What is Teaching Excellence?

Christopher Buddle
Associate Provost (Teaching & Academic Programs)
Teaching matters

• What is teaching?

• Excellence in teaching is central to fulfilling McGill’s academic mission
  • “…the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards…”

• Teaching is one of our foundational scholarly activities, and is done by many members of the McGill community (e.g., Tenure-stream Academics, Faculty Lecturers, Course Lecturers, TAs, Librarians, Clinicians, Lab coordinators)

• But, defining and measuring ‘excellence’ is challenging and discipline-specific
Assessing Teaching Excellence

• Formal and informal feedback to instructors, Chairs/Directors
  • Metrics are one part of a more holistic picture
  • Changes to metrics over time can be informative
  • Expanding types of evidence (e.g. peer review)

• The tenure and promotion process (e.g., ‘superior’ category)
  • Guidelines provide a framework, but unit-specific differences are important to recognize

• Internal and external awards

• Evidence of creativity, innovation, collaborations

• Activities related to the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (publications, projects, conferences, workshops)
Principles of Teaching Excellence

• **Mission critical**: formal and informal teaching occurs in all our physical and virtual spaces

• **Student – Teacher Partnership**: student/learner-centered

• **Inquiry-based**: good questions drive excellence in teaching and learning

• **Innovative**: new instructional and assessment strategies, spaces, tools, and technologies

• **Iterative**: ongoing collection and response to feedback
Faculty of Medicine
Education Strategic Plan

Terry Hébert
Assistant Dean, Biomedical Sciences Education
The Education Strategic Plan

Vice Dean, Education
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Education Champions
Faculty of Medicine’s MISSION:
To educate future and current health care professionals and scientists based on the highest standards of excellence and principles of life-long learning, together with the pursuit of novel research and clinical innovation, to improve the health of individuals and populations worldwide.

EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
- Centre for Medical Education
- Many other Departments/Schools and Offices/Centres also contribute to educational research

EDUCATION: DEGREE PROGRAMS
- Health Professions Programs
  - Medicine (UGME)
    - Gatineau
  - Nursing
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
  - UDAC
  - Speech & Language Pathology
  - Residency (PGME)
- Undergraduate Programs
- Biomedical Sciences
- Graduate Programs
  - MSc
  - PhD
  - Certificates

OFFICES/CENTRES PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
- Accreditation
- Admissions
- Assessment & Evaluation
- Continuing Professional Development
- Faculty Development
- Interprofessional Education
- Molson Informatics
- Steinberg Centre for Simulation & Interactive Learning
- Social Accountability & Community Engagement
- The WELL

OUTREACH WORLDWIDE
- Public Education
- Professional Development
- International Education
  - Global Health
OVERARCHING STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1
The Faculty of Medicine embraces evidence-based, learning-centred educational approaches that foster deep learning and value student engagement in the education mandate.

GOAL 2
The Faculty of Medicine fosters and encourages a culture that supports interdisciplinary and interprofessional partnerships underpinned by a collaborative educational environment.

GOAL 3
The Faculty of Medicine promotes educational research and scholarship and innovation in the health sciences in order to advance our understanding of teaching and learning and to inform policy and practice within and beyond the University.
The School of Biomedical Sciences

- an innovative, overarching structure for an integrated, learner-centered educational experience for McGill University undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty of Medicine

- an opportunity to create interdisciplinary training at every level, better prepare undergraduate students for graduate or professional training, and graduate students for varied careers

- forge links between the Faculties of Science and Medicine to generate a unique educational experience and drive innovation in educational delivery and research

- forge links with professional programs in different Faculties and within schools in our own Faculty to help build cross-cutting interdisciplinary training and research opportunities.
Needs going forward

“We want the School of Biomedical Sciences to be Plan A for students, not Plan B instead of a professional school.”

“Numeracy comes to our students too late.”

“An important piece is helping students recognize and be more confident in the skills they are developing, such as: teamwork, critical analysis, literacy, problem solving, etc. We want students to be able to learn whatever they are presented with.”
Challenges associated with transformation

“Do we understand the tension between ‘training’ and ‘skill development’?”

“Teachers do not know what undergrads are qualified to do, so they do not help them identify the skills that they are learning that will benefit them.”

“Students choose their majors in the biomedical sciences randomly.”

“We need to incentivize teaching.”
Supporting Chairs

- Help develop laboratory teaching spaces and training opportunities
- Helping preserve departmental identities while building shared educational platforms
- Helping develop curriculum mapping, self-accreditation and curriculum renewal toolkits
- Enshrining education and teaching as core values in departments
- Developing peer to peer mentorship for students and faculty alike
Developing teachers

John Lydon
Chair, Department of Psychology
Context in Psychology

• Enrolments 11,000
• 20 courses enrolment 300-650
Before hiring

- Candidate interview with the chair
- First item before space, startup, tenure
Don’t cannibalize our young

• Tenured faculty want to dump
How do we launch a teaching career

• First time teach 100 instead of 600
• Use a seminar to develop a lecture course
• Repeat small set of courses
Observe excellent teachers

• Field trips
• Excellent teachers with very different styles
• Meet and discuss
Unofficial guide

• Testing
• Grading
• Justice and mercy
Take home

• Teaching is highly valued
• Different ways to be a good teacher
• Privilege to teach amazing students
• Nurture climate of mutual respect with students
Brainstorming:
Teaching excellence in your units—opportunities and obstacles

Identify at least 2:
• ways to support teaching excellence in your units, and
• obstacles to effectively support teaching excellence
Support and resources
Laura Winer
Director, Teaching and Learning Services

- For instructors and programs
- Reward and Recognition
- Beyond McGill
Teaching and Learning Services

We provide instructor support and recognition, facilitate student skills development opportunities, and oversee teaching and learning spaces.

For instructors
Creating a course outline? Seeking new teaching strategies? Curious about assessment methods?
Access resources

For students
Looking for ways to develop your skills outside the classroom? Wondering how to recognize a stellar prof?
Find information
Writing Assignment Toolkit

Use this toolkit to design, comment on, and assess writing assignments, regardless of class size or discipline.

+ Introduction to the Toolkit

Create assignments that promote student learning and build in opportunities for feedback

Design assignments

Provide meaningful comments that students can use in future assignments

Write comments

Grade assignments in a way that is fair, efficient, and meaningful to students

Grade assignments
The following is a list of all policies and guidelines that directly address teaching at McGill. Note that other policies may apply depending on course circumstances; please contact tls@mcgill.ca if you have any specific questions.

- Academic Integrity
- Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
- Conflict of Interest
- Copyright
- Course Evaluations, End-of-
- Course Outline Guide
- E-Mail Communications with Students Communications par courrier électronique avec les étudiants
- Guidelines for Assessment of Experiential Learning
- Guidelines on Intimate Relationships Between Teaching Staff and Students Lignes directrices sur les relations intimes entre des membres du personnel enseignant et des étudiants
- Guidelines for Search Committees
- Mobile Computing & Communications Devices in Classes
- Ombudsperson for Students L'ombudsman des étudiants et étudiantes
- Religious Holy Days L'accommodement des fêtes religieuses
- Reporting Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Violence
- Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources Bon usage des ressources informatique de McGill
- Rights of Student with Disabilities Les droits des étudiants handicapés
- Safe Disclosure
- Sexual Violence
- Teaching Portfolio Guidelines
- University Student Assessment L'université relative à l'évaluation des étudiants

View complete list of University Policies and Regulations.

https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/policies
Thanked Profs (2017-2018)

The following instructors were thanked in our Thank a Prof program during the 2017-18 academic year. Congratulations to all recipients!

THANK A PROF.

Teaching Awards

Teaching is an activity that is often recognized only by the students of great teachers. However, there are many opportunities for our great teachers to be publicly acknowledged for their commitment and excellence, both at McGill and externally.

https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/awards
Beyond grading: Assessment strategies from McGill instructors

Authors: Carolyn Samuel and Kira Smith

Inspired by instructors’ enthusiastic participation at the December 7, 2018 Beyond Grading: Effective Assessment... Continue Reading

https://teachingblog.mcgill.ca/2018/08/01/getting-ready-for-the-beginning-of-the-semester-check-out-these-resources/
Wrap up and adjournment