

OLTC Program Monthly Report September 2021



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Program Director's Note

At the end of August, my children returned to school after being home since Ontario first closed schools in March 2020. Naturally, my six-year old had a number of worries about this imminent return—from bullies to misremembering French words. Luckily, my partner had heard about “hug buttons”¹ in the preceding week; so, we sat down, wrote her worries on a piece of paper and kept it with us all day, while drawing small hearts on each of our arms. We would carry the worries for her that day, we said, but if they came back, she could press the heart to hug us (and we’d be doing the same).

Later that week, I shared that story with the OLTCs during our weekly check-in, acknowledging that the following week they would be returning to university. During some free-writing exercises, I asked them to write for three-minutes listing their own worries upon their return. After some other prompts, I asked them to return to that list, read it, and see if they could imagine any solutions that we could do to alleviate those worries as a program.

We then went around and shared any worries and solutions the OLTCs were comfortable making public—a simple “pass” is always available for sharing exercises like these. Ranging from OLTCs that had never set foot on their campuses before to others reaching the end of the studies, there was surprisingly many shared concerns. *How do we go back to in-person lectures now that I've got used to pausing and rewinding video lectures? How will I adequately take notes when I've only listened and engaged during synchronous lessons and saved note-taking for when the recording was released? How will I manage my time now during back-to-back classes are all across campus?* What we found was that the OLTCs work over the summer has already addressed many of their worries for a return-to-campus, as they had advocated for robust, supplementary material online to support even fully face-to-face offerings. They were, rightly, proud to be one of the forefronts of supporting accessible and flexible courses.

Our work has been grounded in critical reflective practice and this has allowed the OLTCs to look back upon their own learning over the past year and identify what worked and what didn't work for them as learners. We continue to enter new frontiers and new complexities with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and student voices are an integral part of prioritizing learner-centered education, so that all students can access and participate in their courses. So, while the OLTCs may not have a “hug button” program, they are offering invisible support to many classes across our four institutions.



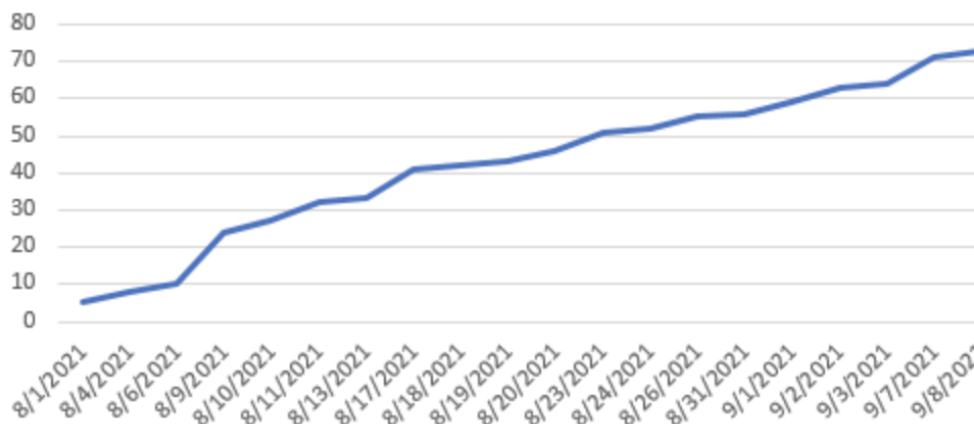
~ Matthew Dunleavy, Program Director, OLTC Program

¹ The earliest reference I can find for “hug buttons” is from Louise Mallet, a mother in Ipswich, in 2017.

OLTCs Support Over 100 Fall Courses

As the semester began, more course instructors signed up to work with OLTCs for their Fall 2021 courses. Considering each course instructor and each course has different needs, this is an incredible accomplishment and shows how dedicated our OLTCs are at supporting more learner-centered courses.

OLTCs have supported and continue to work with **70 course instructors** to support **123 courses**.



29 Students Embrace Curricular Work-Integrated Learning

29 students are now enrolled in *Teaching, Pedagogy, and Technology in Courses* with Dr. Toni Roberts. Supported by a CEWIL iHub grant, these students are delving into a curricular version of our OLTC Program. We look forward to seeing how these students expand the scope of the OLTC Program and offer new avenues for student collaboration with faculty.



Student Champions Submit Article To Hybrid Pedagogy

Following a [Call For Papers](#) for “Student Voices,” our three OLTC Student Champions—Cécilia Alain, Ben Boudreau, and Denise Roy-Loar—have submitted a paper to *Hybrid Pedagogy* about their role in the OLTC Orientation. As the call argues, “it is all too rare that we center (or even hear) the voices of students talking of their experiences; in classrooms, on campus, online, in Zoom, these stories are barely a whisper.” We are happy to part of the process of centering student voices and providing Cécilia, Ben, and Denise the space to imagine

successful student-centered virtual gatherings and reflect upon their vital role in building community in our cross-institutional program. We wish them the best of luck getting their timely reflection published.

Hybrid Pedagogy

OLTC Team Meets With Blueprint

Maple League Executive Director Jessica Riddell, Program Director Matthew Dunleavy, and Project Manager Lauren Boulton met with **Blueprint** this month, which has been engaged by BHER to conduct an impact evaluation of their WIL program. We had the opportunity to share the successes of our program and outline the ways financial support from BHER has allowed this program to grow and continue our Student-as-Partners model of collaboration.

Instagram For Student Success

Our Communications Fellow—Emma Trumble—continues to publish student-focused posts on **social media** to offer short tips and tricks to help student success. Ranging from PowerPoint annotation tools to practicing typing skills, these posts give quick, digestible information to help students as the new semester begins.

