

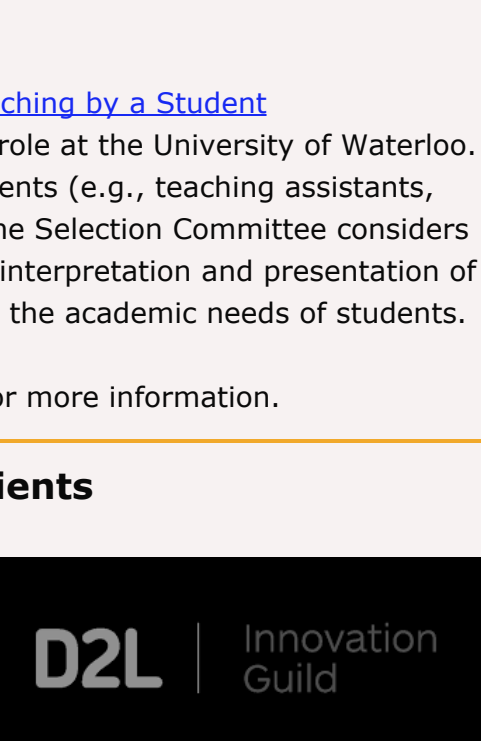
January 2021

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Upcoming Events and Workshops

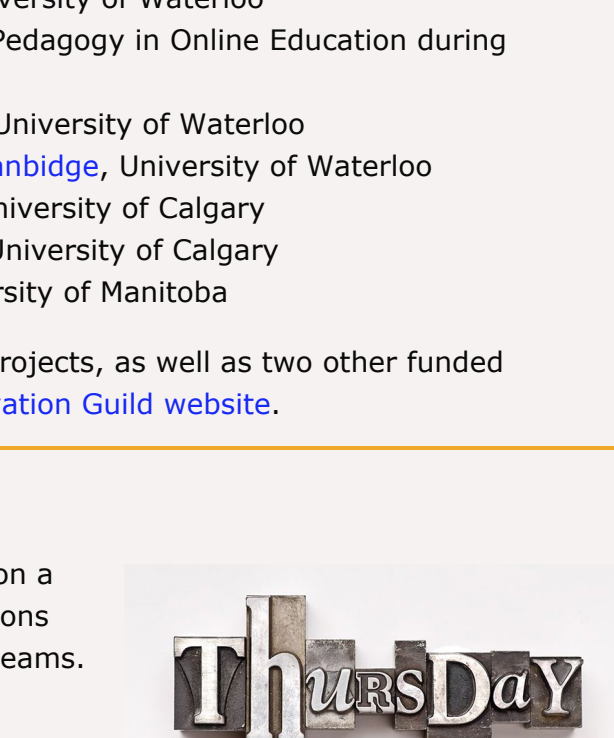
CTE has nearly **30** workshops and events scheduled before the end of the Winter term! We've highlighted a few of them further down in this issue of In the Loop, but for the **complete roster**, with descriptions and registration links, visit our [events page](#).



In addition to CTE's upcoming workshops and events, **Waterloo's Keep Learning team** also coordinates [teaching and learning events and workshops](#).

Teaching Award Deadlines

Do you know of an excellent teacher? Nominate them for a Teaching Award! Submit your nomination form by **February 5, 2021**. There are two campus-wide teaching awards at the University of Waterloo:



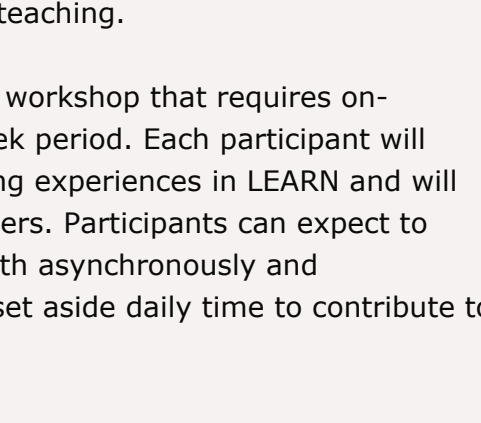
[Distinguished Teacher Award](#)
Awarded to exemplary instructors at the University of Waterloo. This is not limited to faculty members — it's open to all those who teach students at our university. The main criterion of the Distinguished Teacher Award is a record of excellent teaching over an extended period at Waterloo, usually at least five years.

[Amit & Meena Chakma Award for Exceptional Teaching by a Student](#)
Open to all students who have a formal teaching role at the University of Waterloo. Up to four awards can be given to registered students (e.g., teaching assistants, laboratory demonstrators, sessional lecturers). The Selection Committee considers intellectual vigor and communication skills in the interpretation and presentation of subject matter, and concern for and sensitivity to the academic needs of students.

Visit the [Centre for Teaching Excellence website](#) for more information.

D2L Innovation Guild: Grant Recipients

Three of five projects that were recently awarded research grants from the Desire2Learn Innovation Guild (DIG) are headed up by Waterloo faculty or staff. The DIG grant program is intended to support research projects relating to teaching and learning practice and/or teaching and learning technology. The Waterloo-led projects are:

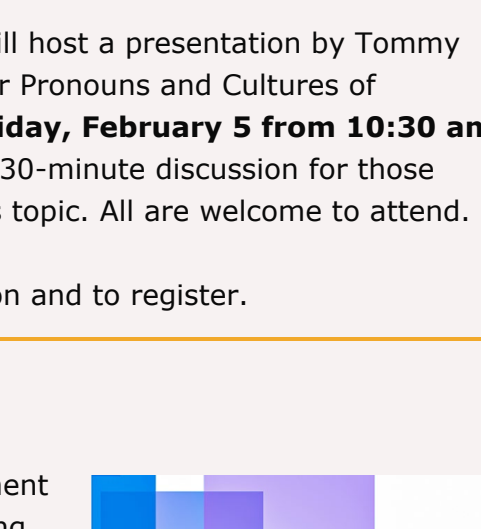


- Exploring Extended Reality (XR) Pedagogical Initiatives at Three Guild Member Universities: An Environmental Scan
Lead PI — [Dr. Mark Morton](#), University of Waterloo
Co-PI — [Gillian Dabrowski](#), University of Waterloo
- Leadership Skills to Support Experiential Learning for Canadian Engineering Grand Challenges
Lead PI — [Dr. Christine Moresoli](#), University of Waterloo
Co-PI — [Dr. John Donald](#), University of Guelph
Co-PI — [Dr. Nadine Ibrahim](#), University of Waterloo
- Understanding Trauma-Informed Pedagogy in Online Education during Turbulent Times
Lead PI — [Dr. Colleen McMillan](#), University of Waterloo
Co-PI — [Dr. Alice Schmidt Hanbidge](#), University of Waterloo
Co-PI — [Dr. Heather Boynton](#), University of Calgary
Co-PI — [Dr. Beth Archer-Kuhn](#), University of Calgary
Co-PI — [Dr. Judy Hughes](#), University of Manitoba

More details about these Waterloo-led projects, as well as two other funded projects, are available on the [D2L Innovation Guild website](#).

Thirty-Minute Thursdays

These are 30-minute sessions focusing on a particular feature in [PebblePad](#). All sessions take place from **Noon – 12:30** on MS Teams. No registration required

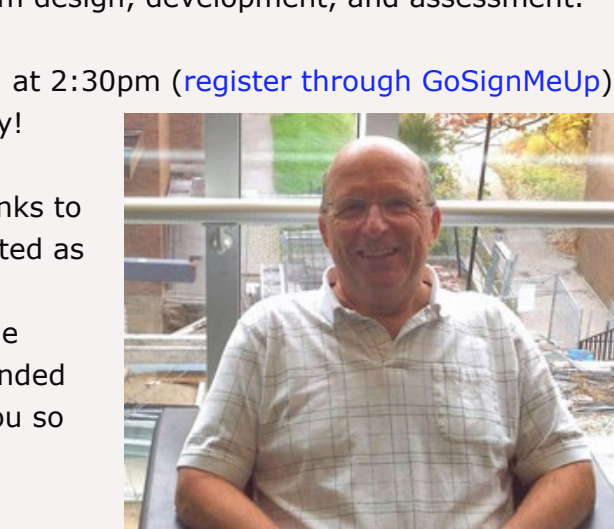


- February 4 . Why would I use ATLAS, the assessment side of PebblePad?
- February 11. Reviewing Feedback Settings in ATLAS
- February 18. Managing PebblePad Resources
- February 25. Utilizing the Feedback Tools in ATLAS
- March 4. Managing the Verification Process
- March 11. Using Scorecards in ATLAS
- March 18. Managing and Understanding Assignment Settings in an ATLAS Workspace
- March 25. Reviewing Reporting Features

[Click here to join the sessions just prior to noon on Thursdays](#)

Online Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW)

The Online Instructional Skills Workshop has been developed to provide Waterloo instructors teaching online the opportunity to experiment with creating engaging and meaningful online learning experiences. The next offering of the Online Instructional Skills Workshop is scheduled for **February 22 to April 6**.



The workshop affords instructors who are new to online teaching — along with those with more online teaching experience — an opportunity to learn and reflect on the design and facilitation of effective online lessons/activities, as well as an opportunity to explore new ideas and/or refine teaching practices. Although focused on the online environment, the ideas developed in this workshop are also applicable to the blended context and will serve to inform in-class teaching.

The Online ISW is a small enrolment, peer-based workshop that requires on-average a 5 hour/week commitment for a six-week period. Each participant will design and facilitate four 20-minute online learning experiences in LEARN and will receive verbal and written feedback from their peers. Participants can expect to interact with and learn from other participants both asynchronously and synchronously during the workshop and need to set aside daily time to contribute to the workshop activities.

To register, [visit CTE's Upcoming Events page](#).

Here's what past participants have had to say about the Online ISW:

- "I value online teaching and learning a lot more. I used to think of it as a second-best option. However, I see the value of it as a first option now too."
- "By introducing new methods and giving me an opportunity to experience the application of these techniques in a classroom, it helped me achieve my goals and learn more than I had aimed for."
- "I learned about the importance of creating a consistent and smooth experience for the learner in the online setting so that the learner is not lost or confused."
- "The feedback from other instructors was very helpful and constructive."

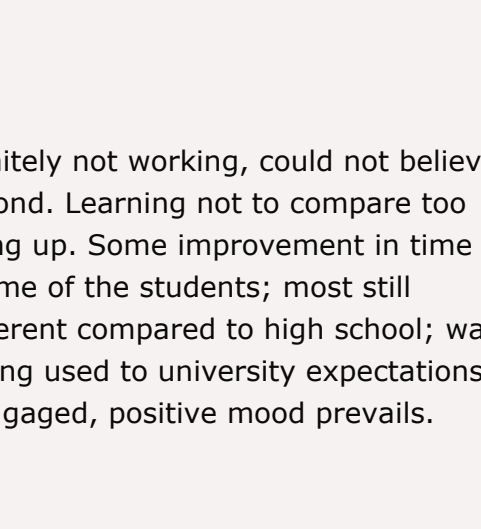
Gender Pronouns and Cultures of Respect

As part of the Inclusive Instruction Series, CTE will host a presentation by Tommy Mayberry (St. Jerome's University) titled, "Gender Pronouns and Cultures of Respect." This virtual event will take place on **Friday, February 5 from 10:30 am to 11:30 am** and will be followed by an optional 30-minute discussion for those who are interested in further conversation on this topic. All are welcome to attend.

Visit the session's [event page](#) for more information and to register.

Teaching Squares

Teaching Squares are an ideal teaching development opportunity for instructors interested in broadening their exposure to different teaching techniques and styles. Faculty participants join three other teaching colleagues to form a teaching square to share teaching practices and learn from each other by visiting each other's teaching spaces. In the online mode, this involves providing your teaching square peers with access to your course site and highlighting a unit of learning for their visit. Square participants are provided with guidance on how to visit each course and gather their immediate thoughts for further reflection and subsequent share-back with the group. The total time commitment is approximately 6 hours. If interested, fill in the [registration survey](#).



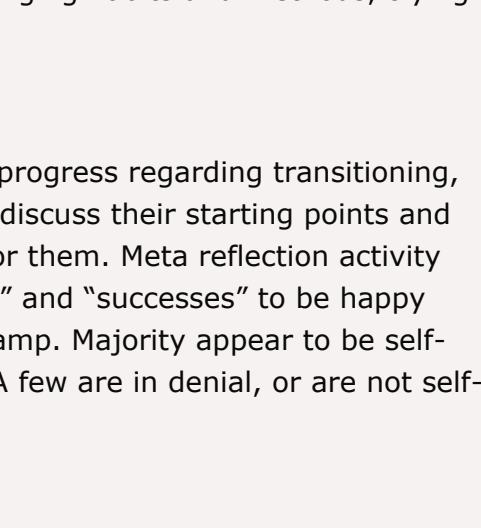
Wrapping Up the Program Outcomes Assessment Community

Since 2016, participants in the Program Outcomes Assessment Community have discussed a wide variety of topics, such as defining program outcomes, identifying assessments that authentically evaluate those outcomes, creating signature assessments in the program, tools and technology to support data collection and analysis, and issues around building a departmental culture that sees value in this process.

At this closing session, we will share our stories of change, and consider what our next steps might be. Our plan is to wrap up this version of our community and explore ideas for the future. We look forward to hearing your suggestions for a next community of practice related to program design, development, and assessment.

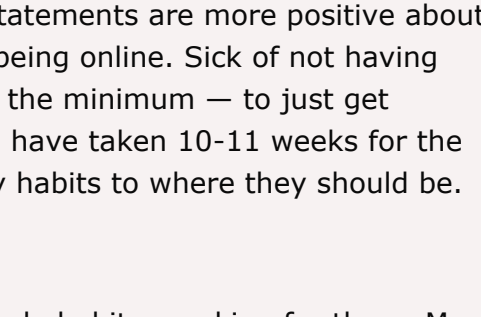
Please join us on Thursday, February 11 at 2:30pm ([register through GoSignMeUp](#)) for this closing session of our community!

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the many faculty and staff who contributed as guest facilitators of these sessions. In particular, CTE would like to highlight the contribution of [Bob Sproule](#), who co-founded and organized the community. Thank you so much, Bob, for your contributions and leadership over the past 5 years!



Let's Talk Teaching and Learning Research!

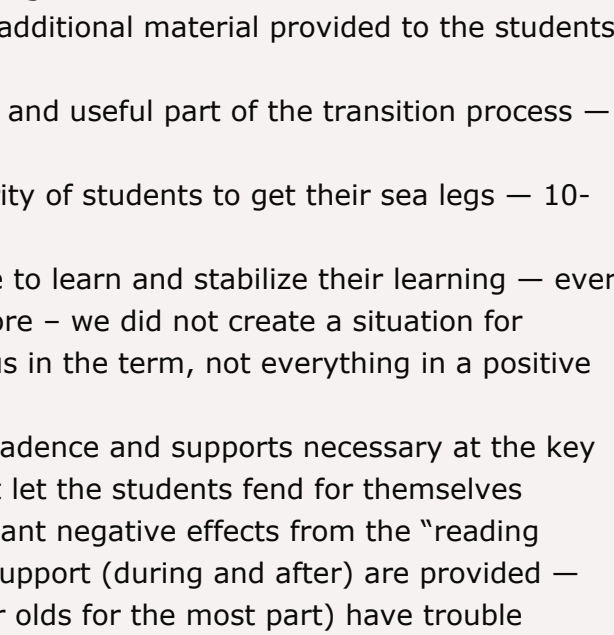
Have you conducted teaching and learning research in the past, or have an interest in learning more about how to get started?



CTE is developing a *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Miniseries*, a small number of facilitated sessions that will open up discussions of teaching and learning research and support the sharing of research being conducted here at UW. In order to ensure we cover the things you're interested in, please complete this short survey (no more than five minutes) to let us know how we can best design this miniseries for you! [Complete the survey here](#)

The Power Of Reflections

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, Waterloo's Department of Management Sciences has worked hard to assist their instructors and students as they continue to adapt to remote teaching and learning. Along the way, they have chronicled the strategies and innovations they have implemented, what has worked and what hasn't, and suggestions for moving forward. They have shared some of these experiences and learnings in a series of articles published in previous issues of *In the Loop*, including the following:



- [A Collaborative Approach to Remote Teaching](#)
- [Strategies for Remote Teaching](#)
- [Lessons Learned on Remote Teaching](#)
- [Onboarding Initiatives for Incoming Students](#)

In this new article, [Ken McKay](#) shares highlights about a reflection-based learning activity that was undertaken in the Fall 2020 term.

As part of the F20 onboarding for Management Engineering 1As, a weekly reflection activity was performed in the 1A concept/studio course MSCI 100. The 100 students were asked to reflect at the end of each week and upload a short reflection about what was "learned" during the week — not the facts and course material, but what did they LEARN! There were 10 marks associated with the term reflection activity and while each reflection was not marked or feedback given, marks were deducted if the student was a chronic offender — not taking it seriously, not regularly submitting.

There was no right or wrong reflection. However, it was easy to tell when 30-60 seconds were spent to simply put stuff on the page without sincerity. Thus, it was easy to get 10/10 marks, if 10-15 minutes each week were seriously spent. For added context, the students were given an "Owner's Manual for the Student Brain" and there was also 1-1 coaching for all students with another MGTE already in the program — these two aspects complemented the reflection activity.

Reflections have a long history: diaries, journals, and such. There is value when writing the entries, value when looking at them later, and in this case, value to the reader — the course instructor. During the term, there were meta-cognition exercises as well — reflecting upon the reflections, reflecting, and what was LEARNED over the term. As the reader, the course instructor was able to

1. learn more about the cohort
2. identify those who needed a little reach-out
3. get a read on the whole term, not just the concept course
4. get rapid feedback about each week and adapt the course delivery the next week (if necessary)

Based on feedback from the students, the reflections helped the students feel connected and helped develop a "relationship" with the instructor. Over the term, approximately 30 "reach-outs" were done based on the weekly readings. Some repeatedly.

As the reflections were read each week, patterns started to appear. Of course, in any such sample there are and indeed were exceptions, but the notes below reflect the 70-80% trends each week. The reflections were partially reviewed again at the end of term. The following are the highlights with an occasional reflection about what was happening:

First Week

- were not expecting the high intensity, amount of immediate work, disorganization as the classes adjusted to online; worries about online learning, multiple tools to use, getting back into study mode, not being on campus, making friends, doing the same things done in high school (extra curriculars), how to figure out things for themselves. They were told, it was discussed, they were warned — they did not believe. Until they experienced it, they did not understand the import of the words!

Second Week

- tougher, more challenging than the first week, an eye opener: number of deadlines, using more time management skills than ever before, less sleep, starting to struggle with assignments, everything due Friday, stress and panicking starting, learning to ask for help, work with others. Feeling lost, not ready or "good enough," self-doubts. Falling behind. Looking at clubs etc., how to connect, get involved. Some optimistically thinking that they had it figured out. Starting to use tools, purchase calendars. Starting to worry about mental health. Some motivation came from the shock factor, the initial adrenalin rush of being at university.

Third Week

- some high school habits recognized as definitely not working, could not believe that the third week was worse than the second. Learning not to compare too much against other students. Work still piling up. Some improvement in time management, getting organized seen by some of the students; most still struggling. First test experience — very different compared to high school; was a wake up call for some. Many are still getting used to university expectations, load, cadence. Generally, still motivated, engaged, positive mood prevails.

Fourth Week

- fourth worse than the third (which was worse than the second, which was worse than the first!). Feeling overwhelmed. Could not believe it could actually be worse, but some are looking ahead and predicting fifth will be worse yet. They are trying to develop plans and strategies but with each week worse, there is no positive feedback, successes. Nothing stable long enough to show changes are working. Did not give them a chance to catch their breath. Always on the fire line with no respite. Looking forward to the reading week. First signs of motivation, engagement issues affecting the mood, perspective. Also learning how university assessments and marking work — definitely not like high school! Starting to do reach-outs.

Fifth Week

- reread fourth week's description above, take everything up a notch, few students happy — no respite, just more and more of the same on all fronts. Most stressful week yet. Term tests and activities for some of the courses were pulled ahead which created stress and anxiety. Some philosophical waxing over the ahead which experienced. Still learning time management — the hard way. Some dejection, and again making changes without understanding what to really change, how to manage change. Constantly changing learning habits because there is no sign of them working. Overwhelmed. Motivation and engagement lower. Hard to keep plans set at start of the week. Many planning for how to use the reading week to recover, prepare for what comes after. Reflections are sad to read, many are just trying to survive now. Make it to reading week.

Sixth and Seventh Week - reading, reduced load weeks, no reflections

Eighth Week (end of October)

- week better than the last few, comments about week after reading week and issues getting back into it, not doing "what was planned to do" during reading week, the inability to work on university work that week, how it created a bigger pile after, how the reduced load week (seventh) was also heavier and probably worse than the fifth week — was not better. Some positive comments about time management, things better now. In eighth week, comments from a few about finally understanding how much work is required to do the deliverables, and how to make plans. Some realize that they were optimistic before — thinking that they had it figured out. Some having sleep problems. Most still struggling with time management, estimating, plans.

Ninth Week

- back to "most challenging week of the term." Comments on sleep, desperation. Hardest tests. Multiple tests every week. Hoping term ends soon. Just hoping that they pass the tests. Hard to find any motivation, positive thinking in any of the reflections. To quote a student "they are done." Some trying to find time for mental and physical health activities. Do not have time for their health or well-being. There are of course several students doing ok, but they are the exceptions. Many keep changing habits and methods, trying to find the right recipe.

Tenth Week (mid November)

- students were asked to reflect upon term's progress regarding transitioning, learning. They see changes and are able to discuss their starting points and where they are now; learning what works for them. Meta reflection activity seems to have worked — giving them "wins" and "successes" to be happy about; stuff that had been buried in the swamp. Majority appear to be self-aware and mindful with a growth mindset. A few are in denial, or are not self-aware of learning weaknesses, issues.

Eleventh Week

- aware that they are in the final stretch, better signs of time management, being prepared each week, finally figuring it out. Pressure and stress though on marks, some trying to get as many before the final exams start. Some thinking about reduced load. Time pressures are mounting as some students are not handling in the reflections and more are giving "minimum" effort of 2-3 fluffy sentences. Some are now beginning to note their survival, making it this far, being able to do things they were not confident about. No improved motivation about the term per se, but the statements are more positive about themselves. Sick of being at home. Sick of being online. Sick of not having socializing. Some are now lazy, trying to do the minimum — to just get through to the end. No real joy. It seems to have taken 10-11 weeks for the majority to "figure it out" and get their study habits to where they should be.

Twelfth Week (end of November)

- more positive comments about improved study habits, working for them. More reflective on what has worked, is working for them. Some working hard on turning around the motivation issues, trying to end the term on a good note (projects, assignments, term tests). They are working hard, putting in long hours. Fewer reflections (again). Some comments looking back — being behind every week, stress every week.

Thirteenth Week (end of term)

- students were asked to travel back in time and give themselves recommendations at the start of term. Many points about changing expectations for themselves, learning to pace, develop good time management practices, staying ahead, not falling behind. How it will not be like anything else they have seen — more difficult, more work, more thinking for themselves. Learn how to get help, and look after themselves — sleep, physical and mental health were also commented upon by many. There were motivational recommendations — things are going to work out. Things will be ok. Not to be afraid.

Lessons from the reflections:

- these are possibly better than average observations because of the 1-1 coaching during the term and the additional material provided to the students about learning habits
- weekly reflections can be a critical and useful part of the transition process — many benefits
- it takes many weeks for the majority of students to get their sea legs — 10-11!
- the students did not have the time to learn and stabilize their learning — every week was worse than the one before — we did not create a situation for success — there should be plateaus in the term, not everything in a positive feedback loop
- future terms should consider the cadence and supports necessary at the key points in the term — we should not let the students fend for themselves
- it is possible that there are significant negative effects from the "reading week" — unless proper prep and support (during and after) are provided — the incoming students (17-18 year olds for the most part) have trouble handling the time "off"

Things do in fact work out, but what is the cost? Is there a better way? Does it have to be this hard?

— Ken McKay

More Fast Facts About CTE

- Since March 9, 2020, CTE staff members have engaged in 4511 consultations with Waterloo faculty and staff. Of those consults, 93.5% were related to instructional guidance and 6.5% to curriculum, research, or the category was unspecified.
- [Trevor Holmes'](#) birthday is on January 23!

To subscribe to CTE's In the Loop newsletter, [click here](#).



The Centre for Teaching Excellence acknowledges that we are located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

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Our mailing address:
Centre for Teaching Excellence
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON, Canada
N2L 3A5
ctc@uwaterloo.ca
ctc.uwaterloo.ca

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