

# CI Newsletter: March 3-7, 2025

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**Hello everyone!** This edition is packed with exciting teaching ideas, as well as news from the community. We showcase a CI strategy titled “Enriching Video Game Design with EDI.” You will also find event recaps from February events here at Seneca including Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025 and Food as Medicine: Black Food Justice and Food Sovereignty. Finally, read about fun multicultural and multifaith events in the GTA you can attend to help celebrate the arrival of spring.

- [Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Human Skills Cohort](#)
- [Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Three Pillars Cohort](#)
- [Curriculum Integration: Strategy Showcase](#)
- [Curriculum Integration: Spotlight Sessions](#)
- [Teaching & Learning: Foundations of Creating Accessible Content](#)
- [Event Recap: Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025](#)
- [Event Recap: Food as Medicine: Black Food Justice and Food Sovereignty](#)
- [Event Calendar: Generative AI Courses](#)
- [Event Calendar: Using Zoom for Online Classes](#)
- [Event Calendar: Multifaith and Multicultural Festivals in March](#)

## Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Human Skills Cohort



On February 18, the Human Skills CI faculty champions met in person for a special panel on the role of empathy in the Human Skills. We were joined by three wonderful panelists for a rich round-table discussion about the importance of empathy in the current climate for both ourselves and Seneca students. We also discussed how empathy is an integral part of communication, collaboration, and critical thinking as it lays the foundation for students and faculty to learn and grow in these three areas (also known as the three Cs).

- Priyanka Sahajpal (Counsellor, Counselling Services; [priyanka.sahajpal@senecapolytechnic.ca](mailto:priyanka.sahajpal@senecapolytechnic.ca)) shared data about what students are struggling with right now- anxiety and social isolation topped the list. She also mentioned a group for

International students struggling socially called the "Home Away from Home Support Group" which runs bi-weekly at Newnham Residence.

- Cheryl Mitri (Counsellor, Accessible Learning Services; [cheryl.mitri@senecapolytechnic.ca](mailto:cheryl.mitri@senecapolytechnic.ca)) shared about her work with mindfulness in the post-secondary sector and how she's currently developing a guide for faculty to incorporate mindfulness into their curriculum.
- Maxine Britto shared how one can weave empathy into learning outcomes and in the classroom to support the human skills framework.

We look forward to our March 4th virtual session where we will explore how Generative AI can help students build their competencies in the three Cs.

## Curriculum Integration: Winter 2025 Three Pillars Cohort



We've reached the midpoint with the Winter 2025 CI cohort, and this past Study Week, champions were able to watch two fantastic recordings on how to integrate the three pillars, as well as a conversation with a faculty champion-Chair duo. The latter sheds some light on what implementation can look like, once a champion has graduated from the CI Project.

We hope all faculty have had a great Study Week, and we look forward to seeing our champions at the next Core session, on Thursday, March 6th, which will focus on Values Statements.

A friendly reminder that our Spotlight Sessions are running through the month of March. We just included a new update to the Tuesday, March 25th Spotlight session. This will now be an in-person session, where all attendees will have a chance to play through the **Truth in Truth and Reconciliation Educational Board Game**. [Sign up on MyPD today!](#)

## Curriculum Integration: Strategy Showcase



Each CI Newsletter showcases 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.

This edition's strategy is drawn from the world of video game design and considers how to enrich it with EDI principles.

Copilot then generated the following summary of a curriculum integration strategy.

### Strategy: Enriching Video Game Design with EDI

When you dive into a video game, you create a character, explore your surroundings, and start your adventure. But what kind of world are you entering? Does it offer choices that reflect your identity, or are your options limited in a way that makes you feel excluded? Can you express yourself freely and truly feel like you belong in this new space?

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) can be applied in important ways in game design. They influence everything from character design, to the adventures you can take, to the roles you can play. When games are designed with EDI in mind, they can build welcoming communities, foster a sense of belonging, and allow players to see themselves in the worlds they explore. This activity and assignment takes a look at popular games and their online communities where imaginative worlds can feel very real.

- **Sample Learning Outcomes**

- Research representation of diverse communities in the online video game communities.
- Discuss ways to make game design more inclusive of a wide range of identities.

- **Related Activities**

- Begin with a class discussion on the significance of inclusive environments within immersive video games. Why are these considerations important? What aspects of the games might contribute to belongingness for players?
- Students then research representation in popular video games and their associated online gaming communities.
- Working in small groups, they select a game and evaluate its design features (e.g., character options, narratives, accessibility settings) and, if applicable, related community spaces (e.g., forums, in-game chat, social media).
- The class co-constructs a rubric with key elements of inclusive game design.
- Each group will then apply the rubric to assess the inclusivity of their chosen game's design and community interactions. Building on these findings, groups will collaborate to brainstorm and develop design recommendations for improving inclusivity in their selected game.

- **Related Assessment**

- Design Proposal: Groups create a concept document (storyboard, infographic, list, etc.) outlining design improvements for the selected game. Summarize proposed changes (e.g., customizable avatars, inclusive storylines, improved community guidelines) and how they address gaps in representation.
- Class Presentation: Groups pitch their findings and design proposals to the class, using visuals (e.g., a shared whiteboard, slides or sketches) to support their ideas.

- **Inclusive Teaching Tips**

- Consider talking to student groups about how make decisions in an equitable manner.
- Provide class time to help the student groups connect and plan time to meet.
- Explore collaborative ed tech tools such as Miro, which might help students share ideas.
- Consider encouraging the class to ask questions after each group presentation.

### Related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



**Note:** The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

### Resources

Halbrook, Y. J., O'Donnell, A. T., & Msetfi, R. M. (2019, November 6). Games can be good—When you play for the right reasons. The Observer – Association for Psychological Science. <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/games-can-be-good-when-you-play-for-the-right-reasons.html>

Mohawk College. (n.d.). The importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the video game industry. Retrieved 2024, November 21 from <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/about/news/blogs/importance-of-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-video-game-industry%C2%A0>

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Sustainable Development. (n.d.). The 17 Goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

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](#).

## Curriculum Integration: Spotlight Sessions



Spotlight Sessions are open to all Seneca faculty and staff. The next four sessions take place in March:

- **Reconciliation Education through Music**  
Tuesday, Mar. 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.  
(online)
- **Inclusive Teaching Strategies**  
Thursday, Mar. 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.  
(online)
- **The Truth in Truth and Reconciliation Educational Board Game**  
Tuesday, Mar. 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.  
(in person, K2037, Newnham Campus)
- **Developing Leadership through Sustainability**  
Thursday, Mar. 27, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.  
(online)

To learn more about Winter 2025 CI Spotlight Sessions, take a look at 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!

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## Teaching & Learning: Foundations of Creating Accessible Content

Show your commitment to curriculum integration with a digital badge!

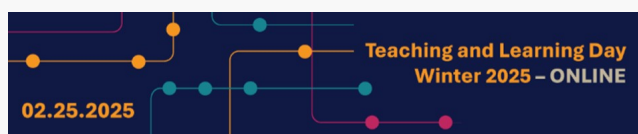
The short course Sustainability in our Classrooms will run from March 18-April 11. A few spaces are still available for staff, full-time faculty, and non-full-time faculty. [Register now on MyPD!](#)

In this asynchronous online course, we will engage with multiple perspectives about the natural world and reflect on climate justice and the impact of the climate crisis on our communities and regions around the globe. We will also discuss methods to encourage students to develop themselves as global citizens who contribute meaningfully to their communities and workplaces. After reviewing sustainability models, frameworks, and a variety of examples from faculty at Seneca Polytechnic who are teaching sustainability, we will brainstorm authentic tasks, activities and assessments to promote sustainability in the classroom.

In addition to sharing in personal reflections and brainstorming, learners will complete a sustainability integration worksheet in order to receive a digital badge.

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## Event Recap: Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025



Caption: Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025. Image source: Seneca Polytechnic.

On February 25, 2025, the Teaching & Learning Centre hosted Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025 titled “Cultivating Connections: Enhancing Student Engagement in Online Learning”.

Since this was a virtual event, Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2025 was able to reach a much larger and more widespread audience. Hundreds attended, including an excellent turnout from our Seneca community as well as guests attending from other Ontario colleges and Amity University in Dubai.

Dr. Nidhi Sachdeva of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto delivered the keynote, “small bites = BIG GAINS: Harnessing Evidence-Based Microlearning to Boost Student Interaction”. She held everyone’s attention with her depth of knowledge and infectious enthusiasm for her subject.

After the keynote, participants could choose to attend 3 out of 18 workshops presented by their peers. Topics covered included

- reviewing pedagogical principles such as the Community of Inquiry, Universal Design for Learning, and Competency-Based Education and their application to the online environment;
- using specific apps or technologies to enhance online teaching such as Leganto, Mentimeter, Adobe Express, Wix, voice AI, ChatGPT, and Copilot; and
- sharing strategies for non-software-specific online teaching, such as how to create engaging online discussions, how to cultivate a sense of community in the online setting, how to encourage active online participation in class, and how to give constructive feedback on AI-facilitated assignments.

The participants also had time to play games and participate in draws, and the Teaching & Learning Centre was thrilled to give book prizes to six lucky winners!

For more information on the workshops and access to recordings and shared resources from the day, [visit the event website](#).

Join us on April 29, 2025 for Teaching & Learning Day Spring 2025, in person at Newnham Campus!

## Event Recap: Food as Medicine: Black Food Justice and Food Sovereignty



Caption: Teeography (n.d.). Zakiya Tafari. [Photograph]. Retrieved Feb. 27, 2025 from Afri-Can FoodBasket.  
<https://africanfoodbasket.ca/>

“Together we can build a food system that is just, equitable, and rooted in community.”

~Zakiya Tafari, Executive Director, Afri-Can FoodBasket, Toronto

As part of Black History Month programming, Seneca hosted the event Food as Medicine: Black Food Justice and Food Sovereignty. This special gathering featured Zakiya Tafari, Executive Director of **Afri-Can FoodBasket**, who led an engaging and insightful presentation to create awareness about the need for a progressive food movement for African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities across the GTA.

Tafari provided data that demonstrated the inequities that exist with regards to the access to healthy, affordable and cultural foods for the ACB communities. He invited the Seneca community to get involved by “supporting Black-owned food businesses, participating in policy discussions, and pushing for real solutions to Black food insecurity by engaging with local leaders and decision-makers.”

After Tafari’s keynote, chefs Nicole King and Taswrell Salmon demonstrated the preparation of cassava gnocchi. Cassava is one of many cultural food staples of Caribbean communities, and the demonstration shared not only cassava cooking techniques but also how recipes are passed down from generation to generation in the ACB communities through storytelling.

The delicious aroma in the room was unforgettable, surpassed only by the taste of the cassava gnocchi, which all the guests had the opportunity to try! Afterwards, a few guests even walked away with a cultural food basket prize to start them on their culinary journey.

## Event Calendar: Generative AI Courses



Caption: Altmann, G. (2024). Artificial Intelligence Network Programming. [Image]. Pixabay.

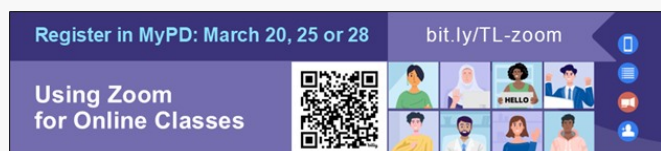
<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/artificial-intelligence-network-8743259/>

There is still time to register on **MyPD** for any or all of the upcoming online courses on Generative AI:

- AI Literacy and Generative AI for Educators  
Tuesday, Mar. 4, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.  
(online)
- Effective Techniques for Generative AI Prompting  
Tuesday, Mar. 11, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.  
(online)
- Assessing Learning in the AI Era  
Tuesday, Mar. 18, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.  
(online)
- Exploring GenAI Use From the Teaching Side of Things  
Tuesday, Mar. 25, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.  
(online)

There is no prerequisite for any of the courses, but if you are new to GenAI, it is highly recommended you attend **AI Literacy and Generative AI for Educators** before attending other workshops to maximize your gains from them. Check out **MyPD** for complete course descriptions and learning outcomes.

## Event Calendar: Using Zoom for Online Classes



Caption: Using Zoom for Online Classes banner. Source: Teaching & Learning Centre.

Curious about how to best use Zoom in your online classes? FTeaching & Learning is offering a 90-minute online workshop to teach you how to go beyond the basics in Zoom and become proficient with polls, breakout rooms, Learn@Seneca integration, cloud recording, Zoom Whiteboard, and more! There



will be three sessions for this workshop, from March 20-28, 2025. Register on [MyPD](#) today!

## Event Calendar: Multifaith and Multicultural Festivals in March

With March comes the end of winter and the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Throughout history, people around the world have chosen this time of year to celebrate a new year, new beginning, and new life.

The Greater Toronto Area is home to many faiths and cultures; let's take a closer look at some of the festivals happening in March that are open to the general public to promote understanding, respect, and appreciation.

**Holi (March 13-15, 2025)** - The Hindu festival of Holi celebrates not only spring's arrival but also the triumph of good over evil, love, new beginnings, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In the GTA, many Hindi organizations host Holi festivities that are open to all ethnicities ([Gupta, 2025](#)).

**Purim (March 13-14, 2025)** - Purim commemorates the time in ancient Persia when the Jewish people were delivered from death during the reign of Xerxes I. A joyous celebration, Purim customs include sending gifts of food and drink to friends, giving charity to the poor, dressing up in costumes, and eating festive treats ("[Purim,](#)" 2025). One of the largest Purim events in the GTA that is open to all families is Purimpalooza on Sunday, March 9 ([Eventbrite, 2025](#)).

**St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 2025)** – In the Catholic Church, St. Patrick's Day is a liturgical feast day in honour of the patron saint of Ireland, but this day is enjoyed by all as a celebration of Ireland's history, culture, and heritage. Most of the GTA events this year, including the St. Patrick's Parade, will take place during the weekend of March 15-16 ([AllEvents, Toronto St. Patrick's Day, 2025](#)).

**Spring Equinox (March 20, 2025)** – Indigenous peoples around the world have celebrated the arrival of spring since ancient times. Here in the GTA, one event that is open to all is the Equinox Sunrise Ceremony on March 23, led by Knowledge Keeper Mark Sault of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation ([Heritage Mississauga, 2025](#)).

**Nowruz (March 20, 2025)** – The ancient Zoroastrians celebrated Nowruz, or Persian New Year, as a holy day as far back as the 2nd millennium BCE. Today, hundreds of millions of people of different faiths including Zoroastrianism, Bahá'í, Islam, and Christianity in the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans, and elsewhere continue to celebrate Nowruz as a cultural event ([Preston, 2025](#)). In the GTA, the large Iranian community hosts Nowruz celebrations every year ([Bazaarche, 2024](#)).

**Eid-al-Fitr (March 30-31, 2025)** – The feast of Eid-al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan. Since the 7th century CE, the month of Ramadan has been a time for Muslims to fast during the daytime,

pray, give to the poor, and reflect on spiritual growth and improvement (“Ramadan,” 2025). Eid-al-Fitr is a time for feasting, giving gifts, and celebrating community. In the GTA, the Muslim community hosts Eid festivities on various dates that are open to all faiths and cultures and offer shopping, cultural presentations, and festive food (AllEvents, 2025).

To learn more about these and other religious, cultural, and diversity-aware observances, check out the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion's Diversity Calendar](#).

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Looking for support? Feel free to reach out to the CI team at any time by emailing [teaching@senecapolytechnic.ca](mailto:teaching@senecapolytechnic.ca)





































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