

**Transcript for Looking to the Horizon: Emerging Trends in Post-Secondary Education  
2024 ETUG Spring Workshop: Digital Literacy Today – Day 1, May 9, 2024  
Educational Technology Users Group  
Presenter: Amanda Coolidge**

AMANDA COOLIDGE:

Our new Strategic Plan and emerging trends in post-secondary education. Next slide.

So before we do that, I do want to say that this year, our community lost a very valuable member, and a mentor to many, and what I would consider a kind-hearted soul, Irwin DeVries. He was part of early developments of Open Education in British Columbia and associate provost of Open Learning at Thompson Rivers University, and also an associate faculty in education and technology at Royal Roads University. For those who knew Irwin, he will always be remembered as an educator, someone who was at the forefront of open practice and instructional design, and as someone who was one of the early leaders and creators of the Educational Technology Users Group. As Irwin was one of the early founders of ETUG, I wanted to share some words he recorded for the 25th ETUG anniversary. In this video, Irwin shares with us the beginnings of ETUG, the origin story, if you will. I hope you enjoy hearing his voice again as much as I do.

[Recording starts]

♪♪♪ [Voice of Irwin DeVries]

So I was invited to offer a few comments on the 25th anniversary of ETUG and I'm more than happy to do that. I was involved at the very beginning. My name is Irwin DeVries. I was with the Justice Institute at that time. Subsequently, I was with Thompson Rivers University Open Learning and now also teaching for Royal Road University. In the very beginning, when we actually formed ETUG, our concern was the wide variety of technologies that were coming onto the market as well as the growth of the internet and all the complexities that all of that was introducing. And educational technology was an emerging interest and an emerging profession between both technical people as well as faculty who wanted to use these technologies or explore them in their teaching practice. As well, we were starting to see more online learning. And so we had a lot to learn. We had a lot to share, and the most valuable part of it all was the network. In terms of my own professional development, it got me out meeting people who are doing similar things, learning from their failures and their successes. Not only at our conferences and meetings, but also they were always available. We had a listserv email group where we could put questions out. So it was a very active and vibrant group, and we really got to know each other really well and there was some sense of sharing and community there, and I believe that that has continued. So what do I hope for the future? I hope that new beginning junior educational technologists, instructional designers, faculty who are interested in using technologies, continue to join this group to be part of it, and also to continue to grow that critical understanding of technologies because while in the beginning, we were all excited, we have learned over time that there's also a need to maintain a critical awareness of how technologies are being used and how they're being abused and manipulated. It's become a lot more sophisticated, but I believe that with sharing and collaboration that we've done, and will

continue to do, ETUG will provide a service long into the future, so ETUG congratulations.  
[Recording ends]

AMANDA:

Thank you. So Irwin ended with his hopes for the future, and I will echo them. Let's continue to welcome new educational technologists, instructional designers, instructors, and students to ETUG. Let's continue to be a space where young professionals feel welcomed and included, and let's continue to discuss technologies with both enthusiasm and with a critical lens.

So one thing I wanted to talk about. I have a few minutes here to talk about BCcampus itself, and I wanted to talk about the BCcampus Strategic Plan because so many of you were involved in that. Next slide.

So I put, my colleagues put on the table a one pager of our new Strategic Plan. And just so you all know, our Strategic Plan was informed by an internal SWOT analysis. We also did an external survey where we had 125 responses, 85% were from B.C. post-secondaries. And we also took a look at some emerging trends, which I'm going to talk about after. Next slide.

One thing we asked folks in the survey is, in your opinion, what are the most critical challenges facing B.C. post-secondary in teaching and learning right now? And there were four main themes. One is artificial intelligence, the second was funding. Third was EDI and accessibility, and the fourth was the move to hybrid or online teaching. Next slide.

In terms of topics that are most relevant to your work, across the board, we found that 92% said assessment, 89% said online or hybrid learning, 87% said educational technology. Then we had 85 at OERs or open educational resources. 82 said open education pedagogy and 75% said artificial intelligence. Okay. Next slide.

In terms of comments regarding topics of relevance, we found that folks were asking questions about indigenization of curriculum. What are the processes involved there? Facilitation, collaboration among post-secondary institutions, digital literacy and AI, instructional skills, teaching engagement strategies, and experiential learning, and then research-based teaching and learning. Next slide.

And so which of the following services when we asked were most valuable to you and your institution, and this was regarding services that BCcampus offers. So the Open Collection and the Digital Literacy Collection, both had about 96%. Pressbooks was also highly valued, hosting professional development webinars, hosting conferences like today also went high on there, and then grants for OER. Next slide.

Some further comments regarding services in terms of things that either they'd like to see going forward or additional comments. were an educational developer community of practice, shared

education resources, curriculum, and technologies, collaboration with First Nation-mandated institutions, climate change, education, and support for smaller institutions. Next slide, please.

Then we also asked what else should we be considering. These are some of the comments that came out. Collaboration with Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledge, OER discoverability. Stay on top of emerging trends. Research in the areas of AI, H5P, etc. Addressing DRIPA in all BCcampus work. Student participation beyond consulting and engagement strategies across the diversity of PSIs. Next slide.

So what we did there with all of that information as we got together and we looked at how could we formulate the Strategic Plan? So we started with themes, and these are our areas of focus. We then went down to objectives, which are high level goals, and we then took strategies, which are approaches to achieving these goals and then activities. So it responds to how we are going to do this over the next three years. Next slide.

And so what we've done is we came up with three themes, and many of these themes probably won't seem out of the ordinary for BCcampus, but it's about how we'll action them that I think is quite important. The first is building relationships and communities. The second is advancing teaching and learning practices, and the third is supporting organizational excellence. Next slide.

And so with this particular Strategic Plan, we put out the key strategies, which you can find on the one pager, and this is something we're committing to over the next three years. If you have specific questions about the action items going forward, you are welcome to come by and talk to me later today or send me an email or chat with anybody else. But I think one thing that's really great about our general Strategic Plan and key strategies is that it involves all of you. *Mi casa es su casa*. So we need help and we're really looking for the Educational Technology Users Group to be a part of this plan. Okay. Next slide.

One of the things in advance of our Strategic Planning retreat in the beginning of the year, I started to research some emerging trends that were shaping the face of post-secondary education in B.C. and the country overall to provide context and frame our thinking. Next slide.

Because this is the 30th anniversary of ETUG, I wanted to share a video here of the most emerging trend from 1994. [Video starts] Transform your home into a mammoth interactive entertainment. Imagine a world where every word ever written, every picture ever painted, and every film ever shot could be viewed instantly in your home via an information superhighway, a high capacity digital communications network. What that would mean is you could transform your home into a mammoth interactive entertainment centre with the old stock exchange and shopping centre thrown in. It sounds pretty grand, but it all comes down to computers communicating. In fact, that's already happening on something called the internet that anyone in the world with a computer and a modem to connect it to a telephone line can subscribe to. There are over 20 million people connected up, and one person in particular, I

know is connected is the American President Bill Clinton. I know that because I used this computer to write to him today, and I've already got a reply from the White House, and here it is. "Thank you for writing to President Clinton via electronic mail. The President is committed to integrating this dynamic medium into the White House. It goes on to give some details of his government's policy to encourage the building of information superhighways. Now, I can't electronically mail our Prime Minister John Major because he hasn't got a modem, and I can't find out what his government's policy on information superhighways is because it hasn't got one, at least nothing beyond the usual thing of leaving it to market forces. But you can do more than just send messages on the internet. There's loads of useful information in here. You can get news and recipes. I found this satellite weather map in there and there are interactive services as well. This is a shopping centre. Here it says it's just off the information superhighway. That's its address, and inside, there's a flower shop and it shows me the picture of the flowers I can order and tells me how much they cost. Then all I have to do is tap in the address I want them to go to, and of course, I have to give them my credit card details to pay. There's even some stuff about us in here. Let me just find that for you because we've just put some details on the internet about tonight's program and some pictures as well. It's all good fun. But what limits the potential of all this is that it's relatively slow. You can't play a video down this. In fact, most of that stuff we've had to receive in advance. That's because copper telephone lines are really designed for people to talk down, not for computers. But with an information superhighway built with high capacity fiber optic cables, you're not limited to shifting around text and the odd picture. You can send high quality sound and video as well. When are we going to get all this then? At the moment, regulations restrict what services can be offered by phone companies, cable television operators, and so on. But in America, for any company who's prepared to invest in an information superhighway, there's a new law, which means they can transmit anything they like on it, video, music, telephones, data, the lot, as long as they let other people provide services on it too. But it's not just a license to print money. The companies will also be compelled to connect every classroom and library free of charge. So society stands to benefit as well. Here in Britain, though, restrictions still apply. BT, for example, isn't allowed to do cable TV, but they're developing some interesting ideas to get what they can out of their existing copper phone lines, like video on demand. We've got a setup here to show what they're aiming at. The idea is from the comfort of your armchair, you'll choose whatever video you want, and it'll be played down your phone line to your own TV. It'll not just be movies, though. There'll be other TV programs, too, like this travel program I've selected here. Now, the other thing is because it's interactive as well. Say I was wondering where he got his suit from. It would not only tell me that, but I could even buy one here and now via the inevitable home shopping option. Armani. I can see that. But this video on demand is a tricky thing to do without the extra capacity of the fiber optic cables. I, for one, will be impressed when the real thing is up and running down the phone lines. But it could well be the first taste most of us will get of what will come rolling down the information superhighway. It's ironic that it'll come on old phone lines, but it could stay that way, unless Britain develops its own vision of what sort of information superhighway it wants and how to get it.

[Video ends]

AMANDA:

Thank you. So I challenge you today. You somehow need to incorporate information superhighway into all of your presentations, I'll just wait for the next slide too.

Also a great conversation topic to ask at your tables. Where were you in 1994 when the internet first came out? So I'll just keep going and then when the slide comes up, it'll come up. One of the things from the environmental scan that we realized is it focused not only on educational structures and practices, but also on wider issues of climate crisis and student wellness. Today, I want to focus on some of those aspects. So I'm going to be talking about artificial intelligence, assessment, the climate crisis, credentialing alternatives, and student mental health and well-being. So to start off with, I'm going to talk about AI. So next slide.

I don't think I can talk about emerging trends in post-secondary institutions without discussing AI. So it's here and it's staying and the trend isn't so much that AI exists. We know that.

The trend is how we use AI and why we need to be looking at AI with a critical lens. The AI being used in our institutions, mostly Chat GPT was not designed with pedagogy or inclusion in mind. It's based on a data set from the past, and, in fact, an exclusive set of data from the past, and we need to be part of the design. Jutta Treviranus of the Inclusive Design Research Center based out of OCAD University says, "Education needs to demand a different type of AI." She goes on to say, "Is what we've been doing in the past the direction we want to go in?" The *Accessible B.C. Act* became effective in 2022. I bring this to your attention because as such, post-secondary institutions needed to bring their community together to draft an accessibility plan for their institution. As we look into procuring educational technologies, those that may be AI related and those that may be AI detection related, a whole different talk. We can utilize the Accessibility Act to ask the questions in the procurement process. Is the tool inclusive? Is the tool equitable? Is the tool biased? How does the tool address diversity? We can start getting involved in the committees to then enact policy to support our students versus in harm of our students. Next slide.

Lacey Robinson, who's the author of *Justice Seekers*, and the CEO and president of UnboundEd said, "Forget about artificial intelligence and focus on authentic intelligence." As educational technologists, I don't think we can forget about the tool per se, but I do think we need to start remembering that the use of the technology in our education system is for education purposes, educational technology. So education first. Yet we get so consumed by the tool, what it's going to do, how it will take over our school systems, and how it will take over our jobs. If we want our students to be using AI and learning about AI, then as educational technologists and instructors, we need to be well versed in what AI is. What are the core competencies we are actually wanting our students to graduate with. Evaluation skills, critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and the ability to create. Next slide.

Okay. In my opinion, students do not come to post-secondary to cheat. They come to learn. Here's the thing. Students are using AI. In fact, most of us in this room are using AI in some form

or another. Why are students using AI? For many reasons. Feedback mechanism, simplification of complex topics, and support and breaking down essay topics, for example, But what gets me jazzed about AI tools is as assessment, assessment redesign. I've been talking about assessment redesign for the last 23 years as an instructional designer. It's what I needed as a student. I wanted a different approach to assessing and addressing my competencies. What I want to see more of is the celebration of good assessment design. If the main concern of AI is students cheating, not their privacy or security, then we need to be supporting our instructors in how to redesign assessments that actually engage the student and evaluate them on authentic intelligence. As AI continues to grow at a faster rate than we can teach it, I want to see great examples of assessments, ones that are redesigned because rather than policing students because of the fear they will use AI to cheat, they are instead redesigned to perhaps even use AI to co-create to evaluate and critically analyze. This is a plug for a FLO Lab that's happening on May 22, between 9 and 12, which is maximizing student learning with assessment as, for, and of learning. Free, highly encourage you to attend. Next slide, please.

There's an increased focus on and demand for workforce skills and concern regarding the cost of college education and student loan debt. Digital badges and micro-credentials will continue to play a role in higher education and require those focused on teaching and learning to consider how to better integrate these short career-focused learning experiences into existing curriculum. But the question is, how do we best design work integrated learning experiences as well as badging and micro-credentials to meet the needs of students? There's a toolkit that we created. It's the BCcampus Micro-Credential Toolkit. This toolkit aims to support micro-credential practitioners and members of the B.C. post-secondary community who are developing and offering standalone, short-duration learning experiences that are competency based, aligned with industry, aligned with employer, community, and/or Indigenous community needs and can be assessed and be recognized for employment or learning purposes. The toolkit compiles knowledge, resources, templates, and experiences from the sector to support the community. It also proposes a list of questions that practitioners can explore in laying down a solid foundation in their context. Each self-contained chapter covers one aspect of offering micro-credentials from sustainable budgeting strategy to partnerships in and out of institutions to governance, and quality assurance to forging educational pathways to connect micro-credentials to further educational opportunities in the system. This quote from KPMG says "20 years from now, lines between people's learning and working lives will be increasingly joined. Learning will not be something you graduate from to transition to a job, but will be a lifelong journey of upskilling and micro-credentialing to keep up with exponential advances in technology and changes in the workplace that will build a better economy and society." Okay. Next slide, please.

The climate crisis presents an imminent and escalating threat to the planet, demanding urgent action. In response, B.C. institutions and others around the world are grappling with ways to incorporate and give prominence to these serious issues. Some post-secondary institutions are considering making it a requirement for students to take an introductory course on climate change. Others are increasing their course offerings, examining the relationship between social

and natural disasters or causes of climate change. B.C. institutions with the highest number of related programs on climate change and sustainability include BCIT, Coast Mountain College, North Island College, and Vancouver Island University. Royal Roads University is offering a number of courses in micro-credential offerings such as the climate adaptation fundamentals and a masters of art in climate action leadership, which are addressing the skills gaps when it comes to addressing the climate crisis. Next slide.

Pearson College is a United World College. And they've launched an exciting and innovative new IB program curriculum option in the 2022, 2023 academic year for students with a passion for tackling the most pressing issue facing humanity: climate change. The new climate action leadership diploma is an IB career-related program, and it's the first of its kind. It's a two-year diploma for 16 to 19-year-olds who wish to specialize in climate leadership. It's delivered over 600 hours of instruction, spread over two years and consists of university-level courses in partnership with Camosun College and Royal Roads University. It develops and delivers in house with invited external speakers, guest lecturers, and direct place-based experience, and it runs alongside and complements the knowledge, skills, values, and attributes, learning in university level CP core courses. It also offers micro-credentials for students to develop skills in facilitation, conflict transformation, climate modelling, and understanding the legal rights of individuals participating in direct actions. Also that person right there at the bottom of the stairs is my sister. That's my sister. My sister leads that program, but I love the program, and I think it's awesome and I see a future for it. Next slide.

Student mental health and well-being. People between the age of 15 and 24 are more likely to experience mental health issues than any other group and comprise a significant portion of the post-secondary student body. At the pan-Canadian level in 2020, the Mental Health Commission of Canada released the National Standard of Canada for Mental health and Well-Being for Post- Secondary Students. Institutional initiatives are blossoming with on-campus counselling, peer support groups, academic preparation, and other services that are meant to ensure mental health and fulfilling environments for students. And this is why a pedagogy of care for an institution. Sorry, pedagogy of care in an institution is so important. And it's not just the role of a faculty member. This is a role for every touch point of student encounters from registration by having the ability to register under a preferred name with preferred pronouns to accessing their courses, whether it be the use of OER in a course to support availability in the choices administrators make on educational technology. What is the impact to the student? What is the data being collected? How is the technology ethical and just? Or in the design of the course where you could suggest to an instructor, where is there space for the students to have the opportunity for alternative forms of assessment to understand... to demonstrate understanding? Next slide.

While there are many more trends to be discussed, I purposely chose the few I spoke about because I also wanted to share the trends that I want to see at the forefront of our institutions. With AI, I want us to be reviewing these tools with a critical lens. I want institutions to remember it's education first always, to be procuring educational technologies that are in

favour of the student versus in harm of the student, and ultimately to be trending toward the support of authentic intelligence as we utilize artificial intelligence tools in the classroom. Assessment, redesigning assessment is critical to change in the narrative that AI is only a tool for cheating. As I mentioned, I want to see more celebration of instructors who are redesigning assessment. The more we celebrate this and share ways of redesign, I believe we can move the trend in upward momentum to thoughtful and purposeful reassessment design. What I like about the trend toward credentialing alternatives is the value placed on lifelong learning. And with the climate crisis, Dr. Vanessa Andreotti, who's a professor and dean of Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria says, "The buck stops here when it comes to climate education." I don't necessarily want to be putting the climate crisis up here as a trend because trends come and go. But to be honest, the climate crisis, as we know, isn't going anywhere. But like I said, I'm sharing these as a topic, as a way to get these topics and trends that are vital for future generations and not just for learners, but for our humanity. With regards to student mental health, student mental health isn't a one-off project. It's an ongoing commitment that extends beyond implementation. So much of what are emerging trends in the post-secondary institutions directly affect student mental health, from the educational technologies we procure that may cause harm to the student to the way in which we assess to offering students alternative ways of learning and to actually addressing the challenges that face our humanity by offering programs to help students be a part of the solution. Next slide.

So to conclude as a bit of a thank you and nostalgia, I asked Chat GPT to put together the top 10 songs from 1994, and you can access the playlist on Spotify by scanning the QR code above. Thank you.

FACILITATOR:

Thanks so much, Amanda. So we do have maybe one question perhaps, if anybody has a question.

AMANDA: Oh, QR code again, Britt.

FACILITATOR: Andrew?

ANDREW:

Hi. Thanks for the interesting presentation. I had a question about authentic assessment. Did you ask the institutions in the survey, did you talk about what the barriers are to creating authentic assessment?

AMANDA:

We did not, no. But that's a great question we should be asking. Yeah.

FACILITATOR: Okay. I think we probably need to move on. So thanks so much again, Amanda. And we'll be back in a few moments.