be heavy and it is easy to get triggered. This isn't a job where you can just close the door at the end of the day; we carry this work into our everyday lives and sometimes that's the challenging piece of it. Reading constantly about the tragedies of what happened in residential schools is difficult.

Still, I believe wholeheartedly in the power of education. This work is about changing minds and changing *hearts*. So often, we're used to being in our minds in post-secondary institutions, while ignoring our hearts or the emotional dimensions of ourselves, including our spiritual selves. An important part of the work we are doing with Indigenous education is bringing our whole selves to our work. I believe that not only changing minds, but changing hearts, is key to decolonizing."

What advice do you have for faculty and instructors who are looking to contribute to Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation in higher education?

"One thing I often hear in my role as Indigenous Curriculum Specialist is that people have fear, and do not know how to broach this work. My message to them is this: do not let your fear hold you back! Be okay with making mistakes and with 'not knowing'—we are all learning together. I'd also say that it's important to understand the history of the Land, where your feet are planted. Of course, there is so much more, but these two foundational things will give you a good start. Move ahead with that learning and know that there are so many good resources available to educators."



AJ Keene

Superintendent of Education/ Board Math Lead

Lakehead Public Schools

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program (1994)

“I came to Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, for the 1993-1994 school year, after completing an undergraduate degree at the University of Windsor. I loved my year at the faculty and the connections I made with peers (some of which have lasted my whole career), and my exposure to aspects of education I didn't know about. I'm a southern Ontario boy, but the beauty of the north was a huge draw for me—it's why I never left.

I am currently Superintendent of Education and Board Math Lead at Lakehead Public Schools. The Math Lead role is a new position, created to lead and coordinate targeted improvement in mathematics achievement for Kindergarten to Grade 9 students. In April of 2023, the province unveiled an investment to help students build math skills and knowledge, and this included introducing one math lead per board to spearhead the implementation of the curriculum and standardize training, as well as providing additional supports for math coaches in the classroom.

I am focused on bringing my prior learning to this new role; in particular, my work with Indigenous education and how culturally relevant pedagogy in mathematics can positively impact Lakehead Public School students. In my previous superintendent role, I led Kindergarten to Grade 8 programming, Indigenous Education, and other portfolios, as well as supervising schools. I have also worked as an education officer with the Ministry of Education, writing math resources and training staff and teachers across the province in math reform (some of this work was done alongside Dr. Alex Lawson, Professor Emerita of the Faculty of Education).

My newer role is much more focused: it involves identifying priority math needs in the system, planning system reform, coordinating resources, supporting target schools, and reporting/accountability to the Ministry. It is also important for me to be a voice for the north in this role, as our student profile and needs are different here than in other parts of the province.

Work in the educational field is always changing, and schools are much different places than they were as recently as 10 years ago. In an even shorter timeframe, the pandemic has changed things further. It has never been a more challenging time to be a teacher in Ontario! No part of this job is easy: it requires a commitment to learning, change, and of course the students—for the entirety of one's career. That being said, there is no job more important than making connections with kids and providing them a positive experience in schools.”

Courtenay Costanzo

Core French Teacher, Lakehead Public Schools

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program (2020); Master of Education program with specialization in Social Justice Education (2021)

“For three years after graduating from the BEd program, I was in and out of various contracts and supply teaching for the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board and Lakehead Public Schools. In September 2023, I secured a permanent position teaching Core French with Lakehead Public Schools.

I have always been one to advocate about the importance of learning French! Learning a second language not only provides students with more opportunities professionally, it also allows them to develop an appreciation for the language and culture. Further, studies have shown that when students learn French as a second language, their competencies in English improve as well.

Personally, I value the French education I received as a student because without it, along with my post-secondary studies in French, I would not have the career that I do. I try to make my classes extremely engaging, because I want my students to have a positive experience learning the language. This involves a balanced literacy approach where I integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing components in every class. This makes the 50-minute blocks fly by, and keeps students engaged and motivated. By planning my classes in

this way, students can look back on their education experiences positively—even if they stop taking French classes after Grade 9.

My time with the Faculty of Education was positive and allowed me to network with others, build relationships with future colleagues, and build my understanding of the teaching profession. My practica provided me with invaluable experience to grow as a teacher candidate and a new professional, while deepening my understanding of classroom management and teaching strategies and building relationships with students and staff at schools in my community.

My advice to graduates of the BEd program is to start taking Additional Qualifications (AQ) courses right away upon graduation! AQ courses can open up many doors for you and your professional endeavours. It's also a way to continue being a reflective practitioner, and improving your pedagogy as you continue your career.”



Anishinaabemowik and the Library Launch Digital Archive of Indigenous Languages Program Documents

After many months of work, a team comprising of members of the Faculty of Education and the Library are proud to announce that many historical documents and writings of the Faculty's Native and Indigenous Language Instructors' Programs (NLIP & ILIP) have been digitized and made publicly available.

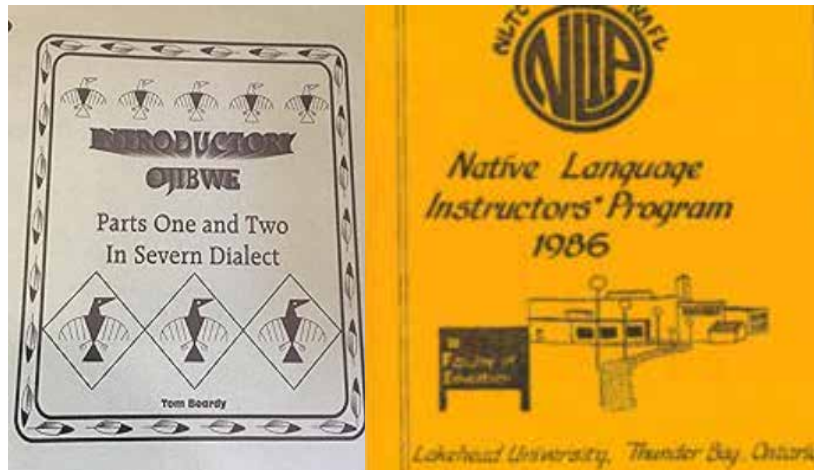
The **online archive** of historical documents is an open-access, publicly available collection that includes teaching materials, newsletters, faculty/staff handbooks, yearbooks, and promotional materials. The program materials date back to the early 1980s, when NLIP officially began at Lakehead University. (The Historical Timeline is shown on the next page).

Spearheaded by Tyler Armstrong (Program Coordinator of Anishinaabemowik – the Indigenous Language Teachers' Program) and Gisella Scalese (Education Librarian), in collaboration with University Archivist Sara Janes, a central goal of the archive creation was to preserve materials from the former NLIP and ILIP programs.

"One of the project goals behind the digitization was connected to Anishinaabemowik's work of language preservation and revitalization. Another goal was to give these materials new life and new audiences—honouring everyone who has gone through the NLIP and ILIP programs, and made Indigenous language teaching what it is today," says Gisella. "We're excited to share these materials widely, so that current students, faculty, and others around the world can access these important language resources."

One of the exciting sections of the archive is the Teaching Materials, which include Ojibwe language instruction materials created by instructors. Gisella says that these materials are sought after and requested by teachers across Canada.

As additional materials are located, they will be added to the digital collection.



Pictured above: Course materials, such as the 360-page "Introductory Ojibwe" text, and historical documents, such as the 1986 Native Language Instructors' Program yearbook, are available as part of the digital archive.



Above: Tyler Armstrong (Program Coordinator of Anishinaabemowik) and Gisella Scalese (Education Librarian).

Many Individuals to Thank

In addition to the work of Tyler, Gisella, and Sara, the Faculty of Education and Anishinaabemowik would like to thank Alexis Paulusma (Library Assistant) and Alyson Chasse (Summer Work Study student) for their assistance in digitizing the documents. Further, the entire project was supported by the guidance and encouragement of Dr. John O'Meara, Professor Emeritus and former Dean of the Faculty of Education.





Historical Timeline of Anishinaabemowik (Indigenous Language Teachers' Program)

Lakehead University's Anishinaabemowik has a 50-year history, including expansions, name changes, and certification processes to become what it is today.

- 1973:** An experimental Native Language Teachers' Training Program (NLTT) began in Fort Frances, Ontario, and later expanded to London and Brantford, Ontario.
- 1978:** A second experimental program for teachers of Native Language Arts was established in Thunder Bay.
- 1981:** Both programs merged, to become a permanent offering through Lakehead University's Faculty of Education in Thunder Bay. The program began as a diploma program and officially became known as the "Native Language Instructors' Program" (NLIP). Two streams were offered: Native as a First Language, and Native as a Second Language. The program focused on the Algonquian languages of Western Ojibwe/Central Ojibwe and Cree.
- 1983:** The first cohort of students graduated from Lakehead University's Native Language Instructors' Program.
- 1985:** The Ontario Ministry of Education announced a new policy regarding Native Language Education, and a teacher certification program was added.
- 1986:** The NLIP program branched into three program streams: the Native Language Teachers' Certification (NLTC), Native as a First Language (NAFL), and Native as a Second Language (NASL).
- 1990:** The Native Language Summer Institute was established, offering Advanced Native Language/Linguistic courses for students who graduated from the NLTC and NASL programs.
- 2015:** The Native Language Instructors' Program (NLIP) was accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers.
- 2019:** NLIP was re-accredited as the Indigenous Language Instructors' Program (ILIP).
- 2021:** The program was gifted the name Anishinaabemowik during a Chiiskan (Turtle Lodge) naming ceremony. Following a pause during the Covid-19 pandemic, the program continues today, offering programming for Indigenous language teachers and evolving further to become a more community-based and Aki- (Earth) based program.



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