

B.C. Digital Learning Strategy Forum

NOVEMBER 2023



Ministry of
Post-Secondary Education
and Future Skills

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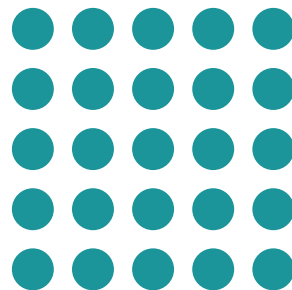
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Executive Summary

In an effort to foster collaboration between the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (the Ministry) and the post-secondary sector and gain a deeper understanding of the digital learning needs in British Columbia, the Digital Learning Advisory Committee was created in 2021. Co-chaired by Nicola Lemmer, former Assistant Deputy Minister, and Dr. Maureen Wideman, former Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning, University of the Fraser Valley, the committee played a pivotal role in developing and launching the provincial Digital Learning Strategy (DLS) in spring 2023. The strategy outlines strategic priorities, recommended actions, and provides information on best practices, lessons learned, and forward-thinking approaches to enhance the ongoing digital aspects of post-secondary studies across B.C.

On November 23, 2023, BCcampus and the Ministry jointly hosted the inaugural B.C. Post-Secondary Digital Learning Strategy Forum. Thirty-eight participants from 20 institutions across the province represented the breadth and diversity of B.C.'s post-secondary education sector.

The forum explored initiatives to build capacity within the post-secondary system and align efforts and best practices with the DLS. This was particularly crucial in strategic areas where collaboration across multiple institutions had been identified as a key determinant for success.



Presentations

The day opened with a welcome from Tsleil-Watuth Nation Elder, Carleen Thomas, chancellor of Emily Carr University.

Presentations at the forum included overviews of how organizations and post-secondary institutions are implementing the Digital Learning Strategy, and gave participants the opportunity to share learnings and best practices. These included the following:

Digital Learning Strategy Development and Implementation Activities: Ben Ferrel from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills provided an overview of the development and implementation of B.C.'s Post-Secondary Digital Learning Strategy. The presentation covered the background and timelines associated with the strategy's development, as well as the consultation process. The progress made toward implementing the Digital Learning Strategy was showcased, and it was highlighted that the initiative operates on a three-year implementation timeline, which began in Spring 2023 and is scheduled to continue through 2026.

BCcampus and the Digital Learning Open Educational Resource Repository: Selina McGinnis and Britt Dzioba from BCcampus shared the BCcampus Digital Literacy Website Demo, which offers a curated collection of Open Educational Resources (OER) to help instructors in B.C.'s post-secondary institutions with the integration of digital literacy materials into their courses, as well as enhancing their own digital skills.

Developing an Institutional Digital Learning Framework: Dr. Brit Paris from Capilano University shared the process of developing an institutional digital learning framework at CapU, which supports the university in moving toward its strategic goals of providing distinctive university experiences, animated by the imagination and innovation of its learners, deeply connected to the communities it serves, while advancing goals of social equity and access as well as environmental sustainability and serving as a powerful mechanism for campus integration.

The Digital Learning Strategy Scorecard: Dr. Leeann Waddington from Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Ben Ferrel from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills introduced a scorecard and evaluative survey to address "report/strategy fatigue" by consolidating information on post-secondary institutions' responses to Digital Learning Strategy priorities. The structured approach aims to identify synergy, assess implementation, minimize duplication, and gather feedback to inform future efforts, fostering best practices within the post-secondary system.

OpenETC and the Potential of Open, Generative Platforms and Cross-Institutional Collaboration: Brian Lamb from Thompson Rivers University, Clint Lalonde with BCcampus, and Anne-Marie Scott, expert consultant, discussed the Open Educational Technology Collaborative (OpenETC), which is a community of educators, technologists, and designers sharing their expertise to foster and support open infrastructure for the B.C. post-secondary sector. The objectives are to encourage technological autonomy and provide ways for students, faculty, and institutions to own and control their own data; lower the barrier to participation on the open web for B.C. faculty and students; and provide a more sustainable ed tech infrastructure for higher education in B.C., giving institutions more control over their tools. It also assists B.C. faculty in evaluating and making informed pedagogical decisions around open-source teaching and learning applications.

Ethical Educational Technology and Working Group Update: Anne-Marie Scott and Carol Ribeiro from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills presented an overview of the Ethical Educational Technology Working Group’s progress, encapsulating details concerning its responsibilities, purpose, vision, membership, and composition. They elaborated on the methodology employed by the group to fulfill its objectives, encompassing an environmental scan of resources concerning ethical considerations in educational technology and four drop-in sessions hosted to delve into specific aspects of ethical considerations relevant to educational technology in the post-secondary system.

UBC Vancouver’s Universal Design for Learning Fellows Program: Simon Bates, Christina Hendricks, and Afsaneh Sharif from the University of British Columbia explained that the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) fellows program was established to:

- Identify and address systemic barriers to equitable learning opportunities, to create and sustain equitable and inclusive campuses (enhancing the accessibility of physical and virtual spaces for students, staff, and faculty);
- Improve access and inclusion in on-campus, online, and hybrid teaching and learning environments, with a focus on reducing barriers for students with disabilities;
- Develop a network of practitioners with expertise in applying UDL approaches in the design and delivery of courses across a range of disciplines and who will promote the practice of UDL among faculty and staff across UBC; and
- Develop a range of strategies and resources to help increase support for accessibility in UBC courses and on its campuses.

Project-Based Learning at UBC’s Emerging Media Lab: Prototyping with Emerging Technology: Saeed Dyanatkar and Dr. Patrick Parra Pennefather from the University of British Columbia shared the experiences of the Emerging Media Lab, an experimental space where faculty, students, and staff from all disciplines collaborate with industry and the community. Its mission is to evolve learning by creating tools and techniques using emerging media.

World Café

The World Café method is a participatory dialogue process involving small group conversations to explore a specific question or topic. Participants move between tables, sharing ideas and building on each other's thoughts, fostering a collaborative and interactive environment for generating collective insights and solutions.

A significant part of the Digital Learning Strategy Forum involved engaging people in a World Café session, facilitated by Amanda Coolidge from BCcampus. The groups moved through four tables with the following guiding questions for discussion:

1. Digital Learning Strategy Implementation
 - a. What is happening regarding DLS implementation at your institution? What would support success and what challenges/barriers do you face?
2. First Nations Engagement with the Digital Learning Strategy
 - a. How are post-secondary institutions working with First Nations and First Nations-mandated institutes on development and implementation of policy, projects and plans related to the DLS?
3. Guidelines for Technology-Enhanced Learning: Digital Learning Strategy
 - a. Are you using them in your institution or work? If so, what has your experience been? Do you have any areas you've identified that could use revision?
4. Digital Equity
 - a. How can DLS implementation support digital equity across BC institutions?

Table 1: Digital Learning Strategy Implementation

Key Ideas:

1. Awareness & Alignment – the importance of building awareness of the DLS, particularly at the faculty level to ensure alignment with administrative efforts. Tensions between administrative priorities and faculty/student preferences highlighted the need for ongoing efforts to promote alignment and awareness.

2. Training & Support – seem as essential to meet the high demand for AI resources and effective online teaching. Participants emphasized the necessity of clarity around terms and definitions, integrating digital literacy into existing strategic plans, and fostering collaboration to address resource challenges.

3. Challenges & Solutions – Challenges identified included a lack of leadership engagement, faculty buy-in, communication around available resources, and funding concerns. Addressing these challenges requires fostering collaboration, providing clarity, and allocating resources to support digital literacy implementation, including Indigenous resources and workshops to protect Indigenous knowledge.

Table 2: First Nations and the Digital Learning Strategy

Key Ideas:

- 1. Indigenous Collaboration** – Participants emphasized collaboration between post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities, advocating for Indigenous advisory committees and indigenization offices to shape DLS policies and projects.
- 2. Community Support** – Strategies focused on community-driven delivery models and student support, including centralized resources, distributed learning opportunities, and addressing challenges like internet access and funding constraints.
- 3. Intellectual Property and Digital Impact** – Discussions highlighted priorities around Indigenous intellectual property, addressing structural barriers, and proposing solutions like traditional knowledge labels and utilizing platforms such as Mukurtu CMS. Overall, the conversation prioritized collaboration, inclusivity, and capacity building for effective DLS implementation.

Table 3: Guidelines for Technology-Enhanced Learning: Digital Learning Strategy

Key Ideas:

- 1. Feedback & Implementation** – Participants highlighted the need for celebrating successes, better understanding implementation in PSE, and recommended a soft approach due to changing and uncertain contexts. Participants noted faculty engagement concerns.
- 2. Audience Clarity & Challenges** – Clarity on the audience, especially educational support units, and

the role of deans were discussed. Challenges included contradictory regulations, faculty resistance, and rapid technology turnover.

3. Faculty Support & Quality Assurance - Faculty engagement, capacity building, and support were emphasized, along with integrating quality assurance measures. Suggestions included establishing naming conventions, creating concise resources, and conducting workshops. Provincial-level discussions and embedding expectations in collective agreements were deemed essential for a comprehensive approach within the DLS framework.

Table 4: Digital Equity

Key Ideas:

1. Access to Technology – Participants addressed connectivity challenges, advocating for increased device availability to ensure fair and inclusive access to education, particularly in remote communities and among First Nations.

2. Equitable Technology Procurement – Discussion focused on financial constraints faced by institutions and explored leveraging government procurement power to increase device availability. Aligning procurement processes with accessibility and equity strategies was highlighted to ensure students have access to technology meeting accessibility standards.

3. Inclusive Learning Environments - Participants emphasized training faculty and staff on course design and accessible content creation to meet the objectives of the Accessible British Columbia Act. They discussed transitioning from basic digital accessibility to inclusive content considering various modalities, balancing student inclusion needs with faculty workload, and fostering flexibility and choice while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Questions

Later in the afternoon, participants were asked to respond to two key questions: What do we need to do as a system to collaborate and keep resources fresh? And what are the barriers (besides time and money) to institutions being responsive to changing technology? Several key themes emerged from the discussion.

Needs

1. Enhancing Collaboration and Communication

- Fostering relationships within and among educational institutions
- Pairing institutions to exchange challenges and best practices
- Staff buddy systems, collaborative events, and shared projects to boost networking and knowledge exchange

2. Promoting Digital Literacy and Access to Information

- Initiatives aimed at improving digital literacy for both learners and educators
- Development of open platforms for resource sharing
- Communication about the effective use of these resources

3. Implementing Structured Processes and Incentives

- Structured processes to facilitate resource sharing, professional development, and continuous improvement
- Advocacy for initiatives such as resource sprints, leader swaps, and recognition schemes to support these efforts

Barriers

4. Organizational Culture and Mindset

- Dealing with resistance to change
- Fear of failure
- Inertia of established practices

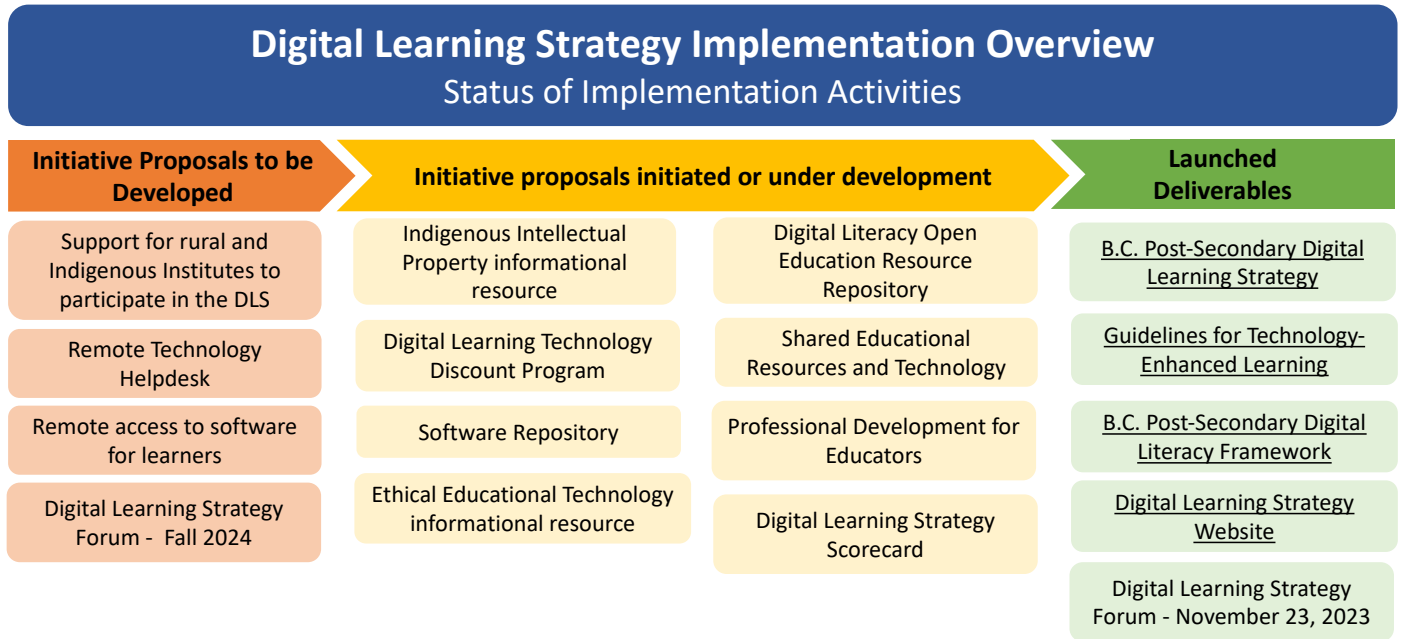
5. Digital Literacy and Leadership Involvement

- Concerns about inconsistent digital literacy levels
- Senior leadership buy-in and understanding

6. Structural and Procedural Obstacles

- Bureaucracy
- Siloed thinking
- Difficulties in identifying use cases and learning outcomes

Next Steps



Funding for the Digital Learning Strategy continues through to the 2025/26 fiscal year. We look forward to the continued collaboration and coordination across the post-secondary sector of the implementation of the Digital Learning Strategy. As more initiatives are launched there will be ongoing opportunities to contribute, including data collection efforts, consultations and working groups. As the work on individual initiatives progress more updates will be available.

We look forward to seeing you at the Digital Learning Strategy Forum 2024.

Appendix I: Agenda

Digital Learning Strategy Forum Agenda

November 23, 2023

8:30 am–4:30 pm

BCIT Atrium, 555 Seymour St., Vancouver

- 7:30 am **Registration and Breakfast**
- 8:30 am **Welcome**
Elder Carleen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation; Chancellor, Emily Carr University
Amanda Coolidge, Executive Director, BCcampus
- 9:00 am **Digital Learning Strategy Development and Implementation Activities**
Ben Ferrel, Executive Director, Digital Policy and Business Transformation, Ministry of
Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
- 9:20 am **BCcampus and the Digital Learning Strategy**
Digital Literacy OER Repository Demo
Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus
Selina McGinnis, Lead UX/IA, BCcampus
Britt Dzioba, Advisor, Learning + Teaching, BCcampus
- 9:40 am **Developing an Institutional Digital Learning Framework**
Dr. Brit Paris, Director, Teaching + Learning, Capilano University
- 10:05 am **Digital Learning Strategy Scorecard**
Dr. Leeann Waddington, Associate Vice President, Teaching + Learning, Kwantlen Poly-
technic University
Ben Ferrel, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
- 10:20 am **Break**

- 10:35 am **World Café**
Facilitated by Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus
- 12:10 pm **Lunch**
- 12:50 pm **Harvestings World Café**
Facilitated by Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus
- 1:20 pm **OpenETC and the Potential of Open, Generative Platforms and Cross Institutional Collaboration**
Brian Lamb, Director, Learning Technology and Innovation, Thompson Rivers University
Open Learning
Anne Marie Scott, Independent Consultant
Clint Lalonde, Director, Open Education, BCcampus
- 1:45 pm **Ethical Educational Technology Working Group Update**
Anne Marie Scott, Independent Consultant
Carol Ribeiro, Senior Policy Analyst, Digital Policy and Business Transformation, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
- 2:05 pm **UBC Vancouver's Universal Design for Learning Fellows Program**
Dr. Simon Bates, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning (on leave), University of British Columbia (UBC)
Dr. Christina Hendricks, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning, *pro tem*, UBC
Dr. Afsaneh Sharif, Faculty Liaison and Senior Project Manager, Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, UBC
- 2:25 pm **Project Based Learning (PjBL) at UBC's Emerging Media Lab: Prototyping with Emerging Technology**
Saeed Dyanatkar, Senior Manager, Digital Experience and Creative Media, UBC
Dr. Patrick Parra Pennefather, Assistant Professor, UBC
- 2:45 pm **Break**

- 3:00 pm **B.C. Post Secondary’s Responsiveness to Change with Emerging Technology**
Facilitated by Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus
- 3:30 pm **System Collaboration**
Facilitated by Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus
- 4:00 pm **Closing Remarks**
Ben Ferrel, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Amanda Coolidge, BCcampus

Appendix II: Participants

Elizabeth Adjin-Tettey	University of Victoria
Simon Bates	University of British Columbia
Karen Brooke	Vancouver Community College
Brent Calvert	Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC
Amanda Coolidge	BCcampus
Saeed Dyanatkar	University of British Columbia
Britt Dzioba	BCcampus
Kyle Empringham	Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Ben Ferrel	Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Rob Fleming	BC Council on Admissions and Transfer
Briana Fraser	Langara College
Katherine Gall	First Nations Education Steering Committee
Jaime Grismer	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
Nathan Hall	Douglas College
Emily Hannah	Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Hayley Hewson	University of Victoria
Leah Hopton	BC Electronic Libraries Network
Rajiv Jhangiani	Brock University
David Kirk	Vancouver Community College

Clint Lalonde	BCcampus
Brian Lamb	Thompson Rivers University
Selina McGinnis	BCcampus
Tannis Morgan	Vancouver Community College
Brit Paris	Capilano University
Sean Parkinson	Federation of Post-Secondary Educators
Patrick Pennefather	University of British Columbia
Nishan Perera	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Helena Prins	BCcampus
Carol Ribeiro	Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Tracy Roberts	BCcampus
Alex Samur	Langara College
Debbie Schachter	Langara College
Anne-Marie Scott	Expert Consultant
Afsaneh Sharif	University of British Columbia
Dave Smulders	Justice Institute of British Columbia
Kashi Tanaka	BC Public Service
Chad Thompson	College of New Caledonia
Leeann Waddington	Kwantlen Polytechnic University