

Teaching & Learning Day Fall 2024: Human Skills in the Age of AI

Published 11/15/2024 by [Ashley Ribbel](#)

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Teaching & Learning Day Fall 2024 was a day to celebrate faculty excellence and engage in thoughtful discussion around Human Skills and Artificial Intelligence.

To kick-off the day, Marianne Marando, Vice-President, Academic and International, presented Seneca's Teaching & Learning Awards to three faculty for their exemplary teaching and their dedication to enriching student experiences through innovative practice. Congratulations to Alireza Faed from the School of Marketing, Justin Boudreau from the School of Community Services, and Jeevan Pant from the School of Computer Programming & Analysis! Award recipients received commissioned artwork of a Seneca campus created by students in the Visual Development stream of the Animation program in the School of Creative Arts & Animation.



Dario Guescini, Dean, Seneca Works, introduced Seneca's Human Skills Project, which is a program to weave communication, critical thinking and collaboration through all program curricula. These are essential skills to prepare Seneca graduates for success in the workforce and to help them develop interpersonal skills aligned with global citizenship and community engagement.

Maria Vamvalis's engaging keynote "Thinking Critically in the Age of AI" left a lasting impression. We continue to hear rave reviews from attendees who want to prioritize thinking skills in the classroom. Maria challenged us to identify three practical and powerful next steps for deepening quality thinking in our teaching context. Using effective questioning techniques, she held the attention of everyone in the room while modelling how to guide students through critical thinking.

Here are three takeaways from Vamvalis' engaging talk that we can implement into our classes right away:

1. **First, teach *how to think*.** Maria challenged the notion that critical thinking should come after foundational knowledge. Through effective questioning and facilitation, we can engage students critically in new concepts without feeling the need to cover all the fact-based content. Learners of any level have the ability to call on their previous experiences and knowledge to critically engage with new material. This way, students can develop critical thinking strategies that they can transfer to their personal and professional lives. (Check out Maria's [Thinking Strategies resource](#).)
2. **Model "habits of mind."** Encourage students to be independent, relational, reflective, consultative, and open-minded. Recognize that students differ in their engagement with complex thought — some enjoy puzzles, while others prefer quick decisions. Maria's mantra, "I'm not interested in your opinion; I'm interested in your reasoned judgment," highlights the importance of informed beliefs, urging students to back their views with evidence and facts.
3. **Be intentional in our questioning techniques.** Maria emphasized metacognition through tools like exit tickets, journaling, and reflection. Effective questions help students assess information, rank ideas, examine data, and develop practical approaches, which promote critical thinking beyond finding the "correct" answer, fostering long-term learning and the ability to pursue valuable questions critically.



The keynote was followed by a faculty panel, "Humanizing Human Skills Integration — Stories from the Road", which gave the panelists an opportunity to speak on their own

experiences incorporating Human Skills into their teaching practice.

The day ended with two session blocks on how to use AI in higher education. Seneca's AI Thought Leaders, Kent Peel and Panos Panagiotakopoulos, presented a variety of popular AI resources that can aid faculty in everyday tasks. In the second session, staff from the Libraries, Sandbox, and Learning Centre presented the services and resources available to students to improve their information literacy and academic integrity when using generative AI.

Join us for our next Teaching & Learning Day in late February, 2025!



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