



# ACURIT 2024

The Augustana Conference on Undergraduate Research and Innovative Teaching

9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE (WITH 2-YEAR GAP 2020-21)

**“ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: THE STUDENT, THE TUTOR AND THE INSTRUCTOR”**

## ABSTRACTS

Thursday, May 9, 2024

In-person at Augustana Campus of U of A, Camrose, AB  
Roger Epp Room (2-004 Forum Building)

8:30 – 9:00 am	<b>Registration</b> (coffee/tea light refreshments provided)
9:00 – 9:15 am	<b>Welcome to ACURIT 2024</b> Anne McIntosh, Chair of the ACURIT Committee
9:15 – 9:45 am	<p><b>Student Keynote Panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>The Other Side of Learning: Observation and Application.</i> Kathie Bailey, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists: Rion Joshy, Angel Nwaka, Jessica Schultz, Brook-Lyn Sherbo, Emma Liese Thomsen, Taylor Tizzard, Stanislav Vasyliuk</b></p> <p>Being a student mentor is a unique role within the Augustana experience that offers a new way to learn about yourself as a student, apply your own knowledge, and attend to diverse questions and learning styles. Mentorship offered us an informed opportunity to explore both sides of the classroom. As students ourselves, we understand diversity: different learning approaches are crucial in fostering a deep understanding. We need great attention to detail to best support mentees. This includes balancing giving direct answers versus asking questions that promote genuine understanding and long-term success. We needed to recognize a student's affect and discern when a straightforward answer is necessary: sometimes, less is more.</p>

	<p>The role reversal from student to mentor is surprising. We began to question how we absorb information and how we participate in active learning. We learned alongside the students, but in a different capacity. This has opened our eyes to seeing that learning extends beyond schooling to application. We became a team, learning to work with and support each other. Finally, we bolstered our confidence: it takes confidence to be responsible for information on which students will be assessed.</p>
<p>9:45-10:30 am</p>	<p><b>Panel 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b><i>Perspectives of a Professor and Senior Students from Teaching a First-Year Seminar. James Kariuki, Aishi Nayar, Thanhhai Nguyen, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</i></b></p> <p>All incoming Augustana students are required to take a first-year seminar (FYS) course to orient them to the university environment, enhance communication skills, and develop other academic skills that will lead to success in future courses. A learning assistant (LA), typically a senior undergraduate student, is partnered with a faculty member to assist in teaching an FYS course by providing mentorship, implementing pedagogical practices to support the classroom environment, and enhancing the learning experience for students. This presentation explores our experiences and growth as first-time LAs and how we learned to navigate the hybrid roles of an instructor figure and a student in the classroom. By investigating the various interactions within the classroom (instructors and students, a professor and LAs, and student-instructor relationships), we recognized substantial growth in our teaching abilities as we transitioned from novices to competent LAs who could confidently manage a classroom.</p> </li> <li> <p><b><i>Do Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs) Promote Student Capacity to Identify and Apply Their Scientific Skills and Knowledge? Sheryl Gares, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</i></b></p> <p>Undergraduate research experiences (UREs) have a high impact on educational opportunities because they offer students authentic investigative experiences. Unfortunately, relatively few undergraduate students benefit because of the need for the one-on-one supervision required to complete a research project. Course-based undergraduate research experiences (CURES) have been reported in the literature for several years and incorporate the URE practice, but within the setting of a course, so many students may benefit. I have designed and used two types of CUREs as part of my teaching practice for several years. One type of CURE involves a scientific literature-based group research project. The second approach is a more conventional CURE where students complete individual laboratory-based research projects. An overarching goal I have for both types of CUREs is for students to 1) recognize the scientific skills and disciplinary expertise they have acquired from previous courses and 2) directly apply their learning to develop their research expertise. I have designed a rubric to provide guidance for students to carry out their literature-based CUREs, and I use the rubric to evaluate the research projects. More recently, I have incorporated reflection assignments for lab-based CUREs to increase student</p> </li> </ul>

	<p>awareness of their scientific skills and knowledge, with the expectation that this practice would support gains in student confidence, culminating in greater productivity and satisfaction with their research. This presentation will include former students who will provide a brief overview of their research projects, then discuss whether the rubrics or reflection assignments provided a framework that was helpful in guiding their research endeavors.</p>
<p>10:30 – 10:45 am</p>	<p><b>Break</b> (refreshments provided)</p>
<p>10:45 am – 12:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Panel 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Internship Preparation and Commerce Internship Courses: A Comprehensive Overview from Instructor, Student, and Employer Perspectives.</i> Tetyana Khramova, Witty Sandle, Carl Schultz, The King’s University, Edmonton, Alberta</b></li> </ul> <p>This presentation offers a comprehensive overview of the Internship Preparation and Commerce Internship courses. It features insights from an instructor, a student intern, and an employer supervisor. The presentation highlights the delivery of these courses to third-year students and the assessment methods employed, which include a focus on self-reflection in assignments.</p> <p>To begin, the instructor shares their perspective on the content delivery and assessment components used to prepare students for their internships. Students are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and skills to succeed. They develop self-awareness for better career choices. A broader view is taken on the facets that inform their internship and career pathways, with a spotlight on the term "vocation" and how one’s paid employment serves as a vehicle for living out a sense of purpose. The presentation explores the role of self-reflection in assignments, outlining goals and sequencing.</p> <p>The following section presents the perspective of a student intern, describing their experience of preparing for and participating in an internship. This part focuses on the knowledge and skills gained and how students can apply their theoretical knowledge to business-related positions. It includes a personal account of the features of the internship preparatory course that helped the student make informed internship decisions. Additionally, it reflects on the internship experience and how it has impacted their career and personal choices.</p> <p>Lastly, the presentation features the employer’s perspective on serving as an internship supervisor. The employer shares their experiences and reflections on assessing students’ skill development and growth.</p> <p>In summary, the speakers aim to provide valuable insights to a cross-disciplinary audience, focusing on addressing the importance of reflexivity skills to make connections within classroom and workplace experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Oral Assessments for Learning Practical Skills.</i> Magrieta Snyman, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Must Love Words: Making the Shift from Skill to Core Competency through a Text-first Approach to Design.</i></b> Constanza Pacher, MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta</li> </ul> <p>In the field of design, to create illustrations, design a cover, or the pages of a book, the project always starts with the interpretation of a text — literary, poetic, informative. Without the content, a design is just a vessel. Yet many students disregard the text, by either skimming it, or not reading at all.</p> <p>My aha moment came when a layout for an annual report managed to fool me, with its attractive and professional looks, just before I realized the student hadn't even used the real text in the design. "Oh, yes," answered the student confidently to my alarmed comment on the use of placeholder text, "but I'll replace it later."</p> <p>I realized that, inadvertently, the traditional assignment—designed to practice basic visual and technical skills—was hindering the acquisition of higher-order core skills, such as reading, interpreting, reflecting, and problem-solving. All of these are needed in advanced courses and are foundational for the success of my students' professional lives.</p> <p>All it takes is a few of these skill-development assignments to cement the idea that reading—and knowing what the text is saying—is not important. By the time a more complex project comes along, the bad habits have sunk in, and the lack of reading affects conceptualization, leading to superficial and unoriginal ideas that miss the mark.</p> <p>What I did to remedy this was to turn one of my assignments upside-down. Instead of focusing on creating generic layouts, as fancy containers of interchangeable text, we now focus squarely on the text, the interpretation of which dictates the shape of the container, the layout. In this assignment, reading is no longer optional but becomes a necessary precursor and indispensable to the outcome.</p> <p>Purposeful readings, analysis, and exploration of the text as a source of meaning are now the center points of this learning experience. I use experimentation to push students to solve problems, as they propose unconventional ways to design the page and the reading experience. The results are designs that are as unique and specific as the words and the students' interpretations that sparked them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small and Mighty (or Not?!) Classroom Practices to Create a Positive Learning Environment.</i> Anne McIntosh, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</li> </ul>
12:00-1:00 pm	<b>Lunch</b> (included in registration fee) Location TBC
1:00-2:30 pm	<b>Joint Keynote with FoTL</b> <i>Creating Cultures of Care and Connection: Lessons from Indigenizing Climate Change Education.</i> Sara Mai Chitty, Beth Hundey, Western University <i>Remote presentation followed by in-person discussion</i>
2:30-2:45 pm	<b>Break</b> (refreshments provided)

2:45 pm  
– 3:35 pm

### **Student Panel**

***Media Coverage of Murders: Uncovering Students' Bias, Discovering Media's Techniques, and Recovering Agency.*** Mélanie Méthot, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta

#### **Panelists:**

- ***Uncovering Biases and Biting Off More Than You Can Chew.*** Dakota Ekelund
- ***Trap in Time: Analysis of the Role of the Media with the Criminal Justice System during the 20th Century in Australia.*** Mariana Castillo Arces
- ***Unveiling the Narrative: Exploring Inconsistencies and Sensationalism in the Coverage of Frances Elizabeth Compton's Murder.*** Tacey Robertson

In a first year interdisciplinary seminar, students are asked to identify five newspaper articles using the Australian historical newspaper database TROVE and analyze them. I only give them the name of a murder victim. The case has not received any scholarly attention, despite the fact that it was during its time a media sensation. In this panel, five students who took the course (at three different times) will briefly share the results of their research and reflect on the obstacles they faced and the skills they developed. As the instructor, I will conclude the session with my own qualitative and quantitative observations in relation to the learning objectives of the course. EKELUND: During my first-year interdisciplinary seminar IDS100, Dr. Méthot set us to help us develop not only our research skills but also our communication and critical thinking skills. I will be looking back into the experience, identifying the challenges I faced, my biggest take aways from analyzing newspaper articles on bigamist murderer Alexander Smart and the metacognition lessons I carried into my second year. CASTILLO: Media plays a significant role, both critiquing police actions and shaping public perceptions. Inspector Harry Mann's career in Western Australia's Crime Investigative Bureau (CBI) offers insights into this evolution. During the IDS 100, the database Trove provided access to countless 20th century newspapers which allowed me to ponder on the role the media plays in our life. Leading to the question, are we trapped in time? I will reflect on my findings and the skills I developed completing the assignment. ROBERTSON: In this exploration of media reporting, I dissect media coverage surrounding the 1911 murder of Frances Elizabeth Compton. Utilizing TROVE articles, I uncover disparities and sensationalism in initial reporting and then reflect on my research process. I elucidate the competitive dynamics of journalism and its impact on narrative formation, connecting these insights to society's intrigue with crime. Through critical analysis, I advocate for vigilant media consumption, urging audiences to question portrayals of tragic events. My presentation serves as a call for discernment and reflection, emphasizing the necessity of thorough investigation in interpreting media narratives.

3:35-4:15 pm	<p><b>Panel 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Developing Critical Thinking Skills through AI-Based Assignments in Higher Education.</i> Tetyana Khramova, Malachi Konynenberg, The King’s University, Edmonton, Alberta</b></li> </ul> <p>This presentation highlights the exercise of developing and implementing assignments on using artificial intelligence (AI) software to solve business problems. This is an example of just one of three distinguished approaches to using AI in the classroom.</p> <p>The presentation compares two assignments: a short in-class assignment for first-year students and a longer home-written assignment for third-year students. It showcases the assignment's position in the course, the teaching objectives, assignment descriptions, and learning outcomes for each. It also highlights how these exercises can help develop students' critical thinking skills. The presentation also includes a summary of students' reflections on both assignments, containing their opinions on the value of developing AI-using skills for their future.</p> <p>The presented experience will contribute to the ongoing post-secondary education discussion on whether to allow or prohibit the use of AI in assignments, with the ultimate goal of finding the best solution for every discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Research in Fun: Intersecting various courses into one workload.</i> Joanna Marris Nicolas, University of Alberta (Augustana), Camrose, Alberta</b></li> </ul> <p>Students believe only prerequisites connect to other courses, but classes can intersect, regardless of the content or enrolled semester. My study began in 2022 for a political science class that offered open-ended research subjects for students. I found more data than I could realistically fit into my final project, which led to an independent study alongside a supervising professor. In the fall of 2023, I took a year-long requirement for my university degree: the social science capstone. Focused on analyzing scholarship within a student’s chosen topic, I decided to concentrate on the field I would research during the following semester for my independent study. By March 2024, I wrote two research papers simultaneously: a content analysis of original research and a literature review of past scholars. As the subjects were so closely linked, they aided each other; I could defend my literature review arguments using my independent study and build on my research using past scholars’ literature that I have analyzed. I believe students can find a healthy balance between work and pleasure with the right mindset and approach while avoiding academic burnout.</p>
4:15 – 4:30 pm	<p><b>Conference Closing Discussion</b></p>
	<p>Everyone is invited to continue conversations at Fox and Fable downtown (not included in registration fee)</p>