



BI-WEEKLY UPDATE

Hats Off

The LAR / Ed Tech Team would like to tip their caps to Tracey Riley, Bryan White, and Joel Urquhart for their valuable contributions to our [podcast series](#). (The team is also thankful that CBC radio has not yet stolen Carl Doige to host Radio One).

Points of Note:

COOL TOOL ALERT!

How would you like your Moodle course to float through the cosmos or under the ocean? You can now make this happen with the Generico filter available in the toolbar in Moodle. Watch this short video to see how it can be added to your courses and please do not hesitate to contact Ed Tech for a walk through.

LAR / Ed Tech Road Show Dates

LAR / Ed Tech are coming to a campus near you, and we are excited to introduce you to the team, try some exciting new instructional tools and approaches as well as answer questions. Please pop by and visit us on the following dates on your campus:

Vernon: Monday, November 22 10:00 – 12:00 Room D223

Open House – Learning and Applied Research and Education Technology B120-130

Join us for our open house in B120-130 on December 17th from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm. We will showcase exciting new gadgets, tools, and our newly renovated space B130. We will be serving up coffee, tea and goodies so don't miss out!

ATTENTION Faculty and Instructors!!!

The LAR and Ed Tech team are looking for nine individuals to test either Kahoot, Wooclap or IClickers in the learning environment. We will provide three people each with the same tool to test over a two-month period, starting January 2022. Once the testing period is over, you will come together to share your learning about each tool. Finally, we will offer a one-hour open debate type workshop for faculty



and instructors on the tools. Please email learningandappliedresearch@okanagan.bc.ca if you are interested in becoming a tester before December 3rd. Names will be gathered on a first come, first serve basis. We will notify all participants by December 10, 2021.

Kaltura Virtual Classroom

Kaltura Virtual Classroom is an easy-to-use online teaching platform that is now available inside Moodle. With just one click, you can engage with your learners using interactive tools like those found in Blackboard Collaborate (whiteboard, screen sharing, and breakout rooms). However, the added features such as real time notes, live quizzes and video sharing and storage, will make you go WOW! Yes, Zoom is a great video conferencing tool, but the interactivity of Virtual Classroom is seamless, and you don't have to leave Moodle. On March 31, 2022, Blackboard Collaborate will be replaced by Virtual Classroom. Over the next 5 months we are offering workshops, small group sessions and one-on-one training on the Virtual Classroom platform. Please join us as we explore what this platform can do for your course delivery and student outcomes. Check out our [Professional Development workshops PDF](#) for a list of the remote workshop delivery dates and times. You can also contact us directly to book a small group session or one-on-one training for your department.

Portfolio Hosting through Open ETC

Are you considering using portfolios for students to synthesize learning experiences and reflect on their learning? Portfolio development is a learner directed form of authentic assessment, which can be completed for one course or an entire program. Digital portfolios are becoming increasingly adopted as they can host multiple forms of media and are easily shared. [Open ETC](#) is an open-source site that provides hosting and access to three platforms, WordPress, Mattermost and Sandstorm for educators and students. Please reach out to learningandappliedresearch@okanagan.bc.ca if you would like to explore the many possibilities of portfolio assessment.

Learning and Applied Research - Books

Want to have a good read about learning, teaching and student success? Come see us in B120 or [email](#) us to borrow one of our books. We have several to choose from and we are building our library. Listed below are just some samples:

- Evolving Education: Shifting to a learner-Centered Paradigm, Dr. Katie Martin
- Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Canada: Advancing a Critical Legacy
- The Power of Making Thinking Visible, Ron Ritchhart and Mark Church



Workshops

Exciting new workshops have been scheduled. You will find the [catalogue](#) on the Learning and Applied Research website. Please register [online](#).

Here are some examples of workshops coming up, don't miss out!

- **Managing Course Reading Made Easy with Talis Reading List**
- **Learning Outcomes and Assessment Strategies**
- **Get to Know Kaltura**
- **Indigenization Readings and Dialogue**

Indigenization – Readings and Dialogue

As a follow up to our first session discussing the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#), our next reading was selected, *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truths in a Northern City* by Tanya Talaga. Copies are available through the OC library, Okanagan Regional Library as well as Mosaic books. Our next session will be held from **12:00 – 1:00** on **December 3**. Please register [online](#) to receive the meeting link.

BCcampus Trades Summit Series

[Trades Summit Series 2021](#) includes sessions on **Leveraging Technology for Team-Based Learning, Humanizing Assessments, Building Communities of Practice: From the Micro to the Macro, and Podcasts for Learning Trades?** Sessions are held every Monday in November. Visit the link provided to register.

Interesting Podcasts

Please check out our new podcast section of the Bi-weekly. The podcast is called “Our Teaching Practice” and explores the experiences of Okanagan College instructors and faculty associated with their day-to-day teaching practice.

<https://anchor.fm/oc-lar-ed-tech>

Your course syllabus – is it inclusive and learner-friendly?

Carl Doige, PhD

As the Fall academic semester concludes, many instructors are turning their attention to preparing for the Winter semester. This may be a good time to revisit the course syllabus from the lens of learner-centeredness and inclusivity.

The course syllabus accomplishes many functions. Some of these are pragmatic and legalistic¹. That is, the course syllabus needs to convey information about due dates, required texts and resources, course content and learner outcomes, and policies related to grading, absenteeism, and academic



integrity. This sort of information is important for articulation agreements and for providing clear guidelines related to possible academic misconduct or student grievances.

But another (and perhaps more important) function of the syllabus is to serve as a vehicle to invite and welcome students to an exciting and supportive learning journey¹⁻³. Recent research indicates that a positive tone and messages of inclusivity in a course syllabus can favourably impact students' perception of whether faculty are caring, reliable, likely to promote student engagement in their course and whether the students, themselves, feel they belong in the course^{4,5}.

Several recent articles offer suggestions on how to create more learner-centered syllabi¹⁻⁴. These include:

- using non-academic language where possible,
- communicating in a warm positive tone,
- involving students in establishing some of the course policies and procedures,
- clarifying how students can be successful in the course, and
- providing rationale for course objectives, assignments and why students should be as excited about the course content as you are.

Authors have also provided recommendations and checklists for promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in course syllabi^{1,5}. In a Canadian context, the University of British Columbia Centre for Teaching and Learning provides online resources for Inclusive Teaching, including an infographic for writing a learner-centered/inclusive syllabus, which can be accessed at this [link](#).⁶

This all said, despite best intentions to produce a learner-centered and inclusive syllabus and despite in-class attempts to require students to engage with the syllabus (e.g. syllabus quiz), many instructors lament the questions that arise over the course of the semester: *When is the midterm? Is there extra credit?* Students can be forgiven for not assimilating all the information that is recorded in a lengthy course syllabus. A possible solution to the information overload experienced by students (and the possible frustration experienced by faculty) is to produce a syllabus companion that highlights important points and dates and answers those frequently asked questions⁷. See the following [student-friendly infographic](#) as a possible example.

The interested reader may wish to consult the references below for further information.

1. Spangler, S. (2021). Syllabus Solutions: Examining your syllabi for evidence of true student-centeredness. *Faculty Focus*, September 10. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/syllabus-solutions-examining-your-syllabi-for-evidence-of-true-student-centeredness/>
2. Bart, M. (2015). A learner-centered syllabus helps set the tone for learning. *Faculty Focus*, July 29. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/a-learner-centered-syllabus-helps-set-the-tone-for-learning/>
3. Moore, C. (2019). Seven ways to make your syllabus more relevant. *Faculty focus*, January 11. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/seven-ways-to-make-your-syllabus-more-relevant/>
4. Weimer, M. (2018). As you're preparing the syllabus . . . *Faculty focus*. January 10. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/youre-preparing-syllabus/>



5. Fuentes, M.A, Zelaya, D.G. & Madsen, J.W. (2021). Rethinking the course syllabus: Considerations for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. *Teaching of psychology*. 48(1), 69-79.
6. University of British Columbia Centre for Teaching. Learning and Technology: *Inclusive Teaching @UBC*. <https://inclusiveteaching.ctlt.ubc.ca/> (accessed November 14, 2021)
7. Bowers-Abbott, M. (2020). The straight scoop syllabus. *Faculty focus*. October
16. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/the-straight-scoop-syllabus/>

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Our LAR and Ed Tech team is here to help you with your instructional questions using Moodle and innovative ways to teach online, and we look forward to working with you to show you how to get the most out of the experience. Reaching us by our LAR/Ed Tech [email](#) is the **very best** way to connect with us. We aim to respond as soon as we are able so that we can support you in finding good solutions to your questions. Please ensure you include the detailed course name and as much information as you can when making an inquiry.