



Teaching Matters

great teaching ... by design

The Centre for Teaching Excellence: A Year Later

It has been almost a year now since three former units – LT3, TRACE and LRI – merged to become the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE). Many services have been maintained, but much has also changed, some

challenges continue, and opportunities are emerging.

Changes

The most important change involves the emphasis in our mandate to provide **research-based** resources and actual **research** on issues related to teaching and learning. This new emphasis is well in line with the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), which is calling on teaching centres to advocate for best practices and contribute to research in higher education. Over the past year, we have not only continued our support for the Teaching-Based Research Group (TBRG), but we have expanded into research projects supporting program renewals and evaluation. This new emphasis informs our online resources as well. For example, we have prepared a well-researched site to support the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs) (see <http://ocav.squarespace.com/>).

Challenges

Like all new units, we face important challenges. Our most serious challenge is that we are located in two areas: the fourth floor of the Math and Computer

Building and the third floor of the Porter library. Consequently, it has sometimes proved challenging for faculty and graduate students to find us and the resources that they need. We recommend always phoning or emailing ahead if you are unsure as to where a particular resource is located. Another challenge is that we know that the technology in the FLEX Lab is becoming dated, and we are working on renovation plans.

Emerging Opportunities

We see several areas of emerging opportunities. One is in the area of cross-campus collaborations. We have already begun working with units such as DCE and ITMS, and we will continue to look for other opportunities to share and develop resources. Another area of opportunity is within CTE as we develop programming that integrates our own resources, such as having CTE Liaisons assist in programming associated with emerging technologies. Finally, as a Centre, we intend to respond actively to HEQCO's call for research to support and develop evidence-based practices in higher education.

Catherine Schryer

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Diana Chisholm Wins Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) Award



The CUT Award is generously provided by an anonymous donor and the winner is selected from the CUT students who have completed the program within the last year and demonstrated the highest accomplishments upon completion of the program. This year Diana Chisholm of Statistics and Actuarial Science is our CUT Award winner. The following article stems from a recent interview with Diana in which she discussed the CUT program, her favorite topic to teach, and her recent transition into the role of a lecturer.

In the last two years Diana Chisholm has learned more about teaching than most of her peers would learn in twice that time. Having recently completed an MMath, her academic CV boasts five courses that she TA'ed during her one-year program and six more courses that she has taught as a sessional instructor and then as a full-time lecturer. This Spring, she is teaching three courses, one of which she TA'ed only a year ago. How does someone studying to be an actuary become so interested in teaching?

She credits one of her upper-

year co-op placements as an undergraduate tutor in a computer science course as the turning point in considering teaching as a career. Once in graduate school, she enrolled in the UW's Certificate in University Teaching in order to come closer to her goal of becoming a university teacher.

Diana made impressive progress in the CUT, completing the whole program in record time while working on her degree. She especially enjoyed writing response papers for various CUT teaching workshops (GS 901 course) which made her think about how to apply the workshop material to her own discipline and teaching. This reflective quality allowed Diana to prepare an excellent teaching dossier as part of the second CUT course (GS 902) which is now in the CUT resource collection as a model for other CUT participants. When Diana had her first teaching observation done for GS 903, she admits that she had no idea how she was doing as a teacher. The CTE observer's feedback gave her a framework for assessing her future teaching and increased her teaching confidence.

In her own teaching, being available to students and having effective communication with them are critical to Diana's success. She also believes that her enthusiastic and engaging delivery of the course material helps, and her students concur: "she

makes a boring course fun." Diana maintains her energy having learned about work/life balance. In her first term teaching three large-enrollment courses, she admits that she approached her teaching "as a graduate student," frequently staying up very late to mark or to respond to student emails. However, she learned to balance her teaching responsibilities with her other passions and, as a result, is able to enjoy the teaching side of her life more.

Like most instructors, Diana has favorite topics to teach. In particular, she gets excited about the history of cryptography in her MATH 135 course, how the Enigma machine was used to encrypt secret messages during World War II and how important it is for Internet security these days. Last term her lectures on this topic were a hit with the students who had many positive comments after class.

What advice does Diana have for graduate students who want to learn more about teaching? She recommends seeking opportunities to teach one course as an instructor in order to explore various facets of teaching and get in-depth experience. And for those graduate students who want to reflect on their teaching and receive feedback on their teaching skills, the CUT program provides the opportunity to do both.

Congratulations, Diana!

Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

Learning about Teaching Symposium 2008

Don't forget the annual Learning about Teaching symposium that begins Monday, May 12th with the Presidents' Colloquium on Teaching & Learning. Dr. Marilla Svinicki, University of Texas at Austin, will deliver the keynote **"Teach me, I dare you!: Changing students' attitudes about who's responsible for learning"** from 2:00 – 3:30 pm in the Humanities Theatre. Wine and cheese reception and book signing to follow.

Tuesday, May 13th brings two limited enrolment workshops with

Dr. Svinicki for faculty members in the FLEX Lab:

Self-regulation and learning in the disciplines – learn how to apply motivation theories in your own courses (9:00 – 11:00 am)

Assessment as motivation for learning – discover how to design assessments that encourage students to improve their learning (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

On Wednesday, May 14th, CTE workshops will build on those delivered by Dr. Svinicki.

Designing Motivating Assessments, with facilitator Trevor Holmes who provides a follow-up to Dr. Svinicki's assessment workshop (9:15 – 10:30 am)

Motivating your Large Class, with moderator Nicola Simmons and UW faculty member panelists Paul Guild, Tracy Penny Light, Barb Moffatt, and Ian Vanderburgh (10:45 am – 12:00 pm).

We hope you will join us! For more information and workshop registrations, go to www.teaching.uwaterloo.ca.

ePortfolio Conference at St. Jerome's University - July 7th & 8th, 2008

Looking for ways to help your students integrate learning that occurs over time, across courses, and in the academic, workplace and community environments? Incorporating electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) into a course, or program, can help students develop a more holistic approach to learning, as well as provide evidence of how and where students are developing

competencies and achieving learning outcomes. **Join us Monday, July 7th and Tuesday, July 8th as we explore teaching and learning with ePortfolios.**

Speakers include associate directors of the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research (INCEPR) - Dr. Darren Cambridge (George Mason University), Dr. Barbara Cambridge (Indiana University Purdue Uni-

versity), and Dr. Kathleen Yancey (Florida State University). Their work has significantly influenced the theory and practice of ePortfolios.

Contact Tracy Penny Light (tplight@sju.uwaterloo.ca) for more information on the ePortfolio Conference. For more information on using ePortfolios in your courses or programs, contact CTE's Katherine Lithgow (klithgow@uwaterloo.ca).

Conferences

Interested in discipline-based research about teaching and learning?

The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), in Windsor, June 18-21. <http://web2.uwindsor.ca/stlhe/>

The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), in Edmonton, October 16-19. <http://www.indiana.edu/~issotl08/>

Contact Nicola Simmons at ext. 36091 for more information.

Book Review

Svinicki, M. D. (2004). *Learning and motivation in the postsecondary classroom*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

Looking for a comprehensive book on learning theory and how to apply it to support students' academic success? This book provides a wonderful overview of cognition theory as it applies to student learning. Svinicki even walks the talk on motivation, beginning with a chapter aimed at motivating the reader to learn about the theories.

Although many of the ideas seem simple (the best ideas always are!), the well-researched theories prevent it from being a simple 'how to' book. Svinicki includes sections that go into greater depth ("For those who want to go beyond the basics"), as well as a section at the end that gives the "theories in a nutshell". While rich with theory, the book is equally rich with strategies for theory implementation: a fine example of praxis in action.

CTE Welcomes a New Senior Instructional Developer



CTE is pleased to announce that Jane Holbrook has joined the Senior Instructional Developer team as our Blended Learning specialist. This new role completes the CTE Senior Instructional Developer (SID) group that includes Nicola Simmons, SID-Consulting, Trevor Holmes, SID-Programming, and Mark Morton, SID-Technology.

Blended learning involves the combination of face-to-face instruction and online activities in

on-campus courses and has gained recognition as an effective instructional strategy in the last few years. Blended learning can improve learning outcomes by presenting students with a variety of pedagogical approaches and can increase the time and space for student learning. Jane, no stranger to the University of Waterloo or our online learning environment (UW-ACE), has been engaged in designing activities for blended learning in on-campus courses for instructors in Science and for her own courses since 2002. A former CTE Liaison to the Faculty of Science, Jane will lead the CTE Liaison group and work closely with Distance and Continuing Education and Instructional Technologies and Multimedia Services to promote the effective use of the online envi-

ronment in our on-campus courses.

In conversation about her new role Jane said, "We just can't imagine life without the internet now. We communicate and do research on all aspects of our world and lives online, so it isn't surprising that it has become an integral part of how we provide instruction and communicate with our students." As a Liaison, Jane supported faculty who wanted to integrate effective learning activities into UW-ACE. In her new role she will provide programming for faculty across campus who want to pursue this to a greater degree. The programming includes the UW-ACE User Group, which will be profiled in the next CTE newsletter. Jane Holbrook can be reached at ext 35931 or by email at jholbroo@uwaterloo.ca.

Faculty of Science Course Outline Template Available on CTE Website

Course outlines range considerably in style and content. Some are exceedingly detailed while others barely extend beyond the calendar course description. The course outline, whether in hard copy or on a website, is effectively a contract, and it needs to be unambiguous, especially as it pertains to course content and methods of student assessment. As future undergraduate program reviews will see increasingly higher levels of accountability in terms of quality assurance and commitment to ongoing enhancement of education quality, having a widely available, comprehensive course

outline guide is a logical step in the right direction. Ultimately, this will be appreciated when the time for program review arrives, and courses as well as programs will be required to have clearly articulated learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

The CTE now hosts on its website a comprehensive guide to writing course outlines, which was developed in Science, and which is freely available to anyone wanting to use it. http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_resources/teaching_tips/tips_plan/FacultyofScienceCourseOutlineTemplate.doc. Even

though the examples in the guide are specific to Science, the guide is readily adaptable to courses from anywhere on campus. The current guide will be updated slightly for the Fall 2008 term, when the new Policy 72 (Student Appeals) and the significantly revamped Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) and Policy 71 (Student Discipline) become effective. We recognize when it comes to course outlines that one size does not necessarily fit all, and the hope is that instructors be able to use the outline guide as a template that can be customized for their own needs.

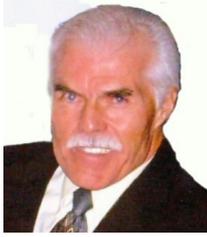
Mario Coniglio

2008 Teaching Awards

Distinguished Teacher Award Winners



Jane Irvine
Geography



Michael Sharratt
Kinesiology



Ian VanderBurgh
Mathematics



Monica Leoni
Spanish & Latin
American Studies

Exceptional Teaching by a Student Award Winners

Andrew Dilts,
Management Sciences

Erin Spicer,
Biology

Amirhossein Hajimiragha,
Electrical & Computer
Engineering

Congratulations to all!

UDLEs and CTE

For over a decade, program quality audits (UPRAC reviews) have been performed under the auspices of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). In 2005, a working group identified six "threshold expectations" that all graduating students from Ontario universities could be said to have achieved. UW adopted the OCAV University Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs) and added two of our own (articulating learning from experience, and awareness of diversity of several kinds).

CTE staff are ready and waiting to support Departments with upcoming self-study reports, and can assist by facilitating meetings or retreats in which you map your course content to program outcomes, or program outcomes to UDLEs. Check out <http://ocav.squarespace.com> for the basics, and contact Donna Ellis at ext. 35713 for further details.

Teaching Excellence Council (TEC) subcommittee seeks your input!

Based on the Sixth Decade Plan, the TEC has formed a working group to explore and share a definition of "experiential learning" that distinguishes UW. We wish to chart the scope of activity already existing at UW in order to share information and useful practices. Our provisional definition would benefit from your input. Currently we define experiential learning as "intentional and reflective learning from experience with different degrees of integration into courses or programs." We are also seeking examples of what YOU consider to be small or larger scale experiential learning from your own

courses or program-related activities. The following list provides examples of "experiential learning."

- exercises that use students' prior experiences as a starting point for theoretical discussion
- hands-on labs and demonstrations that use real material that promote deeper understanding than readings
- field trips or fieldwork as the basis for other course work or that permit testing of theories in real settings
- involvement in University clubs or external volunteer involvement

- community service learning as part of a course or program
- studies in other countries and the preparation for or follow up from such studies
- Co-op experiences that find their way back into classrooms
- Exhibiting or performing in the fine arts or presenting posters of scientific findings at conference
- Conducting research individually or as part of a team.

Please write to Robert Ryan (French Studies) rwryan@uwaterloo.ca in order to share your techniques or models that can add to our definition.

Trevor Holmes

Gary Bruce – Award-winning Professor Opens Classroom

Several times during the year, award-winning professors at UW open their classrooms so an exchange of ideas about teaching and learning across campus can occur. In the winter term, Gary Bruce (History) welcomed colleagues to observe an excellent session in his course on the History of Nazi Germany. After class, observers discussed the highlights of the class, and posed questions about the thinking behind them.

Although often it is department colleagues who attend these events, the take-away learning is broader than that, as experienced by those who attended Gary's class. Yes, we learned about history, but more importantly, we observed the ways Gary strongly connected to students, introducing

topics by asking the students for their opinions ("Why did Hitler go to war?") and then moving on to present what other historians have said. In this way, Gary helps the students connect to the ongoing conversations in the discipline. He poses questions to students, allows significant thinking/response time, affirms their answers, and expands on them. He also brings a dynamic energy to his classroom, making it clear that history is exciting! The students respond with high accolades: The moment Gary begins speaking, they listen. When he circulated a hand-out part way through class, not one student diverted their attention from him to begin reading it.

The follow up discussion was

also rich: Gary modeled the same enthusiasm for learning with his peers, and posed as many questions to us as we did to him! A huge thank you to Gary for teaching us something about history, and a lot about teaching and learning.

We hope to see you at future Open Classroom events! Consider coming to one that is outside your discipline. This may allow you to focus more particularly on the teaching process and methods rather than the content. The discussion afterwards will allow you to explore ways in which you can tailor what you learn to your own context. Watch for details of Ian VanderBurgh's Open Classroom in the Fall 2008 term.

Nicola Simmons

New Programming for International Teaching Assistants

To teach successfully in the Canadian university classroom, international graduate students and new Canadians need more than a good command of English. They need to develop an understanding of the teaching, learning, and assessment practices used in Canadian universities. To assist international graduate students and new Canadians who teach or plan to teach at UW, we have expanded our existing graduate student programming to include a series of new initiatives specifically tailored to UW international teaching assistants (ITAs).

Walid Omran, our new international TA Developer, would like to hear from you at cte-itad@uwaterloo.ca if:

1. you are new to teaching in Canada and would like assistance in understanding the teaching environment at UW or preparing for your first teaching assignment, or
2. you want to learn more about ITA workshops or to sign up for the upcoming sessions to practice your lecturing skills.

If you are a faculty member with international teaching experience and are interested in sharing your cross-cultural insights on teaching and learning, please contact Svitlana Taraban-Gordon at: stara-ban@uwaterloo.ca.

The **Teaching Excellence Academy** was a resounding success again this year! Donna Ellis, Trevor Holmes and Jane Holbrook from CTE were joined by Gord Stublely, Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering, and Judi Jewinski, English, as Academy facilitators. Fifteen participants worked through their course re-designs and came away with a revamped course outline and an appreciation of an aligned design. Well done all!

CUT News

In the spring term, our TA Developers are developing new workshops. In June, Karen Gallant will facilitate a workshop on service learning, a topic she is passionate about. Then, Sally Heath will lead a session on the imposter phenomenon, a common experience among new university instructors. These workshops are open to all UW gradu-

ate students. Check out our spring workshop schedule here: http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/CUT_events.html

Saying Thanks!

Amanda Clark from Psychology completed her appointment as a TA Developer with CTE last term. Thanks to Amanda for all of her work!

Winter CUT Graduates!

At time of printing, nine participants completed the CUT last term: Neel Aluru, Robin Blanchard, Rob Burns, Muriel Myriam Fleischer, Julie Gauley, Trish Stadnyk, Douglas Stebila, Dawn Trussell, and Colleen Whyte. We wish them all the best in their teaching endeavors!

Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

New CUT TA Developers



Sally Heath is thrilled to be able to use her teaching experience to help other graduate students develop their teaching skills as a TA Developer with CTE. She is a PhD student in the Department of English Language and Literature, where her research focuses on Contemporary Canadian Literature. She has taught as both a sessional instructor and teaching assistant at the University of

Waterloo since 2002 in both the English and Drama and Speech Communication departments. Her pedagogical interests are in making evaluation and feedback more student-centred and in facilitating more effective communication between instructors and students in both traditional classroom and online learning environments. She can be reached at ext. 37084 or seheath@uwaterloo.ca.



Erik Acs is joining the CTE team as a TA Developer, and is excited to use his experience to help other students develop their teaching skills. He is a PhD student in the Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies and his research focuses on tourism in the hinterland. He has been a teaching assistant with the University of Wa-

terloo, Brock University, and the University of Guelph, where he completed his masters degree. Erik is interested in helping students further develop their presentation and speaking skills. He is looking forward to the position, and working with CUT participants. Erik can be reached at ext. 37084 or reacs@uwaterloo.ca.

New ITA Developer



Walid Omran has recently joined the CTE team as an international TA developer. "This is a great opportunity for me to develop and apply my teaching skills in such a professional environment", says Walid. As an international TA developer, he is responsible for assisting international TAs to cope with the teaching standards of

UW. His work as a TA in two different countries had a great impact on improving his teaching skills and his understanding to the needs of undergraduate students. In addition to his work at CTE, he is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Electrical & Computer Engineering. Walid can be reached at ext. 37084 or cte-itad@admmail.

New Educational Technologies

Social bookmarking is a web-based technology that allows you to create an archive of links to web resources that you've found valuable, and which you might want to return to at a later date. In one sense, social bookmarking is just like creating a list of "favourites" or "bookmarks" in your web browser. But social bookmarking has two advantages over browser bookmarking.

First, your archive of links exists on the web, not on your computer, so you can access it from anywhere. Second, you can share your archive of bookmarks with others, or search the bookmarks of someone else who has similar interests – that's where

the "social" aspect comes in.

There are several social bookmarking services that many academics have come to rely upon over the past couple years, including del.icio.us, ma.gnolia.com, citeulike.com, and the connotea.org. To my mind, though, all of these have been left in the dust by diigo.com.

Diigo allows you to create and share an archive of links, but its functionality also includes the ability to highlight specific passages on any web page (like when you're reading an article with a yellow highlighter). Those highlights will still be there when you go back to

the page, an hour, a day, or a year later. Similarly, Diigo allows you add comments or annotations to any web page, and you can read those comment or annotations at a later date (along with comments from other users if you so wish), even if you are at a different computer. Essentially, Diigo accomplishes this by caching the sites that you bookmark, and then associating them with your Diigo account. Diigo has many other useful features as well (such as the ability to import your bookmarks from other social bookmarking services), and best of all it's free.

Mark Morton

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Visit http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/index.html for Faculty and CUT Events!