

Teaching Matters

Centre for Teaching Excellence

Issue No. 24

<http://cte.uwaterloo.ca>

May 2007

A new Centre for Teaching Excellence is emerging at the University of Waterloo

Since May 1, 2006, representatives from LT3, TRACE and LRI have been meeting to forge together a new teaching unit at UW—the Centre for Teaching Excellence.

The restructuring committee, chaired by Gail Cuthbert Brandt

(AVP-LRI), included Marta Bailey (LT3), Liwana Bringelson (LT3), Donna Ellis (TRACE), Cathy Kelly (DCE), Tracy Penny-Light (LRI), Vivian Schoner (LRI), and Catherine Schryer (English Department and TRACE).

Since its establishment by Chris Knapper in 1976, TRACE has been offering instructors consulting on issues related to course and curriculum design as well as classroom teaching. Much of its efforts have been devoted to developing teaching resources, such as online Tip Sheets, programming for New Faculty and the Teaching Excellence Academy, that offer faculty opportunities to enhance their teaching at various points in their careers. Its activities have also focused on the Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) program, a program that prepares mostly doctoral students for their teaching responsibilities as future faculty.

LT3, founded in 1999, under the direction of Tom Carey, has focused on offering instructors expertise on innovative technologies that they can use with students in on-campus classes.

This assistance, delivered via workshops, presentations, and the LT3 liaisons who work with instructors in the various Faculties, has been focussed on supporting appropriate use of technologies. LT3 has also been a key player in the development of new ways for supporting learning through Learning Objects and Learning Design.

The most recent unit, LRI, has been providing leadership and infrastructure for the Teaching Excellence Council (TEC), chaired by Gail Cuthbert Brandt, AVP-LRI. The TEC has been responsible for new initiatives such as the Learning about Teaching Symposium. LRI has also assisted in developing more research capacity, especially with respect to the Teaching-Based Research Group (T-BRG).

However, we recognize that instructors at Waterloo have found these plethora of services confusing and difficult to navigate. As evidenced by the mandate of the new centre, we also saw this merger as an opportunity to more fully respond to the Sixth Decade Plan's call for a focus on excellence in teaching.

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Teaching with Imagination: Interview with Trent Tucker, 2007 CUT Prize Winner



Many CUT participants hailing from different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds can attest to the following statement: there is no universal path to a career in university teaching. For some, the process of discovering an interest in and a passion for university teaching may take place after years of being outside of academia. This was certainly the case of Trent Tucker, this year's CUT Prize* Winner and a Ph.D. Candidate in Management Sciences. After several years of working in industry, Trent decided to make a transition from industry to university. Shortly, he found himself in the new role of a doctoral student at UW and a full-time lecturer at the School of Business & Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University. In retrospect, Trent credits Nicholas Lore's book, *The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success*, for helping him to find his way to university teaching.

Despite the heavy teaching load associated with a full-time teaching position, Trent saw the process of teaching as a way to explore his creative side. To learn new teaching skills, he started the CUT program and developed an interest in the scholarship of teaching. Ac-

ording to Trent, a combination of reflective activities and application-based workshops that are part of the CUT program allowed him to become clearer on the goals that he has for his students and to develop learning activities that support these goals. It is through the CUT that Trent started to think about shifting the focus of his teaching from content to pedagogy and the process of learning. Later his interest in teaching led him to attend teaching-related conferences, including the conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE).

This year, Trent was selected as the CUT prize winner for his creative instructional approaches. His creativity and experimentation with pedagogical possibilities translates into what he calls "fun, creative outlets" for student learning. He is constantly looking for new information and new ways of bringing the youth-embraced cultural practices into the classroom. For example, in order to revitalize a fairly dry fourth-year Management of Information Systems (MIS) course, Trent turned to the video sharing website YouTube, which is popular among his students. He modified the format of students' presentations to include short, student-produced videos that followed the introduction of the research findings. Students were given topic areas (e.g., computer viruses) for their research projects and worked in small groups to research the topics and create commercials or public service announcements as part of their in-class presentations. When he learned about Facebook, an online social networking tool, he began to think about ways he could use it in his MIS course to illustrate

how various pieces of databases are connected. He also drew on his computer skills to create new tools for course management. One of the databases that he built allows him to track student participation in each class.

After reading an academic article about the use of LEGO in the classroom, Trent bought 25 LEGO fire-trucks which students then used for assembly line and quality assurance exercises. If you are interested in reading how Trent uses LEGO in his classes, I would encourage you to stop by the CTE library (MC 4051) to review materials from Trent's mini-workshop "Teaching Quantitative Concepts with LEGO", which he facilitated last year as part of the CUT program.

Trent emphasized that while he has a laid-back and fun approach when it comes to his delivery style, he is firm regarding assignment deadlines, issues of academic integrity and other aspects of student learning. He has also been involved in curriculum redesign projects. His current project involves work on the redesign of the MIS curriculum. He is working with colleagues to survey alumni of the program to learn about their experiences and their perceptions of the effectiveness of instruction.

What are Trent's goals for his teaching? "In preparing the next generation of business managers," says Trent, "my main goal is for them to learn to think and be creative since the answer to the unstructured question their boss asks them won't be found in the back of any of their undergrad textbooks." He thinks that his approach to teaching will continue to be anchored in his background of a consultant-turned-

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Engaging Students in Learning

Inspired insights... unanticipated connections... magnificent failures... making connections... engagement... these are the activities that learning is made of.

Through their eportfolios, students in Kate Willink's Intercultural Communication (SPCOM 491) class demonstrated how they achieved the course learning objectives and demonstrated their ability to synthesize course material and connect it to other personal learning experiences. Their activities show they were indeed engaged, inspired, made connections, and learned from their mistakes.

Each student's eportfolio created for the Intercultural Communication course was arranged under the following three themes:

- **Inspired Insights** – where the students showed how they used course content, discussions and readings in a community or workplace setting;
- **Magnificent Failures** – where the students showed work they considered experimental, tentative, and “substandard” and explained how they learned from “mistakes”;
- **Unanticipated Connections** – where students described insights that went well beyond the syllabus, often bridging academic knowledge with life experiences, and thus making the work more personally relevant.

For example, Craig Garbe's eportfolio

(<http://www.cfkeep.org/html/stitch.php?s=4626598725679&id=18684948625681>)

captured his reflections on his learning. Feel free to contact him at: craig_garbe@hotmail.com.

Students were also given the task of creating metaphors for themselves (e.g., “Student as a Lover”, “Student as a Consumer”) and sharing them with the class. Some students decided that they wanted to share their metaphors beyond the class and posted them on YOU TUBE. To view their work go to:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=student+metaphors.



Perhaps you have activities that you use in your class to share with others or you want to develop new activities. If so, contact your CTE Liaison, or other CTE consultants. Let's talk about how learning happens and how we can be engaged in the process

Katherine Lithgow, CTE Liaison

CUT Prize Winner...

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teacher. Trent wants his students to see the value of the course material, yet he also pushes them beyond the academic textbook. And although he will soon finish his

four-year teaching contract, it seems that the next chapter of his teaching will be full of new adventures.

Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

*The CUT Prize, generously donated by an anonymous donor, is awarded annually to the Certificate in University Teaching participant who demonstrates the highest achievement on completion of the program.

Centre for Teaching Excellence...

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In fact, the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) will provide leadership in the promotion, development, and advancement of excellence in teaching and learning at the University of Waterloo.

Consequently, we are working towards linking all of our re-

sources together and finding ways to improve them to support excellence in teaching at all stages in an instructor's career at UW.

As of May 1, the CTE will enjoy an administrative and virtual existence at <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca>. For now, we will remain in our current of-

fices but, in the near future, we also hope to be in one physical location. The Director of the CTE is Catherine Schryer and the Associate Directors are Liwana Bringelson and Donna Ellis.

Catherine Schryer

LIFs and PIFs: Funding for Change in Teaching and Learning

The University of Waterloo is continuing our history of innovative approaches to learning and teaching through the provision of internal funding to faculty members, and to Faculties, Departments or Programs. Funds to develop proposals to enhance learning through changes in instructional methods are available through the *Learning Initiatives Fund* (LIF). Funds to develop proposals that address learning resources and curricula developments are available through the *Program Initiatives Fund* (PIF). Proposals are due May 15, 2007. Details are available on the CTE web site.

The Learning Initiatives Fund offers faculty researcher(s) up to \$20,000 over a two year period

to fund research projects that enhance undergraduate student learning and support the strategic plans of an academic unit. Preference will be given to proposals that show promise of developing best practices in teaching approaches and/or classroom-based research methods that can be shared with other disciplines, programs, departments, or schools.

The Program Initiative Fund offers departments, schools and Faculties up to \$20,000 over a two-year period to fund projects that support instructional changes linked to formal undergraduate academic program reviews. The objective of this fund is to develop and evaluate projects that enrich the learning ex-

periences of students whose curriculum is being revised significantly as a result of program reviews. Priority will be given to proposals that benefit as many undergraduates as possible, and that assist academic units in implementing recommendations related to their academic program review.

For more information concerning these funding programs please access the calls for proposals at <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/grants/>. Also, please contact Dr. Vivian Schoner at vschoner@uwaterloo.ca or call her at Ext. 32940 if you would like further information.

Vivian Schoner

Dawn Buzza: A Shift in Roles

Dr. Dawn Buzza has been a familiar face on campus since 2001. She has been assisting LT3 to develop grants for innovation projects such as the Learning Design Research group. Among many other ventures, she has also been working with the School of Optometry on a project, entitled, "Innovations in Technology-Assisted Continuing Education [RE-Presence]" to pilot test an open-source learning technology system called EPresence, with the intention of developing a model for rapid turnaround of leading-edge information and research findings for working professionals. Dr. Buzza has also piloted this same online communica-

tions technology in a partnership with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, aimed at building capacity for teacher professional development through elearning.

In the new Centre for Teaching Excellence, Dawn will be retaining her interests in higher education research. For example, this last semester she developed and implemented a research project that investigated the needs of new UW faculty members.

However, Dr. Buzza has also had a long standing interest in the development of teaching expertise. In fact, she has already joined Donna Ellis in providing individual assistance that TRACE and now the Centre for

Teaching Excellence offers to faculty members in terms of class management and syllabus development.

Prior to coming to Waterloo, Dawn was an educational and management consultant to industry and government in British Columbia. She also spent 11 years as an Assistant/Associate Professor of Education at the University of Victoria. Her research interests include learning strategies, instructional design, and self-regulated learning.

We are very fortunate indeed that Dr. Dawn Buzza is working with us as part of the Centre for Teaching Excellence.

Learning about Teaching: An Annual Event



This year the Teaching Excellence Council (TEC) went all out!

For the last two years the TEC has supported the Presidents' Colloquium, an annual event that invites an internationally acclaimed education scholar to address faculty at UW. The event is called the Presidents' Colloquium because both the President of the University and the President of the Faculty Association co-host the event.

However, this year the TEC committee that organizes the Colloquium wanted to maximize the impact of our international visitor. So often, a single talk does not translate into changed practices. And many faculty had mentioned that they wanted extended opportunities to address the interesting ideas presented by speakers.

The result was the Learning about Teaching Symposium: Celebrating Fifty Years of Teaching at UW, a three day

event, held between April 30 and May 2. The committee felt that the logo—Learning about Teaching—captured the essence of what we wanted the symposium to accomplish. In effect, we are always Learning more about Teaching.

This year's speaker, Dr. Ken Bain, was more than willing to assist us. His interactive talk "What Makes Great Teachers Great?" set the stage for our inquiry. Dr. Bain, currently Vice Provost for Instruction and Director of the Teaching and Learning Resource Center at Montclair State University, is an internationally recognized scholar on teaching and learning in higher education. His book *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Harvard University Press, 2004) has received many awards and been translated into six languages.

He also accepted our invitation to provide follow-up for his talk by means of two workshops fo-

cussed on teaching large classes and developing effective syllabi.

The Symposium concluded with two other events to provide UW instructors with more opportunities to explore Ken's ideas and to celebrate teaching. On May 2, noon hour discussion groups were opened to investigate using technology in the classroom, dealing with classroom management issues, and developing effective syllabi.

Finally on the afternoon of May 2 we held a celebratory event to honour many of the faculty, instructors and graduate students who have won teaching awards. At this event, the emergence of the new Centre for Teaching Excellence was also announced.

The TEC is planning that the Learning about Teaching Symposium becomes an annual event. So next year look for our logo and get ready to learn!

3rd Annual Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA)

Twelve UW faculty members joined us for TEA from April 25-30 at St. Paul's College. The key focus of the TEA was to guide and support the participants through a course re-design process. CTE facilitators Donna Ellis and Tracy Penny Light, plus faculty facilitators Bob Sproule and Mardy Frazer, did just that through small group and one-on-one consultation sessions.

However, we also engaged in many lively large group discus-

sions about topics such as teaching large classes, group work, teaching with technology, assessing written work, our students as learners, and the place of teaching in academia.

Participants had an opportunity to reflect on and articulate what their courses were really about – both content and skills. Now they can communicate this same message to their students.

But we did more than create courses. We also created a com-

munity of practice as participants from across the UW campus and affiliated colleges shared their teaching successes and challenges.

The TEA concluded with a showcase of revised course outlines at the final celebratory event for the Learning about Teaching Symposium on May 2nd.

Congratulations to all TEA participants, current and past!

Donna Ellis

Current CUT TA Developers

Trish Stadnyk, former CUT Program Coordinator, is in her second term as a TA Developer. For those who don't know her, she is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering, but is always more than happy to get involved in a variety of new challenges, CTE being one of those! Trish enjoys working individually with participants, do-

ing teaching observations, and sharing her own teaching experiences to help facilitate participants' progress through the CUT. Trish can be reached at: tastadny@engmail.

Amanda Clark has also agreed to stay on with the CUT program as a TA Developer for another year. In her first three terms with the CUT, Amanda facilitated work-

shops and observed many of your teaching events while also working on a Master's and Ph.D. in Psychology. Amanda has also made great strides in completing the CUT program, and she looks forward to helping many other CUT participants along the same path. If you haven't met Amanda yet, you can reach her at: aclark@watarts.

CUT News

Research on Teaching

This term, several CUT participants completed their research projects on teaching using UW classrooms as their research sites. Working individually or in collaboration with faculty members, several CUT participants examined the learning outcomes of various teaching and curriculum projects at UW.

In his research project, Conrad Stanley, Environment and Resource Studies, examined a recently developed course in ecological economics. Cheng Seong Khor, from Chemical Engineering, worked with his advisor on a project investigating how a systems approach could be incorporated in the undergraduate chemical engineering curriculum. In Civil Engineering, Ahmed El-Refai investigated how various teaching approaches affect the quality of engineering tutorials. These research projects were presented at the CUT Research Projects session on April 12, 2007.

In Physics and Astronomy, Jean-Paul Brichta was part of a team that developed a web-based tool to facilitate the creation of online tutorials. To find out how classroom approaches affect student motivation for self-study, Anders Knudby from Geography surveyed students in an introductory course in Human Geography. These two projects were part of the CUT poster session at this year's Graduate Student Re-

search Conference in April.

Stay tuned for upcoming research presentations on teaching by CUT participants in May and August!

Request Your Teaching Observations Early!

CUT participants who plan to have teaching observations done in the Spring term are encouraged to request their observations as soon as possible. The middle of the term tends to be CTE's busiest time; therefore, early requests have a higher chance of being accommodated. If you do not have a Taship this term, explore alternative opportunities, such as approaching professors in your department about guest lecturing. You can present a guest lecture based on the materials developed by the course instructor or you can present on a course topic related to your research area.

Course Completion Timelines

CUT participants in the revised program are reminded of the 12-month course completion timelines. If you have registered for a CUT course in Fall 2006, you have until August 31, 2007, to complete all course requirements.

Congratulations, CUT Grads!

This term, fourteen CUT participants completed the program: Sakineh Akram, Lija Bickis, Mike Cinelli, Ahmed El Refai, Martin Hansen, Ivona Hideg, Jennifer Hunter, Graeme Kemkes, Anders Knudby, Renee MacPhee, Marjan

Maleki-Tehrani, Karin Spiegelhalter, Bethany Giddings White, and Sarah Woodruff.

Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

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Teaching Matters is published by the Centre for Teaching Excellence. At the Centre, we provide leadership in the promotion of development, and advancement of excellence in teaching and learning at UW.

Centre for Teaching Excellence

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For faculty members...

Spring 2007 Faculty-Only Events

MAY	2 (W)	E-Merging Learning (Introduction)	Time: 10:30 a.m.
	23 (W)	*Meet & Greet for New Faculty	Time: 12 noon
	30 (W)	Open Classroom Series: Wei-Chau Xie, Civil & Environmental Engineering	Time: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
JUNE	7 (Th)	*New Faculty Lunch & Learn Using Course Evaluations To Improve Teaching & Learning	Time: 11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
	20 (W)	Open Classroom Series: Carey Bissonnette, Chemistry	Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The events listed with an asterisk (*) are intended for new faculty members only.

These events are restricted to UW faculty members, and are by invitation only. When you receive an invitation to one of these events, follow the instructions on your invitation to register.

Focus on Teaching Opportunities

Any workshop or event can be customized and run as a department-specific Focus on Teaching Event. Please contact Donna Ellis at Ext. 35713 or donnae@admmail to discuss your ideas or get more information.

Spring 2007 Workshops open to all UW Instructors

MAY	31 (Th)	Course Design	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
JUNE	4 (M)	Teaching Dossiers	Time: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
	5 (T)	Teaching in the Intercultural Classroom	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	13 (W)	Enhancing Your Teaching With Online Learning Technologies	Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
JULY	21 (Th)	Understanding the Learner	Time: 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
	10 (T)	A Matter of Style: Learning From Ontario's Best Lecturers	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	12 (Th)	A Matter of Style: Learning From Ontario's Best Lecturers	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	24 (T)	Course Design	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
AUGUST	2 (Th)	Understanding the Learner	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

CTE workshops are open to all instructors at UW and are approved for CUT participants. For details and workshop registration please visit:

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/index.html

Instructional Development Grants Available

Instructional Development (ID) Grants of up to \$1,000 are administered through the CTE Office. ID Grants are designed to help instructors improve teaching effectiveness. The next deadline for proposals is **Friday, May 25, 2007**. Information and the application form can be obtained from the TRACE website at:

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/grants/ID_grants/index.html

For graduate students...

Spring 2007 CUT-Only Events

MAY	17 (Th)	CUT Research Project Presentations	Time: 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.
	23 (W)	*Research Projects Workshop	Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
	29 (T)	So You Want To Be A Faculty Member	Time: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
	31 (Th)	*Course Design	Time: 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
JUNE	4 (M)	*Teaching Dossiers	Time 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
	12 (T)	*Consultation Session: Research Projects	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	19 (T)	*Consultation Session: Teaching Dossiers	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	21 (Th)	*Understanding the Learner	Time: 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
JULY	5 (Th)	*Research Projects Workshop	Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
	24 (T)	*Course Design	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
	26 (Th)	*Teaching Dossiers Workshop	Time: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
AUGUST	1 (W)	*Consultation Session: Research Projects	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	2 (Th)	*Understanding the Learner	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
	14 (T)	*Consultation Session: Teaching Dossiers	Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
	16 (Th)	CUT Research Project Presentations	Time: 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Those listed with an asterisk (*) are required for the Certificate in University Teaching (CUT), but space for non-CUT participants may be available.

CUT participants, please note that all of these workshops partially fulfill CUT requirements for GS 901 and 902.

Required CUT workshops will be offered each term. Check the CUT website for details about which workshops you require.

For details and workshop registration visit:

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/index.html

Spring 2007 Workshops open to all UW Instructors

MAY	31 (Th)	Course Design	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
JUNE	4 (M)	Teaching Dossiers	Time 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
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AUGUST	2 (Th)	Understanding the Learner	Time: 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

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http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/index.html