



# Teaching & Learning Commons NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024



## A MESSAGE FROM THE AVP

I recently had the opportunity to attend the International Innovative Learning Environments Conference. My key takeaway: Learning environments are not just about the spaces in which we deliver education. Pause, reflect and read that again. Robust dialogue occurred that revealed learning environments are about entire campuses and all the intentional uses for each space - inside and out.

Traditionally, when we thought about learning environment, we considered only the classroom; its furnishings and over recent years it's technology. Recently, focuses on technology and delivery models allow us to support learners both on and off campus. However, if we consider all spaces and the ways in which they support or do not support learning, then we need to broaden our thinking about how to enhance learning. This is not the work of teachers and students or the folks in facilities alone, we all have a part in environment and culture and we should be considering this with every decision we make.

I was pleased that the technology available in KPU classrooms is equivalent to what was presented from elsewhere in the world for both standard classroom and technology enhanced (hybrid). What I knew that was reinforced is It would be ideal to consider more types of rooms for various pedagogical and co-curricular purposes and flexible open spaces for non-instructed learning to occur. I love that several speakers highlighted a recommendation on the use of natural elements and the impact these have on wellness and on learning. "Bring the outside in and take the inside out".

We should use spaces in ways that support wellness, cognition, pedagogy, and accumulatively human thriving. I am inspired to engage in more dialogue about how we can better the environments we provide our students and welcome you to reach out if this strikes you as something you would like to engage in.

This newsletter is chock full of updates and learning opportunities as the Commons continues to strive to support the practice of KPU educators and the institutional objectives. We recognize the current complexity of challenges facing higher education and are committed to engaging with all of our partners to address them. We wish you all a restful holiday break and look forward to seeing you in 2025!

All the best, Leann



*We at Kwantlen Polytechnic University respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and study in a region that overlaps with the unceded traditional and ancestral First Nations territories of the Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt, and Kwikwetlem; and with the lands of the Kwantlen First Nation, which gifted its name to this university.*

# BITS & BYTES



## Unlock Creativity with Lucidchart: Use Cases and Guidelines for Faculty

We've created guidelines and use cases for using the free online version of Lucidchart, a collaborative diagramming application for mind mapping, collaborative notetaking, brainstorming, and more!

The TL Commons worked with the Office of Information Access and Privacy to provide faculty with clear guidelines for using this external tool responsibly.

We hope you will consider how Lucidchart could support engagement and collaborative learning, simplify complex concepts, or promote problem-solving and critical thinking. For support using Lucidchart in your course design, contact the TL Commons—we are here to help!

**CLICK HERE TO  
ACCESS THE  
RESOURCE!**



# GENERATIVE AI: FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

The TL Commons is putting together a webinar series to encourage dialogue around generative AI. Generative AI may be the most critical disruptor to face higher education. In an effort to spark dialogue and critical discourse, we're hosting the voices of KPU faculty sharing their disciplinary perspectives.

## Empowering Faculty: Creating Your Own AI Assistant for Teaching and Research

November 29, 1:30-2:30 PM, online (Zoom)

Host: Serena Neumerschitsky

Curious about how AI can elevate your teaching, streamline research, and support student engagement? Join our hands-on webinar series, Empowering Faculty, where you'll learn how to build a custom AI assistant tailored to the needs of educators. This series is designed specifically for faculty by faculty, guiding you step-by-step through the process of creating and deploying a virtual teaching assistant powered by OpenAI's ChatGPT. From understanding AI fundamentals to crafting prompts that align with your unique subject area and teaching style, this course will empower you with practical knowledge and insights.



**REGISTER HERE!**



## STAY TUNED!

The TL Commons will be launching on SharePoint, making it easier for you to find teaching & learning resources!



# AI-ENABLED EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

TL Commons funded 20 KPU educators and administrators to attend the SFU AI-Enabled Professional Development Conference on October 16, 2024. Given the importance of generative AI, we thought it was important to have faculty in attendance. Here is their feedback and insights.

## Taranum Sultana

**Student-Centered Discussions:** The students were given opportunity to speak about their experiences and how tools are helpful in critical thinking and fostering responsible digital citizenship.

## Paola Gavilanez

The main takeaway for me was the complexity of the ethical challenges AI presents across different academic disciplines. A major issue attendees commented on was the question of what constitutes true human and 'original' creation when AI plays a role in generating content, even when guided by human prompts. Additionally, there are unresolved issues around content ownership in cases where AI assists in creation, sparking debates over intellectual property rights. These concerns hold significant and sometimes unexpected implications for academia.

## Carley Hodgkinson

I very much appreciated Fred Lesage's presentation on balancing innovation with tradition – in his Imaginative Methods Lab at SFU SIAT, he and his students interrogate AI through creative exploration, storytelling and speculative making. AI tools can help make assessment more efficient and more transparent to students, as well as actively engage passive learners by making stronger connections to their learning (for example, through a custom AI tutor or digital twin).

## Jovita Vytasek

The student panel stood out to me as it offered valuable perspectives on how learners envision integrating AI into their education. Students emphasized a desire to learn more about how AI can be used to enhance knowledge construction, information evaluation, planning, and critical thinking, rather than viewing it merely as a shortcut. They shared thoughtful considerations for implementation, ethics, environmental considerations, and appropriate applications in academic settings.

## Gustavo Arruda

Educational institutions must shift their perception about AI. Instead of seeing it as a threat it should be seen as an opportunity to greatly enhance the educational experience for both students and instructors. Designing AI-amenable course curricula, assessment tools, and rubrics should be a top priority.

## Daniel Benzimra

I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about instructor perspectives on appropriate and ethical use of GenAI as a part of their course and assessment design, as well as how they navigate student use of AI for assignment completion.

## Marcelo Machado

Most students are using Gen AI, and only 30-40% of faculty. We must find ways of blend Gen AI into our teaching and learning. Multiple presenters identified that Gen AI allows for a return to one-to-one learning as opposed to broadcasting learning (one-to-many). Feedback with Gen AI can be deeper, more competence, skilled based, rather than knowledge (understanding) based, and that may make the way we grade and rank students obsolete - You either can do something or not whereas you know part of the contents of a course (e.g., 75%).

# TL COMMONS COMMUNITY CORNER

The TL Commons continues to be committed to developing community around teaching and learning. And to that end, you'll find below the latest blogs, communities of practice, and upcoming faculty development sessions to support you in your practice development.

## Workshops

- Nov 22, Elevating Student Engagement: A Faculty Workshop
- Nov 22, Let's Do Some Open Pedagogy
- Nov 29, Getting Started with Pressbooks
- Dec 2, Technology Enhanced eClass Orientation
- Dec 6, Getting the Best Out of AI: Prompt Engineering
- Dec 9, Instructional Skills Workshop (series)
- Dec 16, Establishing Your KPU Teaching Practice

CLICK EACH  
BULLET TO  
LEARN MORE

External - University of the Fraser Valley May 2025 Indigenous workshops!

- Educators Journey Towards Reconciliation (EJTR)
- Weaving Knowledge Systems (WKS)
- Holistic Approaches to Teaching and Learning

## Latest Blogs

- Leading by Example: Faculty Initiatives for Sustainable Development
- Revisiting Academic Integrity in the World of Generative AI
- From Words to Visuals: Enhancing UDL with MultiMedia

## Current Communities of Practice

- Generative AI
- Open Education
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- ePortfolio Matters at KPU

# SIMPLE SYLLABUS

We are excited that things are moving ahead with preparing Simple Syllabus for use. The Privacy Impact Assessment is complete, and we are testing integrations. We are looking forward to engaging faculty to test the system in the coming weeks and are grateful to those who have volunteered. If you would like to test Simple Syllabus in December by preparing your spring syllabus, you will be able to download a pdf of it from the test system to use for your course. If you participate, your syllabi will be in the system for replication in future semesters. To participate in testing email [tlcommons@kpu.ca](mailto:tlcommons@kpu.ca)



Discover Selkirk College's Sound Education Podcast  
[Listen here!](#)

Episode 11, Authentic Assessment & ePortfolios features Teaching & Learning Commons Learning Strategist Lisa Gedak and Educational Consultant Gillian Sudlow!

# PURPOSE STATEMENT

Through active intentional partnering, the Teaching & Learning Commons provides pedagogical leadership that is grounded in community, ethics, creativity, and care.



## VISIT THE COMMUNITY CORNER!



Arbutus 2400 (2nd floor library)

We invite you to spend time in the TL Commons Community Corner. Enjoy our spacious seating and large screen to cast to.

## NEW BLOG!

[Click here](#) to read 'The Spinach in the Lasagna': ePortfolios Matter for Authentic Assessment by Learning Strategist, Lisa Gedak, and Educational Consultant, Gillian Sudlow.



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