

---

**Agenda**

---

Chair: Maureen Wideman

Committee: Alyson Seale      Barbara Salingre      Alison Prichard Orr      Chris Leach  
Cheryl Van Nes      Chris Humphries      Seanna Takacs      Jodi Noble  
Tia Noble      Korina Gratton      Karsten Renaerts      Kulwant Gill  
Les Stagg      Mark Goudsblom      Patti Wilson      Nancy Norman  
Rilla Apostolakis      Ted Zak      Thanh Ma      Kirsten Trustham  
Mark Pearson

---

1. Special Speaker – Kim Gemmel
2. Approve agenda
3. Approve minutes – Oct 5, 2016
4. Scanning the University for Accessibility Issues – Seanna Takacs
5. Rick Hansen Foundation – Maureen Wideman & Seanna Takacs
6. Accessibility Software – Seanna Takacs

**Next meeting: Feb 8, 2017, 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm, AB A225 & CEP 1369**

## Minutes

---

**Chair:** Maureen Wideman

**Present:** Rilla Apostolakis, Seanna Takacs, Cheryl Van Nes, Deirdre Miles, Jodi Noble, Mark Goudsblom, Korina Gratton, Kulwant Gill, Nancy Norman, Barbara Salingre, Kirsten Trustham, Ted Zak, Chris Leach, Patti Wilson.

**Regrets:** Eddie Campbell, Alyson Seale

---

**1. Welcome and approve agenda**

- a. Add business arising from the previous minutes

**All approved.**

**2. Approve minutes – May 18, 2016**

Deirdre Miles reported on agenda item 4.1 concerning the letter from a high school student who will be attending UFV in the Fall 2016. Deirdre has been working very hard with facilities and others to make sure all the needs for this student are covered and things are going very well.

**All approved**

**3. Membership: Co-chair**

Maureen Wideman reported that Seanna Takacs has accepted to sit as co-chair for the AAC. If anyone else is willing to sit as co-chair, please email Maureen Wideman. Maureen thanked Seanna for stepping forward to help out.

**4. Abstract Thinking – Seanna Takacs**

Seanna gave a presentation on Cognition and Concepts. (pgs. 4-19) She reported that it helps the “why” when we are teaching and providing services to students. If you have questions or comments, please email Seanna [seanna.takacs@ufv.ca](mailto:seanna.takacs@ufv.ca)

**5. UFV’s Accommodations Policy (pgs. 20-23) – Seanna Takacs**

Seanna reported that she is making some changes to the policy because of the shift in the field of diagnostic markers. She acknowledges that disability is a part of diversity and the disabilities need to be embraced. The main focus she would like to bring out in the policy is that faculty, DRC and the students are all involved in creating an appropriate and rewarding experience for the student. Included in the changes will be a section on the responsibilities of the DRC and the students. Students need to be clear on what they are supposed to do in the areas of self-disclosure and self-advocacy.

**6. Teaching & Learning Accessibility Resources** – Maureen Wideman  
Maureen reported that Teaching & Learning hired a couple students last summer who created accessibility resources for the TLC website. Suvneet Bains built the Teaching & Learning Toolkit, see link here , and Carl Bols created short tutorials, see link here <http://www.ufv.ca/tlc/resources-for-teaching-and-learning/universal-design/>

**7. Goals for Upcoming Year** – Maureen Wideman  
Maureen suggested that the committee establish goals over the next year. There is money available to Post Secondary Institutions from the Provincial Government to make improvements towards physical environments.

The committee came up with the following two goals:

**Goal 1** – Find out how accessible our environment is by taking a walk through of all spaces on UFV campuses. Make sure to take notes while walking and report back to the committee.

**Action item:** Ted Zak and Mark Goudsblom will do the walkthrough on the CEP campus.

**Goal 2** – Offer a two-day mental health 1<sup>st</sup> aid course. This can be done on two consecutive days or on two Saturdays.

**Action Item:** Ruby Ord will send out an email to all departments to see who is interested in this.

**8. Other Business**

Safety Measures Around Campus – it was brought to our attention during the last meeting that there is no bylaw in Abbotsford for refuge areas in buildings. Currently, UFV does not have a plan for students with mobility issues in an emergency.

Maureen Wideman drafted up a letter asking for clarification around plans for areas of refuge and asked the committee for their feedback. With the input from the committee, she will finalize the letter and send it to Mark Goudsblom. Ted Zak has offered to be available to help once the letter is submitted and he will act as the go-to person.

**The meeting adjourned 4:37 pm**

# Abstract Thinking

Seanna Takacs, PhD

Acting Coordinator, Disability Resource Centre

# Cognition and Concepts

- ▶ **Cognition** is a term that loosely refers to the way we perceive, process and organize information.
- ▶ We create **mental representations** based on all the linguistic, experiential, and sensory input we're exposed to.
- ▶ In turn, we create **concepts** - ways of grouping experiences, things, ideas; deciding and understanding how some things are like/not like other things.

# Concrete & Abstract: Early Years

- ▶ Very young toddlers exhibit concept formation around the structure and function of concrete objects: “Dog!”; “Mama!”; “John blanket”.
- ▶ However, the apprenticeship in abstract thinking likewise begins early as we use language to refer to concepts that cannot be seen: “Oh, she’s a friendly lady!”; “It’s raining cats and dogs!”; “What a nice day!”



# Concrete Thinking

- ▶ Concrete thinking is reasoning using observable facts, events, objects, and examples.
- ▶ Everyone engages in some degree of concrete thinking.
- ▶ The degree to which we think abstractly varies between situations and subject matter but also according to our level of fatigue, mood, and how cognitively taxed we are.

# Abstract Thinking

- ▶ When we are thinking abstractly, we are reasoning in terms of **unobservable generalizations**.
- ▶ thinking symbolically;
- ▶ using metaphor;
- ▶ perceiving analogies and relationships;
- ▶ detecting patterns.

# The Transfer Problem

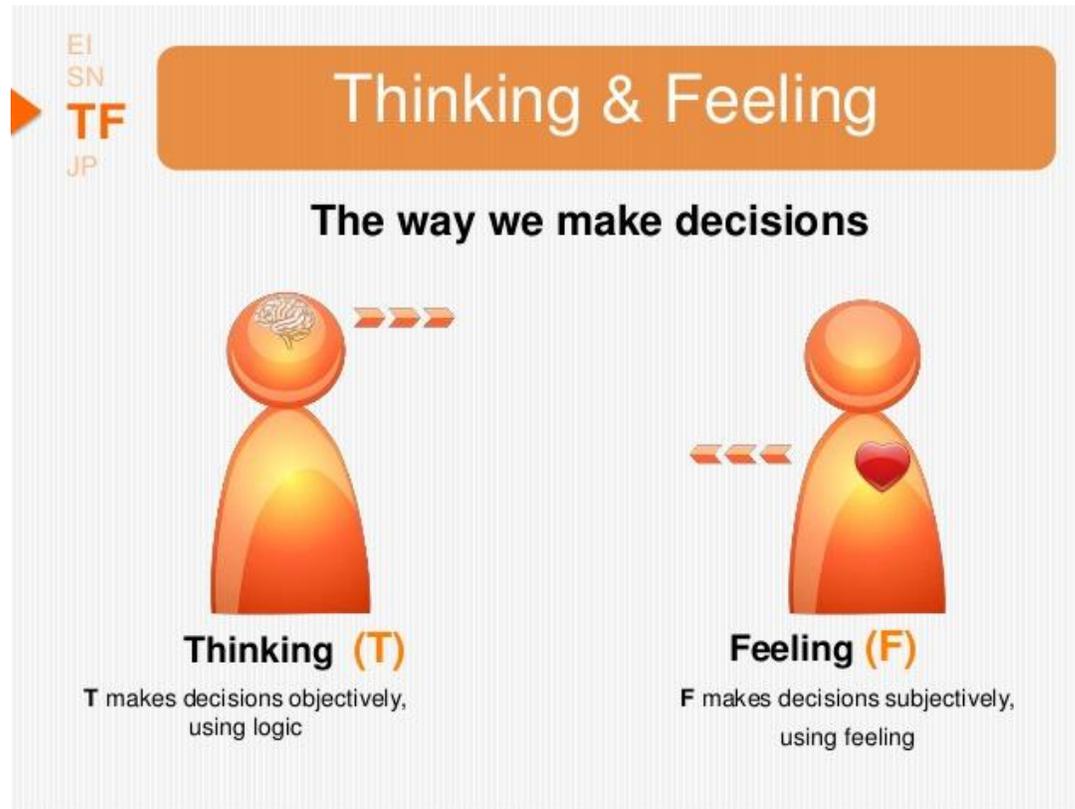
- ▶ The ability to think abstractly is (in part) the cognitive function that allows us to engage in TRANSFER: the ability to use concepts, information, and skills in one setting and apply them in a similar setting.
- ▶ Does learning music support math education?
- ▶ What do shark fins and prefixes have in common?
  
- ▶ A student who is thinking concretely will see that he will learn about gangs in Criminology and will learn about social loafing in Social Psychology; the student who is thinking abstractly will see that systems theory can explain both.



# Abstract Thinking in Post-Secondary

- ▶ Universities are in the business of teaching abstract thinking.
- ▶ *Principle, concept, framework, theory, paradigm, system*
- ▶ It is **normal** that they oscillate between the concrete and the abstract.

# Example: Are you a Thinker or Feeler?



# Difficulties with Abstract Thinking

- ▶ Difficulties can be tricky to recognise.
- ▶ *“I listen in class but the instructor goes so fast.”*
- ▶ *“The instructor needs to do a better job of explaining what he’s saying.”*
- ▶ *“You’re not being clear - I need more examples.”*
- ▶ They are struggling to create, hold, and manipulate mental representations.
- ▶ In turn, the student will struggle to generalize their knowledge, see relationships, interpret metaphor, and make inferences.
- ▶ This can yield a “dead end” feeling which is frustrating for both student and instructor.

# How to Help?



# Move Between Concrete and Abstract

- ▶ Provide (more) concrete examples, scenarios, and situations for students to analyze.
- ▶ Deep analysis and synthesis might be required for students to acquire a *felt sense* of an abstract concept.
- ▶ Abstract thinking takes practice and that practice should be explicit and deliberate.
- ▶ Learning to move fluidly between concrete and abstract is something students often need to get comfortable with; to move into a space of feeling comfortably uncomfortable as they push boundaries and ask increasingly challenging questions.

# See Analogies

- ▶ Be explicit in helping students understand that a good test of whether they have mastered an abstract concept is whether they can see analogies between the concept in question and another presented in the course.
- ▶ How is authoritative parenting like prison?
- ▶ How is it unlike prison?
- ▶ Can authoritative parenting be described as an institution?
- ▶ Why is teaching good manners a hallmark of authoritative parenting?

# Devise and Manipulate Metaphors

- ▶ A metaphor is a linguistic device that implies a relationship between two objects that otherwise might not be associated.
- ▶ By analyzing metaphor, students engage in a deep process of compare and contrast which helps them sift out essential conceptual features.
- ▶ Is ecological impact best represented by the term *footprint*?
- ▶ How is cognition less like computer processing and more like an algorithm?
- ▶ In what ways can the concept of love be likened to the rising sun? If not the rising sun, to what might we liken love?

# Reason from Lower Level to Higher Level Abstractions

- ▶ Abstract concepts exist along a continuum from low level to high level.
- ▶ The higher the level of abstraction, the more removed the concept is from its concrete correlates.
- ▶ For example, *5km run* is a lower level of abstraction than *healthy exercise*.
- ▶ Low levels of abstraction incorporate specific details while high levels of abstraction are more diffuse. **Helping students develop ways of moving between levels is crucial.**
- ▶ For high level abstractions, demonstrate how students should gather data, specify instances, observe the ways language can conceal information and how to thresh out detail.
- ▶ For low level abstractions, have students practice making connections between other low level abstractions and how they might be grouped into larger, broader categories, both within and across disciplines.

# Observe the Ways Knowledge is Structured.

- ▶ Knowledge can be apprehended in terms of structures: opposites, hierarchies, cycles, reciprocity, dependence, or overlapping features.
- ▶ For instance, when we ask whether serial killers are evil or mentally ill, we are implying opposition; a choice must be made.
- ▶ Demonstrate explicitly how we can model questions and answers in terms of these structures.
- ▶ What if serial killing is a question of overlapping features instead of an either/or proposition?
- ▶ Have students list assumptions, underlying norms, historical precedence, and find biases which produce knowledge structures.

## ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

---

<b>Approval Authority</b>	President
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Vice President, Students and Enrolment Management
<b>Related Policies / Legislation</b>	Board policy direction Student Services, Student Activities and Associations (BPD-230) BC Human Rights Code Chapter 210, Section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to foster diversity, inclusiveness, and student success at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) by ensuring that UFV complies with the legal duty to provide academic accommodation.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all students with disabilities enrolled at the university. Policy compliance encompasses instructors, other employees, contractors, and students at UFV.

### DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Accommodation:** Providing support for the purpose of accessing services, courses, or courses of study, programs, making exceptions to any regulations, policies, or standards of practice, or making modifications to physical environments to the extent necessary to address discrimination against a student based on any Protected Grounds.

**Disability:** A student with a disability is a person who

- Has been diagnosed by an appropriate professional as having: a mental health impairment; physical impairment, neurological impairment; learning disorder; or sensory impairment, any/all of which may be permanent or temporary and is likely to continue and may significantly interfere with educational pursuits; and
- Experiences functional restrictions or limitations in their ability to perform the range of life's activities; and
- May experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper their full and self-directed participation in life.

**Protected Grounds:** The areas in which individuals are protected by human rights legislation (e.g., gender, race, disability).

**Student:** Includes an applicant for admission as well as a person who has been admitted and is eligible to register in courses at UFV.

---

## **POLICY**

UFV recognizes and affirms the rights of persons with disabilities (permanent or temporary) who are academically qualified, to have full, fair, and equal access to all university services, programs, and facilities. The university will take all measures short of undue hardship to provide reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities and equal opportunity to allow them to succeed in their programs of study.

---

## **REGULATIONS**

In accordance with the BC Human Rights Code, reasonable academic accommodations must be provided to students with disabilities when the disability impairs the student's ability to fulfill essential requirements of a course or program.

The essential requirements of the course or program are the knowledge and/or skills that must be acquired in order to demonstrate that the student has successfully met the learning objectives, as established by the course instructor, of the course or program.

Academic accommodations must be requested from and approved by the Disability Resource Centre (DRC).

In some circumstances, the nature and degree of a disability may mean that no reasonable accommodation would enable an individual to perform the essential requirements of a course or program. Where no reasonable accommodation can be provided, the university may refuse admission in order to preserve the academic integrity (i.e., the essential requirements) of a course or program.

A person will not be presumed to be incapable of demonstrating the essential requirements of a course or program unless all reasonable options for accommodation have been considered and deemed insufficient.

If a student with a disability requests services and does not have documentation, the student may be accommodated, at the discretion of the Coordinator of Disability Services, for one semester, pending receipt of appropriate documents.

### **Confidentiality**

The university is concerned with protecting the privacy and confidentiality of students with disabilities while requiring sufficient information to reasonably evaluate and respond to the student's request for accommodation. When the accommodation process requires students to disclose information outside of DRC regarding the nature of their disability, needs and restrictions, that information shall be disclosed on a "need to know" basis only. All personal information disclosed to staff or faculty beyond DRC shall be governed by Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation.

### **Responsibilities of the Student**

Students are their own best advocates; a reasonable measure of self-reliance, information-gathering, communication with instructors and university staff is an important aspect of academic success.

---

Upon admission to UFV, a student with a disability who requires accommodation must supply documentation to the Coordinator of DRC or designate a minimum of four months before the beginning of the course or program they wish to take. The student is responsible for associated costs. Where it is not possible to provide four months' notice, students will be considered for accommodation as feasible. Changes to pre-arranged accommodations can only be considered if students make requests for accommodation to DRC in a timely manner.

In order to obtain the maximum benefit from accommodations and support services, students with disabilities are expected to:

- adhere to the policies and procedures for each DRC service accessed inclusive of classroom and exam accommodations;
- maintain a relationship with their instructors around course content, anticipated and actual difficulties with course/program content, and accommodations;
- participate in developing and implementing strategies related to their own academic success;
- understand that sufficient notice must be given to arrange academic accommodations;
- be willing to engage in dialogue around accommodation strategies that may take place across the university.

Should a student feel dissatisfied or wish to appeal a decision, the student should speak with the Coordinator of DRC. If the issue remains unresolved, the student may appeal the matter or decision in writing to the VP Students. The decision will be made by a committee assembled by the VP Students and Enrolment Management for the purpose of investigating the appeal. Decisions made by the committee will be final.

### **Responsibilities of the Disability Resource Centre**

The role of the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) is to

- assess student's documentation to determine whether or not there is a disability which can be accommodated and whether or not that documentation is adequate for the purpose of accommodation;
- provide accommodation plans;
- provide academic guidance, resources, and community services to students with disabilities.

To this end, the DRC will do the following:

- encourage all students with disabilities to register with DRC;
- approve appropriate academic accommodations for each individual registered with DRC;
- coordinate the requests for and provision of academic accommodations including classroom and exam accommodations;
- provide advice and assistance regarding accessibility issues;
- help students registered with DRC to access funding, psychological testing, technology, alternate format texts, and tutor support.

### **Providing Physical Access**

UFV will comply with the British Columbia Building Code regulations including physical access for persons with disabilities. When feasible, all facilities will incorporate principles of Universal Design. Other modifications such as adjustable laboratory stations, computer stations, and adaptive technology

will be installed as resources permit. A review of physical access and safety issues will be undertaken annually by Disability Resource Centre in consultation with the Director of Facilities.

---