

Plenary Speaker, May 27th
Sharon Brewer
(Thompson Rivers University)



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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Sharon Brewer is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops BC. She is a co-founder with Dr. Bruno Cinel of the BC Integrated Laboratory Network (BC-ILN). The BC-ILN provides remote access to analytical instrumentation for teaching and outreach purposes, allowing real-time chemical analysis of real samples over the internet. Her research interests include remote instrumentation as a teaching tool, inquiry-based laboratory curriculum, open educational resource (OER) development and implementation, analytical method development, environmental analysis and water treatment. Sharon is a passionate developer, supporter, adapter and adopter of OER who is proud to be part of the chemistry team at TRU who developed and launched open LibreTexts this past academic year for their first year courses. Sharon is also the Registrar of the Association of the Chemical Profession of British Columbia (ACPBC), a position she has held since 2020.

PLENARY CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Connecting through Chemistry Outreach and the impact of COVID-19

Chemistry outreach programs have a long history in Canada and beyond, and are typically seen as valuable service activities to promote the chemical sciences, encourage awareness and understanding of chemistry, and inspire potential future students. Outreach brings information and interactive activities to the larger community beyond your institution. During the COVID-19 pandemic many educational institutions were focused primarily on delivery options for required curriculum and as a result, outreach activities took a backseat. As we move post-COVID and return to outreach activities, the need and demand have changed, as has the audience for outreach activities. In addition, demand to provide support and engagement activities *within* our institutions has significantly increased.

Chemistry at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) is in the process of evaluating our two longstanding largescale outreach programs to meet this new reality, while also being cognizant of the additional needs and demands from our own students. This presentation will describe and highlight the current state of our outreach programs while discussing the impact of COVID-19 on our outreach and target audiences.