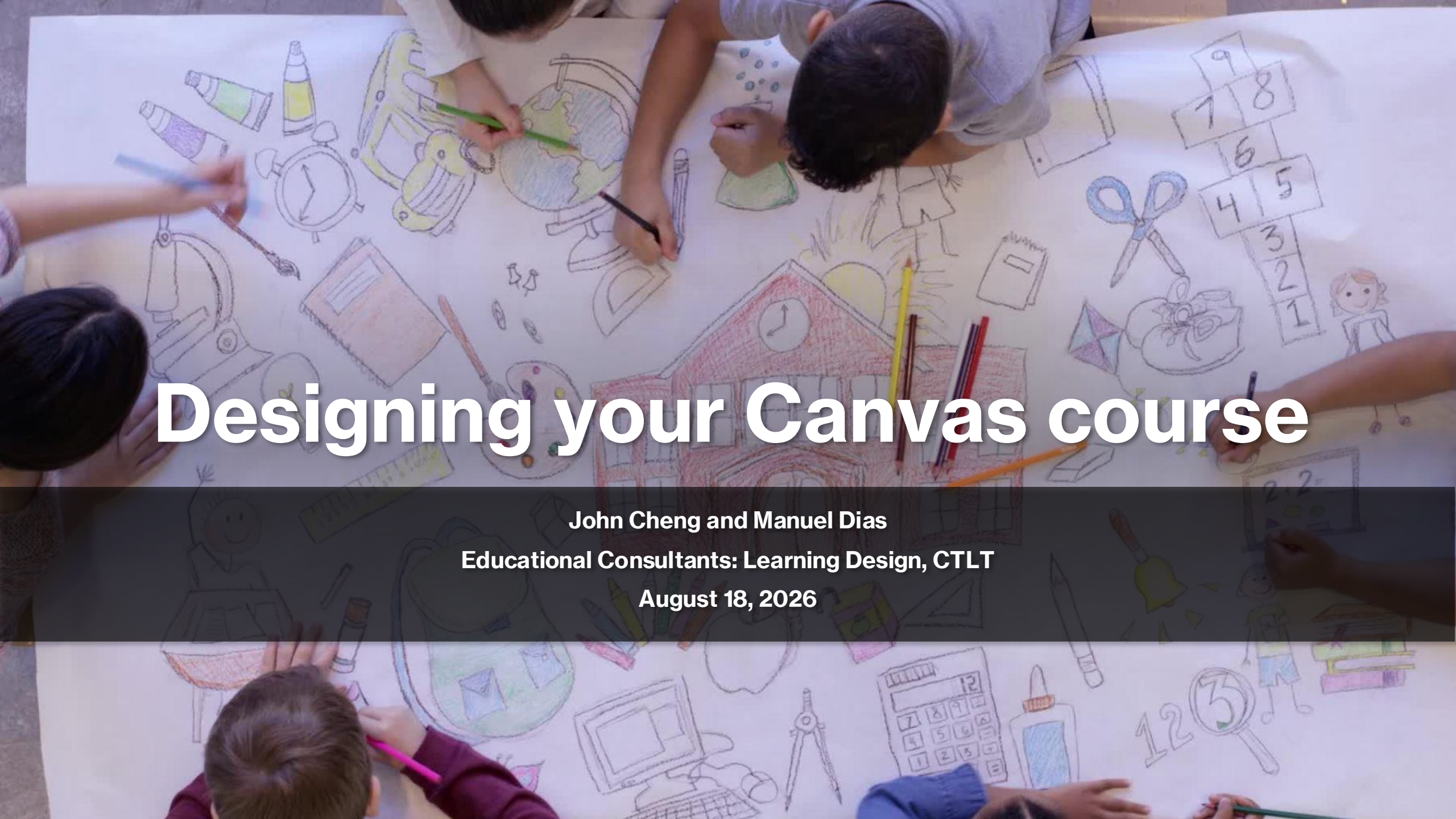


A top-down view of several children sitting around a large white table, drawing various educational concepts with colored pencils. The drawings include a globe, a microscope, a clock, a book, a pair of scissors, a number line, a calculator, a computer monitor, a compass, a lightbulb, a person, and a small house. The children are focused on their work, and the atmosphere is creative and collaborative.

Designing your Canvas course

John Cheng and Manuel Dias
Educational Consultants: Learning Design, CTLT
August 18, 2026

Welcome! While you're waiting...

Please, enroll yourself to this Canvas course:

<https://canvas.ubc.ca/enroll/XYHYTF>

Or <https://bit.ly/4neQZB1>

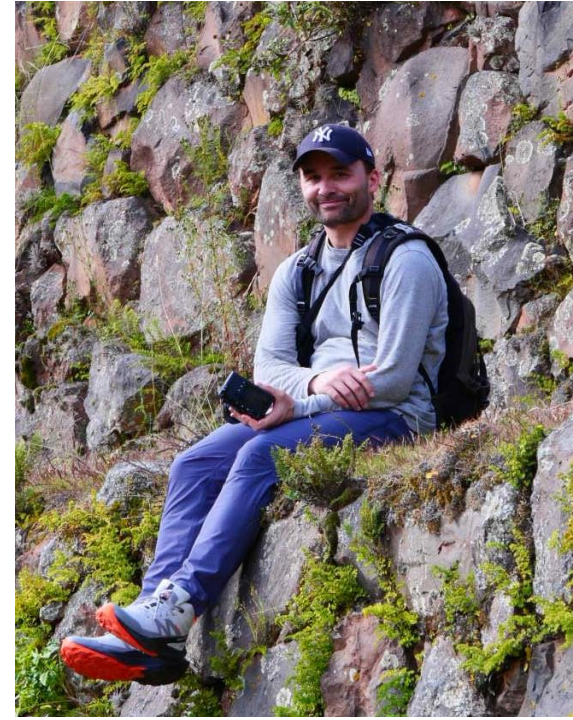


Meet your facilitators



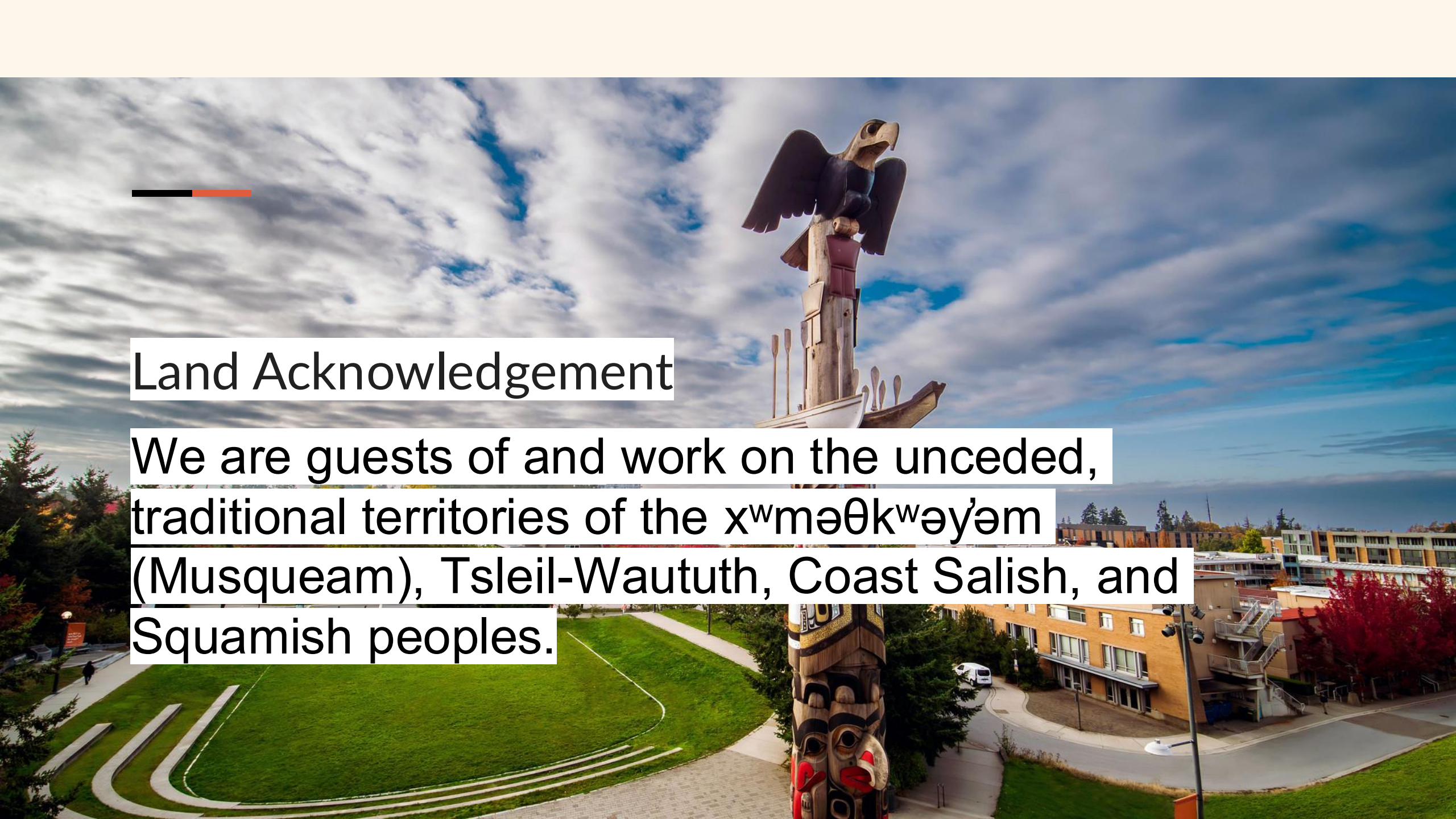
John Cheng

Educational Consultant: Learning Design



Manuel Dias

Educational Consultant: Learning Design



Land Acknowledgement

We are guests of and work on the unceded, traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Tsleil-Waututh, Coast Salish, and Squamish peoples.

Session's objectives

- Structure your course materials using Modules, Files and Pages
- Integrate Universal Design for Learning principles when designing your Canvas course
- Create assessments (quizzes, assignments) and evaluation rubrics
- Communicate with students using the Inbox, Announcements and Discussions tools
- Organize the Canvas dashboard and navigation tools in the course menu
- Explore copying your course, maintaining content, and planning for next term

Icebreaker Activity (3-5 min)

Think about how you currently use your LMS. On a post-it note:

1. Jot down one or two things you do on Canvas, e.g.: "I upload video lectures", "I use the gradebook to track late assignments", "I use Modules to share my course notes", etc.
2. Place your notes under the column it best matches (Course materials, Communication, Grades, Assessments).

If you use the LMS for more than one of these, grab a few post-its and add one to each relevant column.

Canvas in a nutshell



Course materials

- Modules
- Files



Communication

- Email
- Announcements
- Discussions



Grades

- SpeedGrader
- Feedback



Assessments

- Quizzes
- Assignments

Dashboard and Course Menu

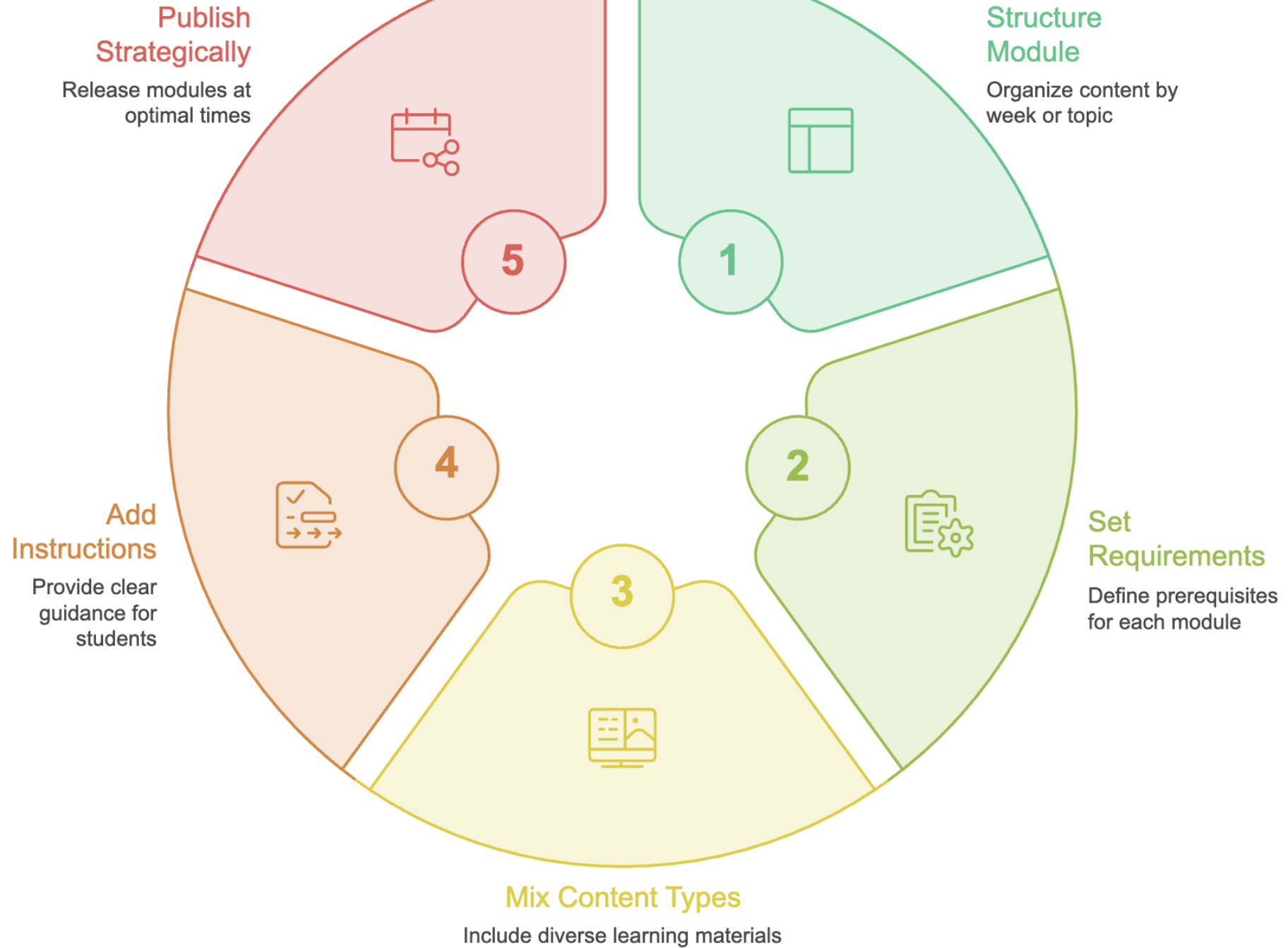
Purpose: Explore Canvas global navigation and course menu.

Dashboard and Course Menu

- Canvas dashboard (Notifications, Courses, Inbox)
- Course Menu (Settings, Course Details, Navigation)

Structuring Course Materials: Modules, Files, Pages, and Settings

Purpose: Organize content in a structure that supports student learning.



Styling your Canvas content

Purpose: Design your course content using Universal Design for Learning principles.

UDL in Canvas

When organizing content, you may want to think about:

- Breaking content into sections (e.g., weekly)
- Using consistent headings, colors, and icons so students know what to expect
- Providing advance organizers (like “this week’s overview”) to reduce cognitive load

Using the **Rich Content Editor** to style in Pages, Discussions, Assignments, etc.

- Headings
- Meaningful text links
- Real lists
- Strategic emphasis
- Aligning/resizing/adding alt text to images
- Chunking walls of text

Assignments & Rubrics

Purpose: Submit and evaluate assignments using SpeedGrader and rubrics.

Student View

Previewing assignments
from a student's
perspective



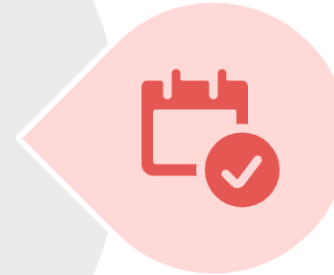
Clear Instructions

Providing detailed
guidelines for
submission



Due Dates

Setting deadlines to
manage submissions



Online Submission

Enabling digital
submission options



Accepted Formats

Specifying file types for
submission



Rubrics

Using grading criteria for
feedback



Quizzes

Purpose: Assess student understanding with auto-graded or manually reviewed tests with feedback.



Select Quiz Engine

Choose the appropriate quiz engine, such as New Quizzes, for enhanced features.



Utilize Question Banks

Create or connect to question banks to randomize questions and facilitate reuse.



Implement Access Controls

Set time limits and shuffle questions to deter academic dishonesty.



Preview the Quiz

Always preview the quiz to identify and resolve any setup problems before publishing.



Give Student Feedback

Determine when students can view correct answers, either immediately or after submissions.

Communicating with Students

Purpose: Keep students informed and engaged through Canvas.



Inbox tool

Private messages
for course related
topics.



Announcements

Course-wide
updates, enable
student comments
for discussion.



Discussions

Discussion threads
to foster student
interactions.



Groups

Communicate with
groups of students.

Promoting Student Engagement in Discussions

- **Use Open-Ended Prompts**
Ask questions that promote critical thinking and real-world connections.
- **Pre- and Post-Class Threads**
Get students thinking before class or reflecting after.
- **Peer-Led Discussions**
Let students take turns leading and moderating.
- **Multimedia Posts**
Encourage video, audio, or image responses for variety.
- **Reply Requirements**
Set expectations (e.g., 1 original + 2 thoughtful replies)
- **Small Group Discussions**
Use groups for more intimate, active participation.
- **Grable Discussions**
Grable Discussions are graded online posts and replies.
- **Weekly Reflections**
Use regular threads to check learning and spark insight.

Course Copy

Purpose: Carry course content forward without bringing unnecessary files.

BEFORE course copy: Keeping your course content organized and up to date

- Remove unnecessary files before course copy (clean the Files area)
- Remove and update links in the modules area (broken links)

Ways to copy content:

- Course copy
- "Sent to" feature

AFTER course copy: Checking broken links

- Validate links in a course:
 - During the course copy process, some links might be broken
 - Go to **Settings** -> **Validate Links in Content**

Support & Resources

Contact Learning Designers at
learning.design@ubc.ca for consultation and
support around course design

Learning Technology (LT) Hub at
lt.hub@ubc.ca for technical support

Resources and tool guides:

- [LT Hub Tool Guides](#)
- [Accessibility 101](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning Hub](#)

