

# University of Waterloo 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaching and Learning Conference 2021:

## Learning through Assessment

*Please note that this is a revised Call for Proposals for the 2020 University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference that was postponed until 2021. Proposals aligning with the original theme, as well as those that now meet the revised focus of this call, are welcome.*

### Conference Theme and Call for Proposals

Why do we assess our students? Historically, assessment has been viewed as a way to see how students are progressing, a requirement for determining whether intended learning outcomes have been reached, and, in some cases, a necessity for ensuring accreditation standards are met. Increasingly, instructors are coming to view these perspectives on assessment as a lost opportunity. Thoughtful approaches to assessment can provide students with authentic, actionable feedback for improving their work; provide students with deeper insight into the purposes and process of assessment; and equip students with the skills to succeed in similar situations at university and beyond.

In one of our previous annual Teaching and Learning Conferences (2014), we grappled with the concept of assessment *of* learning and started to rethink how assessment could do more than just evaluate what a learner has accomplished. Now, six years later, we return to the concept of assessment, aware of the powerful learning opportunities that come with thoughtful, well-designed, student-centered assessment practices. As such, we question assessment's underlying purpose and focus on the concept of **assessment for learning** – assessment that is learner-centered, encourages interaction and participatory learning, and provides opportunities for meaningful feedback and self-evaluation. Done well, such assessments give students more control of their learning. As educators, we too benefit from assessment practices that best support our students in their educational journeys.

We have spent the majority of 2020 now learning how to teach – and in turn, assess – remotely. Assessment strategies and approaches we may have never considered before are now top of mind, and we are left to question how we can adapt and reuse what we have learnt when we're back to face-to-face instruction.

For our 12<sup>th</sup> annual Teaching and Learning Conference, we invite you to submit proposals for presentations, panel discussions, workshops, poster presentations, and an assessment showcase. We also strongly encourage Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) grant recipients to submit proposals; these sessions will be highlighted in the conference program. **Please note that the conference will be held entirely online.**

## Ideas and questions to consider:

### The Role of the Student

- **Student as assessor** - Who should be involved in assessing student learning? How can we best employ self, peer, and group assessment so that learners play an active role in the assessment process?
- **Student as creator** - How do we guide students in designing their own assessments? How do we provide meaningful assessment and feedback of creative student outputs?
- **Student choice** – When should students be given a choice as to how they are assessed? How does offering choice affect our assessment practices?

### Space and Design

- **Assessment spaces** – Where and when does assessment take place? How does the classroom space affect assessment practices (e.g., large classes, classroom layout)? How can we engage learners in assessment practices outside of the classroom (i.e., online, co-op, experiential learning, or work-integrated learning contexts)?
- **Curricular considerations** - How can we incorporate assessment for learning across the curriculum? What are effective means by which to integrate assessments so that learners interact with them at multiple times throughout their program? How might data from student assessment inform programmatic assessment and/or accreditation?
- **Authentic assessment** - How do we make assessment authentic? What are some ways that we can prepare students for tasks or performance standards that exist in the work environment? How do we encourage their self-reflection?

### Ways of Knowing

- **Ways of knowing** - How do different ways of knowing influence our assessment practices (e.g., Indigenous, neurodivergent)? How can assessment for learning build relationships and bring about necessary change in higher education?
- **Assessment domains** - How do we move beyond a focus on content? In what ways can we privilege other domains of assessment, such as the affective or psychomotor?
- **Inclusive assessment** - What inclusive assessment practices can we employ to ensure that all learners can participate fully?

### Innovative Teaching Approaches

- **Emerging practices** - What emerging assessment practices are replacing traditional assessments such as exams and essays? How do these assessment practices encourage assessment for learning? How do we help students prepare for such practices? What is the role of educational technology in assessment for learning?

### Online and Remote Assessment Practices (*new for the revised Call for Proposals*)

- **Learning new ways to assess** – How have assessment practices changed due to the shift to online/remote teaching? What are we doing now that we didn't think of doing before? Which online assessment practices have potential to be employed in the face-to-face classroom? Has a shift occurred in how we think about assessment for learning due to the necessity to teach and assess online?

## 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 20, 2021**. There will be no extensions to this deadline.
- Proposals must be between **200-300 words**.
- Proposals may be research-based, practice-based, or both. For example:
  - **Research-based:** Individuals engaged in conducting research on teaching and learning (including recipients of [LITE grants](#))
  - **Practice-based:** Instructors who are looking to share practices, strategies, and examples from their teaching experiences
- Individuals may *present* in a maximum of one session. Individuals may be *authors* in more than one session, however. If you are submitting a poster or assessment showcase item, you may present at 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 consider two to three main takeaways from your work.

*If you have questions about a proposal you submitted to the 2020 Call for Proposals, please email [uwtl@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:uwtl@uwaterloo.ca)*

## Proposal review criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of proposal to the conference theme or funded through the Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) grant program\*
- Deepens understanding/awareness of issues related to teaching and learning
- Proposal ideas are situated within the relevant literature or best practices
- Relevance to people 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.

## Session formats

- **Presentation:** 20 minutes (15-minute presentation, plus 5-minute discussion period). Share an approach (practice-based), present empirical findings, or examine theoretical or methodological issues (research-based). *Presentations will be recorded ahead of time. At a specified time in the conference schedule, presenters will be asked to both engage with the audience while their presentation plays via chat, and also facilitate a 5-minute discussion period afterwards.*

- **Panel Discussion:** 55 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 to 20 minutes. *Panels will take place synchronously.*
- **Workshop:** 55 minutes. Take participants through the process of designing and implementing a strategy that you have used, and the insights gained from using that strategy and/or the research and literature behind those strategies. Workshops should include participant activities and provide opportunities for participants to consider application to their own teaching. *Workshops can be either synchronous or pre-recorded with synchronous engagement integrated.*
- **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 monitor the virtual space where the posters will be displayed and interact with the conference participants through a chat functionality. Posters can be either a standard conference poster saved as a PDF, or a shorter collection of PowerPoint slides that do not require presentation.
- **Assessment showcase:** Bring an example of an assessment practice that you employ (either in-class or online) to showcase to other instructors. No research is required to have been conducted on the efficacy of your assessment, but we expect you to share your thoughts, experiences, and rationale behind the assessment. The assessment showcase will be held asynchronously, but we expect author(s) to monitor the virtual space where the assessment showcase items will be displayed. You may choose what you want to share with attendees (assignment instructions, handouts, sample of student work, recording, etc.).

## 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

- CTE Tip Sheets on [Assessing students](#)
- Boud, D. and Associates (2010). [Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education](#). Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- Brown, S., Race, P. and Smith, B. (2005) *500 Tips on Assessment: 2nd edition*. London: Routledge
- Hutchings, P. (2010). [Opening doors to faculty involvement in assessment](#). *NILOA Occasional Paper, 4*.
- Maki, P. L. (2017). *Real-Time Student Assessment: Meeting the Imperative for Improved Time to Degree, Closing the Opportunity Gap, and Assuring Student Competencies for 21st-Century Needs*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Sambell, K., McDowell, L. & Montgomery, C. (2013) *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Suskie, L. (2018). [Assessing student learning: A common sense guide](#). John Wiley & Sons.
- Vaughan, N.D., Cleveland-Innes, M. & Garrison, D.R. (2013). *Teaching in blended learning environments: Creating and sustaining communities of inquiry*. Athabasca: Athabasca University Press. Available online at: <http://www.aupress.ca/index.php/books/120229>