

## Abstracts

### Session Title: SSHRC-ing Your Responsibilities: Making Research into Teaching

The creation and preparation of a SSRHC/NSERC grant application is one of the hallmark activities of the research scholar. Like so many granting activities, it takes a great amount of time, energy, and attention to detail and can become a very solitary task. This session asks scholars to extend and expand the grantsmanship process to make it into a teaching opportunity. Both student research assistant and research scholar will analyze and describe their working relationship and how compiling the application together became a teaching and learning experience as well as a scholarly one. We will also, by extension, debunk widely-held myths that students cannot or should not be actively and meaningfully engaged in advanced research projects.

### “Getting To Know You”: Humanizing the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom

We live and teach in an environment that we are told is increasingly depersonalized, decentralized, and mediated by technology. At the same time we are encouraged to get to know our students, understand their diverse life experiences, backgrounds, and learning styles as a way to facilitate their learning and development and to aid in retention and engagement. Privacy laws, problems such as stalking or harassment, and our increased awareness of personal problems that students experience work against this attempt to get to know them and opens us up to areas and issues with which we are not always equipped to deal. In addition, we are teaching larger classes where individual contact with students is even harder to achieve. With all these competing demands and pressures, how do we connect meaningfully but prudently with our students as people? This session offers practical advice, activities and strategies that have been tested in the classroom and have facilitated achieving our desire to communicate meaningfully and influence lives without crossing boundaries or being invasive.

### “I think, therefore I learn”: Student Learning Philosophies as Tools for Motivation, Retention and Engagement

We teach in an era in which student engagement and retention are key components of our classroom strategies and attitudes, and we now understand that issues involving transitioning into adulthood and lack of engagement are pressing student problems. This session investigates the use of the Learning Philosophy as a motivational and focusing tool, particularly for first-year students. Modeled on the Teaching Philosophy, the student Learning Philosophy asks students to go through the same process of self-reflection, self-discovery, and self-actualization that the teaching philosophy does for us as teachers. Asking students the important questions “who cares?” or “why am I here?” before they ask us these questions puts the drive and focus back to the student’s inner life, the only place where true motivation and engagement can take place.

### Syllabus Design for Dummies and Not So Dummies:

As teachers, we often have wonderful ideas for new courses or are dissatisfied with the courses we are already teaching. And yet, every year we find ourselves facing the same syllabus which we haven't gotten around to revising, or are scrambling to put together a new one. What elements go into a good syllabus, what are the best strategies for designing a course of study, methods of assessment, assignments and class activities? How long should a syllabus be, and how should it differ between first-year surveys and fourth-year seminars? This session is designed for new teachers and to refresh more experienced instructors in what a syllabus can be and what it can't, and to present realistic timelines as to how long it takes to craft a well-designed course syllabus.

### Cornucopia of Creativity: Our Top 10

Instructors are encouraged to show creativity in both the design and delivery of their courses, with innovation in teaching practice increasingly being recognized and rewarded in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. At the same time instructors face time pressures and large class sizes which militate against creativity and demand instead teaching survival. This session offers resources and practical ideas that can enhance and refresh any instructor's teaching practice. The session describes the ten most creative in-class activities and outside-class assignments that the co-presenters (both together and separately) have developed and tested in the field over the past decade of teaching practice. From collaborative exams to student learning philosophies, from creative analogies for student progress to innovative rubrics, this session presents an introduction to our 10 most practical and successful creative teaching techniques -- those that have proven to have the greatest impact on student engagement and success. The presentation will feature descriptions of and caveats for each activity with participant discussion on the techniques. To enhance the value of this session, participants will receive a hands-on "starter kit" so that they can readily and quickly implement this collection of creative ideas in their own teaching, regardless of field or discipline.

### Plagiarism: The Video

One of the largest issues we face in higher education is the persistence of plagiarism in student work. Although many instructors spend valuable time constructing "plagiarism-proof" assignments and services like Turnitin.com attempt to aid in detecting and diagnosing plagiarism in student assignments, these tools may impede creativity and cast instructors in policing rather than teaching roles. Furthermore, these interventions assume a natural disposition toward dishonesty in students, an attitude that erodes teacher-student trust and undermines student confidence. Pre-emptive and preventive measures are not always successful because the root of the problem is often not willful dishonesty, but students' basic misunderstanding of what constitutes plagiarism. This session presents a new and creative strategy for educating students: a short video for students on plagiarism that, through humour and analogy, portrays the problem as an inability to integrate one's own perspectives with those of others. Cast with young actors, and written and directed by the presenter, the video shows students in any discipline how to use sources responsibly and effectively. This interactive session will screen and

discuss the video, and then engage attendees in a new, more positive way of framing and talking about plagiarism that focuses on proactive as opposed to punitive approaches. After the session, the presenter will provide the video electronically to participants for use in their own classes.

#### “Eight Days a Week”: Using a Course Intern for Learning Outside the Classroom

Teaching assistants and interns are often used by instructors to review course material, mark student work and provide academic support through tutoring and meeting with students. The underlying assumption of this model is that the course assistant possesses an identical skill set to the instructor, just not on as advanced a level. What if, instead, the assistant had completely different skills than the instructor, and used them exclusively outside of the classroom? This session describes a teaching intern - a professional, recording musician, who worked with students in a Beatles course to coach and prepare song presentations. The instructor, a music historian, had no skills in this area, but wanted the students to get this important support, coaching, and instruction. By working together, the intern and instructor were able to offer the students two simultaneous “courses” that complemented and reinforced each other. The session challenges participants to seek out course experiences for their students that they alone could not provide so that learning can be greatly enhanced and expanded. Some excerpts from a final concert of the best in-class performances will demonstrate to session participants the outstanding results that accrue from establishing unique learning experiences outside the classroom.

#### **Professionalism Marks: The Agony and the Ecstasy**

One of the objectives of University level teaching is to prepare students for future roles as researchers, graduate students, and professionals in a variety of fields and occupations. Although our courses and curricula ground students in the information and skills they need to master areas of specialization, we understandably can spend less time teaching them how to foster behaviours and habits that go along with those professional roles. By substituting for the often vaguely-defined and –conceived “participation” component of a grade with a “professionalism” mark, a place is created in every course for students to learn and exercise mature approaches to their work and their roles within the University. Presented as a proactive and positive element within the student’s control, instead of a punitive grade component, the “professionalism” mark has resulted in dramatic changes in my students’ class behaviour, participation, attitudes, accountability and self-motivation. This presentation outlines the methods and strategies I have used implementing this grade component in different types of courses for the changing needs of first year to graduating students, as well as the substantial pros and cons of the system.

#### **“A Strategy for Combating Red Pen Syndrome (Co-presenter)**

University teachers spend hours providing written feedback on student essays, research papers, tests and other writing projects. While we may not use a red pen, our students don’t always view our carefully (and not-so-carefully) constructed comments in the way we intend. Here’s one student’s take on “red pen syndrome”: “Seeing a piece of my writing marked up with red pen

makes me feel very defensive. I never pay attention to [this] feedback because I don't feel it's constructive." In this session, the presenters will describe a simple system of feedback that allows students to see at a glance where they have succeeded, where there is still more work to be done, and what mechanical errors (punctuation, spelling and grammar) need attention. At the same time, this system allows the instructor to quickly check to make sure the feedback is balanced and constructive.

### **Imagining the "Ideal Course": New Models and Strategies for the Collaborative Classroom**

This session addresses ways in which instructors and students can design courses truly together, respecting the way students learn while meeting the expectations of the instructor and providing a forum in which an "ideal" course can be imagined and offered. The presentation will include such a model developed between students and professor to create a dynamic, stimulating, and student-centred course design that takes the best elements of the standard format of lectures, class discussion, traditional testing and web-based instruction, but which goes beyond them.. The session illustrates what can be possible with open communication and collaboration between instructors and students in the very important element of syllabus design.

### **Managing an Independent Study in a Liberal Arts Environment**

Faced with a full course load, committee work, and professional research commitments, the idea of taking on an independent study project seems a daunting one to the already overextended academic. However, the benefits for both student and professor can far outweigh the extra work required to effectively direct an independent study. With a carefully chosen field of inquiry, appropriate assignments, a flexible approach to the syllabus, and a realistic goal for a final project, the independent study can help students to prepare enviable portfolios for graduate school and professional training, and provide enormous stimulation for the instructor. It can also provide an opportunity to test syllabus design for future courses. Using a recent independent study project in music as an example and point of departure, this presentation will discuss methods, outcomes, and caveats for the would-be independent study advisor, and considers ways to fit independent study projects into an already busy academic schedule.

### **Designing a Foundation Course for Retention**

First-Year Foundation or Introduction to University courses are becoming ever more important in grounding students with knowledge, skills and experience to succeed in their chosen field of study. However, such courses often cover basics of writing, research, and critical thinking that sometimes distance students from the very subjects in which they are most interested. This session describes a new foundation course for majors that combines reflective and creative strategies for students, allowing them to connect with their own experiences and passions and bring them to a specific area of study. Using technology judiciously and a variety of classroom and out-of-class experiences enhances student retention and provides a model as to how instructors can "do it all" in one semester without significant attrition. Specific assignments and teaching techniques will be described and demonstrated, as well as an overall outline of how such a course work. Caveats and challenges to this model will also be provided from both pedagogical and technological perspectives.

### **Whose Music? Diversity in a Music Foundation Course**

Students come to university with diverse tastes, experiences, and backgrounds, yet we often want them to embrace a body of aesthetics, philosophies, or ideologies that reflect the material we want

to teach them. By using their own backgrounds as a basis for exploration, discovery, and sharing, students can learn from each other's tastes and experiences. This session discusses two assignments designed for a first-year foundation course in music history and literature. Although they are music-specific, these assignments could be tailored to virtually any field of study within a first-year foundation course. "Personal Music History" and "Music Repertoire Assignment" allow students to bring the music they know and love, as well as their life experiences to the study of a new body of musical literature. Diversity of taste and background, when shared with others, helps students to understand each other's unique perspectives and cultural diversity. The session will engage participants in just such an exercise as they reflect on their own passions and histories with music of all kinds.

### **From Pedagogy to Andragogy: Getting Our Students to Grow Up**

Many of today's students face challenges in making the transition from high school to University. Often considered only a problem at the first-year level, this process of maturing and adapting to the University environment is in reality a four-year process that unfolds in many arenas as students grow and learn, succeed and fail, challenge and adapt. How do we ease this long transition and support students in moving from a high school mentality to one of fully mature adults embarking on work careers and graduate education? How do we know when to challenge and when to ease off? Are today's students more or less mature than their predecessors only a few years ago? How does the prevalent culture support or work against the maturing process? Are we part of the problem? This session discusses these issues and addresses the process of moving from pedagogy to andragogy, socially, intellectually, and psychologically, presenting a series of strategies and assignments meant to aid in student growth, maturity and self-awareness. Although reflective, the discussion will be rooted in practical tools and strategies to help our students grow up.