

Curriculum Integration Newsletter: June 24-28

Published 6/25/2024 by **Naomi Go**



Hello everyone!

Check out this special edition of the newsletter for an event recap and a timely and thought-provoking article by Dr. Yvonne Simpson.

Curriculum Integration Project



Caption: Curriculum Integration logo. Source: Teaching & Learning Centre.

Spring 2024 Giveaway Day Recap

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Giveaway Day on June 19th. This marked the end of the first phase of Curriculum Integration for the Spring 2024 cohort. The event highlighted that it is in faculty champions' hands, [ha-kol b'yadecha](#), to start integrating Truth and Reconciliation (TRC); Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI); and Sustainability (SUS) into their teaching practice. We celebrated with engaging activities, including learning from Randy Pitawanakwat's meaningful Giveaway teaching, making origami butterflies, watching Derek Gruchy's faculty champion testimonial video, engaging in breakout room discussions, and listening to Jamie Arfin's inspiring story about the Rabbi and the Cynic.

We appreciate everyone's hard work on their recommended action plans, and we eagerly anticipate the next steps in the curriculum integration journey. For all faculty champions in this cohort, please remember to submit your final deliverables, with chair sign-off, on Blackboard by June 27th, to complete the first phase of your curriculum integration journey.

Captions: Photo 1: We had a fun time folding origami butterflies; Photo 2: The T&L team helped faculty champions with folding their origami; Photo 3 Faculty champions worked hard on creating their origami butterfly.; Photo 4: Faculty champions watched Derek's faculty champion video; Photo 5: Faculty champions engaged in dynamic breakout room discussions. Source: Teaching & Learning Centre.

Faculty Voices: Yvonne Simpson



Caption: Headshot of Dr. Yvonne Simpson. Source: Dr. Yvonne Simpson.

We invited Dr. Yvonne Simpson, a Seneca professor in the Faculty of Continuing Education and Training, to share insights on the importance of integrating TRC, EDI and Sustainability in curriculum. With a PhD in Critical Disability Studies and over 20 years of experience in post-secondary education teaching disability and accessibility studies, Yvonne discusses how structural inequities in education lead faculty to re-think traditional approaches to teaching in the post-secondary classroom in pursuit of inclusive and accessible learning opportunities for students.

The Imperative of Reflecting on Change

At this time of year educational institutions are well underway with planning, including setting aside time for retreats to reflect on accomplishments over the past year and what needs to be done for the upcoming academic term. Although this rich tradition of critical reflective practice is well ensconced in post-secondary institutions, questions remain regarding the approach that will be taken concerning discussions on equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, decolonization, and indigenization.

In recent times, the imperative for change has been amplified by the findings of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC\) 94 Calls to Action](#) and the global outcry for human rights and social justice following the tragic death of George Floyd in May 2020. These events along with long-standing historical issues have reignited the calls for human rights and

justice. Educational institutions joined in the denunciation of racism in all its forms, declared public plans and made commitments for centering efforts on EDI. These commitments raise a critical question: What strategies and measurable action actions are educators implementing and are current reflections on the future?

There is also a growing need among educational practitioners involved in academic program reviews and curriculum design to reassess how traditional tools can foster inclusivity and reimagine learning to encompass all equity-identifying groups. These professionals may be interested in examining how traditional tools are leveraged in the uptake of learning in the academic environment. As a prominent Education thought theorist has indicated:

Inclusivity requires pedagogies that respond to the social construction of difference in the school system, and also in society at large (issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability). Inclusivity requires spaces for alternative, and sometimes oppositional, paradigms to flourish in the schools ([Dei, 1996, p. 176](#)).

While these questions and framings will resonate with many, during this time of reflection, it is crucial to be mindful that EDI is not a novel concept or a new intervention in education. In fact, scholars have argued that for decades now governments and educational institutions have been aware of the structural inequities in education but have failed to achieve the necessary changes ([James & Turner, 2017](#) ; [Henry et al., 2017](#)). A compelling case has also been made for integrating diverse world views and Indigenous knowledge systems into curricula, moving beyond traditional frameworks like Bloom's Taxonomy ([LaFever, 2016](#))

In an effort to respond to some of these challenges, a team of curriculum specialist at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) have collaborated in the creation of [The ASCOR Wraparound Tool](#). This tool aims to centralize equity, diversity and inclusion in the development and revision of program-level and course-level learning outcomes. This initiative represents just one of the many reflective efforts across academic institutions, striving for change during this critical period.

To truly reflect deeply and meaningfully on the imperative for change, academic institutions must shift beyond periodic considerations and advance towards sustainable practices for systemic transformation. This means engaging fully in practices for integrating new methodologies for inclusivity. This requires a continuous process for re-commitment, steadfast critical questioning and challenging traditional educational paradigms. As we take time to reflect on events over the past year and look towards the future, let us ensure that our reflective practices translate into measurable sustainable actions which will embrace diverse worldviews, Indigenous perspectives across all disciplines, in order to achieve an equitable learning environment for all.

Yvonne Simpson, M.Ed., PhD, Critical Disability Studies

References

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Looking for support? Feel free to reach out to the CI team at any time by emailing teaching@senecapolytechnic.ca.



Caption: Artwork by Isaac Murdoch, "The Petition to the Water Spirits", located at Seneca@York Courtyard. Source: Seneca Polytechnic, 2023.





tags : curriuclum, integration, learning, teaching