

IN THE LOOP

The Monthly Newsletter from The Centre for Teaching Excellence

December 2023

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Join our mailing list!



Happy Holidays!

As we embark on a new year and a new term, there may be new-to-Waterloo instructors and staff who would benefit from receiving this newsletter. Please share this newsletter with anyone who you think would like to receive it. Note: The January issue of In the Loop will be published in early January.

Photo by Yann Lombard on Unsplash

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

Upcoming Workshops and Events

CTE offers workshops for instructors and staff, new instructors, graduate students, and postdocs in several modes: face-to-face, hybrid, fully online, and self-directed (LEARN-based). Check out the [complete schedule](#), [self-directed workshops](#), and [recorded workshops](#), as well as [CTE's YouTube channel!](#)

Exploring Turnitin's Artificial Intelligence Detection Tool

- **Hybrid (Room MC 2036 & MS Teams) Monday, December 11, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**

This hour and a half hybrid session will introduce the basics of how to use the AI detector as well as the pros and cons of such a tool. Some case examples will also be shared to highlight how some departments and programs are using this new tool. We will conclude with some best practices.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Pop Ups

- **Online Wednesday, December 13, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**
- **Online Thursday, December 14, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

In response to requests from the Standing Committee on New Technologies, Pedagogy, and Academic Integrity, we are hosting some end-of-term virtual pop-ups for faculty who wish to share ideas with peers and support unit staff for assignment redesigns in light of generative AI (not only ChatGPT). We'll think together about how your Fall term went and what you'd like to consider for Winter 2024. Consultants from several support units will be available to answer questions and join in discussion. All faculty and teaching staff are welcome, whether you are discouraging the use of generative AI tools, or encouraging their use in particular ways.

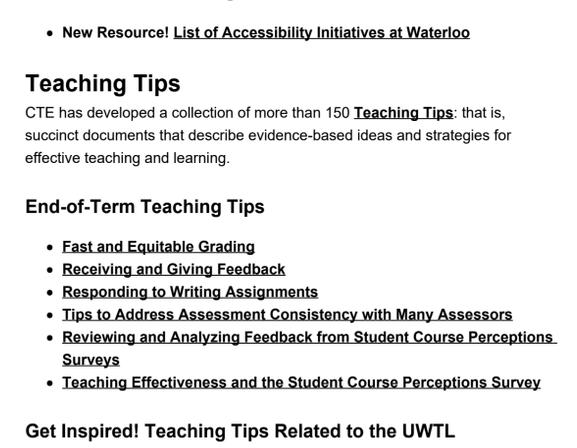
Teaching Squares

The **Teaching Squares** offer a unique opportunity for instructors to engage in reciprocal classroom visits with 3-4 fellow instructors. This isn't your typical evaluative classroom observation; it's a chance to self-reflect on your teaching practices while gaining fresh perspectives from your colleagues. Discover new insights, enhance your teaching strategy repertoire, and foster a deeper appreciation for the skill and talent of your peers. The commitment is approximately 6 (six) hours for the term. The only requirement is that you are actively teaching in a course. If interested, please email [Katie Damphouse](#).

Getting Started in LEARN

- **In person Wednesday, December 6, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**
- **Online Monday, December 11, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

These sessions (intended for instructors that will be using LEARN in the upcoming term) will introduce you to LEARN (D2L Brightspace), Waterloo's learning management system for presenting course activities and resources in on-campus and fully online courses.



Call for Proposals: University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference (UWTL)

- Online conference day - Wednesday, May 1, 2024
- In-person conference day - Thursday, May 2, 2024

We encourage you to submit a proposal for our 15th annual University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference (UWTL) taking place on Wednesday, May 1 and Thursday, May 2, 2024. Our 2024 conference theme is "Sparking and Sustaining Engagement." The deadline for proposals is January 22, 2024. To read the full Call for Proposals and learn more about the conference, please visit the [University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference website](#).

New and Timely Resources

- **New Resource!** [List of Accessibility Initiatives at Waterloo](#)

Teaching Tips

CTE has developed a collection of more than 150 **Teaching Tips**: that is, succinct documents that describe evidence-based ideas and strategies for effective teaching and learning.

End-of-Term Teaching Tips

- **Fast and Equitable Grading**
- **Receiving and Giving Feedback**
- **Responding to Writing Assignments**
- **Tips to Address Assessment Consistency with Many Assessors**
- **Reviewing and Analyzing Feedback from Student Course Perceptions Surveys**
- **Teaching Effectiveness and the Student Course Perceptions Survey**

Get Inspired! Teaching Tips Related to the UWTL Conference Theme: Sparking and Sustaining Engagement (organized by sub-theme)

- Defining engagement: [Early Engagement Quick Tips](#) and [Motivating our Students](#)
- Equitable engagement: [Gender Pronouns and Teaching](#) and [Universal Design: Instructional Strategies](#)
- Using assessment strategies for engagement: [Enabling Uptake of Instructor Feedback Through Feedback Literacy and Bloom's Taxonomy Learning Activities and Assessments](#)
- Technology and engagement: [Online Tools for Collaborative Content Creating and Assessment](#) and [Conversations with Students about Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools](#)
- Student-centered approaches to engagement: [Learner-Centered Assessment](#) and [Practical Tools to Empathize with Your Learners](#)
- Assessing communities: [Supporting Students' Mental Wellbeing: Instructional Strategies](#) and [Building Community in Large Classes](#)

2023-2024 Teaching Award Deadline Friday February 3, 2024 at 4:30pm

Nominate an exceptional TA for a teaching award. The Amit & Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student (AETS) are open to all students who have a formal teaching role at the University of Waterloo in recognition of excellence in teaching. Each award consists of approximately \$1000 as well as a certificate and acknowledgement at convocation.

Nominate an exceptional instructor for a Teaching Award. The Distinguished Teacher Award is open to all those who teach students at the University of Waterloo, including tenure and teaching stream faculty, sessional instructors, lab instructors, and staff instructors. The main criterion of the Distinguished Teacher Award is an instructor's record of excellent teaching over an extended period at Waterloo. In addition to having a record of excellent teaching, nominated instructors should have the capacity to write about their teaching philosophy and provide solid evidence of teaching excellence, leadership, and educational innovation.

The nomination process requires time, so if you haven't yet started, bookmark the deadline for next year (first Friday in February). If you already have the required materials in order, don't forget to **submit before the deadline on Friday February 3, 2024 at 4:30pm**. Consult the [AETS page](#) or the [Distinguished Teaching Award](#) page, respectively, for full details about eligibility requirements and the nomination process. If you have any questions regarding either award process, please contact [Sarah Seabrook](#).

LITE Seed Grant: Best Practices for Post-Pandemic Course Design

Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) Grants fund projects investigating innovative approaches to enhancing teaching and fostering deep student learning at Waterloo.

In 2022, Elena Neiterman, Jennifer Yessis, Natalie Chow, Josh Edmondstone, and Zara Rafferty received a LITE Seed Grant for their project titled **'Capturing student and instructor insights from the pandemic to develop guidelines on best teaching practices for post-pandemic course design and delivery in the Faculty of Health: A community-based approach.'** A key deliverable from this project was the creation of a document and an infographic outlining best practices for post-pandemic course design. If you are interested in taking a look at these resources, please contact [Elena Neiterman](#).

LEARN Contract Renewed for 5 Years

After careful review and analysis of the Learning Management System (LMS) project findings, the project team has recommended continued use of LEARN (D2L's Brightspace), with a focus on improving the platform as it relates to the learning experience. A new 5-year contract has been negotiated with D2L and is effective as of October 31, 2023. The final review report and information on the initial projects will be shared within the next few months. Continued engagement with campus stakeholders will be critical to successfully modernize our LMS platform to meet the needs of learners in 2023 and beyond.

[Visit the LMS Review Project Page to Learn More](#)

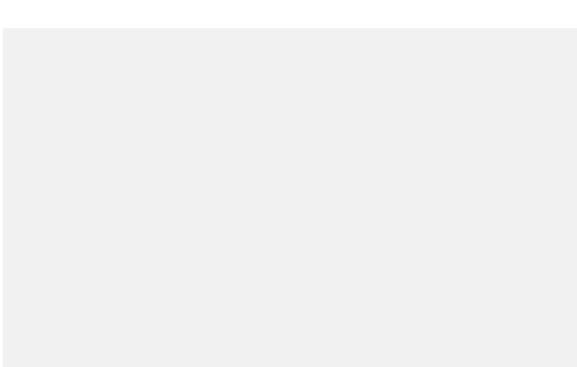


Photo by Luca Upper on Unsplash

Staff Changes

Farewells

CTE would like to say farewell and best wishes to our amazing co-op students who joined us this term: Sara Agawa, Tanraj Dulai, and Charlie Uebele. Thank you for your good work and enthusiasm! Though you were with us for a short time, you made a big difference to the staff and work of CTE.

Welcomes

Welcome **Raffe Kachichian** (he/him) to the CTE Grad Team as our Program Coordinator for Graduate and Postdoctoral Programs. Raffe joins CTE on secondment from the Faculty of Math where he is Graduate Studies Coordinator. He received his Bachelor of Science degree at Waterloo, majoring in Honours Health Studies, with a Health Informatics Option.

Welcome (back) Sarah Seabrook (she/her). Sarah formerly held co-op roles with CTE and helped during teaching awards and the UWTL conference. She recently convoked with a Master's degree. Sarah will work on teaching awards coordination and communication along with key faculty program planning and resource support.

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted 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 coordinated within our [Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

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Centre for Teaching Excellence
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON, Canada, N2H 3A3

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