

Reflections

Newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre, The University of Western Ontario

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Reflections is the newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre at The University of Western Ontario.

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Making It Real: Student Engagement An Interview with Dr. Joy Mighty

Joy Mighty is Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Queen's University. She obtained her B.A. and B.Ed. from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. After obtaining her Master's degree in Education, she taught high school in both Guyana and Jamaica, and post-secondary courses in Trinidad and Tobago and in Egypt. She obtained her MBA from Howard University and spent several years in the private sector. But soon she realized that she missed the classroom. And so she enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the Schulich School of Business at York University. Joy was a professor in the Faculty of Administration at the University of New Brunswick before she joined Queen's in 2003. Joy is the president elect of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE).

Q: There's been a lot of talk recently about student engagement in higher education. Why should we be concerned about this?

A: If you're concerned at all about student learning, if you're concerned about adult learners, if you're concerned about the best learning practices, you need to know that the best learning is active learning. Student engagement promotes active learning.

Q: Don't we do this already in our classrooms?

A: For the most part, we have "professed" ... we have made assumptions about what it is that students need. We've been teaching, but we need to focus more on the process and let students be the masters of their own learning.

Q: Are you talking about the course content or the actual process of learning?

A: Both. Content can be engaging. For example, we are all engaged when we watch a movie. We are following the story, focusing on the plot. In class, we supply content of course, but there must be more than just interesting content.

You must take it a little further and help students make the connections. You need to make it real for them. Many times I think that we could easily drop half of the content in a course—it simply is not all that relevant.

Sure it may be relevant to some aspect of the course, but if it is not relevant to a student's own life, they will simply not remember it.

Q: Many people are talking about NSSE ... what is this?

A: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed in the United States about eight years ago. Participation by Canadian universities started around 2004. The intent was to get information about good practice in undergraduate education by asking students about the extent to which they



Joy Mighty

Continued on page 2

participated in their own university experience. Various items tap participation in classroom activities plus the ability to make connections outside the classroom, interactions with faculty members, the extent to which students felt challenged, etc. The survey was developed, in part, to address some of the issues raised by “annual ratings” publications (such as the Maclean’s ratings). Unlike the ratings publications, NSSE is designed and implemented by educational researchers. To date, there are over 1100 colleges and universities taking part in the survey, and over 30 Canadian schools participated last year.

Q: So how are we doing?

A: Better, but there is a long way to go.

Q: Can you be specific?

A: It is difficult to look at individual items, but we can look at some trends. In general, universities tend to provide a supportive environment for students, but do not do such a good job with active and collaborative learning, nor do we score highly on interactions with faculty members.

Q: Are the results any different for Canadian versus American schools?

A: If we look at the relative standing across similar types of universities, the Canadian schools score pretty close to their American counterparts.

Q: Does engagement tend to increase as students move from first to final year in their program?

A: Yes. There is more room for choice in the senior years and the structure of upper year courses is more likely to engage a student. For example, many programs have a capstone course in the final year (such as an independent study or thesis course). Students have developed the skills to carry out independent work and become very engaged in these types of courses.

Q: Could you put this type of structure into a first-year program?

A: Of course, but you need to build up the skills over the years. McMaster’s Inquiry-Based Learning initiative is a good example of this, and they do score better on the NSSE.

Q: So what can we do?

A: We are moving in the direction of more engagement and it is the responsibility of both the student and the university to achieve this. As educators, we can create the conditions for more engagement and then remove any barriers that exist in the system.

Q: Such as?

A: Class size, for example. Large classes can be a huge barrier to engagement. If you cannot reduce class size, then we must find ways to allow students to provide opinions and feedback—allow for challenge in these large classes. The use of “clickers” is a good example. By giving students a means to communicate, we instantly increase engagement with the material.

Q: What advice can you offer to instructors who do not have access to this kind of technology, or who teach relatively small classes?

A: In general, we need to keep in mind the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. Chickering and Gamson (1987) note that good practice:

- encourages contact between students and faculty;
- develops reciprocity and communication among students;
- encourages active learning;
- gives prompt feedback;
- emphasizes active learning;
- communicates high expectations; and
- respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

By following these principles, we focus on engagement rather than on professing. We will be more creative in our own teaching and reach more students more often. We need to recognize the resources that our students bring to the classroom, and learn to use these resources in our teaching.

Reference:

Chickering, A.W., & Gamson, Z.F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, 39, 3-7.

**For more information on the
National Survey of Student
Engagement see:**

<http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm>

Graduate Student Development Programs

NANDA DIMITROV, COORDINATOR OF TA PROGRAMS
TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

The last issue of *Reflections* introduced new programs to support the progress and development of graduate students as part of the 360 degree initiative, many of which are now well under way.

The first "Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning" was awarded recently. Graduate students entering Western mid-year benefited from a new FGS January orientation session for the first time, while the TSC's Winter Conference on Teaching expanded to provide an introduction to teaching for over 80 new and recently appointed TAs.



During the fall and winter, our faculty associate on graduate supervision, Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, organized focus groups with both faculty and graduate students to identify what characteristics of effective supervision and supervisor-student relationships help graduate students succeed the most. If you are interested in learning more about effective supervision practices at Western and other universities, take a look at our website's new page on supervision, at www.uwo.ca/tsc/gradsupervision.html

New!

MENTORSHIP IN ACADEMIA

by Donald G. Cartwright
The University of Western Ontario

Dr. Don Cartwright, Coordinator of the Faculty Mentor Program, has completed our first Purple Guide on *Mentorship in Academia*. If you would like to receive a free copy of this publication, please contact the Teaching Support Centre at ext. 84622 or e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca

The University of Western Ontario Teaching Support Centre

Course Design and Renovation Workshop

May 7 & 9 2007

9:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

The purpose of this two-day workshop is to facilitate the design or redesign of a course that you will be teaching in the upcoming year. At the end of the workshop you will have completed the necessary steps to create a course structure, identify learning objectives, and design learning activities to achieve those objectives.

Topics may include:

- Course and Instructional Objectives
- Universal Design for Course Construction
- Structuring an Effective Course
- Selecting Learning Activities
- Teaching Library Research Methods
- Team Teaching and Interdisciplinary Course Planning
- Preparing an Effective Course Syllabus
- Setting Course Policies
- Text Selection and Use of Course Packs
- Blended Learning: Using the web to enhance face-to-face instruction
- Matching Objectives to Assessment Methods
- Alternative Forms of Assessment

Enrolment: limited to 15 faculty members, so that the course goals and topics can be tailored to the needs of the participants.

Registration: see TSC Upcoming Events at

www.uwo.ca/tsc



STLHE 2007 Conference — EVOLVING SCHOLARSHIP

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

June 13 — 16, 2007, University of Alberta

www.ualberta.ca/~uts/STLHE

Note: Western has an institutional membership with STLHE. This allows the Western community to join the Society at a reduced rate. For membership information, go to: www.stlhe.ca

Cultural Detective: Some Clues for Decoding Each Other

NADINE LE GROS, LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR,
TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

“Culture [is] those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged.” (Edward T. Hall)

A few years ago, I was suffering through a workout on an elliptical trainer in a gym alternating my attention between a television monitor and a magazine. Prince Charles was on the news participating in a Canadian Aboriginal ceremony. While he was closing, he recounted the names and titles of his mother and father. The woman on the trainer beside me leaned over and hissed a comment about how arrogant Prince Charles was being by citing his lineage.

I had not seen what the Aboriginal leaders had done or how they had closed, but I speculated that perhaps citing the names of their ancestors had been part of the ceremony. Had this indeed been so, how might that piece of knowledge about intercultural communication have affected this woman's interpretation of Prince Charles' words ... and therefore his character?

The field of intercultural communication is based on over 40 years of studies in the fields of psychology, sociology, communications, and anthropology. **Cultural Detective** is a series of booklets created by interculturalists that presents the core values of various cultures. The booklets contain case studies to illustrate cultural

differences and explain how key cultural characteristics might be misunderstood by people from different cultures.

Core values related to initiative, authority, and collaboration influence how professors expect students to participate in class discussions and interact with the instructors during and after class. For example, on the *Cultural Detective Canadian Values Wheel*, individual initiative is listed as one of the core values of Canadians. The booklet states that Canadians “[t]ake individual proactive responsibility,” which others might perceive as “selfish.” When a Canadian student is actively engaged in a discussion during class, an international student who only recognizes learning as coming from a professor might think that the Canadian student was detracting from class time. This could then engender hostility towards the Canadian student and lack of respect for the professor for not exerting appropriate authority over the ‘disruptive’ student.

Using **Cultural Detective** is a wonderful way to inform ourselves of cultural tendencies and to try to anticipate how our behaviour and messages might be perceived or misperceived by members of other cultures.

Had the woman on the elliptical trainer beside me known about the norms of Aboriginal ceremonies, Prince Charles' behaviour might have been perceived as being entirely appropriate rather than arrogant.



If culture is a backdrop that frames how we interpret the actions of others, we need to learn about the backdrops of others so that we are either more charitable with our adjectives, or so that we might be able to suspend the application of adjectives altogether. Moreover, we need to learn about what our own backdrop is, given its unstated nature.

If you are interested in learning more about how your students from other cultures might perceive your class, consult our collection of **Cultural Detective** booklets.

*The Teaching Support Centre has booklets about Bulgaria, Canada, China, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Islam, Israel, Japan, India, Oceania, Russia, South Korea, Switzerland, Women, and the USA. More information is available about other cultures at www.culturaldetective.com. (Our only restriction is that these materials can only be used for reference as the **Cultural Detective** license stipulates that a user fee must be paid each time the materials are used in training.)*

Reference

Rutherford, D., Laroche, L.F., & Hofner Saphiere, D. (2006). *Cultural Detective Canada*. Retrieved January 1, 2006, from <http://www.culturaldetective.com>.

Spring Perspectives on Teaching

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Room 35, Health Sciences Building
9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Keynote Session:

Responding to the Rainbow: A Multi-faceted Vision for Higher Education

Aline Germain-Rutherford, University of Ottawa



Aline Germain-Rutherford

Plenary Session — Fellowship in Teaching Innovation Award Presentation: **Integrating Simulated Teaching/Learning Strategies in Undergraduate Nursing Education**

Karen Ferguson and Barbara Sinclair, School of Nursing

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Conversations on Effective Graduate Supervision

Elizabeth Skarakis-Doyle, Teaching Support Centre and the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Clickers 201: Good Things Get Better

Tom Haffie, Teaching Support Centre and the Department of Biology

Conflicting Cultures: Promoting Academic Integrity at Western

Selinda Berg and Harriet Rykse, Western Libraries

Kim Holland, Teaching Support Centre

WebCT: Tips and Tricks

Jeff Longland, Information Technology Services

To view details and register, visit the TSC website at:
www.uwo.ca/tsc

For more information, contact the Teaching Support Centre
phone ext. 84622 or e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca



SUMMER TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE

MAY 28 – 30, 2007

The Teaching Support Centre (TSC) and the Instructional Technology Resource Centre (ITRC) invite you to participate in the **Summer Teaching with Technology Institute, May 28 - 30, 2007, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

This three-day Institute will be an interactive and engaging experience, open to all faculty and course developers at The University of Western Ontario. These workshops will be of particular interest to:

- those interested in learning more about using online teaching technologies;
- those currently developing online courses using WebCT; and
- those interested in teaching online courses using WebCT.

The focus of this Institute is to highlight the essential knowledge and skills required for the integration of technology into either your face-to-face or distance courses. Participants need not have any experience with instructional technologies to attend; they need only to have an interest in how technology can enhance their curricula.

Participants will be required to bring relevant course materials (such as a course outline, weekly lectures, quizzes, and discussion materials). During the Institute, participants will have the opportunity to transform this content to engaging online instructional materials. Participants who complete the Institute will have the foundation of a WebCT site, and acquire the skills to build, teach, and manage their courses.

Registration:

See Upcoming Events at www.uwo.ca/tsc

Limited Enrolment:

Enrolment is limited to 25, so please register early.

The Academic Integrity Tutorial:

A tool to help your students to become aware of scholastic offences

KIM HOLLAND, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Academic integrity is a fundamental principle of teaching, learning, scholarship, and research. Western is an intellectual community where students and faculty members come together in an environment rich in intellectual resources to pursue a multiplicity of academic interests. We recognize, as a community of learners, that the avoidance of plagiarism and other scholastic offences is an intellectual and moral journey that one undertakes.

An academic integrity tutorial has been designed to continue the student's journey to understand what academic integrity is, and to give them the skills to avoid committing academic offences. This tutorial is a learning module that will initially be placed in all Distance Studies courses in WebCT. The instructor will have the choice whether or not to use this tutorial by the selective release settings within WebCT. In the future, this tutorial will be placed as a system-wide resource available to any instructor using WebCT.

The tutorial consists of five parts.

Part I explains what academic integrity is and how the tutorial is structured.

Part II gives the student an overview of scholastic offences by covering the key points of Western's policy on scholastic offences and the penalties that can be applied. This unit includes a review of what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of cheating and the impact that plagiarism has upon student learning. In addition, a discussion of how to avoid academic offences such as cheating and plagiarism is covered. This unit ends with a review of some methods instructors use to prove plagiarism.

Part III covers student services that are available when dealing with issues of academic integrity. The Office of the Ombudsperson, Student Development Services, and Academic Counselling contact information is provided. Help with locating and citing bibliographic references is also provided.

Part IV is a series of case studies that students can review to determine whether plagiarism has occurred. These case studies are the learning 'heart' of the tutorial. Each case presents an original source and offers some writing samples using this source. The student's task is to identify which writing samples display academic integrity, which do not, and why.

Part V is a multiple-choice quiz to test whether the student understands the concept and application of academic integrity.

If you would like further information about the academic integrity tutorial, please contact Kim Holland at the Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library, phone ext. 84612 or e-mail kholland@uwo.ca.

The Teaching Support Centre at Western wishes to thank the Centre for the Support of Teaching at York University for the idea of a tutorial on Academic Integrity.

TSC WEBSITE UPDATE

www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources.html

The Resources Section on the Teaching Support Centre Website has recently undergone a renovation and expansion, with the reorganization of material and the addition of new subject areas and links. These resources will be useful whether you are interested in finding information on a particular topic related to teaching, or are browsing for creative ideas to incorporate into the classroom.

The online information has been organized into topic-specific categories, and there are new resources on:

- Student Engagement
- Information Literacy
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Graduate Supervision
- Assessment
- ... and many other teaching topics!

Archived material can also be found for sessions presented at past *Perspectives on Teaching* Conferences and *Reflections* Newsletters. In addition, teaching and professionalization resources specifically for graduate students and teaching assistants are now available.

Please forward any suggestions for new online resources to tsc@uwo.ca.



Information Literacy Update

TOM ADAM, INFORMATION LITERACY COORDINATOR,
WESTERN LIBRARIES

Western's Teaching Librarians have enjoyed a busy instruction year partnering with faculty to facilitate over 375 information literacy and outreach sessions reaching more than 10,000 participants thus far in the academic year. Several have employed our new Assignment Planner tool to tailor instruction initiatives to the specific needs of a course or assignment and deliver important resources, services and time-saving tips right to the students' e-mail inbox. In addition to introducing the vast collections of resources housed in the seven physical locations making up the campus library system and the excellent tools available to assist in locating the very best of our online resources, Western Libraries' Instructors work hard to create fertile learning environments in which the 4-A Information skills can grow. Developing the ability to efficiently **Access**, critically **Assess**, effectively **Assimilate**, and responsibly **Apply** information not only equips Western students with key skills that facilitate excellence and foster academic success, but these proficiencies carry Western students beyond university and set the foundation for lifelong learning. We are eager to work with you to embed these important information management competencies into the fabric of your course or curriculum. Contact your subject Liaison Librarian or give me a shout in the Teaching Support Centre to discover the benefits of working with a Librarian.



The Teaching Support Centre has a site license allowing the Western community free access to *The Teaching Professor*, a higher education newsletter produced by Magna Publications. 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.

You can access this publication (PDF or Audio MP3) from a campus computer by going to the TSC website
www.uwo.ca/tsc

For information on accessing this publication from your home computer, contact the TSC at ext. 84622 or e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca.

Inside the March 2007 issue:

- Assessing Class Participation: One Useful Strategy
- Helping Students Learn
- Quizzes Are the Right Answer
- Making Cell Phones in the Class a Community Builder
- Cell Phones Do Distract in Class
- Views Presented in Class: Balanced?
- Preventing Cheating: Do Faculty Beliefs Make a Difference?
- Large Classes: Approaches Taken in One Discipline
- Active Learning: A Perspective from Cognitive Psychology
- Take a Quote and Think about What We're Doing
- Questions that Lead to Self Understanding

TEACHING RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Collaborative Learning and Group Work

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/wigintro.html>

Considering group projects and group discussions in your class? This website from the Derek Bok Center at Harvard University provides practical strategies on what to say and do in order to create effective group discussions and collaborative learning experiences in class. Its brief handouts can be used by both students and instructors to address common problems in group work, explain how people function in groups, to help include everyone and their ideas in group discussion, as well as to help understand and manage group processes.

Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html>

Lee Warren's article addresses how to manage difficult dialogues in the classroom and how to turn them into positive learning experiences for students.

Quizzes as Attention Getters

<http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/index.cfm>

Looking for new ways to get students' attention? Start the class with an online quiz. This website offers dozens of quizzes in each discipline. Quizzes are ranked by level of difficulty.

Teaching Tips with MERLOT



KIM HOLLAND, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

I know what you are thinking. A fine red wine always makes difficult class preparation much more enjoyable. While that may be true, this Merlot that I want to tell you about may have the equivalent outcome, without the same inebriating effects with over consumption.

MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm) is a teaching resource that you can draw upon for free that just might make your life a little bit easier. Merlot is a website portal, which started in 1997, that allows you to find resources, people, and learning materials that you are looking for in an easy-to-use website. Merlot's stated goal "is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by increasing the quantity and quality of peer-reviewed online learning materials that can be easily incorporated into faculty-designed courses." To accomplish its goal, the site has the learning materials organized in many different ways. For example, you can search by key word, by discipline name/subject category, or whether the material is peer-reviewed or has won an award. These are a few ways that you can find the learning materials that you are looking for on this site with over 16,000 learning resources. To demonstrate some of the range of material here is a brief description of a few learning objects:

DNA from the Beginning: DNA from the Beginning is an animated tutorial on DNA, genes and heredity. The science behind each concept is explained using animations, an image gallery, video interviews, problems, biographies, and links. There are three sections: Classical Genetics, Molecules of Genetics and Organization of Genetic Material. Key features are the clear explanations of classical experiments and the excellent photographs of researchers and their labs.

LangMedia Foreign Language Media Archive: This site presents information on culture and language in different regions of the world as well as videos and audio taken from the authentic regions. Transcripts in English and the target languages are included. LangMedia provides access to authentic materials that can be used in a wide variety of pedagogical settings. It features less commonly taught languages from Bangla to Wolof, as well as excellent materials in French, Spanish, and other more commonly taught languages. It has a learner-centered design and appeals to a variety of learning styles. With its strong cultural content and English transcripts, LangMedia can also be used in International Business, Area Studies and in any discipline where the study of authentic culture is featured.

WebQuest Page: Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University developed the idea of WebQuests to teach students how to effectively use the Internet for research. Webquests are inquiry-based lessons in which all or part of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet. A short-term WebQuest is designed to be completed in a few class periods. At the end of a WebQuest, a learner will have grappled with a significant amount of new information and made sense of it. Check out the link http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest_collections.htm These are lists of WebQuests created in various settings, mostly university courses and workshops.

Mathematical Visualization Toolkit: This site consists of a collection of plotting and solving applets featuring a uniform user interface. This site was selected as the 2005 MERLOT Classics Award winner for the Mathematics discipline due to its value and effectiveness as a set of teaching/learning tools. Visualizing mathematical concepts, especially in three-dimensional space, can be quite difficult for students. These tools and applications enable students to see the concepts in action and to come a deeper understanding of the underlying mathematics. In addition, the collaboration between the faculty, students, and Sun Microsystems staff, who together designed and constructed these tools, was quite unusual and impressive. The collaboration itself is an inspiring model.

The Fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier: The Fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier is a site that provides interactive multimedia analyses of Book I (and portions of Book II) of the WTC by Johann Sebastian Bach.

These learning objects range from images and animations to simulations to help you teach that difficult concept or assist your students to explore your discipline more deeply. To facilitate instruction, collections of Merlot objects can be compiled as personal collections that can be accessed easily to use for a specific purpose, class, or topic. Faculty and students may also use personal collections of others to construct meta-collections of useful learning objects.

Finally, Merlot has created a variety of Community Portals categorized by discipline to provide you with a broad spectrum of resources related to online teaching and learning and exemplary teaching strategies for continuous professional development.

The only downside of the Merlot site is that it will take some time to explore its potential, but it might have that learning object, simulation or website compilation that you wish you had, but did not have time to develop. Happy exploring.



Silence in Teaching and Learning CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



"Shhh. I'm thinking."

Silences can create spaces for the still, small, creative voice.
In those silences, the imagination and intellect can flourish.

"Silence! You, in the back row! Yes, you! Quiet! I'm talking up here."

The teacher speaks, erecting a wall between the student and learning.

In the spring of 2008, the Council of 3M National Teaching Fellows will publish a book that examines silence and teaching in a multitude of ways—*Silence in Teaching and Learning*. The Council invites you to write about teaching and silence, and submit your paper. We imagine a collection that explores silences that shape, block, enhance, strangle, or inspire teaching and learning. We welcome creative pieces, commentaries, meditations, research-based articles, expositions of theory, and demonstrations of practice. Your submission should interest the growing audience of people outside academia who are curious about the complex dynamics of teaching and learning in higher education.

Article Limit: 1,000 words

Deadline: April 30, 2007

Submit to: Sylvia Riselay, Executive Secretary
Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
McMaster University
1280 Main Street West, REF-201
Hamilton, Ontario L8X 4K1
riselays@mcmaster.ca

Coming Events in the TSC

Spring Perspectives on Teaching Conference
May 3, 2007

Course Design and Renovation Workshop
May 7 & 9, 2007

Summer Teaching with Technology Institute
May 28 - 30, 2007

New Faculty Orientation
August 9, 2007

Course on Teaching at the University Level
August 13 - 17, 2007

Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference
August 30, 2007

For more information, contact the Teaching Support Centre, ext. 84622; e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca; website: www.uwo.ca/tsc