

CI Newsletter: Feb 3-7, 2025

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Hello everyone! As we settle into February, take a look at what this month brings for Curriculum Integration at Seneca, including learning how to enhance online student engagement at our online [Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025](#). (Registration is open – secure your spot today!)

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Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Human Skills Cohort



Seneca's second cohort of Curriculum Integration Human Skills faculty champions has been working on reviewing the asynchronous Human Skills course (coming soon as a microcredential!). They also just had their first in-person session, building community and exploring the rationale of making communication, collaboration, and critical thinking explicit in Seneca's program areas and course clusters.

Currently, faculty champions are building on this session by crafting values statements specific to their context. We look forward to our upcoming session where faculty champions will start to work on a needs analysis, and hear from students!

Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Three Pillars Cohort



Fresh off of Week 4, faculty champions had the opportunity to join a Spotlight session on TRC Foundations, building on their Skoden readings in Chapters 1-6.

Though we weren't able to offer the Thursday, January 30 Accessibility Spotlight, we do have a fantastic recording and accompanying slide deck available. Please reach out to teaching@senecapolytechnic.ca if you'd like either of these resources. Looking ahead to Week 5, we will be discussing approaches to curriculum during the Core Session: What Is Curriculum?

Curriculum Integration: Strategy Showcase



Every CI Newsletter issue will feature a "Strategy Showcase", where we share a curriculum integration strategy or idea that you can adapt to your classroom. Each strategy comes with a learning objective and supporting activities, assessments and resources. The example is subject specific but can be adapted to any subject area.

In this edition, let's take a look at how to teach sustainability using reflective activities to examine our relationships with nature. Wai Chu Cheng, Sustainability manager, who has recently taught the General Education course "Exploring Environmental Relationships," shares the strategy of reflecting about our human actions on the natural world through contrasting Western and Indigenous worldviews. The book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by the Indigenous botanist Robin W. Kimmerer is used for this teaching activity. (The book can be downloaded from [Seneca Libraries](#).)

Strategy: Teaching sustainability through reflective activities

- **Objective:** Reflect on the impact of human activity on the natural world through western and Indigenous worldviews.
- **Teaching Technique**
 - Have the class read Chapter 1 and 2 of Robin W. Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, ahead of the class.
 - During the class, first go over the story in each chapter and highlight, for each chapter, the two or three key aspects/questions (or "strands"), including the Western worldview and knowledge, the Indigenous values and way of knowing, and the author's family story. Examples of key topics/questions include the meaning of pecans for Indigenous people, "What does land mean to people?" and "Can trees communicate with each other?"
 - In the second part of the class, have students form groups of three or four to discuss the following:
 - what resonated with them most from the book;
 - what we humans receive from nature; and
 - what humans can give back in return.
- **Assignment**
 - Students are asked to complete a reflective essay to talk about how their new

understanding and knowledge affects their life, particularly their personal and professional goals.

- **Adaptation**

- Instead of class discussion and essay writing, the students can provide their reflections through posting in discussion boards via [Learn@Seneca](#). See below for a student writing assignment sample.

Honestly speaking, before taking this course, I was not someone who cared about the environment, I had never thought of the impact of climate change, air pollution, biodiversity loss, etc. However, after joining a few classes, I started to be aware of the existing environmental issues and damages that have been caused...

- Cere, Seneca student, Exploring Environmental Relationships

Read the rest of Cere's reflection in the module [Sustainability at Seneca Polytechnic](#) – navigate to Seneca Student Examples and select "Reflective Essay" by Cere.

Tell us what's in your CI backpack! Do you have an integration idea to share with the Seneca community? Submit your idea here: [Curriculum Integration Idea form](#).

Event Calendar: Spotlight Sessions

January 28th's Curriculum Integration Spotlight was on Foundations in Truth and Reconciliation. Eric Zwicker (Faculty, FirstPeoples@Seneca) along with Naomi Go and Cedar Leithead (Teaching & Learning Centre) explored how Truth and Reconciliation concepts can illuminate and enhance learning and student engagement across different programs and also overlap with the pillars of Sustainability and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Spotlight Sessions are open to all Seneca faculty and staff. The February sessions cover these topics:

Sustainability in the Classroom: What Works and What Doesn't?

- Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
(in person, Newnham Campus, room K2037)
- Truth and Reconciliation in Your Classroom
Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
(online)
- Universal Design for Learning
Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
(online)

To learn more about Winter 2025 CI Spotlight Sessions, [visit the CI Spotlight flyer](#). To register for any session, [go to MyPD](#) and type “Spotlight” in the catalogue search bar. We look forward to seeing you!

Event Calendar: Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025



Caption: Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025. Image

source: Seneca Polytechnic.

On February 25, 2025, join us for the online Winter 2025 Teaching & Learning Day! This conference’s theme is **Cultivating Connections: Enhancing Student Engagement in Online Learning**.

During our online workshop sessions, we will focus on sharing ideas, trips, and strategies that have helped online learners connect with educators like you, their classmates, and class materials.

To register, [visit MyPD](#).

Event Calendar: Black History Month

Black History Month is certainly a time to celebrate the history, culture and contributions of Black communities. But what does that have to do with Curriculum Integration?



Caption: Black History Month celebration. Image by Wepik, n.d., [Freepik](#)

When we think about the teaching and learning experience, many of us consider this to be a social act that integrates our own [social identities](#) with those of our students, towards a shared goal of learning.

In equity-minded teaching and learning experiences, we know that entering into community with a

diverse group of individuals builds understanding among us all and a sense of belonging (Iverson, 2011). Understanding varied lived experiences can help us to better connect our teaching topics and teaching approach with the social identities of our students, towards cultural validity (Baidoo-Anu et al., 2023). The topics we teach are more effectively understood through a lens of personal relevance, allowing students to connect and relate to the material on a deeper level.

To that end, we offer you the [City of Toronto Black History Month](#) events calendar and resources to promote our shared learning and expand our communities.

Event Calendar: International Day of Women and Girls in Science



Caption: Photograph of woman reading code by Gerd Altmann, 2018, [Pixabay](#)

It is always a good time to acknowledge the accomplishments of equity-deserving groups and recognize days dedicated to their lived experiences. In 2025, February 11th marks the 10th anniversary of the [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#).

This international day of recognition focuses on women and girls as contributory to advancements in science and as vital agents of change for the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) #16 and #17. The UN website houses additional resources to explore.

To align with events of the day, The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and the Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada (OCSA) are co-hosting a virtual symposium titled [Women in Leadership: At the Forefront of Discovery and Innovation](#).

And for information about various events and celebrations for diversity and inclusion, explore: [Global Diversity Calendar 2025](#) and [United Nations Observances](#).

Kudos to all women and girls pursuing pathways in STEM!

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

