

OLTC Report: PBI379 Neuropsychology

Preface

From July 26th to August 6th, students from Acadia, Bishop's, Mount Allison, and St. Francis Xavier completed two weeks of intensive training for the Online Learning and Technology Consultant (OLTC) Program. These students were provided with foundational training in pedagogy and edu-technologies in order to work with course instructors as co-designers for 2021-22 courses. As part of their training for this work, they were grouped into Student Working Groups (SWG) and worked with a Faculty Mentor (FM) to test their new knowledge and skills when collaborating in a Student-as-Partners model. At the end of the orientation, they shared what they created with their FM, other faculty members, all the OLTCs, and other community members; they also produced written reports that are a testament to the phenomenal work they created during their orientation and how the OLTC Program can help your in-person, online, hybrid, or hyflex courses, if you choose to [join us on this innovative and learner-centered journey](#).

Below you find the report from Donovan Faraoni and Zoe Ingleby from Bishop's University who worked with Professor Jasmeen Sidhu. I thank Donovan and Zoe for sharing their work as OLTCs and Professor Sidhu for allowing us a glimpse behind the curtain of her course.

~ Matthew Dunleavy, Program Director, OLTC Program

Intro

You don't know what you don't know. This couldn't have been more true when talking about my courses. I was struggling to find ways to improve my courses and pedagogy. With the help of Zoe and Donovan, I was able to get new perspectives on new assignments and technical structures. I feel like my courses have improved due to their insights, and I am grateful for the opportunity to improve! I thank them and the OLTC team for their dedication and passion for pedagogy.

~ Professor Jasmeen Sidhu, Bishop's University

Report

Working with Professor Jasmeen Sidhu was an absolute pleasure and her role as a faculty mentor was greatly appreciated. We are the two newest members of the OLTC team at Bishop's University and, during our orientation, we have been helping Professor Sidhu create a more interactive Moodle page for her PBI379 Neuropsychology class. Going into these meetings, our project goals were to take everything we had learned not only from our Moodle training sessions but also a pedagogical standpoint of why our suggestions were relevant to the class design.

From the start we thought it was important to understand the story of the Professor Sidhu's class. The information we gathered from our initial meeting was that the goal is to see if the students enrolled in the class are really interested in working in clinical neuropsychology and to help them understand what a job in this field entails. Professor Sidhu offers a really great classroom environment where students get the opportunity to try out real world experience within neuropsychology to see if this is something they could see themselves doing in the future.

Needs Assessment

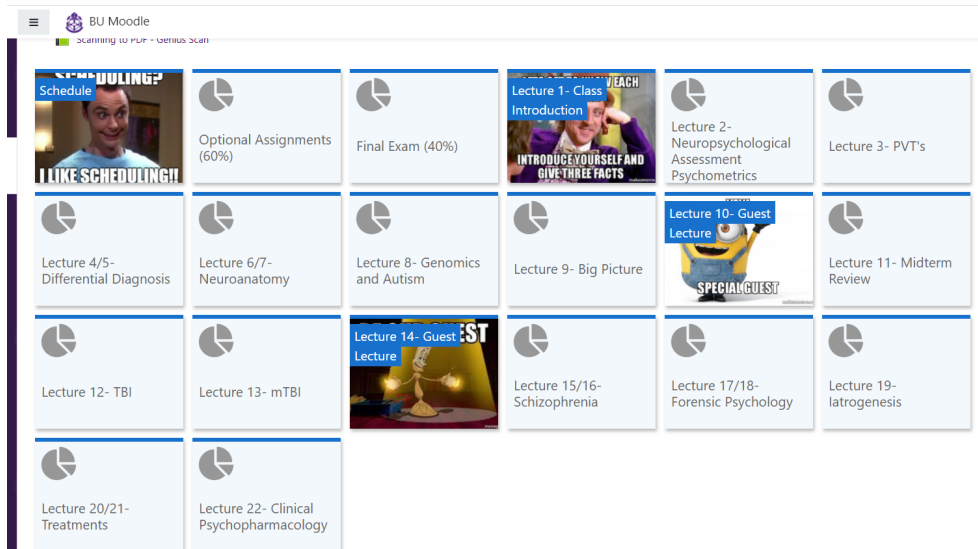
Going into our initial needs assessment meeting with Professor Sidhu, we prioritized listening to what she liked about her course, what areas she wanted to improve on, and what new ideas she wanted to implement into her Moodle page. After our initial meeting, we re-read all our notes and identified three areas that we wanted to implement changes to, as well as three areas that did not need any improvements.

What is Already Working:	Areas to Improve:
Effective use of forums for discussion.	Cosmetics of Moodle landing page.
Transparency and explicit details given in syllabus that allow students to understand what is expected from them and how to achieve each grade level.	New resources and assignment types.
UDL classroom, many choices, flexibility, variety in assignment types.	Syllabus and accessibility.

Cosmetic Recommendations

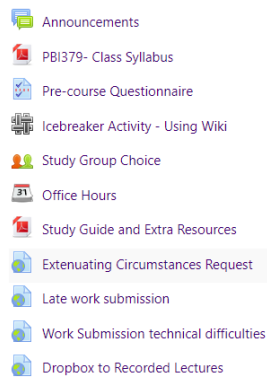
For cosmetics on the landing page, we created four suggestions that related to Professor Sidhu's wishes as well as our personal inputs.

- Our first suggestion was to use a "Tile" format to display each week/topic as a way to declutter the home page. We thought this was a great way to incorporate fun memes and pertinent images onto the homepage as well as make everything easy to find. We chose this design because it keeps the homepage easy to navigate, allows for many files to be hidden into bigger files, and allows the Moodle page to be kept short.

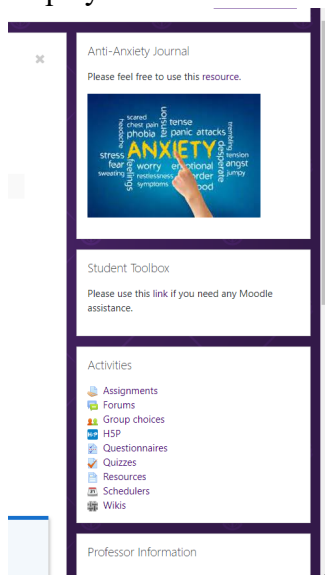


- Our second suggestion was to have all the most important documents such as the syllabus, group choice, announcements and classroom policies at the top of the page. This

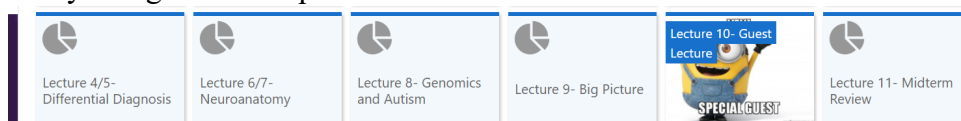
suggestion comes from our accessibility training where the most important information is easy to find and the things that are used most are easily accessible.



- Our third suggestion was the use of blocks along the right-hand side of the Moodle page. We wanted to have the professor's introduction, the new student toolbox, and an anti-anxiety journal available here. The anti-anxiety journal was a new feature Professor Sidhu wanted to add to her course and we thought this was the best location to add it. We think this is really important because it shows that as a professor, she is aware and cares about the student's mental health. We recommended the use of blocks because it helps keep the landing page organized and allows the additional resources for students to be displayed in an accessible format that is easy to find.



- Our final cosmetic suggestion was including the lecture name alongside the lecture number. We chose this for organization reasons but also for student inclusion reasons. As we know each student organizes their notes differently so where some students might remember a certain topic by the lecture number some might associate them with the lecture title. Having both available helps keep students organized and allows them to easily navigate each topic.



Resource Recommendations

Another important point brought up during our initial meeting was the potential of using new platforms for assignment submissions as well as additional study resources. After discussing many options, we decided on the following four: Flipgrid, Mural, H5P, and MotorLab.

- We chose **Flipgrid** because it is a great way for students to engage in conversation as well as submit video clips. We chose this because Professor Sidhu really likes having an option for video submissions and discussion is also an important element in her class. We thought this resource took away the nerves from making a post on a social media page but still allowed video content where other students could interact with each other.
- Another resource we chose was **Mural** which we thought could be a good resource for class discussion or guest lectures where students could anonymously post their questions and comments. We chose this as it would reduce the student worries about being wrong which Professor Sidhu brought up as a point of concern in the class last semester. We felt this platform could eliminate this risk.
- Another resource we suggested was the use of different features on **H5P**. We particularly thought that the interactive video function as well as the flash cards would be of interest. We suggested both of these as study resources after our workshop in Universal Design for Learning as it would allow students different studying alternatives. As well, we thought this would be an interesting platform as it relates to her wishes of having more student interaction in the class where she would be able to embed formative assessment.
- Lastly, as an additional source, we suggested using **Motorlab**. Zoe has used Motorlab in a Motor Learning and Control class to observe stimuli, reaction time, and other experiments linked to the processing time of the brain. We thought this could be helpful for this Neuropsychology course as an interactive way for students to be engaged in real life experiences.

Accessibility Recommendations

Professor Sidhu already implements many accessibility features to make her classroom an equitable space for learning, but we wanted to provide her with some new resources and features we thought could be helpful. The aim was to ensure that all our suggestions above were met while maintaining an equitable classroom where everyone has access to every available resource in the class. Some of our suggestions included using the closed captions, immersive reader, and large print so that all lectures and other resources are accessible for all students. We also think it is important to exhibit assessment options not only in the text version of the syllabus but to provide a chart, which Professor Sidhu had utilized in another course, showing all the possible assignment combinations available for the optional assignments.

Lastly, we felt it important to clearly show learning goals not only for the semester but also lecture objectives. We think this will make it easier for students to gauge their individual understanding as well as know when they need additional help. This relates back to our training about assessments and allowing students to individually reflect on if they understand the new concepts rather than using a quiz to monitor understanding. We feel reflection practice is a great addition to the class.

Recommendation Meeting

The first recommendations meeting confirmed the need for adaptability on everyone's part and

enabled us to flag some of the initial recommendations for follow-up and set others aside. It is important to note that the pedagogical function of some of the new resources evolved in light of the feedback from the meeting, notably in the case of using H5P flash cards to answer the question “what did you take from this course?” Most initial recommendations that did pass the second meeting remained the same in terms of scope and intention. The result of deliberation after this second meeting produced three main follow-up points:

- Use of the H5P flash cards for student feedback, as a trackable feature of Moodle, and the use of H5P-enabled video quizzes to build real time comprehension checks into what is currently posted as video content on Instagram. This offers convenience and accessibility advantages, given that it is mounted on Moodle rather than an external social media platform that students are not guaranteed to have access to.
- The use of Flipgrid for optional video assignments was discussed as a way to meet several demands, notably the ability to use video content to stimulate discussion that enables students to see each other’s work and comment. It helps that Flipgrid is available with existing Teams credentials, which makes accessibility easier. Additionally, features such as closed captioning are already built into Flipgrid.
- As discussed in the meeting, the use of a tile format was found to be beneficial. It enables easy navigation, and serves as a place to put visually distinct elements on the page, such as the memes that are currently on the syllabus. A related aspect is grouping all optional assignments into one tile, for the sake of clarity and accessibility.

On top of these recommendations, further discussion about priorities that first emerged in the initial needs assessment led to several additional recommendations:

- We used blocks on the right-hand side of the Moodle page to present vital information for the course, such as Professor Information, Anxiety Journal, and Office Hours. We also created an interactive syllabus that has links to the assignments. The interactive syllabus would provide a second way to navigate the page.
- Using Q&A forums that require a student to post before being able to participate as a way to balance competing concerns about the effect of student anonymity on positive participation and issues with students not participating due to fear of being incorrect. This builds on already highly effective uses of Moodle forums and can only improve the course.
- A desire to have optional study groups based on Moodle was voiced, with the option to either form a group with known or unknown peers, depending on what a student is comfortable with. This will likely require a combination of Moodle’s polling capability and the Group Choice function, in order to achieve the desired result. It will provide access to peer-reinforced learning that will continue to build learning outcomes.

Thus, the process of preparing these recommendations showed the importance of two characteristics for this role: adaptability and being able to interpret dynamic circumstances that shape the requirement. This approach will be applied to future instances where recommendations are to be prepared.

Conclusion

The process of preparing recommendations for the PBI379 course was marked by several key steps, which all required attentive listening, problem solving, and adaptability to respond to feedback. Since this course already uses a range of tools on Moodle effectively, a primary focus became the use of new Moodle resources and external resources to better serve students and Professor Sidhu's needs.