

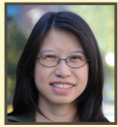
## Our Team



**PETER ARTHUR, Ph.D.**  
*Director*  
250.807.9207 | SCI 200B  
peter.arthur@ubc.ca



**JANINE HIRTZ, M.A. (Education)**  
*e-Learning Instructional Support Specialist*  
250.807.9133 | SCI 200E  
janine.hirtz@ubc.ca



**VANIA CHAN, M.A. (Candidate)**  
*e-Learning Instructional Support Specialist*  
250.807.9408 | SCI 200D  
vania.chan@ubc.ca



**HEATHER HURREN, M.Ed.**  
*Manager, Academic Development*  
250.807.9288 | SCI 200C  
heather.hurren@ubc.ca



**LYNNE MCPHERSON**  
*Communication & Teaching Evaluation Coordinator*  
250-807-8845 | SCI 263  
lynne.mcpherson@ubc.ca



**JOHN PARRY, M.Ed.**  
*Coordinator, Graduate & Teaching Assistant Program*  
250.807.9316 | SCI 259  
john.parry@ubc.ca



**TRICIA LALLI, B.A.**  
*Centre for Teaching & Learning Support*  
250.807.9293 | SCI 200  
tricia.lalli@ubc.ca

[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/ctl](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/ctl)



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## Centre for Teaching and Learning



## Ending the Semester on the Right Note

Just as the first class and first impressions are important, so are the final stages of a course. There are many things to think about and prepare for as you finish the course:

- Did the students learn all of the intended material and skills?
- Have I prepared my students for the next stages/courses in their program?
- Have I graded and returned all the work of my students?
- Have I prepared my students for a final assessment?
- Was this a good experience for my students and myself?
- Will I teach this course again? If so, are there some adjustments that need to be made?

It is a good idea to return to the objectives of the course and review them with your students. Students also find it helpful for review sessions to be organized if there is an upcoming final exam. One method of review for students to do on their own or with a partner is to create a concept map for the

course, outlining what they view as the important concepts and related ideas.

Concept maps are a good tool for fitting all the pieces of the course together in a visual manner. It will demonstrate how the students see the content fitting together and you can clarify any misconceptions that arise in the concept maps. Depending on their program of study, they may be able to relate future or past courses to the concept map for your course.

Concept maps are just one form of review that can be used at the end of a course. It is useful for students to have some type of formal review done so that they can connect all the learning together and discover any missing connections prior to a final assessment.

Preparation for a final assessment can be done by the instructor or students or teaching assistants can manage study groups or exam preparation sessions.

Exam preparation time can enter the online field with online discussions or online practice problems.

In reflecting on the assessments for the course, try to finalize any issues that exist related to grades that students are seeking. It is important for you and your students to end the course feeling that assessments were done fairly. This may mean that you have to increase your office hours at the end of the term or make yourself available during class time to sort out any remaining issues.

Ted Panitz (1995) makes the final examination a teaching tool by asking students to take it in two stages, first, individually, and then with help from other class members.

**The Centre for Teaching and Learning will be pleased to assist you further should you wish to explore this topic.**

He has seen students make breakthroughs in understanding material they missed during the semester. This method of examination assesses the how well students work together to solve problems, a course goal omitted in a traditional format.

During your final meeting with the students, let them know of possible career paths, programs, research areas that your course fits to enable them to see the benefits and possible opportunities that exist beyond the last class.

In a survey of college faculty from a variety of disciplines at two different institutions demonstrated that faculty members typically end their courses with final projects, papers, and review sessions (Eggleston & Smith, 2001). Some faculty did more: approximately 42 percent reported that they took the time to say good-bye to their students, and 30 percent responded that they tried to leave their students with some final words of wisdom; At the same institutions, 90 percent of the students reported that they would appreciate more closure on their courses.

## **Centre for Teaching and Learning**

The Centre for Teaching and Learning at UBC's Okanagan campus promotes and supports excellence in teaching and learning . The Centre provides campus-wide support for all models of teaching and learning, including online learning.

### **It is our Mission:**

*"To lead, support and promote teaching and learning excellence, innovation and scholarship at the UBC Okanagan campus."*