


# Online Course Guidebook

Always  
Learning

Tips for creating a  
welcoming and engaging  
online environment

  
UNIVERSITY  
OF THE FRASER VALLEY

TEACHING AND LEARNING



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## Acknowledgement

The University of the Fraser Valley is situated in the traditional territory of the Stó:lō peoples. The Stó:lō peoples have an intrinsic relationship with what they refer to as S'olh Temexw (Our Sacred Land); We express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living and working in this territory.



*Figure 1: From Victor, Carrielyn. (2018) [Flying Birds]. [Acrylic on Canvas]. UFV. Abbotsford, BC, Canada. Stó:lō artist. This piece shares a message of togetherness. The birds show us, sometimes even when we are flying in different directions we can still be in synchronicity. This shows in flocks of birds, and it also can be recognized in our work as people.*






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# Online Course Guidebook

## Terms and Examples

	<b>Terms</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Examples</b>
	<b>Synchronous</b>	Synchronous courses meet at a specified time and work is done together with instructors and students. This is usually a synchronous weekly meeting.	Class meets every Wednesday at 11:30 AM.
	<b>Asynchronous</b>	Asynchronous courses have content available online in the Learning Management System and students can access it at their own time. Content may be released on a weekly basis, but students are not expected to work on the course at a specified time.	Class does not meet at a specified time.
	<b>LMS</b> Learning Management System	The LMS is the space where all online content is shared with students. Students will log into the LMS to view their weekly content, activities, and assessments as well as view their grades and feedback.	Blackboard, D2L, Canvas, Moodle
	<b>Web Conferencing Tools</b>	Web Conferencing tools students and instructors to connect through video and audio on the internet.	Zoom, Teams, Skype
	<b>Video Repository</b>	Video repositories are a collection of course videos stored and organized for easy access and management on a cloud-based system with data stored in Canada.	Kaltura, LMS specific options

	<b>Course Designations</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>UFV's Definition</b>
	<b>TRD</b> <b>"Traditional"</b> Face-to-Face Learning	Traditional face-to-face meetings are in-person courses that may require access to the Learning Management System. However the course meets regularly in person.	A course, that is delivered in a classroom, studio, shop, or lab setting, requiring a student's presence on a campus. Some online access to Blackboard Learn (myClass) may be required. Meeting times: The dates, days and meeting times of classes will be clearly listed in the schedule of classes.
	<b>HYB</b> <b>"Hybrid"</b> Blended Learning	Hybrid courses involve a mix of synchronous in-person and synchronous or asynchronous online activities. This can mean that you have 30% online and 70% in-person, 70% online and 30% in-person or 50% for each. There is no perfect mix for all courses. Regardless of the mix you choose, remember that some content is better delivered in a specific mode. For example, rebuilding a computer in CIS would be best delivered in person, however editing a document in real time would be best suited for online. As disciplinary experts, instructors should discuss within departments and faculties.	A course delivered using a mix of in-person and online learning activities; online learning may be synchronous or asynchronous. Meeting times: The dates, days and meeting times of in-person classes and scheduled online learning activities will be clearly listed in the schedule of classes. This will require access to a reliable internet connection, a computer and, for some courses, web camera with microphone.

	<b>Course Designations</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>UFV's Definition</b>
	<b>HYX</b> <b>"Hyflex"</b> Hyflex Learning	Hyflex courses are offered through both online and in-person synchronously. Hyflex content is designed in a manner that allows students to choose to attend classes in-person or online throughout the semester.	During a course, students can choose to attend sessions in the classroom, participate online, or do both, depending on student need or preference. The flexibility enables students to change their mode of attendance weekly or by topic.
	<b>OLO</b> <b>"Online Only"</b> Online Asynchronous Learning	OLO courses are asynchronous and delivered through the LMS. The course content is available for students to complete on their own time without having to meet synchronously throughout the semester. This method has no synchronous activities for students other than exams which can be in-person.	A course that is delivered through remote means. You will be required to have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection to obtain and download course materials as well as to submit assignments and take tests and exams (in-person exams required for some courses). Meeting times: There are no scheduled meeting times for asynchronous (OLO) classes. Note: May require access to a device with microphone and/or camera for group or collaborative work. Attention: Attendance at in-person exams may be required for OLO courses.
	<b>OLM</b> <b>"Online with Meetings"</b> Online Synchronous Learning	OLM courses are similar to face-to-face courses with the exception that they are only offered online synchronously via a web conferencing tool through the Learning Management System.	A course that is delivered through remote means, but includes regularly scheduled online classes, often requiring a video connection with the instructor and class through web conferencing such as Blackboard Learn. You will be required to have access to a computer with a web camera with



	Course Designations	Meaning	UFV's Definition
			<p>microphone and a reliable internet connection to participate in the class, obtain and download materials, as well as to submit assignments and take tests and exams (in-person exams required for some courses).</p> <p>Meeting times: Dates, days and times of scheduled on-line learning activities will be clearly listed in the schedule of classes.</p> <p>Attention: Attendance at in-person exams may be required for OLM courses.</p>

**Note:** Requiring in-person final and mid-term exams for online courses should be avoided where possible as it may make it difficult for a student to attend. Instead, alternative assessment methods should be considered to preserve the accessibility and inclusivity that online courses provide.

Please note that if you schedule in-person final and mid-term exams you must indicate this prominently in the syllabus and advise students during the initial class session. Additionally, you are required to allow students to arrange for alternate off-site invigilation (Assessment Services can assist with this). (Office of the Registrar, email message to instructors, August 16, 2024)

## Introduction

Online courses, in general, differ than face-to-face courses in many ways.

Asynchronous online courses, for instance, lack the synchronized structure of face-to-face or synchronous online courses. For this reason, it is essential to incorporate alternative forms of structure into your OLO courses. Many factors need to be considered in designing the OLO course. Preparation for an OLO course is not as simple as copying materials from an OLM or HYB/HYX course. This guidebook outlines the important considerations for developing effective OLO courses given that more students are choosing online courses for flexibility and comfort with digital technologies (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Approximately 30% of all courses offered at UFV have online instruction, and approximately 10% are fully online (University of the Fraser Valley, 2022). Students are looking for a personalized and engaging learning experience from an expert in the field regardless of instructional mode. As an instructor, you are curating information that may be useful and helping students make connections and achieve designated learning outcomes.

## Territory Acknowledgement

It is important to include a territory acknowledgement in your online course as it demonstrates your commitment to reconciliation. This should be on the landing page and on your syllabus. The territory acknowledgement should be personalized and unscripted. It is recommended that you take TLC's Territory Acknowledgement workshop to learn the best practices for these acknowledgements and to ensure you are following the protocols provided by Stó:lō leaders and elders. ([Appendix A, Figure 2](#))

## Expectations

Students' expectations for OLO courses often stem from their own previous experiences, the experiences of their peers, and general assumptions of online classes. As you set expectations for your students consider that some may be experiencing their first university course, their first online course, and/or their first course in a Canadian post-secondary institution. To be culturally responsive consider including examples of your expectations such as the information required in an email or how they should address you. It is important to explicitly state what you expect from your students, and, in fairness, what they can expect from you. Expectations you may have of your students include due dates, AI usage (see TLC's [AI Guidelines](#)), assignments, participation, and communication expectations. Consider providing information on what students can expect from you including how consistently you will communicate, your preferred communication channels (course messages vs. email), and your anticipated response time. In OLO courses, students are not expecting to have synchronous activities, including synchronous group work and/or lectures. When a student chooses an asynchronous course, they may not have set aside regularly scheduled time to work on coursework, and they may not be able to find a time that works to be synchronous.

## Course Content

Content in an online course will differ from other course designations. For example, in OLO courses there are no regular weekly meeting times. In OLM courses, there may be some supplementary materials in addition to the synchronous meetings.

In addition to course content, it is important to provide students with information helpful to them as a student. This includes adding links to your course shell to resources like

the [Academic Success Centre](#), [Counselling Services](#), [Academic Advising](#), [Centre for Accessibility Services](#) , [Indigenous Student Centre](#), and any [other services](#) that could be valuable to students who may be feeling stressed or struggling are aren't aware of because they are not coming to the campus.

### **Accessibility**

Online courses have many accessibility considerations. Instructors have a responsibility to ensure students have equal access to materials and course content. While we may think [accessibility guidelines](#) are only for students who have different learning needs, following these guidelines can benefit all students. To make accessibility requirements easier to meet, you can use the accessibility checker within the LMS.

Here are some strategies to make your course and its content more accessible.

### **Accessible Content**

For videos and audio, ensure that you have closed captions and/or a transcript provided to students. This can be done within the web conferencing tool or the LMS. For written content, note that while PDFs are convenient, they are not accessible to those using assistive technology. Providing files in their original format such as PowerPoint or Word, is more accessible. Scanned materials are often distorted, making the text difficult for students to read. Assistive technology requires that these materials, which appear as an image, are converted into text. If you must scan documents for your course, you should use Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to convert the scanned image into text. Tools such as Acrobat Pro can help with this and you can reach out to TLC (at [asktlc@ufv.ca](mailto:asktlc@ufv.ca)) or ITS ([its servicedesk@ufv.ca](mailto:its servicedesk@ufv.ca)) for assistance.

## Assessments

When creating online assessments, it is important to consider the time provided to students to complete each question on a quiz or exam. Some students may require longer to read a question or recall the answer. Assigning the same time limit for all the questions can be problematic as some questions may take longer to answer than others. Consider providing students the questions all at once or allowing backtracking so students can navigate back and forth between the questions.

Be sure to access the information found on UFV's [Accessibility website](#) and review the Teaching and Learning Centre's (TLC) [HOPE<sup>3</sup> guidelines](#) (2023) for strategies to enhance accessibility. If you have concerns or questions about implementing accessibility guidelines into your course, please contact TLC at [asktlc@ufv.ca](mailto:asktlc@ufv.ca).

## Consistency

Online courses require consistency to help students know what to expect in any given week. OLM courses have a consistent meeting time scheduled in the timetable which needs to be followed each week. These course meetings should be conducted through a web conferencing tool in the LMS, such as Zoom. For OLO courses, posting your content in the same way at the same time each week can be very effective. The best way to do this is to have a folder for each week/unit. Another way to be consistent is to post announcements that introduce the upcoming week or summarize the previous week or perhaps both. These can be text, video, audio, or even a meme; anything that you can do each week to maintain consistency and increase engagement. Try to make these announcements relevant to the current semester by referring to discussions in the synchronous course meetings (for OLM) or the assigned discussions/videos. This

shows students that you have personalized the announcement rather than reused one from a previous semester.

### Amount

Online courses are assigned credits in the same way as other course designations.

When deciding on the amount of content to include in your courses, consider the number of credits. Policy 105 states:

"Course credits are intended to be a reflection of the total learning time, including class time and outside-of-class time, regardless of the instruction method(s) used... The traditional academic model for assigning course credit assumes that lecture of semester-based courses requires a 1:2 ratio of class time to outside-of-class time. In this model, a credit is based on one hour of in-class and two hours of outside-of-class study (total three hours per week of study time) for an average student over a 15-week semester, for a total of 45 hours." (University of the Fraser Valley, 2016)

This policy means that for a 3-credit course it is expected that there would be 3 hours of class activities and 6 hours of out-of-class time. For an OLM course this means you will have a 3-hour assigned meeting time and up to 6 hours outside of that scheduled time. For an OLO course this means that your 'in-class' and supplemental work should not exceed 9 hours of content per week. For both types of courses, the 9 hours *include* the time it takes for students to complete assigned activities. To help you calculate the workload for your online courses, BCIT has a [Course Workload Estimator](#). (Johnston &

Rolos, n.d.). This tool can help you calculate the hours of readings, writings, watching, exams and other assignments to ensure that you are keeping within the expectations of the course. If you have resources that a student may find interesting but are not required to be accessed in the course, consider making them optional and housing them on a resource page so students can refer to them as desired. Make sure you clearly distinguish optional readings and resources from required ones for your students.

### **Structure**

Online courses require a clear structure so students know where to find everything they need in the course. Consider creating a video at the start of the class describing the structure of the online environment. Structure can be demonstrated in different ways including creating weekly checklists or creating folders or learning modules.

### **Course Menu**

Your course menu can be organized in many ways. As long as your titles are clear so students can find the information, you can personalize the standard UFV template. Have your syllabus in a prominent place so that your students can refer to it regularly throughout the semester. Ideally your content from week to week would be located in one place (e.g. a folder) rather than scattered across several different menu items. It is helpful to create folders to separate content for your course by weeks or units. Each folder can be titled to reflect the focus/theme/topic of the week or unit and should contain all the information required for the week or unit, including readings, instructions for the activities and links to assignments and quizzes/exams. Many instructors will prefer to put their assignments and quizzes into separate menu items. Rather than

duplicating the assignment or quiz, it is a good idea to create links to them within the relevant folder. You can choose to make these folders available all at once or release them on a weekly basis. If choosing to release them one week at a time, consider putting them in reverse chronological order so that the current week always appears at the top of the page. When creating the folders you have an option to create text to go with the folder title. This section can summarize the week/unit and may include a checklist or schedule as shown in the next section. Alternatively, you could choose to create the summary inside the folder instead of adding additional text.

### **Checklists**

Checklists can help students stay on track and ensure they are completing all the required tasks each week. There are different ways that checklists can be structured. You could include a short summary within the LMS that tells students what they need to complete ([Appendix A, Figure 3](#)). You could also provide a longer checklist in a file that students can download and check off as they complete their tasks ([Appendix A, Figure 4](#)). Regardless of how you choose to create your checklist, ensure that you keep the distribution consistent throughout the semester.

### **Videos**

Videos can be a useful tool to provide your students with information in a different format than text and readings. Videos can be used for short lectures, tutorials on the LMS or assignments, feedback on submitted work, and announcements. Using video creates a sense of community within your online course because students have an opportunity to see you and feel that you are present in the course.

Aspects to consider while choosing videos include:



### **Length**

When planning, it is useful to assess the length and number of videos you are providing to the students. Studies show that student engagement peaks at the 6-minute mark of a video (Novak & Tucker, 2021). Despite this, a series of lecture videos of 15 - 20 minutes on given topics or concepts may be appropriate for a 3-credit course. If you need to lecture for longer than 20 minutes, consider breaking your video into smaller, more manageable videos that students can watch separately. Remember that the total time spent to watch your videos each week should not add up to more than the course delivery hours (3 hours per week for a 3-credit course).

### **Total number**

Consider the number of videos you are providing to students. Could some of them be audio only? Could you provide a summary handout as opposed to a video?

Regularly updating your videos is a good practice to keep content fresh and relevant. It is reasonable to have one to two videos per class with additional materials to support learning the content, such as handouts, problem sets, questions, analyses, etc.

### **Personalized**

If you are using outsourced videos such as those on YouTube or a reputable news site, consider whether it is possible to create a personalized video yourself that relates directly to your students and the discussions you have had throughout the course. If you feel that the outsourced video is the best option for the topic, consider providing a short video that summarizes the key concept(s) of the video and explains the relevance to the course.

When creating your own videos, consider:

### *Style*

- Are your videos going to be lecture style with just your face on a screen reading to your students? Consider screen sharing or adding a PowerPoint for students to have a visual effect. PowerPoint allows you to add your web cam video in the bottom corner so students can still see your face.

### *Location*

- Have a dedicated instructional space. Ensure you have an appropriate backdrop or add a virtual background to your web conferencing video tool. Remove distractions so that you can focus directly on the task at hand. Ensure you have adequate lighting so that students can clearly see your face in the video. In online teaching, looking directly at the camera on your laptop or webcam means you are making 'eye contact' with your student. Try to do this as much as possible even if you have to look at the screen or at a second screen from time to time to reference notes.

### *Quality*

- Use a high-quality webcam (preferably in HD) and an external USB microphone or USB headset rather than the webcam's mic. Test your setup by recording a short (30 second) video and listening to it after to ensure lighting and sound are working properly. The video room in G104 contains a professional mic and HD webcam that can be booked for these recordings through [asktlc@ufv.ca](mailto:asktlc@ufv.ca).

### **Materials**

Regularly updating materials for your courses each semester keeps them fresh and relevant to what is going on in the current semester. If you are reusing a video or

PowerPoint from previous semesters or years, ensure that the content is still up to date and relevant. Check your materials each semester to ensure they are still relevant and that all your links are still working. Some things to consider regarding your course materials include:

### Quality

Ensure any videos or images you present to students are in HD whenever possible and can be viewed in full screen without distortion. Scanned documents often have formatting issues so it is necessary to convert them into an easily readable format. PDFs or Word documents with clean and consistent formatting are recommended. Including the course name and the last updated date in the header/footer shows students that you have kept the materials updated. Documents with visual cues such as bulleted list, boxes around key ideas, or images to indicate clear separation between content can be helpful.

### Size

All online materials that are uploaded to your course use space in the LMS storage. When creating content for your course, it is advised compress all PowerPoint and Word documents, especially those with images, before converting to a PDF or uploading to the LMS. The [TLC media space has videos](#) showing you how compress files. Please ensure you are upload all videos to the video repository (e.g., Kaltura) rather than directly into the course so that the videos are not taking up space with every iteration of the course. The [TLC media space](#) also includes videos that describe how to add videos to your course.

## Links

When you mention something in your course such as “Ensure to hand in assignment 1”, include a direct link to assignment 1 to make it easier for students to find. Creating links within your materials helps prevent students from becoming overwhelmed or frustrated when searching for content. Make the materials as easy to access as possible.

When adding links to your course, edit them so that they open in a new tab or window. The default is to open within the same window. This means that a student clicking on a link is brought out of the LMS to the link and sometimes, it can prevent them from getting back to the LMS. By opening links in new tabs/windows it will keep the LMS open and make it easier for students to go back and forth between the link and the LMS.

## Releasing Content, Assessments, and Assignments

There is no right or wrong way to release your content. You can choose to release your content weekly throughout the semester, or all at once. However, this should be decided before the course begins and listed on the syllabus. Ensure that you remain true to the scheduling listed in the syllabus and inform students of any changes during the semester through announcements in the LMS. Consider releasing your content weeks in reverse order so the newest week is always at the top. This saves time as it prevents students from having to scroll down 12 items on week 12. ([Appendix A, Figure 5](#))

Release dates can be triggered based on the completion of other activities. For example, you can set a parameter that requires a student to make a discussion post prior to seeing other students' posts or that requires students to view a piece of content

prior to completing a quiz or assignment. If you would like to explore these options please [book an appointment](#) with a member of TLC.

## **Community**

Research in post-secondary education suggests there is significant value in fostering a sense of community in all courses (Gannon, 2020; Quinn et al., 2022; Weimer, 2013). This is equally important in online courses, however, how you create this community is different than in face-to-face courses. In traditional courses, there are opportunities for spontaneity and moments before/after class where students may create new connections with their peers. In an online class, you need to facilitate community-building interactions. This can be done in a variety of ways including discussion boards, collaborative activities (breakout rooms, Padlet, Mentimeter, etc.), as well as group work. You could also consider asking students to set up a 'buddy system' in which they can work with through the semester when they want to collaborate or catch up on anything they missed. It is also important to consider your [instructor presence](#) to enhance the sense of community in an online course (Quinn et al., 2022).

### **Discussion Boards**

Providing students with a space to discuss course topics is a great start to creating community. This allows for them to interact with each other and potentially brainstorm other ways of thinking regarding the topics in the course. Avoid the common issue of 'death by discussion', where students may feel overwhelmed by the amount of discussion they have to complete and read. This often results in students creating boilerplate responses just to meet the requirements. You can avoid this by having bi-weekly discussions and building an assessment that requires them to represent what they

learned and the connections they made from the discussions. This adds value and meaning to the discussion activities. Allowing students some autonomy on how and when they respond will create more fruitful discussions as they are genuinely interested in the discussion. You may also consider assigning students one week's worth of discussion posts to moderate for a grade. It provides an asynchronous way for students to work together, learn from and with each other, and allows for you to have another form of assessment for a discussion board. An alternative to a discussion board is using a community site such as Padlet ([Appendix A, Figure 6](#)) for your discussions which creates a rich and meaningful discussion board that is live and active throughout the course of the discussion. The TLC team can help you learn how to maximize the use of Padlet in your courses.

If you are requiring your students to participate in discussions, it is effective modeling for you to also participate in these discussions. You can read through the discussions during the week and chime in where you see fit. Importantly, you can create a summary of the discussion forum and highlight points that are important and correct and redirect students' learning.

Extra discussion forums you may consider for varied purposes include:

- “Trouble in Paradise” or “Group Help”: A space for students to address and resolve issues with each other, fostering collaboration and peer assistance. Let students know whether you will monitor this forum regularly.
- Community Board: Often called a “water cooler” or “[Course Name] café,” this forum allows students to share interesting finds or engage in non-course-related interactions, adding a touch of spontaneity.

- “Ask Anything” Board: A monitored space where students can pose questions and receive responses from you, creating a safe environment for seeking clarification.

### **Collaborative Activities**

Instructors are encouraged to use breakout rooms during live lectures for your OLM courses to allow students to see each other and communicate in real time. You can create opportunities for them to collaborate with other students in asynchronous groups or activities that build off each other’s conversations. When using breakout rooms, it is important to give clear prompts for what students should discuss and how long they have. Another method to build in accountability is to assign one person as the recorder of the main points of the discussion which can be completed in a shared template visible to the instructor and others in the class.

### **Instructor Presence**

Your students benefit from seeing their instructors as “real” – someone that cares about their success and is present for questions and concerns. There are many ways to do this, but following the steps in this guidebook is a good start. Posting a bio paragraph or video on your LMS landing page is an excellent way for students to get to know you. After introducing yourself provide opportunities for students to introduce themselves either through a discussion board or potentially a short (15-minute max) one-on-one meeting with you to get to know you more than just the video. Ensure that you have office hours (sometimes named as “student hours” so they seem less intimidating for some students). Ideally, these times will be at the same time every week and through a video conferencing tool. You can open the room up at the same time every week and

have it as a drop-in for students. Some instructors choose to use this as an optional synchronous review session to cover concepts that may be difficult for students to learn asynchronously. If you choose to make this a review session, ensure that you record the session and post it for students that could not attend. You can also create video or audio feedback for students to explain some issues that you may have found on their assignments.

## **Assessments**

### **Variety**

Offer students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in different modalities. This might include video presentations, art creations, podcasts, etc. Allowing students to choose how they represent their learning will often make it easier for students to complete the assignment and can result in higher completion rates and potentially better scores when the student is presenting the assignment in a modality that suits their learning preferences. While it may seem like more work at first, allowing students to complete assignments in a variety of modalities providing clear requirements and a detailed rubric for each modality will help streamline the grading process, making it comparable to assessing traditional formats.

### **Design**

When designing your assessments for an asynchronous course, ensure you are explicit with your expectations. Convey your expectations in multiple ways. A detailed rubric that shows students what you are looking for in each section of the assignment can offer valuable guidance. Example assignments that show students what A+ work looks like and what B and C work would look like is also helpful. Consider creating templates for



assignments where appropriate ([Appendix A, Figure 7](#)). These strategies provide students with a clear framework and helps ensure that students understand what is expected of them.

### **Quantity**

Be mindful of the number assignments you assign. Students are often taking multiple classes at the same time and have multiple assignments and deadlines. Keep in mind the course amount as discussed earlier in this guidebook when creating assessments for the course. As a reference point, a 3-credit course can have two major assignments, two major assessments, and two to three minor assignments that can function as formative assessment tools. Major assignments and assessments might include a report or essay, an exam, a culminating portfolio of lab or other discipline-specific activities, a creative piece, or project artifacts. Minor assignments and assessments might be discussion post analyses, reflections, quizzes, group presentations, reading analyses, journals, lab reports, and in-class activities. Balancing the type of assessments helps maintain a manageable workload for students. Provide timely and informative feedback on student work to keep students informed of their progress throughout the course.

## Essentials vs Extras

Identifying the essential features vs the extras in your course will allow you to meet course learning outcomes while still providing scope for variation. Think critically about what is essential to your course. Complete all the essentials you've identified and address the extras when there is time. Identifying these essentials and extras while organizing your course can help guide you through your course design. We have provided some examples here of essentials and extras for different areas of content (Burns, 2021).

### Accessibility

#### Essentials:

- Ensure your materials and assessments are accessible to all students.
- Provide students with the original file you have created such as .docx or .pptx rather than inaccessible PDFs.
- Avoid the use of scanned materials. If you must use scanned materials, ensure that you use the OCR function of scans in order to make them accessible.

#### Extras:

- Consider removing time limits on assessments. Remember that not all questions will take the same amount of time and students will take longer to recall the information than you will.
- Some students with auditory learning preferences can benefit from having books that come with audio files.

## Consistency

### Essentials:

- Create/release materials on a regular schedule so students know when to expect them. Include this information in your syllabus.
- Demonstrate and model file organization.

### Extras:

- Create relevant announcements summarizing the week past or the week to come. These could be videos/audio/text/visual or graphic organizer, etc.
- Create a road map of what your course structure looks like.

## Amount

### Essentials:

- Keep the amount of course content consistent with the number of credits assigned to the course. See the suggested breakdown of assignments and assessments in previous section.

### Extras:

- Provide a resource page for optional videos/lectures/articles that students may find useful.

## Structure

### Essentials:

- Provide explicit directions on where to find important information.
- Keep a clear and logical course menu.

- Consider creating a checklist so students are aware of what is expected each week/unit.

### **Extras:**

- Create activities, quizzes, scavenger hunts, discussions, etc. on how to find things in the LMS environment.
- Create a video showing students where they can find the important information.
- Identify different weeks with different visual images/colours/etc. These can be reflective of the themes in the course.

### **Videos**

#### **Essentials:**

- Keep videos short and relevant to the material and content of the course.
- Keep the total number of videos to a reasonable number, ensuring they are balanced with other forms of engaging students with the content.
- Ensure you have an appropriate background and adequate lighting.
- Personalize the videos to foster engagement.

#### **Extras:**

- Provide shorter chunks of long videos.
- Utilize HD abilities of your webcam and video recording software.

### **Materials**

#### **Essentials:**

- Provide the highest quality materials you can or have access to.

- Release materials at the same time every week so students know when to expect them.
- Provide all the materials in one folder for each unit/week so students know where to find them.

### Extras:

- Ensure that your materials are compressed prior to uploading to the LMS.
- Edit links to open in a new tab/window rather than within the same window.

### Create Community

#### Essentials:

- Include opportunities for collaborative activities.
- Create peer feedback opportunities.
- Incorporate discussions and use tech-friendly features.
- Ensure students can feel your presence within the course, be it through videos, office/student hours and/or review times.

#### Extras:

- Invite other courses for collaborative activities.
- Create cross-generational and cross-cultural groups to provide students with insights from diverse experiences.
- Consider having students moderate discussions for credit instead of a minimum number of replies.
- Invite students at the beginning of the course to create a short bio-video or Padlet post with a photo.

- Provide extra forums for students to create their own community.
- Utilize alternatives to Discussion Boards such as Padlet.

## **Assessments**

### **Essentials:**

- Make your expectations clear in all assignments, rubrics, grading methods, etc.
- Identify success criteria and share them with the students.
- Create routines for assessment.
- Allow for assessment in multiple modalities.
- State a clear purpose for the assessment.
- Utilize summative (incremental) and formative (cumulative) assessment to ensure students have multiple opportunities for growth.

### **Extras:**

- Provide anonymized examples of A+ work (with permission from past students).
- Allow students to view and respond to classmates' assignments.
- Consider smaller low-stakes assessments, but not too many.

## **Relevant and Authentic Assessments and Materials**

### **Essentials:**

- Tailor tasks to allow for students' interests.
- When introducing complicated learning experiences, begin with a clear understanding of what you are expecting from the students and make it relevant to what they have learned in order to provide reasoning behind the task.
- Provide written and visual instructions for tasks whenever possible.

### **Extras:**

- Provide students with opportunities to choose the audience for their work.
- Curate some local/global examples of the concepts you are teaching.
- Have students look for news articles and other current events related to the work that they are presenting.

### **Resources**

#### **Essentials:**

- When curating resources, keep your learning objectives in mind.
- Ensure resources are authentic, relevant, and relatable to students and the content.
- Choose resources that promote student interest.

#### **Extras:**

- Collaborate with colleagues to create resource databases.
- Work with the library to teach students how to curate their own resources.
- Ask students to keep a record of the resources they use throughout the course and share it with you for the next semester. Have a resource page in your LMS course.

## Appendix A: Examples

### Territorial Acknowledgements

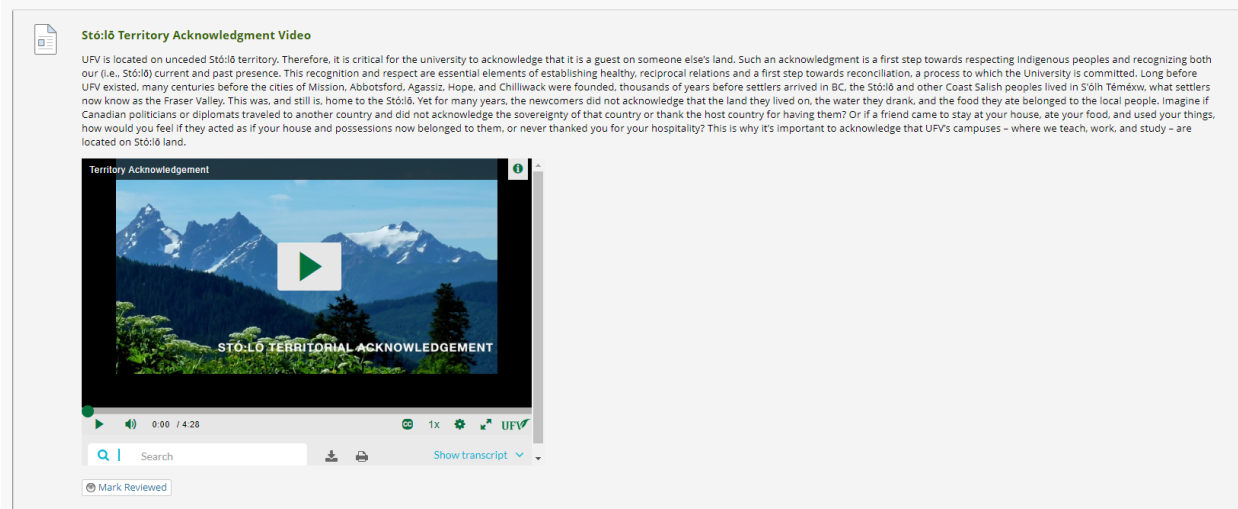


Figure 2: From Taylor, E. (2024). *Stó:lō Territory Acknowledgment Video* [Course Item]. University of the Fraser Valley Blackboard. <https://myclass.ufv.ca>

#### Figure reads:

“UFV is located on unceded Stó:lō territory. Therefore, it is critical for the university to acknowledge that it is a guest on someone else’s land. Such an acknowledgment is a first step towards respecting Indigenous peoples and recognizing both our (i.e., Stó:lō) current and past presence. This recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations and a first step towards reconciliation, a process to which the University is committed. Long before UFV existed, many centuries before the cities of Mission, Abbotsford, Agassiz, Hope, and Chilliwack were founded, thousands of years before settlers arrived in BC, the Stó:lō



and other Coast Salish peoples lived in S'ólh Téméxw, what settlers now know as the Fraser Valley. This was, and still is, home to the Stó:lō. Yet for many years, the newcomers did not acknowledge that the land they lived on, the water they drank, and the food they ate belonged to the local people. Imagine if Canadian politicians or diplomats traveled to another country and did not acknowledge the sovereignty of that country or thank the host country for having them? Or if a friend came to stay at your house, ate your food, and used your things, how would you feel if they acted as if your house and possessions now belonged to them, or never thanked you for your hospitality? This is why it's important to acknowledge that UFV's campuses – where we teach, work, and study – are located on Stó:lō land.”

## Course Checklists

### Week 1

#### Week 1 Activities

All activities Due Sunday Midnight End of Week 1

**Demonstrate:** Session 1.1 & 1.2: Lakewood Community Health Services - This is the main module in order to learn how to complete the skills. **This is a mandatory activity, however you do not need to hand it in.**

**Practice:** Review Assignment Pg 1-54 - This is a review assignment that will review the skills you completed in the module. If you are comfortable with the skills from the sessions, you do not need to complete this. **This is an optional activity.**

**Quizzes:** Quick Checks 1.1 & 1.2 - These are located in the Assignments and Tests on the menu on the left hand side. **This is a mandatory activity.**

**Assignment:** Great Giraffe (1-55) - You can hand this in on the Assignments and Tests menu on the left hand side. **This is a mandatory activity. Keep this file as you will be using it each week.**

Figure 3 From Boisvert, C. (2024). Weekly checklist: Week 1 [Course item]. University of the Fraser Valley Blackboard. <https://myclass.ufv.ca>

GEOG 331		Weekly checklist	Sept - Dec 2022
		TOPICS OF THE WEEK	ASSIGNMENT / QUIZ
Week 9	Nov 7 - 11	16. Environmental monitoring and communication	Outline of your grant proposal (Due Nov 18)
<p><b>1. Lectures</b> (on Blackboard – Course Content; with and without audio commentary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental monitoring and communication lecture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Synchronous session recording (to be posted by November 10<sup>th</sup> at the latest) with guest speaker, Aleesha Switzer, a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) at the Fraser Valley Conservancy specializing in amphibian conservation and ecology.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Readings</b> (for all readings, try to identify the main points and note why they are important)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read the article in the Course Content &gt; Readings folder on the role of video games in environmental communication. Do you agree that the video game industry (including gamers themselves) can really promote and engage with environmentalism?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Read this article</a> to learn more about the growing movement in environmental monitoring. Do you think results from citizen science research are just as trustworthy as results from research undertaken by scientists alone? Why or why not?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Read this article</a> to consider how climate change is communicated. Which term do you prefer: climate change or climate crisis? Why? What is the impact on communication when using either term?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Read this article</a> to see how the media was used over the years to shape the messaging of oil's impacts from the fossil fuel industry.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Visit the ECO Canada website</a> to read more about the career of an Environmental Communications Officer, and learn about the associated job skills. If you are interested, feel free to explore the other job profiles on the website.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Videos</b> (same as the readings, note down and understand the important points of each video)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Watch this short video</a> to consider how images being used to engage people with pro-environmental communication can actually have the opposite effect. Why is personal relevance important in environmental communication? How might this affect the environmental assessment process?</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Synchronous session – Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am-14:20pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For this HyFlex course, you can join in-person (room D225) or online (“Collaborate classroom”)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Live attendance is not mandatory. If you do not attend the live session, you <b>MUST</b> watch the synchronous session recording in your own time. A recording of the session will be made available on Blackboard under “Course Material” → “Other recordings”.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There is <b>no</b> activity sheet this week.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Discussion boards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The pros and cons of environmental images</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Assignments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assignment #4: Outline of your group’s grant proposal. Due November 18<sup>th</sup>. See the Assignments section and the Week 9 Synchronous Session for more details. <a href="#">Please add your name to this Google Sheet</a> to indicate if you plan to work in a group or as an individual for these assignments.</li> </ul>			

Figure 4 From Pizzirani, S. (2022). Weekly checklist: Week 9 [Class handout]. University of the Fraser Valley Blackboard. <https://myclass.ufv.ca>

## Content Release Order



[Excel Week 12 \(March 18\): Module 7 \(con't\) and Module 12](#) ▼



[Excel Week 11 \(March 11\): Module 6 \(con't\) and Module 7](#) ▼



[Excel Week 10 \(March 4\): Assignment/Quiz 3 and Module 6](#) ▼



[Excel Week 9 \(Feb 26\): Module 5 continued](#) ▼



[Excel Week 7 \(Feb 12\): Module 5 and Assignment/Quiz 2](#) ▼



[Excel Week 6 \(Feb 5\): Module 4](#) ▼



[Excel Week 5 \(Jan 29\): Module 3 continued](#) ▼



[Excel Week 4 \(Jan 22\): Module 3](#) ▼



[Excel Week 3 \(Jan 15\): Module 2](#) ▼

Figure 5 From Nehring, C. (2024). Course content [Menu item]. University of the Fraser Valley Blackboard. <https://myclass.ufv.ca>

# Communication

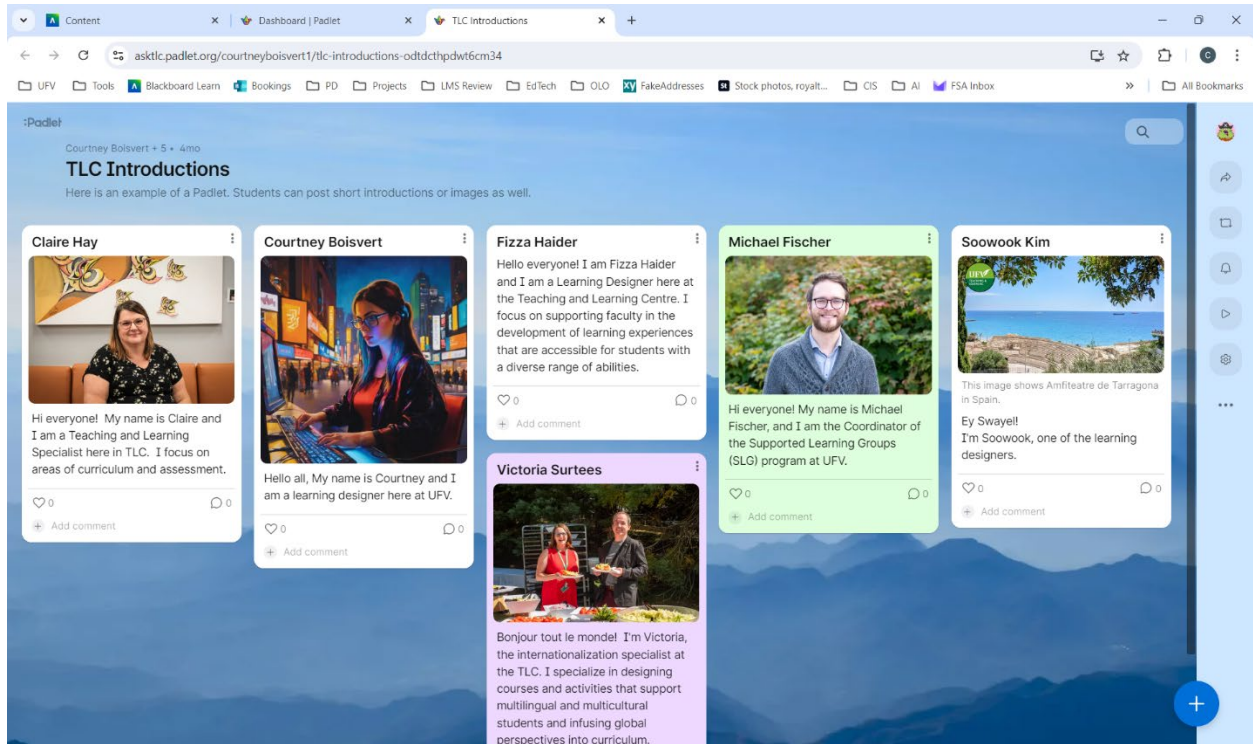


Figure 6 From Boisvert, C. (2024). TLC introductions [Padlet]. University of the Fraser Valley. <https://asktlc.padlet.org/courtneyboisvert1/tlc-introductions-odtdchpdwt6cm34>

## Sample Assignments

### Sample Outline

- **Introduction (5-10 pages) *Begin the Story*** (present tense)  
Purpose – why, where does the interest come from?  
Context – you, your school, your situation, your problem, the issue, the environment, etc.  
Research Questions – the questions that I want to explore...  
Scholarly significance – because...

- **Body (15-30 pages)**

#### **Tell *About the Story*** (present tense)

Literature Review – what is said about this topic and the questions surrounding it?

Comparing and contrasting different perspectives and approaches to the topic by researchers; identifying the key ‘components/pieces’ of the topic that I think I want to explore (that may change after I explore them so I may have to go back and amend my literature!)

Theoretical Framework – some include a ‘lens’ through which to explore their topic, some use the framework as a ‘bed’ in which to situate/plant/rest their topic, others use this as way to ‘hang’ or ‘hinge’ their topic. The TF *informs* their topic.

#### **Tell *How the Story was Constructed*** (past tense)

Methodology – the type, the approach, and the requirements; gives the reader the “how” of your study in academic terms.

Data Analysis – includes a paragraph or two about your data sources/participants and describes exactly what you did in coding and/or analyzing data; gives the reader the “how” in application/practical terms.

#### **Tell the Story!** (past tense)

Results – presenting the data, codeweaving, reporting, conveying evidence, themes/categories (theme one, theme two, etc.; order of events, simple to complex, macro concepts)

- **Conclusion (5-10 pages)**

#### **Reflect on the Story** (past/present tense)

Discussion – a conversation between your results, the literature/theoretical framework, and your original question(s); make connections; confirm/refute; clarify a theory with your new insights; enhances/adds to a model; provide more language to explain a phenomenon, identifies key changes in ‘before/after’ studies, etc.

Conclusions – the key take aways, the ‘ahas’, the final outcomes in plain language; explain the ‘so what’ as implications for your practice, for future actions; make recommendations, construct a list, provide limitations of the study, suggest where to from here?

#### **Possibilities for the *Next Story*?** (present tense)

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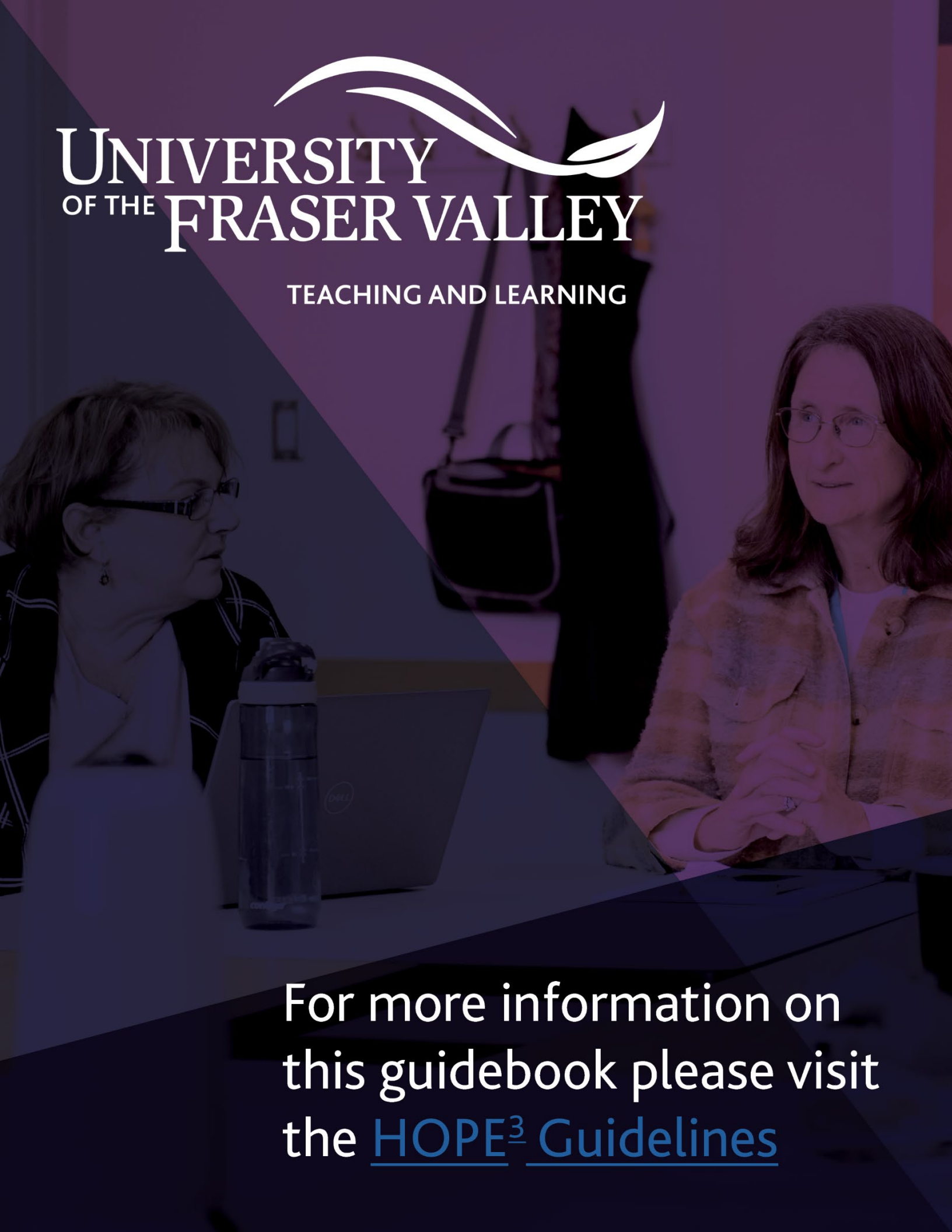
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TEACHING AND LEARNING



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