



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY



LIFE-CHANGING FOR A BETTER WORLD

LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH MODEL

LIFE.CHANGING

OUR MISSION

Royal Roads University aims to provide learning, teaching and research that help people transform careers and lives by solving problems and creating opportunities in the world. As set out in our original Learning and Teaching Model (LTM) in 2013, we focus on

“producing citizens of the world who are passionate, determined and confident lifelong learners, integrated into a broad network of like-minded learners, and who can confidently manage and resolve complex, real-life problems.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Royal Roads University acknowledges that the campus is located on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lkwungen (Songhees) ancestors and families who have lived here for thousands of years.

This land has been part of the fabric of the life of Indigenous communities long before Hatley Castle was built, and it will be long into the future. It is with gratitude that we now learn and work here, where the past, present and future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff come together.

Hay'sxw'qa si'em!



GOALS OF THE UPDATED MODEL

This updated Learning Teaching and Research Model (LTRM) offers a snapshot of the values, worldviews, attributes and practices that reflect and shape the unique learning environment, culture, practice and service at Royal Roads. It aspires to inspire ongoing engagement, creativity, dialogue and debate among our wider community. We seek to continue the conversation about what we do, why we do it and how it contributes to living our shared values.

BASIS OF THIS MODEL

We used the original Learning and Teaching Model (LTM) for strategic and academic planning; in recruiting, training and developing faculty, staff and students; and most importantly, to generate discussions about what learning and teaching mean to us at Royal Roads. Given the shifting landscape in post-secondary education landscape, rapidly changing educational technology and new personnel joining Royal Roads, the time was right to formally re-examine and revise our model.





THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The theory grounding this model remains rooted, first, in social constructivism, which suggests that learning occurs as we interact with others and the world, and second, in social constructionism, which posits that we come to multiple, evolving understandings, attitudes and beliefs about the world through shared dialogue. Like its forerunner, this LTRM remains grounded in UNESCO's five pillars of learning: learning to know, to do, to live together, to be, and to transform oneself and society. This model adds references to our foundational notions of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity.

METHODOLOGY

This revision project provided the opportunity to evolve a framework for deep dialogue about concepts, practices, values and processes that make Royal Roads unique. As an action-research project, it details what the LTRM Working Group learned in 2016–17 through an extensive, iterative and inclusive process:

1

consulting Royal Roads staff, faculty, students, alumni and school advisory council members about their learning, teaching and research practices;

2

identifying trends in higher education that support and align with how we work together to create highly effective learning environments at Royal Roads;

3

refining the results into a model comprising key values and attributes that are grounded in pedagogical theory.

CORE CATEGORIES

This LTRM presents three core categories of values: *applied and authentic, caring and community-based, and transformational*. The acronym “**ACT**” expresses what our Royal Roads community perceives as unique and forward-thinking in our learning, teaching, research and services.

APPLIED & AUTHENTIC

- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary
- Experiential and participatory
- Flexible and individualized
- Outcomes-based
- Openly practiced

CARING & COMMUNITY-BASED

- Inclusive and diverse
- Community-based learning
- Supportive
- Team-based
- Co-creative
- Place- and virtual space-based

TRANSFORMATIONAL

- Socially innovative
- Respectful of Indigenous Peoples and traditions
- Impactful
- Reflective

REVISIONS IN THIS LTRM

Our extensive and diverse consultations reinforced core values expressed in our original LTM, while raising two new foundational points. First, the LTRM needs to recognize that research is the core of our mandate and work, and that our staff contribute services essential to everything we do. Second, it must communicate more clearly to our diverse stakeholders and audiences. Thus, this LTRM retains the essence of the original LTM and its eleven elements, while including research, service and our shared core values.



APPLIED AND AUTHENTIC

ACT



Applied refers to our focus on teaching, learning, research and service. It's about creating practical outcomes that make a positive difference in the world versus knowledge outcomes that are primarily of scholarly interest, with limited direct, tangible benefits.

Authentic refers to learning experiences that are applicable to or take place in real world settings. The elements in this category have complementary and overlapping characteristics, but they all promote the applied and authentic nature of our work.

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY

Interdisciplinary learning, teaching and research combine theories and methods from more than one discipline. These interact with a problem-solving focus. Transdisciplinary learning transcends the borders of fields of knowledge to address the complex problems of contemporary societies.

EXPERIENTIAL AND PARTICIPATORY

When we work together to create authentic teaching and learning environments, students can actively examine complex, real-world challenges that are grounded in and informed by research. Such learning is fuelled by curiosity, critical reflection and a willingness to experiment. It's an invitation to challenge and develop ideas in the process of constructing knowledge. When students use higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and application, they are engaged by the relevance of their learning and enriched by the enculturation to their chosen disciplines.

FLEXIBLE AND INDIVIDUALIZED

We use the terms 'flexible' and 'individualized' in three senses. First, Royal Roads has long practiced flexible assessment for admissions. We evaluate and recognize qualified applicants' demonstrable skills and knowledge gained through life and work experience. This flexibility creates a pathway for experienced professionals to access programs that enhance their practice. Second, these terms recognize that students increasingly seek opportunities to shape their studies to their needs. Royal Roads provides this through coursework that empowers students to work on real-world issues relevant to them. Third, they refer to the variety of settings and modes available to match students' individual needs, ranging from face-to-face, in home communities, on campus and fully online, to programs offered in a blended format.



OUTCOMES-BASED

At Royal Roads, curriculum is developed and delivered using program-wide learning outcomes created in consultation with school advisory councils that represent stakeholder groups. Fuelled by rich feedback from peers and faculty, this outcomes-based approach promotes focused, deep learning and transparent connections among real-world situations, coursework and assessment.

OPENLY PRACTICED

The trend toward using open educational resources that are readily accessible and shared digitally has become a movement of practices and pedagogies that encourage learning, teamwork and interactions with peers beyond the classroom through networked media. Royal Roads approaches open practices with an ethic of caring for others. Other elements of our LTRM, such as experiential and team-based learning, align well with open educational practices and can guide us as we renew our technologies and instructional approaches.

CARING AND COMMUNITY-BASED

ACT



Caring refers to our humanistic focus, our intention to build relationships that create a safe community, and our commitment to provide spaces for students to discuss the tensions that they face as they learn, change and grow. It is evidenced by establishing trusting, supportive connections and nurturing these relationships to support the success of all.

Community-based refers to collaborative learning communities that enact our view of adult learning as socially constructed. The elements in this category have complementary characteristics and work to create an environment that is supportive, impactful and future-oriented, all central to our work. In research, this embraces respect for cultural identities and protocols, authentic engagement with communities and participants, and the co-creation of knowledge.

INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE

Inclusive and diverse experiences enrich the community and learning of all in it. Royal Roads consciously works to create and prioritize safe places for sharing experiences and building a community that is respectful of our differences. This is a key foundation of our focus on cohort-based learning. Drawing on and encouraging the exploration of multiple and diverse perspectives inspires high-quality learning experiences. Royal Roads researchers seek to engage diverse communities and stakeholders in meaningful dialogue on issues relevant to their needs and interests.

LEARNING-COMMUNITY-BASED

Social learning is central to the overall experience at Royal Roads. Through on-campus programs and face-to-face residencies, our digital learning ecosystem and supporting social-network tools, learners are connected within and beyond their cohorts, communities and networks. Researchers consult widely with stakeholders from the formulation of a research topic through to its dissemination, exchange and mobilization. The resulting learning communities are an act of co-creation among learners, faculty, staff, researchers and members of the wider community. It recognizes the value of relationships and reflection, fosters the inclusion of diverse perspectives, promotes meaningful collaborations and contributions to professional networks, and extends the scope and impact of students' work.

SUPPORTIVE

Royal Roads adopts a supportive, caring approach to learning, teaching and research. This is continually recognized as our hallmark. The holistic, integrated and appreciative approach taken in all aspects of our university life supports the human at the centre. It occurs through support provided by Student Services to online and on-campus students, by the Centre for Teaching and Educational Technologies (CTET) to faculty and staff, and by the Office of Research to students and faculty.

TEAM-BASED

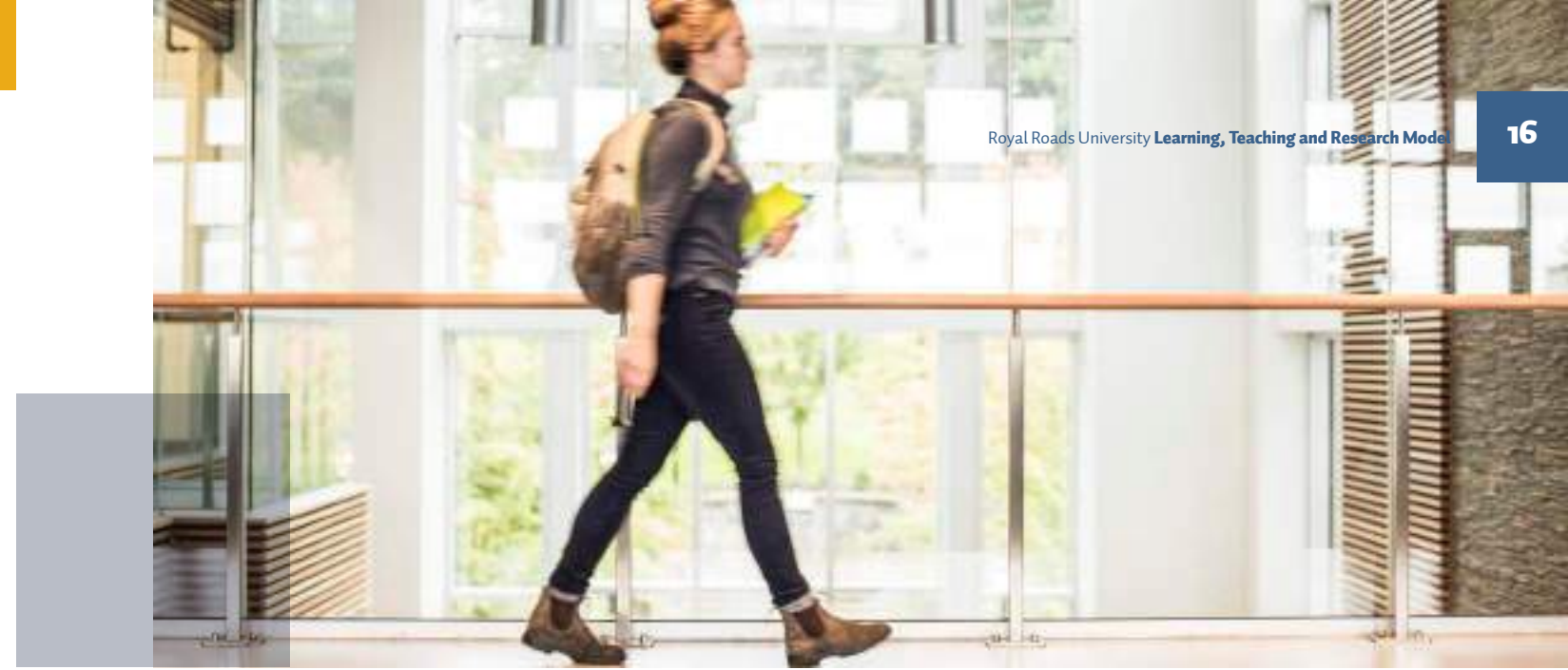
Team-based approaches encourage relevant experiences. Our purposeful emphasis on teams and their development by coaches supports the interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity of the teaching, learning, research and service work at Royal Roads. It also strengthens and sustains the learning communities formed, and extends the individual and collective impact of the learning and knowledge created. Students gain skills in collaboration, team facilitation and project management, as well as in how to work with people with multiple perspectives, abilities, personalities and cultural backgrounds. Research teams comprising faculty, staff and students take on complex, real-world challenges using multiple, diverse lenses.

CO-CREATIVE

At Royal Roads, learning, teaching and research are grounded in experiences, curriculum and knowledge that emerge through the involvement of many. Students learn as a community in innovative and often unpredictable ways, while researchers work with their stakeholders to create new knowledge. As they draw on the expertise provided by others, their individual and collective knowledge deepens.

PLACE- AND VIRTUAL SPACE-BASED

The place where Royal Roads resides has a rich natural and cultural heritage that we acknowledge by recognizing the ancestral lands of the Xwsepsum and Lkwungen Peoples. Its distinct mosaic of flora, fauna and sweeping views of sea and distant mountains testify to the majesty of this planet and engender deep awe and respect. Hatley Park National Historic Site reminds us that we also learn from the life and journeys of others. Prompted by the physical location of the institution, Royal Roads became an early adopter and leader in online teaching and learning. Through face-to-face and digital environments in the university's learning ecosystem, we connect to this rich heritage and cultivate an ethic of care for place and all life, and the skills to enact that ethic.



TRANSFORMATIONAL

AC T



Transformational learning aligns with the need to transform oneself as a precursor to transforming others. This is recognized in Royal Roads' tagline, 'Life. Changing', as well as in UNESCO's fifth pillar of learning for sustainable development, "learning to transform oneself and society."

SOCIALLY INNOVATIVE

We seek to develop in students a socially innovative mindset capable of generating solutions to social challenges and changes. This orientation is embedded in activities such as applied and experiential learning, live cases and community engagement. Faculty and staff strive to meet the needs of students, organizations, society and the environment by staying informed of trends and engaged in their potential to ground beneficial change.

RESPECTFUL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND TRADITIONS

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are challenged to understand and engage in their roles in decolonization and to contribute to reparation and restitution for Indigenous Peoples in Canada and beyond. As society learns to integrate and reconcile Indigenous and multiple ways of knowing, we work to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy. In collaboration with local and place-based First Nations communities and other Indigenous relations, we co-imagine a curriculum that includes Indigenous principles and history, and offer students opportunities to experience Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Here we note that this heading,

Respectful of Indigenous Peoples and traditions, does not accurately convey the richness of our intended meaning, as it suggests that we are doing something for or to Indigenous Peoples. Instead, we believe that decolonization involves a long-term process of Indigenous Peoples and immigrants working together in a good way, for the good of all.

REFLECTIVE

Reflecting on our work is essential to self-transformation and applied learning.

Transformation is a cyclical process that begins with a disorienting dilemma and an individual's decision to confront it through reflection and a questioning of assumptions. This process can lead to reinterpretation of experiences in light of new insights and understanding, as well as an enduring change in attitude and behavior. Aided by rich feedback from peers and faculty, authentic and experiential activities and outcomes-based curricula, students become reflective learners, with well-developed critical thinking, analysis and decision-making skills.

IMPACTFUL

Through inquiry and learning, we tackle complex problems to positively affect individuals, organizations, communities, society and the environment. Transformative learning is critical to educating leaders who can empower others. We aim to cultivate leadership and other skills for making beneficial change as we solve real-life challenges, generate practical solutions, produce accessible research and track the impact of our contributions.



LTRM WORKING GROUP

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LTRM IN CONTEXT

Situated in its wider context, this LTRM expresses how, what and why we learn, teach and research at Royal Roads. **How** we ACT: applied and authentic, caring and collaborative, and transformational. **What** we teach, what our students learn, and the topics our faculty and students choose to research. Finally, and most importantly, our LTRM is grounded in the **why**. As an internationally-designated Ashoka Changemaker, Royal Roads aspires to help bring about change for a better world. Our purpose is life-changing. By learning to transform ourselves, we learn to transform others.



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