

Brock Teaching

News from the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies, Brock University

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Nothing changes if nothing changes

By Maureen Connolly,
Director CTLET



Professor Maureen Connolly

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard claimed that creativity flourishes within limits or it dies.

University culture has long been a site of competing tensions and constraints; however, we are moving into a time of unprecedented opportunity for creativity. We face limits in time, money, and human and material resources. Expectations around performance and productivity are at an all time high while supports for these expectations are tapped to their capacity. Education at all levels is experiencing the stressors described above, and post-secondary education is especially vulnerable. In this climate of crisis, urgency, and triage, the choices we make cannot only be choices within pre-given, familiar and unquestioned contexts; they must be choices about the contexts. Here, Kierkegaard's admonition becomes particularly cogent.

We are at a threshold where habit, convenience, and canon are placed under the kind of scrutiny that academics typically reserve for standards of research practice. Here we must examine monolithic structures of mastery, content, assignments, and evaluation, and we must examine them with an eye toward change if we are to survive and thrive in our multidimensional lives of teaching, research, and service.

Fortunately, working with/in limits does indeed call forth

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New e-classroom is a dynamic teaching and learning facility



Professor Jon Radue, Faculty Associate of the CTLET, conducts a class utilizing wireless laptops in the new James Gibson e-classroom.

It's a room with a view — a view into a new world of classroom teaching at Brock.

The James A. Gibson Library and the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies (CTLET) held an Open House in March to show off their new e-classroom.

This impressive facility integrates the latest teaching technology into a classroom setting designed as a comfortable, flexible learning environment.

"Although technology is critical to the e-classroom, its presence is subtle, something that was planned deliberately in the design of the facility. It's a very warm and welcoming room," says Margaret Grove, University Librarian. "In addition to its technological features, the e-classroom was designed with careful attention to aesthetics, social ambience, lighting and other such details to make it a comfortable space for people."

"The e-classroom creates a cocoon in which learning can happen," adds Professor Maureen Connolly, Director of the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies.

The e-classroom is a highly flexible teaching space that features modular, mobile tables to allow for different groupings, depending on the needs of the instructor and students. The room's state-of-the-art technology includes a multimedia electronic lectern and wireless technology to support 30 tablet PCs for classroom use.

The e-classroom offers a dynamic environment to support teaching and learning in a variety of ways at Brock. Margaret Grove, Jill Grose, Associate Director, CTLET, and Professor Barry Joe share their perspectives on the benefits of the e-classroom.

Q: How do you see the e-classroom supporting library initiatives?

A: Margaret Grove: "Considering that electronic resources now make up a very large and growing proportion of the Library's information offerings, it is vital that we provide instruction to students on how to search databases effectively for information and how to critically evaluate the material that is available. The e-classroom is a perfect place to do this. The Library places a very heavy emphasis on teaching information literacy and is seeking opportunities to expand its collaboration with faculty in this area. Students need to acquire the skills necessary to become informed and intelligent consumers of the vast quantities of electronic information at their disposal. The technology available in the e-classroom allows our librarians to conduct hands-on training as part of classroom sessions so that students can learn by doing. The training is often held in conjunction with specific course assignments and serves as a very productive learning experience. The skills involved in information literacy are very transferable — in today's world, these are lifelong skills."

Q: How do you see the e-classroom supporting CTLET initiatives?

A: Jill Grose: "It's wonderful to have a teaching space that allows us to experiment with creative uses of both traditional and state-of-the-art teaching resources. Not only can we mount our own professional development sessions in this space but also we are able to work with faculty on ways of investigating how learning is different as a result of the design of the room and the technologies within it. In a sense, it's a teaching and learning laboratory. Having ready access to

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CTLET's call for digital teaching and learning resources

By Mike Laurence,
Educational Technologies Co-ordinator, CTLET

Since 2002, CTLET has provided support to more than 40 Brock faculty members as they design, develop and test digital teaching and learning resources. The large majority of these technology enabled resources represent a significant shift in the way learning content has been traditionally structured, resulting in much smaller, "molecular level" units of learning. Generally referred to as learning objects, these resources:

1. are designed to engage the learner in an interactive experience that typically lasts from 10 minutes to 30 minutes;
2. are self-contained - each resource can be engaged independently;
3. are reusable - a single resource may be used in multiple contexts for multiple purposes;
4. can be aggregated - resources can be grouped into larger collections of content, ranging from tutorials to more traditional course structures;
5. are tagged with metadata - every resource has descriptive information allowing it to be easily found by a search;
6. are designed to address a particular teaching and / or learning challenge due to content complexity or learner background limitations related to a particular theory, concept, process, or event;

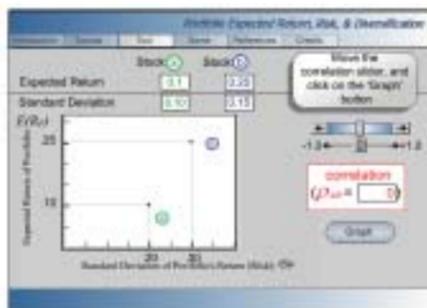
Learning objects are developed in adherence to CTLET's design specification by following eight phases of interactions between the content expert, instructional designer and production team:

- Design collaboration via the Brock University Interactive Learning Design Tool
- Paper Prototype (storyboards)
- Production - achieved by a talented team of students and staff with expertise in: animations, simulations, illustration and graphic arts (2d and 3d), digital photography, digital videography, databases, computer programming, and streaming media.
- Usability Testing
- Subject matter expert review
- Metadata Generation
- Learning Impact Study
- Submission to learning object repository for peer review and publication.

Upon completion of usability testing and a learning impact study, faculty are encouraged to collaborate with CTLET staff towards submission of two publications to peer reviewed journals, and a digital learning resource to two of North America's most prestigious learning object repositories: MERLOT and CLOE. Presented here are screen

shots of Brock faculty-developed digital learning resources that can also be viewed online (<http://www.brocku.ca/ctlet/learningobjects/>).

Faculty members are invited to visit this Web page, where they will discover directions to request CTLET support with the development of digital teaching and learning resources. Please note that priority is given to requests that are designed to address a particular teaching and / or learning challenge. It is expected that from 15 - 20 learning objects will be developed annually in addition to CTLET's online course and online workshop development initiatives.



Portfolio Expected Return,
Professor Ernest Biktimirov, Business



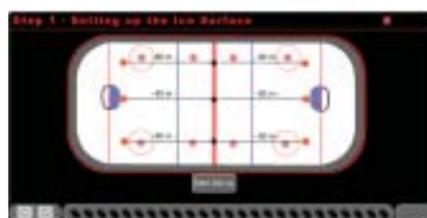
Moraine Formation,
Professor Rick Cheel, Geology



Monty Hall Dilemma,
Professor David DiBattista, Psychology



Tania Solium, Professor Ana Sanchez,
Community Health Science



Field Aerobic Skating Test
Professor Brent Faught,
Community Health Science

WebCT upgrade builds upon success

By Matt Clare,
Educational Technologies Support Specialist, CTLET

Brock's institutional Learning Management System (LMS) continues to be WebCT. This instructional tool has performed well for both the University's teachers and learners thus far, but there is still more to be done. What follows is a look at how Information Technology Services (ITS) and the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies (CTLET) plan to build on that success.

As Brock's LMS for almost five years, WebCT has provided instructors and students a common place to interact over the Internet from anywhere on the planet that was wired. Recently that level of connectivity has been extended beyond the reach of the wires themselves.

The Brock wireless network, announced in the fall of 2003, initially was not able to access WebCT due to concerns about security. One need only recall recent media headlines to get a sense of the importance of computer security. To enhance security and ensure privacy of sensitive information, ITS in consultation with CTLET has now implemented a secure web interface to WebCT.

What this means to most users is that their password and personal information (student marks and other private and intellectual property) will now be encrypted en route between the WebCT server and the user's computer, preventing personal data from being intercepted along the way. This process is similar to the way Brock's Webmail service (webmail.brocku.ca) works, or how online banking is done. The only potential adjustment to regular use of WebCT is the acknowledgment of an alert which pops up to warn users that they are entering or exiting the secured area.

Along with an upgrade to WebCT's level of security, the program itself will receive an upgrade. Brock's current version of WebCT, version 3.8, is the most

recent and fully featured version of generation three, but the time has come to move on to generation four. Last summer, WebCT released version 4.0 of its campus edition software and, this summer, Brock will be moving to a well-refined version 4.1. The fourth generation of WebCT's campus edition does not add any significant new tools; rather it refines the appearance and interaction of the existing tools. The advances made in how WebCT interfaces with instructors and students finally addresses long-standing design issues that needed this type of generation leap to address.

Features of note in WebCT 4.1 include its integrated HTML editor which allows for easy stylization of text. There is better support for packages created by textbook publishers. This version also addresses redundant and obscure options, simplifying the interface and making it behave a lot more like other Web sites and desktop programs. These enhancements work to get the technology out of the way and allow instructors to achieve their teaching goals.

While the appearance of WebCT 4.1 does look different than 3.8, it is evolutionary not revolutionary. This latest revision might solve the situations in which being presented with a page full of configuration options can result in one being too overwhelmed to configure any of them.

Finally, the WebCT Management Facility (<http://www.brocku.ca/webct>) will also receive an upgrade this summer. The facility was developed to automate the creation of WebCT courses based upon Brock's actual offerings and class lists. This summer's work promises to further expand its abilities.

As work is done to improve these services, a future in which technologies are no more of a distraction to teaching and learning than paper is to reading and writing is soon to be realized.

CTLET forms Teaching Council

The CTLET is pleased to announce the establishment of the CTLET Teaching Council. The council, with representation from all six faculties, will serve as an advisory body to the Centre and assist in the promotion and celebration of excellent teaching at Brock. Faculty associates on the Teaching Council for 04/05 are:

- Faculty of Business: **Professor Ernest Biktimirov**
- Faculty of Humanities: **Professor Barry Joe**
- Faculty of Social Sciences: **Professor John Mitterer**
- Faculty of Mathematics and Science: **Professor Jon Radue**
- Faculty of Education: **Professor Ruth McQuirter Scott**
- Faculty of Applied Health Sciences: **Professor Lorne Adams**

Brock TAs committed to quality teaching practices

By Jill Grose, Associate Director, CTLET

Brock's teaching assistants ranked first in the country for "quality of teaching assistants" for the second year in a row. In a national Globe and Mail student satisfaction survey, Brock TAs were again rewarded for their dedication to teaching by being ranked No. 1 in the categories of TA Quality and TA Availability amongst 38 universities across the country.

For the CTLET, it is no surprise that Brock TAs are the best. This past academic year, 171 TAs participated in the Centre's bi-weekly workshop series to develop their teaching expertise. Each year, the CTLET offers a certificate program to Brock teaching assistants who wish to pursue opportunities for professional development in teaching. Gathering on Saturday mornings in the deep dark dawns of winter, these TAs show commitment in going above and beyond their contracts to learn and share best practices in teaching. Over the past five years, more than 250 Brock TAs have earned a certificate offered by the CTLET. This year, 57 TAs earned a basic TA certificate and 23 earned an advanced certificate, again a new annual record for Brock University.

The workshop series is open to all TAs, seminar leaders, lab demonstrators and markers under contract to the University and covers topics such as teaching and learning styles, effective marking practices, motivating students and handling conflict in the classroom. To earn a Basic certificate, TAs attend eight workshops throughout the year. To earn an Advanced certificate, participants are required to attend 16 workshops on teaching issues and submit a statement of teaching philosophy. TAs state that, in addition to learning from the various presenters, they enjoy the opportunity to meet colleagues from other disciplines to discuss problematic situations and share ideas and strategies. TAs completing the certificate program were honoured at a University Club reception on April 2, hosted by the Vice-President Academic and the CTLET.

2003-2004 TA Certificate recipients (* received Advanced certificate)

- Jennifer Andrus, Psychology *
- John Bachynski, History *
- Terri Bartkiw, Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures
- Karla Boluk, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Kelly Campbell, Psychology *
- Xu Chen, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Andrea Crevits, Child and Youth Studies
- Erasmus Cudjoe, Chemistry *

- James Curier, Modern Languages, French
- Alison Dagg, Child and Youth Studies
- Maren Dick, Comm., Pop. Culture and Film
- Jennifer Ferguson, Psychology/Labour Studies
- Lindsay Foley, Sociology
- Martin Ford, Philosophy
- Sara Fulmer, Child and Youth Studies*
- Katherine Gardiner, Psychology *
- Kimberley Gibson, Child and Youth Studies/Sociology
- Karen Gilbert, Child and Youth Studies *
- Ericka Gonzalez, Experience Plus
- Anthony Goodman, Comm., Pop. Culture and Film
- Lindsay Guyitt, Education *
- Wolfgang Haas, Computer Science *
- Kendra Hart, Management, Marketing and HR
- Kelly Hartle, Geography*
- Yangzi Hu, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Octavian Ichim, Political Science *
- Yixing Jiang, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Jing Jing, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Beth Koruna, Child and Youth Studies
- Kevin Krumrei, Philosophy
- Christinia Landry, Philosophy
- Kimberley Lee, Comm., Pop. Culture and Film *
- Ning (Diana) Li, Management, Marketing and HR
- Brian Lightbody, Philosophy
- Buyu Liu, Management, Marketing and HR *
- Rachele Longtin, History *
- Arlene MacLeod, Political Science
- Gerard J. Masse, Labour Studies/Education
- Heather McIntyre, Political Science
- Kojo Mensah, Experience Plus
- Ashleigh Miatello, Experience Plus
- Ryan Nery, Psychology *
- Suzanne Parm, Geography *
- Sally Pham, Child and Youth Studies *
- Kevin Ray, Physical Education & Kinesiology
- Dana Reker, Psychology *
- Jillian Robillard, Child and Youth Studies
- Wendy Rocca, Education *
- Sandi Salmon, Physical Education & Kinesiology
- Jo-Anne Sinnige-Egger, Child and Youth Studies
- Shelley Smith, Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Cheshue Soufian, Women's Studies
- Holly Stack, Psychology *
- Alejandro Tanaka Trelles, Modern Languages *
- Trudy Tattersall, Comm., Pop. Culture and Film *
- William Tays, Psychology
- Renee Tomovcik, Great Books & Liberal Studies
- Colleen Trask, Education
- Pamela Vail, Management, Marketing and HR
- Marion Walker, Women's Studies
- Michael Whyte Kpressa, Political Science *
- Taryn Yasko, Recreation and Leisure Studies

Congratulations to TA Award winners



This year, four TAs were honoured for their commitment to teaching at Brock University. From left, Jacqueline Dix, recipient of the Senior TA Award; Ryan Nery, recipient of the TA Award; Joanna Sheppard, first recipient of the new Graduate TA award; and Frank Benko, recipient of the Senior TA Award.



Eighty certificates in teaching and learning in higher education were awarded to Brock TAs on April 2 in the University Club.

The Brock University Teaching Assistant Awards were founded by the CTLET to recognize the excellent teaching contributions made by TAs, seminar leaders and lab demonstrators. TAs must be nominated by two individuals (including a faculty member) who submit supporting documentation in the form of letters from faculty, former students and other TAs; summaries of teaching evaluations; and evidence of professional development in teaching. The TA Award is given to a TA with less than three years' experience who shows promise in the field of teaching; the senior TA Award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to university teaching.

This year, the Graduate TA Award was established by the Dean of Graduate Studies, Jack Miller, to specifically recognize the contributions to teaching by graduate students.

TAs in all categories are recognized with a cash award, a certificate and an inscription on a plaque that celebrates previous TA Award winners.

The CTLET congratulates the recipients of this year's TA Awards:

Senior TA Award

Frank Benko, Physics

Frank Benko has been serving as a senior lab instructor in the Department of Physics since 1988. He supervises both graduate and non-graduate TAs and teaches the

Physics 3P91 laboratory course. Only a person who has a sense of deep commitment and love for teaching can elicit praise from students such as "astounding," "awesome" and "don't ever let him go."

Benko has a Bachelor of Science degree from Brock and has been a member of the University community for 30 years.

Senior TA Award

Jacqueline Dix, Political Science

Jacqueline Dix has been a Teaching Assistant and seminar coordinator in the Department of Political Science for 25 years. She has worn many instructional and administrative hats, and has had an impact on students and faculty alike with her abilities and resource materials. She has authored the department's manual for Teaching Assistants and coordinates an annual TA training day for Political Science TAs. Dix holds a BA and MA in Politics from Brock University.

TA Award

Ryan Nery, Psychology

Ryan Nery is a TA and one of several course coordinators for PSYC1F90. He has been an active member of the CTLET TA Program and earned the Basic certificate last year and the Advanced certificate this year. He is a past recipient of a Hallmark Coumts Foundation

Continues on page 4.

Mandatory training program recommended

The University Long Range Planning Committee has recommended that all TAs undergo a mandatory training program in instructional development. A committee comprised of representatives from the TA body, Human Resources, the CTLET and the Senate Instructional Development Committee have been meeting to discuss the ways in which this can be implemented across the institution. Those who wish to share ideas or concerns about this initiative are invited to contact Jill Grose, at the CTLET, ext. 4392.

Nothing changes if nothing changes - continued from page 1.

creative responses. Examples abound from the creative teachers at Brock University — shorter assignments, grading templates, draft and re-write submissions, blends of narrative and expository writing all contribute to maintaining marking and grading hour limits, and academic integrity; hybrid courses of electronic and classroom based seminars contribute to better utilization of space; shorter exams and alternative exam formats (e.g., IFAT multiple choice scripts) contribute to improved learning and

improved learner focus; team-based digital resource creation contributes to new models for honours and graduate theses; collaborative teaching contributes to innovative deployment of technology and shared best practices.

Limits present us with opportunities to examine, choose, and shape the contexts of our academic culture; examining long-standing habits is some of the toughest work we can do, but nothing changes, if nothing changes.

New e-classroom is a dynamic teaching and learning facility - continued from page 1.

it allows the CTLET to facilitate teachers who are engaged in reflective practice or in scholarship of teaching projects. Instructors can conduct action research into the instructional design of their courses, their students' learning and how the technologies might impact the decisions they make about teaching. It's also an amazing instructional space in terms of its flexibility and ambience — the students seem to be really comfortable. And that's important to learning."

Q: How do you see the e-classroom supporting teaching initiatives?

A: Professor Barry Joe: "When I asked my students what they liked most about their new environment, one replied, 'The possibilities of this room for us as students.'

The students have already demonstrated that their imaginations and their

surroundings are a vital part of their learning process. They do this each week as they arrange the furniture for class with no direction from me. Whether they are in a circle or in several small learning puddles, they invariably want to see each other's faces. Their message is clear: Forget the broadcast, one-to-many mode of teaching! No more sage on the stage before a passive audience! We want to participate in our learning.

Just as students are excited about the imagined potential of this exciting new space, so too can faculty be inspired: inspired to collaborate with students on a new teaching model; inspired to re-examine the fit of their current pedagogical model to students and the new intimate environment; inspired to engage in the kind of performative risk-taking that engaged pedagogy almost always entails."

Conference features Stephen Brookfield and Tony Bates



Stephen Brookfield



Tony Bates

Renowned adult educator Stephen Brookfield and educational technologies guru Tony Bates will be the keynote speakers at the CTLET's First Annual Best Practices in Teaching and Learning Symposium on May 6.

This year's theme, Making the Most of Our Institutional Resources, explores avenues for the deployment of institutional resources in efficient but pedagogically informed ways. Our best resources are, of course, the faculty, students and staff that creatively teach and learn within our institution.

Brookfield will open the day's

activities with a keynote entitled "Being a Critically Reflective Teacher." His address will be followed by concurrent workshops on topics such as multiple choice testing, innovative teaching techniques, collaboration technologies, facilitating distinctly different seminars and a panel discussion on making the most of our teaching space.

In the afternoon, Bates will join us from the west coast by videoconference to discuss "Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education: Theory and Research." The full-day symposium is open to all members of the Brock community but participants are required to reserve a seat for the Brookfield address through the Centre for the Arts, at ext. 3257.

Dave's Top 10

And now... in keeping with the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies mandate to support and promote best practices in teaching, we present this somewhat light hearted, and primarily reflective awareness feature:

Dave's Top 10 List of What makes Teaching "Sexy" at Brock University:

1. Creative university teachers who believe in the value of teaching!
2. 54 Brock teaching and learning events attended by 1,315 participants in 03/04;
3. TA's rank No.1 in Canada in the Globe and Mail poll;
4. Five 3M Teaching Fellows (and counting...);
5. Development of 42 digital teaching and learning resources;
6. 252 TAs complete one or more of the TA certificate programs over the past five years;
7. Michael Lueck utilizes video conferencing for team teaching with New Zealand and Scotland;
8. Ernest Biktimirov wins "competitive paper" award for innovative teaching in the area of financial education at the Financial Management Association Annual Meeting;
9. David DiBattista researches the instructional benefits of scratch & win IFAT for multiple choice testing;
10. Teaching awards in all faculties!

Congratulations to TA Award winners - continued from page 1.

Scholarship, a Royal Canadian Air Cadet Scholarship and a Royal Canadian Legion Medal of Excellence. He is also the recipient of the first PSYC1F90TA of the Year award. Nery will graduate in June with an Honours BA in Psychology.

Graduate TA Award

Joanna Sheppard, Physical Education and Kinesiology

Joanna Sheppard is the first recipient of the newly created Graduate TA Award, sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies. Sheppard is doing her Master's degree in Physical Education and Kinesiology and holds an Honours BA in Physical Education and History from Brock University. She serves as both a Teaching Assistant and a Research Assistant and is a recipient of an Ontario Graduate scholarship and a Ralph Morris award for 2003.

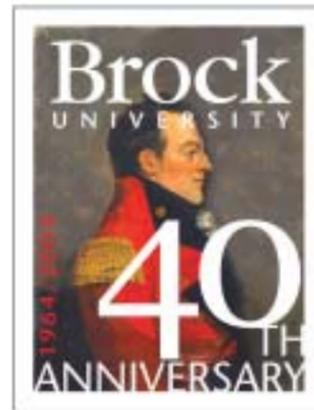
The 2004 International Human Science Research Conference August 5 to 8

The International Human Science Research Conference is a cross disciplinary group of scholars meeting annually to explore issues of design, methodology, content and relevance in human sciences research. Presentations are broad in scope and represent a diversity of fields such as education, psychology, cultural studies, health care, therapy, sociology and communications; and an equally open embrace of approaches to inquiry, including narrative, case study, action research, phenomenology and movement.

The 2004 conference will be hosted by the CTLET and Conference Services at Brock University with internal support from departments and programs with a human science orientation (including Nursing, Sociology, Education, Applied Language Studies, Communication Studies, Popular Culture, Psychology and Disabilities Studies). For more information, contact Maureen Connolly, at ext. 4707.

Instructional Skills Workshop

The third annual Instructional Skills Workshop will be offered again this year from June 8 to 10 at Brock University. The ISW is a 25-year-old, peer-based, experiential instructional development program and is one of the most successful approaches to pedagogy in post-secondary institutions across North America and in other parts of the world. Held over three days, the ISW is designed to enhance the teaching effectiveness of both new and experienced educators. This year, the facilitators of the ISW are Nancy Frances-Murray, of the Department of Physical Education and Kinesiology, and Jill Grose, of the CTLET. For more information, contact ext. 3933.



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