

Teaching & Learning Exchange Newsletter

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A Message from the Director

When the TLX Team meets to plan the programs we are going to offer, we ask ourselves three guiding questions:

- 1) Who are we serving?
- 2) What groups might not be getting all that they need?
- 3) Where does the power show up in this situation?

More recently, I've started to think about a fourth question: Whose voices are we missing?

I'm really proud of the [Fall 2023 catalogue](#) we released recently. The team has developed a wide range of opportunities to connect the teaching and learning community across the college, making space for conversation, inspiration, and reflection. These include several new Learning Communities, including the **Coordinators' Collective** -- a chance for Program Coordinators to meet from across the college to share ideas and strategies; **Learning Squares** -- a chance for faculty to visit one another's classrooms to get new ideas and reflect on their own practice; the **XR Academy** -- a chance for interested faculty to get familiar with VR/AR/XR technology and consider trying it out in their own classrooms; the **Passport to Teaching Effectiveness** -- a new program designed for new contract faculty at the college; and as always, a range of interactive workshops and conversations throughout the semester.

I believe that the mandate of the TLX is not to provide answers about teaching and learning, but to make spaces for faculty to connect and share with one another. My hope is that you will see that mission reflected in this fall's program... and I hope you will add your voice to the conversation!

-Heidi Marsh

Director, Faculty Professional Development and Academic Technology

Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX)

About the 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.](#)

Coming up in the next two weeks:

Coordinator Collective (Sept. 25): Are you a new Program Coordinator or a seasoned veteran in the role? Join us for monthly drop-in chats where Program Coordinators can connect to share best practices and learn from each other's successes and struggles so we can be even more supportive for our students.

10 Tips to Zoom like a Pro (Sept. 25, 26): This is for those already familiar with the basic Zoom functionalities. This session will share with you tips and tricks that will enhance and upgrade your experience. Safia will share Zoom hacks, including keyboard shortcuts, non-obvious settings, integrations, and general video chat tips. [Register here.](#)

Brightspace Basics (Sept. 25, 27): Brightspace Basics will provide an overview of navigating the Brightspace Learning Environment and learning ways to personalize your course home page and learn more about the settings available to you. [Register here.](#)

Academic Integrity Community of Practice (Sept. 26): We would like to invite you to join us to share stories, anecdotes, suggestions, and offer support as we navigate the ever-changing world of academic integrity issues. Each month we will have a different presenter and topic for discussion. The ultimate intention of this community of practice is to prevent harm to students.

Brightspace: Grading & Assessment (Sept. 28): This module includes an overview of the Brightspace Assessments and Grading tools, and includes hands-on tasks. The facilitator will demonstrate a series of steps toward an objective, and then invite you to recreate those steps in your own Sandbox shell. Topics include: Create an assignment; Create & attach a rubric; Create a simple quiz (=test); Set up/alter the gradebook; Evaluate assignments. [Register here](#)



Photo of a Calendar with a date circled

XR Academy (Sept. 29). In this program, we will learn about Extended Reality and explore opportunities to integrate these technologies into our teaching. Following the academy, faculty members will have the opportunity to implement a VR learning experience into their teaching the following semester, with support from the TLX. [Register here.](#)

Learning Squares (Call goes out Oct. 2)
This is a peer-based faculty program in which teaching faculty join a small inter-disciplinary group and observe one another's classes, in person, or virtually, once or twice during a semester. In advance of those visits, we meet as a group to talk about the process of observation and reflection, and remind ourselves that the goal is not to give the faculty member being observed feedback, but to reflect on our own teaching practices. At the end of the semester, each "square" meets as a group to share their biggest "aha" moments, to discuss what was learned, and to make a commitment to adjust their teaching practice based on their learning.

Passport to Teaching Effectiveness (Oct. 4, 6)
Active Learning is an approach to teaching and learning that builds on a learner-centered focus. This workshop will explore the ways that we can start our teaching by thinking about what our students will be "doing" in class. We will look at developing and incorporating appropriate techniques to foster student interaction in the classroom. [Register here.](#)

The UDL Xchange

Why Context Matters When We Design Using UDL

One major component to consider when designing with flexibility is understanding that learning is contextual. From a UDL perspective, we understand learning to happen in the interaction of the individual and the environment. It's deeply social and contextual and for that reason, a person's knowledge shifts as they interact with the environment. For example, it's important to consider what a student can do on their own, what they can do with support in the environment, and what they can do under scaffolding conditions, because that will define where the coaching and teaching needs to happen to allow the student to progress with their learning. Just like Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development - defining the range within which a learner can have their optimum progress toward learning - we want to set up the conditions for learning to happen within a learner's zone.

Another way to consider context and the relationship between the learner and the environment is the way we think about disability, which can be contextual as well. For instance, if a person does not experience any barriers, are they disabled? If a person needs to use technology to be able to complete a test or read a text, and the environment is set up for everyone to have access to it, are they disabled? In other words, sometimes it is really the barrier within the environment (e.g., the inability to access the technology needed) that is disabling. This is the social model perspective of disability, which is at the heart of the UDL philosophy.

The following advert flips the concept of disability to demonstrate that access and inclusion is a matter of the relationship between individuals and the barriers within systems and structures that are within the environment.

Disability Awareness (and EDF Advert).

What is the context we are creating for our students? Might we be unintentionally creating barriers or failing to remove some?

Check out the next issue of the UDL Xchange, where we'll continue the conversation on the role of context in supporting our learners.

We asked ChatGPT...

Describe a Classroom Assessment Technique for getting formative feedback from students.

ChatGPT's response:

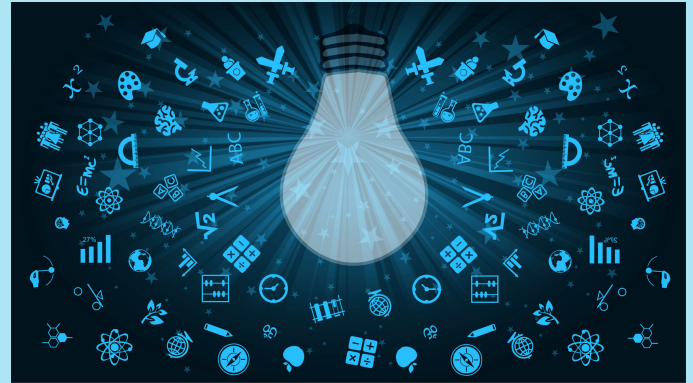
The Traffic Light (Stoplight):

1. After presenting a lesson or a specific topic, provide a moment for students to reflect on their understanding. You can do this by asking a question related to the material, such as, "How well do you understand this concept?"
2. Instruct students to respond using one of three colors to represent their level of understanding:
 - Green: If they feel they understand the material well.
 - Yellow: If they are somewhat unsure or have some questions.
 - Red: If they are completely lost or need significant clarification.
3. You can use different methods for collecting their responses, such as having them hold up colored index cards or use a polling app if your class is using technology.
4. Review the responses quickly. If you see a lot of "red" or "yellow" responses, it's an indicator that you need to address those specific areas of confusion or revisit the material.

Brightspace Update

As of August 31, 2023 the GBC Community can no longer access Blackboard. All courses have been migrated to the new D2L **Brightspace**. To assist with this transition, Brightspace training has been offered throughout this year to hundreds of faculty and will continue to be offered throughout the upcoming weeks. If you have not completed all four training modules, please check **Cornerstone** for training being offered in September. For additional resources and support, visit the **TLX website**. For help inside Brightspace, click on the GETHELP widget in the bottom right corner. For first time access to Brightspace, to request a sandbox or to request a DEV shell in Brightspace users should email the **GBC Helpdesk**.

How do you like our new learning management system? Watch for opportunities in the coming month to let us know what you think!



Ready to take your D2L Brightspace Course Design to the Next Level?

The TLX Instructional Design Team is here to help! Did you know that you can book a 30-minute consultation with one of our Instructional Designers, who can take a look at your course and make suggestions for how to improve the organization, aesthetic, and overall learning experience for your students?

[To book a conversation with Stella Bastone, Lisbia Romero, or Ian Craine, click here!](#)

Coach's Corner

Here's a question for today: Here's a question for today: As fall is upon us, and we notice the cooler, crisp morning air and the colours of the leaves beginning to change, what do you notice is changing in the educational landscape? How are these external changes impacting your day-to-day teaching & learning practices? And are there small changes that you could make, for example, in how you understand the learning barriers that your students might be facing? Fall is also a time of "letting go". Is there something that no longer serves your learners as well as it used to, that it's time to let go of? Enjoy the approaching fall!



Nicki Monahan , TLX Faculty Facilitator