



CENTRE FOR  
**TEACHING & LEARNING**

*Annual Report 2020*

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

I find it nearly impossible to think about 2020 without thinking of the pandemic. I know we had two-and-a-half months of what passed as normal. At the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), we hosted some workshops, made a couple of announcements, and decided on some awards; we were planning for a future that we saw as an extension of our present. And then, in the middle of March, we started working from home – and working in earnest to help Trent’s instructors move their courses online.

That move online turned out to have at least three phases. The first was a mad dash to find ways to support instructors as they moved their courses online for the remaining few classes and the exam period. The second was a phase of workshops and consultations, aimed at helping faculty build thoughtful and engaging courses, taking place largely online (the term we used for these courses was “remote”), for the academic year. And the third was period of reflection, encouraging faculty to reflect on what was working and what minor changes could help as they prepared new courses for remote delivery.

I’m proud of the contributions of the CTL, in all phases of this year. The team here is dedicated, generous, and smart. We ran more workshops for more faculty from more parts of the university than any other year. We worked with our colleagues in IT, Trent Online, and all corners of the university. We built a significant library of resources and have found new ways to stay connected and offer meaningful support to our faculty.

I’m also proud of the work of our faculty. These are unusual circumstances, a time when it’s tempting to be skeptical or pessimistic. I have been thrilled to see our faculty’s thoughtfulness, the care they’ve shown for their students’ learning, and their willingness to approach remote teaching with a sense of possibility.

A few weeks ago, I received a note from a colleague who had been to a handful of workshops and had just made it through the fall term. He wanted to thank us for helping to navigate the challenges of teaching during a pandemic. For the first time in a while, he feels part of a community of teachers, making their way forward – and was eager to share his appreciation.

I’m grateful to work with such wonderful people. At the CTL, our challenge is to build on our efforts, stay connected to faculty, and continue to help them develop or recognize their abilities as teachers.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Joel Baetz**  
Director  
Centre for Teaching & Learning



# WORKSHOPS & CONSULTATIONS

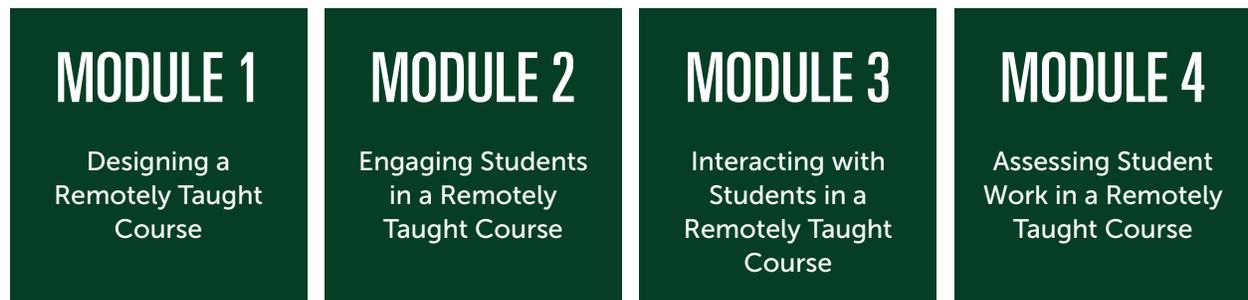
One of the best ways for instructors to learn about teaching is by talking about it – with each other or with an expert in the field. It's always helpful to hear what has worked or is working for others, especially when that is guided by experience or informed by research. When the pandemic arrived, at the Centre we still offered one-on-one consultations because of the chance they provide faculty to work through ideas specific to their own situations; we also expanded our workshop offerings. It was a good way to reach a high number of faculty, and give them a sense that they were working with a community of dedicated instructors, facing challenges similar to their own.

## GOING THE DISTANCE & REMOTE-TEACHING WORKSHOPS

March was a whirlwind, a flurry of activity to finish the last three weeks of the term. At the CTL, we helped as best we could. We worked with colleagues in Trent Online and IT to hold drop-in sessions for faculty needing support; we published a few resources that answered faculty's recurring questions about extensions, assessments, and class meetings.

By the time the summer term rolled into view, we knew we had to do more to help faculty learn how to teach online courses. At the CTL, we led the development of *Going the Distance* – a multi-stage workshop that would help faculty learn the fundamentals of teaching remotely, so they could design and deliver engaging and meaningful courses.

*Going the Distance* has four modules:



We were fortunate to have the help of experts from Trent Online and IT. Their experience and expertise were clearly beneficial, helping faculty make good decisions about technology while following principles of good pedagogy.

This workshop was the best-attended faculty-development opportunity in the history of Trent's Centre for Teaching and Learning. The workshop ran eight times synchronously (meaning everyone tuned in to a workshop at the same time) for 320 faculty. To meet demand we developed an asynchronous (web-only version) that ran three times for 69 faculty. More than two-thirds of Trent's teaching faculty attended the workshop.

The numbers matter; but so too do the words of thanks and encouragement from faculty. Here is a sample:

*I've really enjoyed the sessions so far, benefited from the discussions, and learned so much. I certainly feel much better equipped to be a more effective remote teacher!*

*I very much appreciate the sessions . . . [They] have been informative and even inspiring.*

*The interactive forum is a good way to learn and to practice how we might interact with our students.*

**320**  
FACULTY  
ATTENDEES

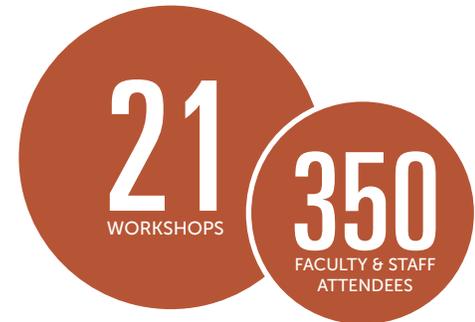
**8**  
SYNCHRONOUS  
WORKSHOPS

*Due to the wonderfully encouraging talks in the *Going the Distance* series, I am now very much inspired to take a deep dive into my own courses come August. We're all very grateful.*

*Given the difficulty that we discussed with gauging student response during remote teaching sessions, I just wanted to tell you in no uncertain terms how helpful today's CTL workshop was: well-paced, clearly delivered, and very reassuring. I'm looking forward to the next three installments!*

Building on the foundational ideas, strategies, and tips offered in *Going the Distance*, the Centre offered a series of workshops which allowed faculty to build on their growing knowledge of and skill with remote teaching. These next-level workshops helped instructors explore specific issues, from dealing with large classes to developing new assessment strategies to providing experiential learning to distanced students. Our 2020 offerings included the following topics:

- Decolonizing the Academy
- Creating a Teaching Portfolio
- Principles of Universal Design for Learning
- How to Find, Select, and Integrate Library and Open Access Resources into Your Remote Course
- How to Deliver Experiential Learning in a Remote Course
- How to Assess Student Work in a Remote Course
- How to Deliver a Good Lecture in a Remote Course
- How to Demonstrate Science Labs in a Remote Course
- How to Engage Students in Large and Small Courses
- How to Make Courses More Accessible
- How to Plan for Large Courses
- How to Integrate Indigenous Content and Pedagogy into Remote Courses
- How to Organize Your Course in Blackboard
- Student Perspectives on Fall-Term Remote Teaching: What They Are and How We Can Respond
- How to Make your Synchronous Classes Better: Connecting with Students While Covering Content
- Tips for Increasing Student Participation with Discussion Boards, Teams, and VoiceThread



## GRADUATE TEACHING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Graduate students have a special role at Trent. While studying, researching, and writing at a high level, they are also starting to develop their identities as teachers. In doing so, they are faced with pressing questions:

- What is my role as a teaching assistant?
- How do I know that I'm doing my job well?
- How do I manage a classroom when I'm closer in age and experience to the students than the instructor?
- How do I mark well, offering good feedback and following the course standards, while still getting my own schoolwork done?

Our Graduate Teaching Certificate program helps graduate students answer these questions (and a few more), as they become important members of our teaching complement at Trent. In early 2020, we ran two in-person graduate teaching retreats, attended by 40 new GTAs. Later in the year, as much of the focus of our Graduate Teaching workshops turned toward remote teaching, the Centre offered a two-module workshop, "Going the Distance for GTAs: Issues, Ideas, and Tools for Assisting with a Remote Course." Attended by 83 Graduate Teaching Assistants, these sessions introduced essential concepts and skills to help them interact with students in large and small classes, on discussion boards, and in Zoom as well as assess student work in a remote course. As always, our aim was to not only give participants a foundational understanding of key remote learning tools, but to encourage them to think more about their role as teachers.

Many graduate students choose to not only complete these teaching orientation workshops, but to pursue a Graduate Teaching Certificate, which involves completing online modules, attending Centre for Teaching and Learning workshops, and engaging in a capstone teaching project. Currently, we have 154 graduate students in the program – and are thrilled to be working with them as they become better teachers.

## CONSULTATIONS

Sometimes it's important for faculty to talk one-on-one with someone about the specific opportunities and challenges in their teaching. For that reason, alongside the unprecedented number of faculty workshops in 2020, members of our team met with 75 individual instructors to discuss particular course design, instructional, and assessment challenges. We also supported an initiative led by our colleagues in Trent Online: the Remote Teaching Support Teams. With one team assigned to each decanal unit, faculty were able to get their questions answered (by email or by one-on-one or small group meetings) about particular issues in their own courses.

## INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY

Trent's commitment to Indigenous education is evident in its vision: "we foster an environment where Indigenous Knowledges are respected and recognized as a valid means by which to understand the world."

In 2020, the Centre for Teaching and Learning continued its commitment to helping fulfill this objective. This year, our Indigenous Pedagogy Designer was made into a permanent position, now titled Education Developer (Indigenous Pedagogy), allowing him to sustain long-term relationships with faculty and develop a strategic plan for furthering the integration of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies across the institution.

Over the course of 2020, much of the relationship building begun in earlier years came to fruition, and our Indigenous Pedagogy Developer reached diverse audiences across the university through the following activities and programs:

- Held one-to-one consultations on Indigenizing teaching, learning, and assessment with faculty, administrators, and staff from over 15 units from across the university.
- Provided professional learning opportunities and resources on Indigenization and practices of Indigenous Knowledge in a diverse range of programs, including the Department of History, the Department of Social Work, The School of Business, The School of Education, and the Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies.
- Facilitated a monthly strategic planning meeting at Trent Durham GTA to increase the visibility of Indigenous spaces and communities on the Durham campus and ensure that it is a safe and inclusive space to share Indigenous Knowledges.
- Provided instructional support for integrating Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogy into remote learning through six Centre for Teaching and Learning workshops and several contributions to the Remote Teaching Resource Library.
- Contributed to university-wide conversations on allyship and anti-racist pedagogy through participation in Trent's Anti-Racism Task Force.
- Participated in the Indigenous Curriculum Specialist Network to collaborate with and gain insight from Indigenous pedagogy designers from across Ontario.

# RESOURCES

## Teaching Notes

This year, it has been important to stay connected with faculty. As they worked and taught remotely, we wanted to keep some of our conversations going, guiding their attention to series of important pedagogical issues and resources. So, we started a bi-weekly tiny newsletter, *Teaching Notes*. Each one addresses an issue important to faculty – and follows a predictable format. It begins with a short reflection, followed by a small roster of links to helpful resources, a short video recorded with IT or another expert (when appropriate), and a few announcements about upcoming events.

In 2020, we produced seven issues, covering topics from the importance of checking in with students to tips for grading to teaching in tough times. This newsletter promises to create and sustain conversations about teaching at Trent. The success of a newsletter is difficult to measure; but there are some good indications that it's working. On average about two-thirds of recipients open the email; and about ten percent click on one of the resources. These numbers are, we're told, impressive for these kind of ventures. More importantly, we receive words of appreciation and encouragement after every issue. Like clockwork, the morning after a newsletter goes out, we find notes from faculty waiting for us. Here are some:

*"This was actually one of the most positive and useful emails I received this week."*

*"This is so useful and timely! And it has links to a bunch of resources I've not already seen while doomscrolling."*

*"Thank you ... for sharing your messages of continued support for teaching and learning remotely."*

*"Thank you, I needed this!!"*

*"This newsletter is always informative, supportive, and positive. Your words are compassionate and encouraging. I find it motivational."*

## ONE THING THAT WORKED

In the last issue of *Teaching Notes* for 2020, we brought together faculty reflections on what went well in their fall-term courses. Indeed, while much of 2020 was spent facing the pedagogical challenges of remote learning, our "One Thing that Worked" campaign encouraged faculty to highlight and share stories of their successful moments as teachers over the past term. Many faculty members answered the call, providing stories of creative assessments at which students excelled, moments of authentic learning when abstract theory was brought to bear on the realities of pandemic life, and examples of empathetic connection between students and faculty. We were able to celebrate and share these stories in two editions of *Teaching Notes* to allow faculty to take inspiration from each other's work.

## REMOTE TEACHING RESOURCE LIBRARY

As a complement to the *Going the Distance* workshop and a means of offering faculty timely and ongoing support, the Centre for Teaching and Learning has authored an extensive set of resources in our Remote Teaching Resource Library. Covering course design, student engagement, remote teaching platforms, and assessment, the library contains guidelines, templates, and exemplars that help faculty through the process of planning and teaching in remote environments. As the challenges of remote learning continued to reveal themselves, the Centre worked to develop new resources, resulting in a diverse collection of over 35 separate guides.

» [trentu.ca/teaching/remote](https://trentu.ca/teaching/remote)

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSES TO STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON REMOTE LEARNING

This fall, the Centre for Teaching and Learning took a lead role in helping faculty to reflect and respond to student feedback on remote learning. After reviewing students' responses to Trent's Student Engagement Survey, student-authored reports on remote learning experiences, and interviews with Online Learning Student Assistants, our Director invited faculty and staff to discuss three key themes in the data:

- difficulties managing remote learning workloads;
- challenges of not being able to interact with faculty in person; and
- isolation caused by not being able to participate in extracurricular activities.

The Centre integrated insights from these lively discussions with scholarship on teaching and learning to create a resource that explored instructional strategies by which faculty could support students with remote learning challenges. We also researched and developed specific exemplars and templates to help faculty implement these strategies. Entitled "Instructional Responses to Student Perspectives on Remote Learning," our guide was distributed to all faculty along with a cover note that helped faculty consider how best, in the midst of a busy term, they could reflect on and respond to student feedback.

## DISTINGUISHED VISITING TEACHING SCHOLARS



### DR. PAT MAHER

In June, the Centre for Teaching and Learning benefited from the insights of Dr. Pat Maher, an interdisciplinary scholar and internationally recognized leader in research on experiential education. Currently the Dean of Teaching at Nipissing University, Professor Maher is a 3M National Teaching Fellow and a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. Professor Maher spoke to Centre staff about strategies to integrate experiential education into remote learning environments. These conversations allowed our Education Developers and Director to support more fully faculty efforts to offer experiential education opportunities in their remote courses. It also allowed the Centre to collaborate with Careers and Experiential Learning to offer a workshop on best practices for experiential learning.



### DR. NICK BAKER

In December, the Centre for Teaching and Learning was delighted to host award-winning Director of the Office of Open Learning at the University of Windsor, Dr. Nick Baker. Serving as the Chair of the Ontario Universities' Council on eLearning, and a director on the board of eCampus Ontario, Professor Baker brought to Trent faculty insights on remote learning gained from over two decades of teaching and researching about online learning. Faculty and staff participated in a guided conversation with Professor Baker, discussing student engagement online and how to build meaningful and durable connections with students during remote pandemic learning.

# SUPPORTING RESEARCH ON TEACHING & LEARNING

## WICKERSON FOUNDATION FUND FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

In 2020, The Wickerson Foundation Fund for Educational Leadership and Universal Design entered its second year of awards. Sponsored by a generous donation from the Wickerson Foundation, this internal grant aims to fund faculty-led projects that make learning more inclusive, by removing or minimizing barriers that might otherwise keep students from reaching their potential as learners. When Karen Wickerson ('87) announced the award, she spoke about her desire to support teaching at Trent: "I want to give back to Trent as a token of deep gratitude for the assistance I received as a Trent student. . . . I can only imagine what these students can accomplish when barriers to learning are taken out of the equation."



The two Wickerson grants awarded in 2020 are allowing faculty to engage the challenges of integrating Universal Design Learning (UDL) with different pedagogies. For their project, "Fostering Enwaayang in the ICR Classroom," Professors **Robin Quantick** and **David Newhouse**, of the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, are exploring how UDL could be coupled with Indigenous pedagogical approaches. Focusing on the interconnected design and delivery outcomes of INDG 1001H, "Foundations of Reconciliation," one of Trent University's largest Indigenous Credit Requirement (ICR) courses, Professors **Quantick** and **Newhouse** are exploring how these pedagogies could be intertwined to "help students learn in a pedagogy that is based more upon individual sensemaking and understanding of material through storytelling than content presentation and recall."

Professor **Emily Bruusgaard**, with the Department of English Literature, is working to reimagine online video lectures for a spectrum of learners with different needs. As Professor **Bruusgaard** puts it, "if we are to fully unlock students' potential, and to truly implement multiple means of expression as one of the three principles of UDL, we must create multiple pathways to information in the digital learning environment. We must present main course concepts in more than one way. We must recognize and allow students to engage in the style of learning that suits them best." This research and experience will not only benefit the students in Professor Bruusgaard's course, but will be used to design online learning modules for Trent faculty on creating accessible online teaching.

## TEACHING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Trent Teaching Fellowship program fosters leadership and innovation in university teaching and learning. Thanks to a generous donor, this grant allows faculty to develop, over a period of three years, meaningful and sustained teaching activities or to study and test out best practices in the classroom.

Our current Teaching Fellows are making exciting contributions to the study and practice of teaching. A couple of highlights of fellows' work include the following updates:



**Professor Nadine Changfoot** has been exploring how to strengthen students' targeted writing skills, media and information literacy, and research skills toward the creation of critically informed content for public domain and open access knowledge sources. This June, Professor Changfoot and Trent alumnae Daniela Leal will be leading the workshop "Critical Wikipedia Creation: Combining Scholarly Publication in Wikipedia Creation" for the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) Meeting. They are excited to share with researchers this avenue of public scholarship.

**Professors Holly Bates and Sarah West** have continued their project to redesign the large first-year Human Anatomy and Human Physiology courses. In the current COVID-19 environment, they have taken advantage of the large online student presence to focus on redevelopment of content within the web versions of these courses to enhance student engagement. In 2020, Professors Bates and West had two abstracts accepted for presentation at the Human Anatomy and Physiology (HAPS) Annual conference that compared student performance in the web and face-to-face Human Physiology courses. They are currently revising a manuscript titled "Methods Development as an Opportunity for Undergraduate Experiential Learning in Physiology" that is under consideration for publication in *Advances in Physiology Education*. In addition, they have supervised an honours thesis student who is currently examining factors that impact Trent Biology student satisfaction and scientific identity.



We look forward to welcoming new Teaching Fellows in the coming year.

# AWARDS & SHOWCASES

## INTERNAL TEACHING AWARDS

The Centre for Teaching and Learning was pleased to celebrate Trent's excellent teachers through surprise in-course announcements and video celebrations of their work.



**Dr. Kathryn Chittick** | *Department of English Literature*  
**Symons Award for Excellence in Teaching**

Kathryn Chittick was recognized as a committed, compassionate, and challenging teacher who routinely empowers her students with a confidence they did not know they possessed. The fact that Professor Chittick was nominated by undergraduate and graduate students, alumni as well as both faculty and staff is a strong recommendation of the far-reaching and lasting impacts of her teaching. Each spoke to the honest concern and kindness that Professor Chittick demonstrates towards her students, as well as her ability to inspire and innovate their level of direct and embodied engagement with course materials.



**Professor Kim English** | *Trent/Fleming School of Nursing*  
**Award for Excellence in Online Teaching**

Kim English was recognized for her innovative and accessible online course designs, and for her unique, engaging teaching style while being wonderfully attuned to the needs of distance learners. Professor English chooses an approach that embraces flexibility and enthusiastic engagement in the digital context. She utilizes a digital remote nursing station as the focal point of her course work and has created "module" sections that are simple to navigate while giving her students choice. Her "digital storytelling" project allows a high degree of creativity from her students and her approach allows for financial accessibility as well.



**Professor Derya Tarhan** | *International Development Studies*  
**CUPE 3908-1 Award for Excellence in Teaching**

Professor Derya Tarhan was recognized for having a strong, positive impact on students' learning through his clear lectures, relevant readings, patience while teaching, creative seminars, and general approachability. Professor Tarhan's classes are dynamic, interesting, and enjoyable environments where he pushes students out of their comfort zones in order to inspire applied learning. Professor Tarhan listens to student feedback and is responsive to their needs, makes himself available and provides timely feedback, while also remaining aware and supportive of student wellbeing. He has facilitated learning that has been meaningful and fun while going above and beyond to support student initiatives, including a student-led conference for which Professor Tehran has invested much time and energy.



### **Kelly Wright** | *Chemistry*

#### **Award for Excellence in Teaching Assistance**

Kelly Wright was recognized for going above and beyond for the students in her labs and seminars. She has made a point to spend time one-on-one with each and every student, ensuring they fully understood complex laboratory techniques so that they would be well equipped to go on to work independently in industry or to continue in academic research. Seeing a particular need for more skill development required to complete an assignment, Ms. Wright organized a seminar where she led a detailed presentation on how to construct specific figures. Profoundly knowledgeable and organized, not only was Ms. Wright helpful to her students in planning and thinking through their experiments, she also made herself available after hours, even on the weekends, in order to ensure their successful completion despite setbacks.

## SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE

The Centre for Teaching and Learning regularly showcases inspiring faculty, staff, and student members of the Trent University community



### **Betty Carr-Braint**

*First Peoples House of Learning*

Betty Carr-Braint, Cultural Advisor and Indigenous Counsellor with First Peoples House of Learning, dedicates herself to the Trent community by offering a diverse portfolio of programs and services. Providing counselling support and traditional cultural experiences for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, Carr-Braint also works with Elders to provide counsel and teachings across all degree programs, as seen through her coordination of the Traditional Area and as lead organizer for Trent's annual Elders' Gathering. Carr-Braint is inspired by the opportunity to help students remember who they are through ceremony, time on the land, and heart-centered learning. She continues to be a passionate advocate for Indigenous Knowledges and equity, as well as personal and inter-personal healing here at Trent.



### **Dr. Else Marie Knudsen**

*Social Work*

Else Marie Knudsen, a professor in the newly accredited Department of Social Work, loves teaching the large first year Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare classes offered at both Durham and Peterborough campuses. As a former front-line social worker and policy analyst within the criminal justice system, Professor Knudsen teaches through her lived experiences as well as case studies to bring complex and often challenging topics alive in the classroom. She embraces the use of technology and personal devices to engage further her students, elicit student voice, and to generate the kind of critical conversations for which her courses are known. Professor Knudsen is passionate about teaching new social work professionals and helping her students to develop anti-oppressive pedagogies and critical thinking skills that will aid them as they challenge social barriers in their communities.

» [trentu.ca/teaching/showcase](https://trentu.ca/teaching/showcase)

# MEET THE TEAM



**Dr. Joel Baetz**  
*Director*



**Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe**  
*Senior Educational Developer*



**Dana Capell**  
*Senior Educational Developer*



**Mitchell Huguenin**  
*Education Developer  
(Indigenous Pedagogy)*



**Brandon Rimmelgas**  
*Administrative Coordinator*

[trentu.ca/teaching](https://trentu.ca/teaching)