Transcript for BCcampus Online Book Club: A Conversation with Dr. Tony Bates (February 21, 2023)
BCcampus event hosted February 21, 2023
Hosts: Helena Prins and Leva Lee
Guest speaker: Dr. Tony Bates

LEVA LEE:
Welcome to the BCcampus Book Club. It's nice and cozy here in the library. Though it's kinda cold outside. We are the BCcampus Book Club, the open edition. And today we have a conversation with the author, Dr. Tony Bates. So before we begin, I have just a few preliminary comments. BCcampus has two offices in the traditional territories of the Coast Salish. Today, I'm pleased to be welcoming you from where I live and work on the ancestral lands of the Halkomelem and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh speaking peoples, also known as Burnaby. I'm pleased to be here with my colleague Helena and today for our second open book club chat with the author. Also grateful for the help of teammate Kelsey. So we invite you to share in the chat, the territory you are joining us from, if you wish. And as you do this, I'd like to mention a few additional items. So today's session is being recorded and will be shared on our BCcampus website. Feel free to change your name to participant if you wish, as well. The live captioning is enabled. Now let's begin.

So we're pleased and honoured today to be chatting with the author of *Teaching in the Digital Age,* Dr. Tony Bates. Just get the next slide. Yes, Tony, is a scholar, a writer, an open educator and global consultant on teaching and technology and online learning. Tony is based in Vancouver and is a hugely valued member of our BC post-secondary community. I'd like to have a warm welcome. Say a warm welcome to Tony. It's always a pleasure to chat with you and you've been gracious with your time over the years. And finally, it's kind of cool to reconnect. So welcome Tony.

TONY BATES:
Thank you very much. I'm really delighted to be here. Every author loves to discuss their book. So I'm really pleased to be able to do this. And especially you get some feedback because you send out a book, it goes into the, into the world and you have no idea how people are reacting to it.

ALMA:
Yeah, that's wonderful. So this is a great opportunity for everyone to have a bit of a discussion. And so we'd like to know who's here. I think Helena has something prepared.

HELENA PRINS:
Yes. I see people are putting their acknowledgment in the chat. Thank you for doing that. Since we all know who's Dr. Tony, we thought it might be helpful to him to know is in the room. You should see a poll question pop up for you right now. If you don't, then you can answer in the chat and I'll just read the questions. So who's in the room? Are you a faculty member or

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perhaps sessional instructor? Are you an instructional designer? Are you an ed tech developer, administrator, or perhaps the fall under that category that we call other. Then if you do fall under that, I see we have a few people. If you don't mind letting us know in the chat what exactly that role is. We know what perspectives you are bringing to our conversation today. So we'll give it... a few more people that have to respond. There's 40 seconds left on the poll. Let's see in the chat how we define Other. Someone is in professional learning of the College of Nurses and Midwives. Thank you for letting us know. So, Tony, I didn't know. Can you see the poll so you'll know who's with us?

TONY: Yes.

HELENA:
Yes, Wonderful.

TONY:
We've got a good range.

HELENA:
Yes, quite the mix here. Sessional instructor. Taruna, you wear many hats. You are more than one category there. But thank you so much everyone for letting us know that you are here. And now we're going to get to know Tony a little bit better over. Over to you, Leva.

LEVA:
Yes. So Tony, what we think would be nice for people to hear more about is to have you tell us your story. So perhaps take a few minutes to tell us your story. And then we'd like to hear more about, about *Teaching in a Digital Age*.

TONY:
Well, I'm very old, so I'll try to keep it short. I first got into this. I was basically did psychology at university and then started to educational research in England. And then I got a job at the Open University doing research into distance education. That's how I got into the field. And early on in the research, I, we were looking at student responses to the learning materials. And I had a combination of television, radio, and print materials. And I noticed that students reacted very differently to particularly the television materials compared to the print materials. So I persuaded the university they needed somebody to research into the effectiveness of the broadcast the BBC was making for the Open University. And that's how I got into educational media research. And of course, as technology changed, audio cassettes came in, video cassettes came in. I kept on doing that research. I had a team of people that I had built up and then I decided to immigrate to Canada in 1989. I was fed up with giving advice on what people should do and wanted more administrative and management responsibilities. So I went to the Open Learning Agency and worked there for five years and then moved to UBC as director of Distance Education and Technology at UBC. When the mandate really to move their distance education programs online, which I did for about eight years. And then I got to compulsory retirement.

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But I wasn't ready to retire. So I set up my own consultancy business. And I've been doing that more or less since for the last 20 years. I've had a lot of interesting consultancies in that period all around the world. So that's my story basically. I hope it wasn't too long.

ALMA:
No, no. Interesting that you've got many experiences globally. Not just in distance, that you've travelled along and learned along as things have changed with how technology has certainly evolved through the years. So then what brought you to Teaching in a Digital Age and to the writing of that book?

TONY:
Yeah, I've been trying to work that out for the last... Well I first started in 2014. And I'm not sure why, looking back on it, except that I think there were two things. First of all, I was at a point in my career where I wanted to kind of capture everything I'd learned and put it down in one place. I also felt that it wasn't any single book that was really ready... providing, enabling people to be ready for the digital learning age. I felt I really needed a book that focused on that. Not as an academic book, not a kind of theory of learning or theory of online learning, but as a pragmatic book to enable any instructor if they had a question, just a login, look it up. Here's something on this. How do I engage students? There's the book that I can go to. There's a section in that book on that, or how should I use television or video in my course? Again, I have something that they can go to That's pragmatic. So that was one reason I wanted to get this down into one place and look forward to the future, not so much to the past. And secondly, it was the BC Open Textbook Project was very active at that period as it is now. And I wanted to explore how to really use an open textbook, a pedagogically sound way to try to... what I would call exploit what I would call the affordances of open textbook publishing. And there's lots of things I wanted to explore in that. First of all, I'd worked for, I'd published 10 books with commercial publishers before then. And I got increasingly disgruntled with publishers. You do all the work, they take all the money. That's the principle of publishing, educational publishing. And I had two goals. I did not want to make money. That was not the purpose. It would be nice if I did, but that's not the purpose. I wanted somebody to read my stuff. And I thought if I published in an open book, more people would read it than if I published it as a commercial book. So that was one, it was free and open. Second, I saw there were a lot of interactive possibilities of engaging the reader through an open textbook that you can't do with a printed book. Very simple things like you can click on a URL and open it up and go to the source that you're referring to in the book. Very simple things like that. Then I realized you could embed podcasts, for instance, in the textbook. So I could bring in some multimedia to it. And I also hope that eventually, and this is something I want to talk about a bit later, that it will become a collaborative exercise that other people would join in and add to the book or change from a book to a kind of online living resource. I've not been able to get to that collaborative bit yet. But if I was looking at where I want to go in the future, I would like to be able to hand over the book and say, Okay, you carry on with this book. Keep it up to date. Take out the bits that are no longer relevant, and bring other voices to the book as well.

LEVA:
What a great idea, what a great idea for collaboration. We'll have to start thinking about that.

HELENA:
Yeah, well, we might even start on it with the next segment, right, Dr. Bates? We are going to have time for everyone to participate in questions for Dr. Bates, but firstly, so it will give him the opportunity to ask the audience some questions. So, Dr. Bates. What are you most curious about to learn from our readers? And I believe you want to keep a bit of context to your question. Well it's a very boring question. As most authors, I'm wondering what you feel was missing from the book. Secondly, what do you disagree with? Is there something in the book that you think is wrong or you just don't think that's the right way to teach? And it's because it's such a damn long book now, is there something in it that's unnecessary that I could take out so people wouldn't have to wade through it?

HELENA:
That's some great questions. So we hope, audience members, that you would, you would oblige by answering some of these critical questions. You can raise your hand, the icon is there and the reactions button, or you can put in the chat, I want to give some positive feedback, something that I really love about it is that audio element. We had the question for the book club about, what do we think makes a good teacher? And we all took time thinking or reflecting on it. And then to hear your voice and your answer. I think it makes it a very intimate experience. I always like when I listen to audio books and I can hear the author read his own book or her book. So I just wanted to say that's something that I really love and I hope that it can continue to be in your book. So let's hear from the other audience members. Any feedback for Dr. Bates? I see a comment from Taruna in the chat that she loves the idea of building on your work and co-creating with others to bring other voices to the work.

PARTICIPANT:
I can't find my hand raising reaction. So yeah, I worked at Vancouver Community College as an instructional associate and the discussion. recently has come up the difference between curriculum developer and instructional designer. And what I really like about looking back through your book is going back to those roots of what paradigm are we using, using different, like higher-level strategies to develop a curriculum or program rather than just responding to maybe redevelopment of a program, keeping it as it is and just kind of updating to be experiential. But I guess just at a higher level look at curriculum. And also I think this is just, I've already referred a number of sort of newer instructors to this resource because I actually loved the way it's user-friendly to walk through. It's not intimidating. It's not a huge book that I feel that I have to get through all in one read. But rather being able to go back and link to the parts that are pertinent to me or to people I'm working with right away. So I don't know if that all comes together, but I appreciated the step back to that bigger picture of looking at learning. Thank you. And I think it's an interesting comment about the difference between curriculum development and instructional design. I've noticed recently there's been a kind of renewal at the idea of overall costs. Overall program design, particularly given the fact that we're moving

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into blended as well as online learning. So at what point during the program, should you, what's the right mix as you go through a program? For instance, put it very simply, first-year students are probably more dependent on the classroom. Coming straight from high school, probably need a lot more face-to-face teaching. But by the time they're in fourth year undergraduate, they probably can handle a fully online course. And then you could use blended learning as a way of introducing them to online learning in a less abrupt way than having just throwing them into an online course. That will be more of a curriculum development choice I would have thought than just looking at individual design, the design of individual courses. Dalhousie University's bachelor of computer science, was having problems with a high dropout rate. And they got all the professors together to look at the curriculum. It had been thrown together like most degree programs, find out what professors wanted to teach. And then they put those subjects in. When they brought them all together, they found that some things that were being taught at the end of the course, like theory, were really needed at the beginning of the course. So they looked at the whole curriculum and what learning outcomes each instructor could expect from previous courses that students would have, and what new learning outcomes they would pass on to the professors in the next course and so on. I would like to see a lot more of that these days, looking at both content, particularly skills development. If you look at, if we think about developing skills like critical thinking, then what are students, what level of critical thinking will students have in your subject area when they come into your course? And what will you add to that when they leave? And starting thinking in those terms. Because I think that we need to do a lot better job in measuring and developing these, what I would call soft skills, but are not soft skills about these high-level intellectual skills that really are the justification for most post-secondary education. I don't know if that answers your question. It's a bit longer than I intended it.

PARTICIPANT:
Thank you.

HELENA:
Thank you, Julia. In the chat, there's two more comments. The first one is from Jennifer. It says, I teach first-year physics and engineering students. I would like more on this topic, which you mentioned several times as being a stretch. So she's very aware that it's a niche group. I've used your book over the years, so I do not think you should cut anything out. I agree with that earlier comments about no need to cut anything out because someone mentioned it's so easy to navigate. And then, Ann also makes a comment, I think supporting lifelong learning and digital literacy can be expanded on, please. Students take this to the professions and workplace learnings. And another comment, I don't know if you can see the chat, Tony, but I will just read it to the recording after I'm curious to hear your thoughts about recognizing prior learning, especially given the diversity that we see in online learning and teaching today.

TONY:
Let me let me address Jennifer's point. I very much appreciate that. And I do mention several times during the book that I can't tell a physics teacher how to teach physics and I can't tell the

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historian how to teach history. That's one of the really big problems in trying to provide guidelines for our instructors is that so much is context specific. So much depends on the discipline. It depends on the epistemology behind the discipline. And so that's always a struggle when you're writing a textbook. A general, a wide range of readers. And what we really need, I guess. are textbooks on digital learning in physics textbook for digital learning in history and so on. And it will all be very different approach, I'm sure. So I think that, and again, the nice thing about a collaborative approach to the book is that if somebody wanted to take on that, they could do so. I mean, it's not that I need to give permission. It's an open textbook so anybody can take bits of that book and then expand it in their own way. They don't need my permission to do that. I had some experience in Latin America where one guy took the book and then took all the examples out that I put in and put in Latin American examples to make it more relevant to their students and so on. But you're right, Jennifer, every discipline has its own epistemological and pedagogical approach that has to be respected because it reflects the very nature of the discipline is how you... is embedded in how you teach it.

JENNIFER:
Yes. Definitely. I just want to say in person Thank you for the book. It has been such a useful guide over the years, but I did laugh out loud. Reading up, so let's say before it's going yeah, Unless you teach it. So let's say particularly if you teach first-year engineering students. That would be me. I just felt seen, but yeah, but yeah, it's a great book and yes, I will definitely continue to use it and to expand on it. Thank you.

TONY:
Thank you. Sorry. The second question was about diversity, I think. Was it?

HELENA:
Lifelong learning is a topic that was brought up by Ann. She said supporting lifelong learning and digital literacy can be exactly done...

TONY:
I struggled with the digital literacy because obviously there's, I guess a narrow view of digital literacy and a broad view. The narrow view I didn't really deal with in the book. The narrow view is, how do you, how do you search for information? How do you analyze it and so on, I was more concerned about the broad view of digital literacy, which was to make sure that instructors were embedding digital examples in their work. I think I give an example in business studies in teaching real estate use of geographical information systems, for instance. You need to bring the use of digital technologies that are prevalent in your professional field into the teaching of your course. So that's what I would call a broad approach to digital literacy. And again, as I said before, that will vary enormously from subject discipline into subject discipline. There's some interesting things going on in history at the moment, using our digital archives for instance. So if you're a historian, you should really be sure that students are aware of these tools that are now available to historians. Yeah, I think I could have done more on, but I don't feel particularly expert on digital literacy in the narrow sense. Because it does depend so much

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on the subject area. What kind of digital literacy is really important? If I was a school teacher, I think this is more, probably more of a valid, more valid the criticism, because I originally wrote the book for post-secondary, then I found it was being used very heavily in K to 12 education. And I think digital literacy is a very important topic for that group and probably deserves a whole chapter or more or a whole book on this digital literacy. And again, that's a huge topic because it varies enormously from very young children through to say, 16 or 17 year olds. So the approach to digital literacy will be very different, I think, for those two age groups. So it's a huge topic.

HELENA:
It's definitely a big topic at BCcampus. We are looking at the Ministry and supporting the framework that's been launched and working under repository of OERs to support digital literacy development in this sector. There is a question that I read from Taruna about her... She's curious about your thoughts on prior learning, recognizing prior learning, especially given the diversity that we see in online learning and teaching today. Any comments?

TONY:
Well yes. I know some institutions like Thompson Rivers have it formally built in to their own learning program. B.C... I always get... the British Columbia BCCAT I think it is that deals with qualifications, has a formal approach to prior learning assessment. I believe that allows students to carry credit into their programs. That will depend of course on the institution to some extent, but they're all provincial guidelines on this, I believe. Yeah, I think prior learning assessment is really important, especially for lifelong learners. And especially given the current discussion about health. The lack of people in the health care and so on in British Columbia, we need much more flexible methods of assessment, of assessing prior learning, particularly for people who are qualified outside of Canada. I think it's not so much the institutions. I think that the barrier here is more the professional associations. And I think we need to do a lot more work with the professional associations to try to get them to loosen up a little on this.

HELENA:
Yeah, I hope that answers for you, Taruna. There's a few comments of appreciation. So we'll just make sure that we save the chat after that. You can read more about that. There's a suggestion from Danielle. It says, I suppose instructional designers and educational developers specialized in different subject areas, can translate the book for teachers in specific fields and then they build a course together. Yeah, absolutely, Yes. Then a question from Dave. Hi Dave, We're glad you're here. Dave will be part of next month's book club too. What do you think about the role of instructional designers in ensuring that educators are not just developing good courses? But they, that they are integrating ideas that are beyond the immediate course environment like equity, diversity, inclusion and industrialization, openness, accessibility, etc. Is this part of that superhero dilemma?

TONY:
Yeah. Yeah, I liked the superhero dilemma. You're absolutely right. Just, just something else for instructional designers to do on top of persuading faculty members to do things they don't

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want to do. Yeah, I mean, I think the instructional designer's job is really, really challenging. And I think there is so much that they have to do that could be avoided if we prepared our instructors better, particularly through their PhD programs. So that it has something about teaching in their programs. Because so often they are subject experts and they're very good at that. And within their subject, they probably know the right ways of teaching that subject. But once you start getting into other areas like inclusion, openness, accessibility, and so on, you're often moving them beyond the level of expertise, interest. I suppose, I often think of instructional designers as priests. People go into confessional and say. My course is lousy. Please help me out. Please forgive me, Father. What have I done? Yeah, I think that is part of the job of the instructional designer is to make sure that all these things are considered when, when instructors are teaching, but you have to be so careful that you don't come across as preaching and telling people what they ought to do. And so on. It's just kind of like a checklist you have, and say, Well, have you thought of this, etc. And I'm always impressed with the skills that most of the instructional designers, how in dealing with these rather sensitive issues with faculty. It's a tough job.

HELENA:
That was really a great segment. Nice questions there. Thank you everyone for participating. And I did hear invitations starting with Jennifer maybe to what kind of segments specifically for that niche area. Dr. Bates, if you're okay, we're going to move on then. Thank you for the questions you posted to the audience. It's going to be their time to ask you a questions.

LEVA:
Yeah. So now audience, It's time for your turn to ask questions of Tony. So we're going to take 5 minutes to do this. So we'll invite you to come up with one question for Tony in your breakout groups. So you'll do a breakout group. Just briefly introduce yourself in the breakout, then collectively brainstorm some questions that you would like to ask Tony and decide on one that you would like to ask and choose one person to be the person to ask on behalf of the group. So I think this will be fun. It's just 5 minutes and then we'll regroup and then invite you to ask your questions. So have fun and surprise us. Yeah. We are back now. Okay. We're back.

LEVA:
Hi everyone. So now we're going to field some of your questions for Tony. And I thought we could start by groups, so there were four groups of you. And I think we'll start with group four. So I'll just do a call-out. You know what group you're in and then have the spokesperson just introduce themselves and then ask the question of Tony. So we'll start with group four. I'll go backward in the numeric order. So group four. Who's the spokesperson for group four. Who is in group four?

HELENA:
Daniella, Deb, and Julie were in group four.

DEB:

Daniella or Julie, do you want to jump in or do you want me just go ahead. Okay. What we were talking about was modes of delivery and then how we're moving into hybrid flex kinds of classrooms and those kinds of things as well. And with that happening, what we're finding is... Okay, so we found a couple of things and hoping you can comment on it. One of the things that we found is synchronous to asynchronous. Students who are looking at, or instructors that are looking at trauma-informed ways of supporting students. There isn't that community being built. So how do we introduce that into instructional design and learning design? And then the other part of it is almost active learning fatigue because in our course, in our programs, there are maybe three classes each day. So by the end of the third class, students have been on online synchronously doing all kinds of things. And by the third class, they're ready to just sit and listen to somebody because they're too exhausted to participate anymore. You have any comments on that?

TONY:
Well, I think the first comment is that we still got a lot, a lot to learn about blended learning and how best to do it. You know, we had, I guess, very well established ways of teaching face-to-face. And we had very well established ways of teaching fully online. But we don't have really, there's lots of different ways, lots of different possible design models for blended and hybrid learning. And it can vary enormously from basically not giving up any of your lectures and just giving students work to do online, which usually overloads them. And overloads the instructor as well by the time the work comes back to just maybe having a very carefully designed face-to-face session once a week, and the rest online. And you can have anything in between those two poles. And so I think some of the general principles of online design apply, such as controlling student workload. I think that's really important. I think we have to move away from the three credits. Three credits equals three lectures a week model to looking at students study hours per week per course. An average. I know it's always an arbitrary number because some students will need more time than others. But looking at say, 8 hours a week for a three-credit course, everything has to be in that 8 hours. And it doesn't matter how you mix up the face-to-face and online. At the end of the day, it must not come to more than 8 hours work for an average student. I think that provides the instructor with a bit of guidelines about what they can do then. I think the second thing is, again, look very carefully at what is the added value of the synchronous learning? Is it something that they can't get anywhere else. Either, does it have to be in person or can it be online? That's another question about synchronous learning that. So it is looking at the affordances particularly. I think the big push with most instructors now is to get them to understand that if they're coming to campus, students are coming to campus, you've got to have added value now because they can do a lot of their stuff online. They don't need to come to campus. So what's making it worth their while academically to come to campus, not just the social life and everything else. But what are you offering in your course that's unique, that couldn't be done online. And that's a very tough question. There are good answers to that. I mean, obviously, people in science will say, Well I have to come to the labs and so on. Well, that's fine. But if you're a historian, I think that's a good question for a historian. You know, why did they have to come on campus? I don't know if that helps answer the question.

DEB:
You've opened my mind to other opportunities, so thank you so much. That's answered the question. Thank you.

LEVA:
And thank you for the group that you're with. Rather than going by group numbers, maybe I'll just asked for the next question. If someone would like to step forward to do that, that'd be great.

PARTICIPANT:
I actually just wanted to make a comment because my niece is in her first year of university and she says she doesn't like online because she's forced to go up to school to go to the lectures. So for her even though she complains, she's like, Oh, no, I don't like going up there. She says for her it offers her structure for doing her work. So I guess that's another perspective that some, you know, some students, they do like the face-to-face.

LEVA:
Great comment.

TONY:
I think structure is really important, particularly for first- and second-year students. They need to know what they have to do every day at what time. And that's one of the big changes when you go to a hybrid or fully online model. That, that's the great thing about a learning management system. It provides that structure, it tells students what to do when they're online and when it has to be done. We all know that students like to procrastinate and if there isn't some kind of deadline for them to do the online work, it doesn't get done. And again, I think instructors who are used to students coming into lectures and handing in work on time and so on don't understand when they move to a blended or online model, the need for putting that structure in for the online work as well as for the on-campus work. My favourite story is when I went home to England to see my grandson, who's doing first-year physics, actually. Doing astrophysics at Cardiff University and he was online in his first year and I said, Oh, is your instructor putting you online. He said, No, no, no, no. He said, But he's a terrible instructor. He comes in, he covers the black, whiteboard with formulas and so on. We've got a rough idea what he's talking about it, but he goes so fast, we can't follow him. So what we do, we go to one lecture in three. I've got two friends. And he said, We take a note of what he's talking about. Then we go to MIT OpenCourseWare and look the lectures up. I would like to see OpenCourseWare. Smart physics students, they've worked their way around the system.

LEVA:
Here comes a physics instructor.

JENNIFER:

As I tell my students and my colleagues, MIT has had their courses open for decades. That, and so, and I give that as a resource and say, Look, there's no way that I will say that I think I'm a better instructor than the folks at MIT. So come to my course, I have to make it worthwhile or go there. But yeah, like yeah, but you can find it. Physics is out there, yeah.

TONY:
Yes. Sorry, I got a bit off course there, but

LEVA:
Thanks, Jennifer. Good comment, Christina. Next question. We want to make sure we get the every group has a chance to ask their burning question.

CHRISTINA:
So my question, Tony, was just what trends you see coming up in learning, you know, in terms of learning technologies. Because I know you have a long history with learning technology. I've got three in my book, of course, artificial intelligence, simulations, and virtual reality. The artificial intelligence, as you probably well aware is suddenly taking a big leap with chatGPT and that's causing all kinds of problems. I'm very amused by this because when you think about how a professor delivers the lecture, I think it was Isaac Newton who says, We stand on the shoulders of giants. In other words, we all draw on other work as part of our own work. There's not much that's original in my book that I haven't drawn on from elsewhere. And I think every professor is in the same position. It may be their own piece of research that may be unique. But basically they're drawing on the work of people who have gone before. And that's all that chatGPT is doing, basically. It's drawing on the stuff that's already out there. The differences you can't identify where they've got it from. Now you can ask them for, you can ask GPTchat for references. And it's very bad at providing them. Even though if you do a little bit of research, you can see where they got it from. So for instance, I asked something about asynchronous and synchronous learning and they gave me a really good definition of the difference between the two. But the reference they gave didn't exist, it was just not there. But when I did a little bit more research, I found it came from, I think it was Indiana University Center for Teaching and Learning. So I was able to identify, just track back and find the actual reference that they drew on. Now, I think that this development in artificial intelligence will have a wonderful effect on higher education in forcing us to write better assessment questions. To move beyond comprehension. Because that's what ChatGPT does. It kind of pulls together what I would call a comprehension type answer to a question. Do you understand this question? If you understand this question, this is the answer you would get. Now, we want to move beyond comprehension and memory in higher education, to skills development, to critical thinking, to problem-solving. Now, when it gets better at that, I will get worried. But at the moment, it's forcing instructors to think, well, how can I design my assessments better so students can't cheat at them? And I think that's a good thing.

CHRISTINA:
Thank you.

LEVA:
Thanks, Christina. Well well, that's a relief. It will be a little while, I think, before we get replaced. Next question.

TONY:
I'm not sure I answered your question.

CHRISTINA:
No, thanks. I was interested in ChatGPT, so that was good.

DAVE:
I'm in the next I think I'm in the last group here so...

LEVA:

Hi Dave. Nice to hear your voice.

DAVE:
Nice to see everyone. I guess, Tony, for our question goes back to the first group's question about, a bit about hybrid and high flex developments. So the question is, what do you think of all these terms? Like in your book, you use blended as a kind of catch-all. But now there's a lot of talk about HyFlex, which is supposed to be distinct from hybrid. Is there a common understanding that we should all be following? Or does it even matter? And, you know, what kinds of... What's important to know about these different formats?

TONY:
Well, I can give a short answer to the first part of the question is that yes, there is pretty much agreement now on these terms. Both WCET in the States and Canadian Digital Learning Research Association in Canada. They surveyed 1,000 instructors and 1,000 administrators with terms like asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid, blended, and found there was a good deal of agreement about the differences. So you can go to CDLRA site and they've got these definitions on which there seems to be a lot of agreement now. So I think that's a good thing because I think maybe two years ago there wasn't that level of agreement. These terms were emerging. But I think there's been enough stability around now for there to be some kind of common agreement about the differences between these terms. I'm sorry, the second part of the question. I've forgotten.

DAVE:
Well, I was just thinking about I'm looking in the chat too. There's something Leanne says in there that reminds me of this. Like there might be understanding, let's say in the educational community, but what do you, what's your response when an administrator comes to you and

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says We need more HyFlex. We're not even sure what they understand by that term. How do you, how do you answer that question?

TONY:
Well, I'm sure you're not alone in having administrators, particularly presidents, who've been to a conference and come back and say, Why aren't we doing this? And again, you have to ask, why? Why would we do this? What do you see the benefits of doing this as being? I think HyFlex is a particularly, is the particular challenge. I'm not saying you shouldn't do it. But it's a lot of work to have a valid course that can be taken in any possible way. Now, if you've, I think it's much easier to go from a fully online course to a HyFlex course. And to go from a face-to-face course to a HyFlex course. If you've got a fully online course, you've got everything online already. So it's a question then, What do you want the face-to-face part to do or how would that differ from the online part? I have to ask, why. Why would you do that anyway? If students can do the whole thing online or if they can. I mean, basically it's the student's choice whether they take the stuff online or face-to-face. There may be a case to be made that there are certain things that can't be done online and must be done face to face. But then he doesn't become a HyFlex course because they have to attend for that part that's done face to face. But if it can all be done online, then why would you have the extra work of having a face-to-face session as well? It just increases the work of the instructor. And I can see that students who have a face-to-face course and can't get there, might want an online course, but I can't see why somebody who can do an online course would be forced to do, would want to do a face-to-face bit if they can do it online. But again, some students prefer face-to-face. But I think that ideally everybody would be able to choose to do whatever they like in life. But at some point you have put a boundary around it. What's feasible and what's cost-efficient and makes sense economically to do. And I do have some worries about HyFlex. If they can be done well without loss of quality, no matter which form the students can take it and it can be done without overwhelming the instructor, then I don't have any objections, but I think those two are very important caveats about HyFlex.

LEVA:
Thank you very much for the question, Dave and Tony. We're nearing just the last maybe few minutes to check out what. We've got a couple of comments in the chat. Leanne said, In my experience, confusion may not come from many not understanding what blended really means. And Taruna says that the technology is transformative, but it's actually the pedagogy that can be truly transformative. Every year we have new shiny terms that appear in conferences and workshops that are marketed as something different. But at the core, I believe all learning is blended. That's great comment there. Thank you. Thank you for that. Thank you for everyone's questions. So I think Helena, we wanted to invite Tony to do a book recommendation for us. So what do you have for us as far as something you've been reading or that you think that we all should be turning your attention to after we read yours?

TONY:

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Okay. This is not a new book. I think it's 2014. If I look it up. But it's on It's called *Culture and Online Learning*. And it's by Insung Jung who's from South Korea. And Nirmalani Gunawardena who's from a US university. And it's basically a set of research essays on dealing with culture and cultural issues in online learning. And it's one of the best books I've seen on this topic. I was fortunate to start my online teaching with an international, a course with lots of international students on it. And it was a very interesting and rich learning experience to have students from completely different countries like Mexico and China, and Canada and Europe on that same course. And it was really interesting to see how they responded to online learning differently. And I learned a lot from this book afterwards, after I'd done that course. So I would recommend that very strongly.

LEVA:
Wonderful. That's one I know I'm gonna be looking at for sure. I think one of the last things is that, yeah, we were wondering if you had any words of encouragement or any comments about your hopes for post-secondary education in B.C. looking into the future.

TONY:
I think it is a particularly exciting time to be in instructional design and learning technologies. The reason I'm still working at 82 is because it's such an interesting field and it continues to develop. And it's not just the technology, it's all the things around it like the how you teach and so on and how technology affects that and vice versa. I think that we still have a lot to learn about the affordances is a different media and how to use them better. I think we're still far too much text and lecture-based. I think that we need to, with hybrid learning, move to more interesting designs that are more pedagogically focused on effective teaching and learning. But it's such an exciting time to be working here. We've got simulations and games, we've got virtual reality, we've got artificial intelligence all coming in and having an impact both positively and negatively. So I think it's a fantastic time to be in this business. And I wish you all the best in the future. I'm glad you're going to have to deal with it and not me!

LEVA:
Well, we'll look forward to reading more from you and maybe hearing about your next endeavors may be the collaborative work that you spoke about. So I'll just want to take the last minute or so to thank you, Tony. Next slide. Thank you, Tony and helping us to remember as instructors the humanity in our work. And that it really above all, everything is that it isn't about, It's about the teaching. So thank you very much and I'll do a shoutout for your blog site. So if you want more information, more writings about Tony from Tony, tonybates.ca. And please stay tuned for the next book club. We still have another week of reading and then we're on to the next book, which will be Designing for Care from the Hybrid Pedagogy Collection. So thank you very much for attending today. Helena and I look forward to seeing you online in our chats and thank you so much, Dr. Tony Bates.

TONY:
Thank you, everyone.