'Sitting beside': reflections on assessment for an RPL context

Giulia Forsythe via Flickr

Claire Hay, MSc.

Learning Specialist (Curriculum & Assessment)

Teaching and Learning Centre, University of the Fraser Valley

A bit about myself
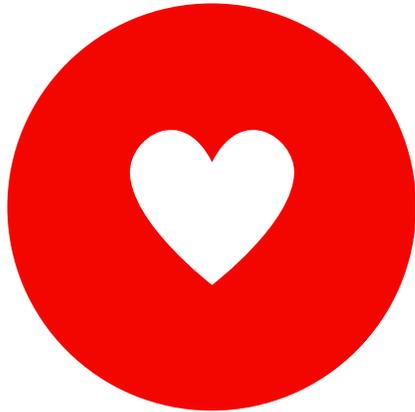
My educational values

KINDNESS   TRUST   EQUITY

Defining assessment

"The word '**assess**' comes from the Latin verb '**assidere**' meaning **'to sit with'**.

In assessment one is supposed to sit with the learner. This implies it is something we do 'with' and 'for' students and not 'to' students."

Green, 1999

**What word(s) come to mind as you read this?**

Decolonizing assessment: starting with relationships

Adapted from:
Lorna Andrew's 5 R's in practice model, April 2022.

Kirkness, V.J., and Barnhardt, R. (2001). First nations and higher education: The four R's: Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. In R. Hayhoe and J. Pan (eds), Knowledge across cultures: A contribution to dialogue among civilizations. (pp. 75-90). Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong.
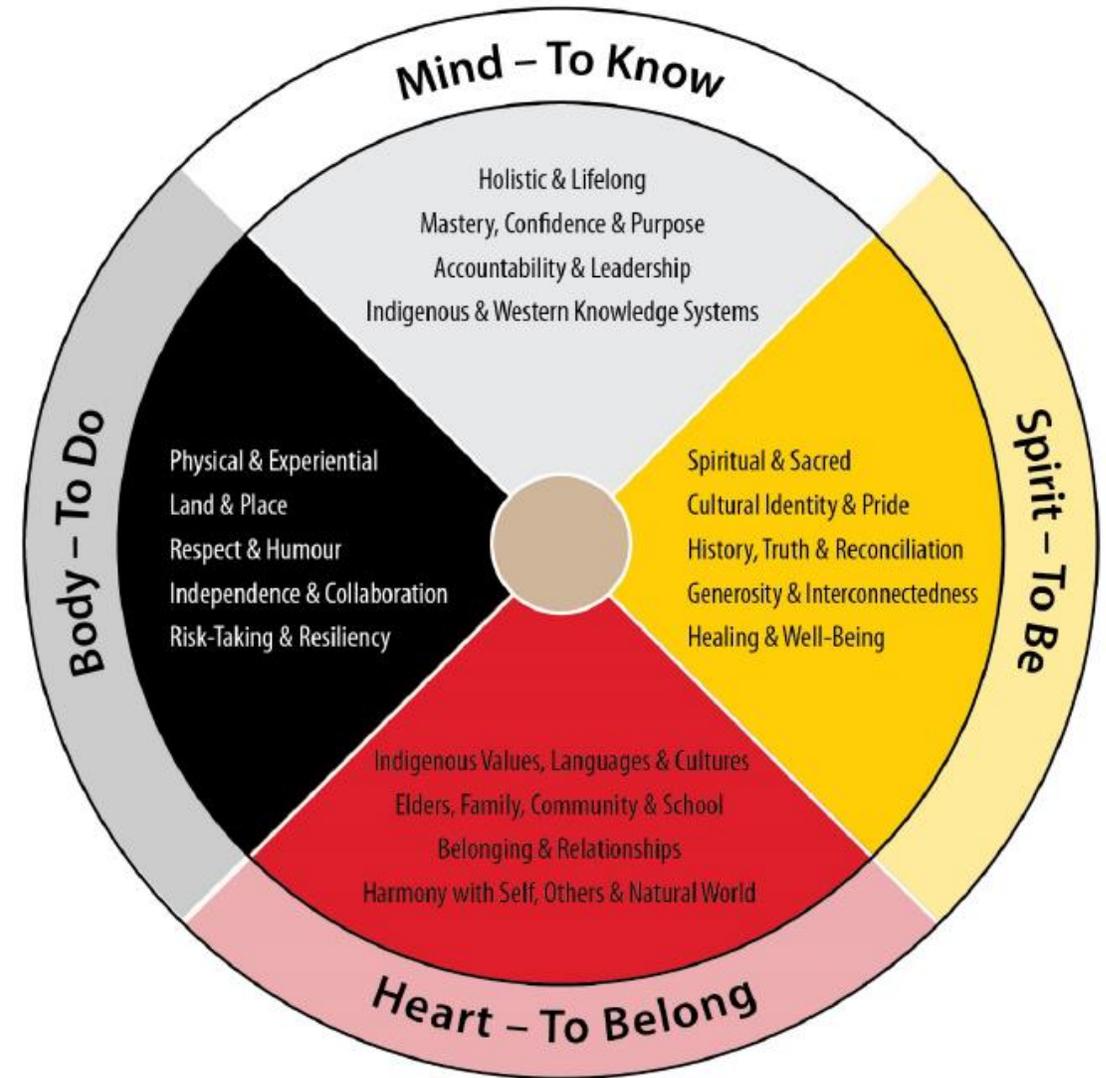
Restoule, J.-P. (2017). Where Indigenous knowledge lives: Bringing Indigenous perspectives to online learning environments. In E. A. McKinley & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Indigenous education*. New York, NY: Springer.
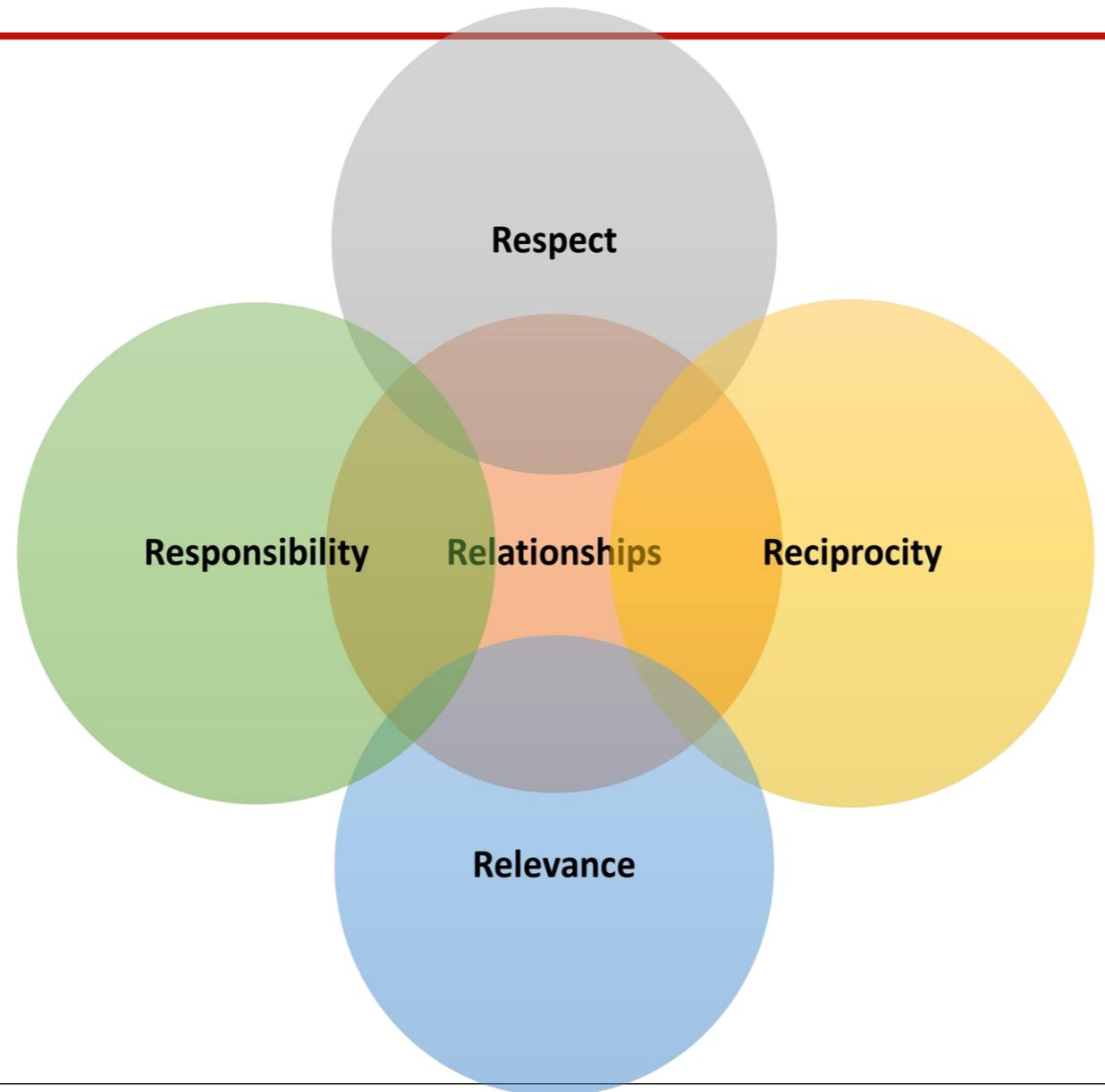
Considering holistic assessment

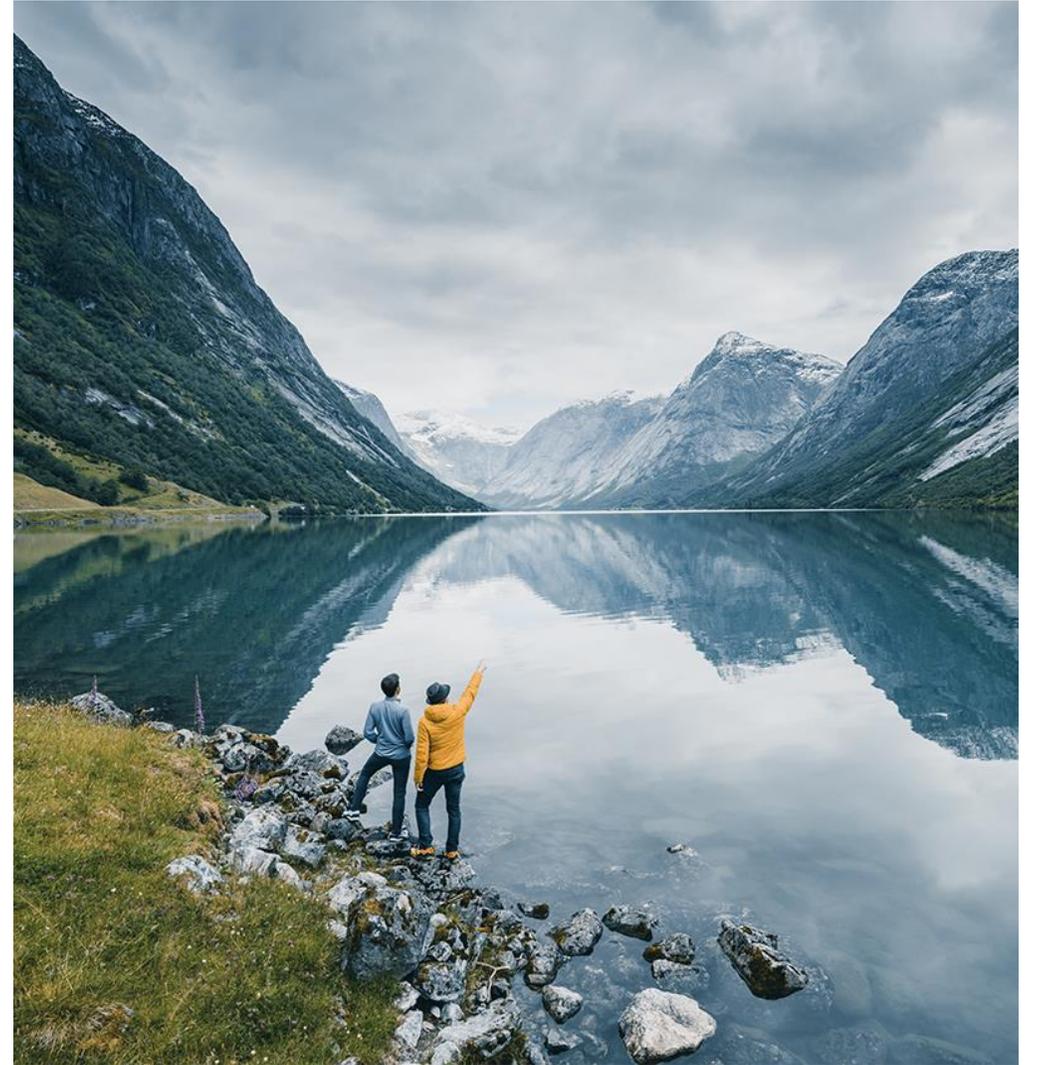- [Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework](#) (Calgary Board of Education)

The holistic learning framework wheel showing four quadrants:

Mind – To Know (grey, top)
- Holistic & Lifelong
- Mastery, Confidence & Purpose
- Accountability & Leadership
- Indigenous & Western Knowledge Systems

Spirit – To Be (yellow, right)
- Spiritual & Sacred
- Cultural Identity & Pride
- History, Truth & Reconciliation
- Generosity & Interconnectedness
- Healing & Well-Being

Heart – To Belong (red, bottom)
- Indigenous Values, Languages & Cultures
- Elders, Family, Community & School
- Belonging & Relationships
- Harmony with Self, Others & Natural World

Body – To Do (black, left)
- Physical & Experiential
- Land & Place
- Respect & Humour
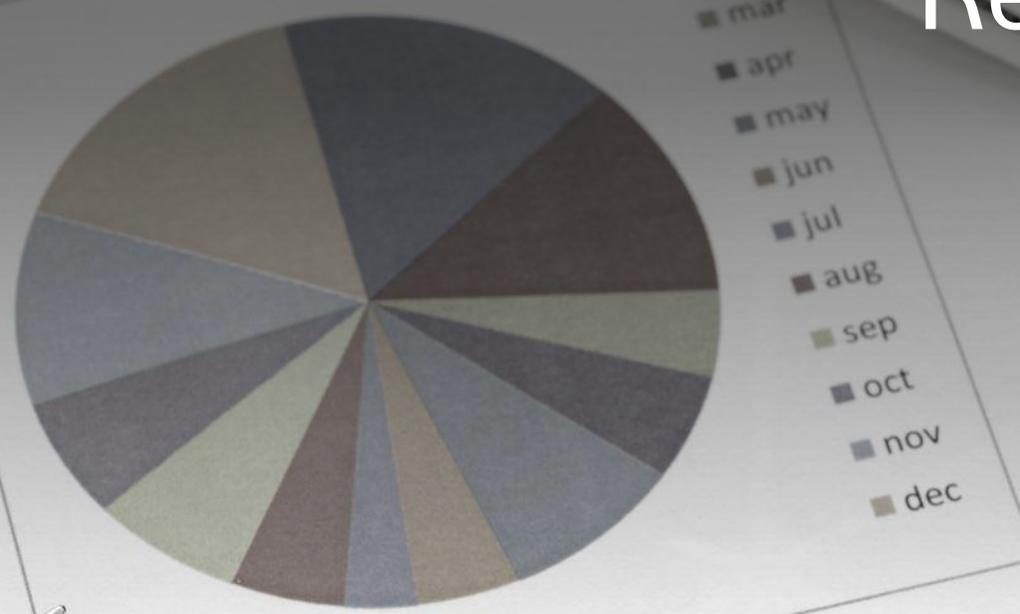- Independence & Collaboration
- Risk-Taking & Resiliency

REFLECTION TIME

How do your RPL processes address relationships, and holistic learning?

What opportunities might exist?

Relevancy and alignment

Considering alignment

Example – ENV 111 Course Learning Outcomes		Assignments		
		Project	Class activities	Reflection journal
1	Discuss relationships between global environmental change and human population, urbanization, and agriculture.	X		X
2	Compare western scientific approaches to traditional ecological knowledge and other world views in understanding and resolving environmental issues.	X	X	X
3	Identify situations where different scientific and social scientific data collection methods and techniques are most useful in developing environmental research projects.	X	X	X
4	Reflect on the ethical issues associated with the collection, analysis, and utilization of data, including traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous communities.	X		X
5	Integrate field observations and data collection into a group project on local environmental change.	X	X	X
6	Utilize both social science and natural science approaches in explaining the cause of, and solutions to, current environmental problems.	X	X	X
7	Work collaboratively with other students and other stakeholders in advocating new strategies for improving environmental sustainability at a local scale.	X	X	X

Alignment in RPL

- Evidence of learning:
  - Residential Landscape Technician Diploma (Burnaby Community & Continuing Education)
  - Work experience as a landscape technician with an arborist (9 months) – reflection & reference from employer
  - Project portfolio – including project descriptions, roles, learnings & reflection

	Example – ENV 111 Course Learning Outcomes	Evidence of learning		
		Diploma	Work experience	Portfolio
1	Discuss relationships between global environmental change and human population, urbanization, and agriculture.	x		
2	Compare western scientific approaches to traditional ecological knowledge and other world views in understanding and resolving environmental issues.	x		x
3	Identify situations where different scientific and social scientific data collection methods and techniques are most useful in developing environmental research projects.		x	x
4	Reflect on the ethical issues associated with the collection, analysis, and utilization of data, including traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous communities.			x
5	Integrate field observations and data collection into a group project on local environmental change.	x	x	x
6	Utilize both social science and natural science approaches in explaining the cause of, and solutions to, current environmental problems.	x	x	
7	Work collaboratively with other students and other stakeholders in advocating new strategies for improving environmental sustainability at a local scale.		x	x

Relevancy and alignment in RPL context

- When 'students' bring evidence of learning via RPL, how can we show that it aligns with course learning outcomes (even when it looks different)?
  - Especially important as learning experiences can address more than knowledge and skills
- Who is responsible for communicating this alignment?
  - RPL facilitator
  - Course evaluator
  - Student
- It should be a collaborative exercise by 'sitting with' the student. Listening and learning from them.
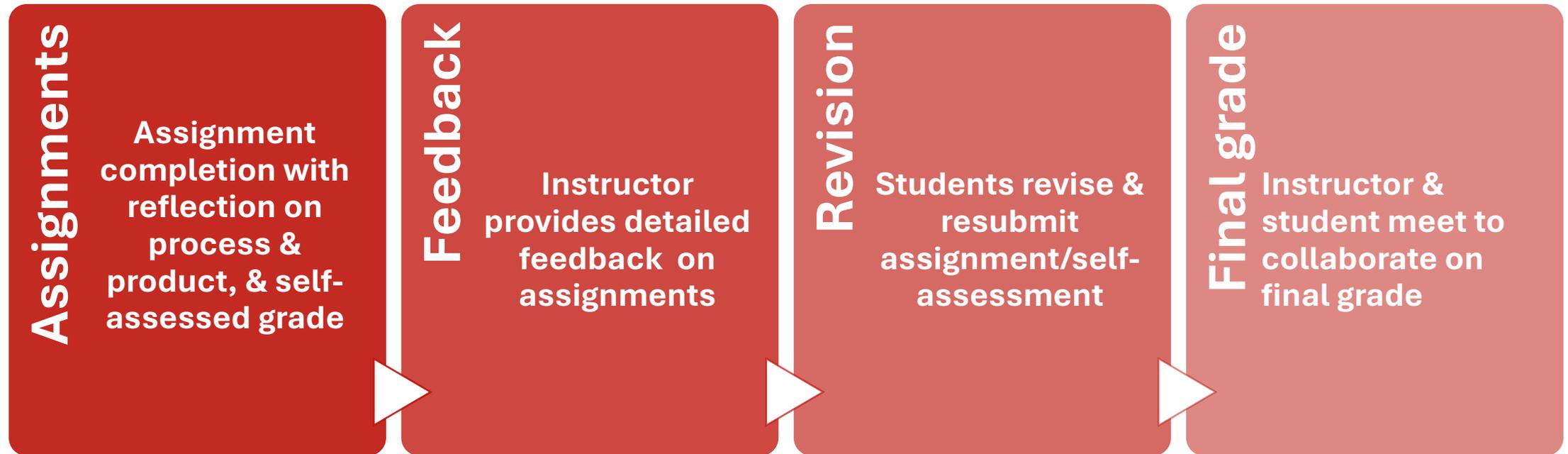- **How can we personalize RPL? How can we build relationships through this process?**

Evaluating RPL through relationships & collaboration

# Being graded...how does it make you feel?

Think about a time you were graded/evaluated. How did this experience make your feel?

Some situations to consider:

- Engaging in a job review process
- Receiving your student evaluations of teaching
- Receiving a journal review

My collaborative grading model

Assignments
Assignment completion with reflection on process & product, & self-assessed grade

Feedback
Instructor provides detailed feedback on assignments

Revision
Students revise & resubmit assignment/self-assessment

Final grade
Instructor & student meet to collaborate on final grade

The collaborative conversation in ENV111

Describe how your learning in this class has impacted your sense of self as a student. What have you learned about yourself? - **SPIRIT**
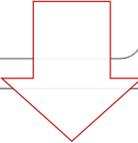
How do you connect to being an 'environmental scientist' and part of a scientific community?- **HEART**
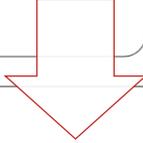
How did the skills we used in class help your leaning? Where did you succeed? Where might you need to grow? - **BODY**
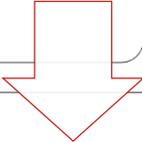
Describe your key learnings from this course. What stands-out? What are you still curious about? - **MIND**
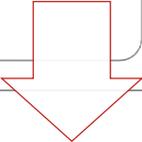
How would you describe your performance in this course? Why?

Describe how your learning experiences have shaped who you are. What have you learned about yourself? - **SPIRIT**

How do you connect to being part of a (disciplinary) community? - **HEART**

How did the skills you developed help your learning? Where did you succeed, and where might you need to grow? - **BODY**

How would you connect these learning experiences to the course outcomes? What did you learn? – **MIND**

Looking at the learning artifacts you have shared, do you meet the minimum the criteria for RPL credit in this course? Why?

A proposed RPL collaborative conversation

Where does genAI fit into this conversation?

- The launch of ChatGPT in Nov 2022 created a tsunami wave of fear, distrust, and panic.

- AI tools offer opportunities for learners to collate learning artifacts for RPL but also create/invent learning artifacts.

- Not all evaluators may be supportive of its use.
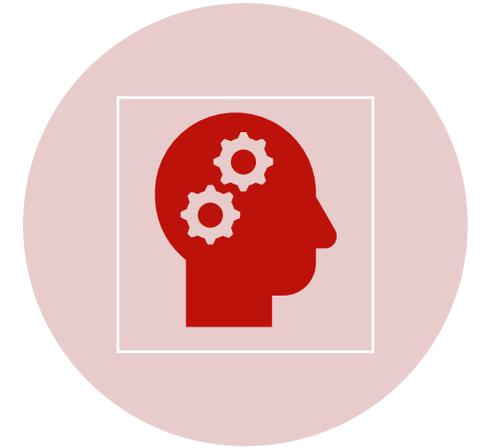
- Relationships must come before technology.
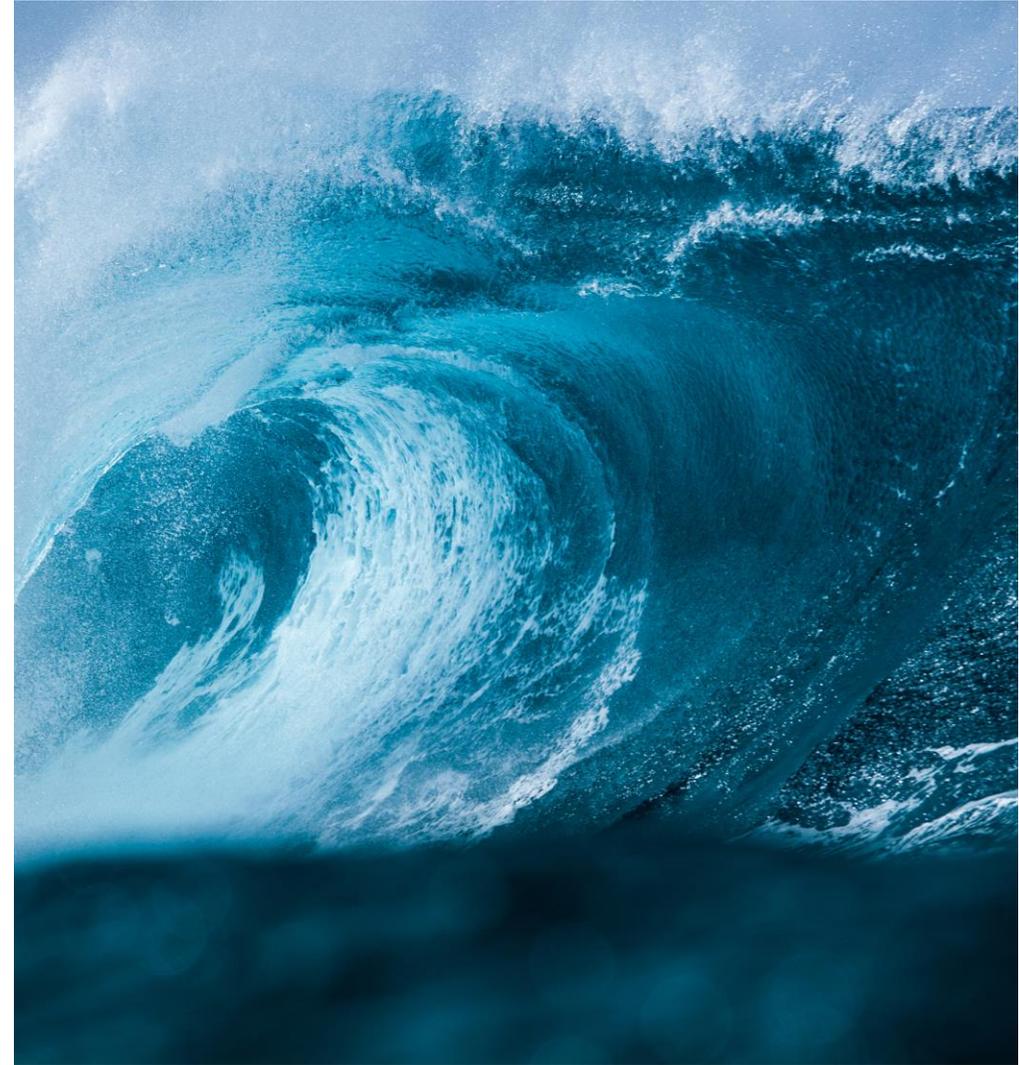
Bringing it all together
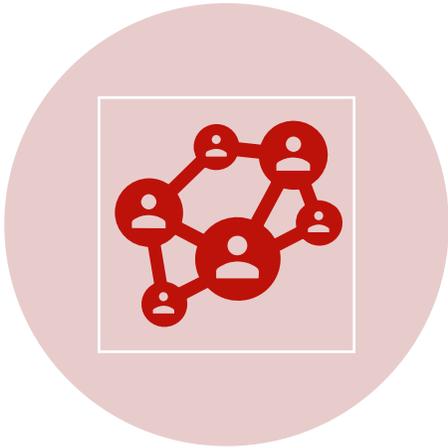
RELATIONSHIPS

ALIGNING LEARNING
EXPERIENCES

COLLABORATIVE
EVALUATION

My question for you...

What is your key takeaway from this session? What is your 'aha'?

Time for conversation

Contact: claire.hay@ufv.ca
LinkedIn: @clairehay