A message from the Director

As everyone returns to the classroom this week, I'm reflecting on what this time of year means to me. I have always loved that feeling in the air in late August; just the edge of a chill in the early morning, and a sense that things are about to change. The fall brings lots of things that I love — sweaters, purple cloudy skies, and pumpkin pie — and I have always embraced the feeling of a new school year: a brand new notepad; bright new pens and markers; some excitement and uncertainty; a fresh start.

Of course a new school year isn't all rainbows and unicorns. When I used to teach, I remember it felt so daunting to look at a room full of new faces; new students who didn't yet know me and my charm (ha!); knowing that I had to start all over again with building a dynamic, earning their respect, and helping them find joy in the learning. In that sense, September can also bring the magnitude of the year ahead into sharp relief. The prospect of the work required can sometimes feel formidable.

But whether you enter this season feeling excitement or apprehension, I wish you a year full of challenge; a year full of triumph; and every moment of growth and effort that happens along the way. Because the real beauty in learning and in life is right there, in the in-between. Happy back to school week.

-Heidi Marsh

Director, Faculty Professional Development and Academic Technology

Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX)

Support

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.

The goal of the TLX is to foster a culture of teaching innovation and excellence, from in-class to hybrid, to fully online learning, by providing ongoing professional learning opportunities, support for teaching innovation, and 'just-in-time' teaching resources and training.

Services include one-on-one coaching and consultation, on-demand digital resources, interactive workshops, college-wide conferences, instructional design support, and much more.

The TLX also supports faculty in integrating educational technology into their teaching (e.g., Brightspace, Zoom, and ed tech apps), and in the development of digital curricular assets, such as videos, graphics, podcasts, and immersive learning experiences (VR/AR/XR). Finally, the TLX offers a number of ongoing professional learning opportunities for faculty, including teaching certificates and micro-certificates.

Contact Us

To contact any members of the TLX visit the **Contact Us page on our TLX website.**

The UDL Xchange

Welcome to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) section of our newsletter. Each issue, we will provide you with a short and sweet featurette where we share ideas, foster connections, and support one another to learn about and practice UDL!

What is UDL?

UDL is a framework that promotes designing learning experiences that remove barriers to learning, proactively responds to the variability of learners, and supports the development of learner expertise through it's **UDL Guidelines**, developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (**CAST**). The framework has three overall principles:

1. Provide multiple means for **engagement**
2. Provide multiple means for **representation**
3. Provide multiple means for **action & expression**

These principles are meant to encourage reflective practice, bust myths about teaching practices and learner attributes, and offer concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline.

Danny Smith, a faculty member in the Centre for Business, uses the analogy of planning for a trip and its connection to the UDL framework. In this video, recorded for the **UDLHE pop-up in April 2023**, he demonstrates how we all have different motivations, interests, skills and strategies we employ when we travel, and these variables may even change depending on our needs and wants of the time or purpose of our trip. Learning is as diverse an experience for students as travel is for all of us. UDL encourages us to consider how variable our learners may be and is a guide for reflection on how this variability may take place within the context of our classes and learning environments.

In the coming weeks, we will delve more into what is expert learning, post examples and discuss more about the "why," "what," and "how" of learning.

We would love to hear of ideas of UDL in your practice! If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact **udlgbc@georgebrown.ca**.

Are you interested in being part of a cohort of educators who take a deeper dive into UDL and other equity frameworks? Learn more about **TLX's UDL Certificate Course**!

TIPS

Tech Tip

Embedding external tools and activities into Brightspace. You can bring external edtech tools such as Padlets, Interactive Infographics, Mentimeter presentations, or Collaborative Documents into your Brightspace course by using the Enter Embed Code feature inside an HTML page. Copy the embed code from the external tool, go to your content area in Brightspace, create a new file and click on the "Insert Stuff" button. Then, choose Enter Embed Code and paste your code. If you need to replace the code or make changes, you can use the Source Code button (</>) on the toolbar. **Watch this video to learn how to embed these tools and see a few different examples.**

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, pleaser 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.**

Upcoming Training

The TLX is super excited to be offering a variety of training support- including mini-series, communities of practice, learning squares, certificate programs, ed-tech training sessions, UDL training sessions and so much more! All upcoming training information can be found on the **TLX website**, **Cornerstone** and in our program catalogue (coming soon)!

Coach's Corner

Nicki Monahan is an accredited coach with the International Coaching Federation (ICF). In her role as Faculty Coach with the TLX, she supports faculty to navigate the always changing landscape of higher education. Coaching involves examining our mindsets to adopt new perspectives, and make changes that allow us to perform to our highest levels and experience deep satisfaction in our work.
In Coach's Corner, Nicki will pose questions to help us reflect on the hugely challenging work of teaching and learning and continue to find new ways to meet these challenges with energy and enthusiasm.

Here's a question for today:
First impressions are powerful, and the beginning of each semester provides great opportunities to make subtle changes to our teaching practice that can have profound impact. What's one thing that you want to do more of, less of, or differently at the start of this semester that will support your learners to feel included in your learning space? How will you know if it's making a difference?
Make it a great start to the new semester!

evolvED: GBC's Annual Teaching & Learning Conference

GBC's annual teaching and learning conference "evolvED" took place on June 29, 2023. George Brown College employees gathered for exploration and learning focused on teaching innovation, a celebration of teaching excellence at the college, and conversations on the impact of rapidly evolving technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), on post-secondary education. The day featured a keynote presentation by the University of Calgary's Brenda McDermott, a plenary discussion with Microsoft Canada's National Technology Officer John Weigelt, as well as several workshops hosted by GBC faculty and employees on topics including equity, diversity and inclusion, AI, applied research and others.

During the keynote presentation and plenary discussion, attendees explored the technological advancements and the latest tools and research, focusing on high-impact and ready-to-implement practices.
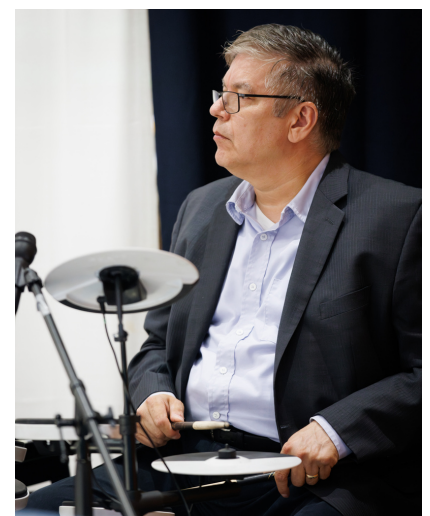

Keynote Presentation with Brenda McDermott

Workshop hosted by GBC employee for GBC employees

Plenary Discussion with John Weigelt, Microsoft Canada's National Technology Officer and Gervan Fearon, President of George Brown College

Lunch and Wine & Cheese Social entertainment featuring the Wolfgang Band & Chef David Wolfman