2025 Atlantic Universities' Teaching Showcase Schedule

8:15-9:00 a.m. | First Floor Wu Centre | Registration and coffee
9:00-10:15 a.m. | Chancellor Room

- Welcome from UNB's President – Dr. Paul Mazerolle
- Keynote: Reimagining Higher Education in the Context of Generative AI: What Remains Human? – Dr. Toni Roberts

10:15-10:30 a.m. | First Floor Wu Centre | Break
10:30-12:00 p.m. | Concurrent Sessions I

- Room 203 – Two-Eyed Seeing and Indigenous Pedagogies
- Room 204 – Navigating AI in Teaching and Learning
- Room 208 – Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning
- Room 209 – Building Resilient and Inclusive Learning Environments
- Room 210 – Workshop: Professorial Pastimes: Connecting Pleasurable Pursuits to Improved Pedagogy

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. | Lunch - Chancellor Room First Floor Wu Centre
1:00 - 1:45 p.m. | Meet the 2025 AAU Teaching and Leadership Award Winners | Chancellor Room

- AAU Distinguished Teaching Award
- AAU Distinguished Teaching Award
- AAU Anne Marie Mackinnon Educational Leadership Award

1:55 - 3:15 p.m. | Concurrent Sessions II

- Room 203 – Innovations in Curriculum Development and Program Design
- Room 204 – Rethinking Assessment: Equity, Agency, and Preparation
- Room 208 – Transforming Nursing Education
- Room 209 – Workshop: True grit: Fostering Grit and Resilience in Today's Students
- Room 210 – Workshop: Creating Time and Space to Rediscover the Joy of Learning - Reflections from the 3M National Teaching Fellows, 2024

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. | First Floor Wu Centre | Break
3:30 - 4:50 p.m. | Concurrent Sessions III

- Room 203 – Inclusive Classrooms and Care-Centred Pedagogies
- Room 204 – Beyond the Grade: Stress, Process, and Creative Pedagogy
- Room 208 – Building Inclusive Learning Communities: On Campus, Online, and Beyond
- Room 209 – Workshop: The Africentric B.Ed. Cohort: Reimagining Access to Education through Africentricity and Ubuntu
- Room 210 – Workshop: Mindful classrooms: integrating mindfulness-based activities in your teaching practice' workshop.

Keynote: Reimagining Higher Education in the Context of Generative AI: What Remains Human?

Dr. Toni Roberts, Mt. Allison University

Generative AI is reshaping the landscape of content and knowledge creation, communication, and assessment. Universities face a profound question: What is the role of educators and learners in a world where machines can mimic understanding? As educators, we must reflect critically and creatively on the evolving goals of higher education in the age of artificial intelligence.

Rather than framing GenAI solely as a threat or a tool, we will explore it as a catalyst— forcing us to confront what truly matters in teaching and learning. What do we value when content is abundant, answers are instant, and creativity is increasingly automated? How do we cultivate empathy, justice, critical consciousness, ethical reasoning, and the ability to live with ambiguity—qualities and values that resist automation but are essential to our shared future?

Our challenge is to reimagine curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy with an emphasis on what remains distinctly human. We need a view of higher education not as a site of resistance to technology, but as a space for reasserting purpose, fostering belonging, and preparing students to shape a world where "intelligence" may no longer be exclusive to people—but meaning still is.

Biography:

Toni Roberts is an award-winning, first-generation educator and recipient of both the D2L National Teaching Innovation Award and the prestigious 3M National Teaching Fellowship.

A bit of a trailblazer in academia, Toni was the first man accepted into the Women's Studies program at Dalhousie University and the first admitted to the Feminist Studies master's program at the University of Toronto. Their academic background spans a wide range of disciplines, including chemistry, environmental studies, philosophy, and education.

Toni has more than 20 years of teaching and research experience at Mount Allison University. Earlier in their career, they worked with the Department of Education and the National Research Council to develop standards and specifications for sharing learning materials across digital platforms. This work contributed to international standards such as the Accessibility for All framework and the Learning Object Metadata specification, which was adopted as an IEEE standard to ensure interoperability and accessibility for disabled users.

A dedicated advocate for justice and equity, Toni brings a feminist, inclusive, and student-centred approach to their teaching. Their pedagogical practice incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL), student agency theory, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles to create environments where students feel supported, engaged, and empowered to succeed.

Toni holds a continuing appointment in Sociology and serves as the Purdy Crawford Professor of Teaching and Learning. Their teaching focuses on topics such as the body, gender, sexuality, digital and environmental sociology, and they regularly teach in disciplines including psychology, sociology, and environmental studies. Courses taught include Gender Relations, Human Sexuality, Sociology of Sex and Sexuality, Representations of Social Problems, Digital Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Sociology of the Body, and Trump and Society. The latter culminated in a public Summit on Trump, where students presented their research findings to the broader community.

Toni's research interests include student engagement, community-building in online learning, queer and feminist theory, poststructuralism, critical theory, and the intersections of technology and gender performance. Their publications reflect these diverse interests, covering topics such as student engagement across different delivery modes, metadata standards for learning technologies, and representations of masculinity in horror films.

As Director of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, Toni champions justice-centred pedagogy and works to support transformative, inclusive teaching practices. One of their most meaningful initiatives is THRIVE (Teaching in Higher Education for Radical Inclusion, Values, and Equity), a program they co-created with faculty, staff, and students. THRIVE supports first-generation, Indigenous, queer, disabled, and other systemically excluded students as they transition to university—not just as learners, but as whole people—helping them to thrive, grow, and succeed.

Toni has secured nearly $400,000 in funding for students enrolled in their experiential courses, which has enabled them to eliminate course fees and provide technology support directly to students. Together with colleagues, Toni is currently engaged in an application for $12 million in funding through the SSHRC Transformation stream, a project aimed at creating radical, systemic change in higher education. Toni says "Fingers and toes crossed", they will get the funding.

Outside of academia, Toni is a committed activist, having been involved in initiatives addressing homelessness, environmental justice, anti-poverty work, and other social justice movements. For Toni, teaching is a natural extension of this activism—a means of advancing equity and justice within the classroom and the university.

In their personal life, Toni enjoys camping, hiking, and sea kayaking with their dog, Trinh. (For Toni's 50th birthday, they hiked the full length of Hadrian's Wall across England.) Trinh, for their part, enjoys swimming, stealing socks, and being adorable.

[Back to Schedule]

Concurrent Sessions I: Room 203 | Two-Eyed Seeing and Indigenous Pedagogies

10:30 – 12:00 p.m.
Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

10:30 – 10:50 | Two-Eyed Seeing: Tending to Classroom Frictions as Pedagogy

10:50 – 11:10 | Bridging Cultures: Strengthening Indigenous Voices in German Language Classes- Through Translation, Exhibitions, and Concerts

11:10 – 11:30 | Connecting with Indigenous Ways of Knowing as Settler Educators

11: 30 – 11:50 | Decolonizing Nursing Education and Building Awareness

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Two-Eyed Seeing: Tending to Classroom Frictions as Pedagogy

Presenters:
Riley Olstead, Saint Francis Xavier University
Emma Dixon, Saint Francis Xavier University

Abstract:
In 2015, the *TRC* (2015) invited Canadian post-secondary institutions to ethically engage Indigenous communities and knowledge systems toward reconciliation, with the aim of correcting the historical use of education in settler colonial endeavors. Our presentation reflects on our effort to respond to the *TRC* (2015), through a classroom experiment centring Two-Eyed Seeing. Two-Eyed Seeing (*etuaptmumk*) is an ontological principle developed by Mi'kmaq Elder, Albert Marshall and involves weaving both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, emphasizing the strengths of each perspective for the benefit of all (Bartlett et al. 2012). While Two-Eyed Seeing is increasingly taken up by academics, research shows that frictions and frustrations often emerge as colonial power relations continue to shape knowledge and relationships (Bujold et al., 2022).

Following Indigenous pedagogies (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Wilson, 2008) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2017; hooks, 1994), rather than smoothing over these tensions, we purposely work with the difficulties as sites of learning, guided by Indigenous-informed pedagogies inspired by the Gesturing Toward Decolonial Futures (GTDF) Collective and especially Stein et al.'s (2022) *depth inquiries*. *Depth inquiries are* pedagogic practices emphasizing relational transformation rather than knowledge extraction and therefore helpful in our engagement with Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett et al. 2012) as a practical, relational form of learning.

However, as we moved more deeply into 'relational transformation' as the core of our classroom practice, we noticed strong 'epistemic frictions'—ways in which colonial registers, metrics and objectives animated at multiple scales (interpersonal, institutional, cultural) pushed against the emergence of Indigenous and other exiled ways of being and knowing. Our talk will offer reflection on how we encountered these frictions as pedagogic signposts pointing to 'opportunities to interrupt' the normative flow of colonial structures in the relational field.

Our project aligns with the AAU conference theme of *Belonging* by centring decolonial pedagogic practices, ethics and responsibilities in classroom engagements. Our research is relevant to a multidisciplinary audience interested in how teachers might ethically engage with the calls of the *TRC* (2015) in their classroom practices. But it also is relevant to a deepening of our collective understanding of how Two-Eyed Seeing might be respectfully, brought into classroom contexts, not as a knowledge-sharing framework, but as a lived practice of relational ethics for decolonial, transformative learning in higher education.

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Bios:

Riley Olstead is a mother, a gardener and teaches and does research in the areas of settler colonialism, decolonisation and especially the ethics of settler academic responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Her work is focussed on climate change, Indigenous/settler relations and pedagogies of a decolonial future. Riley is just completing a speculative fiction novel and enjoys drawing crows.

Emma Dixon is a settler who is highly influenced by her love of Atlantic Waters and the breathtaking landscapes which surround her home in Unama'ki (Cape Breton). She is working towards an Honours Sociology program with a subsidiary in Development Studies at Saint Francis Xavier University. She is currently the Development Studies Society's vice president and the Sociology Society's co-president. Emma is an active member of the Elder Youth Alliance, which is guided by Elder Albert Marshall, to practice the concepts of Etuaptmumk when bringing together Indigenous and Settler youth and elders. Most importantly, Emma is a daughter, sister, and friend. Her goal is to focus her energy on promoting the relationality of all living and non-living entities of Mother Earth whilst causing an interruption within her social and academic environments by advocating and weaving together exiled ways of knowing with Western ideologies.

[Back to Room Overview]

Bridging Cultures: Strengthening Indigenous Voices in German Language Classes- Through Translation, Exhibitions, and Concerts

Presenter:

Marlis Lade, Modern Languages Department, Saint Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Abstract:

Integrating Indigenous topics into the curriculum offers opportunities but poses challenges. This paper explores an innovative teaching approach to the theme "Mi'kmaw culture and language in the German class setting," moving beyond traditional views to

include Indigenous culture, especially that of a Mi'kmaw artist, in German language education at Saint Francis Xavier University (StFX) in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Over recent years, the initiative has involved collaborative projects with renowned Mi'kmaw artist Alan Syliboy, including creating printed materials and organizing concerts for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. These materials include translations of his children's books The Thundermaker, The Daily Drum, and Wolverine and Little Thunder, as well as two essays by students titled "Painting is My Life" and "Our Journey with Alan Syliboy." Various presentations and events with Alan Syliboy have been documented and compiled into booklets. The objectives of these projects are multifaceted: to introduce students to the rich Indigenous/Mi'kmaw culture and foster a deeper understanding of Indigenous/Mi'kmaw history and culture through engagement with primary sources in German translation. This highlights the complexities of translating texts into a foreign language and underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity.

Our work supports the university's commitment to reconciliation by fostering intercultural dialogue and creating a more inclusive educational environment. Additionally, authentic and current German texts give German speakers access to an authentic Indigenous voice. This paper examines the challenges and benefits of translating Indigenous voices into a foreign language, highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity and the unique opportunities this offers for German language students. The author reflects on her role as an educator, fostering cultural exchange and encouraging students to engage with Indigenous topics. Over time, the bridge the students cross may gradually fade, allowing them to build their connections. The success of this initiative, demonstrated by increased student participation and a growing awareness of Indigenous history, shows how this collaboration can deepen understanding of cultural exchange and reconciliation efforts within StFX and the broader community.

Bios:
Since 2023, Marlis Lade has been a part-time instructor in the Modern Languages Department at Saint Francis Xavier University, teaching various courses: German 101/102, 201, and 202. We rotate between a film course and a business course. In 20121, she received the Outstanding Teaching award, for which she was nominated each year thereafter. She celebrates German Day at STFX every year, inviting members of business, culture, and politics. The 18th German Day at StFX was in 2025. She has also taken a small group of students to Germany, including Berlin, Hamburg, and Stuttgart, for fifteen years. Since 2016, she has been working closely with Mi'kmaq artist Alan Syliboy, translating his children's books, organising concerts with his band The Thundermakers, and hosting art exhibitions.

Connecting with Indigenous Ways of Knowing as Settler Educators

Presenter:

Shawn Xiong, Ph.D., Dalhousie University

Abstract:

 "… we did go blind, … blind but seeing, blind people who can see, but do not see. (Saramago, 1995)". This quote speaks to a form of blindness that goes beyond physical sight—it's about a lack of awareness or recognition of crucial truths. This idea can be powerfully applied to the context of the truth and reconciliation process in Canadian Higher Education. In Canada, the truth and reconciliation process is about acknowledging and addressing the historical and ongoing injustices faced by Indigenous peoples, particularly those inflicted by residential schools. The concept of "seeing but not seeing" can be related to the way many people and institutions have historically been aware of Indigenous issues yet have not fully recognized or understood their depth and implications. For many, there's a tendency to "see" the surface issues without engaging with the profound truths about systemic injustice, cultural erasure, and trauma. This is reflected in the persistent gaps between awareness and meaningful action, as many people remain at the step of reading off the prescribed land acknowledgement as part or sometimes sole effort towards reconciliation in education.

The lack of meaningful action may be due to what J.P. Restoule (2011) described as "benign resistance": a phenomenon whereby settler educators express mixed and sometimes cyclic emotions such as hope, curiosity, responsibility, guilt, doubt, hesitation, and fear to the extent that they retreat into inaction. While these emotions are real, what can be masqueraded underneath are acknowledged or unacknowledged privileges. These privileges are unintentionally shifting the responsibility of dismantling systemic racism to those who are most oppressed, under the guise of uplifting and creating space for marginalized voices (Evans & Moore, 2015).

As settler educators, how we take meaningful, responsible and respectful actions to connect with Indigenous ways of knowing and further incorporate them into our own lines of work? How can we do this without burdening Indigenous partners? In this collaborative session guided by the members of SoTL Canada Writing Group, we will:

- Address the "benign resistance" about engaging with Indigenous knowledges as settler educators.
- Recognize and appreciate the shared challenges and solutions from hearing about the presenters' own learning journeys.
- Reflect on realistic strategies for moving forward on your own learning journeys towards Indigenous knowledges.

Together we'd like to acknowledge that engaging with Indigenous knowledges as settlers may lead to ongoing insecurity about our capacity to learn about and teach elements of Indigenous knowledges. This is a process that can cause discomfort, pain and anxiety. However, as Solomon (2014) said, "We don't seek painful experiences that hew our identities, but we seek our identities in the wake of painful experiences.". Just as we always tell our students "Don't be afraid of making mistakes in learning", it's now time for us to embody and demonstrate this fundamental skill through taking responsible actions in truth & reconciliation.

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Bio:

Dr. Shawn Xiong is primarily appointed as the instructor for the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology in the Faculty of Medicine to coordinate and supervise undergraduate teaching laboratories and introductory Biochemistry courses. Concurrently, Shawn also serves as the faculty associate for Dalhousie' Center of Learning & Teaching. As a life-long learner, Shawn has been engaged with DBER and SoTL research to improve his teaching and his students' learning experiences and outcomes. Shawn is a member of SoTL Canada writing group and has recently been selected as a research fellow for the 2025-27 Elon University Multi-Institutional Summer Research Seminar.

[Back to Room Overview]

Decolonizing Nursing Education and Building Awareness

Presenters:
Adam Elliott, MN NP, Cape Breton University
Dr. D. Beverly McKee, RN, PhD
Courtney Pennell, MN(student), RN
Dawn Googoo, MN RN, Dalhousie University
Emily Peter-Paul, MEd RN
Amy Rockwell, MN MEd RN

Maddie Gallant PhD(c), RN

Abstract:
Postsecondary institutions are increasingly called to confront colonial legacies and create curricula that are inclusive, relational, and equity-driven. This is imperative in nursing education, given the profession's responsibility to provide culturally safe and responsive care with Indigenous communities. This presentation shares insights from the development of Acadia University's inaugural nursing program, that is grounded in a Two-Eyed Seeing approach and created in partnership with Mi'kmaq nurses from Tajikeimɨk, the Mi'kmaw health and wellness organization. Our co-creation approach integrates Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, doing, and being, learning with and from one another, identifying what nursing education has been missing. Indigenous voices are at the heart of this inaugural program. Reimagining curriculum development cannot happen without Indigenous people; true transformation requires Indigenous leadership, relationships, and respect at every stage.

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Bios:
Adam Elliott is a white settler from Newfoundland and Labrador where he earned a Bachelor of Nursing from Memorial University of Newfoundland. He went on to complete a, Nurse Practitioner designation from Athabasca University and spent much of his career privileged to work with First Nations communities across the country, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba. Adam is now an Assistant Professor at Cape Breton University in partnership with Acadia University in the School of Nursing and is proud to help build the curriculum for the new Nursing program at Acadia in partnership with Mi'kmaw nurses from Nova Scotia.

Beverly McKee, a settler, is an Assistant Professor with Cape Breton University at Acadia University. A graduate of UNB she holds a PhD from the University of Victoria. A dedicated health care practitioner, educator and research scientist she has worked in numerous

capacities from senior policy/program analyst and Director of Population Health with the Government of Nunavut, in senior management /consulting positions with federal and First Nations organizations, and as a Nurse Practitioner from coast to coast to coast. She is passionate about addressing systemic racism, ongoing colonialism in health care education, and the promotion of Indigenous knowledges and voices.

Courtney Pennell, in 2015, began her nursing career at IWK Health, specializing in pediatric oncology, nephrology, and hematology. Her work expanded into research on pain experiences of Indigenous children and youth. In 2021, she became IWK's first Indigenous Health Consultant while pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing at Dalhousie. She co-led cultural safety initiatives, an Indigenous Health Strategy, and a Smudging policy. In 2024, she joined Tajikeimik as a Mi'kmaq Indigenous Nurse Education Specialist—a role that aligns with her passion for community, advocacy, and education, and her commitment to supporting the next generation of Mi'kmaq nurses.

Dawn Googoo is a Mi'kmaw woman from We'koqma'q L'nue'kati. After high school, she joined the military before earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Nursing. Her journey through higher education was challenging, and she witnessed many other Indigenous students struggle within systems not built for them. Feeling privileged to have learned how to navigate life away from her community, Dawn began supporting and advocating for Indigenous learners in postsecondary spaces. She believes that higher education must also learn to create a culturally safe, relational approach that truly supports the success and wellbeing of Indigenous students.

Emily Peter-Paul is a Mi'kmaw registered nurse from Metepenagiag Mi'kmaw Nation. She grew up in Sitansisk Wolastoqey Nation, NB, and now lives in Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, NS, with her three daughters and partner. Emily graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2017 and completed her Master of Education with a concentration on health in 2023, both from St. Francis Xavier University (STFX). She now works at STFX as Mi'kmaw Indigenous Nurse Education Specialist with Tajikeimɨk that supports Indigenous nursing learners. She also teaches Indigenous perspectives on health and healing at the university, which is currently a nursing elective.

Amy Rockwell **is** a white settler from rural Nova Scotia. She is a mum, a daughter, a sister, and friend who graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (Dal) f,Master of Nursing in 2012 (Dal) and will graduate in 2026 with a Master of Education (Health cohort) from St. Francis Xavier University (STFX). She has taught in undergraduate nursing education for over twenty years while still working as a bedside nurse   She Sheholds a strong interest and investment in raising the racial consciousness of all students in nursing studies and is a strong ally in Indigenous culture as a nurse, educator, and community member.

Maddie Gallant, a white settler, is an Assistant Professor at the Acadia Expansion Site at Cape Breton University, a PhD candidate at Dalhousie University, and a Perinatal Nurse Consultant with the Reproductive Care Program of Nova Scotia. Maddie has been immersed in clinical practice caring with pregnant persons, birthparents, and newborns for nearly a decade as a Registered Nurse. Maddie's emerging program of research is embedded within implementation science and incorporates integrated knowledge translation at the core. Maddie, an honored ally, is deeply committed to advancing equity as a registered nurse in education, research and clinical practice.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions I: Room 204 | Navigating AI in Teaching and Learning

10:30 -12:00 p.m.
Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

10:30 -10:50 | Reconsidering the Transformative Role of Innovation by Artificial Intelligence and Ethics in Higher Education

10:50 – 11:10 | Empowering AI For Teaching Excellence

11:10 – 11:30 | Red, Yellow, Green: A User-Friendly Framework for Syllabus Language and Assignment Flexibility with Generative AI

11:30-11:50 | What Work is Worth Doing?: Care, Connectivity, and AI in Teaching

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Reconsidering the Transformative Role of Innovation by Artificial Intelligence and Ethics in Higher Education

Presenter: Jagath Jayaprakash, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled education technology (EdTech) is fueling a revolution in higher education's teaching and learning landscape (McDonald et al., 2025). This scenario presents game-changing opportunities for innovative pedagogy as well as complex ethical dilemmas. Generative AI (GenAI), powered by LLMs (large language models) like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Llama, has become more advanced and is widely used by students (*How Will ChatGPT and Other AI Tools Change Schools and Learning?*, 2023). Meanwhile, virtual tutors and automated grading systems have become common; educators and institutions are facing critical questions about honesty and integrity. Questions also arose about fostering critical thinking (Al-Zahrani, 2024), job loss due to AI replacing teachers (World Economic Forum, 2023), and the growing influence of tech companies on the education landscape (Kak et al., 2023). Adaptive learning and personalized pathways powered by AI have enormous potential in improving student engagement and success (Dempere et al., 2023). To make this happen ethically, there is a necessity for robust ethical frameworks that will bring fairness, safeguard data privacy and security, and ensure transparency (Jayaprakash, 2025). Educators require extensive and continuous professional development and training to successfully tackle the challenges and opportunities created by AI-enabled EdTech (Jayaprakash, 2025). Interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial to support teachers and address their apprehension and skepticism about AI's role in the classroom. Teaching methods that respect diverse cultures and consider past experiences of students can meaningfully develop the fair use of AI EdTech and make it more accessible for all while keeping the traditional values of education intact (Samuel et al., 2023). Careful

consideration is required for the deployment of AI-enabled EdTech in higher education (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). It should include the formulation of new models of assessments that address academic integrity in the face of generative technologies and foster authentic critical thinking and creative skills among learners. Drawing from the author's capstone project, the presentation will focus on the ethical dimensions of AI in higher education by critically evaluating the ethical implications of AI-enabled EdTech (Jayaprakash, 2025).

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educators? International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 16(1), 39. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0171-0.

Bio:

Jagath Jayaprakash is a doctoral student at the University of New Brunswick's Faculty of Education, where his research explores the intersection of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality in education with a focus on ethics and equity. He holds an M.Ed. from UNB and an undergraduate degree in management. He managed student residences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Jammu. He has presented conference papers on AI-enabled education. He has also authored books on history and social issues and continues to engage in discussions on race, acculturation, and political economy.

[Back to Room Overview]

Empowering AI For Teaching Excellence

Presenter:

Constantine Passaris, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:

This paper will propose an appropriate architecture for academic governance at Canadian universities to successfully integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their modern teaching mission. AI is clearly a game changer for universities across Canada. It can make a significant and profound impact on the scope and substance of teaching. However, universities across Canada are experiencing a Malthusian moment. Thomas Malthus was an 18th century economist and demographer who predicted the demise of humanity because population would increase at a geometric rate while food supply would increase at an arithmetic rate. In consequence, the food supply would be insufficient to meet the demand triggered by an increasing population. What he failed to account for was the positive role of scientific advances, groundbreaking inventions and innovative agricultural machinery that would enhance agricultural productivity and increase the food output of the agricultural sector. Fast forward to the present, when universities across Canada are experiencing a frenzy of elevated anxiety and are pushing back on the significant potential of AI because it will facilitate student cheating and compromise academic integrity. In effect, we are on the cusp of a transformational innovation that has the capacity to empower spectacular advances in teaching and pedagogy. Universities must take a leadership role in driving the evolution of AI to mitigate the harm and compound the benefits. I propose, several actionable priorities for Canadian universities regarding AI to be included in their academic mission and mandate. These include: acknowledging the empowerment of AI in their academic mission, develop academic policies and guidelines for harnessing the vast potential of responsible AI, draft a Code for the Ethical Use of AI that has faculty buy-in, position AI tools strategically to enhance teaching and pedagogical outcomes, provide students with AI tools and skills that will accelerate their professional

careers, encourage all courses to update their curriculum by integrating AI capacity, use AI for the purpose of enriching the student learning experience, nurture the effective use of AI capacity as tool for life-long learning, professional development, and career upskilling, build AI as a bridge to facilitate interdisciplinary learning. Universities should embrace the public good in AI and get in on the ground floor of this spectacular innovation. This will provide them with the moral authority to nurture its development, provide the intellectual leadership and operationalize its administration. All of this for the purpose of positioning AI as a catalyst to chart an inspired roadmap for excellence in teaching and the betterment of humanity.

Bio:
Constantine Passaris is a longtime professor of Economics and Chair of the Department of Economics (Interim) at the University of New Brunswick (Canada), an Onassis Foundation Fellow (Greece), a Dobbin Scholar (Ireland), a Research Affiliate of the Prentice Institute for Global Population & Economy at the University of Lethbridge (Canada), an Affiliate Member of the Canadian Institute of Cybersecurity, and a member of the Academic Scientific Board of the International Institute of Advanced Economic and Social Studies (Italy). His scholarly publications have been published in monographs, books, encyclopedias, and academic journals. He has written extensively on economic issues and economics pedagogy. He is the recipient of numerous academic and civilian honours and awards, including the University of New Brunswick's two highest academic teaching awards: the Allan P. Stuart Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Neil Scott Educational Leadership Award.

Red, Yellow, Green: A User-Friendly Framework for Syllabus Language and Assignment Flexibility with Generative AI

Presenter:
Courtney DeGiobbi, Cape Breton University

Abstract:
Generative AI is now embedded in students' research, writing, and creative workflows across disciplines. Yet institutional and course-level responses remain uneven, producing uncertainty for students and confusion around academic integrity and assessment validity (Dawson, Bearman, Dollinger, & Boud, 2024; Luo, 2024). This presentation introduces a practical "*Red-Yellow-Green*" framework that helps instructors articulate transparent, discipline-appropriate syllabus policies for AI use, with sample language and disclosure practices that can be adapted per course or per assignment.

References:

Dawson, P., Bearman, M., Dollinger, M., & Boud, D. (2024). *Validity matters more than cheating*. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 49(7), 1005–1016. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2386662

Luo, J. (2024). *A critical review of GenAI policies in higher education assessment: A call to reconsider the "originality" of students' work*. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 49(5), 651–664. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2309963

Bio:
Courtney DeGiobbi is an Educational Developer at Cape Breton University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. Her work focuses on faculty development and educational technology. She is pursuing an M.Ed. in Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Studies at Memorial University, with research centred on digitally mediated learning and the evolving role of technology (particularly AI) in higher education.

[Back to Room Overview]

What Work is Worth Doing?: Care, Connectivity, and AI in Teaching

Presenters:
Adrian M. Downey, Mount Saint Vincent University
Denise Palmer, Mount Saint Vincent University

Abstract:
This presentation continues our ongoing examination of the ethics of using AI in the interpersonal communications involved in teaching, specifically emails communicating with students and feedback on student work. Where our previous work on this topic has been situated in Adult Education and K-12 teaching, this presentation considers the unique context of post-secondary education. We begin by advancing two interconnected arguments: 1) that the use of AI in teaching-related communication does not reduce the emotional labour (Hochschild, 2012) of teaching, as is sometimes suggested in statements that AI can reduce teacher burnout (Langreo, 2025), but rather shifts the burden to the recipient of a message; and 2) that the use of AI in teaching-related communication actually makes the connective labour (Pugh, 2024) of teaching—the relationship building—harder to accomplish, as genuine opportunities for connection are reduced through AI's mediation of communication. These arguments function as a caution about AI, not a complete rejection of its uses in post-secondary teaching. Indeed, there are many situations in which the use of AI can be justified in the post-secondary context. One example we consider in the presentation is an instance of microaggression between students. There, Student 1 may not want to expend the effort to correct Student 2's behaviour, but they may still want the behaviour corrected. Student 1 may also be disinterested in having any sort of relationship with Student 2. As such, Student 1 may reasonably use AI to communicate the microaggression and its effects to Student 2. Ultimately, then, we suggest instructors consider what work AI is doing when it is used in

teaching and whether that work is something worth doing ourselves. By way of a learning outcome, we hope that through this presentation participants will reflect on what sorts of work AI should and should not be used for in their teaching.

References:

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press.

Langreo, L. (2025, February 14). 'I don't get burnt out as much:' How these teachers use AI in their daily work. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/technology/i-dont-get-burnt-out-as-much-how-these-teachers-use-ai-in-their-daily-work/2025/02

Pugh, A. (2024). *The last human job: The work of connecting in a disconnected world*. Princeton University Press.

Bios:

Adrian M. Downey is an Associate Professor at Mount Saint Vincent University in the Faculty of Education. He holds a BA and BEd from Bishop's University, a MAEd from Mount Saint Vincent University, and a PhD from the University of New Brunswick. His research and teaching focus on curriculum studies, the foundations of education, and Indigenous education.

Denise Palmer is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS. She was a practicing schoolteacher for fifteen years, teaching a wide variety of courses in classrooms from K-12. Understanding the world from a feminist and social justice perspective, Denise's research focuses on teaching as carework and the impact of this burden of care on wellbeing and retention.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions I: Room 208 | Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

10:30 – 12:00 p.m.
Talks in this Session

10:30 – 10:50 | Reimagining Higher Education from the Ground Up: Dewey's Legacy in Rural, Relational Learning Spaces

10:50 – 11:10 | Following the Students: Project-Based Learning and a Jigsaw Approach in Medieval Studies

11:10 – 11:30 | Different Uses of Podcasts in a Course: Benefits and a Few Warnings

11: 30 – 11:50 | Go Ask Alice: Going Down the Rabbit Hole to Reconnect to Human Intelligence

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Reimagining Higher Education from the Ground Up: Dewey's Legacy in Rural, Relational Learning Spaces

Presenters:
Tracey E. MacNeil, (Faculty) Cape Breton University, (Student) Saint Francis Xavier University

Abstract:
As higher education continues to navigate rapid social and technological change, I keep coming back to John Dewey's work for guidance. His philosophy still holds a lot of weight today—especially his belief that "the teacher's personal influence is always the most potent factor in the education of the individual" (Dewey, 1938, p. 22). At its core, learning is relational, and it's grounded in experience. In this presentation, I'll explore some of Dewey's key ideas—like experiential, democratic, and inquiry-based learning—through the lens of place-based education in rural Nova Scotia. I'll be drawing from my teaching experiences at Beinn Mhàbu and Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide, both located in Mabou, Inverness County, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, to bring these concepts to life.

Place-based learning—defined by Yemeni (2023) as "pedagogical practices that prioritize experiential, community-based, and contextual/ecological learning"—resonates deeply with Dewey's view of education as a process of growth and engagement with the world. By rooting learning in local environments and centering student curiosity, agency, and connection, this approach can create more inclusive and meaningful learning experiences—especially for students who've historically been underserved by traditional systems.

That said, applying Dewey's philosophy within today's institutional structures isn't without its challenges. Dewey wasn't writing policy or designing curriculum frameworks—he was a

philosopher. His ideas often bump up against the realities of standardized education and rigid teacher prep programs (Mohammed, 2023). This session will take a critical look at those tensions while also sharing some strategies I've found helpful for adapting Dewey's thinking into care-centered, sustainable, and place-conscious pedagogy.

I'll invite attendees to reflect on their own teaching and consider how Dewey's emphasis on experience, community, and democratic values might show up in their contexts. Ultimately, this presentation is a call to imagine education that's grounded in relationships, local realities, and the lived experiences of learners—and to recommit to the transformative possibilities of teaching.

References:

Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. Macmillan.

Hassen, M. Z. (2023). A critical assessment of John Dewey's philosophy of education. International Journal of Philosophy, 11(2), 28–31. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijp.20231102.13

Yemini, M., Engel, L., & Ben Simon, A. (2023). Place-based education: A systematic review of literature. Educational Review, 77(2), 640–660. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2023.2177260

Ye, Y.-H., & Shih, Y.-H. (2021). Development of John Dewey's educational philosophy and its implications for children's education. Policy Futures in Education, 19(2), 240–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210320987678

Bio:

Tracey MacNeil has contributed significantly to education, culture, and community economic development for over 30 years. She is a full-time faculty member in the Department of Management and Marketing at the Shannon School of Business, Cape Breton University, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Studies at StFX University.

Following a 15-year international career as a professional musician, Tracey returned to her home island of Cape Breton and now lives in the rural community of Mabou Harbour. Her research focuses on place-based learning in rural higher education, authentic assessment practices, and innovative experiential learning approaches that support cultural continuity, foster community revitalization, and promote both human and ecological flourishing.

[Back to Room Overview]

Following the Students: Project-Based Learning and a Jigsaw Approach in Medieval Studies

Presenter:
Jennifer MacDonald, Acadia University

Abstract:

Humanities professors face challenges from technological developments and governments looking for universities to teach for the labour market. As we reckon with our assignment structures and their transferable skills, we must explore new pedagogies. These can be overwhelming, and in this paper, I will show my slow path to innovation, as I developed a Project Based Learning (PLB) assignment, for my upper-level history course on medieval material culture. Further, I will show how a jigsaw approach fosters a positive atmosphere for group work.

Following principles of PBL, the project is collaborative and involves creating a medieval town in two eras, usually c. 970 and c. 1300. It began with students giving traditional research presentations. These were done in chronological and thematic groupings and provided interesting insights into the medieval world. At the same time, I had senior seminar students making forged primary sources. These students had much more fun with this assignment and their research took them further into the sources than their counterparts. I saw potential in merging these two assignments and having students create elements of a fictional medieval town. When describing the assignment to the next group of students, they felt some trepidation and then rose to the occasion. Over the years, students have added increasingly innovative elements, interesting narratives, and new technologies. During lockdown, they made videos as we could not have public presentations, and in 2025, some experimented with 3D computer modeling software.

The town project has been an overwhelming success. The role of both student and faculty is key in this. In this section of the paper, I will explain my use of the jigsaw method of cooperative learning. The jigsaw method has students each assigned to a specific area, and for the town they choose, on a first come first served basis. They are then solely responsible for the research on and creation of their element of the town. I interfere as little as possible, guiding the process and making corrections as needed. As the term progresses, they share their ideas with each other and pull together all elements into a unified town. At the end of term, we invite members of the university and the local community to attend a presentation of the town. Students are graded on their individual work, using a multimodal system. This removes students' usual concerns around the workload distribution and grade assignments of traditional group work. PLB impowers the students, giving them control over their work, and this specific project is an example of Applied Humanities, requiring critical thinking, detailed research, problem solving, and communication skills.

Bio:

Jennifer MacDonald is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Classics at Acadia University. She has won multiple teaching awards, including the Acadia Alumni Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching. MacDonald received her doctorate in Medieval Studies from the University of York, England. She has taught in England and Canada, and was the lead researcher on an interactive museum project about England in *c.* 1000 C.E.

She is currently working on a textbook for Routledge on understanding Medieval Europe through the use of material culture.

Different Uses of Podcasts in a Course: Benefits and a Few Warnings

Presenter:
Michelle Eskritt, Mount Saint Vincent University

Abstract:
Podcasts are (usually) audio recordings distributed online. Podcast series often have a host and sometimes guests who discuss a particular type of current topic. They have become a popular source of online information and entertainment. Podcasts have also been increasingly used to help those learning English as a foreign language (Safitri & Najwa, 2024) as well as to teach medical students (Kelly et al., 2022). Students enjoy the media because they find it interesting, efficient, and authentic. I will argue for the value of using podcasts as an effective part of a course, regardless of discipline, but also indicate how their use requires support. I have used podcasts in three different ways by having students: 1) listen to particular episodes from online podcast series, 2) create their own podcasts as an alternative assessment to the traditional essay, and/or 3) listen to podcasts I have produced interviewing individuals from diverse backgrounds. Regardless of how I incorporated podcasts, I found they helped students with active listening, critical thinking (particularly perspective-taking), as well as consider how to communicate with different audiences. They are also an effective and more sustainable means of adding interdisciplinary diversity and/or first voice to a course (Fantini, 2024). However, because students often use podcasts as a form of entertainment, I will also discuss how any use of podcasts should be preceded by instruction on how to actively reflect on their content. Furthermore, if asking students to create podcasts, scaffolding and clear marking guidelines are required to combat anxiety over the unfamiliar means of assessment.

References:
Fantini, E. (2024). Podcasting for interdisciplinary education: Active listening, negotiation, reflexivity, and communication skills. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications, 11*. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04119-6

Kelly, J. M et al. (2022). Learning through listening: A scoping review of podcast use in medical education. *Academic Medicine, 97* (7), 1079-1085. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000004565

Safitri, I. A., & Siti, N. (2004). Podcast towards Students' Listening Comprehension: A Literature Review. *LinguaEducare: Journal of English and Linguistic Studies, 1*, 1-8. https://doi.org/10.63324/lec212025

Bio:
Michelle is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Mount Saint Vincent University. She studies the development of thinking across the life span. Specifically, she is interested in how we use different cognitive tools, such as note-taking or the internet, to influence thinking. She also researches children's and adults' understanding of nonverbal communication in different contexts to determine how another is thinking or feeling. Michelle was the recipient of the MSVU President and Vice President's Advanced Career Teaching Award in 2025.

[Back to Room Overview]

Go Ask Alice: Going Down the Rabbit Hole to Reconnect to Human Intelligence

Presenter:
Greg Doran, University of Prince Edward Island

Abstract:
We have heard a lot about AI these days, and its potential threat to education. Every week, we read another article, expressing best practices on how to either ban AI or embrace its use in the classroom. Lost in this moment is any discussion or re-engagement with those qualities that our students already possess. In response, I developed an in-class activity that can help students both resist the allure of AI and re-engage with their own intelligence and intuition.

The activity is called the Rabbit Hole, and it is a form of word association activity that helps students sift through ideas to help them focus on the central idea found in the class reading, whether it is a piece of fiction or poetry. The activity helps students get to the heart of their ideas about the piece.

In addition to assisting students in interpreting literature, the activity also helps the students develop some of the qualities outlined in Howard Gardner's *Five Minds For The Future*. Specifically, the activity helps to develop what Gardner terms the Disciplined Mind and the Synthesizing Mind.

The presentation will outline the steps involved in the activity. It will also connect the outcomes of the activity to Gardner's Disciplined and Synthesizing Minds. While emerging out of the teaching of literature, it is transferable to multiple disciplines because the activity helps to develop the Disciplined Mind. The presentation will conclude with some thoughts on the value of the activity in the face of AI and some reflections from students on how the activity helped their learning.

Bio:
Greg Doran is a past recipient of the AAU Distinguished Teaching Award (2018). He is a Professor at the University of Prince Edward Island, where he currently serves as the Associate Dean of Arts and Coordinator of Theatre Studies. He is a theatre scholar/practitioner whose work explores the intersection between the audience and the performers. In addition, he explores various classroom approaches, designed to engage students in their learning.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions I: Room 209 | Building Resilient and Inclusive Learning Environments

10:30 – 12:00 p.m.
Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

10:30 – 10:50 | Fostering Resilient Classrooms through the Development of a Workshop Series

10:55 – 11:15 | Leading for Connection: Rethinking Knowledge Sharing in Higher Education

11:20 – 11:40 | Fostering Collective Reflexivity in Classrooms to Prepare Students for Addressing Grand Challenges

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Fostering Resilient Classrooms through the Development of a Workshop Series

Presenter:
Daniella Sieukaran, Dalhousie University

Abstract:
We are facing an ongoing mental health crisis amongst our students and instructors. A 2022 study found that 75% of Canadian post-secondary students experience negative mental health during their academic careers (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations & Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2022). Yet, a third of Dalhousie students report feeling the school does not provide sufficient support for their overall well-being (Dalhousie University, 2020). Instructors are facing challenges as well: Along with healthcare workers, lawyers, and corporate executives, university instructors are in the top ten professions most likely to experience burnout (Schaffner, 2023).

Georgetown University (2011; as cited in Simon Fraser University, 2019) astutely noted, "The college experience poses significant and complex challenges to student well-being. Traditionally, these challenges have been addressed in residential halls, campus clinics, and counselling centres – everywhere but the classroom." Recognizing the impact that instructors can have in the classroom to enhance overall well-being, the Resilient Classroom Series was developed at Dalhousie University. It is a professional development workshop series for instructors that is designed to foster the well-being of both students and instructors. The series began in Summer 2024 and has since spanned five semesters, with a total of 11 workshops.

The workshop series intentionally targets both student and instructor well-being. When the post-secondary mental health crisis is discussed, it usually focuses exclusively on student mental health. However, instructors must first attend to their own well-being before they can effectively support their students.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the impetus and intended goals behind developing a workshop series addressing student and instructor well-being
- Outline the structure and topics of the workshop series
- Identify impacts and benefits of the workshop series
- Identify strategies for implementing a similar workshop series in their institution, informed by lessons learned and future directions of the Resilient Classroom Series

This presentation ties to the Showcase's Belonging area of interest, specifically 1. Faculty and student well-being, mental health, and care-centered teaching, 2. Designing inclusive and accessible learning experiences, and 3. Building community and connection in online, hybrid, and in-person classrooms. The workshop series directly targets faculty and student well-being, which in turn, fosters community-building and connection between students and instructors, which can help everyone feel more included, validated, and accepted. For similar aforementioned reasons, this presentation also ties to the Renewal area of interest, specifically Embedding care, wellness, and sustainability into teaching practices.

References:

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Schaffner, A. K. (2023, November 21). *Why are academics so burnt-out?* https://www.annakschaffner.com/post/why-are-academics-so-burnt-out

Simon Fraser University (2019). *Rationale for well-being in learning environments*. Healthy Campus Community. https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments/rationale.html

Bio:
Daniella Sieukaran has 25 years of experience supporting and teaching students across the lifespan, of which the past 19 years have been at six post-secondary institutions in Toronto, Vancouver, and Halifax. In addition, she has taught at the post-secondary level for the past 14 years. She holds a Specialized Honours BA, MA, and Certificate in University Teaching and Learning. In a previous career path, she trained to be a psychologist, which included conducting 10 years of internationally renowned research. This background influences her evidence-based, humanistic, student-centered approach to teaching and learning.

Leading for Connection: Rethinking Knowledge Sharing in Higher Education

Presenter:
Adenike Oluwatoyin Sanni, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Higher education is at a turning point, navigating increasing demands for inclusion, innovation, and responsiveness to diverse learners. This presentation, grounded in insights from my capstone project "Examining the Impact of School Leadership on Knowledge Sharing, Strategies, Challenges, and Best Practices," explores how leadership can reimagine knowledge sharing as a humanizing practice in teaching and learning.

Knowledge sharing is more than the exchange of information. it is an act of building trust, connection, and belonging (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). When students and educators feel safe and valued, learning becomes a collaborative process that fosters creativity and deeper engagement. However, barriers such as rigid hierarchies, siloed practices, and inequities often limit these possibilities (Fullan, 2001).

This session highlights strategies that position leadership as central to cultivating inclusive, collaborative learning environments. Drawing on equity-centred pedagogy, particularly the work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and hooks (1994), I will share findings on:

- Barriers to knowledge sharing, including power dynamics, access, and cultural disconnects.
- Leadership practices that foster spaces where diverse voices—especially those of equity-deserving students are recognized and valued.
- Best practices for designing responsive environments that encourage dialogue, participation, and shared responsibility for learning.

References:
Hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom. Routledge.

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Senge, P. M. (2006). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization (Rev. ed.). Doubleday/Currency.

Fullan, M. (2001). Leading in a culture of change. Jossey-Bass.

Fostering Collective Reflexivity in Classrooms to Prepare Students for Addressing Grand Challenges

Presenter:
Mojtaba M. Shourkaei, Assistant Professor, Sobey School of Business, St. Mary's University

Abstract:
As complex, interconnected grand challenges such as climate change, systemic inequality, and global health crises are rising, higher education must prepare students to confront them. These challenges are not just technical but also deeply social, requiring collaborative understanding and adaptive responses across disciplines and contexts. Traditional pedagogical methods in classrooms often focus on individual critical thinking and self-reflection, which are essential, but are not enough for collaborative and systemic work in addressing these challenges. This paper argues that students must learn how to be collectively reflexive, which involves a dialogic, iterative process of questioning assumptions collectively, negotiating meaning, and co-creating solutions. Collective reflexivity is different from individual reflection by emphasizing the social and political aspects of knowledge creation. It helps students understand power structures, challenge mainstream narratives, and include diverse perspectives to address contextual and global socio-ecological challenges. However, current practices often limit reflexivity to individuals or a tool for self-improvement, which limits the possibility of finding alternatives to address grand challenges. To address this, this paper suggests that instructors should enable students to exercise collective reflexivity in the classroom. Drawing on a *social-symbolic work perspective*, this paper explores how higher education instructors can institutionalize collective reflexivity through practices that shape meanings, norms, and identities in classrooms. This perspective suggests that practicing collective reflexivity needs to extend beyond one-time practices, involving institutional work to transform educational narratives, relationships, and material arrangements. Through collective reflexivity, universities can prepare students to collectively identify and address systematic issues and find inclusive alternatives to enact systemic change.

Bio:
Mojtaba M. Shourkaei is an Assistant Professor in the Management Department whose teaching and research focus on sustainability and alternative organizing.

10:30 – 12:00 p.m.
[Back to Schedule]

Professorial Pastimes: Connecting Pleasurable Pursuits to Improved Pedagogy

Presenters:
Dr. Mary Hale (She/Her), Department for the Study of Religion, Saint Mary's University
Dr. Shannon Murray, Department of English, University of Prince Edward Island

Abstract:
SMU has a fantastic initiative called SMUvies. Twice a semester, students and faculty gather to share presentations grounded in a variety of areas of popular culture. Pedagogically, for students, these panels model faculty willingness to don a "beginner's mindset" and learn from them. For faculty, we learn new things about our students and one another (who knew the Chair of Philosophy was also a Swiftie?). Engaging in and showcasing one's hobbies is a way to model life-long learning (applying one's academic skill set beyond the academy), an important facet of self-care (pursuing interests beyond one's job), and opportunities for surprising connections (eg: the ideas for this workshop arose when the facilitators serendipitously sat beside each other at adult band camp!). This modelling of the "fullness of life" (Vygotsky, 1986) through professorial pursuits of pastimes will be the focus of this workshop.

Connections between personal interests and deep engagement in learning processes is well-documented (Dewey, 1913; Vygotsky, 1986; Azeveto, 2019; Hedges, 2019). Educators expend much energy helping learners to make connections between course content and everyday lives and interests. We suggest that a complementary element to this philosophy is faculty involvement with hobbies and other recreational activities—by participating in and sharing experiences of these activities, we are also providing a model of self care and work-life balance that is beneficial for us and those around us. (Cleary, et al, 2025)

Participants in this workshop will look beyond our respective academic disciplines to the hobbies we pursue outside of work through small group conversations and activities. The intended outcomes of these collaborations are co-constructed knowledge about the ways in which hobbies enrich and support the lives we live inside and outside of the classroom. It is hoped that this workshop will also lay some foundations for new collegial connections and avenues for mutual support and encouragement.

Some questions that will guide our conversations are: What hobbies and/or recreation are you involved with outside of work? Why are you pursuing these hobbies/activities? How much of our teaching is also informed by what we choose to do outside of work? What lessons are we imparting to our students that we have gained by our hobbies? Who else are

we modelling for, ie. Family, colleagues, community? What implicit lessons in work-life balance and self-care are we modelling when we converse with others about these aspects of our lives?

References:

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Bios:

Mary Hale is an Assistant Professor of Religion at Saint Mary's University in Halifax where she teaches courses on Cults and New Religions, Religion and Ecology, and Death. Her SoTL research focus is on alternative assessments and the development of learner metacognition. She has written and given talks on poster fairs in the Humanities, arts-based immersive role plays in the classroom, and has performed stand-up comedy that interrogates popular conceptions of "cults". Her current project examines the use of LLMs as co-constructors of knowledge in asynchronous online learning environments. She knits, crochets, bakes, plays the banjo (badly), and flute (competently).

Shannon Murray is a Professor and 3M National Teaching Fellow (2001) teaching Early Modern and Children's literature at the University of PEI. She is co-author of *Shakespeare's Guide to Hope, Life, and Learning* (U of Toronto Press, 2023). She has spoken and published on hope in higher education, on ungrading, on active learning, and on capstone

experiences. In 2023, she received the Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award from STLHE. She is currently writing a book with Jessica Riddell and Lisa Dickson on how Shakespeare can help us imagine and create better worlds.

[Back to Schedule]

Meet the 2025 AAU Teaching and Leadership Award Winners - Chancellor Room

1:00-1:45
Talks in this Session
[Back to Schedule]

1:00 – 1:15 | AAU Distinguished Teaching Award

1:15 – 1:30 | AAU Distinguished Teaching Award

1:30 – 1:45 | AAU Anne Marie Mackinnon Educational Leadership Award

Bios:
Dr. Andrew Zinck is a professor of music at UPEI, where he teaches courses on music and culture, composition, stage and film media, and digital audio techniques. His background as a musicologist, performer, and composer informs his efforts in the classroom, where he often integrates the historical and theoretical study of music with compositional exploration, allowing his students to work first-hand with essential materials and concepts while developing effective habits as creative artists. Dr. Zinck is a strong advocate for strengthening student agency, particularly through alternative assessment practices.

[Back to Room Overview]

Dr. Mary Oxner, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Fellow Chartered Professional Accountant (FCPA), Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA), Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) is currently a Professor of Accounting in the Gerald Schwartz School of Business at St. Francis Xavier University. She joined the School of Business in 2000 following a PhD at the University of Alberta to develop and teach various courses in the accounting and finance disciplines. Dr. Oxner's research and outreach interests are financial literacy, corporate governance, instructional strategies, labour force readiness of Indigenous youth and successes and challenges of Indigenous women in business in Atlantic Canada. Her teaching interest focuses on innovative instructional strategies with experiential learning including service learning placements, field trips, guest speakers, community outreach, etc. at the heart of those activities.

[Back to Room Overview]

Dr. Rob Power is an instructional design and educational technology innovator who was named winner of the Cape Breton University Instructional Leadership Award for 2021, and the Association of Atlantic Universities Anne Marie MacKinnon Education Leadership Award for 2025. He has also previously been nominated for the Mt. Royal University Teaching Excellence in Lifelong Learning Award. Rob's career has spanned over a quarter century in the K12 and higher education sectors, and he is currently an Associate Professor with the School of Education and Health at Cape Breton University. In addition to Rob's

work as an instructional design consultant, he is a Past-President of the International Association for Mobile Learning (IAmLearn) and of the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education (CNIE|RCIE).

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions II: Room 203 | Designing for Connection: Learning, Curriculum, and Belonging

1:55 – 3:15 p.m.

Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

1:55 – 2:15 | When Learning Hits the Mark: Developing a Learning Outcomes Guide

2:20 – 2:40 | Curriculum Development Best Practices: A Moodle-Based Resource for Outcome-Based, Learner-Centered Program Development and Renewal

2:45 – 3:05 | Knowing Each Other: The Foundation of Belonging in Higher Education

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When Learning Hits the Mark: Developing a Learning Outcomes Guide

Presenters:
Daniella Sieukaran, Dalhousie University
Shawn Komar, Dalhousie University

Abstract:
Clear and meaningful learning outcomes are essential for effective curriculum design and student success (Brooks et al., 2014; Kyriakides et al., 2013; Schoepp, 2017). However, there are inconsistent approaches to articulating quality learning outcomes. With many post-secondary institutions across the Atlantic (Willick, 2025) and nationally (Wells, 2025) facing financial and identity crises, clarity in educational design is essential. Well-constructed learning outcomes help educators accurately operationalize learning experiences, empower students to articulate the skills they've gained, and facilitate alignment with employer expectations.

The *Developing Learning Outcomes Guide* (Sieukaran & Komar, 2025), co-developed by Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Community College, was designed to provide guidance and support to department heads and subject matter experts when creating program- and course-level learning outcomes in the post-secondary learning environment. The development of this comprehensive resource was grounded in educational theory and guided by the 25 years of experience the co-authors share in educational development and teaching.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the impetus, intended goals, and development process behind developing a learning outcomes guide
- Outline the structure and key features of the learning outcomes guide

- Describe the role of a learning outcomes guide in the development of quality curriculum and program development
- Share lessons learned from the development of a learning outcomes guide

This presentation ties to the Showcase's Belonging area of interest, specifically designing inclusive and accessible learning experiences. The reflective process of developing learning outcomes implores educators to define standards for success and assess whether those standards are equitable and inclusive for all students, and does not disadvantage specific groups of students. Values of transparency and accountability that underlie the use of learning outcomes may also support institutional strategies toward more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible learning environments. This presentation also ties to the Showcase's Renewal area of interest by reconfiguring institutional structures – or in this case, a resource tool – to support pedagogical leadership and innovation. Program-level outcomes should align with the vision and values of the department and educational institution. Therefore, learning outcomes can act as promising agents of change to usher in new ways of thinking and doing for our students and educators.

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Brooks, S., Dobbins, K., Scott, J.J.A., Rawlinson, M., & Norman, R.I. (2014). Learning about learning outcomes: The student perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education, 19*(6), 721-733. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2014.901964

Kyriakides, L., Christoforou, C., & Charalambous, C.Y. (2013). What matters for student learning outcomes: A meta-analysis of studies exploring factors of effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36*, 143-152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.010

Schoepp, K. (2017). The state of course learning outcomes at leading universities. *Studies in Higher Education, 44*(4), 615-627. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1392500

Sieukaran, D. & Komar, S. (2025). *A guide to developing learning outcomes*. Dalhousie University & Nova Scotia Community College.

Wells, P. (2025, March 5). *A crisis of confidence in Canadian universities* [Audio podcast]. Antica Productions. https://paulwells.substack.com/p/a-crisis-of-confidence-in-canadian

Willick, F. (2025, July 9). *Most of Nova Scotia's universities are in the red. Here's why, and what's next*. CBC. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/n-s-universities-grappling-with-budget-shortfalls-amid-financial-challenges-1.7576133

Bios:

Daniella Sieukaran has 25 years of experience teaching and supporting learners across the lifespan, of which the past 19 years have been at six post-secondary institutions in Toronto,

Vancouver, and Halifax. In addition, she has taught at the post-secondary level for the past 14 years. She holds a Specialized Honours BA, MA, and Certificate in University Teaching and Learning. In a previous career path, she trained to be a psychologist, which included conducting 10 years of internationally renowned research. This background influences her evidence-based, humanistic, student-centered approach to teaching and learning.

Shawn Komar has supported the development of microcredentials, as well as the systems and policies for microcredentialling at both Dalhousie University and the Nova Scotia Community College. He also helped develop the Nova Scotia Microcredentials Framework. Prior to this, Shawn was a professor of organizational behaviour and human resource management at the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University, specializing in organization theory, and human resource planning. Shawn holds a PhD in Industrial/Organizational psychology from the University of Waterloo, with a focus on psychometric theory, competency framework development, statistical analysis, and human research methodologies.

Curriculum Development Best Practices: A Moodle-Based Resource for Outcome-Based, Learner-Centered Program Development and Renewal

Presenters:
Lauren Wilson Finniss, Acadia University
Danielle Pierce, Acadia University

Abstract:
At smaller institutions, sustaining support for curriculum development, renewal and review can be difficult when teaching and learning teams have limited capacity to support multiple programs simultaneously. To meet this challenge, Acadia University has developed a Moodle-based Curriculum Development Best Practices course that equips academic units to lead their own curriculum development and review processes. This just-in-time, flexible resource was created to foster a culture of continuous improvement grounded in learner-centred, outcome-based curriculum design, while also serving as a practical tool to support cyclical program review.

The course was originally conceptualized to enhance the cyclical review process and to make it more accessible and sustainable on a small campus, in a manner similar to work undertaken at Thompson Rivers University with their Pressbooks resource. What began as a targeted tool to help programs prepare for and navigate cyclical reviews has since evolved into something broader. With the introduction of Schedule H requirements in Nova Scotia, the first iteration of the course has expanded in scope to provide structured guidance on framing curriculum conversations, documenting evidence, and moving toward actionable change in curriculum development and renewal work.

In its current form, the Moodle course has also been opened more widely as a professional development resource for all faculty to engage with. This shift reflects a recognition that effective curriculum development is not confined to scheduled review cycles but is part of an ongoing culture of continuous improvement. Faculty members at Acadia can now use the course flexibly to strengthen their understanding of learner-centred and outcome-based curriculum design, outcome alignment, curriculum mapping, and analysis strategies such as a SOAR Analysis. While its primary purpose remains advancing learner-centred curriculum development and review across Acadia's campus, it will also provide essential support for units navigating the province's Schedule H requirements.

This presentation will explain the rationale for developing a Moodle-based curriculum resource in the context of limited teaching and learning capacity, Describe how the resource is structured and intended to support learner-centred, outcome-based curriculum development, with share feedback from our community, and will highlight lessons learned for institutions looking to adapt or replicate a similar approach at their own institution.

Bios:
Lauren Wilson Finniss is the Vice-Provost, Curriculum & Planning at Acadia University. She leads strategic initiatives in teaching and learning, curriculum, educational planning, and related policies and procedures to enhance academic programs and the student learning experience. Lauren holds a PhD in Higher Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, where her research focused on university student transitions and identity development. She has a background in educational leadership, planning, and educational development, and has' worked for the last decade in teaching and learning in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

Danielle Pierce is an instructional designer in the Office of the Vice-Provost Curriculum & Planning at Acadia University. Her work centers on faculty development and training, accessibility, and the coordination of teaching initiatives across campus and with the Maple League of Universities.

Knowing Each Other: The Foundation of Belonging in Higher Education

Presenter:
Matthew MacLean, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Belonging begins with knowing — knowing names, faces, and stories. In this short session, we'll explore how fostering familiarity and connection among students can transform the

learning environment, enhance engagement, and support wellbeing. Drawing on principles of social health and inclusive pedagogy, this session will offer practical, low-barrier strategies educators can use to help students build meaningful peer relationships in their classrooms and programs. Participants will leave with simple, evidence-informed ideas to make "knowing each other" a deliberate and vital part of teaching practice.

Bio:

Matthew MacLean excels in converting research and empirical data into actionable, innovative approaches that nurture mental health and development, both within communities and for individuals.

Boasting a robust background in counselling, mental health, and accessibility, Matthew has dedicated fifteen years to the realm of Higher Education. His career journey spans across various institutions and provinces.

Matthew currently holds the position of Mental Health Strategist at the University of New Brunswick. In this role, he is instrumental in shaping and guiding the university's mental health policies and practices.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions II: Room 204 | Rethinking Assessment: Equity, Agency, and Preparation

1:55 – 3:15 p.m.

Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

1:55 – 2:15 | Adventures in Ungrading

2:20 – 2:40 | Student-led investigation into their own biases in DNA stability through alternative assessment

2:45 – 3:05 | The Right Type of Preparation: Examining the Effects of Handwriting vs. Typing Note Sheets on Exam Performance and Perceived Stress

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Adventures in Ungrading

Presenters:

Shannon Murray, English, University of Prince Edward Island
Michael MacLellan, Kinesiology, University of Prince Edward Island
Travis Saunders, Kinesiology, University of Prince Edward Island
Andrew Zinck, Music, University of Prince Edward Island

Abstract:

The four of us from three different disciplines have been employing a variety of ungrading, also called "alt-grading," techniques in our classes, including contract grading, self-evaluation, and others--identified in Susan Blum's 2020 book *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning* -- while tracking the responses of students to these experiments. "Ungrading" is an umbrella term that includes any attempts to shift focus from marks to learning. As Jesse Stommel suggests, it "rais[es] an eyebrow at grades as a systemic practice, distinct from simply 'not grading.' The word is a present participle, an ongoing process, not a static set of practices." Our own concerns have been for introducing more equitable, student-driven, and transparent assessment models while emphasizing learning over rankings. In this session, we will briefly outline our own approaches to grading in a variety of courses, suggest our personal experiences as instructors, and finally offer some initial conclusions from our research study on student responses to alternative grading methods.

Bios:

Shannon Murray is a Professor and 3M National Teaching Fellow (2001) teaching Early Modern and Children's literature at the University of PEI. She is co-author of *Shakespeare's Guide to Hope, Life, and Learning* (U of Toronto Press, 2023). She has spoken and published on hope in higher education, on ungrading, on active learning, and on capstone experiences. In 2023, she received the Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award

from STLHE. She is currently writing a book with Jessica Riddell and Lisa Dickson on how Shakespeare can help us imagine and create better worlds.

Dr. Mike MacLellan is an Associate Professor in UPEI's Kinesiology program and Chair of the Department of Applied Human Sciences. He is responsible for teaching courses in Motor Learning and Control, Human Motor Development, Neural Control of Movement, and Human Biomechanics. The main goal of his teaching approach is to develop innovative leaders who will make meaningful contributions to the community following graduation. To meet this goal, Dr. MacLellan strives to ensure students move past mere memorization of course materials and instead emphasizes the application of information outside the classroom.

Dr. Travis Saunders is a Professor of Applied Human Sciences at UPEI, where he teaches courses on physical activity and health. Students in his courses develop exercise programs for community volunteers, and his research studies the impact these programs have on both student learning and the health and fitness of their volunteers. He has also incorporated contract grading into several upper year courses, and is very interested in evaluating the impact of this approach on the student experience.

Dr. Andrew Zinck is a professor of music at UPEI, where he teaches courses on music and culture, composition, stage and film media, and digital audio techniques. His background as a musicologist, performer, and composer informs his efforts in the classroom, where he often integrates the historical and theoretical study of music with compositional exploration, allowing his students to work first-hand with essential materials and concepts while developing effective habits as creative artists. Dr. Zinck is a strong advocate for strengthening student agency, particularly through alternative assessment practices.

[Back to Room Overview]

Student-led investigation into their own biases in DNA stability through alternative assessment

Presenters:
Charlotte Polo, Dalhousie University
Ameeta Thandi, Dalhousie University
Shawn Xiong, Dalhousie University

Abstract:
In contemporary education, the paradigm is shifting from traditional, top-down models of teaching toward more inclusive and participatory approaches. One such transformative concept is students as partners (SaP), which reimagines the student-teacher relationship as a collaborative partnership. Rather than viewing students as passive recipients of knowledge, SaP emphasizes their active involvement in shaping learning experiences,

curriculum design, and assessment practices (Cook-Sather, 2014). This approach fosters mutual respect, shared responsibility in teaching and learning, and co-creation of knowledge. In practice, SaP has been shown to enhance student engagement, motivation, and a sense of ownership by challenging the non-democratic, hierarchical structure of higher education, single-minded focus on predetermined learning outcome, and view of students as clients (Students as Partners, 2025).

Parallel to this shift is the growing emphasis on alternative assessment or authentic assessment. Traditional assessments—such as standardized tests and timed exams—often fail to capture the full range of student learning, creativity, and critical thinking. Alternative assessments, including portfolios, podcast, reflective journals, and project-based learning, offer more holistic and authentic ways to evaluate student understanding. These methods prioritize the utilization of higher order thinking skills, emphasizing student growth and performance (Dikli, 2003). Anderson (1998) underscores alternative assessments acknowledge the multiple meanings of knowledge, prioritize both process and product, promote learning through assessment, and adopt a shared model of power. By valuing a shared model of power in teaching and learning, the principles of SaP and alternative assessment create a powerful synergy. Together, they foster more equitable and empowering educational experiences, where students are not merely assessed but actively shape what and how they learn (Elkhoury, 2023).

By embracing the synergistic model of SaP and alternative assessment, third-year students from a life science program at Dalhousie University were invited to participate in an alternative assessment to investigate their biases in DNA stability through a year-long laboratory experience. During the alternative assessment, students worked in small investigative teams to first identify their bias and then explore the root cause of the bias through collaboration with instructors and textbook and literature review. The outcome of the alternative assessment is a joint submission to the student journal – *Spectrum*.

In this presentation, students partnered with instructor will collaboratively
1. offer an adoptable framework on students as partners based alternative assessment.
2. present and analyze students common bias in DNA stability.
3. provide solutions to address students' bias.

References:

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Bios:

Charlotte Polo is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Dalhousie University majoring in biochemistry and chemistry. Charlotte has experience in laboratory-based research with special interests being peptide/protein chemistry and NMR spectroscopy, currently working under Dr. Jan K. Rainey investigating the biophysical prosperities of spider silk proteins. Under the guidance of Dr. Shawn Xiong, she has developed an interest in educational research, specifically the potential to introduce creativity and community based learning frameworks within a laboratory environment. In her third year, she worked collaboratively with 13 peers on an alternative assessment, based on the Student as Partners (SaP) model.

Ameeta Thandi is entering her final undergraduate year at Dalhousie University, pursuing a dual major in Biochemistry and Chemistry. Her research interests include computational modeling and exploring innovative approaches to science education. During her third year Ameeta conducted undergraduate research in Dr. Jan K Rainey's laboratory, applying machine learning techniques to investigate the properties of spider silk fibres. More recently, she has expanded her interest into educational research, collaborating with 13 peers on an alternative assessment supervised by Dr. Shawn Xiong.

Shawn Xiong is primarily appointed as the instructor for the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology in the Faculty of Medicine to coordinate and supervise undergraduate teaching laboratories and introductory Biochemistry courses. Concurrently, Shawn also serves as the faculty associate for Dalhousie' Center of Learning & Teaching. As a life-long learner, Shawn has been engaged with DBER and SoTL research to improve his teaching and his students' learning experiences and outcomes. As a member of the SoTL Canada writing group, Shawn has been focusing on decolonization and place based pedagogies. Most recently, Shawn has been selected as the research fellow for 2025-2027 Elon University Summer Research Seminar.

[Back to Room Overview]

The Right Type of Preparation: Examining the Effects of Handwriting vs. Typing Note Sheets on Exam Performance and Perceived Stress

Presenters:
Michaela Ritchie, University of New Brunswick
Vanessa Morris, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:

Background: Research suggests that students prefer having access to notes during examinations, as it reduces test-related anxiety and increases perceived preparedness (Dickson & Bauer, 2008; Nsor-Ambala, 2020). Relatedly, there is a traditional belief that handwritten notes lead to better learning outcomes than typed ones (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014), which has been recently challenged (e.g., Voyer et al., 2022).

Methodology: In the present study, undergraduate students in a neuropsychology course were permitted to create one note sheet for each of three tests. A total of 217 note sheets were categorized by a researcher blind to the study's purpose. Students completed a survey on how their note sheets were constructed and utilized.

Results and Discussion: A one-way within-subjects analysis of variance showed significantly different scores across tests ($p < .001$). Students performed significantly better on Test 1 than Test 2 (M = 5.20, SE = 1.55, $p = .004$), and better on Test 3 than both Test 2 (M = 10.87, SE = 1.80, $p < .001$) and Test 1 (M = 5.68, SE = 1.89, $p = .011$). Organized, higher quality note sheets have been associated with better test performance (Gharib et al., 2012; Visco et al., 2007), but there is limited work evaluating the effectiveness of note sheet preparation modality. To contribute to this research, we included student ID as a random effect in a mixed linear model, and found that preparation modality (typed, handwritten, combination of typed/handwritten notes), did not predict test performance ($p = .186$). Our results corroborate past claims that preparation modality does not predict test performance (Hamouda & Shaffer, 2016). Despite no observed effect, students may have perceived some benefit to typing their note sheets: whereas only 36.1% of students typed their notes for Test 1, this increased to 54.1% by Test 3. We conducted a multiple regression to examine whether preparation modality added to the students' overall perceived stress for each test. Participants who used a computer (vs. handwriting) for Test 2 reported significantly lower added stress, B = -1.997, SE = 0.96, $p = .044$. Preparation modality may not affect test scores, particularly when most students (93.33%) studied their note sheets. Scores were lowest on Test 2, so it is noteworthy that students who typed sheets for this test perceived less stress from doing so, compared to those who wrote their notes by hand.

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Bios:
Michaela Ritchie is a fourth-year PhD student in Experimental Psychology at the University of New Brunswick Saint John (UNBSJ), with a focus on memory and cognition. Her research primarily focuses on the generation effect, a phenomenon where generating information improves memory retention compared to passive learning or reading. Michaela is also currently teaching a cognitive psychology course at UNBSJ and is a proud member of the Music and Multisensory Processes lab, where she works under the supervision of Dr. Jonathan Wilbiks.

Dr. Vanessa Morris is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at UNB. Her teaching-related research focuses on understanding how students learn and applying insights from cognitive science to education. She is particularly interested in translating what we know about the brain into practical strategies that help students study more effectively. Dr. Morris also explores the design of learning activities that not only support immediate comprehension but also promote long-term retention, ensuring that students remember material for years to come.

Concurrent Sessions II: Room 208 | Transforming Nursing Education

1:55 – 3:15 p.m.
Talks in this Session
[Back to Schedule]

1:55 – 2:15 | From Aspiration to Achievement: Supporting Nursing Students' Well-Being and Success in Higher Education

2:20 – 2:40 | Transforming Nursing Education: A Multimodal Simulation Approach

2:45 – 3:05 | Beyond the Centre: Reimagining *Belonging* and Support for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Nursing Students in Nova Scotia

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From Aspiration to Achievement: Supporting Nursing Students' Well-Being and Success in Higher Education

Presenters:
Yasin M. Yasin, Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick
Areej Al-Hamad, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Faculty of Community Services, Toronto Metropolitan University
Kateryna Metersky, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Faculty of Community Services, Toronto Metropolitan University
Pamela Durepos, Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Nursing students represent the future health workforce, yet many face substantial challenges that threaten both their educational success and overall well-being. Stress, financial strain, heavy academic and clinical workloads, and social pressures contribute to high levels of burnout and dropout intention. Generation Z students, now the dominant group in undergraduate programs, bring unique career expectations, technological fluency, and values related to flexibility and mental health. Understanding their motivations, challenges, and supports is essential for advancing student well-being and creating care-centered teaching environments.

This presentation will share insights from the study *From Aspiration to Achievement* (Yasin et al., 2025), which investigates the career motivations, challenges, and facilitators of undergraduate nursing students in New Brunswick. Using the validated Healthcare Career Choice Scale alongside open-ended questions, the study captures how intrinsic motivations, extrinsic factors, and social influences intersect with stress, dropout intentions, and satisfaction with nursing as a career.

Bios:
Dr. Yasin M. Yasin, PhD, RN is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick. His research focuses on nursing education, healthy work

environment, and health service delivery for vulnerable populations. He has received funding from the Harrison McCain Foundation, QRDI, and Canada's Tri-Council. Dr. Yasin also serves as a member on several funded projects and is a member of the editorial board for the Canadian Journal of Nursing Research.

Dr. Areej Al-Hamad is an Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. She holds two PhDs: a PhD in Rural and Northern Health (Health Policy) from Laurentian University (2019) and a PhD in Nursing from Western University (2021). With teaching and clinical experience in Canada, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, her research focuses on food insecurity, women's health, marginalized populations, immigrants, refugees, and social justice. She has published widely, received several research grants and teaching awards, including the Sue Williams Excellence in Teaching Award (2024/25), and leads interdisciplinary projects on refugee health, aging migrants, and social determinants of health.

Dr. Kateryna Metersky is an Assistant Professor and Associate Director of the Collaborative Nursing Degree Program at the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). She continues to maintain her nursing practice in General Internal Medicine at University Health Network (UHN). Dr. Metersky is an Affiliate Scientist with the Global Migration Institute at TMU and The Institute of Education Research (TIER) at UHN. She is on the board of directors of the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative and TMU"s Research Ethics Board. Dr. Metersky is also the handling editor of the Canadian Journal of Nursing Research and International Health Trends and Perspectives Journal.

Pam Durepos, RN, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing, UNB Fredericton Campus. Her program of research involves health services and policy research to enhance access to high quality palliative care for persons and families living with life-limiting illnesses. Currently she is leading a province-wide project to increase organization capacity for a palliative approach in long-term care and special care homes.

[Back to Room Overview]

Transforming Nursing Education: A Multimodal Simulation Approach

Presenters:
Jaime Riley, University of New Brunswick
Renée Gordon, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Across the globe, healthcare systems are undergoing rapid transformation driven by advances in technology, rising patient acuity, and evolving professional standards [1]. These changes have heightened expectations for new graduates, particularly their ability to demonstrate critical thinking and clinical judgment. Addressing this challenge requires

innovative approaches to clinical education that leverage emerging technologies while ensuring equitable access.

Recognizing this need, the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick undertook a multi-year initiative to reimagine its approach to clinical education through the intentional development of a comprehensive multimodal simulation program. The initiative sought to move beyond sporadic use of simulation toward a consistent, fully integrated, high-quality program designed to strengthen clinical judgment, critical thinking, and readiness for practice.

The program incorporates three simulation modalities- in-person (including standardized participant and high-fidelity mannequin-based), immersive virtual reality, and computer (also known as screen-based)—strategically embedded across all years of the undergraduate nursing curriculum. Guided by the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning's Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice[2], the design follows a scaffolded, progressive complexity model, ensuring that students encounter appropriately levelled learning experiences. Faculty collaboration was central to this process, with teams engaging in curriculum mapping and scenario co-design to ensure consistent quality and alignment with learning outcomes.

Implementation has resulted in over 100 simulation experiences distributed throughout the curriculum, representing diverse clinical contexts to support student learning.

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Bios:

Jaime Riley is an Assistant Teaching Professor and Simulation Strategist at the University of New Brunswick's Faculty of Nursing, with over a decade of experience as a Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner in emergency and acute care. Her clinical expertise fuels her passion for simulation-based education and its ability to bridge theory and practice. Jaime is co-leading the development of a comprehensive simulation program that integrates innovative, evidence-informed approaches across the curriculum to prepare students for safe, thoughtful, and holistic nursing care.

Renée Gordon is a Teaching Professor and Simulation Strategist at the University of New Brunswick's Faculty of Nursing (FON), and a PhD in Nursing candidate at Queen's

University. She has led and collaborated on several projects advancing teaching and learning innovation, including immersive virtual reality simulation, simulation pedagogy, and evolving models of clinical education. Renée is co-leading the development and implementation of a new multi-modal simulation program for the FON that embeds over 100 simulations across the curriculum.

[Back to Room Overview]

Beyond the Centre: Reimagining *Belonging* and Support for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Nursing Students in Nova Scotia

Presenters:
Emily Peter-Paul, Dalhousie University
Dawn Googoo, Dalhousie University
Margot Latimer, Dalhousie University

Abstract:
This presentation explores the experiences and needs of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous nursing students and professionals in Nova Scotia, offering critical insights into the essential attributes of what true belonging in post-secondary education. Drawing from the voices of Mi'kmaq nurses and students, we challenge dominant narratives that suggest a single, centralized Indigenous centre on campus is sufficient to foster inclusion.

Too often, institutions rely on the presence of one visible Indigenous space as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation, without making the deep structural changes necessary to support Indigenous learners. These centres are frequently underfunded, understaffed, and expected to meet the diverse and complex needs of all Indigenous students—needs that vary greatly by Nation, identity, and lived experience.

Through the support of the CIHR Chair in Indigenous Health Nursing, a collaborative and community-driven approach was developed. This work focused on building sustained relationships between schools of nursing, Mi'kmaq communities, and provincial health and education departments. Research, partnerships, and advocacy led to the implementation of tailored supports for Indigenous learners—supports that reflect their realities, histories, and aspirations.

This presentation calls for bold re-imaginings of post-secondary policies and structures, where belonging is not limited to a single space but embedded across the institution through commitments to Indigenous self-determination, cultural safety, and relational accountability. We advocate for sustainable, Indigenous-led solutions governed by Mi'kmaq leadership as essential to transforming higher education into a truly inclusive and equitable environment.

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Bios:

Emily Peter-Paul is a Mi'kmaw Registered Nurse from Metepenagiag Mi'kmaw Nation. She grew up in Sitansisk Wolastoqey Nation, NB, and now lives in Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, NS, with her three daughters and partner. Emily graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2017 and completed her Master of Education with a concentration on health in 2023 both from St. Francis Xavier University (STFX). She now works at STFX as Mi'kmaw Indigenous Nurse Education Specialist with Tajikeimɨk Health and Wellness that supports Indigenous nursing learners. She is an educator of Indigenous perspectives on health and healing at the university.

Dawn Googoo is a Mi'kmaw Registered Nurse from We'koqma'q L'nue'kati. After high school, she joined the military before earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and then a Master of Nursing. Her journey through higher education was challenging, and she witnessed many other Indigenous students struggle within systems not built for them. Feeling privileged to have learned how to navigate life away from her community, Dawn began supporting and advocating for Indigenous learners in postsecondary spaces. She believes that higher education systems must also learn to create a culturally safe, relational approach that truly support the success and wellbeing of Indigenous students.

Margot Latimer is a white settler in Nova Scotia working with First Nations to foster culturally safe care for Indigenous children, develop supportive pathways for Indigenous Peoples in nursing careers, and create a culture for non-Indigenous health students to understand Indigenous knowledges. As a non-Indigenous researcher, Dr. Latimer uses the Two-Eyed Seeing approach to integrate and recognize the strengths of both Indigenous and Western worldviews. Margot completed her BSc in Nursing, a Master of Nursing at Dalhousie University a PhD in Nursing from McGill University (2006) and a post doctorate in neuroscience from Laval University (2010).

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions I: Room 209 | Workshop

1:55 – 3:15 p.m.
[Back to Schedule]

True grit: Fostering Grit and Resilience in Today's Students

Presenter:
Krissy Keech, Acadia University School of Music

Abstract:
Teachers report anecdotally that grit—the winning combination of passion and perseverance— is dwindling among today's students. Advances in psychology and neuroscience have now given us the language and tools to measure and grow this important skill. Through this workshop, participants will define and measure grit, describe and discuss the psychological assets associated with having grit and how to develop them, and reflect on how they might apply these concepts to their own and their students' learning. Participants will engage in first-hand grit building exercises and practices that they can take to their students.

The broader discussion of grit is based on Angela Duckworth's research (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007) and subsequent work (Duckworth, 2017). Deeper dives on other aspects draw from seminal literature on mindset (Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Dweck, 2016), motivation (Renwick & McPherson, 2002; Coyle, 2009, 2012), practice (Ericsson & Smith, 1991; Ericsson & Pool, 2016), and neuroscience (Gebrian, 2024).

Teachers of all disciplines will benefit from learning that grit is a buildable skill, not an innate quality. Small changes in language and teaching practices won't radically improve grit in students because they would need to do most of the work themselves. However, we as their instructors do have the potential to make some positive change. I have noticed the effect in my own teaching that these approaches make: students feel safer, take constructive feedback less personally, and reach out for help earlier. I have also noticed a difference in myself: I am less judgemental but also more successful in communicating constructive feedback. I am excited to share these concepts with my peers.

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Bio:

Krissy Keech is an Assistant Professor at Acadia University's School of Music, where she teaches keyboard, theory, musicianship, pedagogy, and practising. She completed her PhD in Music Education at McGill University. Areas of interest include teacher effectiveness, practice, error correction, and attitudes about mistakes. She holds a bachelor's degree in music from Acadia and a master's in classical piano performance from McGill. Additionally, she has been operating a private home piano studio for over 25 years. She adjudicates at music festivals and conducts workshops on topics such as improvisation and practising.

[Back to Schedule]

Concurrent Sessions II: Room 210 | Workshop

1:55 – 3:15 p.m.

Creating Time and Space to Rediscover the Joy of Learning - Reflections from the 3M National Teaching Fellows, 2024

Presenters:
Erin Austen, St. Francis Xavier University (StFX)
Libby Osgood, University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)

Abstract:
At times, teaching can feel isolating. With so many demands on our time and desiring to do the best for students, we can set high expectations for ourselves. And – we are expected to be life-long learners, by adapting our teaching approaches during the pandemic and now again in the wave of AI.

In this workshop, participants will receive a teaching resource that was developed by the 2024 3M National Teaching Fellows to create a sense of community and rediscover the joy of learning. Some instructors may like to use this resource as a daily planner or notebook, while others may use it to journal about their teaching practices.

Through the workshop, participants will explore how they use time and space, consider what some barriers to joy might be, engage in conversation to build community, and utilize a resource so that we can collectively rediscover the joy of learning.

Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding the existing research on common challenges faculty and teaching staff face in academic settings, and the importance of rediscovering joy as a route to flourishing.
- Understanding ways to create time and space in one's work by implementing the time saving tips, technologies/tools, and self-care tips or brain breaks shared in the resource.
- Applying strategies shared during the session to build community in the classroom.
- Creating opportunities to be a life-long learner by engaging with our reflection prompts, and reading recommendations, and practicing reframing teaching failures as learning opportunities.

Bios:
Erin Austen is an Associate Professor and Chair of Psychology at Saint Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. She completed a PhD in Perceptual Psychology at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests are varied; much of her research is connected to health and health promotion. She is invested in teaching and in creating institutional supports for faculty development. She has held teaching-relevant leadership roles

including Chair of the Faculty Development Committee and Co-Chair of the Maple League Teaching and Learning Committee. She is a member of the 2024 3M National Teaching Fellowship.

Libby Osgood is an Associate Professor in Sustainable Design Engineering at the University of Prince Edward Island and a religious sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Montreal. She is an aerospace engineer who worked on two NASA satellites as a systems engineer with Orbital Sciences. She holds a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Dalhousie University and is a member of the 2024 3M National Teaching Fellowship and International Federation of National Teaching Fellows. She researches faith & science, humanitarian engineering, and engineering design teaching practices.

[Back to Schedule]

Concurrent Sessions III: Room 203 | Inclusive Classrooms and Care-Centred Pedagogies

3:30 – 4:50 p.m.
Talks in this Session
[Back to Schedule]

3:30 – 3:50 | Social Stories on Campus: Mapping Campus Spaces for Neurodivergent Students

3:55 – 4:15 | Creative Assessment Strategies

4:20 – 4:40 | Cultural Intelligence: an instrument of Care and a Pathway to Students' Well-being

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Social Stories on Campus: Mapping Campus Spaces for Neurodivergent Students

Presenter:
Brandi Estey-Burtt, St. Thomas University

Abstract:
Social stories have been touted for over three decades as a form of social skills intervention for neurodivergent (ND) students, especially those who are autistic (see Tobik 2025 for a general history and overview). While the original concept of the social story focused on young children as a form of social skills intervention, I propose more of a collaborative approach that respects the agency and knowledge of ND students. Rather than focusing on changing or modifying the behaviour of the ND student, social and sensory mapping can provide students with important information about the social and sensory profiles of different spaces and situations on campus.

As a type of narrative intervention, social stories have had mixed assessments in the scholarly literature (see Karkhaneh et. al. 2010). However, I would like to explore the development of sensory stories when lead by ND students, faculty, and staff. To this end, I will highlight my own preliminary experiences with developing sensory stories in a university classroom environment with students as a course exercise. While the process will be collaborative, students can both reflect on and highlight unique social and sensory issues they experience.

Students in the course will learn how to draw on their own knowledge (following the emphasis in critical neurodiversity studies on ND epistemologies) in order to create sensory profiles of spaces they actively use. They will also learn how to distill their knowledge into a format that can be used to teach others, as one goal for the exercise is to provide a functional document that can be used on campus in the future (be it in the form

of a zine, PowerPoint, short videos, etc.). These types of stories can potentially ease transition into university for future ND students as well as first generation students or students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Bio:
Brandi Estey-Burtt (she/her) is a part-time lecturer in English at St. Thomas University and an associate with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative. As a neurodivergent and disabled scholar, she focuses on representations of neurodivergence in children's literature, particularly autism in picturebooks and how autistic subjectivity is constructed visually and narratively. She has several forthcoming articles on this research, including in *Children's Literature Association Quarterly,* the *Routledge Companion to Gender and Childhood,* and *Jeunesse.* She also works on issues of children's book challenges, comics, and postcolonial children's literature.

Creative Assessment Strategies

Presenter:
Kate Krug, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dept. of L'nu, Political & Social Studies, Cape Breton University.

Abstract:
The Learning Curve is Curvy and One size Never Fits All, so Teach, Revise, Dance, Repeat. The discourse on teaching and learning includes work on anti-racist education, decolonization, trauma informed pedagogy, universal design for teaching and learning, feminist, and queer pedagogies, etc. While each of these frameworks represents a different set of interests, they vibrate in harmony around critical reflections on the production of knowledge and the practices and processes of teaching and learning. Critical sociology and critical pedagogy have been at the centre of my work as a teaching academic. The ultimate goal of these philosophies is to empower individuals and collectivities, to inspire transformative practices, and to create a more socially just society. For the last decade or so, I have practiced a critical pedagogy grounded in principles of intersubjectivity and relationality that I have referred to as a Pedagogy of Play. This pedagogy shifts the focus of my teaching and assessment strategies from "discipline" to "learner", with attendant alterations in the practices of devising and implementing assessment strategies to meet the needs of my students as well as the expected outcomes for the courses I teach. This paper provides an outline of some of the successes and failures in those endeavours, and an account of what I have learned in the doing. Classroom teaching and creative writing have one really important thing in common: revision is an integral part of the process.

Bio:
Kate Krug is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Cape Breton University. Kate practices Interpretive Political Sociology with a particular focus on genders, identities, sexualities, Queer theory and critical pedagogy. Since moving to Cape Breton in 2001, Kate has put her pedagogy into activism as well as putting activism into her pedagogy developing and practicing a Pedagogy of Play. When she is not plying her trade as a teaching academic and social justice advocate, Kate can be found hanging around the beaches of Cape Breton photographing assorted waders and/or the moon in daylight.

[Back to Room Overview]

Cultural Intelligence: an instrument of Care and a Pathway to Students' Well-being

Presenters:
Dr. Ziba Vaghri, University of New Brunswick
Dr. Mercy C. Oyet, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
RELEVANCE: In the Maritime provinces, international students account for approximately 13% of all postsecondary enrollments. While Canada, in particular the Maritime region, welcomes individuals from around the world, our classroom becomes a unique ground for individuals from a variety of cultures. To add to the uniqueness, many of our students may have navigated through some stormy journeys in search of a safe shore where respect for human dignity and provision of equal opportunities for every human being is foundational. Ensuring a safe and non-judgmental environment in our culturally diverse classrooms is now more critical than ever. A prerequisite to the creation of such an ambience is developing cultural intelligence (CQ) among instructors.

HOW: Cultural intelligence can be defined as the aptitude to understand, respect, and respond with care and kindness to cultural differences in all interactions. It is suggested to comprise *CQ knowledge* which refers to the understanding of cultural values, norms, and systems, *CQ drive* which is the motivation to function effectively in culturally diverse contexts, *CQ strategy* which involves intentionally preparing for interactions in culturally diverse contexts, and *CQ action* which is the ability to adapt one's behaviours in such culturally diverse contexts. Instructors equipped with CQ can acknowledge students' cultural identities and past experiences while also promoting their integration into the host culture. This will help maintain students' pride in their heritage while enhancing their psychological well-being.

Additionally, through observing such cultural sensitivity, the students will model the behaviour within and outside the classroom and foster a sense of belonging in our classrooms and institutions. Creation of such safe environments can improve academic

outcomes through direct (the reduction of stress hormones) and indirect (strengthening students' coping capacities) pathways. It is noteworthy that the right to practise and participate in one's culture is a declared human right under the UN Charter of Human Rights.

CONCLUSION: When diversity is viewed and welcomed as a strength rather than a challenge, educational environments become positive spaces within which all students can thrive.

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Bios:

Dr. Ziba Vaghri is a UNB Associate Professor and holds a research chair in Child Rights & Child Development. With over two decades of international research experience in the areas of child development/ child rights, she is one of the leading scholars in creating linkages between the fields of Child Development and Child Rights. She has worked with various UN agencies and served as the Technical Officer at WHO-HQ in Geneva. She is the lead author of two highly acclaimed Open-Access books: "Monitoring State Compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" and " Children's rights-based indicators"

Dr. Mercy C. Oyet is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management at the Faculty of Business, University of New Brunswick Saint John, New Brunswick. Her research interests include workplace interpersonal mistreatment, employee workplace voice, and workplace stress. Dr. Oyet is a Certified CQ facilitator and trainer.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions III: Room 204 | Beyond the Grade: Stress, Process, and Creative Pedagogy

3:30 – 4:50 p.m.

Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

3:30 – 3:50 | Panic at the Scantron: Investigating Note Sheets and Test Anxiety

3:55 – 4:15 | Facilitating Ethical Engagement with the Other through Process-Based Pedagogy

4:20 – 4:40 | Creative Projects, Creative Pedagogy

Panic at the Scantron: Investigating Note Sheets and Test Anxiety

Presenters:
Dr. Vanessa Morris, University of New Brunswick
Michaela Ritchie, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Background: Cortisol, a hormone released during stress, can significantly impair working memory and hinder the ability to recall information. While most of us have experienced stress and know that it typically fades with time, managing it can be challenging, especially when you're under time pressure or needing to perform well for evaluation. The goal of the current study was to explore whether having a note sheet during tests could help reduce student anxiety and potentially lead to better overall course performance.

Methodology: In this course, students were allowed to bring a one-sided note sheet to each of the three non-cumulative tests. At the end of the semester, students were surveyed about how they felt taking tests without a note sheet versus with one. Test anxiety was measured using the 10-item Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ) developed and adapted by Nist and Diehl (1991). Additionally, we recruited an online sample of individuals from outside UNB Saint John, who were asked to complete the TAQ regarding their experiences with test-taking without a note sheet. This external sample was collected to gather a general baseline of test anxiety.

Results: We collected TAQ responses from 60 students at UNB Saint John (course sample) and 39 students from outside UNB Saint John (online sample). The analysis revealed no significant difference in test anxiety between the two groups when no note sheet was allowed ($p = .182$), suggesting a similar anxiety level across both samples. However, when comparing test anxiety among UNBSJ students with and without a note sheet, we found a significant decrease in anxiety when a note sheet was permitted ($p < .001$). A similar pattern emerged when we examined test anxiety among UNBSJ students with a note sheet,

compared to non-UNBSJ students without a note sheet, with the UNBSJ group experiencing significantly less anxiety when allowed to use a note sheet ($p < .001$). Lastly, we explored the relationship between test anxiety scores and students' course grades. We found that lower test anxiety was a significant predictor of better academic performance ($B = -0.438$, $p = .013$, $R^2 = .107$).

Discussion: Findings from the current study suggest that allowing students to use a note sheet during tests may help reduce test anxiety and potentially improve course performance. Future research should aim to replicate these results and explore whether they apply to other courses and academic settings.

Bios:
Dr. Vanessa Morris is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at UNB. Her teaching-related research focuses on understanding how students learn and applying insights from cognitive science to education. She is particularly interested in translating what we know about the brain into practical strategies that help students study more effectively. Dr. Morris also explores the design of learning activities that not only support immediate comprehension but also promote long-term retention, ensuring that students remember material for years to come.

Michaela Ritchie is a fourth-year PhD student in Experimental Psychology at the University of New Brunswick Saint John (UNBSJ), with a focus on memory and cognition. Her research primarily focuses on the generation effect, a phenomenon where generating information improves memory retention compared to passive learning or reading. Michaela is also currently teaching a cognitive psychology course at UNBSJ and is a proud member of the Music and Multisensory Processes lab, where she works under the supervision of Dr. Jonathan Wilbiks.

[Back to Room Overview]

Facilitating Ethical Engagement with the Other through Process-Based Pedagogy

Presenters:
Shafik Nanji, St. Francis Xavier University
Lindsey Arnold, St. Francis Xavier University

Abstract:
Calls to transform higher education often highlight innovation in technology, curriculum, or institutional structures. Nevertheless, a subtler orientation shapes many pedagogical practices: the prioritization of product over process. This teleological emphasis on outcomes, deliverables, and efficiencies risks reifying the intelligible, the realm of

Abstraction and predefined goals, at the expense of the sensible, the ground of lived, embodied experience.

Suppressing the sensible forecloses possibilities for ethical engagement with the other (Nanji & Arnold, 2009). For instance, the film *Whiplash* (2014) illustrates how the relentless pursuit of intelligible goals such as technical perfection and external success reduces human interaction to product-oriented performance and undermines the possibility of ethical engagement.

In contemporary higher education, similar dynamics occur when assessment, learning outcomes, or AI tools emphasize product over process. Recent studies caution that these orientations can undermine critical thinking and deep learning. Students often use AI as a shortcut rather than as a tool for metacognition (Fan et al., 2024; Gerlich, 2025). Such findings confirm the need for pedagogies that resist product-driven imperatives and sustain process-based practices that preserve the sensible.

We propose reframing pedagogy in our contemporary, technology-dominated landscape to reinforce process-oriented approaches that foster ethical engagement with the other.

We first recognized the importance of a non-teleological, process-based approach when we studied the interplay of the sensible and the intelligible (Merleau-Ponty, 1995). Foregrounding the sensible requires pedagogies that emphasize process, including attentive engagement, openness to unfolding experience, and responsiveness to students as others to whom we have an ethical obligation (Levinas, 1985). Abram (1997) demonstrates how careful attention to the sensible allows alternative intelligible interpretations to emerge, opening ethical possibilities beyond conceptual categories.

Today, this approach remains crucial: the effective use of AI in higher education depends on whether it supports process or merely accelerates product. When AI is used to generate quick results, it reinforces product-driven habits and diminishes learning. When used as a scaffold for iterative engagement, it can support the sensible ground of experience and sustain openness to the other.

It is intended that by the end of this presentation, participants will be able to differentiate between product-based and process-based pedagogies through the lens of the intelligible and the sensible, consider philosophical and practical resources for cultivating a process focus in teaching and learning, and reflect on the connection between process orientation and the ethical engagement with the other.

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Bios:

Shafik Nanji is Acting Director of the Centre for Online Learning & Professional Studies at St. Francis Xavier University. He leads a team that cooperates with the StFX Faculty Development Committee to deliver educational development and instructional design support for online and on-campus courses. He is committed to assisting faculty and teaching staff in achieving their goals for effective and engaging course design and delivery by referring to the scholarship of teaching and learning and by facilitating the exchange of ideas. He has a Master of Education degree and years of experience in education, leadership, and development. He is pursuing research in holistic and inclusive education and process-based pedagogies that support the development of critical thinking even when generative AI is used.

Lindsey Arnold is an Instructor at the StFX Academic Success Centre and has a Master of Arts in Education degree. Her work as an instructor includes independent and collaborative development and delivery of in-person and online workshops and courses on topics such as writing for academic purposes, academic integrity, and essential academic skills. Lindsey's pedagogical approach emphasizes student-centered, holistic, and active learning alongside direct instruction influenced by Universal Design for Learning. Currently, her research interests focus on integrating AI in educational settings in ways that encourage the development of higher-order thinking and ethical engagement with the other.

[Back to Room Overview]

Creative Projects, Creative Pedagogy

Presenter:

Sandra Bell, UNB Saint John

Abstract:

Creative assignments are one useful way to engage students with course material, to personalize academic work, and to broaden the understanding of the purpose of research and assessment. Studies show that creative and multimodal assignments connect creativity and critical thinking (Duenkel 2013; Ross, Curwood, Bell 2020) and can help students access a better understanding of course texts and of themselves (Lawrence 2012). Creative assignments can allow students to rethink academic material for more diverse audiences (Armstrong 2022), as few will encounter academic audiences after they graduate. However, there are challenges when introducing creative assignments into a course. Will creative assignments help students reach the goals—in terms of material and skills—of the course? Students may also be unfamiliar with creative assignments and see them as risky, and thus require more supports through scaffolding, modeling, and feedback (Allam 2008; Ross, Curwood, Bell 2020). Assessment can also be challenging, as it can be difficult to grade creativity (Allam 2008; Jonker 2023) and multimodal assignments (Ross, Curwood, Bell 2020). However, in the process of connecting their own creativity to their research, students are encouraged to become clearer in explaining their understanding to a broad audience. In a world where AI can eliminate the student voice, creative assignments can provide a personal entry point. This presentation will reflect on my experience incorporating creative assignments into humanities classes and will consider how other disciplines might use creative assignments as a method of understanding and transferring disciplinary knowledge.

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Bio:

Sandra Bell is a professor of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature in English, as well as poetry and drama courses; she has also developed experiential courses that take students into local high schools. She is involved in local theatre—directing, acting in, and writing plays. Sandra was awarded the AAU Distinguished Teaching Award in 2022.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions III: Room 208 | Building Inclusive Learning Communities: On Campus, Online, and Beyond

3:30 – 4:50 p.m.
Talks in this Session

[Back to Schedule]

3:30 – 3:50 | Creating Conditions to Foster International Students' Flourishing - A Collective Undertaking

3:55 – 4:15 | The Online Learning Community: Building Connection and Belonging when Online is your University

4:20 – 4:40 | Community Partner Perspectives on Their Role in Course-Based Experiential Learning

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Creating Conditions to Foster International Students' Flourishing - A Collective Undertaking

Presenters:
Dr. Shari Smith-Ellis, University of New Brunswick
Dr. Lyle "Steamer" Hamm, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
In September 2023, the inaugural face to face cohort on UNB Fredericton campus Master of Educational Administration and Leadership began. It was composed of twelve students from six different countries.

A research group composed of Dr. Lyle Hamm (Associate Professor), Dr. Shari Smith-Ellis (Assistant Teaching Professor), Catherine Foster (International Development Coordinator), Dr. Monique Allain (Coaching Mentor and Stipend Instructor), and Krysta Kinney (Graduate Programs Assistant) from the Faculty of Education at UNB were curious to understand more about this cohort's collective experiences of the first year of their degree program.

A research project was created with the goal of concluding the research with annotated learnings to inform future teaching and learning opportunities with national and international cohorts and to generate further conversations at UNB and beyond, about these learnings.

Three of the questions that guided this research were:

- What were some of the positive learning experiences you had within the program?
- What were some of the challenges you faced?
- What supports alleviated the challenges you experienced in your first year of study?

In the presentation, learnings from this study will be shared to illustrate the international students' perspectives on the supports and challenges they faced and how a sense of belonging was nurtured through key initiatives that impacted their engagement in their master's program learning.

Research from Rodriguez et al., (2024), Clarke (2023), Guo and Chase (2011) will be referenced to illustrate the need for Canadian universities to carefully consider and value International Students' experiences to further deepen our understandings of how these inform future teaching and learning opportunities across multiple disciplines.

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Bios:

Dr. Shari Smith-Ellis is currently an Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of New Brunswick in the Faculty of Education. She teaches in the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education, Bachelor of Education, and Master of Educational Administration and Leadership programs. Prior to this, she taught for 35 years. This included three years as a vice principal and nineteen years as a principal in elementary schools. She is a graduate of the New Brunswick Department of Education's Leadership Academy. Her research has been in the fields of critical literacy, student voice, mathematics, and assessment.

Dr. Lyle "Steamer" Hamm is an Associate Professor of Educational Administration and Leadership in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. His teaching and research focus on provincial, national, and international immigration trends, demographically changing schools and communities, population growth, and intercultural and antiracist education grounded in critical transformative/social justice leadership theory.

[Back to Room Overview]

The Online Learning Community: Building Connection and Belonging when Online is your University

Presenters:
Courtney DeGiobbi, Cape Breton University
Laura Baker-Warren, Cape Breton University

Abstract:
As universities expand online and hybrid offerings, supporting student belonging and connection beyond the physical campus has become essential. At Cape Breton University, a new Online Learning Community (OLC) was developed in Moodle to provide online learners with structured support, peer connection, and accessible resources. Unlike traditional course shells, the OLC is a community space designed for orientation, self-paced learning modules, and ongoing engagement with campus life and fellow online learners.

The OLC features eight interactive modules addressing core aspects of online learning success, including time management, academic integrity, technology readiness, and navigating institutional supports. Students can also earn badges to mark progress and participate in discussion forums that foster peer-to-peer exchange. Developed collaboratively by the Centre for Teaching & Learning and the Office of Online Learning, the OLC responds to growing demand for equity-centred digital supports that meet students where they are.

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Tinto, V. (2017). *Through the eyes of students*. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19(3), 254–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115621917

Bios:
Courtney DeGiobbi is an Educational Developer at Cape Breton University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. Her work focuses on faculty development and educational technology. She is pursuing an M.Ed. in Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Studies at Memorial University, with research centred on digitally mediated learning and the evolving role of technology (particularly AI) in higher education.

Laura Baker-Warren is Manager of Online Learning at Cape Breton University. She recently completed her M.Ed. in Educational Technology at Memorial University, where she

developed a strong foundation in digitally mediated pedagogy. Laura takes a deeply student-centred approach to the design and implementation of online learning, with a focus on accessibility, belonging, and flexible pathways for student success.

Community Partner Perspectives on Their Role in Course-Based Experiential Learning

Presenter:
Dr. Carolyn Peach Brown, University of Prince Edward Island

Abstract:
Benefits of community-based experiential learning for university students have been well documented in the literature (Brown, 2023; Burch et al 2019; Coker et al 2017). Community partners, who host students for such experiential learning opportunities, may also benefit from the experience. However, sometimes collaborating with a university and hosting students for internships and research projects can pose unique challenges for community partners. Research in the field has demonstrated the mutual benefit of such collaborations (Booth et al 2020; Karasik 2020; Karasik and Hafner 2021) but also indicate areas for improvement.

Experiential learning is a key part of two required courses for the Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES), an interdisciplinary degree program, at the University of Prince Edward Island. In the third year of studies, BES students take a course entitled *Environmental Studies Internship*. A key part of the course is the completion of a 30 hour volunteer internship with local community partners who are working in the environmental field. In the fourth year, the capstone course for the BES, *Public Scholars on Environmental Issues*, has small groups of students partnered with local community partners where they work on a short environmentally-oriented research project identified by the community partner. For both of these courses the community partners may come from government, non-governmental organizations or the private sector.

A previous research study demonstrated the value to students from having a 30 hour volunteer internship as part of an Environmental Studies course (Brown 2023). Since such valuable opportunities are dependent on community organizations being willing to host the students, it is important to understand the perspectives of the community organizations who have hosted over the past decade. Therefore, a research study was conducted with the community organizations that have hosted students as part of the *Environmental Studies Internship* and *Public Scholars on Environmental Studies* courses. It sought to understand their motivation to host students, their perspectives on the benefits and challenges of hosting students and how such collaborations could be improved. Besides providing

insight to the scholarly literature related to experiential learning opportunities in the environmental field, the results provide helpful information for improving future offerings of the courses.

Bio:
Dr. H. Carolyn Peach Brown is a Professor of Environmental Studies in the Faculty of Science at the University of Prince Edward Island. An award-winning teacher, she also conducts research with a focus on strategies in environmental governance that can contribute to the goals of sustainable resource management and improved livelihoods in the context of a changing climate. Her research is guided and informed by her interdisciplinary background in both the natural and social sciences. She has had research projects in Central Africa, Atlantic Canada and the Caribbean.

[Back to Room Overview]

Concurrent Sessions III: Room 209 | Workshop

3:30 – 4:50 p.m.
[Back to Schedule]

The Africentric B.Ed. Cohort: Reimagining Access to Education through Africentricity and Ubuntu

Presenters:
Dr. Késa Munroe-Anderson, Acadia University
Dr. Martin Morrison, School of Education, Acadia University

Abstract:

The Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort Program is an excellent example of *Reimagining Higher Education* to provide equitable access to historically marginalized communities (Chisolm, 2024; Acadia, 2025; Clark, 2025). Responding to the legacy of underrepresentation of African Nova Scotian/Black teachers in the Nova Scotia public school system, and persisting systemic anti-Black racism negatively impacting African Nova Scotian/Black learners, Acadia University partnered with the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute to offer the first Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort Program of its kind in Atlantic Canada (BLAC, 1994; Lee & Marshall, 2009; Hamilton-Hinch et al., 2021; Jean-Pierre, 2021; Munroe-Anderson, 2018; Morrison, 2024). Launched in January of 2025 in the School of Education, the development of this three-year alternative program for African Nova Scotian/ Black students currently working full-time in non-teaching positions in Nova Scotia's public school system moves beyond traditional Eurocentric models of Bachelor of Education programs to co-create an Africentric learning environment that is accessible, equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the realities of African Nova Scotian and all Black learners.

Grounded in the theory of Africentricity, (Asante, 1998; Hunn, 2004; Bernard & Brigham, 2012) the Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort centres the knowledge, histories, cultural heritage, values, worldviews, lived experiences and contributions of African peoples in analysis through culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy, relational teaching and learning spaces which foster a sense of family and belonging, and integral community partnership. With a focus on the Africentric values of collaboration, solidarity, compassion, respect, dignity, and collective survival, the program incorporates the human-centred African philosophy of Ubuntu (Mgibi,1997, Makua & Ngubane, 2021; Blackwood, 2024) to guide its development and operation.

The Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort model is a promising framework that postsecondary educators and institutions can use to develop programs accessible and culturally responsive to equity-deserving students through inclusive pedagogies that promote belonging and innovation. This model exemplifies how to decolonize curriculum and pedagogy to create inclusive learning spaces for marginalized students. Through the active story of the development of the Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort Program,

workshop participants will learn about the importance of culturally responsive philosophies, community centredness, and community partnerships to empower and sustain the success of students in programs designed specifically for equity-deserving groups.

Bios:

Dr. Késa Munroe-Anderson is a passionate, community-oriented change agent who practices an Africentric, anti-racist, Black feminist approach to leadership and education. Serving as Associate Professor in the School of Education at Acadia University, Dr. Munroe-Anderson leads the Master of Education in Inclusive Education - Equity and Social Justice Cohort designed to develop Nova Scotia's capacity of equity leaders in education. She is also the Coordinator for the Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort for African Nova Scotians and persons of African descent which responds to the need for equitable representation of Black teachers in Nova Scotia's public school system.

Dr. Martin Morrison is a member of the African Nova Scotian communities of Danvers and Southville and is the proud father of six children and three grandchildren. An Associate Professor in the School of Education at Acadia University, Martin has 20-plus years of experience in education. Martin holds a Bachelor of Education, an Africentric Master of Education in Lifelong Learning and a PhD in Educational Studies from MSVU. Martin's research and teaching explore the themes and characteristics of teachers identified as being culturally relevant and responsive to the social, emotional, academic and cultural needs of African Nova Scotian learners.

[Back to Schedule]

Concurrent Sessions III: Room 210 | Workshop

3:30 – 4:50 p.m.

Mindful classrooms: integrating mindfulness-based activities in your teaching practice' workshop.

Presenter:
Dr Julia Fursova, School of Leadership Studies, University of New Brunswick

Abstract:
Mindfulness is an art and practice of "paying attention on purpose and in a particular way" (J. Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 23). It can also be described as awareness, discernment, and retention of memory (Shapiro & Carlson, 2017). Mindful practice develops ability to direct and sustain attention, lessens reactive response, leads to greater discernment and compassions, and reduces egocentric tendencies (ibid.).

There has been a rising interest in integrating mindfulness in higher education. Mindfulness-based interventions reduce stress and anxiety that students often experience, enhance awareness and attention in the classroom, and help students develop a more accepting and loving attitude towards self and others (Oberski et al., 2914; de Bruin et al., 2015; Schwind et al., 2017; Serrao, Rodrigues & Ferreira, 2022; Ergas & Hadar, 2023). Due to a wide range of benefits, mindfulness belongs in all classrooms and disciplines and should not be limited to specific courses focused exclusively on stress reduction and wellbeing techniques. Mindfulness activities are versatile and can be adapted to the course contexts and objectives. Building on my fifteen years of experience facilitating mindfulness activities in community, adult, and higher education, I am offering this workshop to share strategies for integrating diverse mindfulness activities to enhance wellbeing in the classroom, promote inclusion and human flourishing.

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Shapiro S. L., & Carlson L. E., (2009). What is Mindfulness? in *The Art and Science of Mindfulness: Integrating Mindfulness Into Psychology and the Helping Professions*. American Psychological Association.

Bio:

Julia Fursova is a community engaged scholar and 'pracademic', with over fifteen years of work in community-based, public, and non-profit sectors. Julia is a systems transformation facilitator who contributes to nurturing justice, equity, diversity, decolonization, and inclusion. Community engagement, research co-design, and arts-based knowledge mobilization are the cornerstones of their research and evaluation practice. Julia's interests and passion for systems change have been influenced by their lived experience, grassroots priorities, and a continuous dialogue with community members. In addition to Julia's academic practice, she also a student of yoga and mindfulness, with over twenty years of practicing both.

[Back to Schedule]