

Transcript for FLO Friday: It's All About Relationships: Embracing Teaching in the Digital Age, (Sept 8, 2023)

BCcampus event hosted September 8, 2023

Presenter: Valeria Cortés

Host: Gwen Nguyen

GWEN NGUYEN:

And good morning again. Welcome to our very first Facilitating Learning Online FLO Friday in the new academic year. Thank you very much for choosing to be with us today on a Friday. My name is Gwen and I'm a learning and teaching advisor with BCcampus. Just a few housekeeping items before we start our session. This session will be recorded and you're welcome to keep your camera off. And feel free to rename yourself to participate. Live captioning has also been enabled for this session. At the end of the session, we invite you to participate in a short anonymous survey. We will provide the survey link in the chat. Your feedback will assist us in planning future events to support professional development, especially for educators in higher education. Please stay with us to the very end so that we can also share with you all exciting upcoming learning opportunities. I also would like to express my special thank you to my colleague Kelsey Kilbey who has provided invaluable support behind the scenes. Thank you.

Before we dive into the session today, I'd like to start with the territorial acknowledgment. I was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam. A big and bustling city where it's very hard to see the blue sky, the trees, the oceans. It's hard to see the beautiful nature of every day for many reasons, the high rise buildings and also the air pollution. Since I came to Victoria in fall 2015, I have developed a deep appreciation for this beautiful and peaceful place. I'm very grateful that my family and I have an opportunity to live so close to nature. The images that you see on this slide show the highlights of our summer in Victoria. We spend almost every day in the sun and by the ocean. Today I'm connecting with you from my home office in Gordon Head, located in the traditional territories of the lək'wəŋən (Lekwungen) speaking people, including Songhees Nations, the Esquimalt People, W̱SÁNEĆ People whose historical relations with the land continue to this day. Returning to the main topic today, it's all about relationships, embracing teaching in the digital age. My team and I are so delighted to see such a significant registration turn out, 140 registrations. While we usually anticipate such a response for an AI-related webinar, it really heartens us to see such a huge interest in the human aspect. The interconnectedness that defines teaching in the digital age. This shows our shared commitment towards viewing teaching not solely as intellectual pursuit, but it's also the social human centre, collaborative endeavors. In our work today, we usually ask whether the work the students produce reflects what they have learned. Who actually owns the knowledge? But I'd like to draw our attention back to one of my favourite sayings from professor Shawn Wilson in "Research and Ceremony." "If knowledge is formed in a relationship, it can't be owned. In other words, whether we own knowledge or if knowledge owns us, that is a big question. But just as anything else, I believe that we must nurture the relationship with the idea, with the knowledge as anyone or anything else." Without further ado, I'm excited to introduce Valeria Cortés, our facilitator for the session today. Valeria is a faculty member from Royal Roads University with

25 years of experience working in higher education. What impressed me the most is her unwavering commitment towards cultivating meaningful learning experiences, especially for online education. I know that Valeria has a full session for all of us. Valeria, this stage is all yours. Please guide us through this exploration. Thank you.

VALERIA CORTES:

Thank you so much, Gwen. Hi everyone. Welcome to this session. I also love running and pokey bowls and lately dumplings. I'm also an immigrant from Mexico and I often think about the land where I'm from, like this picture here of Popocatepetl. Also about my responsibility to this place, to the land that I'm on, also known as Victoria, Lewungen and Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations as you know. I was in Mexico a few days ago and I took this picture of Popocatepetl as it was about to land in Mexico City. And I really love this volcano. It's always smoking, smoky mountain. It's what it means. I believe this work today is part of that thinking of the responsibility and the relationality and relationships that we have to my land, to the land where I'm right now on raising my kids. And for that, I'm really grateful and humbled. As we get started in our time together. I invite you to also, with recording your cameras, unless you ask a question or something, will not show your faces. If you feel comfortable, I would love it if you could put your cameras on so I can see your faces. I also invite you to think about your connection to the land where you're on or the land where you're from. As we get started to just take what I call a community breath. Get us grounded in this space, being present. If you are thinking of listening and being here and also trying to read your email, I invite you to perhaps just focus on one of those actions. Just to be present and stay in our bodies. Okay.

So it's interesting, right? Because as I show the next image, Kelsey, it's like the fear that we all have that everybody will have their cameras off. And what does that mean? Is it disengagement? And I just want to say that one of the biggest learnings that I had this past year was that cameras off does not necessarily mean that students are disengaged or not interested or that I'm doing something wrong. I just wanted to share that because sometimes that's usually something that at least throws me off in this quest for trying to make connections in the digital era. Let's talk about our aspirations, like our colleague Carmen Rodriguez says, or learning outcomes for the session. My hope here is... we can go to the next slide, Kelsey. Thank you.

We have an hour together. My hope is that we can identify that whenever you finish this session, that you have three ways in which you can add on or enhance your teaching around really trying to build a little bit more relationships and relationality within your learning spaces and that you have that feeling of trying something new. We're starting a new semester and we might feel very overwhelmed right now. But that inspiration and that openness to possibilities, that's something that I'm really wanting us to have. How are we going to do this? There's three things that I'm planning on doing here. The first one, we're going to talk a little bit about what primary orientation factors are and how they impact teaching. Then we're going to talk about some examples, ideas. This is where the Padlet also comes in. Finally, I want to share a holistic

rubric that has been in the making for about a year. That's the plan. I hope we can all have a meaningful learning experience here.

All right, before we get started, we'll quickly do a pair up and share, and here is the invitation. Look at your workspace. Look around, whatever it is that you have. Just identify an item and choose it, you will be in a pair. We will have 4 minutes in total, so it will feel short and most likely it's going to be interrupted, right? But please allow for that and just give a quick hello and share about why your item is important, right? I have here like a little turtle. Or you might have a photograph or you might just have your water and just a moment to connect with someone else. Perhaps make a good connection. So let's do that. If for any reason, anybody ends up being on their own or there's no interaction with your partner, for whatever reason, please come back to the main room. All right. Whenever you are ready, Kelsey and everybody, you know what to do and we'll see you in 4 minutes.

Thank you for that, everybody. I hope you made a quick, nice connection. Make sure to share emails, contact information to build our community.

Okay, let's get started with a first area of focus. Here is an invitation to think about who we are as educators. For this, I am talking about primary orientation factors. And here I'm borrowing from the field of intercultural communication. Let's go to the next, click Kelsey. In short, primary orientation factors, and some of you might be the experts in this area, are personal values and attributes that we carry, right? In other words, we can say that it's our world view. These are factors that we should consider when communicating with other people or whenever we are in conflict. What I'm thinking here is what did we think about these differences in the context of our teaching? This is just to set the tone, right. Let's take for instance, individualism/collectivism, right? Like that's the first dimension that we have here. What we mean by this is how do we see ourselves or how do you see yourselves in relation to other people? That kind of cohesion with other people. I know in my case, I see myself as very much part of the learning community, right? And I also see the classroom space as a whole as a learning community, right? My invitation here for you is where would you place yourself in this scale, right? Like how do you see yourself in relation to your class? I would say individualism is a little bit more separate in terms of who we are as individuals. Now, I believe that this awareness can give us some insight around who we are, our personality, and also about what activities would work for us. I don't expect that everybody will be using theatre or drama or different things that might not align with your values. That's why this is important. Now, there is another dimension here which I am calling Transactional on one side and Relational on the other side. I'm curious to know when you see these words. When you hear these words, what comes to your mind? I'm curious, either "transactional" or "relational." If you can write on the chat really quick, just give me some ideas of what comes to your mind. Oh, interesting "product versus process." Thank you for that. I'm still trying to figure out the best words perhaps, but transactional for me makes me think of factory-like processes. When I'm in that space, I feel something like, hey student, you need to give me assignments by this time for these points with these specific requirements that are not plagiarized, that I can mark them and give you a grade. It also makes

me feel really anxious about all the bureaucratic procedural approaches, whereas I really need to make myself snap out of it and tap into who I am as an educator. And that's the reason I'm asking this question. And going to my approach, which is a lot more relational. I want to provide flexibility. I want to provide choice in my assignments. I want to integrate arts or images or you know, colour, music. It's like this awareness of the approach. I think it's important, right? This relationality or relational space, it's a deep care for the whole person. I really want to make an effort to see students beyond the label, to see who they are, what expertise, what are the issues that they are caring for so that the learning can really be very meaningful. Yeah, I think that this is where the re-humanizing takes place. I wonder if also in this space of relational space, let's say, or relationship building, there's also where we have trauma-aware approaches, or trauma-informed practices. Where we have a little bit more space to explore what's going on with our bodies, with our social emotional regulation and so on. One more thing that I want to say is that it's in this space of relationality where I remind myself that AI does not have a body, emotions, or sensations. Where AI does not understand culture, or empathy, or the nuance of the interactions. And AI does not have a sense of ethics or critical thinking. That's where as an educator, I can focus my efforts and what I can really help students learn. In some way, it's liberating. And I have to say I need to intentionally move myself into that area and release the anxiety. Some of you mentioned that in your comments in the initial survey. Let's start with an invitation to think a little bit more about who we are as educators. And perhaps we could even have another dimension of how we feel about the digital era. What is our response? Is it fear, excitement, curiosity? I think that's also something to consider as we move forward.

Let's look at the next area of focus here. I am specifically going to share some ideas for check in/ check out. I'm going to a next track. I always, not just at the beginning of the course, but every single session, do a check in. That check in is something that's fun. I always start with music. Some of you that know me. And some ideas, for instance, is the image or photo elicitation.

That's the first image that I have here. This one is a screenshot of group works cards. But really it can be any image or any object. It can be music. It can be anything that really quickly grounds us, inspires us, makes us feel at ease and says something beyond just the content of our courses. Another option, and I just love this, is to work with food. I love teaching international students. Usually when we are in the middle of the term or so. We say, okay, remember this date. We're going to be having a show and tell at the beginning of the course that allows us to be there as humans and talk about food, right? Just can be a quick thing. Won't take a lot of time. You can figure it out so that that's within your content. Then lastly here, another example that I have is you've seen some of you, if you did the arts-based activities. This is something that I ask very pointedly, specifically, how are you doing? What's on your plate? This is on a Jamboard, and I use the Post it notes. It usually allows us to talk about what's happening to us. Particularly in the pandemic that was very useful to have an opportunity to vent and to talk about how we're doing. Now, some of you might have other super, awesome, cool ideas on what to do for check ins and check outs. Please, please add them to the Padlet. The link is on

the chat. Yes, there's so many other ways. Now, you also might be thinking, okay, Val, that works great. What about assignments? Let's talk about assignments.

I'm trying to change the wording again. This is another shout out to Carmen. Demonstrations of learning. This is what it is. Basically I try to invite learners to include personal artifacts and personal connections to the assignment.

You will see in the first image that I have here, this is a foreign post, it's a Moodle. And within the reflection, there's an invitation to include some image. Something that is important for the student, right? There's also the opportunity. I love Padlet. The second image here, very similar. It's a reflection and it's a snapshot or really an image that relates to that reflection. Okay, with PowerPoint. And this is the last image that I have here. Very similar, right? And this one I always give an option of oral presentation or written, right? And many students prefer to say, Okay, let's do a quick check in one on one oral presentation. This is one of those, right? They prepare the slides and they talk to me about their leadership journey, which is usually what I teach. I teach leadership. I believe that there are many different ways regardless of the topic. Because some people say, well, it's easy for you because you teach leadership. But I truly believe that regardless of the topic, we can make those personal connections happen. If you're like, I don't know how. Well please reach out because I have ideas or ask over here. We have lots of expertise in the room. Okay. How are we doing so far? I see thumbs up. Okay. Perfect some of these great ideas in the chat I'm seeing. Nice. Okay, we are halfway through and now I want to show you the last area of focus.

Please check out. There's a paper coming up in the new year. This is a holistic rubric. I'm very excited because this is, I don't know if any of you was part of, it was a FLO lab last year. Rubrics, Rubrics, Rubrics, and we're talking about, well, what other ways are there for us to talk about rubrics? To showcase that holistic connection. And here I'm piloting it; I'm very excited about this. Let me walk you through it. This rubric, it starts with self-love at the centre. And here is both for the learner and for us as instructors, although that's just really just for me to remember, right? But it's about how we bring, very intentionally, this language into the learning space. And how we become aware of who we are and how we are showing up in this learning space. I'm trying to invite students to do so, to reflect that in every single assignment, right? And for them to start thinking about how am I demonstrating mastery or awareness in these four areas of self. I even include what it means in terms of aspirations, mental, physical, emotion, spiritual. Now I believe that this rubric or this approach guides this idea of free risk conscientization, right? We cannot really change or learn if we do not know what is going on, we do not know what's happening in our bodies. The purpose of the assignment is to demonstrate learning. And then the next circle here refers to content. In this particular case, this is my Content for Collective Leadership. I invite you to think about how your own content might look like in relation to this connection of self-love, right? For example, Enrico, you were talking about Six Sigma And I'm just thinking about, wow, this is really cool. Because these are processes that are meant to be there to enhance organizations and productivity and how we work in some way, it has a connection to the human element, right? How do we make that

happen there? Then with this outer circle, I have the course, Institutional learning outcomes. And this comes in learning outcomes lingo, which sometimes we can change, sometimes we can't. But when I am explaining this rubric to students, I found that it was a lot more understandable when I explained that the assignment was not for me to mark, right, again, moving away from that transactional approach and to really invite students to think about how the assignment is helping them learn about themselves in relation to the content. It has been working out well. I am really curious to know what some of your questions or reactions are. But these are some of the areas where I think we can help both students and ourselves do more connected, better work. Absolutely, Bonita, yeah. Self-love here. It's something that I'm trying to be a lot more intentional and talk about it with students. And talk about, hey, pedagogy of love. We want to add labels to these ideas, right? In some ways it's common sense, but sometimes we perhaps need to unlearn the way we have, we think teaching works. Let's see, we have 30 minutes here. I will invite you to take a minute here. We're going to have a minute of silent reflection. You're invited to either write or maybe just think. I have presented three main areas of focus here. The first one is specifically about who are you. What things are happening within your teaching space? Then some very specific ideas. And then this idea of holistic rubric, let's call it for general terms, pedagogy of love. Yeah, the circle of courage is another one that can be used. Absolutely. Let's just write for a minute anything that comes to your mind about what's there for you. Then we'll have an opportunity to share and see if there's any more ideas or concerns or things that are coming up. But in the meantime, let's just have a moment to write down. The three of them. If there's perhaps something that spoke strongly to you, maybe you can focus on that. Let's just take a minute from now. Let's be happy with the silence. All right, so if we can maybe stop the PowerPoint, Kelsey.

Okay, so I'm curious to know, are there any questions before we break into smaller groups here. Anything that you need to ask? Something that you're strongly wondering? Something that perhaps you want to share? How are things going for you? Okay, I'll take that. We're doing great. And if that is the case, let's get us into another opportunity to share. Here is the invitation. It's a cross-pollination of ideas. The question specifically was, What are you compelled to try? Okay, maybe that's the prompt here. Okay, so.... Let's add here on the chat. Thank you, Kelsey. I went zooming through this conversation. Now have an opportunity to talk among yourselves. We'll have around 7 to 8 minutes. What are you compelled to try and if there's something that you're like, I have tried this before, feel free to share. Okay. We're going to go into groups of four and enjoy the conversation. What are you compelled to try or unlearn? You know what to do everybody.

Welcome back, everybody. I'm curious to know if there is anything that you would like to share with the larger community here and in the future, for those who are looking in the future. Any ideas? Anything that you want to voice? It's so true, everybody has AI. Top of mind. Go ahead.

PARTICIPANT:

[Inaudible] Share something that I never really thought deeply about, which was within the rubric you offered, spirit or spirituality is something that we of a particular generation might

have an understanding of. If you're over 30 and you didn't grow up in a digital childhood. It's not necessarily religious, but it is something greater than ourselves. And so we started, or I started wondering what if the representation that's greater than myself was entirely virtual growing up. Is that how spirituality for an 18-year-old or a 19-year-old student, how they might think of themselves as this is the extension of myself beyond myself. It was just a beautiful thought I wanted to acknowledge for sharing it. I never really considered what that might look like from a generational perspective.

PARTICIPANT:

Thanks, I just want to follow up because you mentioned my name. Yeah. I wonder when we show the knowledge. I feel that everyone here, for example, has the same understanding of the words. But do teenagers or 18-year-olds who enter university have the same understanding of that? That's just what I wonder, because they were growing up in a very different era. They are having digital personalities in a digital world and I just wonder, I wish I could know more about it.

VALERIA:

And they are the experts of their own lives, right? So you can always become the researcher and the curious person be like, okay, let's talk a little bit about spirituality and what that means to me is, you know, when I am in point and looking at the water and how I feel so good about myself, how about you? Let's do it in 2 minutes. Or you can also do like a little smaller sessions, but I love that conversation and the thinking of it, right? Let's continue to be curious, absolutely. What they think. Any other comments, curiosities, connections, ideas for activities?

PARTICIPANT:

Lots of the ideas really resonate for me today. But I'm constantly thinking about the assessment and the assignment and drawing them in as somebody who the ideas. Yeah, it makes really good sense for me. The practical component is still feeling, remaining challenging. I get stuck on colonial ways of doing and the ways that things are always done and so I get hung up, I guess. Strategies for getting hung up and/or other thinking groups for continuing to grow and evolve assessment for something where I'm at I guess or a question I have maybe.

VALERIA:

Yeah, please add to the Padlet, everybody, because we have 10 minutes left. I know there's a lot of expertise and ideas in this room. I always now offer different options to students of assignments, for example. I'm happy to chat with anybody who might be, like I have no clue, to think about together. What are some ways in which we can embed these important aspects of learning, Because I think these tools are not going away., right? But what we need more of is this critical thinking, is the awareness of self and our bodies. And our relationship to land even in talking about spirituality. Absolutely, Tyler, UDL principles are super helpful. Yes. I would also tap into trauma-informed practices. There's a link. I'm going to put it on the Padlet there. I forgot, it was like 100 ideas or something about trauma-informed practice. If that's also new for you, it's worth checking out. But yes, definitely we can look into that at a later time. Please

reach out because I know assessment is a challenge. And also the challenge of maybe thinking about different ways to assess different needs, right? That's something that some of us have been thinking about. We tend to think that we want to do the same for every student. And maybe I'm going to a different conversation here about access or need, but different ways of doing things, right? What do we need to unlearn is constant in my mind. I think we have space for one or two more comments or questions. All right.

I want to do a quick check out. Those of you who are with your cameras on, you can give me a thumbs upside or down. Those of you who have your cameras off, please use your reactions or even on the chat. Can you identify how your primary orientation factors might impact your teaching practice? Give me a thumbs up if you're totally okay. Not at all. All right. Okay. What about, do you think you can leave today with at least three different ways in which you can add to or facilitate relationship building and student engagement? Okay. Thumbs up. Great. Okay. This one is most important. Do you feel inspired to try something new, everybody? Yeah. How about in terms of confidence? I'm really curious. Do you feel confident to try something new? Yeah. Some of you. Yeah. All right. Because I'm pretty sure that you have what it takes to make magic happen and maybe too confident, Adam. Okay. This is amazing. Thank you so much for your time today. I know Gwen has some comments that she wants to. There's a lot of training in AI coming up through BCcampus. I'm very excited about that. Yeah, reach out. That's the other one that I want to say. Don't hesitate to reach out and back to you Gwen.

GWEN:

Thank you. Thank you very much for leading us through a very critical topic today. Thank you very much for staying with us till now everyone. We will put the link of the survey in the chat. Please help us with this survey so that we can understand your needs, and we can try to connect with you in those learning opportunities. As I promise, I would like to talk about some of our upcoming learning activities. Can we have the next slide, please?

This fall we started to launch a new FLO Edtech Sandbox series. Those are going to be a nice space for us to explore new innovative teaching tools together, some exciting ideas for our teaching and learning. The next one is we're going to have the Studio23 conference in the fall. It is an in-person conference. Let's get together, everyone, because this is a very creative and playful space. It's going to be nice for all of us to gather together to inspire each other. And just to practice and play and to elevate our skills in teaching and facilitation. Yeah, we look forward to seeing you all there in person, everyone. I know that AI is on top of many of us here today and in our registration room as well. We have two offerings. One is the FLO Lab related to AI, Can I Really Prove that I'm Not a Robot? And one FLO microcourse related to Future Facing Assessment: How to Use AI in the Design of Alternative Assessment. Probably we're going to plan for a FLO panel later this year too. Please stay tuned. And I look forward to seeing everybody again in those learning events. Have a great Friday, everyone. Please help us with the survey. Thank you, Kelsey, for popping the offerings in the chat. Thank you.