

# IN THE LOOP



The monthly newsletter from the  
**Centre for Teaching Excellence**  
at the University of Waterloo

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April 2023

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**Note: words in bolded, purple text are links!**

**CTE's office is open Monday to Friday  
8:30 am to 12:00 pm & 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm  
Second floor of the East Campus 3 building**

## UWTL Annual Conference: Registration Open

Registration is now open for the **2023 University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference**. This annual event, now in its 14th year, will begin on Wednesday, **May 3** with a "pre-conference" consisting of online workshops. The following day, Thursday, **May 4**, the in-person conference will take place featuring presentations, workshops, panels, and a poster and teaching & learning showcase session. The **schedule of pre-conference workshops** is already available, and the entire program will be available on the conference website soon.

The keynote speaker is **Barbara Mokthwenkwe Wall**, Professor of Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program, and Director, PhD Studies, at Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, Trent University.

## Upcoming Workshops and Events

### PebblePad Showcase Event

**April 26, 2023, from 9:30 to 12:00 pm**

This in-person session will feature UW instructors and co-op students sharing how they have used the PebblePad platform to support teaching and learning. Shane Sutherland, CEO and Founder of PebblePad, will then review several successful large-scale initiatives from PebblePad customers across the globe demonstrating how PebblePad can support students from pre-orientation to graduation and into employment, addressing challenges that are common across the sector, both nationally and internationally. The event will start off coffee, tea, and muffins from **9:30 am to 10:00 am** – the presentations will then run from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. **To register, please contact Katherine Lithgow.**

### Other Ongoing Programming

Check out CTE's other ongoing programming for **all faculty and staff, new faculty**, and **graduate students** (as well as several **ongoing, self-directed workshops** that are offered in LEARN).

## Teaching Innovation Incubator (Beta): The Wicked Problem of Climate Change

Registration is open for the end-of-term symposium that is part of the Beta **Teaching Innovation Incubator's** Wicked Problem of Climate Change project. This project, which sought to assemble a team of PhD candidates to design, develop, and offer a course related to contemporary wicked problems, is now being taught this winter term. The undergraduate students' final assessment is to showcase a proposed solution to a chosen climate change problem, which they will present as part of this symposium.

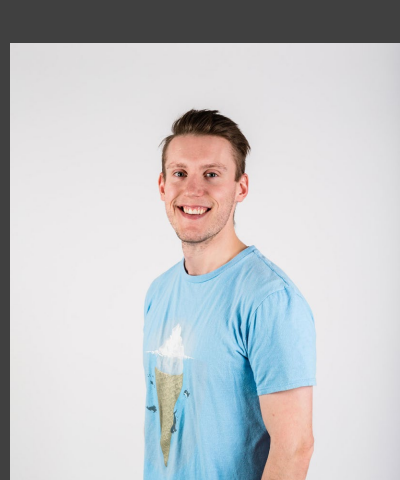
We invite you to visit on **March 28 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm** in the Student Life Centre's Black and Gold Room to view this work, chat with the students and instructors of this course, and enjoy refreshments. If you're interested in attending, please **register in advance** so that the planning team has a good sense of numbers. Drop-ins are also welcome.

## 2023 Independent Graduate Instructor Award

We are pleased to share the news that Toben Racicot, CTE's Graduate Educational Developer from the Department of English, has received the 2023 Independent Graduate Instructor Award for Excellence in Teaching for his course ENGL 108P: Popular Potter. We asked him to reflect on the nomination process for the award and on his experience working with CTE:

"The Independent Graduate Instructor Award is a self-nominated award offered each year to graduate instructors. Submitting for this award requires a course syllabus, a statement of support (in this case, I asked my supervisor, Dr. Neil Randall, to provide one, as I've collaborated with him many times in his classes doing guest lectures and teaching mini units), and a teaching portfolio. Thankfully, having completed the CUT program, I have a well-developed portfolio that I revise each semester.

The award comes with a small monetary prize, but my intent was to show the development of my teaching. I was awarded the TA Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2021, and having both awards on my CV really bolsters my confidence in my teaching and the progress I've made through the years. Thankfully, CTE's programs like Fundamentals and CUT prepare instructors with all the pieces they need for either the TA Award or Independent Graduate Instructor Award. It's a real asset to have a centre to help students develop teaching and gain more skills and confidence."



## New Resources: Teaching Tip Sheet on AI

CTE has begun to develop a series of Teaching Tip Sheets on the topic of generative artificial intelligence tools (such as **ChatGPT** and **DALL-E2**). The first of those tip sheets is now available: **Conversations with Students about Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools**. Find out how to use these tools to support student learning!

Those interested in AI might also be interested in another burgeoning technology: virtual reality (VR). An online session during last week's Open Education Week provided some use-cases of VR experiences for higher education. Here are a few **examples** that will suggest the range of ways that VR technologies might be used in teaching and learning contexts.

- A 3D "walk around" simulation of a **Medieval Church in Calatrava la Nueva, Spain**
- 360 "zoom-able" photosphere of the **Forum in Rome**
- A 3D animated simulation of the **human heart**
- 360 photosphere (layered with annotations and links) of a **distillation column** (developed by Waterloo's Chemical Engineering)

## Open Educational Resources Grant

Waterloo's Open Education Working Group is pleased to announce the **Staebler Insurance OER Fellows Grant** to support Open Educational Resources projects for a course at Waterloo. \$20,000 in grant funding is available to be allocated in amounts up to \$5000. The application deadline is **Monday, April 3**. Those interested need to submit the **application form**.

## CTE Staffing Updates

We are so appreciative of our Co-op Students and Special Projects Assistants, Sarah Abdelraham, Rachel Lam, and Brent McCready-Branch, who supported our CTE programming over the past 4 months and who will be leaving at the end of this term! Everyday they brought new energy (and new dad jokes) to our office – we will miss them!

We are delighted to welcome Lauryn and Charley to the Special Project Assistant roles for the Spring 2023 term!

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The University of Waterloo acknowledges that our work is on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our institution is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is centralized within our **Indigenous Initiatives Office**.

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