

TRU LEARNING

News from the Centre for Student Engagement and Learning Innovation



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

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Charting New Pathways for Learning at TRU

By Tracy Penny Light



These days there is a lot of talk about reimagining higher education. This comes from the acknowledgement that learners today are different – when I began university in the late 1980s, I did not feel pressure to declare a career goal. In fact, I changed majors about three times in as many years and eventually decided on a career in law (which is clearly not where I ended up)! Today, though, students on our campuses feel different pressures than I did because of wider societal expectations that dictate they should enter higher education with a career in mind. Personally, I don't like the idea of "higher education for a career" but prefer instead to think about the ways that we can foster learning "across the learning career." In order to do this, we need to mediate the tensions that exist when students come to us with a career in mind, without necessarily understanding what learning will entail to get there. In his recent book, *The Purposeful Graduate*, Tim Clydesdale advocates that we ought to design programs that help students to develop their ability to learn who they are, not only as learners, but also as citizens. In so doing, we provide them opportunities to develop lifelong learning abilities that will be transferred to their life beyond our campuses. Even more valuable is when we give learners the opportunity to make that learning visible.

For over a decade I have been using ePortfolios in courses and programs because they open up opportunities for learners to make connections between learning in the classroom and in

different contexts (the workplace, in their communities, and beyond). I have consistently been amazed at the ways that individuals make sense of their learning experiences when we open up space to think beyond the classroom. This approach is valuable because it bridges learning in the curriculum and the co-curriculum so we can see new connections (for instance, I've learned about how students transfer knowledge from my undergraduate history and film course to civil engineering and competitive cycling – who knew that was possible?!). The bottom line is that when we provide opportunities for learners to make connections between learning in different contexts we open up space for them to recognize themselves as diverse and unique learners and to plan for their own future learning development.

Of course, this notion can be applied to ALL learners and in the Centre, we believe that everyone should be empowered to discover who they are as learners to identify their unique potential whether they are undergraduates, graduates, faculty, staff, or community members. Our Pathways for Learning program is designed to recognize (formally and informally) diverse learning experiences in classrooms, the workplace, or in everyday life. Being able to reflect on our learning and articulate what we know, understand, and are able to do fosters mindfulness and shapes us as individuals. And the intentional collection and curation of the evidence of our abilities to show others (employers, graduate schools, promotion and tenure committees, friends or family members) allows us to celebrate successes, as well as identify gaps or failures in our learning so we can move forward and improve.

Throughout this issue, you will see examples of this thinking in practice - we hope it inspires you to reflect on where you want to go with your learning and to begin to chart your own pathway.

Unintended Pathways: Journey to Tourism Management

By Tracy Penny Light

Robert Hood didn't intend to pursue a career in Tourism Management – in fact, initially he planned to contribute to the field of public recreation management having spent most of his education focused on recreation and leisure studies. But, as he recounts in a recent reflection on his career in a forthcoming book entitled, *Travel and Tourism Management for the Curious: Why Study Travel and Tourism Management?*, career opportunities allowed him to transition his interest in public recreation management to a focus on tourism. Rob's shift in interests is not uncommon. Many of us have had unconventional career paths following our education and this will be even more common for future graduates. Yet many of us do not share our perspectives on education

or our disciplines, despite the value of reflecting on our own beliefs about teaching and learning and making that thinking visible. For Rob, this process allowed him to identify that, "knowing, understanding and debating phenomena from various perspectives versus limiting knowledge and understanding to one specialization/discipline" was his own "personal preference" for learning that has allowed him to make contributions in the exploration of tourism in small communities. This work, which often requires understanding the perspectives of stakeholders "who wear many hats", benefits from his generalist perspective because he understands the perspectives of the community constituents. His work over his career has reinforced for

him the importance of multidisciplinary education because he believes that this approach "enable[s] more effective human action...for effectively addressing complex human problems." Rob advocates developing programs that allow for this kind of learning and credits his path to tourism management for making him aware of the value of building learning across the disciplines.

To read Rob's full chapter, look for: Hood, R. (2015). "Tourism Management Education: A Personal Account". In K. Vaidya (Ed.) *Travel and Tourism Management for the Curious: Why Study Travel and Tourism Management?*

Innovative Teaching Practices in Mexico

By Brian Lamb

When I got back from Mexico, I did not know how to respond to the question, "How was your holiday?"

That was because I was coming back from two of the most intense and hard-working weeks of my life. I was part of a project hosted at the University of Guadalajara (UdG), in partnership with the Justice Institute of British Columbia. The challenge was to work with more than 300 UdG instructors (two one-week cohorts of 150+ each) who had just been issued new iPads in the practice of active, participatory learning using mobile, networked technologies.

The week was primarily composed of "studios". Each participant took part in "foundational studios" on subjects like student-centred course design and collaborative learning. They then chose from a set of studios

on skills such as audio and video production, alternative assessments, and open educational resources. I fulfilled a long-held dream when I put together a studio on using and creating animated GIFs. What was notable about these studios was the focus on hands-on practice. We kept the lecturing to no more than ten minutes per studio, directing participants to a series of "challenges" ranging from very easy to quite advanced. It was gratifying to see how doggedly and creatively our participants tackled these challenges.

We managed the activities in a WordPress-based open environment that you can check out at: <http://udg.theagoraonline.net/>. We just moved on to the "virtual" phase, where participants apply what they learned in their courses, with online coaching. I'm thrilled to be returning



Brian Lamb, onsite in Mexico.
Summer 2015

to Guadalajara to see how it all turns out and look forward to using what I learned here at TRU.

Brian Lamb is the Director of Innovation, Open Learning and is a regular columnist for TRU Learning.

Supporting Success Through Open Textbooks

By Irwin Devries



For several years Open Learning has been involved in developing online courses based on open textbooks. Currently these textbooks are in the areas of psychology, geology, history and sociology. The open textbook development is connected to the provincial BCCampus Open Textbook project, funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education.

In a presentation at TRU earlier this spring, Clint Lalonde of BCCampus explained that 65% of students surveyed have avoided purchasing textbooks due to their unaffordability, and 35% have reduced their course load to avoid textbook purchases. Further, because of rapid version updates and increasing use of digital textbooks that disappear after a certain period of time, the time-honoured option of selling and buying used textbooks is increasingly under attack. The purpose of open textbook initiatives in BC, across North America and around the world, is to address these problems and ensure students are able to access the textbooks they need to undertake their education.

As defined by Lalonde, open textbooks are “licensed under an open copyright license, and made available online to be freely used by students, teachers and members of the public. They are available for free as online versions, and as low-cost printed versions, should students opt for these.” In addition, faculty are free to adapt, revise, remix, supplement and otherwise customize open textbooks, which are available in both ready-to-distribute and editable formats. All open textbooks are faculty-written and peer reviewed to ensure quality.

In addition to building online courses based on open textbooks, Open Learning has begun to work with BCCampus to edit and produce an open textbook, with the intent of growing our expertise in, as well as supporting and sustaining, this important student-centred movement in open education into the future.

Irwin Devries is the Director of Curriculum Development, Open Learning, at TRU and is a regular columnist for TRU Learning

Moodle News

By Tracy Penny Light

As you may be aware, our colleague and friend Doug Baleshta retired on August 31, 2015. Doug tirelessly provided support to faculty, staff and students on their usage of our Learning Management System (LMS), Moodle. Thank you, Doug, and all the best!

Over the summer, a team-based collaborative approach to supporting Moodle was developed. Moodle users can now access the support team, which includes members from the Centre, IT Services and Open Learning, by emailing moodlesupport@tru.ca. Answers to questions will be provided by the team within 48 hours during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm).

In addition to the support line, the Centre is offering Moodle drop-in sessions for hands-on support, as well as workshops on Moodle topics, such as designing effective learning activities and the gradebook. Information on the workshops and registration can be found on our website tru.ca/learning.

We are also working to develop a Learning Resources Repository, which will allow instructors to import and adapt learning activities for their own courses. We ultimately plan to make the LMS (Learning Management System) easier to use. If you have suggestions or requests, we would love to hear from you!

New Faculty Orientation 2015

By Denise King

The Centre for Student Engagement and Learning Innovation and the Provost office co-hosted the 2015 New Faculty Orientation. All new tenure track and limited term faculty were invited to the orientation.

The orientation opened with an acknowledgement and recognition of the traditional Secwepemc Territory by Paul Michel and welcoming remarks from Alan Shaver.

The first day of workshops included:

- understanding TRU context and culture,
- designing learning outcomes
- group work
- feedback sessions

The second day focused on:

- learning outcomes
- course outline development
- hands-on Moodle training
- copyright and the library resources presentations

The new Provost, Christine Bovis-Cnossen, joined the group for lunch along with Tom Dickinson, Sandra Vermeulen, Michael Henry, Donna Murnaghan, and James Gaisford. The event wrapped up with a social at the Monte Creek Winery.

New Faculty Orientation will be offered each August and plans are underway to develop something similar for Sessional Instructors.



Participants from left to right: Jim Gaisford, Tom Dickinson, Tracy Penny Light, Christine Bovis-Cnossen, Sandra Vermeulen, Noeman Mirza, Jenni Karl, Tanya Sanders, Sheila Blackstock, Silvia Straka, Ted Howe, Kyra Garson, Joel Wood, Gary Hunt, Brenda Smith, Ehsan Ahmed, Xiaoping Shi

“[I] Really enjoyed sharing with other new faculty. Great to meet President and administrators.”

“[I] Absolutely loved the pacing of the content . . . Also liked how attendees were from different faculties. The facilitator was very knowledgeable and helpful.”

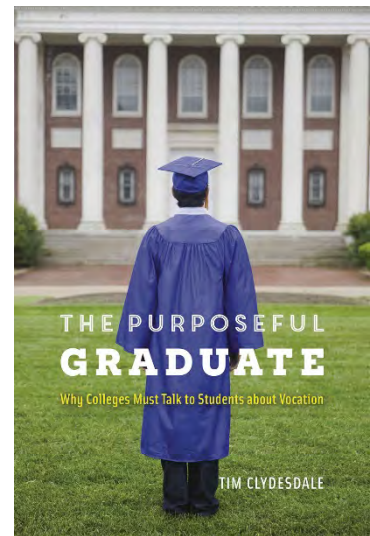
New Books on Higher Education:

What We're Reading

By Tracy Penny Light

We are always looking at the literature in higher education to inform our thinking about learning and our programming in the Centre. Here are some recent finds that we think you might find interesting too:

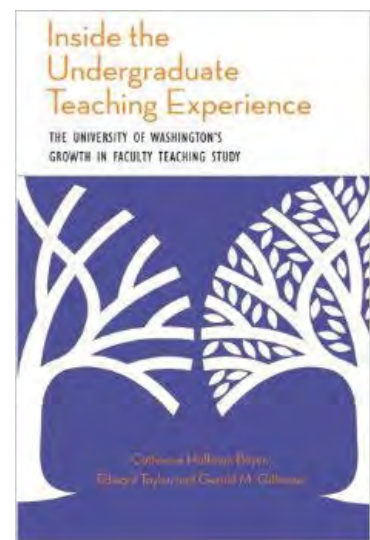
Tim Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Clydesdale argues that in a time when most students pursue higher education in search of a career, rather than to explore “the big questions about who they are and how they can change the world,” we need to ensure that we develop creative programs that allow our undergraduates to explore the question of purpose. This is a central tenet of our Pathways for Learning program. To learn more, go to tru.ca/learning/students/pathways-students



Catharine Hoffman Beyer, Edward Taylor and Gerald M. Gillmore, *Inside the Undergraduate Teaching Experience: The University of Washington's Growth in Faculty Teaching Study* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2013). Beyer, Taylor and Gillmore share their qualitative study of faculty members at the University of Washington. The findings point to the ways that faculty are continually working to improve their practice and how they have increasingly moved toward a student-centred approach to teaching.

We agree with the notion the authors put forth that teaching should be a public activity; the work we all put into our teaching should be shared with our colleagues.

As Joseph Katz and Mildred Henry so aptly noted, “Teaching is a lifelong art that... involves continuous learning not just for the student but for the teacher as well.” This research makes that visible, and aligns well with what we know is happening at TRU. The Centre is actively working to make the work of our faculty more visible!



Pathways to Interdisciplinarity: Entrepreneurial Thought in the 11th Century

By Brianna McIlquham

Annie St John-Stark wanted to find a way to implement hands-on collaborative learning in her History 3520 Course: Knowledge and Belief in Medieval to Early Modern Europe, offered in the winter semester of 2015. In a subject that is traditionally approached with a discussion based instructional method, St. John-Stark's 16 students completed a hands-on group project wherein they were given a common issue of the time period, and had to design an instrument to solve the problem using only materials that existed in that time period.

St. John-Stark gave her students two different issues to solve: to diagnose the cause of stomach pain in a 25 year old male; and to remove leaf and dirt matter from a basket of wheat. “I was trying to get them to think not like 2015 people, think only with what they would have had had they been alive in the 11th, 12th, 13th centuries,” St. John-Stark said. The innovative project was very well received by her students, “They loved it! They totally did! They were very excited about it,” St. John-Stark said.



A device for sorting leaf and dirt matter from wheat, designed by the HIST 3520 students

St. John-Stark hopes this type of hands-on assignment will eventually serve as a bridge between Arts and the Trades and Technology department at TRU. History 3520 will be offered again in winter 2016 if enough interest is shown by students for the course, otherwise it will be offered again in winter 2017. If you're interested in taking History 3520 or are looking for innovative ideas to use in the classroom, contact us at learning@tru.ca

Showcase: ePortfolios

By Brianna McIlquham

The Centre for Student Engagement and Learning Innovation (CSELI) is excited to be the feature subject of an article that focuses on the integration of ePortfolios into student learning at TRU that was recently published in *Excellence in Education: 2015 BC Edition*. The article, which was written by Marketing and Communications at TRU, explains how the CSELI uses ePortfolios as a tool that supports learners to clearly articulate how their unique and diverse learning experiences connects or transfers to other contexts.

The article highlights a number of students and faculty members who are integrating ePortfolios into their teaching and learning practices at TRU. Students have developed ePortfolios in order to articulate their learning for certificates such as Global Competency or Leadership in Environmental Sustainability, as well as to showcase teaching practices, or to reflect and provide evidence of learning across multiple pathways. Faculty members are also beginning to weave ePortfolios into their classroom activities, with students being given the opportunity to submit assignments in the form of an ePortfolio.

If you're interested in developing an ePortfolio, please visit our webpage tru.ca/learning for more information.

To read the full article in "Excellence in Education" please visit www.issuu.com and search "Excellence in Education".

Hailee-Jean Lindgren

"In the right light, at the right time. Everything is extraordinary." -- Aaron Rose

Copyright Royce Sihlis Photography

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Photography City of Calgary Bishop Carroll: Valedictorian Address Contact

The Basics of Hailee

I am an amateur photographer and have incorporated some of my photos as the backgrounds in this portfolio while other photos can be found in the photography section. My interest in photography first started when I was 13 years-old in junior high but I am currently 21 years-old and in my fourth year of a Bachelor of Arts degree at Thompson Rivers University. I graduated as Valedictorian from a self-directed learning school in Calgary, AB named Bishop Carroll High School. I love to volunteer and often return to my old high school to help out whenever I am not volunteering on campus at TRU. Hiking is one of the passions I discovered while living in Kamloops, BC for university where there are abundant trails to take advantage of.

Resume Twitter

Hailee-Jean's ePortfolio is a showcase of her learning through diverse experiences, such as her photography hobby.

Simone Grimard

4th Year Bachelor of Arts

Home My Knowledge My Work My Experiences Contact

Hello,

a little bit about me and the growing global competency I have gained with my time at TRU:

MY KNOWLEDGE MY WORK MY EXPERIENCES

This is a space to learn a little bit more about me, my education, my work, and my travel experiences which

Simone's ePortfolio shows evidence of her learning through experiences, such as Study Abroad for the Global Competency Certificate.

KATHERINE ANCHETA

STRENGTH AND REASON WITH OPEN EARS TO HEAR THE WORDS LEFT UNSPOKEN

HOME ABOUT ME ACADEMIA GOALS JUST FOR FUN! ME AS A MOM MY PHILOSOPHY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE WORK EXPERIENCE

ABOUT ME

Communicator

I am a voice with strength and reason with open ears to hear the words left unspoken.

Music lover | Starbucks Fanatic | Mother | Believer | Forever Learner | All Things Are Possible

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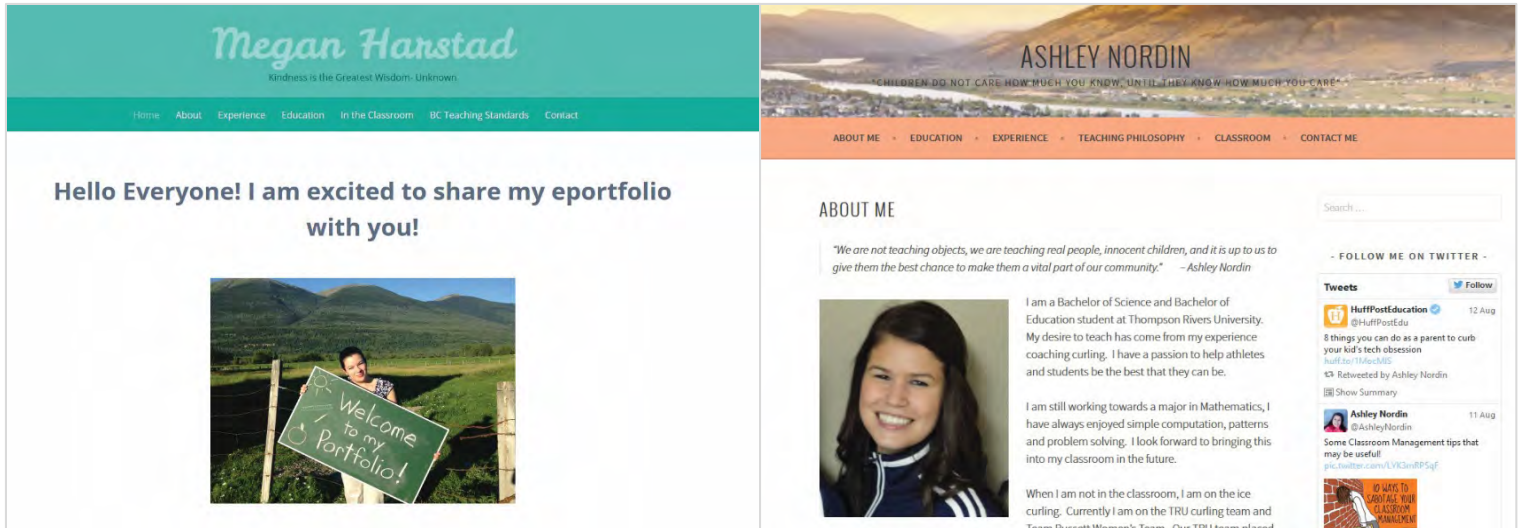
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- Career Paths: Say A Thousand Words...
- Resume
- Academia

Katherine Ancheta developed her ePortfolio during her co-op work term at the TRU Wellness Centre, while also volunteering with the Centre for Student Engagement and Learning Innovation. Her ePortfolio leverages the many facets of her life, including her involvement in various on-campus clubs, her co-op work term, and her role as a mother with her education focus of Human Resource Management. Katherine utilizes many innovative techniques in her ePortfolio such as inclusion of her Twitter feed, and a page devoted to ongoing blog posts. Great work Katherine!

Sustainable ePortfolio Development for Education Students

By Cameron Staff



Megan Harstad's and Ashley Nordin's ePortfolio's - developed for the Bachelor of Education Program.

Edward Howe, a professor in the Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development, spent the summer working closely with two Bachelor of Education (BEd) students to pilot the use of ePortfolios in the BEd program for the upcoming academic year. "I am excited about piloting the use of ePortfolios with incoming TCs (Teacher Candidates) this fall," said Howe. "The ePortfolio is helping students make connections between their education and experiences in other courses while helping faculty effectively work on course articulation and program review."

Electronic Portfolios show great potential for TCs in a number of ways. "In making an ePortfolio, TCs must critically reflect on their learning and provide evidence to demonstrate teaching competencies," explained Howe. "This is an excellent way to... re-confirm why they have chosen to become a teacher."

The ePortfolio project is something the faculty members thought would be an excellent addition to the program. First introduced to the concept a few years ago at a national education conference, Howe was eager to be a part of piloting the project over the summer. "I decided to take a leadership role in this exciting project because I have seen how effective ePortfolios can be," said Howe. "I was impressed at the potential of ePortfolios to highlight the curriculum, teaching and learning of novice teachers

while providing an effective tool for reflexive pedagogies."

Ashley Nordin and Megan Harstad, both second year BEd students, worked with Howe throughout the summer and will help provide an ePortfolio workshop for the first year TCs.

"I feel as though this project reminded me of how much I learned during my first year of the Bachelor of Education program," said Nordin.

The implementation of ePortfolios into any program allows students to integrate what they learn across all of their courses. "A major part of my portfolio was summarizing all that I have learned so far at TRU," said Harstad. "In our Teaching and Learning class we are taught different ways of teaching, assessing and classroom management skills," added Nordin. "By having some of my assignments in my ePortfolio it clearly demonstrates who I am as a student teacher."

Though the project is brand new, Howe is confident that the implementation of ePortfolios will have a positive effect on the BEd program, "We are just starting this project. There is much further work to do," said Howe. "But, as we go through a program review, it is a good time to be embarking on such a venture... And what a great time to be a teacher educator!"



Course Evaluations

TRU is committed to providing students the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of learning in their courses. The CSELI provides support for TRU in moving toward a continuous improvement model of teaching.

Learn more: tru.ca/learning

Intercultural Pathways with Kyra Garson

By Kyra Garson



TRU has identified Increasing Intercultural Understanding as one of its five Strategic Priorities. Although there are numerous ways in which students may gain intercultural understanding, from their personal experiences to exchanges on social media, TRU's commitment to this goal requires intentional curricular and pedagogical planning to ensure students' experiences lead to positive development and does not inadvertently result in entrenched stereotypes and biases.

In May 2015, the fifth cohort of faculty participated in the Interculturalizing the Curriculum Program, bringing the number of interdisciplinary participants to 75. Participants explore intercultural theory, pedagogical approaches, and curricular innovations in order to apply relevant frameworks to their own teaching practice and enhance disciplinary learning outcomes. These

faculty members are working to provide students with classroom exposure to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of intercultural learning.

As students begin to chart their educational journeys through the new Pathways program, they will no doubt appreciate the efforts of educators providing opportunities to meet pathways outcomes through coursework. In some disciplines, course content may more easily lend itself to intercultural learning; however, working with faculty who teach courses such as Canadian Tax, Microbiology, Dendrology, and the History of Victorian England has reinforced that intercultural learning can be infused into learning across the disciplines and result in TRU graduates fulfilling the disciplinary learning central to their degree while at the same time developing intercultural understanding that will contribute to their effective participation in our increasingly multicultural and interconnected contexts.

In subsequent issues of this newsletter, the Centre will feature faculty members whose innovative approaches include intercultural learning in course work, setting students up to articulate their own pathways to learning during their university experience and beyond.

Kyra Garson is the Intercultural Coordinator at the CSELI and is a regular columnist for TRU Learning



Global Competency

TRU Global Competency allows students to earn formal recognition for their intercultural and international experiences – from Study Abroad, to learning a second language, to volunteer work.

Want to learn more about this?

Phone: 250.371.5996

Drop in at: OM 1468

Visit our webpage: tru.ca/global

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