

Maple League of Universities Monthly Report

January 31, 2021



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Executive Director's Note:

Last week 22-year old Amanda Gorman put poetry at the top of the news cycle. After four years of deformed rhetoric, dog whistles, and Twitter rants filled with sentences bordering on senselessness, poetry broke the internet.

Why?

And what does this have to do with Canadian institutions of higher education?

There is, I believe, a fundamental yearning for hope *and* poetry at this particular moment in time. Gorman offers us a balm to the soul and a space to explore our grief and our relief in the midst of a global pandemic. However, she also gives us a clarion call to action, so that we can experience moments of grief without feeling the inertia that often accompanies despair. “Even as we grieved we grew... Even as we tired, we tried.” This deceptively simple rhetorical strategy transforms language, marking our moment of discomfort while also moving us into the future. Tired and tried are ALMOST the same word – with a slight alteration in the placement of “I”. She reverses where “I” lives in the word, which changes our relationship to the past and moves us into the future. Where do “I” want to go? Where do *we* want to go from here? She asks us. The stakes have rarely been higher.

And as we design for a post-COVID world, we must ask ourselves, how do we design for a hopeful and resilient university?

Gorman and universities do the work of reminding us where our legacies live and to whom we are connected through the power of narrative knowledge. Gorman’s poem is rich with others’ voices located at diverse points across time and geography, connecting us to the knowledge, wisdom, and insight of our predecessors. “History has its eyes on us”, Amanda Gorman reminds us in her inauguration poem. By referencing the Broadway smash hit *Hamilton*, Gorman transports us to another moment in a history of nation-building that is so integral to the American cultural imaginary. Amanda Gorman plays with this line to imagine a future that is already writing about her and *this moment in time*. She creates – through poetry – a performative space that harnesses past, present, and future in an act of dynamic simultaneity.

Her poem resonates at a point in time where we are on the precipice of new beginnings, of building a post-COVID world.

Gorman embodies critical hope: she doesn't tell us everything is going to be alright now. Instead, she acknowledges that as messy and difficult as any transformation is, we are at the point of becoming something other than we are, we are at the moment of crossing a threshold, and we need to cross it – both as individuals and as institutions. Her poem gives us a roadmap into the future.

In gifting us a poem she gives us our experiences back to us as something coherent that is, otherwise, incoherent. Gorman takes fragmented, disorienting, and confusing feelings (and we have a LOT of feelings right now) and transforms them into art. In this act of creation, she makes our deep discomfort into something beautiful. And she gives us an entry point – an invitation – where we can participate in a moment of generativity – of future-facing legacy building – through the power of poetry.

Ira Shor, in *Empowering Students* defines hope as “challenging the actual in the name of the possible.” In higher education, students do this in the most wonderful, brave, courageous, audacious ways – because they can still see possibility. Adam Grant, in *Originals*, talks about young geniuses and old masters, and argues that young people haven't been entrenched in the structures and systems where they think and see in a particular way. In contrast, Old masters tackle a challenge over a long period of time to master it through experience.

Universities have the potential to be anchors of hope in a civic society because these institutions bring together old masters (professors) and young geniuses (students). If we design for it, and amplify (instead of squashing) the audacity and curiosity of youth, we can guide and learn alongside this new generation. Young geniuses have hope and joy without cynicism, while professors can help them navigate systems and structures through their experience in order to engage in deeper social and systemic change.

Amanda Gorman is a young genius, connecting words together and flipping them ever so slightly to change the entire world: “Just is” is not “justice” despite their similarity in sound. It is in that difference, in that repetition with slight alteration, that gives new meaning and forges hope in those gaps. In difference we find a way forward, we find a roadmap into the future, we find those spaces where we can build something new. And it is where we find renewal and redemption.

~ *Dr. Jessica Riddell, Executive Director, Maple League of Universities*

I. Extraordinary Student Experiences

BHER Canada Comeback Challenge Teams

Three Maple League students and one Maple League Alumni have advanced to the second round and are *excited to hold two of the top 50 places* in the Business + Higher Education Roundtable's (BHER's) Canada Comeback Challenge. In the second round of the BHER Canada Comeback Challenge running from January 4th- February 14th, Tanisha (Bishop's), Sally (Bishop's), Addy (StFX), and Tiffany (ML/StFX) are competing to reach the top 10 in the BHER challenge. In this round, the Maple League teams will be refining original project pitches, developing prototype, and creating video pitches for two projects:

1. Better Together Boxes which aim to foster connectivity and community in an online world
2. Online Technical Consulting bringing cybersecurity and general technology information to the post-secondary communities at large.



OLTC BHER Challenge

Business-Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) approached the Maple League to partner on micro-WIL experiences. We are working with various groups of student leaders, including the Online Learning and Technology Consultants (OLTCs) at Bishop's University, to connect them to these National Design Challenges. Students claim some of their expenses and access funding envelopes at the various stages of the design challenge competition. They benefit from professional development, mentoring, and invaluable experiential learning.

Riipen in Action

Since the RBC Future Launch program renewed its funding to the four universities of \$80,000 in Fall 2020, many across the Maple League have availed themselves of Riipen's work-integrated learning software.

There have been quite a few notable experiences on the Riipen platform since the renewal. Over the Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 semester, there have been eleven extraordinary course experiences where Maple League schools built innovative work integrated learning (WIL)

The Riipen logo features the word "Riipen" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "R", "p", and "e" are dark blue, while the two "i"s are orange.

experiences. These course experiences connected with more than 40 notable industry partners.

The increased use of the platform is very promising and helps the four individual institutions achieve their strategic visions for building capacities in experiential learning. Engagement is high and growing:

- **Fall 2020 semester:** 338 student experiences (completed)
- **Winter 2021 semester:** 323 student experiences (started or upcoming)

At the core of our mission is the centrality of the student experience. By providing unique experiential learning opportunities such as those made possible through the Riipen platform, we equip our students with the skills necessary to enter the world ready for a rapidly changing job market.

Theatre & Virtual Spaces with Dr. Neil Silcox

“The Motyer-Fancy Theatre presents *Connections*, an online play made across four universities.

In a time of isolation, how do we find togetherness? When we are separated, who do we turn to for support? When the world turns upside down, what do we realize we’ve taken for granted?

Connections brings together artists from the Maple League of Universities (Bishop’s, St. Francis Xavier, Acadia, and Mount Allison) to perform from their homes, from Cape Breton to



Barbados. This live-over-Zoom digital-theatre hybrid is a beacon announcing: we’re here, we’re in this together, and we’re going to get through.

Presented by the Motyer-Fancy Theatre in association with the Maple League of Universities, *Connections* runs from February 4th to 6th at 8 p.m. Atlantic/ 7 p.m. Eastern. The production, directed by Mount Allison’s Crake Drama Fellow Neil Silcox, is presented free of charge, though tickets are limited. Please reserve yours by visiting www.mta.ca/theatre/tickets/

For more information, or if you have any questions, please email motyerfancytheatre@mta.ca”

For the Maple League students *Connections* is a vital opportunity to build bonds with young artists from across the regions. The show has offered support, togetherness, and (most vitally of all) the opportunity to share about themselves. For audiences across the country and around the world, *Connections* is a reminder that — even though we are apart — we’re not alone. We’re all in this together, and together we’ll make it through.

3M National Student Fellowship Alumni Mentoring Network

In January, students across the Maple League availed of the Alumni Mentoring Network as they prepared their applications for the 3M National Student Fellowship. 13 students from all four Maple League universities were matched with a mentor from the Maple League to receive personalized feedback and coaching on their dossier.

Thank you to the Maple League recipients of the 3M National Student Fellowship who have worked with current applicants:

Jason Earl, Bishop's University, 2015 3M National Student Fellow

Piper Riley Thompson, Mount Allison University, 2015 3M National Student Fellow

Chloé Soucy, Bishop's University, 2018 3M National Student Fellow

Ethan Pohl, Bishop's University, 2019 3M National Student Fellow

Addy Strickland, St. Francis Xavier University, 2020 3M National Student Fellow

National Skillshare Series on Preventing & Addressing Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Campuses

On January 13, Heather Carroll and Tiffany MacLennan attended the launch of the National Skillshare Series on Preventing and Addressing Gender-Based Violence at Post Secondary Campuses. Courage to Act will be hosting a National Skillshare Series on Preventing and Addressing Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Campuses from January 2021 - August 2021, where leaders in gender-based violence work can share their work and learn from one another. Heather and Tiffany also are members of the Higher Education Community of Practice, a series of peer-facilitated workshops that will help students develop practical skills around navigating power dynamics in academia.

II. Faculty and Staff Engagement

The Virtual Maple League TLC (V_MLTLC)

Maple League Book Club: *The Privileged Poor*

We are pleased to announce the Winter 2021 Maple League Book Club. Our selected text this semester is *The Privileged Poor* by Anthony Abraham Jack. This professional learning community will bring together faculty, staff, and students to discuss issues of race, class, access and belonging in higher education. We look forward to facilitating conversations with over 60 participants from across the Maple League and beyond.

Limited seats are still available on a first-come, first-served basis. Groups meet every second week for five meetings, with the first meetings February 8, 11, and 12 (times below). If you are interested in joining, please contact Heather Carroll at hcarroll@luc.edu. This Book Club is open to all.

Mondays from 11:00-12:00

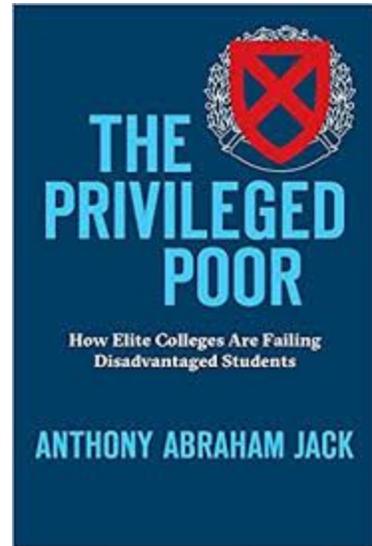
Thursdays from 1:00-2:00 and 3:00-4:00

Fridays from 10:00-11:00 and 2:00-3:00

*all times listed in Atlantic Time.

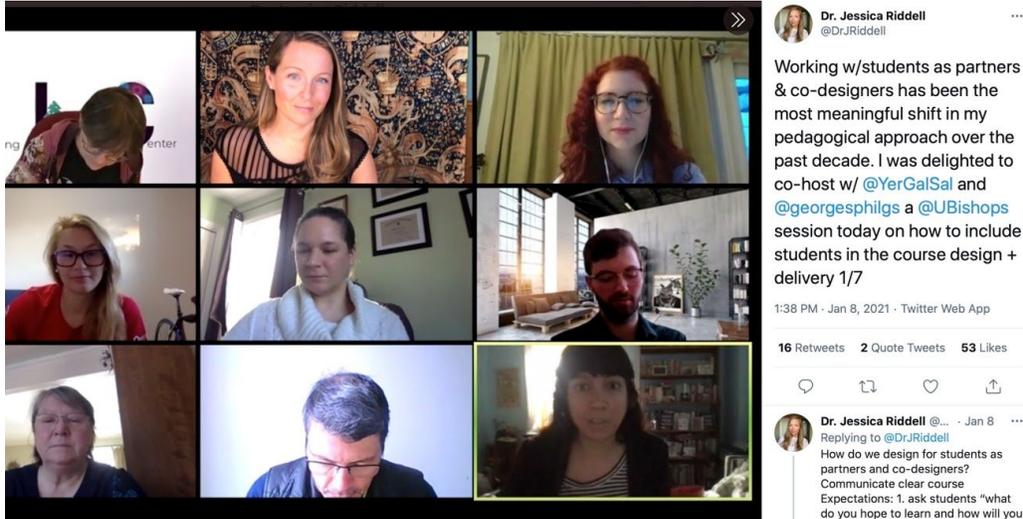
Shared Teaching & Learning Support

As we transitioned into the Winter semester, Acadia, Bishop's, and StFX made institutional programming available to all members of the Maple League of Universities. The Acadia University Office of Indigenous Affairs and Glooscap First Nation hosted an Indigenous Speaker Series, Bishop's University TLC hosted a Winter Teaching Institute, and StFX hosted a series of workshops providing an Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).



Bishop's TLC Winter Institute

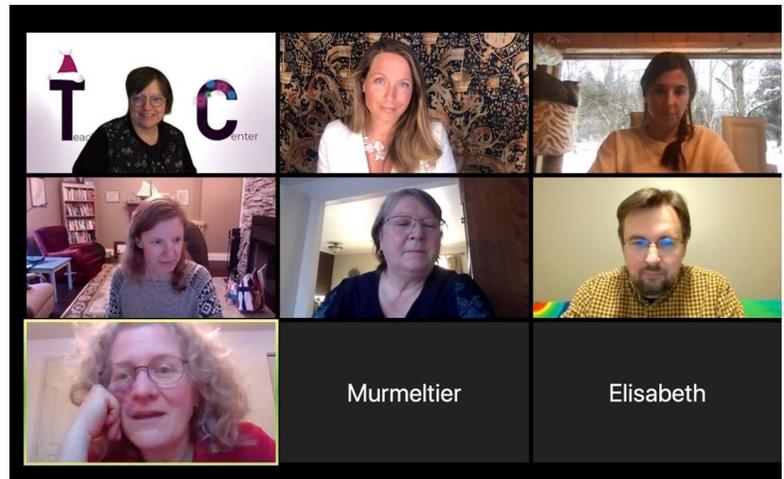
Bishop's University hosted a Winter Teaching Institute from January 7 – 8, 2021



Topics included:

- Video assessments: why, when and how to do it?
- Inclusive Assessments,
- Cognitive load theory
- Problem-based learning online
- Effective group work?
- Students as Partners
- Assessment strategies to get rid of proctoring!

Presenters included many esteemed faculty from the BU TLC as well as student representatives. Including the student voice in pedagogical design is a key principle that must be included as we build more hopeful and resilient institutions in a post-COVID world.



StFX: An Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)

StFX is proud to host **An Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning**

In these virtual workshops, we will find spaces and ways to share our experiences with teaching and learning.

Goals for these workshops:

1. Define Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL).
2. Reflect on the value of SoTL in general and the value of SoTL to our own practices.
3. Working collaboratively, we will draw on our own experiences and the experiences of others, engage in practice exercises that help to define a research question. Once defined, we will place this research question in the context of relevant literature.

Tuesdays, January 19 & 26 2021 from 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Workshop Facilitator: **Dr Heather Smith**, 3M National Teaching Fellow

Two possible reasons to register:

1. Learn about research relevant to your teaching
2. Determine your own research question about teaching and learning

For more information and to register contact Ange Kolan at akolan@stfx.ca

TEACHING & LEARNING CENTRE | FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays January 19
Tuesday January 26
9 -10:30 a.m. AST

Dr. Heather Smith, 3MNTF led workshops and created the space to share faculty experiences with teaching and learning in a variety of ways.

In brief, the goals of these workshops were to learn about SoTL, reflect on the value of SoTL – particularly related to our teaching, and to work together to come up with SoTL research questions.

The Acadia University Office of Indigenous Affairs & Glooscap First Nation Indigenous Speaker Series.

Wednesday, January 6, 2021:
[Netukulimk and Two-Eyed Seeing](#)

Thursday, January 7, 2021: [Pow Wow Protocol and Regalia](#)

Tuesday, January 12, 2021:
[Landscape and Place Names](#)

Tuesday, January 12, 2021:
[Glooscap and Annapolis Valley First Nations](#)



III. External Engagement

MLA Panel of International Scholars

On January 7, 2021 Dr. Jessica Riddell was the only Canadian on a panel of world-renowned educational leaders on institutional change, including James C. Lang (author of *Small Teaching Online*, and *Distracted*, 2020) and David Gooblar (Pedagogy Unbound, and *The Missing Course: Everything They Never Taught You About College Teaching*, 2019). The panel was focussed on institutional culture change in the humanities as an invited speakers panel at MLA (Modern Language Association).



Dr. Jessica Riddell Published in “The Conversation”

Dr. Jessica Riddell’s piece titled “Poet Amanda Gorman's take on love as legacy points to youth's power to shape future generations” was published in *The Conversation* on January 26th.

Read her article [here](#).



University of Ottawa: Benefits, Drawbacks, & Ethical Considerations with International Service Learning

On January 19, Director of the V_MLTLC Heather Carroll was welcomed by the University of Ottawa to present on the ‘Benefits, Drawbacks, and Ethical Considerations with International Service Learning.’ This presentation was sponsored by the University of Ottawa Global Health Team and Medical Ethics Interest Groups.

Rotary International: Creating a Meaningful Virtual Exchange Program

On January 22, Director of the V_MLTLC Heather Carroll was welcomed by Rotary International to discuss virtual learning and virtual exchanges. This webinar was attended by over 100 participants from six continents.

Session Description: We live in a hyper-connected world that is made possible through technology. In seconds, students can access information or connect with someone anywhere in the world. But, while this highly valuable information and connections are within reach online, fostering deep cross-cultural understanding requires structure, intentionality, and direct, facilitated interaction between students and representatives of another culture.

This webinar guided participants on how to develop the procedures and framework of a virtual exchange program in a safe and responsible way. Participants joined Heather Carroll, Director of the Virtual Teaching and Learning Centre at the Maple League of Universities, who explained the many benefits and design principles of virtual learning. Participants also heard from Rotary members from North America who plan to begin their first virtual exchanges in January 2021.

HEATHER CARROLL
DIRECTOR, VIRTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE
FOR THE MAPLE LEAGUE OF UNIVERSITIES



IV. ML Team

The team of Maple League Student Fellows have started 2021 projects with a healthy dash of critical hope and a systems-thinking approach to building a post-COVID world that is more inclusive and student-centred. The Fellows are looking forward to the projects and professional development this year. In the meeting on January 25th, Dr. Riddell posed the question “What are the key design principles you would want the consortium to focus on in a post-COVID world?”



The students reflected on students as partners, accountability, transparency, feedback integration, more funding for high-impact practices, designing systems based on values of kindness and compassion, and more. In advance of their next meeting, the Fellows are to come up with one project they would like to tackle in 2021 that aligns with a hopeful and resilient consortium post-COVID.

Appendix

Social Media

All of our social platforms continue to grow in followers and follower engagement. Some of our best performing posts this month include:

Top Tweet earned 7,063 impressions
Registration for our Winter 2021 Book Club is now live!

Complete the form below to join our inter-institutional professional learning community, reading *The Privileged Poor* by Anthony Abraham Jack.

tinyurl.com/MLWinterBookCl...

@AcadiaU @UBishops @MountAllison @stfxuniversity
pic.twitter.com/XUOnEnZTQX



↳ 3 ♥ 7

Top media Tweet earned 6,931 impressions

For Winter 2021, we are pleased to offer a diverse roster of courses available through online/remote learning across @AcadiaU @UBishops @MountAllison @stfxuniversity

Don't miss out on registering for one of our shared courses! Visit loom.ly/rcE0qkk for more details! pic.twitter.com/KAMH486jWi



↳ 10 ♥ 20

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Loomly

Notably this month, Lauren Boutlbee, the Maple League Post-Graduate Fellow in Advancement and Communications, has been working with a new Social Media Management software called Loomly. This is a cloud-based system that will help us align the many projects and initiatives coming out of the grassroots movements across the diverse communities. This software will help to streamline the internal communication process, increase engagement by aligning scheduling, and provide rich metrics for us to track our growth with advanced analytics features.

New Maple League Website

We are also redesigning the current Maple League website. After extensive consultation, we are moving platforms to ensure better public-facing flow and backend operability. Stay tuned!