



Issue # 7

Starting Fresh: Unlearning To Learn New

As educators, we all experience moments of being stagnant...when the passion and energy that once drove our teaching seem to fade, and we find ourselves feeling stuck. It's natural to face periods of resistance, especially when it comes to learning something new or trying out unfamiliar approaches. In the past decade, we have been asked to grow significantly...whether it's adapting to new technologies, challenging deeply rooted problematic ways of thinking and being, or grappling with the complex and compounding challenges of today. These shifts require us to push beyond our comfort zones, question established norms, and embrace change, even when it feels daunting.

What is important to acknowledge is that those feelings of resistance are not only common amongst all of us, but those feelings are also a sign that growth is needed...and, perhaps, even just around the corner.

While it might feel daunting stepping out of your comfort zone, embracing change can reenergize you, breathe new life into your practice, and help you reconnect with your purpose as an educator.

Take a moment to reflect on the experiences that shaped your current teaching practice...those profound “aha” moments that might have taken effort and even grief to arrive at. Growth and change were necessary for you to be who you are today.

Just as we guide students through their learning journey, sometimes we need to be reminded how to learn.

“...in the rapidly changing world of the twenty-first century, the most important skill anyone can have is the ability to stop in one's tracks, see what isn't working, and then find ways to unlearn old patterns and relearn how to learn.” - *Alvin Toffler*

The process of learning is never linear. Learning requires us to unlearn and relearn, unlearn and relearn – we are forever evolving. It requires us to reflect on past experiences, consider current realities, and be willing to step bravely into the future as a new version of ourselves shaped by what we learned. The practice of unlearning to relearn is difficult because, as humans, we are resistant to change. Change can feel scary, and fear is something we naturally try to avoid.

But...what is the worst that can happen if we are willing to change?

By fully engaging in the process of unlearning to relearn, we open ourselves to new possibilities...for our students, our colleagues, our communities and ourselves.

[Adopting an Equity, Social Justice, Indigenization and Changemaking Lens](#)

Unlearning To Relearn: Fostering Equity in the Classroom

“To be educated is to be uneducated in the ways that society has failed to teach you.”

– *Dr. John Henrik Clarke*

Unlearning to relearn is not just a journey of personal growth – it is a necessary step in fostering equity in the classroom.

Over the past few years, many of us have encountered moments that have forced us to confront and unlearn our assumptions and prejudices—especially when it comes to social justice, equity, and human rights. These moments often arise in ways we don't expect, challenging what we thought we knew about different groups of people, their experiences, and struggles.

Consider a time when a situation directly challenged a prejudice or stereotype you held about a particular group of people. What assumptions did you hold about this group prior to this situation? What beliefs did you unconsciously carry with you?

Now, consider what it felt like having your assumptions challenged. How did you process the discomfort or surprise that came with realizing that the truths you once held were not accurate?

This moment of discomfort is often the catalyst for the critical process of unlearning.

For centuries, harmful ideologies have justified and perpetuated injustices that continue to impact marginalized populations in Canada today. These ideologies have intentionally reinforced power structures that privilege the dominant culture while suppressing and exploiting others, which has contributed to the marginalization of groups including Indigenous peoples, racialized individuals, immigrants and refugees (particularly those from non-Western countries), 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, women (especially those from racialized or Indigenous backgrounds), and people experiencing poverty.

“Bias is prejudice without awareness.”

– *Shakil Choudhury, author of Deep Diversity*

When we aren't mindful of our biases (a natural function of the human brain), they can evolve into prejudices. In the classroom, our biases can affect how we evaluate students' abilities, allocate resources, and provide support. They can also influence our expectations and perceptions of students, leading to inequitable opportunities and outcomes related to race, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. If we fail to confront our own prejudices in curriculum choices, teaching methods, and classroom interactions, we risk undermining students' sense of belonging and hindering their academic success.

In order to dismantle inequitable systems in our societies, we must first confront our own deeply ingrained beliefs.

For us to be equitable teachers, we must be willing to change – not just on a surface level, but on a deeper level. We do this by confronting our mindsets and seeing how they manifest in our teaching practices, interpersonal relationships, and interactions with students and colleagues.

Statements such as “I am not racist” or “I treat everyone the same” may come from a place of good intention. However, they inadvertently close the door to truly recognizing and understanding the lived realities of people in our communities that are impacted by systemic marginalization. In our futile attempts to “remain neutral” or “non-political” on topics related to justice and equity, we halt the capacity to learn and grow.

“Education is what got us into this mess – and education is what will get us out.”

– *The Honourable Murray Sinclair*

The above quote highlights the role that education plays in both the harm caused by residential schools in Canada and in the possibilities of healing and reconciliation. Education has historically been used to justify and reinforce harmful ideologies, such as about Indigenous people. In this way, education has been part of the problem...but it also can be part of the solution.

Education is dynamic. It requires its teachers and students to engage in ongoing reflection, adaptation, and growth in order to build a more just society.

As educators, we must unlearn the ideologies that allowed for injustices to take root in the first place and continue to be perpetuated. Unlearning to relearn is an act of justice...one that is more essential now than ever.

To unlearn:

Read...

- "How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi
- "We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom" by Bettina L. Love
- "Restorying Education: Decolonizing Your Practice Using a Critical Lens" by Caroyln Roberts

Watch...

- [Learn to Unlearn - Burcu Arslan](#)
- [The Art of Unlearning - Duaa Mushahid](#)
- [A Guide to Lifelong Allyship - Catherine Hernandez](#)

Listen...

- Podcast Episode: [Love, Conflict, and Cognitive Dissonance: Unlearning Paradigms with Lewis Raven Wallace](#)
- Podcast Episode: [Nova Reid on Anti-Racism and Courageous Courage - Good Ancestor](#)
- Podcast Series: [The Accessible Stall](#)
- Podcast Series: [Telling Our Twisted Histories](#)

Teaching Hacks

Tips for Teaching Reflection

1. Plan time for reflection – set time aside in your schedule
2. Plan space for reflection (journal, part of lesson plan, etc.)
3. Get input from your students – use exit slips or quick class closers to solicit input
4. Use technology – voice memos are a great way to capture your thoughts while on the move
5. Engage with peers – join a community of practice or invite a peer to sit in your class



For more:

- [6 Tips for Teachers to Make Reflection a Consistent Habit | Edutopia](#)
- [10 fun ways to reflect on your teaching | BookWidgets \[YouTube video\]](#)

Competency Framework Updates

Faculty are learning, relearning and growing in their roles as educators. Check out our latest shorts on our faculty competencies.

- [Faculty are changemakers](#)
- [Faculty are inclusive practitioners](#)
- [Faculty are designers](#)
- [Faculty are researchers](#)



And keep watch for our next four shorts coming soon.

Attend **Focus on Teaching Conference** on April 30th and be part of the launch of the [Innovative Georgian College Faculty Certificate](#).

Check out our [Faculty Competencies Guide \(Pressbooks\)](#).

Visit [Georgian Faculty Competency Framework - Georgian College](#) or email facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca for more information!

Upcoming CTL Event

Focus on Teaching Conference

April 30, 2025

In times of uncertainty and change, connection and gratitude ground us. Being together reminds us of our shared purpose in education, the strength of our communities, and the opportunities we have to transform the future.



Given our present-day challenges, we can pull strength from our unity and our purpose. We all play a role in fostering and supporting student learning.

All are invited to join us for the Focus on Teaching Conference where we will gather to reflect, learn, and appreciate the work we all do, the people who inspire us, and the resilience that carries us forward.

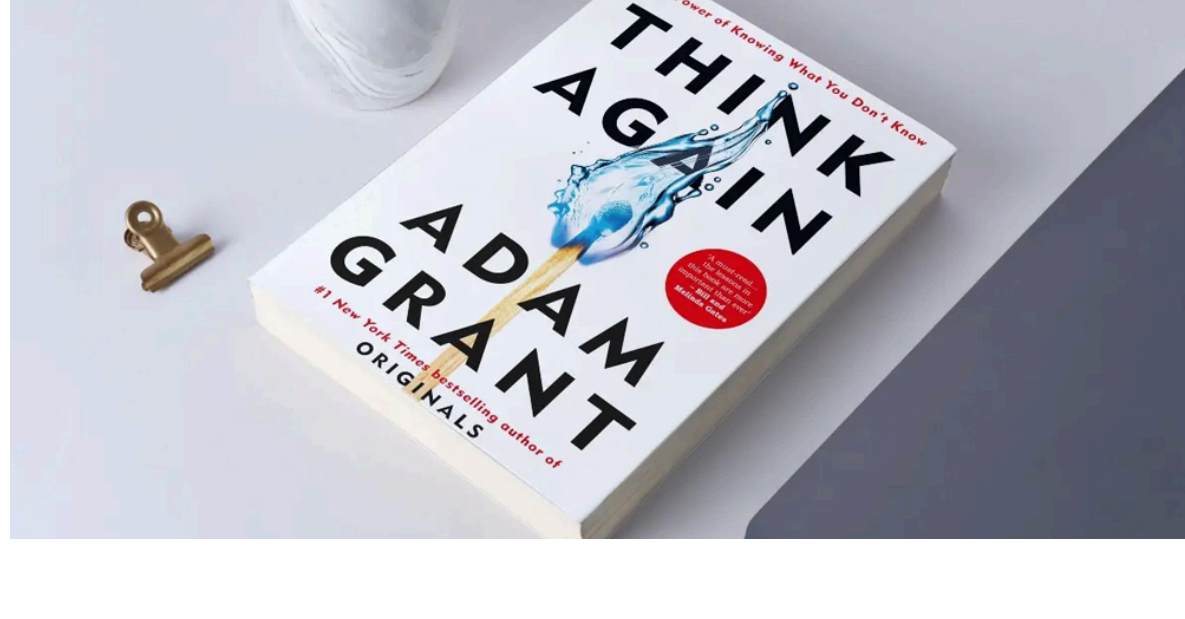
We hope you'll save the date, **April 30, 2025**. We look forward to coming together with gratitude for each other and for the important work we do.

- [Register](#) now for in-person or online attendance.
- [Submit](#) a proposal for a Georgian Talk or Wellness workshop.
- [Celebrate](#) a peer by nominating them for a Teaching Excellence Award.

CTL Team Updates

Faculty Developer Team

Think Again: Rethink & Unlearn



With our timely theme of **change, rethinking, and unlearning**, the Faculty Developer team really wanted to lean into a great proponent of this mentality. Adam Grant says it perfectly here:

"Intelligence is usually seen as the ability to think and learn, but in a rapidly changing world, there's another set of cognitive skills that might matter more: the ability to rethink and unlearn. In our daily lives, too many of us favor the comfort of conviction over the discomfort of doubt. We listen to opinions that make us feel good, instead of ideas that make us think hard. We see disagreement as a threat to our egos, rather than an opportunity to learn. We surround ourselves with people who agree with our conclusions, when we should be gravitating toward those who challenge our thought process. The result is that our beliefs get brittle long before our bones. Intelligence is no cure, and it can even be a curse: there's evidence that being good at thinking can make us worse at rethinking. The brighter we are, the blinder to our own limitations we can become." - *Think Again, Adam Grant*

We highly recommend [Think Again](#) and other books by Adam Grant.

For other reading recommendations as we change seasons and consider new approaches, visit [Good Reads by CTL](#).

Have an idea for a Good Read? Please let us know at facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca

Instructional Designer Team

Unlearning Office Hours: Designing Student-Centered Support



Traditional office hours often don't work—students don't show up. Many face scheduling conflicts, feel intimidated, or don't understand their purpose. Instead of waiting in an empty office, what if we reimagined office hours as dynamic, student-centered spaces?

Rethinking the Model

- **Rename & Reframe** – Calling them student hours shifts the focus. Make it clear they're for support, not just Q&A.
- **Use Themes** – Try "Assignment Brainstorming" or "Exam Prep" to give sessions purpose.
- **Encourage Groups** – Students may feel more comfortable in small, collaborative discussions.

Meeting Students Where They Are

- **Go Virtual** – Use Teams or even a discussion board for flexible access.
- **Offer Options** – Mix drop-in hours with appointment-based slots to fit diverse schedules.

Making It Work

- **Promote It** – Announce office hours in class, on the syllabus, and in course emails.
- **Gather Feedback** – Ask students what works for them and adjust accordingly.

Small tweaks can transform office hours from an underused resource into a meaningful support system. What will you unlearn about student support this semester?

Further Reading:

- [Academic Success Tip: Rebrand Office Hours](#) - This article explores several approaches faculty can adapt to make office hours more accessible and less intimidating for students.

**Special thanks to our colleague Lance Triskle, who introduced us to this idea!*

VR/XR

New Emerging Technology Lab!

The recently built [Emerging Technology Lab](#) in K108 is a dynamic space where teachers and students can explore virtual, mixed, and augmented reality alongside artificial intelligence to enhance learning. It is a space to explore innovation, experiential learning, and collaboration in ways that will transform traditional learning methods and prepare students for the future of technology-enabled education. Contact [Rob Theriault](#) for more information



Multimedia

How to Avoid Common Presentation Mistakes: A Guide for Faculty



As a faculty member, creating a clear and engaging presentation is key to helping students understand the material. Here are some common mistakes to avoid when preparing your slides:

1. Keep Slides Simple

One common mistake is overcrowding slides with too much text or too many images. For a more effective presentation, focus on key points that complement what you're saying. Your slides should serve as visual prompts, not a full script. Keep text to a minimum and use bullet points to break down complex ideas.

2. Avoid Overusing Animations

While animations can add some flair, overusing them can be distracting. Stick to subtle transitions and simple effects to maintain a professional and smooth flow. Remember, your students are there to learn, not be entertained by flashy animations.

3. Make Text and Visuals Easy to Read

It's important to ensure your slides are accessible to all students, especially those sitting farther from the screen. Use large, clear fonts and avoid cluttered visuals. Charts and graphs should be easy to interpret, helping students grasp key information quickly.

4. Stay Consistent with Design

Consistency in design helps students focus on the content rather than the layout. Use a uniform color scheme, stick to one or two fonts, and keep slide layouts consistent. This will create a visually cohesive presentation that enhances learning.

By keeping your slides simple, readable, and well-designed, you can create a more engaging and effective learning experience for your students.

Fun Activity

Write A Secret Message!

1. Gather a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.
2. Place the paper in front of a mirror so that the edge of the paper is to the edge of the mirror. You need to be able to see your paper and writing hand in the mirror.
3. By watching your hand in the **mirror**, write **backwards** (on the paper) a secret message to a friend or family member. Cursive writing makes this even more "secret".
4. Share with the message with the recipient and give them the clue to decode the message ("look in the mirror").



Paul Reynolds, [Kitten and partial reflection in mirror](#). CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Adapted from: [Science Experiments for Kids | HowStuffWorks](#)

Connection Opportunities

And Generally Neat Stuff Happening @ GC



Watch for the CTL Weekly email every Monday morning for a listing of all current offerings or view the [Workshop Calendar](#) for immediate details.

And check out our asynchronous learning modules in [CTL Central for](#)

New for Winter 2025:

- Generative AI Foundations for Faculty
- Culturally Attuned Teaching Toolkit
- Debwewin Miinwaa Naaskodaadiwin Miikaans (Truth and Reconciliation trail)
- Designing for Success – Maximizing Efficiency and Well-being for Faculty

Coming soon for Spring 2025:

- Designing Assessments

Get Involved

Interested in sharing ideas for CTL Connects? We'd love to hear your thoughts.

Please email facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca

Contact Us

Guess what. There are four ways to connect with us:

Blackboard Ultra

For general questions about Blackboard Ultra:

facultybbsupport@georgiancollege.ca

Faculty Development

For questions for our faculty development team:

facultydevelopment@georgiancollege.ca

Instructional Design

For questions for our instructional design team:

instructional.designers@georgiancollege.ca

Learning Technologies

For questions about learning technologies outside of Blackboard:

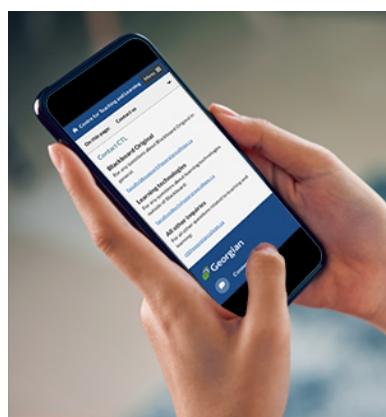
facultyedtech@georgiancollege.ca

All other inquiries

For all other questions related to teaching and learning:

ctl@georgiancollege.ca

Or visit us on our [website](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [X \(Twitter\)](#).



Connect with us!



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