

# Spring Perspectives on Teaching Conference

Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

*Online*

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## Day 1: Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>

**11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Welcoming Remarks**

*Aisha Haque – Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning*

**11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Keynote Session**

### Ungrading and Alternative Assessment

*Jesse Stommel, University of Denver*

"Ungrading" means raising an eyebrow at grades as a systemic practice, distinct from simply not grading. The word is a present participle, an ongoing process, not a static set of practices. Too many of our approaches to grades treat students like they're interchangeable and fail to recognize their complexity. Can we imagine flexible approaches to assessment, pedagogies which center intrinsic more than extrinsic motivation, encouraging and supporting learning, rather than policing behavior? We have to design for the least privileged, most marginalized students, the ones more likely to have felt isolated even before the pandemic: disabled students, chronically-ill students, Black students, international students, queer students, those facing housing and food-insecurity, etc. We need to write policies, imagine new ways forward, for students already struggling, already facing exclusion. In this presentation, we'll examine the foundations for our pedagogical approaches, consider the history of grades, examine the bias inherent in many of our standardized systems, and explore methods and approaches for designing assessments that push back against traditional notions of grading.



**Jesse Stommel, Ph.D.** is a faculty member in the Writing Program at University of Denver. He is co-founder of Digital Pedagogy Lab and Hybrid Pedagogy: the journal of critical digital pedagogy, and he earned his Ph.D. from University of Colorado Boulder. Stommel is co-author of *An Urgency of Teachers: The Work of Critical Digital Pedagogy*, co-editor of *Disrupting the Digital Humanities*, and co-editor of *Critical Digital Pedagogy: a Collection*.

An award-winning teacher, Stommel has taught undergraduate and graduate students at large research institutions, liberal arts colleges, and a community college, as well as non-traditional adult students and teachers at all levels of education. He has taught face-to-face, hybrid, online, and several MOOCs, including a Coursera MOOC with over 25,000 students from 161 countries. He is best known for his work as a champion of teachers and students in higher education, and he is an affiliate of the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice founded by Sara Goldrick-Rab, Ph.D. to support #RealCollege students.

Stommel is a documentary filmmaker and teaches courses about pedagogy, film, and new media. He experiments relentlessly with learning interfaces, both digital and analog, and his research focuses on higher education pedagogy, critical digital pedagogy, and assessment. Stommel was most previously a faculty member at University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has a rascal pup, Emily, a clever cat, Loki, and a badass daughter, Hazel.

### **12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch Break**

### **1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Students' Perspectives on Assessment**

*Moderator:*

*Mike Atkinson – Associate Professor, Psychology/Teaching Fellow, Centre for Teaching and Learning*

*Student Panelists: TBD*

In this session, a panel of undergraduate students will share examples of effective and engaging assessment practices they have experienced at Western as well as practices that have been less successful in supporting their learning. They will also discuss how assessment practices can support academic integrity and student well-being and share their experiences with impactful feedback and alternative forms of assessment.

### **2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Sharing our gifts: An Indigenous-led curriculum response at Western University**

*Presenters:*

*Candace Brunette-Debassige, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education*

*Sara Mai Chitty, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor, Office of Indigenous Initiatives*

This session will introduce participants to a new Indigenous curriculum project at Western University entitled Maatookiiying gaa-miinigoowiziying, or Sharing Our Gifts led by teaching fellow and scholar, Candace Brunette-Debassige in collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Centre for Teaching and Learning. This unique project aims to collaboratively advance the respectful and ethical inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing in the university classroom through the creation of a digital repository of Indigenous resources available for use by Western University instructors across disciplines. The session will provide background on the vision and purpose of the project, share snippets of digital offerings available in 2022-23, and outline processes for Western instructors to engage in the project over the next year.

## **Day 2: Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**

### **1:00 p.m. – 1:05 p.m. Welcoming Remarks**

*Aisha Haque – Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning*

**1:05 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Keynote Session**

## **Paupers, Prognosis & Paper: Reflecting on the past, present and future of disability in Canadian classrooms**

*Jeff Preston, Western University*

Disability has long been pathologised as a “difference” that must be located, isolated, and rectified. Within the university classroom—a space whose very roots drink from the acrid waters of ableism and cognitive supremacy—instructors, researchers and students continue to grapple with these tasks...with varying degrees of success. A hybrid exploration of research & personal experience, this presentation is centered on untangling the structural and discursive ways we disable students, in and out of the classroom.



**Jeff Preston, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of Disability Studies at King's University College at Western University where he teaches classes on disability, popular culture and policy. A long-time advocate and motivational speaker, Jeff's work focuses on the intersection of disability, subjectivity, biopower and culture. Jeff's first book, *The Fantasy of Disability*, was published in 2016 by Routledge.

**2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Break**

**2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Using UDL to Overcome Challenges in Assessment (*concurrent session*)**

*Lisa Aikman – Educational Developer, Centre for Teaching and Learning*

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)\* does not need to be overwhelming! In this workshop, we will work to identify areas where students normally struggle in common assessments so that we can target UDL-informed strategies where they are most needed. Participants will work together to evaluate and adapt strategies for building flexibility and variability into assessment. By taking the “plus one approach” to UDL (Tobin and Behling 2018), we will work to ensure course improvement remains sustainable and rewarding for both students and instructors.

Tobin, Thomas J., and Kirsten Behling. 2018. *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone : Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education* / [electronic Resource]. First edition. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

\*For an introduction to UDL strategies for assessment, [click here to explore the UDL on Campus guide to assessing variable learners](#). Alternately, the graphic organizer of UDL guidelines available through cast.org <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

**2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Faculty Showcase (*concurrent session*)**

Join us for a Q&A discussion with Western instructors to ask questions and learn about diverse assessment types, approaches to UDL in teaching and course design, and the intersection of the two. Be sure to review their resources and videos beforehand!

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Registration is free. Please register at [teaching.uwo.ca](https://teaching.uwo.ca)