A first year course in digital technologies designed to support adult learners using a blended delivery model

by

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We accept the Process Paper as conforming to the required standard.

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Abstract

Many students are not prepared fully for higher education, especially as more and more post-secondary institutions move towards blended and online delivery. To prepare adult learner for this new digital learning environment, I created a blended transition course focused on knowledge of digital tools, digital storytelling (i.e. communicating ideas digitally) and online collaboration called Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning. Through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) students can deeply engage in learning, collaborating and creating content through digital storytelling. By taking the course adult learners will not only increase their digital literacy but also develop an understanding of their digital footprint and online professionalism that will serve them in their future. Conclusions include recommendations on format and content of the course.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Digital Technology, Digital Tools, Digital Footprint, Digital Storytelling, ICT, Transition Class, Learner Engagement, Adult Learner
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Thank you to all those who have helped me along this part of my journey

“The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say”
— J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Purpose of Major Project

The landscape of higher education is changing; information and communication technologies (ICT) provide new learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom (Niemi et al, 2014). Many post-secondary institutions have embraced new ways of learning and teaching (such as blended or fully-online classes) as there are a variety of advantages for both the student and the institution (Kim & Bonk, 2006). People can learn, collaborate and create content in a way that has never before been possible. Not all students, however, are prepared to learn in this new landscape. In my own practice, I started teaching in a blended format a few years ago. I noticed that students were very apprehensive about both learning beyond the traditional lecture format and presenting knowledge outside of an essay or lab report. The purpose of this project was to create a first-year transition course called “Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning” to address the problems students face in the current educational environment.

The course was designed to provide an understanding of how the digital world works and how to collaborate online. At the end of the course, students would feel more comfortable learning online and be able to use a variety of digital tools, with a focus on academic achievement.

Justification for the Major Project

Transition courses are not only important for helping learners upgrade their academic skills but also to assist them in transitioning into their role as students and to instill the belief that they are capable of post-secondary studies (McQuarrie, 2013). The “Succeeding Online” course is one of the Foundation for Success (FNFS) transition courses offered through the Faculty of Academic and Career Preparation (FACP) at Vancouver Island University (VIU). The primary objective is to help students adapt successfully to university life as early success with university
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courses has a far reaching impact on continued success and perseverance in university and future
professional life (Benford & Gess-Newsome, 2006). The courses were initially planned to be
offered by the FACP at VIU during the 2015/2016 academic year. The six FNFS courses
available to students were:

- FNFS 100 Writing for Success
- FNFS 101 Reading, Speaking, and Presentation Skills
- FNFS 102 Finding Careers that Fit: Exploring Meaningful Education and Career Paths
- FNFS 103 Succeeding Online: Tools and Technologies for Learning
- FNFS 104 Solving Calculus Problems
- FNFS 105 Elements of Anatomy and Physiology: Techniques to be Successful in Health
  Sciences

All of the Foundations for Success courses were taught over thirteen weeks at eight hours per
week, and were taught by adult education specialists. Each course was designed to be taken
during first year, or in anticipation of first year, and in conjunction with other first year or Adult
Basic Education (high school equivalency) classes.

Critical Challenge Addressed

This major project presented the opportunity for adult learners to be fully prepared for the
challenges of higher education (and future employment) through a blended, first-year transition
course in digital technologies. Within this challenge, I have addressed the following key learning
outcomes for my students:

- Understand and demonstrate various methods for implementing digital storytelling and
  using study tools and strategies to enhance learning (ie. communicate thoughts and ideas
  in multimedia formats.)
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- Examine their digital footprint and professional digital image and apply strategies for online reputation management.
- Explore privacy roles and digital responsibilities in online environments.
- Work collaboratively with others in a digital setting.

Project Deliverables

The key deliverable was the completed FNFS course called Succeeding Online: Tools and Technologies for Learning. The course was housed in the learning management system (LMS) called Desire2Learn (D2L). The initial construction was held in an ‘on-going’ format that students could not access but invited guests (for peer-review) could. Once the course framework was complete, it could copied to a private (login required) student accessible class. Any modifications to the course (during and after beta testing) were done to the ‘on-going’ class so future instructors can access the up-to-date course.

Course Timeline and Funding

This course was planned during the summer and fall of 2015 and it will be offered over 12 weeks during the fall 2016 semester (September - December). Each week, students meet in a face-to-face class for four hours and they also are required to complete four hours of additional online instruction. The funding for the course will be provided by the Faculty of Academic and Career Preparation at VIU as part of the new Foundations for Success program.

Project Timeline

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<tr>
<td>Course proposal approved by senate (VIU)</td>
<td>February 5, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and development of course</td>
<td>July 15 – November 7, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer evaluation of course</td>
<td>November 7 – December 4, 2015</td>
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Summarizing peer evaluation
December 5 – 8, 2015

Completion of Process Paper for submission to the Faculty of Education at VIU
December 1 - 15

**Definition of Terms**

**ADDIE:** A framework for instructional design which requires Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation (Branch, 2009).

**Adult basic education (ABE):** Courses taught to adults which include: literacy, high school graduation courses, English as a second language and workplace skills development (Moore, 2012).

**Asynchronous delivery:** a “student-centered teaching method that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing outside the constraints of time and place among a network of people” (Asynchronous learning, n.d., para 1).

**Blended learning:** “combining internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students” (Friesen, 2012, pg.1); the combination of both face-to-face and virtual instruction.

**Desire2Learn (D2L):** An interactive LMS with a variety of tools to enhance the learning experience (VIU, 2012).

**Digital footprint:** The collected record of one’s ongoing web activity (O’Keeffe, & Clarke-Pearson, 2011)

**Digital literacy:** The skill and knowledge to access, use, and critically understand digital applications using hardware devices; the knowledge and ability to create with digital technology (Media Awareness Network, 2010).
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*Digital storytelling:* the “art and craft of exploring different media and software applications to communicate stories in new and powerful ways using digital media” (McLellan, 2007, pg. 66).

*Foundations for Success (FNFS):* Transition courses at Vancouver Island University meant to complement existing academic courses and programs and promote student success (VIU, n.d.)

*Face to face (f2f):* Instructors and students in the same physical location at the same time (Friesen, 2012)

*Information and Communication Technology (ICT):* Technology tools and resources used for communication, storage, management, and creation of information (ICT in Education, n.d.)

*Instructional design:* “The process by which instruction is improved through the analysis of learning needs and systematic development of learning materials” (Culatta, 2013, para. 1).

*Internet self-efficacy:* a person’s perception about their abilities on the internet (Tsai & Tsai, 2003)

*Learning Management System (LMS):* Web-based educational site designed to interact with the learner that can provide learning, assessment and support tools (Saade & Kira, 2009).

*Online reputation management:* The establishment, monitoring, maintenance, and repair of a person’s online public information (You (online), 2013).

*Participatory culture:* a culture with “low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices” (Jenkins, 2006, pg. 3)
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Transition Course: An introductory course which builds the skills, ways of knowing and learning, and resources needed to be successful in a post-secondary environment (Steltenpohl & Shipton, 1986)

To create the FNFS Succeeding Online: Tools and Technologies for Learning course I combined research with a needs assessment of the potential students. Through the research process, I was able to develop the knowledge to design and construct the course, fully ensuring that I was able to create a blended first-year transition course in digital technologies to prepare adult learners to be fully ready for the challenges of higher education (and future employment).
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The landscape of higher education looks very different today than ever before as “life is ever more bound up with technology; learning environments are continuously changing, and information and communication technology provides many new learning opportunities” (Niemi et al, 2014, p. 668). In fact technology has the capacity to expand learning outside of the class and in to the real world (Fullan & Langworth, 2014). Today the main mode of online content delivery happens through interactive technology (McIsaac & Gunawardena, 2004).

Unfortunately many students are not fully prepared to function in a digital learning environment in terms of knowledge of the tools available, collaborative skills or an understanding of professionalism online. In order for adult learners to be fully prepared for the challenges of higher education (and future employment), a blended first-year transition course in digital technologies would serve the needs of mature learners.

Challenges of Digital Preparedness in Higher Education

Not everyone who arrives at university is prepared for the rigors of academic life. Learners need guidance to develop the skills of self-regulation and collaboration (Nevgi, Virtanen, & Niemi, 2006). Digital literacy can be a problem for many students in that “as many as fifty percent of adults, including first-year University students, have some sort of computer-related phobia... the use of computers still has some unpleasant side effects despite the Internet boom in the past decade” (Saade & Kira, 2009, p. 177). The emotional state and stress level of the learner affects whether or not they are able to learn; if a learner is in a state of stress, learning is unable to occur (Hart, n.d.). The learning management system (LMS) - which houses content for courses, its perceived ease of use, and the familiarity of the learner with the system greatly affects the level of anxiety learner’s experience. “Frustration, confusion, anger, anxiety, and
similar emotional states can affect not only the interaction itself, but also productivity, learning, social relationships, and overall well-being” (Saade & Kira, 2009, p. 179) of the learner. Learners with low computer literacy skills are at an increased risk of failure or withdrawal as they cannot complete essential assignments within required technical specifications. The challenges experienced by adult learners are exacerbated with online learning as it is assumed that learners have certain competencies when they may have difficulty working effectively online (Marshall, 2014; Hague, & Payton, 2011).

In order to effectively work online learners need support in gaining skills expertise (Lloyd-Smith, 2010; Hague, & Payton, 2011). One way students can be supported is by providing post-secondary transition classes that bridge high school or work-life with higher education. Effective learning management systems are required for learner success, but students also require the training to use the current technology and to be able to adapt to new technologies and applications (Maor, 2003). While learners do eventually figure out how to deal with the technology of their online courses, additional training would make it easier to finish the course (Calvin & Freeburg, 2010). Self-efficacy is “the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals” (Self-efficacy, n.d., para 1). Higher internet self-efficacy - a person’s perception about their abilities on the internet - can promote better problem-solving expertise and “facilitate higher order metacognitive skills” (Tsai & Tsai, 2003, pg. 48) in a digital environment which in turn helps their web-based learning (Tsai & Tsai, 2003). One of the ways to increase internet self-efficacy is to increase the amount that of internet use in general and provide training in digital learning environments (Tsai & Tsai, 2003).

Traditional models of instruction have tended to focus on the transmission of knowledge. Today, in this digital age, people are able to collaborate and create content in a way that has
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never before been possible. However, it is important not to assume that learners are inherently familiar with social and collaborative learning and reflection (Maor, 2003). The instructor needs to provide support and training on all technologies being used in the class as well as appropriate learning opportunities (McLoughlin & Alam, 2014) including many ways of communicating and collaborating while increasing their students’ knowledge about the course material (Hashim, Yan, & Rashid, 2015). While students at Vancouver Island University (VIU) are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching, one of the lowest rated aspect of instruction was effectively using available technology to increase learning (VIU, 2014) as training of higher education instructors in digital literacies is especially lacking in many institutions (Johnson et al., 2013).

Digital Literacy

According to the Media Awareness Network (2010) digital literacy is built on the following principles:

- The skills and knowledge to access and use a variety of digital media software applications and hardware devices, such as a computer, a mobile phone, and Internet technology;
- The ability to critically understand digital media content and applications;
- and the knowledge and capacity to create with digital technology. (p. 4)

In today’s school and work environment learners must have the skill to be successful in a digital setting (Niemi et al, 2014); they need the ability to critically assess information that they find and create in the norms specific to their discipline. Thus learners should have the following skills to be successful: “content creation, with critical content interpretation and validation, and the social skills that are part of digital environments” (Niemi et al, 2014, p. 660). It is important that learners can access and use information but more importantly they need to be able to critically analyze and create new information as they demonstrate their learning (Niemi et al, 2014). The
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creation of knowledge and its use in the real world leads to deep learning (Fullan & Langworth, 2014). It is also important to understand when it is appropriate and useful to use digital technologies to demonstrate learning and when it is not (Hague, & Payton, 2011).

People must not only be able to use and critically understand digital technology but also create content and communicate effectively using digital technologies as “digital literacy supports and promotes empowerment and engagement” (Media Awareness Network, 2010, p. 41), thus shifting from passively consuming and using information to understanding and actively creating content and possibly applying it to “real-world problems with authentic audiences well beyond the boundaries of their schools” (Fullan & Langworth, 2014, p. 4). The issue is no longer if digital technology is used but rather how well it is used to enable deep learning (Media Awareness Network, 2010; Hague, & Payton, 2011; Fullan & Langworth, 2014). In order to effectively use digital technologies, moving beyond participation to creation, support must be provided in the educational system on the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Media Awareness Network, 2010; Schleicher, 2012; Shelby-Caffey, Úbèda, & Jenkins, 2014). Figure 1 illustrates the movement from accessing content to creating it with the required ICT and thinking skills needed to accomplish this.
Fullan & Langworth (2014) however, state that for deep learning to fully occur students need to go further than create and move to application, that is to use the new creation in the real world to solve a problem and do “purposeful things that make a difference in the world” (Fullan & Langworth, 2014, p. 35); this is illustrated in figure 2. The learners’ progression along the continuum means they become more autonomous but the instructor is a necessary partner (Fullan & Langworth, 2014).
Components of a Digital Technology Course

People today are involved in participatory culture which is a “culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices” (Jenkins, 2006, pg. 3). Participatory culture includes collaboration, creative expression and problem solving. Rather than focusing on each emerging tool or piece of technology as they change and evolve at such a rapid pace, it is better to take a holistic approach. By focusing on the interrelationships, communities and supported activities among them, each task can be completed with a variety of tools; “it matters what tools are available to a culture, but it matters more what that culture chooses to do with those tools” (Jenkins, 2006, pg. 7). Digital literacy is “less about the tools and more about the thinking” (Johnson et al., 2013). In this respect a digital technology class should be built around digital storytelling as it promotes thinking while using digital technologies, collaboration and personal learning networks, an awareness of one’s digital footprint and professionalism, and ideally should be in a blended format.

Digital storytelling. Storytelling is a way to transmit “beliefs, traditions, and historical culture to future generations” (Wang & Zhan, 2010, pg. 77) and is an effective, enjoyable way to
teach and learn. In comparison, digital storytelling is the “art and craft of exploring different media and software applications to communicate stories in new and powerful ways using digital media” (McLellan, 2007, p. 66). The available tools today transform storytelling into a modern form with the integration of technology and the narrative and so digital storytelling is being used more and more in a range of subject areas (Wang & Zhan, 2010). While educators can use digital storytelling to better communicate content, learners can also use technology to create a narrative which allows for deeper reflection and engagement (Wang & Zhan, 2010; Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014) as creativity and imagination promotes deep learning (Fullan & Langworth, 2014). The benefits of teaching digital storytelling are varied as it promotes skills needed in today’s world such as “visual literacy, collaboration, and mastery of technology… creativity and problem solving while encouraging self-direction and personal initiative” (McLellan, 2007, 68) while expanding learners ICT competencies in an engaging way (Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014).

In order to create a successful story, learners must plan before they start; they need a clearly defined purpose and a storyboard of how the purpose will be conveyed (Wang & Zhan, 2010). Learners must also determine what tool is most effective for the message they wish to communicate. At every step they must also evaluate and possibly modify what they are doing, giving opportunity for reflection. As students must not only write the story but also direct the output to illustrate the content, they become more invested emotionally (Ivala, Gachago, Condy, & Chigona, 2013), expend more effort, become more interested (Ivala et al., 2013; Wang & Zhan, 2010), and spend quite a bit of time revising their story (Wang & Zhan, 2010). The learners are more in control of their learning which enables learners to remember content in a deeper (Ivala et al., 2013) more meaningful way (Wang & Zhan, 2010). They are more engaged
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...involved in learning when they are creating content that can be seen or used by other people (Wang & Zhan, 2010).

Learner engagement is a central component of the learning environment (Schleicher, 2012). Digital storytelling increases engagement as learners spend more time with the assignment than with traditional assignments; much of the time spent in digital storytelling is outside of class time (Ivala et al., 2013). This suggests that students become more engaged and involved with their learning when they are communicating in this fashion, thus digital storytelling should be integrated into curriculum as an alternative assessment method as it has high levels of student engagement, extending learning far beyond the classroom (Ivala et al., 2013). Although the classroom may be expanded through learner engagement, many learners may lack the capacity to effectively work and learn collaboratively with others (Nevgi et al., 2006) a necessary skill in the world today (Schleicher, 2012).

Collaboration & personal learning networks. While learners do need to be able to work independently, they are increasingly being asked to work collaboratively (Johnson et al., 2013). Collaboration and group problem solving is as important in an online environment as it is in a face-to-face one, as learning is the ongoing interaction between the learner, other people, and their culture (Hanover Research Council, 2009). Within a course learner interactions occur with each other, the instructor and the course material (Pelz, 2010). Learners themselves contribute to the learning of others (Niemi et al, 2014) thus students learn from their peers, especially through feedback and peer expertise (Ivala et al., 2013). When learners have a responsibility for their peers’ learning as well as their own it helps them to be self-regulated learners (Hanover Research Council, 2009).
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Digital storytelling, for example, is an excellent way to encourage in-class collaboration (Shelby-Caffey et al., 2014). Two other common tools that promote interactions between learners are discussion forums and group or collaborative assignments (Hanover Research Council, 2009). An activity suitable for asynchronous collaboration is using a discussion thread where students have to find their own relevant web resource, summarize it and then lead a discussion about the information it contains (Pelz, 2010). In conjunction with another larger project this allows students to discuss, analyze and share resources, helping them to build their personal learning network (Pelz, 2010).

Networking means “learning from others, as well as sharing ideas and experiences” (Niemi et al, 2014, p. 660). Larger personal learning networks lead to higher grades (Casquero, Ovelar, Romo, Benito, & Alberdi, 2013). Learners need to be able to learn and work within their network to pool information and create a coherent picture from the pieces of data (Jenkins, 2006). When students leave education to enter the workforce they are increasingly being asked to work within a team (Jenkins, 2006). It is essential to prepare them to be able to work within a network of information and people (Jenkins, 2006). While no one person may have the answer to a question, collective knowledge through shared expertise means difficult questions and problems can be effectively solved (Jenkins, 2006). Thus learners need to effectively work within a collective, share their personal expertise and be able to critically assess information as misinformation is a problem online (Jenkins, 2006). Using social media in the class (such as Twitter, discussion boards or blogs) helps develop the ability to collaborate, share information and engage in peer-networking (McLoughlin & Alam, 2014). In fact, there are numerous ways to have interactions beyond discussions but key is students should be in control of their own learning (Pelz, 2010).
**Digital footprint & professionalism.** While developing personal learning networks and collaborating on content is an effective and engaging way to learn, people, especially teens and young adults, are creating public digital content without supervision or guidance (Jenkins, 2006). The collected record of one’s ongoing web activity is known as one’s *digital footprint* (O’Keeffe, & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). We are living in a digital world where sharing has become the norm and is encouraged (Media Awareness Network, 2010). It is not that people are unconcerned about sharing information, rather that they are unaware that sharing personal information can be a problem (Media Awareness Network, 2010). Unfortunately this can translate to unintended financial or personal consequences through damage to reputation or future education or employment opportunities (Camacho et al., 2012; Media Awareness Network, 2010; O’Keeffe, & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). In fact 20% of working Americans state that their employer has a policy about how employees appear online (Madden, Fox, Smith & Vitak, 2007).

People post large amounts of personal data in a variety of online social media sites (Camacho, Minelli, & Grosseck, 2012). One’s digital profile can also be scattered over a number of different sites making it hard to manage in a coherent fashion (Camacho et al., 2012). This can be exacerbated by the ability to take on a ‘persona’ on different platforms (Camacho et al., 2012). While increasing numbers of internet users are aware of their digital footprint and actively search for information about themselves (especially younger users and those with higher education levels and income brackets), very few (less than 3%) do so on a regular basis (Madden et al., 2007). Most are not concerned about what information is online nor seek to limit the information as transparency is the norm (Madden et al., 2007). Students have a strong desire to be ‘themselves’ online and remain in contact with a large number of people (Camacho et al., 2012).
Also interesting is the fact that almost 40% of searchers find that a basic search does not turn up any information about themselves (Madden et al., 2007). Thus “one in five self-searchers (21%) are surprised by how much information they find online about themselves, while 13% express disbelief at how little information comes up in their results” (Madden et al., 2007, para 23). One goal of education should be to encourage learners to be more reflective in their digital lives (Jenkins, 2006) as 11% (15% among 18 – 29 year olds) of users have posted content that they regret (Madden et al., 2007).

**Blended learning.** In order to model and illustrate appropriate reflection in a learner’s digital footprint a digital technology class, the course should be blended. The term blended learning has been used since the 1990’s but only recently has its meaning stabilized (Friesen, 2012). Friesen (2012) suggests a composite definition that “blended learning designates the range of possibilities presented by combining internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students” (Friesen, 2012, pg.1). In other words, it is the combination of both face-to-face and virtual instruction. In totally online courses, learners are “often deprived of direct human interaction” (Nevgi et al., 2006, pg. 940) and can have difficulties with the expense of maintaining up-to-date technology (Moore, 2012). While isolation can be overcome through the design of the course, using a blended format creates the needed learner-learner and learner-instructor interaction and allows students to uses on-site technology. Key for educators to remember is “interactivity is the heart and soul of effective asynchronous learning” (Pelz, 2010, p. 107).

Blended learning offers learners and faculty the opportunity to use a variety of methods which potentially increase the effectiveness of the teaching and learning (Lloyd-Smith, 2010) and increases engagement (Friesen, 2012). Stewart (as cited in Lloyd-Smith, 2010) notes that
adults returning to school face many “formidable challenges” (para 14) as they have many other demands on their time; those with many responsibilities get the benefit of anytime, anywhere online instruction with the in-person interaction (Lloyd-Smith, 2010; O'Connor, Mortimer, & Bond, 2011). As blended learning expands the class outside of the four walls of a classroom, it is beneficial in higher education as it promotes autonomy by lessening the learners’ reliance on the instructor, moving education to the hands of learners and their peers (Afip, 2014). Essentially a new learning collaboration is formed between the student, their peers and the teacher (Fullan & Langworth, 2014)

Two advantages of blended courses for adult learners are flexibility and convenience, especially for part-time learners (Clark, 2011), particularly if the online portion is offered asynchronously. Students have a greater ability to connect with their peers and others as digital tools expand the time and space of the classroom (Fullan & Langworth, 2014) compared to a fully in-person class. Fully online courses are very convenient but students have difficulty managing their time (Calvin & Freeburg, 2010). While learners do better in blended courses compared to face-to-face (Clark, 2011) or fully online classes, it is not automatically so (O'Connor et al., 2011) as many learners do not feel fully prepared to be successful in a blended class; thus there is a need for proper training for faculty and students (Clark, 2011). A digital technology class would need to train students in how to be successful in a blended class

**Conclusion**

A digital technologies course designed to help adult students transition into learning in a digital environment would better prepare them for the challenges of higher education (and future employment). A blended approach provides opportunity for students to explore various digital tools. However, rather than focusing on individual tools, the course should focus on digital
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storytelling using ICT as a means to promote deeper learning and engagement. In the process the learner will develop a personal learning network through collaboration and become more reflective regarding their digital footprint and considerate of online professionalism.
Design Considerations of Major Project

I teach at VIU in the Faculty of Academic and Career Preparation. Most of my students are taking upgrading courses to prepare for future post-secondary and employment opportunities. Unfortunately many are unprepared for learning and working in the digital world, thus the FACP created the first-year FNFS course, Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning, to address the problems our students face.

This course was designed in a blended format with equal time in the physical and digital classroom (totaling eight hours a week), as a major goal was “effective use of tools for academic purposes with emphasis on digital presentations and collaborative tools” (VIU, n.d.). By having half the class time in a digital setting, I give the students hands-on opportunity to learn and practice the skills needed to learn and work in a digital world. An advantage to blended learning is it enhances not only the learning outside of the physical classroom but also the face-to-face learning (Shibley, Amaral, Shank & Shibley, 2011).

In consultation with Gord Buzzard, Chair of FACP, the f2f portion of the course would be taught in a four hour class, one evening a week. The decision to have the f2f class only once a week and in the evening was to lessen any potential conflicts with other courses and to increase student enrollment opportunities as 55% of VIU students work (over half of those work more than twenty hours per week) and over one quarter care for dependents (VIU, 2013). I decided to offer the four hour online class in an asynchronous format in order to maximize the flexibility and convenience of ‘anytime, anywhere’ learning.

As Desire2Learn (D2L) is the LMS used at Vancouver Island University, it was an easy decision to house the course there. According to Dr. Liesel Knaack, Director of the Centre for
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Innovation and Excellence in Learning at VIU, D2L is an “easy ways for faculty to create interesting, relevant and current learning experiences for students” (as cited in VIU, 2012, pg.4). A second positive for using D2L as the LMS was students who have used D2L before at VIU would be familiar with the interface and those students continuing on to other programs would have an advantage in that they would already be acquainted with the format. VIU has a standard template for D2L which ensures continuity between courses and faculties. One way to inhibit student success is lacking continuity between course structures as this increase the time to learn how to navigate within a course (Hunn & Hughes, 2014). Instead, as stated by Stephanie Boychuk, Learning Technologies Support Specialist at VIU, “the system will (hopefully) fade into the background after the initial learning curve, and students can focus on their courses instead of having to learn a new navigation path for every course, every semester” (Personal communication).

As students are more and more being asked to work in a team (Johnson et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2006) it was essential to me to design collaborative learning assignments. With this in mind, the mid-term project was created to allow students to work together for several weeks to develop a presentation on digital tools. Every class, whether f2f or online has a shared component. Using social media also helps develop their ability to collaborate and engage in peer-networking (McLoughlin & Alam, 2014). To further peer-collaboration, a private Google+ community was set up for the class as they are a “fast and fun way to stay in touch more easily” (Google+, n.d., para. 3). Students would then be able to engage in anytime, anywhere communication with each other on their computer, tablet or smartphone (Google+, n.d.)
Development of Major Project

This course was developed using the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate) instructional design model as it provides an effective way to develop authentic, student-centered products for learning (Branch, 2009). The ADDIE design model appeared in literature for the first time in the 1980’s but it does not have a single originator, rather evolving informally (Molenda, 2015). As learning is complex, ADDIE offers a systematic, goal orientated approach requiring evaluation at every step (Branch, 2009) yet it allows educators to interpret the model in the way that suits best (Molenda, 2015). The model appeals to me as evaluation is critical to the model and “permeates the ADDIE process” (Branch, 2009, p. 10). Figure 3 illustrates my interpretation of the steps of the ADDIE model and the evaluation which occurs.

Figure 3: The ADDIE method: The steps and evaluation of designing with ADDIE.

Analysis. For this project, I started with analysis of who my students would be and what the context of the course is as the analysis step requires understanding of where the students are and where they need to be at the end (Branch, 2009). I also needed to consider technical constraints such as the LMS and classroom requirements (Neal, 2011). In order to analyze
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effectively, I used a worksheet, see appendix A, provided by Dr. Liesel Knaack, Director of the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning at VIU (personal communication). During the first week of classes, students are asked to answer a survey, housed on a Google form (appendix B). This way I could ensure any assumption I made were accurate and adjust my course as needed. The course syllabus, approved by the FACP and Senate, detailing the learning outcomes, can be found in appendix C.

**Design.** During the design stage, I created a chart highlighting the learning outcomes and overall themes for each week. The weekly themes were based on the learning outcomes. Once these were set I then created intentional learning activities, both in the classroom and online, as well as the digital tools needed to support the learning goals. During the design and development stages a copy of the learning outcomes was kept beside the computer to ensure that all activities related back to the learning outcomes for the course. An important consideration was to ensure that there was a sound instructional reason for the use of each digital tool. Tools must support learning and not be used merely because they can be (Neal, 2011).

**Development.** The course was primarily developed from August 1 to November 7, 2015. To make it easy for students to find material, the content was divided into weeks. Each week was divided in the following way:

- A front page containing the learning outcomes and themes for the week, important dates and times, and links to the other reference pages
- A second page detailing what happened during the f2f class. While this page was created beforehand, it is not available to students until the morning after class. This ensures that there is time to adjust anything based on what happened in class that evening.
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- A third page with the requirements for the asynchronous class including a list of activities, with any necessary hyperlinks, and due dates. This page was made available to students the morning after the f2f class (which gives me time to make any needed changes or adjustments)

- The remaining pages contained any D2L activities (such as quizzes and discussion) for the week. Not all weeks required further pages.

During the design of the course I listed weekly learning outcomes and themes and devised activities around them. By listed the learning outcomes & themes each week on the front page, I was able to assess that my activities did in fact relate directly back to the learning outcomes. If they did not, then I could either alter or discard the activity. Evaluation at each step is an important part of the ADDIE process (Branch, 2009).

**Implementation of Major Project**

**Implement.** Peer evaluation of the course occurred from November 7 to 21. Peer evaluators had access to the D2L course build, a copy of the approved learning outcomes and an overview of the weekly activities (see Appendix D). While FNFS Succeeding Online was initially planned for the Fall 2016 semester, due to enrollment issues, the course was cancelled. The course will be offered in the future at VIU, by the FACP, likely the Fall 2016 semester.

During the Fall 2015 semester, portions of the FNFS course, Succeeding Online, were used in ABE classes (specifically Advanced Physics and Chemistry) as, according to Jean Maltesen, Dean of FACP, it is expected that some ABE students will use the transitional FNFS courses to help bridge in to university (personal communication) and so will have similar competencies to the FNFS students.
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**Evaluate.** The course was evaluated two ways, peer evaluation and instructor reflection. Peer evaluation occurred from November 7 to December 4. Evaluators were given full access to the D2L portion of the course and requested to fill out an anonymous online form which asked questions primarily about content and course design. A screenshot of the questions can be found in appendix E. Responses were read and assessed from December 5 onward.

Instructor observation of the portions of the Succeeding Online course used in other ABE classes occurred throughout the Fall 2015 semester (September 8 – December 5, 2015). The results of the observations are detailed in chapter 4. I also reflected on the course as a whole based on my experiences with the tested content and peer evaluation in order to make recommendations for the future (moving from evaluate to analyze - the lighter arrow of figure 3). My future recommendations can be found in chapter 5.
Chapter 4 – Field/Beta Testing and Findings

Methods and Processes

The created course Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning was beta tested in two ways. The first was using specific portions of the content in ABE classes in the Fall 2015 semester. While the majority of the content was tested in an Advanced Physics class, some were also tested in an Advanced Chemistry class. The ability to test portions of the course on the type of future students the course would likely attract was a tremendous advantage. The second method for evaluating the course was through peer evaluation.

The FNFS course Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning was created in D2L and open for peer evaluation on November 7, 2015. Peer evaluators were invited to participate through an email invitation. If they replied favourably, they were added to the course class list as instructors as this would allow them access to all aspects of the D2L course. The D2L course that evaluators had access to is not one that future students would also access, but rather an ‘on-going’ copy from which all future classes would be copied. Included in the on-going version was a section for peer evaluators which contained an ‘important links and information’ document explaining the purpose of the evaluation as well as a link to the feedback form. Feedback was accepted until December 4 through an anonymous, online form (Appendix E). Analysis of feedback happened from December 5th onward. While there was a low turn-out of responses, only six, there was much variety in the type and background of people providing assessment, leading, I believe, to better quality responses.

Through the peer evaluation and strategic content testing, the entire Succeeding Online course was evaluated and portions of it tested. The results can be divided into two overall categories: course design and content.
Findings – Course Design

How the course is structured is important for student success and confidence in the program (Saade & Kira, 2009). In order to ensure that the course promotes internet self-efficacy, feedback was requested on the ease of navigation, consistency and the overall structure. Any spelling or grammatical mistakes that were commented on by evaluators was corrected immediately as were any minor inconsistency in headings or titles of topics.

Ease of navigation. Overall evaluators were positive about ease of navigation, rating it a 4 or 5 out of 5, finding the course well-organized. Generally they thought that students would pick up the navigation quite quickly, especially as the first f2f in the computer lab teaches students the weekly format. One novice-to-D2L evaluator noted “as someone who never uses D2L but is comfortable with online navigation, I had no troubles working through the various pages” (personal communication). One area that was confusing was when providing a link to a topic in a different week. The suggestion was if the link is to another module, specifically state where the link was to, for example ‘a how-to on creating a post in a discussion can be found in week 1’ with a hyperlink (personal communication).

To ensure that students could navigate the course materials successfully and use all components of D2L, the first lesson in the computer lab involves introductory exercises using various D2L tools. During the Fall 2015 semester, an identical activity was used on two blended ABE science classes. For one class, the activity was mandatory, for the other, optional (due to computer lab time constraints). I observed that the mandatory class had higher levels of online participation throughout the semester and students required less help to partake in the activities.
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Consistency. Every week of class is structured identically, with the same subdivisions. Evaluators found that the consistency of format, from week to week, would be helpful for students and promote their success. Every week, after a f2f meeting, I included a list of what happened in the f2f class. One evaluator noted that providing this is very helpful to students as “a review and a sort of checklist for students” (personal communication). As it is given every week, students know that it is available as a recap of the topic.

Overall Structure. When I created the table of contents in D2L for the course it was divided into weeks, i.e. week 1, week 2, week 3 etc. One evaluator “found it frustrating to not know at a glance what each week was about” (personal communication) or even what the main topics were. As the version of D2L that VIU uses limits customization, it is not possible to colour code the weeks to correspond with units as one evaluator suggested. Instead an evaluator recommended changing the divisions in the table of content to reflect the content that week, for example ‘Week 1 – an Introduction’ or ‘Week 2 – Your Digital Footprint’ (personal communication).

Findings – Content

With respect to content, evaluators found that it highly related to the learning outcomes and was presented in an engaging way (all evaluators rated both at 80 % or better). One evaluator noted that by having varied and creative activities, students would be fully engrossed in the material (personal communication). Important aspects of the content of the course are: the information and communication technologies used in the course, how engaged students are in the material, how the activities relate to the learning outcomes, and how the FNFS course, Succeeding Online, ensures student success in their future educational endeavours.
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**ICT.** Several evaluators commented on the large number of digital tools used by the students. One wondered if, in fact, there were too many were being used as students would have to spend their time learning the different ICT recommended rather than doing the assignment. Another worried about students with low computer skills: “there is a lot of information/tools covered; the only catch will be if you have students with poor computer skills. They will have an incredibly steep learning curve” (personal communication). An evaluator noticed that when I described tools recommended for particular assignments, I stated my personal bias about them; they wonder how my bias might influence the student when choosing tools (personal communication).

**Engagement.** In order to examine the effect of using digital story-telling as a means of communicating material, both ABE courses (Advanced Chemistry and Physics) taught in the Fall semester used TEDEd lessons as a means to convey information. TEDEd lessons involve watching a video, answering questions, and looking at additional information or links. While TEDEd has customizable lessons, it also allows educators to create their own lesson using any video (TEDEd, 2013). Rather than reading static information, students watch, pause, replay and test knowledge acquisition. Generally students were positive about learning with this format, participation rates were high and students often went back and looked at lessons again after the due date.

An infographic assignment, similar to the ‘happy birthday copyright’ activity week 4 or the ‘ways to present information’, week 10 was done in the Advanced Physics class involving Newton’s Laws. Students were asked to create an infographic explaining and illustrating the three laws. The work handed in by students was exceptional with 100% of students participating. Students spent much longer on the assignment then recommended, suggesting a high level of
engagement. A quiz the following week showed that most students were able to repeat the three laws as well as explain what laws were involved in a scenario.

**Relation to Learning Outcomes.** One evaluator stated that without seeing the marking rubrics used for student work it is difficult to ensure that the learning outcomes are being measured. Another found the link between the activities, content and learning outcomes very robust in the first few weeks. “Many activities in the first few weeks … are highly linked into the learning outcomes as well as into the students’ personal contexts. This link is more difficult to see in later modules, but I think that may be due to the learners being more independent as the course progresses” (personal communication). As one purpose of the FNFS courses is to prepare students for success in higher education, one goal is becoming independent learners.

**Future student success.** Evaluators generally thought the course, as planned, would support student success in their educational journey. As one stated “I think that all of the material in the course is critical for students to be more successful at university and introduces many of the digital skills students are lacking when they reach university”. Evaluators felt that by linking assignments and activities in the FNFS Succeeding Online course to material they are learning in other classes they are taking in makes it more applicable and they will to continue to use the tools as they have practiced using them in an appropriate way. One evaluator thought the links should be expanded to include more with other courses. One evaluator explained that this course was valuable as “students want strategies - especially innovative and research supported strategies (and easily applied traditional strategies) - to improve their performance. And they do persist in using them if they can practice their use in class” (personal communication). The inclusion of collaborative group work and partner work is seen as valuable by evaluators as it “will build many of the ‘soft skills’ students need to be successful” (personal communication).
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Other Findings.

In order to ensure students feel welcomed to the course, one evaluator suggested that I should have a welcome message on the front page, as I did for evaluators. The message should both welcome students and give my contact information. The initial introductory activity (both online and f2f in the computer lab) was seen as helpful as screen captures identified exactly what students needed to do. After the initial lesson, material is released progressively, which evaluators found to be appropriate. However an evaluator felt that a version of the weekly activities with key due dates, would be helpful at the beginning of the course. It should also highlight what is for marks, and when works needs to be handed in (personal communication).

As many students today use mobile devices to learn online, one evaluator noted that handouts should be also given as a PDF. Having handouts as PDF’s would also allow for easier printing, should students wish. Another small change to ensure students have greater success would be to include sample work for the assignments, one evaluator notes. This will be easier to do once the course has been taught for the first time (personal communication).
How people learn in higher education is very different than before as many post-secondary universities have embraced online and blended classes (Niemi et al, 2014; Kim & Bonk, 2006). Information and communication technologies allow students to learn, collaborate and create far beyond the traditional face-to-face classroom and into the real world (Niemi et al, 2014; Fullan & Langworth, 2014). Not all students, however, are ready to learn in this new paradigm. Transition courses are used to not only help students upgrade the academic skills they need to become effective post-secondary learners but also to instill the belief that they are capable of being students (McQuarrie, 2013). Early success with a university course has long reaching impact on their continued success in higher education, professional life and increases the likely-hood that they will persevere through challenges (Benford & Gess-Newsome, 2006).

**Project Summary**

The goal of this project was to create a blended first-year transition course in digital technologies called “Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning” to address the challenges students face in higher education today. The course was designed to provide an understanding of how the digital world works, using digital storytelling as the medium. It also will help students learn how to collaborate online and build their own personal learning network. At the end of the course, students should feel more comfortable learning online and be able to use a variety of ICT, with a focus on academic achievement.

The key learning outcomes that this course addresses are:

- Understand and demonstrate various methods for implementing digital storytelling and using study tools and strategies to enhance learning.
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- Examine their digital footprint and professional digital image and apply strategies for online reputation management.
- Explore privacy roles and digital responsibilities in online environments.
- Work collaboratively with others in a digital setting.

In order to achieve the overarching learning outcomes the course was designed as a blended class to be taught in a thirteen week semester, with eight hours of class-time each week, splitting the time equally between a f2f class and online class. The f2f component occurs in both the classroom and the computer lab while the online portion is housed in the LMS D2L.

This course was developed using the student-centered ADDIE instructional design model (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate). The ADDIE model is robust in that it is systematic, goal oriented and requires evaluation at every step (Branch, 2009) yet it allows interpretation to suit the learners and the material (Molenda, 2015). During course design the weekly learning outcomes and themes were listed and activities devised to support them. Thus I was able to ensure that my activities did in fact relate directly back to the learning outcomes.

Once the course was designed, peer evaluation occurred. Evaluators had access to the D2L course build, a copy of the approved learning outcomes and an overview of the weekly activities. During the Fall 2015 semester, I was fortunate to be able to use activities from the course were in two ABE classes (Advanced Physics and Chemistry). It is likely that some ABE students will use the transitional FNFS courses to help bridge in to university and so will have similar skill sets to the expected FNFS students.

**Project Recommendations**

Overall, feedback on the course was positive in that it achieves the desired outcome of building a blended first-year transition course in digital technologies to prepare adult learners to
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be fully ready for the challenges of higher education and their future. Based on feedback and personal observation of tested activities, there are two major divisions among the recommendations: course design and content.

Course design. A key aspect for student success when navigating in the digital realm is simplicity and consistency. Being consistent in the organization means students can concentrate on the topic, instead of searching the LMS for information. This is especially important for the novice user but also helps the experienced student. When providing links between units or activities or to places outside the LMS, stating clearly where the links go ensure that students will not become confused or lost, thereby decreasing frustration. To this end, each week or topic, should explicitly state the key theme. For example, rather than saying ‘Week 2’ it would be better to title the module ‘Week 2 – your digital footprint’ as students will then be able to find the material they are looking for quickly and effectively, decreasing the amount of time spent off-task.

Also important in course design is giving a ‘recap’ of what happened in class that week. The recap is useful for students to ensure that they did not miss any component of the activities and course. As the potential students are adults, with many other responsibilities, it is likely that they will miss class at some point. While the ‘recap’ will not tell them everything, at least they will know what questions to ask. The goal is for learners to take charge of their own learning, helping with their future success in higher education.

As people today are being increasing asked to collaborate with others in education and in the workplace (Johnson et al., 2013), activities involving collaboration were important as it builds the skills needed for their future. Collaboration also increases student engagement with their learning as they are creating content to be viewed by others (Wang & Zhan, 2010).
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**Content.** By using a progressive release model, students are not overwhelmed by information. As the student moves through the course, there is a gradual move towards independence. As transition classes build the needed skills, ways of knowing and learning, and resources needed by a successful post-secondary student, the transition to independence is important (Steltenpohl & Shipton, 1986). To ensure that students do not become overwhelmed, by the number of ICT used or the course requirements, doing regular ‘check-ins’ or surveys would help the instructor keep an eye on the state of the class.

Using digital storying telling as a means of conveying content promotes high student engagement with the material. A further way to promote engagement is by linking assignments to materials or information from other classes that they are taking, or in the case of students not in other classes, to matters that interest them. By doing this they are more likely to remember the digital tools they used and to keep using them in the future as true digital literacy focusses less on the ICT required for the task and more on the thinking and communication involved (Johnson et al., 2013).

To ensure that the assignments are not only engaging, but also appropriate and relate to the learning outcomes and not merely about ICT, having detailed rubrics before giving the assignment is necessary. Students will, that way, know exactly what is expected of them and instructors can ensure the learning outcomes can be properly measured. After all, it is important to use a particular ICT to support and enhance learning and not because it is new (Neal, 2011). While a large number of digital tools are used in the course, exposure to a range of options for digitally communicating with others, expressing ideas, and organizing information are important learning outcomes for the course (appendix C).
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Next Steps

An important next step is to teach the course as created, after making necessary changes recommended by evaluators. As the FACP at VIU is planning to offer the course in the Fall 2016 semester, it will be possible to reevaluate the course then. It would also be useful to have a different instructor teach the course as they would reexamine the content with new eyes. To truly see the long range effect this course has on students would require tracking the future success of the students who take the course over their time at VIU and perhaps beyond, gathering feedback on its effectiveness. Does this FNFS course Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning make a difference in the success of a student during their time at post-secondary education? To answer that question, a long-term study is recommended.

Although the purpose of this project was to create a FNFS course to help students succeed in the digital realm of their post-secondary studies; what I learned researching, creating, and evaluating this course has further reach in my professional life than I expected. I have used and will continue to use many of the strategies and activities designed for this class in other courses that I teach.
References


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# Initial Learner Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner characteristics</th>
<th>Description of potential learners</th>
<th>Implications for course design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will students take the course as a:</td>
<td>This course is not required and may be used as a general elective.</td>
<td>The will be a variety of students taking the course as they are not laddering from, or to, a program. It is also unlikely that the students will know each other from previous classes. It will be important to build a sense of community in the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Required course?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Elective?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Course that fulfills a requirement?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What year of programs are the students in?</td>
<td>This course is intended for students transitioning to university. Thus students will likely be taking ABE or first year classes at the same time as this one but it is open to all who wish to enroll. Students could be directly out of high school, just finished ABE classes, or those who have been away from formal education for some time.</td>
<td>As students will likely be novices at university level instruction, I will need to clearly state all expectations and requirements. This will help to alleviate some anxiety. As students may not believe that they can be successful, laddering the assignments from what they currently know (which is likely almost nothing) to where they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the general aptitude of students regarding their ability to succeed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language abilities of the students:</strong></th>
<th>Some students may enroll on the recommendation of Advising. Students may not believe that they can succeed in a digital/blended setting</th>
<th>need to be at the end of the course is essential. Thus their confidence will build from early successes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Are there any ESL learners?</td>
<td>ESL students are welcome to take the course. During planning it is uncertain if there will be any ESL enrolment.</td>
<td>Learners may not be strong readers, writers or English language users. All handouts, notes etc. should be very simple and easy to understand. As this course is about digital learning, students will be given the opportunity to present their learning using a variety of methods (not all text-based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· What is the reading level?</td>
<td>Reading and writing levels will be varied. The only prior knowledge required is basic computer skills and the general English requirements for VIU.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Writing level?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· What prior knowledge should they have?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What basic computer skills and online experience will the students bring?</strong></td>
<td>The prerequisite for the class is basic computer skills. Students will likely have little experience, although some may have quite a bit.</td>
<td>The course will need to start from a very basic level and build on learned skills. To keep those with more skills interested, assignments should be structured to allow them to do more challenging work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the motivation to learn in the course?</th>
<th>Motivation is to become more confident in digital presentation skills and also effectively living and working in the digital world.</th>
<th>The course will emphasize practical online skills that can translate to daily life and further education. Ideally, the skills learned in the course will directly correlate to skills needed in life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the attitude towards the subject matter?</td>
<td>High computer anxiety is likely.</td>
<td>New digital tools will be well laddered with plenty of support. An e-portfolio demonstrating learning will allow a student to see how much they have learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the level of anxiety?</td>
<td>As students will be coming to the class from a variety of backgrounds there will be a range of comfort levels for teaching and learning activities.</td>
<td>Skills need to be built on. Thus teaching and learning activities will be introduced slowly. As comfort grows, new activities will be introduced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course context analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual factor</th>
<th>Application within course</th>
<th>Implications for course design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of course and prerequisites</td>
<td>Level: First year.</td>
<td>Must start with the basics of online tools and technology. Students may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Prerequisites: Basic computer skills</td>
<td>also not be mentally or emotionally prepared for first year classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the class size?</td>
<td>Class maximum is set at 24 students.</td>
<td>As the f2f class is so long, it is important to break up the class into many activities. The class will be held in both a classroom and in a computer lab. Students who take evening classes often work and/or attend school in the day. Keeping the class interesting is essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the number of classes per week and the length of each class?</td>
<td>Class meets one evening a week for a four hour f2f class. Students will also be required to complete an asynchronous, four hour per week, online class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What time of day will the course be offered?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there flexibility in teaching the course? What is the Faculty policy regarding the course syllabus and grading?</td>
<td>This will be the first time the class is offered. The course syllabus was developed by Charlene Stewart (Instructor at VIU) and myself.</td>
<td>As this is the first time the course is offered, there is tremendous flexibility with respect to the course and grading practices. The standard VIU grade scale will be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the philosophy of the Faculty with regards to program design?</td>
<td>The Faculty supports my course design. The Faculty allows tremendous flexibility with respect to course design.</td>
<td>While I have been asked to design the course, I will be asking my faculty colleagues to review my course design once it is complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the review process for the course syllabus?</td>
<td>The course syllabus was developed by Charlene Stewart (Instructor at VIU) and myself. It was reviewed by the FNFS team and approved by VIU’s Senate.</td>
<td>I will only need to slightly alter the course syllabus to make it appropriate for this semester (instructor information, course details). It is important to use the approved department syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the course online, face-to-face or blended? Will any learning management system (LMS) tools be used? Will any social media, web or online tools be used outside of the LMS?</td>
<td>Course is blended (four hours f2f, four hours online). LMS = Desire 2 Learn (D2L) (VIU supported). A variety of social networking tools will be used (Google forms, Google+ etc.).</td>
<td>A Student User Agreement must be signed by students as not all data from the tools outside D2L is housed in Canadian servers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What classroom technology will be used?</td>
<td>Teacher’s station (desktop computer with projector). Networked computer lab.</td>
<td>Students will be able to use a computer in the computer lab but can also use a personal device if they wish. Cell phones will be encouraged but not required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Year Digital Technology Course
Screen Capture of Student Survey Questions

**Social Media Use**
Which of the following social media platforms do you use?
Please check all that apply
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- Youtube
- Google+
- Linkedin
- Snapchat
- Other: __________

**Favourite Social Media**
What is your favourite social media tool and why?

**Hours on Social Media**
How many hours do you spend (on average) on social media every day?
- less than 1
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 5+
- I don’t use any social media

**Online I**
(choose which describes you best)
- am an open book
- share a little, not too much
- am a closed oyster

**Is there a social media tool you refuse to use?**
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, Which one(s)? __________

**Digital Storytelling**
**BLOG**
Do you have a blog?
- Yes
- No
- What is a blog?

If you do have a blog
Do you mind sharing the address with me?
FIRST YEAR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY COURSE

Content Creation

Other than a blog, do you create any of the following online?

- Digital comics
- Fan-fiction
- Fiction
- Videos
- Art
- Music
- Other: 

Is there something that you want to learn how to do digitally? If there is, could you let me know what?

(make videos, blog, comics, mindmaps).

Is there something that you want to learn how to do digitally for school or work? If there is, could you let me know what?

(Organize data & websites, referencing tools, make videos, blog, comics, mindmaps).

Other Information

Other classes
Are you taking other classes right now? If you are, do you mind sharing them with me?

What are your personal expectations for this course?

Work
How much do you work? (this includes volunteer work too)

- Full-time (20+ hours)
- Part-time (1 - 20 hours)
- School is my focus

Submit
This course will develop an understanding of the digital world, including implications of a digital profile, privacy and professionalism. A major focus is effective use of tools for academic purposes with emphasis on digital presentations and collaborative tools. Personal learning networks and online academic portfolios will illustrate learning.

**General Learning Outcomes:**

The overall intent of this course is for students obtain an understanding of appropriate and responsible use of technology. The course will guide students towards professionalism in the digital world, including understanding privacy roles and responsibilities. Technology tools that assist students in creating presentations, studying, and working together will be introduced. Strategies for successful learning will be interwoven throughout the course. Students will be able to:

1. assess and choose appropriate educational digital tools
2. communicate thoughts and ideas in multimedia formats
3. work independently and as part of a team
4. interpret and apply student code of conduct in technology-enabled communications

**Content:**

**Unit 1. Introduction to Web 2.0**

*Digital Footprint and professionalism – a student’s perspective*
FIRST YEAR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY COURSE

1. Understand the implications and influence of digital profile in terms of longevity, reach, and changing context and explain strategies for online reputation management

Privacy Roles and Responsibilities – Sharing information online

1. Use social networking sites in an educational setting in an appropriate and secure fashion while protecting users’ privacy
2. Demonstrate protection of privacy and freedom of information in dealing with own and others’ personal information
3. Discern among private, recordable, confidential and sensitive information
4. Describe how to comply with VIU’s Technology Acceptable Use Policy and other student ethical conduct policies and program-based professional guidelines

Unit 2. Telling Your Story – Introduction

Creating a professional image online - E-Portfolios

Ways to tell a story (blogging, etc.)

1. Use a broad range of media texts in order to express and share ideas through multiple forms of media applying best practices
2. Create and use a personal web-space to express ideas

Unit 3. Tools and Technology

Working together online

1. Use video and web conferencing tools and instant communication tools for learning or research
2. Collaboratively create documents with peers

Digital Presentation

1. Appropriately use and share digital media in a variety of formats

Digital Study Tools

1. Use social networking tools for communication related to learning or research.
2. Access and utilize current reference programs for citations and attributions
3. Demonstrate a critical understanding of electronic tools available for creating and managing online resources
Unit 4. Telling Your Story Revisited - Tying it all together

Final E-portfolio presentation

Course Prerequisites:

Basic computer skills

Course Particulars:

Lecture hours/week: 4 hours  
Seminar hours/week: 4 hours  
Lab hours/week: none  
Duration: (15 weeks or other): 13 weeks  
Total credits: 3

Student Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly reflections</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term project</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Grade Scale:

The percentage equivalents for letter grades in this course are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>76-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>72-75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>68-71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>64-67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>55-59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49%</td>
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</table>

Schedule of Topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total weeks</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Access to a computer and the internet
# Appendix D

## Weekly Activities

### Overview of each week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>F2F – Classroom</th>
<th>F2F – Computer lab</th>
<th>Online class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1. Introduction to Web 2.0: Digital footprint &amp; Professionalism; Privacy roles &amp; Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Community building</td>
<td>Welcome Circle (A)</td>
<td>Explore Digital Footprint of Instructor &amp; Partner (W)</td>
<td>VIU policies summary (GD-class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Course Syllabus &amp; Expectations</td>
<td>D2L introductory activities</td>
<td>Social Media Use ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital footprint awareness</td>
<td>User Agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is anything private (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class contract (D)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Would I hire? Watch video ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellen’s “Found on Facebook” videos (D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1 Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand the implications of digital profile in terms of longevity, reach, and changing context</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand and assess the influence of an online profile</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate protection of privacy and freedom of information in dealing with own and others’ personal information</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Digital footprint management</td>
<td>Survey results (D)</td>
<td>Sign up for Google+ account &amp; joined class circle</td>
<td>Personal Padlet or Symbaloo Page. Create a page. Share in D2L discussion. (D, E).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>What should/shouldn’t be shared (TPS, W)</td>
<td>Find and post article on digital footprint (GC)</td>
<td>Your digital footprint and sharing your and others’ information online (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Online reputation management strategies (L)</td>
<td>Online reputation management strategies ideas (GD-class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm project handed out (SP – group)</td>
<td>Plan for online reputation management (GD-personal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2 Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain strategies for online reputation management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discern among private, recordable, confidential and sensitive information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe how to comply with VIU’s Technology Acceptable Use Policy and other student ethical conduct policies and program-based professional guidelines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboratively create documents with peers</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Unit 2: Telling your story – an introduction: Creating a professional image online; Ways to tell a story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3 Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create and curate an academic profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and use a personal web-space to express ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story-telling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e-Portfolio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why do we tell stories (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ways to tell stories digitally (A)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How digital story telling method can be used for education or work (TPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Term Project handout – e-Portfolio (SP)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital story telling – comics.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a comic about digital footprint (AL, E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show instructor website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create personal website – Wordpress, Weebly... (AL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move artifacts to website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work on website so it is a personal reflection of you that is appropriate to share with others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why is story-telling important? How do you experience it digitally (R)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4 Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use a broad range of media texts in order to express ideas through multiple forms of media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and share multimedia objects, applying best practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story-telling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright, copyleft &amp; creative commons, FIPPA (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ways to present information Prezi, PowerPoint &amp; others (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: this will be done using the above topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History of Happy Birthday (GD – pairs)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a digital poster based on the information (pairs, E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is effective in other posters? (D2L D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an infographic about a topic from another class (E, GC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finish individual infographic if not complete</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watch the video: RIP! A Remix Manifesto</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watch the video: “Copyright”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copyright, copyleft &amp; creative commons (R)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5 Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use social networking sites in an educational setting in an appropriate and secure fashion while protecting users’ privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and participate in a personal learning network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in group development using collaborative creation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Learning Networks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media in Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has your social media use changed since the start of this class? (TPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are personal learning networks? What is appropriate sharing of others information? (L, D)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter and Social Media activity (W)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work on your mid-term presentations</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Unit 3: Tools and Technology: Working together online; Digital presentation; Digital study tools

#### Week 6
- **Presentations**
- **Organzing information**
- **Midterm project presentations (SP)**
  - How to mind-map. Topic information from class to date (TPS: topics, class: mind-map)
- **Create info-graphic & mind-map about presentations (P, E)**
- **Post copy of presentation (E)**
- **Group & Individual reflection on mid-term project (R)**

#### Week 6 Learning Outcomes
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of electronic tools available for creating and managing online resources
- Optimize and use digital images, audio, and video in a variety of formats

#### Week 7
- **Referencing**
- **Collaborating**
  - Check-in
  - What is plagiarism & what do you consider plagiarism? (D)
  - Reasons for referencing & referencing tools (L)
  - Referencing groups (A)
- **Where to find information online (L - follow along)**
  - Referencing assignment (GD)
  - Personal website - optional category (AI, W)
- **Collaborate class requirements check**
  - Video: Google hangouts & How to collaborate
  - Home page of website
  - Plagiarism and referencing (R)

#### Week 7 Learning Outcomes
- Use video & web conferencing tools and instant communication tools for learning or research
- Access & utilize current reference programs for citations and attributions

#### Week 8
- **Meeting online in real time**
  - **Professional Social Media**
  - Synchronous Collaborate class (computer lab available for students), We be using breakout rooms & google chat. Topic of discussion: Professional Social Media use
- **Social media Activity (W, R)**
  - Personal website - optional sub-category. Build

#### Week 8 Learning Outcomes
- Use video & web conferencing tools and instant communication tools for learning or research
- Use social networking tools for communication related to learning or research

#### Week 9
- **Library**
  - **Referencing**
  - **What the library has to offer**
    - Library visit – Lecture from librarian
  - Online library resources scavenger hunt – pairs (W)
  - Work an referencing assignment from week 7 (GD)
- **Finish referencing assignment from week 7 (GD)**

#### Week 9 Learning Outcomes
- Engage in group development using collaborative creation
- Access & utilize current reference programs for citations and attributions

#### Week 10
- **Ways to present information**
  - Ways to present information (TPS, D)
  - Collaborative mind-map of information
  - Apply ways to education (D)
  - **Alternate formats of referencing assignment (E)**
  - **Digital mind-map of ways to present information & Ways of presenting information reflection (R)**

#### Week 10 Learning Outcomes
- Choose appropriate digital tools for academic endeavours
- Use a broad range of media texts in order to express ideas through multiple forms of media
- Communicating thoughts and ideas in multimedia formats

#### Week 11
- **Collaboration**
  - Upcoming presentation (D)
  - **Ways to collaborate online** (TPS)
  - **Advantages & disadvantages to online collaboration (TPS)**
  - Find resources to show the advantages & disadvantages to online collaboration & learning based on what was discussed (GD)
  - **Changing world of education (GC)**
  - Working together online (R)
  - Collaboratively create documents with peers
  - Engage in group development using collaborative creation

#### Unit 4: Telling your story revisited – Tying it all together: Final e-portfolio presentations

#### Week 12
- **Reflection**
  - What we learned in class – themes, principles and tools (TPS, A)
  - **Examine peer portfolio (AI)**
  - **What we discovered (R)**
  - **Finish e-Portfolio (last minute changes & fixes)**
  - Practice presentation

#### Week 12 Learning Outcomes
- Contribute to a supportive peer culture and a spirit of inquiry that encourages professional development
- Create and curate an academic profile

#### Week 13
- **Final Presentations**
  - **Term Project Presentations (SP) – In Class**
  - **Course evaluation (Q)**
  - Deleting accounts not continuing with (W)

#### Week 13 Learning Outcomes
- Demonstrate course mastery through uploaded assignments into an e-Portfolio
FNFS 103: Succeeding Online: Tools and Technology for Learning

Feedback submitted on this form is provided anonymously and comments will be used to inform Chapter IV of my MEDL690 process paper. Constructive comments may be used to improve further edits of the course. Thank you for your time and consideration in supplying your much valued feedback. Lisa Lewis, MEDL graduate candidate.

**Navigation**

Ease of navigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>difficult to navigate</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Comments about navigation

Your answer

**Content**

How well does the content relate to the learning outcomes of the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

Was the content presented in an engaging way?

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not engaging</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Where did the content succeed? Not succeed?

Your answer
A goal of the Foundations for Success course is to prepare students for greater understanding, success, and enjoyment throughout their time at university. How do you feel the content succeeds or not succeeds in this?

Your answer

Final Thoughts

Do you have any final thoughts on the course?

Your answer

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.