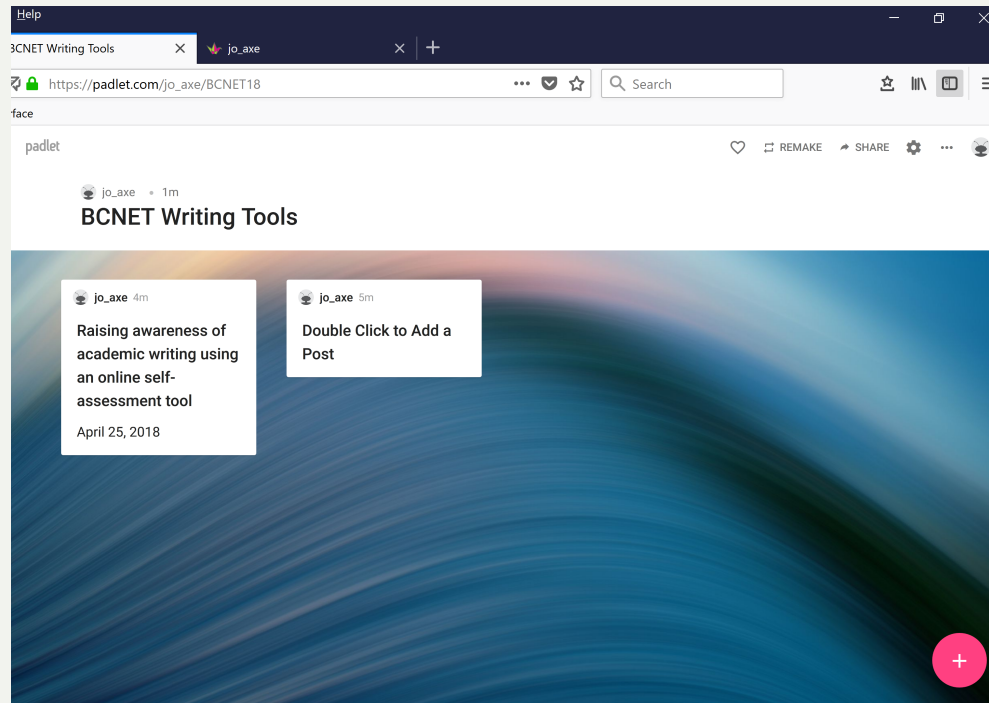


# While You Wait...

## Join our Padlet



[https://padlet.com/jo\\_axe/BCNET18](https://padlet.com/jo_axe/BCNET18)

# Raising awareness of academic writing using an online self-assessment tool

BCNET Conference  
April 25, 2018

Dr. Jo Axe  
Dr. Elizabeth Childs  
Mr. Keith Webster



# Acknowledgement of traditional lands

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are very grateful for the opportunity to live and learn here.



# Introductions



**Jo Axe**

PhD  
Professor and Director  
School of Education and  
Technology



**Elizabeth Childs**

PhD  
Associate Professor and  
MALAT Program Head  
School of Education and  
Technology



**Keith Webster**

MA  
Instructional Designer  
Centre for Teaching and  
Educational Technologies



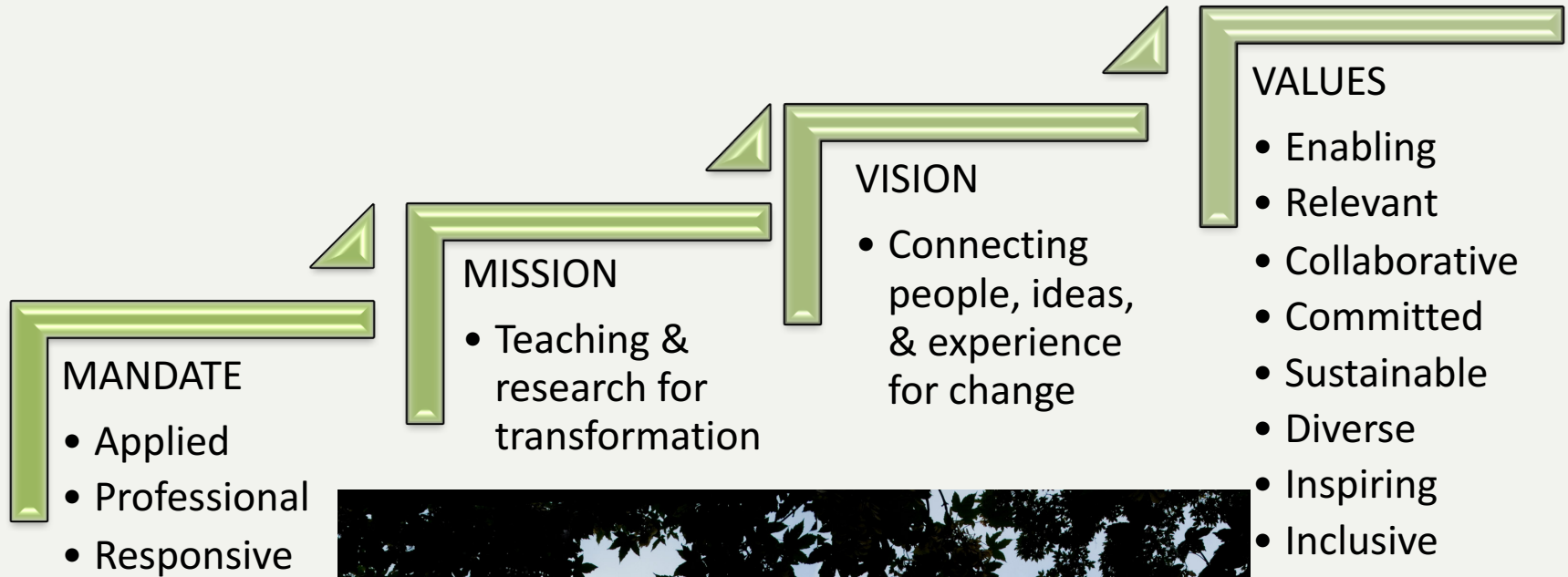
# Overview of Session

- Background and Context
- Tool Selection Criteria
- Small group examination of writing tools
- Large group feedback and discussion
- Student feedback on writing tool used
- Next steps and brainstorming

# Takeaways...

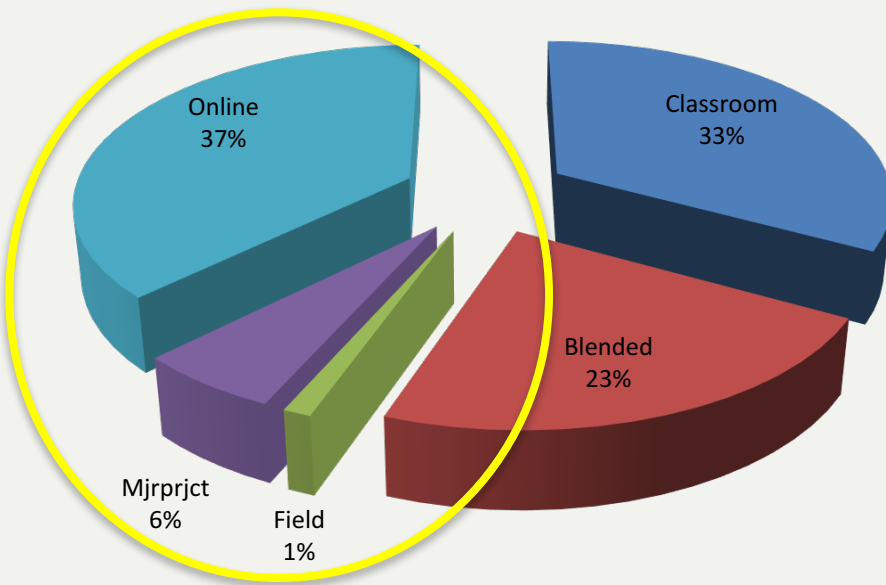
- Appreciate the value of a self-assessment tool for academic writing
- Understand the key considerations for choosing a writing tool
- Reflect on the impact of a tool for improving student writing

# Royal Roads University Context





# Course Delivery Modes



## Key

Online	Fully online course
Mjrprjct	Projects & theses
Field	Field work & work placement
Blended	Blend of online & classroom

- Most programs = on-campus residencies plus online courses; some programs are offered fully online
- Much of RRU learning happens beyond F2F classrooms

# Background and Program Context



# Background

- Axe, J., Bell, T., and Charlebois, K. (2013). Exploring students' self-perceptions of their academic writing research project
- Surveys sent 429
- Participants 122
- Themes included mixed impact; anxiety; lack of confidence; feedback; growth; teamwork
- How can we help: coaching; clear expectations; examples; feedback; proofreading; resources; training; ***support***



# Little or no Effect

“I'm not at all intimidated by it, but that is mostly likely because I did academic writing with my undergrad...” (77)



© Royal Roads University

# Positive

“In learning appropriate writing styles, I notice that my participation in class is clear and concise; I am able to articulate what I am thinking in a strong way.” (74)



© Royal Roads University

# Anxiety



© Royal Roads University

“It makes it very  
intimidating to sit down  
and write something. I  
always worry that it won’t  
be good enough.” (18)



# Lack of Confidence



© Royal Roads University

“I think it effects it alot I am less willing to throw myself out there because I am worried about my skill level with writing.” (7)

# Feedback



© Dahlquist-Axe Design Ltd

“I am highly unmotivated when I do not get good feedback about my poor academic writing skills.” (65)

# Growth

“I work hard to write effectively and as required for the MBA program. I need to work harder.” (98)



© Royal Roads University



# Teamwork



© Royal Roads University

“My confidence in teamwork is very low as I compare myself to others and feel incompetent.” (25)

# MALAT Program



© Samantha Wood

- Working professionals
- Majority between ages of 31 and 60
- Average age approximately 40
- Technology adept
- Masters level
- Online and blended pathways merge in 3<sup>rd</sup> course
- Two-year program

# Program Context

- Pre-admission – English language assessment, but no writing pre-requisite
- Focus on academic writing in the program learning outcomes
- Student experienced with writing in a professional context (i.e. briefs, reports and white papers)

# Assessment Context

- The program learning outcomes require writing
  - PLO # 1. Communicate and synthesize information and arguments at the graduate level.
- Academic papers required in the program
- Focus on critical thinking and writing
- Some students still struggle to make the distinction between professional writing and academic writing



# The Writing Assessment Tools



**Royal Roads**  
UNIVERSITY

# Tool Selection Process

- Worked with representatives from Centre for Teaching and Educational Technologies, School of Education and Technology and the MA in Learning and Technology program to define selection criteria for tools
- Worked to identify potential tools that might meet the need
- Reviewed the tools against the criteria
- Chose tool based on selection criteria and timing

# Tool Selection Criteria

- Ease of use
- Aimed at graduate level writing – focus on grammar, paragraph structure
- Cost for individual student
- Use on multiple devices
- Types of results provided
- Data analytics gathered
- Universal design principles – accessibility
- Time to complete
- Ability to stop/start
- Other...

# Potential Tools Identified

- PEG Writing Scholar
- English Language Writing Tool
- AWA Diagnostic Assessment
- Pearson My Writing Lab
- Writer's Diet
- Grammarly



# Your turn....



# Small Group Activity

- In small groups, take 10 minutes and explore the writing tool assigned
- Record your observations in our Padlet:
  - Ease of use
  - Potential to flag areas for improvement in writing
  - What did not work for you?
  - What did work for you?  
What additions would improve it?

[https://padlet.com/jo\\_axe/BCNET18](https://padlet.com/jo_axe/BCNET18)

# Large Group Discussion

What worked?

What was challenging?

# Large Group Discussion

What additional themes emerged?



# MALAT Pilot



# Tool Implementation

- English Language Assessment Tool open access
- Not mandatory
- Invitation was sent to 15 students in the fully online cohort
- Will be offered again in July for the blended cohort


# Brainstorm...

- What tools to you know of that we have not accessed?
- How can we provide students with a paragraph self assessment tool?

# Next Steps...

- Use self –assessment tool in upcoming MALAT program intake in July
- Request students write a paragraph to be assessed/feedback provided
- RRU writing centre workshop



A serene sunset scene over a calm body of water. The sky is a mix of soft blues, oranges, and yellows, with the sun's glow reflecting on the water's surface. In the foreground, a wooden pier with a metal railing extends from the right side into the water. The pier's structure is reflected in the still water below. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Thank you, we would love  
to hear from you

[jo.axe@royalroads.ca](mailto:jo.axe@royalroads.ca)

[elizabeth.childs@royalroads.ca](mailto:elizabeth.childs@royalroads.ca)

[keith.webster@royalroads.ca](mailto:keith.webster@royalroads.ca)