Transcript for FLO Friday: Learning Relationships with Community in the Online Context
BCcampus event hosted March 1, 2024
Facilitator: Rhianna Nagel
Host: Gwen Nguyen

GWEN NGUYEN:
It is my pleasure to welcome you to another FLO Friday of 2024. It's really hard to believe that it's already March. My name is Gwen and I'm a learning and teaching advisor with BCcampus. Before we start, I'd like to go over a few housekeeping items. This whole session will be recorded and you're welcome to keep your camera off. And feel free to rename yourself to "Participant" if you prefer. Live captioning has also been enabled for our accessibility. A special thank you goes out to my exceptional teammate Kelsey Kilbey, who has been a wonderful support behind the scenes to all learning and teaching offerings. I'm very delighted to start our session today with a territorial acknowledgment.

This slide showcases two beautiful photos. One captures a very vibrant city. Saigon, Vietnam is my homeland and where I recently spent time with my family for Lunar New Year. One represents the territories of the Lekwungen- speaking peoples, including the Songhees, Esquimalt, W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. In late February, where many of us at BCcampus live and work. When I returned last week, as I shared with my team, I really miss my family and the dynamic hustle of Saigon City. However, the peace as well as the beauty of nature here that's by the dark and gloomy weather reminds me that brighter days ahead and springtime is still around the corner. I'm very grateful to be here and connecting with you from this beautiful lane on a Friday. Please feel free to share your introduction and territorial acknowledgement in the chart if you wish. Usually we share the survey link at the very end of the session, but I know that some of you might have a tight schedule, so I'd like to mention this upfront. We invite you to participate in a short anonymous survey. It's in the chat and your feedback will help us to shape our future professional development events at BCcampus.

Turning back to the session. Turning back to our session focus today, it is about learning relationships. It's about learning relationships with the community in the online setting and we are very happy to have Rhianna with us. This discussion is in support of the B.C. Post-Secondary Digital Literacy Framework, emphasizing the importance of community-based learning. As facilitators, it is our role to keep learning and supporting our learners in engaging and establishing meaningful relationships with the community to support the digital projects. So Rhianna is a manager of community-engaged learning at the University of Victoria, and has 15 years of experience in creating and supporting community and industry research. I know that she has a full session planned for all of us today. Without further delay, I hand over the stage to her. Please take it away, Rhianna. Thank you.

RHIANNA NAGEL:
Great, thanks so much, Gwen. Well it's really nice to be here with you all today. This is a pretty big topic because we also want to understand what we're talking about when we're talking

about community- engaged learning before we talk about it in an online context. What I'm going to do is to throw some information on you, at you, and also that I'm hoping that we can have some time for conversation. First I would like to say where I'm coming from. I'm coming from K'omoks Territory, otherwise known as Denman Island. This picture is perfect for today because it is exactly what it looks like today when I look out my window. Not that beach, although I do love that beach, but it is a dreary gray day where I am, which is very representative of winter on the west coast. I'm always really keen when I talk about a territory acknowledgment to think about what it means in the context of our conversation today and what it means in the context of my commitment in my work and in my personal life. In the context of our work today, well, it's very relevant because we're talking about relationships with community. We can't really talk about that without being aware of and considering the relationships that Indigenous people have with the lands, with their people, and the other people in the lands where they're living and where they have lived for many, many years and generations. It's always important, I think, to have that in our minds and our hearts. It's an ongoing journey for myself to learn what that means in the work that I do. My commitment is really to try as we're building relationships, for students to learn in community and with community to hold that in their hearts and minds as well when they're working in this space. Who am I? I am a mother of three of a blended family. Lots of teenagers in the house, intense times in my life. But I do enjoy it. I like to garden. I've worked in the space of community-engaged learning for a long time. I developed our approach to coordinating and managing community-engaged learning at UVic. I've learned a lot in that process, both from my own experience and in connecting with other colleagues across the country. I'm a very open collaborator and I like sharing if anybody has any other questions beyond this presentation, I'm more than happy to connect, to have a chat about whatever questions come up.

What we're going to do today. Well, we're going to get to know each other a little bit and dig into why we're here. I'm going to do a brief overview of community-engaged learning. Then we'll talk specifically about what that means in the virtual context. Then we'll have an opportunity for some reflection and questions.

So let's get grounded. It's not experiential learning. This is foundational to all of the work we do in community- engaged learning because it is experiential learning. And it's not experiential learning unless we're reflecting on what we're doing. I always hold it in all of the workshops that I do. Let's start there. I'd like you to either doodle or write a response to these questions that you see in the mirror here. 1. Why are you here? 2. What do you want to give while you're here? And 3. What do you want to get while you're here? If you could take 1 minute to do your exercise, whether it be doodling or writing. And we're a small group, so I think what we'll do is we'll just go out into pairs for 3 minutes and then we'll come back and share any commonalities that we found in our conversations. I will start you now on a minute of reflection for this. Does anybody have any questions about the task?

Okay, you can wrap up your sentence or wrap up your doodle. Then Kelsey is going to put us in paired breakout rooms so that you can share with each other your responses to these

questions. First, share your name and then your responses to these questions. It gives you a chance to meet somebody new perhaps, or to continue to connect with somebody you already know. Kelsey, if you don't mind. There you go. Thank you. There you came back.

All right. Welcome back. I hope you had a chance to get to know someone and talk about these questions. My curiosity is if there were commonalities in why you're here, what you want to give, what you want to get, and if there are any differences that stood out. If someone from a couple of the groups could share that, that would be helpful for me. I did review some of the survey responses that people gave to what they wanted to learn today, so I have tried to accommodate that. But it'd be nice if there are any burning questions or burning desires of what people would like to share today. If anybody wants to share, that would be helpful. And you're all just coming back. I'm going to repeat my spiel because I thought everybody was here, but everybody wasn't here. I hope you had a good conversation. What I would really like to know from those conversations is where the commonalities stood out in terms of what you want to learn today and what you want to give and get. It's just helpful for me as I shape what I say as we go along in our time together. Any of the groups, if somebody could share just what stood out as a commonality and what people wanted to give and get.

TREVAR:
Fay and I came in not entirely knowing, as usual what, as I said with FLO Fridays you never know entirely what... It's got a title and description, but you never know quite what it's going to be. And it's exciting always to come and hear new ideas and to then bring it back home. And then you aren't entirely sure what you're going to have to contribute. But sometimes that's what emerges during the time that you're sharing. You hear new ideas, you bring your own experience, that sort of thing.

RHIANNA:
Mm hmm. Well, that's very relevant with community-engaged learning. It's all very emergent for sure. Any other thoughts that came from your groups?

KIM:
If it's okay with Jenny, I'll say one thing that came out for us that was really interesting. I thought we got cut off in the middle of the last thing we were talking about. But we were talking about community and all the different ways that we net ourselves in community and whether that is your community from your country of origin or your community because you are a disabled person and you think about the disabled community or so many different nets that we can fit ourselves in. Just curious. I think both of us are curious about what we can contribute in terms of thinking about those different lenses that we bring and also really curious to hear. Both of us are really curious to hear what everybody else in this group is bringing from their perspective.

RHIANNA:

Oh I love it. That's so much of what we do in teaching in a community- engaged way is to support students in understanding their own positionality, and in trying to demonstrate that as well as a way for students to be able to grow into that space. I think that's really relevant for our conversation today. Okay, awesome. Well, thank you for sharing. That's helpful. Nothing was like, oh no, I have no idea what that is or how we're going to go to respond to that. I'm just going to share my screen again. I'm sorry for a little bit of back and forth. I just find it helpful to stop sharing when we're trying to have a conversation so I can actually see people.

All right, let's get on the same page here in terms of what we're talking about with community-engaged learning. I just want to clarify. I'm talking about this… I put at UVic, etc. But I do that because it does look different in different institutions and in different contexts. I just want to clarify that this is one way of looking at it, but it's not the way of looking at it. But essentially, community- engaged learning is experiential learning with community. It's opportunities for students to actively engage with their course content through a combination of collaborations with community and facilitated critical reflection. This can look many different ways. It can look like service learning, where students are embedded within the fabric of an organization. Could be applied research or projects with community or for community. And it could be field- based learning, like our field schools or field trips.

For those of you who aren't familiar with experiential learning or just for a refresher, there has been a lot of scholarship of learning and teaching that's gone into the whole realm of experiential learning. One of these scholars that I really appreciate is John Dewey. One of the things that he says is "Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." And I think that's really important when we're thinking about the context of experiential learning. We're really trying to encourage our students to see themselves as lifelong learners and see their learning as a part of their living. I find that this approach of community-engaged learning can be really helpful in framing that. Essentially what we're doing is we're providing a context wherein students have an activity and a connection, community or place. And then they are bringing that and combining it with our course content. And that's our "What?" What is the activity? What is the community? What is the content? And then the "So what?" As you bring those things together, what does that mean? Is there something new that's developing in our thoughts and our hearts about that? The "Now what?" What do we do with that new understanding? What do we do with that new skill that we've built, etc? It's an ongoing cycle that flips all around. And I think it's a beautiful part of, as I said, understanding oneself as a lifelong learner.

The "Why?" of this approach to learning. In my mind, there are many, but I like this tree of CEL. We've tried to fit in a lot of these different aspects. Place based obviously is one that we'll talk about later, but can or cannot be an element of the virtual realm of community-engaged learning. There always is a component of relationality, of making meaning. Often that's supported through reflection, of having a relevant learning experience where content is applied in some way in the world around us. Where there's reciprocity in our relationships both in and out of the classroom. Where we're building skills and we're forming connections with each

other in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom, Gaining new experiences which shed light on ourselves and on the world around us. Really importantly, I think, is the sense of civic engagement that we can develop. Shifting ourselves away from the idea of education being a tool for getting a job, which obviously, is very important, but also an opportunity for us to see ourselves as members of our community and the world around us and how we can do that in a good way.

When I share this with students, I often break it down to students having an opportunity to know themselves, to build their skills, to figure out how they want to contribute to the world around them, and to know their community.

Before I talk to this slide, I just want to say if there are any questions, please, you can pop them in a chat or just talk over me and say them. Please don't hesitate to do so. CEL is quite expansive and it looks very different depending on the course, depending on the community context, and certainly depending on if we're in person or virtual. I find this spectrum of engagement really helpful to understand what the relationship is that we actually have with community and what it is that we're intending to do when we're working with community. In particular. I think this is important because there was a period of community- engaged scholarship in which we really focused on the informed side, just like taking knowledge, sharing knowledge, etc. And then we had this pendulum shift where we really focused on the co-creation and really significantly romanticized the co-creation of learning experiences with students. The challenge there is that actually creating a co-created learning experience, it's a very difficult and very rare thing to find in a semester- long course. It's actually something that is very burdensome for both community partners, faculty, and students, but it also then can create a false narrative about what we're doing and what we're actually achieving in those experiences. I really like to encourage people to see themselves within the whole spectrum of engagement, recognizing that there is no right place to be on the spectrum except for the fact that it needs to be aligned. It needs to be aligned with the context of the community. With the intended learning outcomes of the course, with the time available for the students and the faculty and the community partners. Those elements are really important when we think about the left side of the spectrum of low engagement and simple reciprocity. To the right side of the spectrum of high engagement and complex reciprocity. What we will see, for example, often is within our semester system, the way that students can most effectively engage with community is more through a consulting type relationship. Where they're providing a small research project or a small project with a community partner over the course of the semester. That doesn't mean that the other types don't happen, but that is the most common type of community-engaged learning at UVic.

Regardless of where the community- engaged learning sits on the spectrum, there are guiding principles that are always meant to be the foundation of that collaboration. One that we're fostering and recognizing meaning, both for the students and for the community partners. Often when I talk to students about this, I talk about it in the context of students understanding that if they're bored in their class or they're bored in the things that they're doing with

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community, then that's their responsibility to understand why and to bring meaning to that experience. Whether it be through their own reflection on themselves or whether it be through conversations with the community partner and the faculty member of understanding the purpose behind the activity that they're doing. Sometimes it is actually the case that they are being thrown into a make-work project that means nothing. That's a really important thing for them to be able to articulate that and then for there to be adjustments. Sometimes it's simply the student really not recognizing the purpose behind the work that they're doing. I mentioned this concept of lifelong learning, and I think it's really foundational. It aligns really closely with this idea of the democratization of knowledge in that we are all learning all the time and we all have different knowledge and skills to bring to the table. There has been a tendency, and there still is a tendency, when students dive into community-engaged learning for the first time, and particularly where they have a high level of self-confidence, there's often an approach that we call dysfunctional rescuing, where a student will go in and think that they know everything and they're going to somehow, in an eight-week project solve all of the problems of an organization that has been working in a field for 40 years. It's insulting to the organization, it's insulting to the people, and it's not a rich learning experience for the student if that isn't dissected and broken down, and they haven't had the opportunity to reflect on that. And be supported in seeing it in a different way, and having the project honed in a way where they understand that they are a small little drop in the bucket of a big beautiful picture. Then this other piece that already spoke about was civic engagement. And this opportunity for students to really see themselves in the world around them. Of course, very important is how we collaborate together. We do so with integrity and reciprocity wherever we are on the spectrum of engagement. That requires communication, it requires self-understanding of ethics and protocols of engagement on all sides. I spelt protocols wrong, sorry about that.

And I spoke to this, but there's this whole piece of aligning that's really important. Where we're aligning the needs of all parties. Where we're aligning intended learning outcomes. And we're thinking about where the students are coming from. What's their previous learning experience? What maturity do the students in your class typically come to into the class? And how can you build relationships and projects with community that align well with that?

Here's some examples of community-engaged learning. There are hundreds and hundreds at UVic, but these are the ones I have pictures of readily available. The one at the top left is an ecological restoration project that an ecological restoration student was working on with the Metchosin Foundation, which is in the outskirts of Victoria. And they were doing chemist metal restoration with the organization. They were getting an opportunity to practise their ecological restoration skills and their project management. But doing so with the Metchosin Foundation, so they understand also that context of what it is to work in that space with others around them. The bottom centre is an archaeological dig in the Broken Group Islands, which is part of an archaeology field school where students, they're very fortunate to be engaged in a decades-long research project. They're contributing consistently to the research for Tseshaht Nation in Pacific Rim National Park and University of Victoria around the ethno-cultural history of the region. The one on the top right was with the James Bay New Horizons Organization, which is a

small community centre in Victoria. This one I found really interesting. It was with a psych stats class where the professor was encountering a lot of failure and a lot of dropout rates in the course. She was trying to brainstorm through ways that the course could be more engaging. At the same time, the James Bay New Horizon Centre wanted to do some program evaluation and had some questions that they wanted to ask in a survey that they wanted to build and to have some answers to. And to be able to evaluate those answers. The students in the class, rather than the previous abstract data that they would use for their class project, they use the real data for the program evaluation. They were able to support the centre's grant applications and the reformatting of their programs. But also with that tangible experience, actually, the results were that they were more engaged with the content and the students had a higher success rate in the course. Very simple project, but a nice example and one that definitely could be replicated in the virtual world.

The next thing I want to talk about is the virtual world, because that's the topic of today, is how this all fits in the virtual context. One thing that I find really interesting is that prior to COVID, the idea of community-engaged learning done, not necessarily in community, but perhaps with community in a virtual sense, was considered the poorer version, so to speak, or like a version of less quality of community-engaged learning. But then of course, with COVID, we adapted and did a lot of different experiences of community-engaged learning during lockdowns and played around with a lot of different modalities. There were interesting outcomes of that. One, that it became very clear that in many cases, the virtual interactions with community were a lot easier for community partners than to have students in their physical space. That it allowed them an opportunity for having meeting times together, particularly when students worked in groups. It also meant that, especially during COVID, when a lot of organizations lost their physical space, it meant that they could still work with students even if they didn't have a physical space. But when I saw was there are different types of what this looks like virtually. I'd be curious to know how this fits with your teaching. But it could be, for example, that the class time is virtual, but the community- engaged elements of the course are happening in the student's community and that could be facilitated or not facilitated by the instructor. Or it could be that all elements of the course, including the community-engaged elements, are virtual. The student is also meeting with the community partner virtually. And they're also doing all those reflective activities and what have you in the virtual classroom. But there's a lot to unpack here. I wanted to pose some questions for us to discuss. Stop sharing. I think given our size, we'll do this as a whole group. I can speak to these things, but I'd like us to brainstorm a bit together. When we're thinking about the virtual context of community-engaged learning, I wanted to pose this question. What does change and what doesn't change? On the foundation of it all, what doesn't change are the principles of community-engaged learning. That will always be there. But I'd like to talk together about things that do change. For example, if the class is distributed geographically, how does an instructor navigate that? If the class is in the same geographical context but they're meeting online, how is that navigated? If everything is virtual, what does that look like? Does anybody have any questions about that or experience in that space? Yeah. Rochelle?

ROCHELLE:

I guess one of the things that I did in COVID, I was teaching a research methods class and as part of our learning outcomes, they actually had to conduct research. So through Ripen, which is a company that connects educational institutions with companies that need work done. We connected with a not-for- profit organization in B.C. Even though all of my students were distributed all over B.C., some folks from Alberta, we were still able to connect. And together collaboratively develop a survey, institute that survey, support recruitment, and provide reports and data analysis for the company. It was just a really interesting way to do it, especially at a time when everyone was online. So we had geographic distribution, but we also had everybody online, which kind of levelled the playing field in a lot of ways is that some of those things were not nearly as relevant in terms of not only the context of the project, which was B.C. wide, but also in terms of being present in the room versus being present online.

RHIANNA:
That's a great example. And did the company come into the class at all to present to the class? Was there a virtual connection between the students and the company?

ROCHELLE:
Yeah, We would have, we had an initial meet and greet online where everyone was expected to be present. And then we had monthly check-ins and progress reports where the students would put together, just like a 5-minute chat for the company to be able to communicate what's been done, what our next steps are, and maybe how we could collaboratively work together to make some of those steps happen, specifically in regards to recruitment and dissemination of the survey.

RHIANNA:
Thank you. Any other examples or questions about these differences and what the challenges might be of shifting to virtual engagement? Ben?

BEN:
Yeah, I have a SSHRC partnership grant and we're working with a lot of community organizations and one of them is the CNIB. One of the students on the grant was actually embedded with CNIB, but it was totally virtual. I'm sure I've never met any of the people in person that are part of this project. Most of the people are out in Toronto. And so the students in B.C. are embedded with them, so they thought it was a really great project because it was driven by CNIB, which is nice, rather than driven by us. And we were basically just helping them with whatever they wanted help with. Now it's nice because I think it's spawned other things because they've invited me to be part of grants that they're submitting, I'm on a scoping review with them. But it's nice because they're the ones leading it and I'm one of the co-investigators, you'll say.

RHIANNA:
I love that example in terms of the emphasis on community led and community driven. I think that's really important. I have experienced a number of times in my role where faculty will

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come with advice on building a community-engaged course. And they'll have all these ideas of the project students will do in community without ever talking to a community partner. I mean, that's okay. And that's why I function as a tinder for community- engaged learning at UVic. We hone in and we find that sweet spot. But it certainly can't end there with the project idea of the faculty member, or the student. Natasha, were you going to say something?

NITHASHA:
Yeah, I was going to say that I did my masters at UBC and it was COVID time. So as a student, I was just thinking maybe I would share my perspective as a student. And I mean, today there are people I have not met. But we did so many projects together. If you ask me, it was okay. But ideally, I would still like to have done it in person. Because again, I have been on projects before where we did work in person and I don't know. This could be totally just me being old school or whatever, I don't know. But I feel like the depth of collaboration and effectiveness that comes through in-person projects, especially if it's community- based projects, right. Some other level compared to the virtual ones.

RIHANNA:
Yeah, I can understand that completely. I was on a call earlier this week with folks like myself from across different institutions in Canada. We did speak about that. In particular, speaking about what it means. Pieces of advice that's given for these types of projects, is that we slow down. We take the time we have tea together, we listen in different ways, we build friendships in different ways than we might not either do in other research contexts. But if we're always in the virtual realm, that can lead to a very fast-paced experience that doesn't really allow that slowing down. So I think it depends on the relationship. I think some relationships work well in that space or if they already have a founded relationship or sometimes even not. But I do think that I have seen also that case where it takes away from the quality of the experience.

NITHASHA:
I think I totally agree with what you're saying. As in usually, let's say if you're working as a team and if it's a virtual team, you get on a call, you're like, okay, it's this we're going to do this, okay? Everybody decides what they will do and you're like, okay, bye. Then we'll work on, which is it takes away from the team engagement and building those relationships part of it.

RHIANNA:
Yeah, yeah. And there are benefits of both. It's really nice also when everything gets done and somehow finding that space for that relationship is also really important. I appreciate that. Thanks Nithasha. Kim?

KIM:
Yeah, I just wanted to add the opportunity to participate virtually. Either doing the class entirely virtually, or doing the community work that way really opens things up for students with disabilities. I want to add that piece to it. During COVID, there was a theme that arose where a lot of students with disabilities who had difficulty attending class in person on campus had a

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whole world of opportunities open up to them when classes were available online. I think when we think about the community engagement piece, we can also think about how are we inviting people into the learning community. And how people who get to come and participate in the learning community when it's offered this way? Even a single parent who can participate when their kid is watching Sesame Street next to them, but they can't leave the kid and go to the class. All of those little... those people that might not be contributing to that learning experience if it wasn't available online.

RHIANNA:
Yeah, I really appreciate that. Again, we did have a lot of really important lessons through COVID of how to do that better because we were forced to really dive into that space. Something we've been working on recently is specifically thinking about accommodations from a field-based and community- engaged learning lens. Even with things like students who are studying geography, and their class is going out to a glacier, how can we make it so those students who aren't able to physically get on that glacier, how can they have a valid learning experience and one that really matters to them? And there are ways now. I think that's a really important thing to bring in. And it certainly has been a benefit on all sides, including with our community partners in that context. It's funny, like when we think about breaking down the ivory tower or what have you. When we're in a virtual space, there is no tower. We're just like all coming in from wherever we're coming in. But in the same space, there is a leveling ground there, for sure. Thank you. Another example that I wanted to bring up, because I think this is an important one, is that I do, as I support faculty in the development of their community-engaged learning. Some community-engaged courses are developed where each student in the class or groups of students in the class, work with a community partner on a particular project that is honed with the faculty member. Based typically either on relationships from the CEL office or relationships with the faculty member has. I have had requests from faculty who teach virtually in programs that are completely virtual to mimic that same process. It's a very difficult one to mimic. It's a difficult one to mimic unless the class is significantly mature students, typically more so at the graduate level, because the faculty member will otherwise not really know enough about the context of the community that the student is working in or the people they're collaborating with. I would say that we can't just translate our models for community-engaged learning from the in person and just copy and paste them into the virtual realm. We do need to be creative about how we approach it. In some cases, like I really like the example that Rochelle brought forward is the whole class can work virtually on a project that is built on a relationship that the instructor has with a particular partner. That's a great way for those students to get engaged. But it's less burdensome to the instructor than having all of these different things going on at the same time with the class and different community partners. Any other thoughts about this before I move on? All right.

Well, one other topic that did come up in the survey that was sent out to everyone was about building community in the online classroom. I thought that was interesting because it's not that different than building community with community partners and how we work with community partners. In looking, for example, at these guiding principles that I showed you earlier, we're

doing the same thing in the virtual environment that we would do with our community partners in whatever context we're working with them. So in the virtual environment we're still trying to foster that meaning. We're still trying to encourage lifelong learning. We're still trying to break down the hierarchy of knowledge. We still want to collaborate with each other with integrity and reciprocity. But the piece here that I think is important to remember is the role of the instructor in community- engaged learning. And particularly in the virtual realm where we see these different roles of the instructor being facilitator, knowledge expert, coach, and evaluator. In some courses, in some learning situations, the instructor will hold on to one of those areas or one of those pieces more than others. In the online realm, in the virtual realm in community-engaged learning, the instructor tends to hold all of these quite intensely. It's quite a lot of work for the instructor to hold all of those different personalities and spaces at the same time. I was curious if anybody in this group has experienced that and what their response has been to holding those multiple hats as instructor at the same time. And how you find you navigate that? I'm going to skip it then.

So one of the things that we really need to do in all of these experiences is teach our students and demonstrate active listening, which is difficult on the online realm. Like right now I can see two faces. That's all I can see. It's awkward. It's like I don't even know who I'm talking to. Like, are they there? It's difficult to teach in this space. It's difficult to know if others can recognize when you're listening and it's difficult to know that others are listening to you. How do we do that? I do think that there are online tools and games that we can use that encourage interaction. I wanted to share one of those with you. I'm going to put in the chat this game because I think it's useful. I'd like you to each go to this link. I will share my screen. I need a few volunteers. I need like five volunteers, let's say. When you go to that link, you'll see why. You will see that there is a game, like a link to a PowerPoint presentation.

At the top of the PowerPoint presentation, it says, "Tell me a story." This is a game that was developed by the map shop at UVic. It's a game really to get people talking and interacting. It's typically done in person, but it can certainly be done online. And we played around with making it online. What you do, if you go to the second slide, you'll see that there are hands in the middle of the slide. One of the things that has been effective of this and that we've gained really great feedback about, is that the first part of the game is putting yourself, it's editable, so you put yourself at the table, so we see ourselves in a circle as opposed to just being these little squares on a screen. Whoever's going to volunteer to play, if you can put your name in one of the boxes at the table, that'd be great. You just click on Name and then you can edit it. As people are doing that, I'm going to demonstrate how the game works. Another piece of this that I think is really helpful is that we can bring in maps and place in the virtual world. Even though it's difficult to bring place into the virtual context. The first person, so first, you go around and you introduce yourselves. We don't have time for that, but that's what we would do first. And you have the table, so you're in a circle and you're going around there. Then the first card goes into the hands like that, you just click on it and drag down. Then the prompt is there. "Tell me a story about a welcoming and friendly place." We're using today a map of B.C.

to frame the conversation. We would talk about a welcoming and friendly place in B.C. It could be your campus. It could be your city. It could be anything you want it to be. It could be even a picture, and it doesn't even have to be associated with a picture or a map. But about a welcoming and friendly place. For me a very welcoming and friendly place is the forest at the end of my road where I feel very at home and where I love to pick mushrooms in the fall and where I really enjoy time with my kids, that is, this is hard to put it down here. I'm going to pull my little arrow over so I can see where I am. Boil Point Park in it mushrooms, kids, forest. Then the next person goes, so Ben is next. Ben, you just drag the card about a welcoming friendly place and you drag it into the hands. That's your prompt.

BEN:
Did I do that right or not? Yeah. Yeah.

RHIANNA:
You totally did it, right. Yeah.

BEN:
Okay. And then yeah, I mean, maybe I'll say like, okay, so I work out at a gym on Mondays and Fridays and there's just a weird little community of people there. It's like I am there. I'm probably one of the youngest people who uses the treadmill on Friday and Monday mornings and I'm there with a bunch of older Punjabi men. Yeah, I've learned some Punjabi. Yeah. It's just a funky little community which I would never have expected to be part of. Yeah.

RHIANNA:
Thanks. So it doesn't matter. But your prompt was a favourite place to eat, so I don't think you're eating on the treadmill.

BEN: Oh, I'm sorry I missed that.

RHIANNA:
Oh no. That's totally fine. I do love what you shared.

BEN: I was doing the welcoming friendly part.

RHIANNA:
No, it's brilliant so I want to put it on the map. So where is that, Ben? Do you mind saying where that is?

BEN: That's Hillcrest Pool.

RHIANNA:
In Vancouver. So go down here.

BEN: I'm sorry, I messed that up.

RHIANNA:
No, I love it. It's all good. There's no wrong in this game. That's what the instructions say. There's no right or wrong. Oops. Okay, I'm going to type this in. Typically you'll have a scribe that's not the person speaking for the other person. That again, encourages the active listening. I'm just writing in, gym, fun, different people difference, whatever. But I would do a better job of that if we weren't trying to be quick here for Ben. Thank you Ben for sharing. And then we would go to the next person at the table, which is Kim. Kim. You click on the card at the top left and you pull it into on top of the Tell Me a Story card. Yeah, there you go. You click on it and then pull it down.

KIM: Okay. So I'm clicking on my name card, right.

RHIANNA:
Click on the card in the top left corner, the one that says...

KIM:
I understand. And then I'm bringing that down, down into the hands. Yeah, exactly. Thank you. Perfect. Yeah. My pleasure.

KIM:
About a favourite place to wander or enjoy nature. Okay. I'm going to think it's funny. I'm going to think about Whytecliff Park, which is outside of if you were driving from West Vancouver up into the Whistler area, you would drive past Whytecliff Park. And I actually haven't been there in ages, but it was one of my favourite places to just go for a short, it wasn't a huge hike, it was just a nice short wander out to the water and you could just explore the ocean landscape. It was beautiful, awesome. Thank you.

ROCHELLE:
Next at our table is Gwen.

GWEN:
Okay, so I'll try to navigate it here. So is it still the same topic, The favourite place to wonder you're calling?

RHIANNA:
I can do it for you too. I'll flip the card for you. And then this is your… Yeah. And then here's your prompt

GWEN:

About where you feel free to share your thoughts, where your ideas are respected. In my family and in my group of close friends. Also in my classroom as well. I think that I feel really blessed to be with the group and then to share my insights.

RHIANNA:
And where do you teach?

GWEN:
I used to teach at the University of Victoria. With the question before, so I was thinking of mad because whenever I want to connect with the land and the place that I immigrated to Canada in 2015, and like the first place that I really want that I wanted to go to whenever I want to reflect and share my thoughts further is Mount Tolmie in the territory of the Lekwungen-speaking people. So yeah, there you see the towel and also the sun and the wind make you feel connected with the community and the space that you are in.

RHIANNA:
Great. Thank you so much. I think everybody can get a sense of how the game works. You can adapt these cards to be anything that you want them to be. You could change the cards to be prompts that are specifically connected to the content of your course. You could make them related in a fun way as the introduction to the course to get students talking to one another. But I have had great responses to this game. You're welcome to use it, to take it and use it as you see fit. You can adapt it. It's an open source game. If you'd like more information, I can share it with you as well. But I wanted to share an example of that, of how we build community. And you can imagine, for example, when students are meeting their community partners for the first time, you could set this up. You could have questions related to the project in the top left corner, and you could have the names of each of the people, the community partner, and the students working on it at the table. There are different ways that we can set this up. Hey, Trevor, what's up?

TREVAR:
Oh, I just if you've seen an example of this because it's pretty cool actually, but if you've seen an example of it being used asynchronously, this game being played asynchronously. Because a lot of our courses have no synchronous component where you'd get people together and you flip the cards like this.

RHIANNA:
Yeah, you totally could play it asynchronously because the link is just open once you've opened the link. And as long as you make it editable by everybody, then people can go in and put whatever they want. Yeah, absolutely. One of the things I just wanted to end with just on the importance of reflection in all of these activities. How they create the bond between the experience and what we're learning in our classes.

The key things to think about when we're thinking about reflection are that the reflection be continuous. It's not just an add on at the end of the course or the end of the experience. That the reflection be scaffolded. You're building the tools for a student to know how to reflect and in some cases you may not know how to reflect yourself in an academic setting. It might be that training is needed to be able to demonstrate that skill and to build that skill in your students. Using multiple formats. Ideally, when we give reflective exercises, we're not just giving more essays that students already have to write thousands throughout their degrees. There are many ways for students to present their reflections and also to do their reflections. Students could be encouraged, for example, to walk in a place that they feel comfortable in their local neighborhood or in their local nature setting, contemplating a particular prompt. And as they're contemplating that particular prompt, then come back and draw something or write something that connects with what their thoughts were as they were doing that activity. They don't need to be things that are just our usual activities of our classroom essays and what have you. It's helpful for students to have feedback on the reflection, in particular at their earlier stages of learning how to reflect and always that the reflection is supporting the students to align their community experience with the course content.

I just wanted to give you an opportunity here to think about what you might be taking away from this time we had together. I'm going to give you a minute because I know Gwen also has some things that she'd like to share with you at the end. If you could just write a brief statement to yourself about, we're not going to do the found object things. We don't have time. But this is a fun one you can do too. You can get your students to go and find an object and how it connects with what they learned today and why. Just get them out of their seat to get them thinking in a different way, connecting to the space around them in a different way. Then they could write a brief statement. And then if you could write, now write a brief statement about your key takeaway from today. And then in the chat, if you could just summarize in one word, that would be great. and I'll give you 1 minute to do that.

Awesome, I love the words coming in. Well, thanks everyone very much for our time together today. Stay in touch if you have any questions or you'd like to explore more. And I wish you a lovely, lovely weekend.

NITHASHA:
 I just have a question. So how do we get in touch with you? Sorry, you mute.

RHIANNA:
 I will put my email in the chat.

BEN:
Thanks very much. I'm sorry. I realized I was unmuted for the last little while.

NITHASHA:
Thank you. Thank you so much. It was a very informative session.

RHIANNA: Thanks so much.

KELSEY:
Gwen, you're on mute. I think you're going to share a couple of resources here.

GWEN:
Yes, oh my god. Yeah, thank you. Thank you everyone for being with us till now. Thanks Rhianna. It was a very powerful talk and very engaging activities. I think it's a good start for all of us and I hope that this conversation will continue for us to share our best, not best practices, but some of the experiences and some of our insights in how to enact this community-engaged learning in our classroom. There's another FLO MicroCourse next week, Introduction to the B.C. Digital Literacy Framework. If you are interested, the time for registration is still on. Also, there's another event coming soon to B.C. is the ETUG conference. It's a spring conference, also related with the celebrating 30 years of educational transformation and focusing on digital literacy as well. We look forward to welcoming you back on all the offerings at BCcampus. Thank you very much and have a lovely afternoon.