

Teaching Matters

Centre for Teaching Excellence

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CTE Supports Faculty Across the Career Span

“They are highly self-motivated individuals who put more time into their work; they gain intrinsic satisfaction from their work; they have self-expectations of productivity; and they are likely to have careers which are characterized by variety in their work”. (Kelly, 1991, p. 25)

It is strange to find oneself the object of research. In the above quote, the “they” refers to faculty members who find ways to forge successful paths across their university careers. What do we know from the literature about the needs and goals of faculty members throughout the various stages of their careers? New faculty experience high stress levels as they have to hit the ground running in terms of developing new courses, meeting their own high expectations, and balancing the teaching/research workload (Sorcinelli, 1990). At mid career, after tenure and promotion, many faculty take stock of their accomplishments and some decide to carve out new niches for themselves. Simpson and Jackson (1990) suggest that this is a time that instructors often want to revitalize their careers by learning new approaches or by incorporating new technologies into their teaching. Many mature faculty members have a strong desire to leave a legacy for their discipline or for their institution (Baldwin, 1984).

What is quite clear from the research investigating career paths and trajectories is that different resources need to be avail-

able to assist faculty at various stages of their career. From our focus groups with new faculty members and interviews with Chairs (Schryer, Ellis, & Buzza 2007), we know that new faculty want specific information about disciplinary and department-specific teaching practices, ways to assess students’ background knowledge and current learning, and the use of specific technologies such as UW-ACE. This kind of orientation can best be provided through departments, the CTE Liaisons, and the Open Classroom series wherein experienced faculty members invite other instructors to view their classes and then discuss teaching strategies. Events designed specifically for new faculty are also available through the CTE and WatPort, and these offer a community from which to learn about UW. After a few years of teaching, instructors often want workshops and consultations related to ways to enrich their teaching through using different technologies or teaching techniques. Here CTE’s workshops, consultations, and most importantly the Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA)

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Steve Furino and Barb Moffatt: Award-winning Professors Open their Classrooms



Throughout the year, award-winning professors at UW are asked to open their classrooms to their colleagues so an exchange of ideas about teaching and learning across campus can occur. After class, the professor leads a discussion with the observers about what they saw and the thinking behind it. This is a great way to see what your colleagues are doing in their classrooms, engage in a community about teaching and learning, and gain new ideas for your teaching.

In Fall 2007, Distinguished Teacher Award winners Steve Furino and Barb Moffatt welcomed us into their classrooms. In his third-year linear optimization course, Steve has the students develop the problem-solving model that they will then use for the entire term. In the previous lecture, students had been given a problem to model. Steve began his open class with an examination of the model and a testing of proposed optimal solutions. The remainder of the class was simply an attempt by students, under Steve's guidance, to propose a viable algorithm to solve such problems in



general. Notably, students from all parts of the room participated in the construction and refinement of the model while Steve acted as a conduit for their thinking on the blackboard, coaching them and challenging them with questions rather than answers as they reached higher levels of complexity. As he puts it, "There is no structure. I take whatever the students propose and work with it. Though the explicit intent is to develop an algorithm, implicitly I want students to see the process of sustained thinking, collaborative effort (including criticism), and use of previously learned material." Although he starts this course the same way every year, he finds that some cohort years are more engaged and some more like "pulling teeth." In the end, the method always works to help students own the model that they can use for the rest of the term.

Barb Moffatt's lecture in her second-year molecular biology course was equally effective. In a larger class of more than 280 students, Barb provides partial notes that the students fill in during the lecture. She began her open class with an overview and

then a lead-in review question to help students see how the current week's material connected to previous sessions. Barb reinforced the idea of connectedness by relating new content to past knowledge, saying things like, "We've seen this word before", and "Remember I told you about..." During the class, Barb walked around the lecture hall, actively engaging students in her lecture through questions that tested their ability to think about and apply the lecture content. "Engage your brain," she exhorted students, "No need to write down the question, just engage your brain." Barb supported the process by asking questions throughout the lecture and making eye contact with individual students, giving the strong impression that they were engaged in a conversation rather than a lecture.

With two different styles, the common ground seemed to be the explicit and implicit coaching that both professors achieved through challenging their students to think hard together about the topic at hand. And for the observers, the follow-up discussions produced a rich exchange of ideas and strategies to handle common challenges.

We hope to see you at future Open Classroom events, including Gary Bruce from History on Wednesday, February 27th, at 2:30 p.m. Details to follow via the CTE Faculty Events listserv.

Trevor Holmes and Nicola Simmons

New Faculty Programming on the Increase

All 2007 saw the ramping up of activities organized jointly by the WatPort Office and the Centre for Teaching Excellence. After the busy Welcome Event in September, monthly New Faculty Socials began in October at the Grad House and continued in November at the Bombshelter, while December's festive season

brought us together at South Campus Hall for warm drinks before heading out to see the lights in Waterloo Park. New Faculty Lunch and Learn events will be more frequent as of Winter 2008; we hope to host three events per term rather than the one event per term seen so far. Themes will vary but we will always offer a mix of theoretical

and practical topics. New in 2007-2008 is the New Faculty mailing list, which includes a monthly email notice of upcoming events as well as links or resources of interest. If you are new or nearly new faculty and do not receive monthly emails from CTE, contact Trevor Holmes at Ext. 33408 to be added.



Learning about Teaching Week 2008

Mark your calendars! Our annual Learning about Teaching events are set to happen early in May 2008.

Monday, May 12, 2008 – Presidents' Colloquium on Teaching & Learning – Dr. Marilla Svinicki, University of Texas at Austin – “Teach me, I dare you!: Changing students' attitudes

about who's responsible for learning” – wine and cheese reception with book signing to follow.

Tuesday, May 13, 2008 – Half-day Workshops – Dr. Marilla Svinicki – “Self-regulation and learning in the disciplines” and “Assessment as motivation for learning”.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008 – CTE Workshops – “Assignment re-design” and “Motivation in large classes”.

We hope you will join us as we delve into the topic of motivation and learn more about teaching issues and practices across our campus!

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have proved valuable. The TEA, in particular, offers participants the opportunity to totally rework a course in collaboration with colleagues. Finally, at mid and later career (and sometimes earlier), some faculty might want to do research on teaching and learning in their own discipline. The Teaching-Based Research Group (TBRG) exists to support these activities. For more information about CTE resources that are available to answer your career needs, check out our website at <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca>.

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Catherine Schryer

CTE Welcomes a New Senior Instructional Developer



Nicola Simmons is delighted to have joined the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) as Senior Instructional Developer, Consulting, as of this past Fall. Nicola has taught educator development at the post-secondary level in the Faculty of Education at Brock University and in Professional Development at Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, including courses on

reflective practice, curriculum planning, instructional strategies, and adult education.

As a researcher, she has been exploring developmental models for supporting new faculty, particularly in their pursuit of conducting and publishing scholarly research on teaching and learning in their respective disciplines, or the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Other teaching and research interests include faculty role constructs, faculty career development stages, mentoring, engaging students in large class settings, learning styles, and authentic assessment techniques.

Dr. Simmons serves as a Director of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), and Canadian Membership Representative for

the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). She also serves on the STLHE Green Guide editorial board.

At the CTE, Nicola responds to faculty requests for consultations about anything related to teaching and course design, and is pleased to meet with you for individual consultations, and/or come to observe your class and provide feedback. You will also see her as a facilitator in some of our workshops throughout the year. In addition, she provides support to faculty members who are engaged in research on teaching and learning issues.

Dr. Simmons can be reached at: ext. 36091 or nsimmons@admmail.

Upcoming Conferences

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), June 18-21, 2008, in Windsor. Proposals due: Tuesday, January 15 (workshops) or Thursday, January 31 (other sessions). See <http://web2.uwindsor.ca/stlhe/>

Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), August 7-10, 2008, in Minneapolis. Proposals due: Friday, February 15. See <http://conference.merlot.org/2008/>

International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), October 16-19, 2008, in Edmonton. See <http://www.indiana.edu/~issotl08/>

Provincial LIFT Award Winners



Rohan Jayasundera, Physics, and Gord Stublely, Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering, at an event to honour their Leadership in Faculty Teaching awards. Information about the LIFT Awards can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/facultyawards/>.

When Should an Instructor Use Learning Technologies?

Most people think of learning technologies as high-falutin' devices made of silicon and cyberspace. However, a learning technology is actually any tool that helps mediate instruction. A pencil, for example, is a learning technology, as are books, blackboards, and language itself.

When it comes to **new** learning technologies, one question facing university instructors is when to pass and when to jump on board. This is hardly a new dilemma. In sixteenth-century England, many schoolmasters were skeptical about the new-fangled "hornbooks," which were made by pasting a page of text to a wooden paddle and then protecting it with a thin layer of transparent horn. By the time Shakespeare started school, however, hornbooks had become widely accepted. On the other hand, it's often good sense rather than recidivism that makes some instructors cautious about embracing new learning technologies: in the 1960s, for example, exponents of a "learn while you sleep" pedagogy promoted phonographs that played lectures over and over while you slumbered. Needless to say, that learning technology eventually fell by the wayside.

So, when *should* an instructor adopt a new learning technology? I would suggest that you can proceed with confidence when **both** of the following conditions have been met:

When your level of "innovation comfort" intersects with the learning technology's level of "user friendliness."

With new technologies, some instructors are "early adopters" by temperament: they enjoy being on the cutting edge of innovation and they don't mind having to devise workarounds for the wrinkles that haven't yet been ironed out. Other instructors might become early adopters because of circumstance. For example, an instructor who has offered the same course for fifteen years might be ready to experiment with a new learning technology in order to resuscitate his or her

"The key... is to balance simplicity with efficacy... a learning technology might provide the leverage you need".

interest in teaching that course. Still other instructors prefer their learning technologies neat: they don't want to be fiddling around with glitches and puzzling over ill-defined best practices. For them, the user-friendliness of the technology must be high, and there has to be a clear return on their time investment, before they are willing to give it a try. Moreover, just as different instructors have varying levels of "innovation comfort," so different learning technologies have varying levels of "user friendliness." Most online course management systems have achieved a high level of user friendliness. Clickers, by way of comparison, remain a bit sulky, if only because different brands of clickers work in different ways, and it may be confusing to decide which type is appropriate for you.

When you're experiencing an instructional challenge that can't be resolved, or at least fully resolved, by other means.

An instructional challenge is anything that hinders students as they attempt to learn something. Instructional challenges can be cognitive, motivational, or interpersonal. Generally, it's best to tackle instructional challenges by starting with simple, low-risk interventions. For example, let's say that your students are coming to class without having read the assigned course material. You might first try to address this motivational lapse by explaining to your students how those readings will help them understand what is covered during class. You might also show them that there is a direct alignment between those readings and the final exam.

If those tactics don't work, then you might try a learning technology such as clickers. With clickers you could, at the beginning of class, quickly quiz the students on the assigned readings to determine who has come to class prepared; those who have done the readings could receive 0.1%, and those who haven't wouldn't. Alternatively, you could accomplish the same thing in UW-ACE by having students complete an online quiz before each class. The key, in all cases, is to balance simplicity with efficacy: if you can solve an instructional challenge by implementing a non-technological solution, then do so; but if that doesn't do the trick, then a learning technology might provide the leverage you need.

Teaching-Based Research Group: Annual Meeting

A recent meeting of the University of Waterloo's Teaching-Based Research Group (TBRG) was attended by 45 members, our largest gathering to date. Five faculty members and co-associates discussed their works-in-progress, each followed by questions and discussion. This represents the first time members of this Group presented to each other. Their presentations were exemplars of teaching-based research, representing unique and innovative studies on teaching and learning at the University of Waterloo specifically and in Canadian universities more generally. These and many other studies undertaken by TBRG members have been funded by the Office of the Vice-President, Academic, and Provost, through the Learning Initiative and Program Initiative Funds. The speakers were (in alphabetical order):

Diana Denton, Assoc. Professor and Assoc. Chair, Drama and

Speech Communication, Faculty of Arts: *Organizational communication and leadership: transformative perspectives for community-based practice*
ddenton@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

Lowell Ewert, Director, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Director of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College: *Service learning models used in peace and conflict studies*
lmewert@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca

Paul Guild, Professor, Management Sciences, Faculty of Engineering: *Understanding and guiding learner choice for classroom vs. web-based delivery formats: objectives, evaluation plan and preliminary results*
guild@engmail.uwaterloo.ca

Marcel O'Gorman, Assoc. Professor, English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts; and **Andrew Hunter**, Director, University of Waterloo Art Gallery (Render): *Interactive and transactional: critical media production in the english classroom*

marcel@watarts.uwaterloo.ca
a3hunter@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

Nancy Waite, Assoc. Chair and Assoc. Director, and **Cheryl Rose**, Service Learning, School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Science: *Pharmacy students and community engagement: an update on integrating service learning in a new curriculum*
nmwaite@scimail.uwaterloo.ca
carose@scimail.uwaterloo.ca

In order to bring a campus-wide perspective to teaching and learning issues, our invited speaker, Dean Ken Coates, Faculty of Arts, presented a talk and facilitated a lunch-time discussion on systemic issues associated with student learning and teaching.

Anyone wanting to learn more about these topics may contact the faculty members directly. Future planning will address different ways to make the work of the TBRG known across the campus community.

Vivian Schoner

Teaching Excellence Academy

Would you like a chance to re-energize your teaching? If this appeals to you, then the Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA) is the place to be! Our annual, four-day event brings together faculty members from across campus to work on re-thinking a course. Through a variety of individual and group activities and discussions, we facilitate and support you in the re-design process. TEA participants are nominated by Department Chairs and Faculty Deans, so be sure to let them know if you're interested because space is limited. This year's TEA will be held on **April 23, 24, 25, and 28, 2008**. Hope to see you there!

Course Internationalization Grant Recipients

CTE and Waterloo International are pleased to announce the winners: **Jane Buyers**, Fine Arts (course "Contemporary Art"), **Scott Campbell** and **Karl Griffiths-Fulton**, Centre for Society, Technology and Values (course "Society, Technology and Values: Introduction"), **Yulia Gel**, Statistics and Actuarial Science (course "Forecasting"), **Alexander Brenning**, Geography (course "Spatial Analysis Using GIS"), **Carol Ann Weaver**, Music (courses "Music and Culture in South Africa," "Intro to Jazz," and "World Music"), and **Josh Neufeld**, Biology (course "Advanced Biogeochemical Microbiology"). Congratulations!

Certificate in University Teaching: News & Updates

Course Completion Timelines for Current CUT Students

If you are registered in the CUT program through Quest, please make sure that you complete your CUT courses within 3 terms (e.g. if you registered in GS 901 in May 2007, you need to complete this course by April 2008).

Presenting Your CUT Research Project at GSRC

Do you plan to present your CUT research project for the GS 902 course in the Winter term? If so, consider presenting your research project in a poster session at the Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC) in April 2008. Presenting your own research at the conference does not prevent you from giving a second presentation at the CUT poster session at GSRC. Your CUT presentation should be in the field of teaching and learning in higher

education. More information about this option is available at:

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/graduate_programs/CUT/CUT_902/CUT_902_rpe.html

Prospective CUT Participants

Interested in being accepted into the CUT program in the Spring 2008 term? Here are the steps that you need to take:

1. Review the requirements on our website: http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/graduate_programs/CUT
2. Consider the workload for your degree and time left to complete your degree at UW.
3. Develop a tentative plan for completing the CUT courses.
4. Schedule an appointment with Dr. Svitlana Taraban-Gordon at: staraban@admmail.

Please note that priority is given to PhD students. Due to a large

number of students already registered in the CUT program, we can accept only a few new students each term. The program is currently open only to graduate students at UW (both part-time and full-time).

Congratulations CUT Graduates!

This term twelve CUT participants completed all requirements for the Certificate in University Teaching. They are: Guillermo Bautista (Eng.), Diana Chisholm (Math), Caglar Elbuken (Eng.), Kate Hano (Arts), Maria Huerta Garrido (Eng.), Aleda Klassen (Arts), Sumit Kundu (Eng.), Bruce Martin (Arts), Ahmad Rteil (Eng.), Conrad Stanley (FES), Suzy Wong Ishibashi (AHS) and Ann Zimmer (Math). We wish them all the best in their future teaching pursuits!

Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

New CUT TA Developer



Karen Gallant is excited to join the CTE team as a TA Developer. She is a PhD student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, where her research focuses on community volunteerism. She has enjoyed teaching both as a TA and sessional instructor at UW and the University of Guelph, where she completed her Masters degree. In terms of teaching, Karen is par-

ticularly interested in helping students learn how to write for academic audiences, and providing diverse, outside-the-classroom learning opportunities such as online discussion groups and service learning. She is looking forward to working with and learning from CUT participants. Karen can be reached at ext. 37084 or kagallan@ahsmail.

Teaching Awards

UW is proud to honour teaching excellence and leadership through university-wide and external teaching awards. The Distinguished Teacher Award nomination deadline is Friday, February 1, 2008. The Exceptional Teaching by a Student Award deadline is Friday, February 8, 2008. Nominations for the 35th Annual OCUFA Teaching Awards must be received no later than Friday, February 22, 2008. Details for all awards at <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/awards>.

CTE Liaisons Support Faculty in their Disciplines

Many instructors and faculty across campus have built strong relationships with CTE Faculty Liaisons and have benefited tremendously from the support that they provide. Who are the Liaisons and what role do they play within their respective faculties?

The Centre for Teaching Excellence has a Liaison in each of the six faculties across campus to act as an important point of contact for teaching staff and faculty members. The Liaisons are physically based in their respective faculty spaces and have a special understanding of the teaching environment, academic culture, and the challenges that instructors face in teaching within their discipline.

CTE Liaisons have a particular interest in helping faculty enhance their face-to-face teaching through the effective use of learning technologies such as UW's online course environment (UW-ACE), eportfolios, podcasts, clickers, etc. Liaisons can provide new UW-ACE users with an initial walk-through of the system and help both new and more experienced users design specific learning activities using the tools within the system. The drop boxes, discussion boards, online quizzes, online polls and course email system available in UW-ACE can all provide learning, communication and feedback opportunities for

students outside the physical classroom.

Although the CTE Liaisons are spread across campus, they meet as a group frequently to exchange ideas, resources and innovative teaching practices. The Liaisons come from a variety of backgrounds and work together to provide the best possible support for UW instructors. By keeping abreast of innovative teaching practices and having knowledge and experience in teaching the subject areas of the respective disciplines, they endeavour to communicate effective practices across campus.

Find your CTE Liaison from our staff list below.

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