

Reflections

Newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre
The University of Western Ontario

Number 53

September 2005

Western's Faculty Mentor Program

In September 2000, the Joint Committee of the UWO Faculty Association and the University Administration approved the introduction of a Faculty Mentor Program to be sponsored by the Teaching Support Centre. The program is designed to provide a service to untenured members and to full-time colleagues who are new to Western.

Faculty Mentor Sessions

"These sessions are great and should continue. A great initiative!"

New faculty member, Spring 2005.

The first component of the program consists of a series of workshop/information sessions that are presented throughout the academic year. The topics have been developed to help our new colleagues adapt to Western, and to aid in their quests for research grants and for tenure. Currently the topics presented are:

- Preparation of the Research Grant Proposal
- University Support Systems for Faculty Research
- Tenure and Promotion Under the Collective Agreement (two parts)
- Development of a Teaching Dossier and a Teaching Philosophy
- The Role of Faculty in the Supervision of Graduate Students and Teaching Assistants
- Career Planning: The Management of an Academic Career and Teaching Awards for Members of Faculty

The sessions have been scheduled for Fridays throughout the fall and winter term. The Faculty Mentor Program relies upon senior members of faculty, members of the Administration, the Office of Faculty Relations and the Teaching Support Centre to conduct the sessions. These colleagues devote their time and energy to prepare highly informative presentations that are beneficial to junior faculty members.

Departmental Mentors

"Many of my mentors have been invaluable with respect to adapting as a new faculty member at Western. Many have also been internal reviewers on my grant applications. I have weekly contact with many. They have been open, approachable and supportive."

New faculty member, Summer 2005.

A second objective of the Faculty Mentor Program is to seek senior members of faculty who will act as mentors for colleagues who are new to their department. The Chair makes the selection of the departmental mentors, normally two. One aspect of this mentoring may involve career planning with new members whereby the aims and objectives of that career are put into perspective. This will involve a discussion on time commitment to committees, and the weight of course assignments in the context of one's dedication to research and the concomitant need to seek funding. Mentors may also give their opinions on the best journals in which to publish. They may review a paper before it is submitted to a journal, and provide a similar critique for a grant application, or they can

refer their colleague to the Research Mentor Network, via Research Western's website (<http://www.uwo.ca/research/general/mentor-program.html>). Teaching techniques may be only partially developed, and a mentor can play an important adjunct role to the work of the Teaching Support Centre in advancing these skills.

Several faculties such as Business, Medicine and Dentistry, Law, Information and Media Studies and Health Sciences conduct their own Mentor Programs. Members of these faculties are invited to the workshop/information sessions but the Faculty Mentor Program does not arrange for departmental mentors in their jurisdictions.

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Circular Mentoring

Successful mentoring that meets the needs of new members occurs in a variety of settings, and to this end a third element of the Faculty Mentor Program has been introduced through the offices of the Deans. To date, some of these colleagues have agreed to solicit the help of two senior members of the faculty who are willing to meet periodically with all new members to their faculty. The intent of this program is to allow new faculty to come together to discuss issues, positive or negative, that are related to their adjustment to the faculty and to the university. The informal meetings provide a setting where frustrations, doubts and concerns can be voiced without fear of creating a negative image.

In addition, these sessions will also allow new members to become acquainted with those in other departments of the faculty, and will contribute to their professional and personal integration. There is considerable evidence in the literature that peer groups are very effective in the mentoring process.

Survey Among Members of Faculty on Departmental Mentors and on the Information/Workshop Sessions

"I am convinced that the reason I was successful with my NSERC application is because of what I learned at the mentor session on Preparation of the Research Grant Application."

A program evaluation of the Faculty Mentor Program was conducted in the spring of 2005. It was designed to identify the topics discussed with mentors and to assess the perceived value of these contacts. The issues discussed most frequently with departmental mentors were those related to student behaviour, personal research and research grants, and administrative matters. Of those who responded to the survey, **77% ranked their interaction with departmental mentors as valuable to highly valuable.** Some new members of faculty, during their adjustment to the department and to the university, developed a linkage with colleagues who are also new to the university,

and have used this contact as a form of peer mentoring. **Eighty-nine per cent of the respondents ranked this peer contact as valuable and highly valuable in adapting to the new environment.** As one respondent said, "There were at least three faculty members in my department who were/are unofficial mentors to me. That is, I absolutely do not feel unmentored." We feel this is an endorsement of our plan to develop the circular mentoring program.

Our colleagues were also asked to indicate the value of the mentor sessions that they attended. The highest ratings were given to the sessions on Career Planning; Tenure and Promotion Under the Collective Agreement, Parts 1 and 2; Preparation of a Teaching Dossier and Teaching Philosophy and Preparation of the Research Grant Proposal. These were rated as valuable to highly valuable by the respondents. Overall, the mentor sessions that are sponsored by the Teaching Support Centre were ranked valuable to highly valuable by 78% of those who participated in the survey. It is quite clear to us that the program is meeting a need of our new untenured faculty.

"I am impressed with all the help and the resources available here at UWO. Thank you very much."

"I think all of this is a great idea. Not everything will appeal to everyone. I think it creates a good atmosphere."

For more information contact:

*Don Cartwright, Professor Emeritus
Department of Geography
Coordinator, Faculty Mentor Program
Teaching Support Centre
E-mail: dgcartwr@uwo.ca
Phone Number: 661-2111, ext. 84651*

Next Mentor Session

**Friday, October 14, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
"University Support Systems for
Faculty Research and the Research
Mentor Network"**



The Teaching Support Centre has a site license allowing the University Community free access to *The Teaching Professor*, a higher education newsletter produced by Magna Publications. *The Teaching Professor* is a valuable resource featuring innovative ideas to enhance your teaching.

Edited by respected scholar and expert Dr. Maryellen Weimer of Penn State Berks Lehigh, *The Teaching Professor* is a forum for discussion of the best strategies supported by the latest research for effective teaching in the college classroom. From tips for class discussion to mentoring fellow faculty, *The Teaching Professor* stretches from the theoretical to the highly specific. Typical topics include assessment and evaluation, engagement of student interest, faculty time management, and the learner-centered classroom.

You can access this publication by going to our Website: www.uwo.ca/tsc. If logging in from a campus computer, you will not need to enter a password.

To access *The Teaching Professor* from your home computer, you will first need to subscribe (it is free) by going to:

<http://www.magnapubs.com/licenses/subscribe.html>

And login as:
Voucher code: **UWOCA**
PIN Number: **2903**

After you subscribe, you will receive an e-mail directing you to the most current newsletter and the archives, which start in January 1999. You can bookmark this page, and login from home on future occasions.

For Engagement, Press "Western"

Tom Haffie, Biology Department, UWO

The higher education research literature is vigorous in its promotion of active learning models that provide opportunities for such activities as bi-directional communication, rapid responsiveness, performance feedback and reflection. Several instructors at Western have developed innovative ways to bring elements of this engaged pedagogy into our largest classrooms, often with the use of various electronic communication tools. One such tool, commonly known as a "clicker", has just become technologically feasible for use in very large classes and I do not hesitate to use the word "transformative" in describing the potential impact of these devices.

The clickers that I am referring to are small radiofrequency transmitters that resemble a TV remote. Students purchase their device in the bookstore and register it against their student number. In class, instructors can ask a variety of structured questions to which students may respond by pressing the appropriate button on their respective clickers. Up to 1000 of these individual responses can be captured by a single small receiver and displayed as a histogram at the front of the room within seconds.

Although many of us have been offering engaging lectures for large classes without the use of clickers, these devices can make our old strategies easier and they can provide new opportunities that were simply not possible in the past. From my perspective, the most exciting prospect is that clickers make it much easier to reverse the direction of the flow of knowledge in a class. That is, the class can become a source of knowledge that their peers, their instructor and their University have an opportunity to learn from. This sort of give and take in the classroom, what I call "AC" education, is much more engaging (and more fun) than the more traditional "DC" version. I have often tried to gauge the understanding of my class by asking a question and then noting the number of hands in the air or the quality of verbal

responses from a handful of extroverted students or the frequency of furrowed brows. Now I can gather a response from everyone in the room. I can learn the distribution of understanding among students as they simultaneously locate their knowledge relative to what I think and what their peers think. Verbal interactions in class can then be elevated to the level of analyzing the issues revealed by the distribution of answers.



Since I can now record and store the responses of individual students, at least two new tools become available in my very large class. I can now acknowledge the effort that students invest in showing up prepared by giving them some credit for participation. Also, I am wondering if honest answers

to thoughtful questions might accumulate quite early in the term to sketch the likely trajectory of academic success in the course. Preliminary research projects are underway to study this question (and several others) around the best use of this technology.

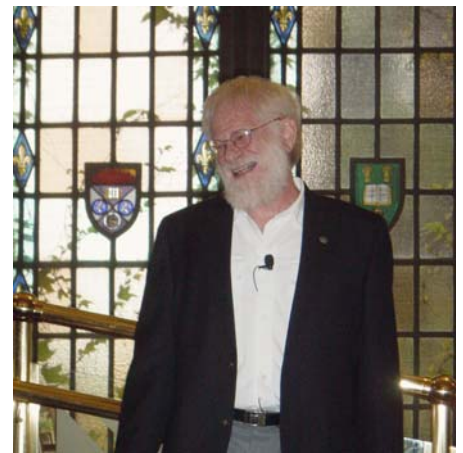
Coordination of the implementation of clickers in large first year Biology and Physics courses in September 2005 is the main goal of the project called *PRESSWestern*. Additional courses in Physics, Computer Science, Sociology, Anatomy, and Engineering are also using clickers under a campus wide adoption agreement with eInstruction.

For further information, contact Tom Haffie in the Department of Biology at ext. 86502 or e-mail: thaffie@uwo.ca.

The *PRESSWestern* project acknowledges significant support in cash and/or in kind from the Faculty of Science, eInstruction, a UWO Award for Teaching Innovation, Pearson Education, the Department of Biology, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, the Centre for New Students, the Student Development Centre, the Teaching Support Centre and Information Technology Services.

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Presidential Lecture 2005



The inaugural Presidential Lecture took place at the University on May 11, 2005 with Allan Gedalof from the Department of Film Studies speaking on "Making Meaning in Popular Culture".

Introducing Western Libraries' Assignment Planner

Tom Adam, Information Literacy Coordinator, Western Libraries

Translating an assignment into a procedure that encompasses the entire research process, from idea to finished paper, is often a daunting task for students. Western Libraries' new Assignment Planner presents the progression in a series of twelve manageable steps, to assist students both in effectively managing time and engaging critically with information to complete the task on time.

Based on the Assignment Calculator, created by Librarians at the University of Minnesota, the Assignment Planner is now available directly from the library website (www.lib.uwo.ca). Students simply enter the date they will begin the process and the date it is due, select their subject from a drop down menu and click the "How Do I Get it Done in Time" button. The Assignment Planner divides the time available and returns a twelve-step process plan to help them accomplish it, complete with target dates by which each step should be completed. Links to relevant resources, appropriate databases for locating journal

articles for example, or to services like those offered through Western's Effective Writing Centre for help with organizing and composing a paper, or to sources for additional help, Western Libraries' collection of Resources by Subject or the appropriate



Subject Librarian for instance, can be embedded in each Step. Students can also opt to have e-mail reminders automatically sent to their Western Account throughout the process.

The tool is easy for students to use and easy for librarians to create. We have complete control over the content; it can be as generic or as detailed and specific as required. So for instance an instruction librarian can tailor

a Planner to the particular needs of students writing a Shakespeare essay in an English class, or organize a lab assignment for Biology or give a general overview of doing research in Sociology. The only limitation is creating the twelve steps that give the process a framework. We can also embed direct links to course-specific Planners in individual course websites and bypass the public listing on the Planner login page, especially if the content of a particular Planner has narrower relevance to a smaller group or class.

Take a look at our collection of Planners and try one out; the main login page is at <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/instruct/calculator>. Recommend the tool to your students. If you would like to use our Assignment Planner for your course, contact your liaison librarian <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/instruct/facultystaff.shtml> or call me at the TSC (ext. 81441), to customize a Planner for your specific needs.

Teaching Innovations.... at Western

Are you interested in enhancing your teaching with technology? Are you looking for new ways to reach your students? Do you like technology, but feel unsure of how you can use it in your face-to-face classroom? Every project starts with an IDEA, and grows year-after-year as we reflect upon and evaluate our teaching. Join us in the Teaching Support Centre for this informative and exciting series highlighting the innovative successes of your peers.

Turning on to Turnitin.com

A demonstration and faculty panel discussion
Friday, September 30, 2005 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

Crossing Over: Using the Web to Enhance Face-to-Face Instruction

A faculty discussion of blended learning models and methods
Thursday, October 13, 2005 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

Clicking with Class: Using Clicker Technology in the Classroom

A faculty panel session of early adopters
Friday, October 28, 2005 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

Can You Hear Me Now? Online Class Communications

A discussion of effective online communication practices
Thursday, November 10, 2005 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre Room, The D.B. Weldon Library

New Technologies: A Collaborative Approach

A discussion of new technologies and new media in teaching
Friday, November 25, 2005 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

Partnerships in Information Literacy

Panel discussion of Faculty-Librarian collaboration
Thursday, December 8, 2005 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

To register, or for more information on these sessions, go to the TSC website at www.uwo.ca/tsc

Does Mentoring New Faculty Make a Difference?

Heather Kanuka, Athabasca University

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The primary purpose of a mentoring program is to help new faculty to fully develop their professional careers, support professional identity and build competence (Toal-Sullivan, 2002). Mentoring programs also facilitate professional learning, socialization and adaptation of new faculty into their professions (Kalbfleisch & Bach, 1998). This can be effectively accomplished through the implementation of a support system that augments guidance with experienced colleagues. Business and industry have applied the philosophy and principles of mentoring to attract, retain, and promote junior employees - which also improve individual and corporate performance and effectiveness. More recently, institutions of higher education are applying these same mentoring concepts and achieving many of the same benefits as business and industry.

Why bother with mentoring programs?

At the core of the mentoring process is an interpersonal relationship between an experienced faculty member and a new faculty member - or faculty members who are at different stages in their professional development - whereby the experienced faculty member takes an active role in the career development of the new faculty member (Newby & Corner, 1997). The experienced faculty member may serve as a role model, adviser, and guide in various formats that range from highly structured and planned interactions to informal interactions (Jipson & Paley, 2000). The underpinning assumption of mentoring as a form of learning and professional development originates from the belief that learning occurs through observing, role modeling and/or apprenticeship, and questioning.

Recently, there has been a surge of interest in mentoring for professional development within higher education settings. While the reasons for this are varied, there is a fairly

extensive body of literature that suggests mentoring programs lead to important benefits in university settings for new faculty, senior faculty, and the institution in general. Specifically, mentoring programs can help develop more collegial and compassionate departments and institutions (Boyle & Boice, 1998). It is a process where tacit knowledge may be passed on to less experienced faculty (Blanford, 2000) and is a means for making explicit the ethics, rules and skills that are necessary for productive performance within the university culture (Nicholls, 2000). Making tacit knowledge explicit is necessary for new faculty to become initiated into the traditions, habits, rules, cultures, and practices of the department and/or faculty they have joined. Simply making explicit what faculty do is a powerful means for preparing new faculty for their new roles.

How does mentoring benefit new faculty?

Through mentoring, it is more likely that new faculty will gain an understanding of the organizational culture (Kram, 1986), access informal networks of communication that carry significant professional information (Luna & Cullen, 1995), and receive assistance in defining and achieving career goals (Bogat & Redner, 1985). New faculty members have reported they feel that they are welcomed and valued through mentoring (Boyle & Boice, 1998). In academic settings, Queralt (1982) found that faculty with mentors demonstrated greater productivity as leaders in professional associations, received more competitive grants, and published more books and articles than faculty without mentors. Mentored faculty members also reported greater career satisfaction.

Experts in the field of mentoring maintain that mentoring programs attend to a variety of faculty needs over a period of time (Kram, 1986). For example, mentoring programs help new faculty to develop as leaders

through the receipt of professional and institutional information, sponsorship, advice, and guidance. As such, new faculty involved in mentoring are more likely to have opportunities to develop not only professionally (career orientation) but also personally (psycho-social needs) throughout their careers. In addition to creating new incentives and career opportunities, assigning mentors to work with new faculty provides a smoother transition, rather than an abrupt and unassisted entry into the professorial that characterizes the experiences of most new faculty.

How does mentoring benefit senior faculty?

New faculty members are not the only ones to benefit from mentoring programs. Mentors gain satisfaction from assisting new colleagues, improving their own managerial skills, and increasing stimulation from bright and creative new faculty members (Reich, 1986). Experienced faculty members who mentor new faculty may also derive enhanced status and self-esteem from being seen as successful and as having something to offer new faculty.

Research has also revealed that mentors find the mentoring experience provides opportunities for reflection and renewal of their own teaching and research career (Boyle & Boice, 1998). Nicholls (2002) further asserts that mentoring plays a crucial role for the mentor through the systematic critical reflection that occurs during the mentoring process.

How does mentoring benefit institutions?

In the last decade universities have become more concerned with enhancing productivity to survive in an increasingly competitive environment. Inherent within the concept of productivity in academic circles is the need to develop faculty, enabling them to make full use of their knowledge and skills. While most,

if not all, new faculty members have spent many years in a university environment learning the content of their subject areas, they typically receive little, if any, formal preparation and guidance in the knowledge, skills, and procedures necessary for them to become successful in their professorial roles. Recent recognition and acknowledgement of this void by institutions of higher education is motivating universities to initiate mentoring programs as a means to address this problem.

While many academic institutions have some form of mentoring activities (most often through informal collegial friends), only a few have instituted formal mentoring programs. Institutions that have successfully implemented mentoring programs have demonstrated that they are not only of benefit to new and senior faculty members, but also contribute to the general stability and health of the organization. In particular, mentoring programs have been found to be effective at facilitating the development of future organizational leadership and developing potential leaders (Luna & Cullen, 1995).



HEATHER KANUKA

About the Author

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The University of Western Ontario Teaching Support Centre

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS Fall 2005

WRITING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Presenter: Mike Atkinson, Psychology

Friday, October 7, 2005

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Teaching Support Centre,
Room 122, The D.B. Weldon Library**

This workshop will outline the construction of high cognitive level multiple-choice exam items. The first half of the workshop is a presentation on test construction, Bloom's taxonomy, and item analysis. The second half is an interactive session in which participants write and evaluate items.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR FACULTY RESEARCH

Friday, October 14, 2005

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Teaching Support Centre
Room 122, The D.B. Weldon Library**

Internal university grants and other sources of research funds will be discussed, as well as the Research Mentor Network.

DEVELOPMENT OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH STUDENTS

Presenter: Don Cartwright, Geography

Thursday, October 20, 2005

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Teaching Support Centre
Room 122, The D.B. Weldon Library**

Verbal presentations by students require the ability to acquire information, organize that material in a logical and coherent sequence, and to deliver the information effectively. This session will investigate techniques that can be used to develop a balance in verbal presentations – the research and organization of material plus an emphasis on the preparation/coaching of the students to deliver the talk.

**To register for the workshop(s), phone
ext. 84622 or e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca.**

Reflective Practice in Nursing Education

Pam Dietrich, Marilyn Evans, Cathy Walker

Western-Fanshawe Collaborative BScN Program, School of Nursing, UWO

We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us...Marcel Proust (1871-1922)

Over the past decade, the nursing profession has experienced significant changes in response to the increasing complexity of the health care system. To prepare professional nurses for work in today's health care environment many Schools of Nursing across Canada have adopted reflective practice as a core component of their nursing education programs. Reflective practice is a cornerstone of professional nursing practice and key to the development of critical reasoning skills needed to enhance quality of care when working with individuals, families, and communities. Many professional nursing licensing bodies include reflective practice as a standard of nursing practice.

Nurses spend their professional lives caring for and partnering with clients, families, communities, peers, and members of other health disciplines. One of the ingredients of healthy working relationships is good insight into one's own way of being in the world. Reflective practice offers a place to explore the personal side of nursing and to reflect on questions and issues arising from various practice experiences, whether that is in the classroom or clinical settings where nurses practice on a daily basis. Reflection in the education context provides students with the opportunity to explore their learning experiences, to create meaning of these experiences, and to develop new understandings, ways of thinking or acting. Although students are expected to apply theoretical and scientific knowledge gained in the classroom, such knowledge in itself does not result in effective practice. Reflection as a practice based learning activity helps students uncover and make sense of the tacit and intuitive knowledge found within everyday practice.

In the Western-Fanshawe Collaborative BScN program, reflective practice has become a requirement throughout all four years of the program. Throughout their clinical rotations, nursing students engage in reflective writing through the use of journaling or reflective practice reviews (RPRs). Students' reflective writing becomes a dialogue with self and the faculty member who works as a mentor in facilitating the process.

For the students using WebCT the on-line environment appears to provide support for reflective practice in that students are required to post their thoughts and feelings about their own and others' practice experiences. Some students report that the on-line environment provides them with the time to reflect on their learning and the opportunity to "get it right" when expressing themselves. When they are in a seminar or classroom setting, more verbal students may tend to dominate.

Johns (2000) outlines 10 Cs of Reflection that are useful for introducing reflective practice to any professional educational setting:

Commitment - believing that self and practice matter; accepting responsibility for self; the openness, curiosity and willingness to challenge normative ways of responding to situations.

Contradiction - exposing and understanding the contradiction between what is desirable and actual practice.

Conflict - harnessing the energy of conflict within contradiction to become empowered to take appropriate action.

Challenge and support - confronting the practitioners' normative attitudes, beliefs and actions in ways that do not threaten the practitioner.

Catharsis - working through negative feelings.

Creation - moving beyond self to see and understand new ways of viewing and responding to practice.

Connection - connecting new insights within the real world of practice; appreciating the temporality of experience over time.

Caring - realizing desirable practice as everyday reality.

Congruence - reflection as a mirror for caring.

Construction of personal knowing in practice - weaving personal knowing with relevant extant theory in constructing knowledge.

In the third year of the undergraduate nursing program, students participate in a family and community health course. Faculty have developed simple guidelines to assist students in the reflective process while working in community nursing practice:

- Try to make some quiet time for reflecting and writing in your RPR as soon as possible after each clinical experience.
- Concentrate on conveying your ideas vividly. Include as much detail as you need to illustrate images, thoughts, feelings and occurrences as they happen. Detailed reconstructions of your experiences will allow you to reflect on the same entries later on in the term or in your nursing career.

- Periodically, re-read your RPR and reflect on your entries.
- You may want to write about your ideas or plans before something occurs. Use RPR to think through what and how you are planning to do something.
- You may also want to jot down observations, thoughts, feelings, questions as events unfold or as soon thereafter as possible.
- Another time for writing may be after the experience occurs, again the sooner, the better.
- The RPR can focus on what you do in your clinical experience with individuals, families or community groups, or with collegial interactions.
- Ask self: what do you think and feel about your experience? What might you do if a similar situation occurs in the future? Is there any theoretical perspective that provides a different point of view that can guide your practice?

At mid term and end of term, students are asked to synthesize their reflections, by asking themselves: What themes and issues have arisen over the term? What themes and issues reoccur? What new insights do you have? Is there movement toward changes you wish to make? Are you confronting the issues that arise for you?

Reflective practice adds another critical dimension to students' learning and promotes a method for them to maintain their professional development and personal growth in practice after graduation.

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2005 Teaching Course Graduates and Instructors



Thirty new faculty members and librarians participated in the Teaching Support Centre's *Course on Teaching at the University Level*, August 15 - 19, 2005. A reunion for the graduates is planned for early December.



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Reflections is the newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library, Room 122, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario N6A 3K7. Telephone: 519-661-2111, ext. 84622; Fax: 519-661-3076; Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>