

14th Annual University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference

May 4, 2023 | Pre-Conference Workshops (Online) – May 3, 2023

Teaching and Learning with Kindness and Care

Call for Proposals

Despite the many efforts of instructors, instructional designers, support staff, and educational developers to design thoughtful and meaningful courses, assessments, and learning experiences, being a learner is challenging. For students, the experience is often characterized by feelings of stress, loneliness, disconnect, and anxiety, all of which may be compounded by the intensity of work and high expectations. Instructors are not immune to this either, with feelings of burnout, overwork, and stress being particularly heightened in recent years. Wellness in general, for students and instructors alike, is paramount to an effective learning experience, but how do we enact it and embody it in our teaching and learning practices?

For our 14th annual University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference, we explore pedagogies of care and kindness in higher education to give us space to support one another in our teaching and learning journeys. Based on mutual trust and respect, educators using these pedagogies undertake purposeful strategies to demonstrate kindness, care, compassion, sympathy, and empathy when they interact with students. These pedagogies are learner-focused, with relationships between learners, instructors, and peers central to how we construct our learning environment. Important to this overarching theme is fostering a sense of belonging for learners that is inclusive, equitable, and supportive for everyone, even when the learning environment is challenging.

Support, care, and relationship building can occur in all aspects of the learning environment: through assessment, during teaching and learning activities, and within various learning modalities. It is our hope that conversations around this theme will allow conference presenters and attendees to share research and experiences that find the appropriate place for kindness and care in the learning experience, while also maintaining our expectations in our various learning environments.

We invite you to submit proposals for presentations, panel discussions, workshops, poster presentations, and a teaching and learning showcase. We also strongly encourage Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) grant recipients to submit proposals. New this year, we also invite online, pre-conference workshops that will be facilitated in advance of the conference.

Ideas and questions to consider:

Designing with care and kindness

- How do inclusive approaches to teaching and learning (e.g., Universal Design for Learning, Universal Instructional Design) intersect with pedagogies of care and kindness?
- What pedagogical design considerations (e.g., creating open educational resources) embody care and kindness?
- How might accessibility considerations be thoughtfully integrated into teaching and learning?
- How do certain educational technologies create learning experiences that facilitate care and kindness?

Building community

- Where can we find, or how can we build, communities that address care and kindness in teaching and learning?
- In what ways can established communities (e.g., communities of practice, student groups, working groups, personal learning networks, etc.) provide support to students, staff, and instructors?
- How do academic support units play a role in supporting learners and instructors and how do they work within a pedagogy of care and kindness?

Finding space for care and kindness in teaching

- How are compassion, care, and kindness integrated and reflected in your teaching?
- What are potential approaches to embed pedagogies of care and kindness in teaching?
- Does embedding a pedagogy of care or kindness work in all learning environments and modalities?
- Does extending care and kindness to students look different in the online learning environment?

Embedding care and kindness in assessment

- Which pedagogies or assessment practices (e.g., ungrading) demonstrate care and kindness?
- How might we reframe failure through the lens of pedagogies of care and kindness?
- What is the role of student choice, flexibility, agency, and autonomy in assessment?

Culturally sustaining pedagogies

- How do we create a respectful learning environment that acknowledges visible and invisible diversity in classroom?
- How do we amplify Indigenous ways of knowing and culturally sustaining pedagogies in courses and academic programs?
- Which aspects of pedagogies of care and kindness resonate with culturally sustaining pedagogies, and why?

Maintaining “rigor”

- How can we embed a pedagogy of care or kindness while also teaching what is required?
- Where do compassion and academic rigor intersect?
- Which teaching or assessment practices maintain objectivity and high expectations, while also offering care and kindness to learners?
- To what extent are accreditation standards compatible with pedagogies of care and kindness? How can we support students while maintaining standards?

Intersections of wellness with care and kindness

- What types or models of support exist for students and instructors? Where is further support needed?
- How can we support students and the complexity of their situations (school, work, social, familial, mental health, physical health)?
- What do we need to address instructor and student burnout?
- What can we learn from trauma-informed approaches to teaching and learning?

Proposal Guidelines

Please consider the following when developing your proposal:

- We welcome proposals from faculty, staff, and students (undergraduate and graduate) from the University of Waterloo and beyond.
- The deadline to submit a proposal is **Wednesday, January 25, 2023**. There will be no extensions.
- Proposals must be between **200-300 words**.
- Proposals may be research-based, practice-based, or both:
 - **Research-based:** Individuals engaged in conducting research on teaching and learning (including recipients of [LITE grants](#))
 - **Practice-based:** Instructors who seek to share practices, strategies, and examples from their own teaching experiences
- Individuals may be a first author in a maximum of one session but may be co-authors in more than one session. If you are submitting a poster or teaching and learning showcase item, you may be the first author in up to two sessions.
- Please remove any names from your proposal, as the review process is blind.
- Ensure that your session will be relevant to people from a variety of disciplines.
- Please include two to three key takeaways from your session (if someone were unable to attend your session, what key research findings/practical experiences would you want them to know?)

Proposal review criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of proposal to the conference theme or previously funded Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) grant project*
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to teaching and learning
- Extent to which proposal ideas are situated within the relevant literature or best practices
- Relevance across disciplines
- Clarity of intended session objectives/learning outcomes
- Appropriate engagement of conference participants (for workshops and panels)
- Overall clarity of proposal

***Note:** [Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement \(LITE\)](#) grants demonstrate the range of pedagogical research across the institution. Hence, we strongly encourage LITE grant recipients to submit proposals; these submissions will be evaluated on all criteria except their relevance to the conference theme.

Pre-conference session formats (held online via Zoom)

- **Pre-conference workshop:** 60 – 90 minutes. Pre-conference workshops should relate to the conference theme of “Teaching and Learning with Kindness and Care”. These workshops should take participants through the process of designing and implementing a strategy or approach that you have used, and the insights gained and/or the research and literature behind those strategies or approaches. Workshops should include participant activities and provide opportunities for participants to consider application to their own teaching or student learning.

Conference session formats (held in-person at University of Waterloo)

- **Presentation:** 20 minutes (15-minute presentation, plus 5-minute discussion period). Share an approach, present empirical findings, or examine theoretical or methodological issues.

- **Panel discussion:** 60 minutes. With a panel of colleagues, address different topics related to the conference theme and/or its sub-questions. Topics may raise issues and include insights from practice, research, or both. Panels may relate to one discipline, several disciplines, or integrate insights gained from working in an interdisciplinary/multi-disciplinary way. Panels should involve three to five panelists and a moderator and should include a discussion period of 15 – 20 minutes.
- **Workshop:** 60 minutes. Take participants through the process of designing and implementing a strategy or approach that you have used, and the insights gained and/or the research and literature behind those strategies or approaches. Workshops should include participant activities and provide opportunities for participants to consider application to their own teaching or student learning.
- **Alternative session format:** 60 minutes. We invite you to propose a format for your session that may better suit your outcomes than the session formats suggested above. When submitting your proposal, please describe the session format and why it better supports your session outcomes.
- **Poster:** Share an approach (practice-based) or present empirical findings (research-based). While the poster should be self-contained and informative, we expect the author(s) to be present during our poster session to engage with the conference participants.
- **Teaching and learning showcase:** Share an example of a practice that you employ that embodies pedagogies of care and kindness. No research is required, but we expect you to share your thoughts, experiences, and rationale behind the practice. The teaching and learning showcase will coincide with the poster session.

Further Information

For more information, including submission guidelines with detailed instructions on how to submit proposals, please visit the [University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference](#) website.

Further Reading

- Adams, C. & Rose, E. (2014). “Will I ever connect with the students?”: Online Teaching and the Pedagogy of Care. *Phenomenology and Practice*, 8(1): 5-16.
- Bali, M. (2020, May 28). Pedagogy of care: Covid-19 edition. *Reflecting Allowed*. <https://blog.mahabali.me/educational-technology-2/pedagogy-of-care-covid-19-edition/>
- Clegg, S., & Rowland, S. (2010). Kindness in Pedagogical Practice and Academic Life. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31: 719-735.
- Denial, C. (2019, August 15). A pedagogy of kindness. *Hybrid Pedagogy*. <https://hybridpedagogy.org/pedagogy-of-kindness/>
- Gorny-Wegrzyn, E. and Perry, B. (2021) Inspiring Educators and a Pedagogy of Kindness: A Reflective Essay. *Creative Education*, 12: 220-230.
- Hativa, N., Barak, R., & Simhi, E. (2001). Exemplary University Teachers: Knowledge and Beliefs Regarding Effective Teaching Dimensions and Strategies. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72: 699-729.
- Rawle, F. (2021, August 10). A pedagogy of kindness: The cornerstone for student learning and wellness. *Times Higher Education*. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/pedagogy-kindness-cornerstone-student-learning-and-wellness>

- Serbati, A., Aquario, D., Da Re, L., Paccagnella, O., & Felisatti, E. (2020). Exploring Good Teaching Practices and Needs for Improvement: Implications for Staff Development. *Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies (ECPS Journal)*, 21: 43-64.
- Stommel, J. (2021). [Resilient Pedagogy: Practical Teaching Strategies to Overcome Distance, Disruption, and Distraction](#). Utah State University.