

**Note: Conference abstracts corresponding to a paper or short communication elsewhere in the Proceedings are indicated with a double asterisk (\*\*).**

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### **Thinking Creatively About “Alone Time” in University Classrooms\*\***

M. Tanya Brann-Barrett, Cape Breton University

As a Communication professor and educational researcher, I spend a significant amount of time studying, practicing, and discussing the benefits of collaborative and group learning. Still, when thinking about innovative ways to encourage critical thought and learning, I have come to “re-appreciate” the value of what might be called “alone time.” I have also “re-thought” what alone time can look like when multi-media and art-making are part of the picture. In this presentation, I make a case for building alone time into classroom experiences in conjunction with collaborative activities. To do so, I draw from my own teaching practices and most recent multi-media ethnographic research. I also invite participants to share their experiences and ideas of alone time and its value in the learning process. First, we contemplate the value of silence in critical learning and strategies educators can use to create room for constructive silence. We then consider the need for some degree of personal space in which students can listen, process, and critically reflect upon what they are learning. Finally, we “try out” an adaptation of an art-making activity that allows for alone time and collaboration in an effort to help students articulate their ideas, questions, and interpretations of theories and concepts they explore in the classroom. These methods will have limitations. Still, when space is made for alone time students may be better prepared to make sense of what they are learning and to engage in knowledge-building with others both inside and outside the classroom. Participants will be given contemplative statements to help them critically reflect on their relationships with alone time and collaborative activities in teaching and learning. Then, using a wide range of crafting materials supplied, they will be invited to create artistic pieces that illustrate their ideas about learning processes that are meaningful to them as both educators and lifelong learners. Throughout this activity there will be opportunities for both silence and discussions. Our focus is the process, not the finished piece. Therefore, there will be no pressure to “hurry up” and participants will take their finished or unfinished work with them so they may continue to critically reflect on their own and with others.

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### **Organizing Curriculum: Introducing "Clusters" in the Faculty of Arts at UPEI**

Ann Braithwaite, University of Prince Edward Island

This Furious Five presentation will talk about a new initiative in UPEI's Faculty of Arts—“clusters”—that are applicable to any Faculty. Clusters are an innovative way to organize and present curricular offerings, by stepping outside of existing department and program structures and, in the process, also challenging

"disciplines" as the primary/privileged way universities—and faculty—think about organizing knowledge. Clusters offer faculty, and thus also students, new ways to imagine curriculum by finding other points of intersection and crossover between knowledges, questions, approaches, and theoretical languages than those more usually assumed to exist within a "discipline"/department. This short presentation will quickly describe what a cluster is and the rationale behind clusters, and give a few examples from our Faculty. It will also address the primary challenge to clustering courses that we've run across—a challenge that, I believe, highlights why clusters are such an important idea to consider, and how much they ask us to think more deeply (and outside the box) about our pedagogy and our curriculum, or about what we're doing in that classroom.

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## **Embracing Creativity to Enhance Reflection, Critical Thinking, and Deep Learning in Nursing Students**

Dawn Burke, University of New Brunswick

Objectives of the Presentation: 1. To share my experience in embracing creative assignments to enhance reflection, critical thinking and deep learning in students, and 2. to challenge and encourage other educators to embrace creative teaching methods to enhance learning. Registered nurses are expected to reflect on their nursing practice on an ongoing basis. This reflection encourages critical thinking. Recognizing that learners have varying educational needs and styles, I have sought to combine the creative with the reflective. Several assignments have engaged students by requiring them to interview someone they know that has a chronic illness; following this, the learners are encouraged to critically think about what are important elements of chronic illness to them personally, and to decide on how they might represent these elements in a creative piece. Students have been creative in presenting their thoughts, and used medium such as creating videos, writing and singing songs, scrap-booking, taking photographs, shadow boxes, and art work to name just a few. I was motivated to embrace the creative not just because I am a creative being, but the idea was also drawn from my thesis research where I had participants take photographs (photo novella) to capture what spirituality meant to them. The photographs were then used to guide interviews. Participants articulated how the process of taking photographs was beneficial in assisting their critical thinking, insight, and reflection. By combining the use of photography and the creative arts with personal reflection and clinical experiences, students are often afforded the opportunity to reflect in such an in-depth manner that encourages deep learning, along with both personal and professional growth. Encouraging this type of reflection early in their careers may provide nurses with a powerful ability to have insight and strength to assist others, and better enable them to experience long last satisfaction and fulfillment as nurses.

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## **Creating Teaching Champions: Taking the Graduate Teaching Experience Outside the Classroom\*\***

Giovana Celli, Marissa Ley, Jill McSweeney, Colin Jackson, and Nayha Acharya, Dalhousie University

Teaching and learning is a critical component of professional development in graduate school. However, it is often overlooked and undervalued by students, who focus on developing research skills and projects in their disciplinary fields. While many universities offer teaching development opportunities (e.g., workshops or certificates), there is often an absence of student community and networking focused on teaching. To facilitate deeper engagement with teaching and learning and more thoughtful teaching practices, the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) at Dalhousie University created the CLT Champions Program in 2013. The Champions are a group of graduate students from different faculties who meet monthly to discuss peer-reviewed literature and research on teaching theory and practice, and develop student-led initiatives to promote teaching and learning efforts across the campus. The program has attracted a group of passionate students who share their challenges and successes with teaching, and provide peer support and mentorship for each other. This session will first discuss building an interdisciplinary community around teaching and learning, and empowering graduate students through their development as teachers. Then, the Champions will share their own experiences from their disciplinary lenses (e.g., Law, Health Promotion) and how the program has had benefits beyond teaching. To conclude, participants will be asked to reflect on the involvement of graduate students in teaching and learning at their own institutions and how student-led programs can help create further professional development and growth.

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### **Being Authentic**

Martha Cheney, Acadia University

Students comment that one of the most important attributes of effective teaching is being authentic. If students feel we appreciate them, they are more likely to engage. This may mean a journey of self-reflection if we are open to doing so. My approach is to use humor, acknowledge that I also learn from them, to be inclusive, set clear expectations, and use weekly quizzes to improve engagement. Student feedback is positive, stating quizzes “helped with understanding all the material,” “we covered a lot of chapters and that was useful when it came to midterms,” and “frequent quizzes forced me to stay up to date on material and keep topics fresh.”

## **In Class Games in Business Education to Facilitate Learning**

Emin Civi, University of New Brunswick

One of the few places students don't regularly play games is in their classrooms. Even though all instructors know it, they do not fully utilize games as a pedagogical tool. Although some teachers use them as a part of their instructional repertoire, most teachers do not (Marzano, 2010). Research has shown that educational games can have positive impacts on student learning and motivation. An effective game will help students understand concepts more quickly and remember them better than from a lecture (Klassen & Willoughby, 2003). Previous literature indicates that games motivate students to actively participate in the learning process and encourages teamwork. Students reported that the use of games was an appropriate method of instruction that facilitated their learning. Students also indicated an overall preference for a participatory course and viewed other students as actively participating when games were used in a course (Azriel, Erthall, & Starr, 2010). The games used are adaptations of popular game shows, such as Jeopardy, Family Feud, Who Wants to be Millionaire, and competitions for a prize. All these games helped me increase student engagement and reach larger number students. In this presentation, I'll mention the use of in class games as a means of facilitating and assessing learning. This presentation will outline how I used this tools and how it helped my students to learn the material. Results of an evaluation that were conducted after the class will also be discussed.

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## **What Do Engineers Do, Anyway? Mentoring First-Year Students**

Frank Comeau, St. Francis Xavier University

Although engineering curriculum is generally slow to change, mentoring is an approach that is gaining attention lately. Mentoring in this context means pairing students with practicing engineers who act as mentors. Mentoring is normally limited to the last years of the engineering program. Mentoring contrasts with the more common co-op work terms where students are paid to work in an engineering company. Another relatively new idea is teaching engineering design in the first year. The traditional approach is to give students a base in engineering theory before tackling design. The drawback is that practically all first-year engineering students are eager to try things out, and many chose engineering specifically because it involves creativity. This presentation reports on our experience of combining mentoring with a design project in a first year engineering course. This innovative approach to mentoring students provides them with invaluable access to professional engineers early in their academic path, but it also presents substantial challenges. We discuss the implementation of the course in the winter term of 2014, as well as the reflections of the students and the mentors.

## **Going Beyond the Typical Undergraduate Thesis Process**

Maryanne Fisher, Saint Mary's University

A thesis is a formidable, yet exciting way to end one's undergraduate career. For undergraduates hoping to pursue graduate training, a thesis project represents a valuable stepping-stone in learning how to perform independent work. In addition to many other features, it provides a way to learn about professionalism, communication, and teamwork. Pivotal to these characteristics is the relationship between the student and the supervisor, which is key to the success of the project, as well as the feeling of self-efficacy and accomplishment by the student. We will reflect on our own experiences working with supervisors to pinpoint the characteristics that relate to positive, negative, and "bland" experiences. My ultimate aim is to generate discussion on new ways of viewing thesis supervision, with the goal being to create a community of practice. Given the importance of thesis work, thinking of novel research is critical, but so is having a flexible supervisory style that remains authentic yet inspiring. We will discuss various strategies that may be (in)effective, and brainstorm on novel ways to shape the supervisory relationship for the maximum positive impact for both the student(s) and supervisor. I will present one approach that I have implemented, which is to supplement independent work with group projects, and, if time allows, I will present some ideas about performing synchronous thesis projects.

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## **The Innovative Death Fair: Or, the Appropriation of Pedagogical Tools for Fun and Profit in the Large Enrollment Humanities Classroom**

Mary Hale, Saint Mary's University

Poster presentations (like those seen in science fairs), while quite popular in Sciences and Social Sciences, are less so in the Humanities. The conventional wisdom is that they are too visual to showcase the kinds of skills honed in Humanities courses. However, Cain and Jarvis note that effective posters present key arguments, evidence, themes, and/or conclusions distilled from a greater body of research that a student or group has done on a subject or topic. The acts of prioritizing and distilling have the potential to encourage clearer thinking and tighter arguments. Some researchers also argue that the learning achieved in posters can be akin to that achieved in a research essay. Participants in this session will engage in a storyboard exercise as an example of the layered pedagogy I have been using in conjunction with poster presentations in my "Death" courses. The benefits of storyboarding will be made manifest in conjunction with a broader discussion of the ways in which poster presentations can be successfully incorporated into the Humanities classroom. Examples of student presentations will be on display. Poster presentations showcase a variety of skills—oral and visual presentation, for example—which Gipps links to an overall impression of evaluative fairness, and, which in my experience, also enhances student engagement and depth of comprehension.

## **Dare to be Innovative and Mentally and Physically Engaging When Teaching Larger Classes\*\***

Angie Kolen, St. Francis Xavier University

Come to this highly energetic, highly engaging session to learn several tried, tested, and proven-to-be successful innovative teaching and learning techniques, which not only physically engage students in your class, but mentally hook them in as well. In addition to the benefits of engaging your students physically and mentally in each of your classes, the risks and challenges of daring to be innovative in larger classes (50 to 150 students) will be discussed. You will have the opportunity to share your perspectives on these techniques as you physically and mentally engage in each of them in this brief session. When you leave this session, you should be challenged to find reasons why NOT to engage in at least one of these techniques in your classes (or presentations) in the future.

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## **The Art of Surrender: Notes on Practicing Pedagogy of Play**

Kate Krug, Cape Breton University

The literature on student engagement is littered with texts on critical and/or transgressive pedagogies that provide a wide variety of classroom practices and processes, exercises, assessment strategies and a host of other tools designed to facilitate and sustain students' attention and connection in the classroom context. My own contribution to this discourse has been to develop and implement a transgressive pedagogy that I call a "pedagogy of play." This paper outlines the foundational principles in the pedagogy of play and provides some concrete examples of the classroom practices that this pedagogy has inspired. In addition to discussing both the successes and failures I have encountered in practicing a pedagogy of play, this paper argues that in order to truly be successful, a radical pedagogue must also learn to practice the art of surrender.

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## **Employing Industry Standard Tools to Drive Successful Student Projects**

David Leblanc, University of Prince Edward Island

Many courses and programs have a requirement for significant, long-term, group development projects. Over the past 16 years, I have supervised many such projects (multiple per year) and, as such, have seen the potentially serious problems that can arise in such endeavours. Projects have encountered many different specific issues, but almost all come down to two basic issues: 1. Individual students can mischaracterize their contribution to the group effort (either through an unrealistic understanding of what is expected of them—or through outright deception), and 2. a group's plan may well exceed the resources (including time) that they have available to them over the life of the project. For the past

several years, I have employed project management techniques commonly used by small to medium sized technology-oriented companies to guide students in self-managing their group efforts and to greatly improve their chances of project success. Within the past 10-15 years, the dominant project management tool within small to medium sized technology-oriented companies has been what are called “Agile models.” These models eschew the management-heavy traditional models of product development in favour of highly interactive, self-governing group approaches. Presently, the most popular of these models is Scrum and this is the model I have been using to drive successful group projects for the past 8 years. Under the Scrum approach, groups work in short (1-2 week) development “sprints” with defined individual goals that directly contribute to the final product. As such, at the end of each sprint the actual contribution of each team member (defined as meeting their defined goals or not) can be directly measured by other group members. Furthermore, as goals must be achieved within these short sprints, the overall project can be conceived of, and driven by, a series of short term goals leading to a successful project. In this talk, I will discuss the tools that are provided to a student team to allow them to organize and schedule a project around a Scrum-inspired structure, to track individual progress within the group, and to provide feedback to the project supervisor about both individual contributions and overall project progress. These tools are simple to both adopt and employ—a simple feature-based timeline schedule, a spreadsheet on a common server such as Google Drive and an evaluation form to be submitted via email. Although developed for technology-oriented projects, these techniques are easily adaptable to any type of project involving group development, as long as the project can be divided into a series of features (i.e., parts that can be delivered separately). Using this approach I have been able to assign much more complicated projects to student groups and have seen the project (and individual) failure rate diminish to almost zero.

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## **From the Classroom to A MOOC: Experiences and Insights from a TA**

Jill McSweeney, Dalhousie University

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have become a non-traditional avenue for higher education to open services to students inside and outside institutions. MOOCs are online courses with unlimited participation that offer the opportunity to participate for non-credit and/or credit, in courses from a range of topics and disciplines. The open and often free nature of MOOCs has garnered international awareness, and is now attracting professionals and non-professionals from around the world. The massive, open, and online nature of MOOCs presents a variety of challenges that are less prevalent or non-existent in traditional classrooms, such as managing thousands of students and their engagement with course content. While discussions are now being held on the topic of MOOC development and delivery, little emphasis is being placed on understanding how these issues impact and transform the role of teaching assistants (TAs). TAs are often on the frontlines of MOOC participation and student engagement. However, unlike traditional classes, a MOOC TA must manage large enrolment numbers,

24/7 student engagement, and constant monitoring of student-led course content. This session will focus on sharing experiences and insights on key issues of teaching and facilitating MOOCs from a TA's perspective. Topics to be discussed are: Creating a collaborative and engaging environment for students; respecting student diversities (e.g., age, professions, languages); creating and maintaining an online presence; and how to manage hundreds (at times thousands) of students without feeling overwhelmed. Practitioners and students are invited to discuss these issues and their own experiences participating and/or facilitating MOOCs.

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## **Teaching Outside the Box Using Social Media and Smartphone Technology**

Allan MacKenzie and Kyle Simon, Cape Breton University

In.Business: A Business Network for Indigenous Youth, was established in 2011 to facilitate the transition of Aboriginal high school students to post-secondary business education. It employs smartphone technology and social media to link Aboriginal high school students with Aboriginal business mentors who facilitate a series of activities, and current BBA students who serve as junior mentors and provide feedback on challenges. The program exposes participants to business concepts and models, while providing advice and support to students. The strategies for employing smartphones and social media in this mentorship program can be easily transferred to classroom learning. With the assistance of an In.Business graduate, in this presentation I will review the structure of the program and explain how social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) have allowed us to create a virtual business network and shaped our programming. In addition, based on the feedback via exit surveys, along with an assessment of the number of graduates moving on to study business at university, we will discuss the success of the program. To close this presentation, we will explain the implications this program has on Aboriginal youth and their communities—namely, In.Business connects students with peers and mentors who can support them through the transition to post-secondary business studies. Participants in this presentation will leave understanding the value of integrating social media and smartphone technology into business education and possess new strategies for incorporating them into post-secondary classrooms.

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## **The Curiosity Project: The Benefits and Challenges of Creating Transformational Learning Experiences through Intrinsic Motivation and Writing in Arts and Business Faculties**

Stacey MacKinnon, Marina Silva-Opps, & UPEI Senior Undergraduate Curiosity Project Learning Facilitators, University of Prince Edward Island



For six semesters, The Curiosity Project has encouraged over 350 students in a 2nd year social psychology class to explore intrinsically-motivated learning, investigating topics that interest them and following them down long and oftentimes winding roads, where U-turns, hidden side roads, and venturing off the map are a cause for excitement, not a distraction from the destination. This project incorporates proximal goals of weekly learning logs and peer group meetings (Bandura & Schunk, 1981) and in-depth feedback from peers and senior undergraduate facilitators (Brown & Campione, 1994). There are no page/word limits or minimum/maximum number of resources, just students' burgeoning sense of what constitutes "high quality work." Community-oriented projects round out this experience. In this session, originating professor, Dr. MacKinnon, and her undergraduate learning facilitators (also former Curiosity Project students) will debate the benefits/challenges of developing and maintaining this large scale undertaking, including our recent research examining the transformational properties of student participation in this project. Dr. Silva-Opps will share her experiences in adapting The Curiosity Project to smaller mid to upper-level biology courses without learning facilitator support. Samples of student projects from both social psychology and biology and plans for continued refinement and expansion of The Curiosity Project across the curriculum will round out the session.

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## **Using Empathy as a Tool to Learn about Atypical Human Sexual Behavior**

Peter MacIntyre, Cape Breton University

Information comes in many types of metaphorical boxes, including beliefs about what is appropriate behavior. This presentation will demonstrate the process of developing an empathetic report in the context of a human sexuality course. This type of report combines traditional research tools with the active ingredient of student empathy. This approach can be applied to many types of "controversial" behaviours. Students choose an innovative style in which to present their emerging understanding, such as a newspaper article, letter, blog, case files, resume, etc. The empathetic report assignment asks students to describe atypical human sexual activity, what it means, and its psychological, social and health-related effects on the people involved from their perspective. Students choose a behavior they do not practice and find difficult to comprehend. The assignment requires students to present practitioners' interpretation of what they do and why they do it. Students gather information from various sources to build their understanding. Examples of topics undertaken include celibacy, various paraphilia, and sex for sale. Attendees are asked to bring a device with wireless capability as we walk through the assignment, dealing with its challenges first hand and from a student's perspective. We will discuss ground rules used for the empathetic report, the need to differentiate empathy from sympathy, and good practices for teaching controversial topics.

## **Teaching Outside the Box: A Contradiction in Terms? In Search of a New Paradigm for Teaching and Learning\*\***

Thomas Mengel, University of New Brunswick

In essence, we perceive “teaching” and “learning” as knowledge transfer from those who know and as knowledge acquisition and consumption by those who do not know, respectively. Pedagogical innovations (e.g., new teaching styles, learner centred approaches) over hundreds of years of higher education have not substantially changed that image (or “box”) of teaching and learning. In educational institutions, those who know are still called teachers, educators, professors, instructors, lecturers, or readers; those who acquire knowledge are called students—or learners at best. While some changes have shifted the focus from understanding “students” as those who don’t know to “learners” who are actively involved in the process of knowledge acquisition and distribution, the general educational practice still reflects the unidirectional or top-down approach to teaching and learning (as exemplified by many classrooms and lecture halls)—even a “flipped classroom” still is a classroom. Only a few institutions experiment with substantially different “teaching” concepts (e.g., “academic coaching,” “integrating,” or “facilitating”). Considering promising examples and current trends, it is high time to break free from the existing paradigm of “teaching.” In this provocative session, I will invite participants to jointly and actively explore potential elements of a new paradigm for teaching (and learning). I will also discuss and summarize key elements that warrant further exploration.

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## **Spreading the Social and Entrepreneurial Mindset: A Case Study of Innovative Teaching and Learning**

Thomas Mengel and Kayley Reed, University of New Brunswick

Thinking critically, dealing with change, and solving complex problems in a creative, socially responsible, innovative, and sustainable way are key competencies of the social and entrepreneurial mindset and of effective citizens. Hence, learning opportunities that help achieve those outcomes should be part of every academic program aiming for the education of effective citizens. In 2007, Renaissance College (RC) at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) introduced a new course: “Change Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship;” engagement with community organizations is a key element of this course. In 2014, community partners, students and the Pond-Deshpande Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at UNB helped take this course to the next level: They engaged in workshops and helped create and fund student-lead social enterprises. The potential lessons learned regarding innovative teaching and learning go beyond this particular case study: Spreading the social and entrepreneurial mindset is of interest to students and faculty in many disciplines and fields. In this interactive presentation, a professor-student team will first share key elements of our experience with encouraging creative and out-of-the box thinking through student-led projects. We will then invite participants to discuss how adding learning

opportunities that help spread the social and entrepreneurial mindset might innovate their teaching and learning in other courses, programs, and fields.

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## **No More Masterpieces: A Case Study of Peer Modelling in "Writing History"\*\*\***

Tracy Moniz, Mount Saint Vincent University

Here's my handy hint: Use student writing to teach students to write. Why? Because students more readily connect with peer models and see their own potential within these models. In essence: It seems possible to write like "that." Writing intimidates. In teaching writing, we need to move students beyond the anxiety that naturally accompanies the writing process and toward a "psychic space" conducive to exploring and uncovering "voice." Peer models help. In this presentation, I strive to demonstrate the value of using peer models in writing education through a case study of a book I edited in 2013, titled *Writing History: A Collection by New Writers*. It contains original, research-based, historical narratives by student-writers in History and Writing, an undergraduate writing course I taught for several years. In this book, which serves as a teaching tool in the course, writers tell stories about topics as diverse as the Partition of India, Residential Schools in Canada, women's golf, and Newfoundland cod fisheries. The pieces in the book exemplify the various rhetorical theories, research methodologies, and writing techniques discussed in class. Together, the pieces demonstrate how writing turns information into history and new writers into historians. This collection offers an example of using peer modeling to improve student writing—in this case, history writing, but the concept applies to other genres including creative non-fiction and scientific. The presentation will include a reading from the collection (an excerpt of a story) to engage the audience and propel thoughts on how peer modelling broadens ways of teaching.

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## **Three-Dimensional Representations of Learning**

Lawrence Nyika, St. Francis Xavier University

What can be gained by explicitly addressing university students' diverse learning capacities? Drawing on Howard Gardner's (1989) and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theories of multiple intelligences and learning as a social process, respectively, I structured my Winter 2014 Health Education class synthesis assignment to include two unique parts. First, in groups of four, students were required to create a three dimensional representation of their "dream" health promoting school (HPS) to be showcased at a class HPS fair. In designing their dream school, students could consider context (e.g. history, geography and demographics), health/education outcomes to be addressed, and how their project will be implemented. Secondly, in two weeks' time, each student was required to submit written critiques of at least three projects presented at the class HPS fair. In my presentation, I will describe the successes and

challenges of incorporating three-dimensional representations of learning into my course as an assignment. I will invite the audience to examine some of my students' HPS projects and deliberate on how other fields of study might use the instructional strategy.

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## **Experiential Learning: Service Placement or Servitude?**

Chantal Phillips, Cape Breton University

How can Internships, Co-op, Field Schools, Service Learning, and Community Based Learning be integrated into academic life? Let's start with a definition and a continuum to describe the different types of service learning and community based learning to see how these various forms co-exist and relate to each other and curriculum goals.

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## **Exploring the Ipad as a Teaching Tool in Higher Education Contexts**

Donovan Plumb, Mount St. Vincent University

Despite their relative recent appearance on the technology scene, tablets are rapidly becoming an integral device in many people's lives. While organizations, including post-secondary institutions, have been slow to add this "additional" technology to their stock of supported devices, there is good reason to attend to the potentials of tablets as tools that can support teaching and learning. In this session, I demonstrate multiple ways that I and other iPad users at my university have been incorporating iPads into our teaching practices. I will demonstrate how iPads can be used to markup student writing, track student grades, develop instructional videos, track and record classroom discussions, and conduct virtual office hours. As much as possible, the session will be a hands-on opportunity to share ideas. Participants who have them are encouraged to bring their iPads (or other tablet devices) so we can explore what we have discovered about the uses of this very flexible and ever-transforming teaching tool. After a brief introduction, the session will alternate between presentation and exploration.

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## **Developing Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity in Nursing Students**

Sheila Profit, Cape Breton University

The registered nurse's role is increasingly more complex as a result of globalization and the growing interconnectedness of the world. The client population is becoming more diverse, demanding that nurses respect and are able to care for clients from different cultural backgrounds. Judgements are often made about clients based on assumptions and values of one's own culture. As nurse educators, we have a responsibility to prepare students to be able to perform cultural assessments, develop cultural

competency skills, and act in a culturally safe way for clients. Having a fairly homogenous student population has created challenges in addressing this issue. A student learning activity based on self- and peer-reflection and interaction with students from different cultures has been implemented in the second year introductory community health nursing course. This activity has the following student outcomes: 1. Develop awareness of the student's own cultural practices and how they impact on his/her health; 2. demonstrate a beginning ability to do a cultural assessment with a person from a different culture; and 3. identify what needs to be done in an assessment of any client to ensure that assumptions are not made that the client is from the same or different culture than the student/nurse. This learning activity has changed based on suggestions made by the students. This presentation will discuss the ongoing evolution of this learning activity.

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## **The Chemistry of Business: A Case Study Involving Marketing and Inorganic Chemistry**

Joanne Pyke and Matthias Bierenstiel, Cape Breton University

It is not often that 4th year level marketing students and 3rd year level chemistry students work together during their courses, yet neither marketing nor chemistry are standalone subjects in the "real" world. In this presentation, we discuss a marketing-chemistry teaching initiative for a semester long case study. The marketing students are placed in small groups tasked to provide a marketing strategy and business plan for a medium-sized company that produces inorganic compounds. The chemistry students are responsible for production. With little more than the structure of compounds, the different groups must communicate with each other about chemicals, their properties, their production and a plan on how to sell them. The students are required to adapt to different, yet equally important topics, such as estimation of production cost and marketing plan and properties of compounds and scale-up—which are typically not taught within their individual disciplines. Further, during the case study each group is presented with a "real" provincial applied research grant, to which the students have to come up with a plan and 2-page application to obtain funding. This is a study on coordination and communication. This presentation will discuss the aspects of coordination of two diverse courses, setup and adjustment of the case study assignment, and variation with expected course enrollments. It provides a behind-the-scenes look for faculty interaction and the development of intercourse assignments.

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## **Solving Problems in Math Class: Hi-Tech and Low-Tech**

Patrick Reynolds, University of New Brunswick

While technological innovations hold some promise for making mathematics seem more dynamic and relevant than often supposed, my recent adventures incorporating technology into the classroom have changed my perspective on what constitutes engaging mathematical content. Perhaps digital content should serve printed material rather than supplant it. Throughout the session, participants will be encouraged to answer survey questions focused on how we learn mathematics, and to discuss the role of printed and digital resources in their courses. In the context of these discussions, I will demonstrate some of the technologies I've used in large lecture classes.

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### **Learning to Learn: Creating Community before Cramming in Content\*\***

Emily Root and Pat Maher, Cape Breton University

Innovation in the classroom flourishes when learners become part of a collaborative and creative community. All too often, content heavy curriculum supersedes the equally important "process" component of learning in higher education. From our experience across a variety of disciplines, learning can be deepened by spending more time and paying greater attention to creating learning communities—a concept that is highlighted as a “high impact practice” in student recruitment and retention literature. Whether the setting is a conventional university classroom or lecture hall, a field or forest on the edge of campus, or a local neighbourhood, educators can facilitate a learning community through a progression of intra- and interpersonal explorations. This workshop engages participants in a series of experiential activities that aim to foster initiative, leadership, self-awareness, and trust—factors that underlie effective collaborations for innovative learning. Workshop activities will be debriefed from both the participant and facilitator perspectives.

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### **The Unexpected Consequences of Applying Mindfulness to Critical Thinking\*\***

David Sable, St. Mary's University

In this highly interactive presentation participants will be introduced to a set of mindfulness-based reflective practices for the classroom that were the subject of mixed methods research with university students. The primary objective of the research was to determine if research-based mindfulness practices enhance the underlying dispositions for critical thinking. The practices apply basic mindfulness principles to individual contemplation, journal writing, listening, inquiry, and dialogue. Taken together, this set of practices becomes reflective interaction. Quantitative results showed statistically significant gains in the average number of indicators for critical thinking dispositions appearing in student journals. Qualitative results showed increased self-confidence and engagement with multiple points of view, confirming expectations based on previous research. However, a distinct and unexpected impact was the reported sense of "connectedness" that was stronger between students who disagreed with each other than between students who found easy agreement in their interaction. Students' sense of

connectedness, engagement with each other, was based on taking an uncertain journey together and risking the suspension of beliefs long enough to be challenged—hallmarks of “thinking outside the box.” Connectedness supports critical thinking that is more focused on deeper and broader understanding than winning an argument. It opens the door to respect, empathy, and creative dialogue.

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## **Teaching Large Online Courses: How Can Professors Promote Active Learning without Exhausting Themselves?\***

Heather Schmidt, Cape Breton University

This session will feature a productive discussion about innovative teaching techniques in large online classes, and the associated challenge of keeping the workload manageable for instructors. Teaching larger classes, and online teaching, both present their own special challenges. In a large class (with 50-100 students or more), how can one actively engage students with interesting assignments and activities, while also staying on top of the required marking and feedback? What are the alternatives or additions to multiple choice exams? Some science departments solve this problem with labs/lab instructors, but what if this is not the case in your department or academic discipline? For its part, online teaching presents the instructor with its own set of challenges, as well as some unique online tools. CBU, for example, recently acquired a tool called “Collaborate” that allows for real-time discussion including video, collaborative document editing, live small group discussion, etc. In an online class of 50 students, however, how can this tool be used? I will begin this session by briefly sharing some of the assignments I have developed for my online classes of 50 students, but also touch on ongoing challenges that I wrestle with as an instructor. We will then use a think-pair-share exercise for each participant to think about and jot down their own active learning practices and challenges/questions, then discuss in small groups, and then we will conclude with a larger group discussion in which innovative ideas for large online teaching will be shared.

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## **Turn on Your Phones Please! —From Distraction to Engagement With Mobile Learning\***

Kathy Snow, Cape Breton University

Robert Lawson, University of Manitoba

In one month, D2L, the learning management system at the University of Manitoba recorded over 6,000 occurrences of students accessing the LMS from mobile devices. Students are telling us through their actions that it’s time to change the way we think about course design. In this interactive session, you will learn how faculty at the UofM have responded to this growing trend as well as experiment with simple activities you can use in your own course design. You will need to BYOD and know how to turn it on, but

no further technical skills are necessary. The format of the 50 minute presentation will include a presentation on the approach UofM has taken to incorporate m-learning in course design for online delivery of courses (15 min max) and then move to ways in which m-learning can be incorporated in face-to-face delivery by experimenting with 5 techniques using tools found on all cell phones: camera, video recording, wifi, and/or sms. Participants will try each of these five activities with their phones and discuss how these could be used in their own teaching context.

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## **What the 3M National Teaching Fellows Can Do for You**

Elizabeth Wells, Mount Allison University

Shannon Murray, University of Prince Edward Island

Heather Carroll, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Atlantic universities have been successful in nominating 3M Teaching and now Student Fellows, so successful that we have now formed an informal "Chapter" of Atlantic 3Ms, the purpose of which is to be useful to the region in supporting and advocating for good teaching and learning. In this panel, 3M National Teaching and Student Fellows will talk about recent initiatives (including a database of external referees for those going for promotion on the basis of teaching), answer questions about successful nominations for the two 3M programs, and take suggestions about how Atlantic universities might best enlist its 3M Fellows, as well as other Atlantic teaching award-winners, to help strengthen higher education in the region.

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## **Peer-Led Teaching Support to Reduce Eating Disorders on Campus\*\***

Kathryn Weaver, Joshua MacKin, and Nicole Cormier, University of New Brunswick

Canadian post-secondary students are “lonely, overwhelmed, exhausted” (ACHA-NCHA II, 2013). While the majority report not wanting to receive information on eating disorders and related mental health concerns from college or university professionals, these students are increasingly seeking help for eating issues and associated underlying problems that require intensive support and challenge university resources. We will share highlights of an ongoing practice-research program, It’s Not about Food (INAF), designed to address the knowledge and social support needs of university students with self-identified eating issues. These highlights will be contextualized through a short (8 minute) film depicting the peer learning process and the specific support rendered by upper level nursing students who serve as peer facilitators. Mixed-method evaluation of the project conveys the value of the INAF group in creating a safe zone for enabling contemplation of personal and health changes, as well as a transformed view of self and global concerns, including the need for building positive workplace environments and prevention interventions targeting younger students and older persons. From the perspectives of the



students as peer facilitators, the most salient finding has been learning to know the participants as persons beyond the eating issues and to develop competency, professional satisfaction, and leadership capacity within a shared power venue. Current peer facilitators will walk the audience through the INAF program and will co-facilitate a discussion about the benefits and constraints of this type of peer-led therapeutic practice within their usual traditionally structured, time-pressed, and task-focused clinical placements.

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## **Inside the Lab/outside the Box: Interpreting Nonverbal Messages\*\***

Dawn White and Sarah Farrow, Cape Breton University

The Dr. Mary A. Lynch Communication Lab at Cape Breton University is approaching its 50th year in operation. A requirement in our introductory classes, the experiential learning labs help students understand concepts, increase their self-awareness, and develop their communication skills cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally, through small-group discussions, experiential learning activities, and critically reflective written journals. The weekly lab sessions encourage students to reflect on their communication behaviours and those around them. Our mode of delivery helps students increase their confidence, retain information, express ideas clearly, understand different perspectives, and expand their world. In this session, we will provide background information about the Communication Lab, explain how our experiential learning labs demonstrate teaching outside the box, why it is effective, and how we maintain the integrity of the lab while striving to adapt to new communication systems while embracing diversity. Nonverbal communication accounts for the majority of the messages we send. It's also the primary way we construct and send messages about our identity unique to contexts and cultures. Educators and students are constantly sending and interpreting each other's nonverbal cues. Have you thought about the messages you send in the classroom? How do you interpret students' messages? How are they interpreting yours? Through facilitated small-group discussions and a highly interactive experiential learning activity, we will cover the nine forms of nonverbal behaviours as related to the teaching and learning environment.

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## **Embracing Uncertainty: Facilitating Students' Pathways through Learning Thresholds**

Brad Wuetherick, Dalhousie University

"Intellectual uncertainty is not necessarily or simply a negative experience . . . It is just as well an experience of something open, generative, exhilarating . . . I wish to suggest that 'intellectual uncertainty' is . . . a crucial dimension of any teaching worthy of the name" (Royle, 2003, p. 52). Over the past decade there has been a robust exploration of what has been called threshold concepts in and

across the disciplines (Meyer & Land, 2003). These learning thresholds, which are characterized by (among other things) both troublesomeness and transformed understandings, have proven to be a useful analytic frame for exploring innovation in teaching and curriculum development across the disciplines (Cousins, 2014). Research has shown that students must overcome their uncertainty, experienced as a result of the troublesome nature of these learning thresholds, if they are to “pass through the threshold” to a transformed understanding (of the material, of the discipline, of themselves as learners) (Wuetherick, 2014). This interactive workshop will introduce participants to threshold concepts, engage participants in exploring possible threshold concepts in their disciplines, and explore one particular innovative teaching strategy—termed an expectation failure (Bain, 2004)—that has been shown to help facilitate students learning to overcome the uncertainty faced when encountering these threshold concepts.

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