Frames and tools for online Experiential Learning at UVic:

Focus on Field-Based Learning

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Prepared by the Community-Engaged Learning Office
Field-Based Learning (FBL) in a nutshell

FBL is a form of experiential learning whereby students actively engage with course content through a combination of land, sociocultural and/or water-based experiences and facilitated critical reflection. It is often also a form of community-engaged learning. Go to the UVic Field Schools website to learn about some of UVic’s current Field School offerings.

Key considerations for online FBL (see CEL considerations)

Tools for online FBL (see CEL tools as well as the below)

Virtual field trips such as these ones created by Arizona State University can give students a taste of the field.

Digital maps can be highly interactive and allow students to explore their neighbourhood and the globe. Geography’s Map Shop and the Digital Scholarship Commons are excellent resources in this area.

Videos and guest lectures from the field can give students virtual interactions with places and people. You can also video yourself in the field or have students video themselves in the field to experience and share the interactions more fully. Videos can all be shared through Kaltura.

Simulations, as with virtual field trips, can provide students with a somewhat more sensory experience of space, place and community. There are several open access sites, such as Virtual Biology Lab that do not require students to sign in or share their personal information.

A story of online FBL

Victorian Medievalism (MEDI 360; Professor Michael Reed)

In May 2020, MEDI 360 students were to explore the medieval revival moment in literature and architecture in Great Britain and colonial 19th-Century Victoria. They usually do so by spending two days per week in class and a third in the field exploring landmarks. This wasn’t possible this year due to Covid19. So, Dr. Reed decided to create a series of on-site videos that featured him as guide. As such, Reed took students on virtual journeys that brought the stories of these historic locales to life for students. Reed coupled the videos with online photo galleries, content and guided questions to reframe the course as a digital experience. He accomplished all of this with one month’s notice, making the content visible two weeks before the course start date to encourage students to begin exploring, reading and considering their assignments. He also recorded all the online sessions and uploaded the links to a central site so students could access and review all the lectures as their schedules permitted. Although it was a lot of work, Reed says students greatly appreciated the effort he put into designing the online course.