



Intersession week report-back

Following from our successful back-to-school keynote event with Dr. Sami Schalk, the Teaching and Learning Exchange and the Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services (OAREHRS) released asynchronous materials focused on [Creating an Accessible Learning Environment](#) and hosted several related intersession events.

Reflecting on Disability Justice and Building an Accessible Institution

On Monday, October 23rd, we gathered to watch a livestream re-broadcast of Dr. Sami Schalk's August 31st keynote talk "Introduction to Disability Justice and Accessible Higher Education." See below for TLX Associate Agnes Orzechowski's summary of the key points from the keynote talk. Faculty and staff attendees from across the College then used Dr. Schalk's reflection questions to explore the work we are doing to make a more accessible institution – and what we could do better.

Reflection questions (Dr. Sami Schalk)

- What defines a good student or good staff member/employee for you? What aspects of this definition may be based on (dis)ability, race, gender or class norms?
- How flexible are you willing to be in your teaching, your supervising, and other work? What prevents you from being more flexible?
- What are your access needs at work? What would make it easier and more enjoyable to do your job?

Try using these questions to spark discussion at your next team meeting!

Student Panel on Accessibility at GBC

On Thursday, October 26th, we had the chance to learn from the wisdom and experiences of two current GBC students who self-identify as disabled, neurodivergent, and/or with unmet access needs in a panel discussion and Q & A facilitated by Wren Alden from OAREHRS. The student panels taught us that what matters most to them is:

- Genuine interest in the goals, needs, and experiences of the students in the classroom
- Making space for students to express their goals, needs, and experiences in their own terms, and not just through the language used in formal accommodations
- Clear, transparent, consistent, and caring communication
- Flexibility and options in assessments and teaching modalities
- Awareness of and attention to the complexity of students' lives
- Willingness to be creative in the classroom and the institution and advocate for structural change (e.g. paid work-integrated learning opportunities)

Proactively applying these strategies in your course design and coursework can reduce barriers for students, who often need to advocate for access. This advocacy can be exhausting and vulnerable for students and makes it difficult for students to learn and succeed.



Accessible Pedagogy Learning Circle

We closed the TLX and OAREHRS shared intersession programming with a faculty learning circle. Four faculty from across the college shared strategies to make the learning environments more accessible, including:

- How to create learning assessments that are creative, flexible and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)-Informed
- Ways that D2L Brightspace can support UDL
- Attitudinal and philosophical approaches to anti-oppressive pedagogy
- How to ensure that physical classroom spaces are warm, welcoming, and accessible for students

ICYMI: Introduction to Disability Justice and Accessible Higher Education

By Agnes Orzechowski

If you'd like to watch Dr. Sami Schalk's Fall keynote on Disability Justice and Accessible Higher Education (you must request access) you're welcome to access it via [this link](#) and watch at your own pace, with professional captioning and transcription.

Accessible Pedagogy Practice Ideas

How do I make a classroom that is more accessible, more comfortable, a better learning environment for everyone by using disability as a framework?

Here are some of Sami Schalk's ideas for accessible pedagogy:

- **Before class access surveys:** these are surveys that ask basic access questions to all students. For example, Do you have access to safe and stable housing this semester? Do you have access to food and medical care this semester? What are your access/safety needs in the classroom around masking (e.g. do you need masks available, do you need others to mask, etc.)? What are other access needs that haven't been addressed here that you want to let me know about?
- **Eliminate attendance policies:** Instead, include a Classroom Community Contribution component to give students credit for various contributions to the classroom community such as leading discussions, writing on the board, taking collaborative notes and coming to office hours.
- **No questions asked 48-hour extension policy.** Often, students might miscalculate their assignment completion time by just a few hours. To accommodate this, offer all students the option to request a 48-hour extension simply by emailing "I'm taking my 48-hour extension," without needing to provide an explanation. This policy empowers all students to request a little extra time when necessary.
- **Shared note-taking:** Encourage two students per class to volunteer to take notes that will be shared with the whole class. This counts towards their classroom community contribution.
- **Brain break and no prep days:** These breaks and no-prep days are scheduled before major assignment deadlines. During these days, students are not required to prepare for class, but they are still encouraged to attend and participate.

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by these new suggestions, find one to start. What feels like a reasonable change that you can incorporate into your teaching practice?

Watch [Introduction to Disability Justice and Accessible Higher Education](#) for more ideas, or organize a watch party with your colleagues with a debrief session afterwards!

Coming UP
Next at
TLX!

Coming up next at TLX:

Cool Edtech Tools: Nearpod (November 8):

Join us for any or all the sessions in our Cool Edtech Tool Series to learn and play with some fun, simple, but powerful tools. These sessions are designed with beginner to intermediate users of Educational Technology in mind, but all are welcome to join and play! This workshop will explore Nearpod, a platform that offers multiple methods of engaging students that will enhance any in-person or online teaching experience. [Register here.](#)

UDL Certificate, Cohort 1 & 2: Representation (November 8): [Registration Closed.](#)

10 Tips to Zoom Like a Pro (November 9): As a hybrid workforce, many of us use Zoom as our main video conferencing tools; This session will share with you tips and tricks that will enhance and upgrade your experience. We'll share Zoom hacks, including keyboard shortcuts, non-obvious settings, integrations, and general video chat tips. [Register here.](#)

Enhancing your documents for Digital Accessibility (November 9): Join us for this session, where we will learn about the importance of creating accessible documents, explore tools and guidelines to make our documents accessible and have time to work on our documents together with the support of the TLX. [Register here.](#)

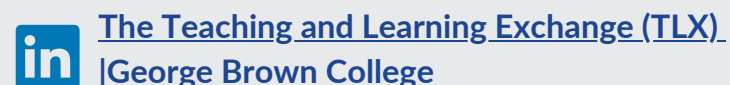
UDL Certificate, Cohort 2: Representation (November 10): [Registration closed.](#)

One size fits none: using educational technology tools to support UDL (November 14): In this session, we'll use scenarios to explore the UDL guidelines of providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action & expression, and how educational technology tools can help support them. [Register here.](#)

Creating OER: Introduction to Pressbooks (November 14): In this workshop, we will demonstrate Pressbooks, a tool for OER creation provided by eCampusOntario. We will discuss its main features and look at the steps of the OER creation process. [Register here.](#)

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The Winter 2024 Term is Now Available on Brightspace

The Winter 2024 term (202302) is now available on Brightspace. This means that any assignments will now be reflected within the LMS. We advise caution regarding any course cross-listing using the self-serve tool until assignments are finalized. Some faculty often see changes to their CRN's over the coming weeks, so it's best to wait, as any reversal of a cross-listing will result in permanent loss of the content within their course. If any instructors are uncertain about their CRN, we're available to provide a development shell for preparation before any cross-listing.

For students eager to enroll in Winter 2024 courses, enrollment opens on November 13th. Please note that students won't access their courses until the official course start date.

Here's to a successful Winter 2024 term ahead.

About TLX

The Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX) serves as a 'one-stop-shop' for all full-time and contract faculty at GBC in support of their teaching and learning-related needs. We aspire to create a community of excellence in teaching and learning by fostering partnerships with and among faculty. We model innovative, evidence-informed practices and open spaces for risk-taking and experimentation so that George Brown learners are immersed in transformative learning experiences led by innovative and adaptive faculty.



Contact Us

To contact any members of the TLX visit the [Contact Us](#) page on our TLX website.

If you are not already, [click here](#) to subscribe to the newsletter.

Coach's Corner

Like many of you, I'm finding it hard to watch the news these days, and almost impossible not to feel despair about the state of the world. What sometimes gives me solace is the knowledge that one of the purposes of higher education is to prepare global citizens to help solve the "wicked problems" of the world. So, today's **Coach's Corner** question is a challenging but hope embedded one. "How are you preparing your learners to deeply listen to one another, across ideological differences, to collaboratively work towards solutions of our most enduring global

challenges?" Perhaps you are creating spaces to have courageous conversations, even though that feels risky? Maybe you allow your students to speak freely about what's on their minds, even as they struggle to articulate conflicting feelings? If you are actively teaching critical thinking skills, giving students time to practice conflict negotiation skills, and supporting them to engage constructively across widely diverse perspectives, then there is hope.

In this attached [video](#), Dr. Paul Handstedt, Director of the Houston H. Harte Center for Teaching and Learning at Washington and Lee University and author of *Creating Wicked Students: Designing Courses For a Complex World* talks about the need to create wicked students ready to solve the future's most wicked problems.



Nicki Monahan , TLX Faculty Facilitator