Pedagogical Values Series: *Remaining Inclusive, diverse and co-creative in times of Covid urgency and expediency*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LANDS

Royal Roads University acknowledges that the campus is located on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lekwungen (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!

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The Pedagogical Values Series

Learning, Teaching, & Research Model (LTRM)

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

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Pedagogical Values

Pedagogical values refer to the worldviews, beliefs, perspectives, and biases about teaching and learning that underpin our specific educational practices (Palahicky et al., 2017). In other words, they are the belief systems that inform the decisions that we make at the micro and macro level of our teaching, from how we design learning experiences to how we interact and engage with learners.

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"Remaining Inclusive, diverse and co-creative in times of Covid urgency and expediency "

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Objectives

- Examine values that are embedded in our Learning, Teaching, and Research Model (LTRM): "inclusive and diverse" and "co-creative"

- Examine these values in context drawing on my teaching

- Discuss how we might be able to maintain the use of these values in the current landscape of the Covid-19 health crisis

"Inclusive and diverse"

- This is a delicate set of values within the LTRM
- On the one hand, these are self-evident values that most instructors will automatically embrace
- There is a real danger, however, to embrace these values merely conceptually as opposed to concretely.
- Acknowledging the diversity of our learners is not the same as designing learning environment which are addressing this diversity.
- How can we ensure that this set of values permeates all our teaching practices?

A culture clash

The landscape of Higher Education is changing widely and rapidly:

- The percentage of students with Disabilities is at an all time high (Akin & Huang, 2019; Los Santos, Bain, Kupczynski & Mundy, 2019)
- The Internationalization of Higher Education means that on most campuses a quarter of our student population is from overseas (Fovet, 2019)
- Indigenous students are more represented in Canadian Higher Education than they have ever been (Kieran & Anderson, 2019)
- First generation students also represent a percentage of our student population that is rising sharply in Canada (Eveland, 2019)
- Life-long learners also have very specific needs (Chen, 2017)

- **And yet**

- We tend to perpetuate, without questioning it, the design of instruction and assessment we have ourselves experienced as leaners. This design is teacher-centric and has worked out for us, but does it authentically address the learner diversity highlighted above?

Finding tools to embed a reflection on learner diversity at the heart of our practices

- Wishing to be inclusive is one thing, but how do we ensure we authentically alter our practices in order for inclusion to genuinely occur in the classroom itself?

- This cannot remain a conceptual goal alone.

- As faculty we needs hands-on tools to keep us focused on the task of redesigning with the learner/ user experience firmly in mind

- For me this has been Universal Design for Learning and its three principles which ensure we offer optimal flexibility in three dimensions:

- Input/ output/ engagement (Wilson, 2017; Tobin, 2019; Nieminen & Pesonen, 2020)

Acknowledging learner diversity in the way we offer content to students

- The example from my practice which I will discuss:
- Using the LMS optimally to embed flexibility in the way we offer content to students

Recognizing learner diversity in the way we frame our expectations for leaners outcomes

- The example from my practice which I will discuss:

- Moving away from the paper writing assignment in order to offer maximum flexibility on the way students demonstrate skills and knowledge acquisition.

Embracing learner diversity in the way we conceptualize student engagement

- Pushing ourselves outside of the box when conceptualizing student engagement.

- Most instructors pride themselves on how they seek learner engagement.

- However, the challenge is how teacher-centric our view of engagement often remains.

- The example from my practice which I will discuss:

- Allowing learners to create strong connections between the course content and their own identity: exploring PhotoVoice as a course assignment (Leung & Flanagan, 2019)

Designing inclusively presumes a willingness to approach students through ethnographic means

- UDL encourages instructors to design delivery and assessment with learner diversity in mind.

- Much of this can happen with the use of common sense, every time we have the opportunity to go back to the 'blue print'.

- However, this can never be enough; inclusive design requires an authentic dialogue with the learner. Otherwise our assumptions as to where barriers lie remain just that: assumptions.

- How can we engage with this sort of authentic dialogue with the learner in order to reframe and enrich our design perspective?

Co-creating with students

- How can we achieve this sort of authentic dialogue with the learner in order to reframe and enrich our design perspective?

- For me, this opportunity has presented itself through the use of curriculum co-creation (Bovill, 2019).

- Co-creation of content: anecdotal discussion around my practice

- Co-creation of assessment: anecdotal examples from my own practice

- Obstacles: What are we collectively so scared of curriculum co-creation?

Maintaining this design perspective in the midst of a public health crisis

- When we are faced with significant crises, it is tempting to set aside the values of the LTRM and to focus on the urgency of other needs

- The Covid-19 crisis has created unprecedented tension as the pivot to online teaching occurred overnight.

- It has also showed how the LTRM values are actually essential and lie at the heart of our pedagogical reflection. Their relevance is heightened in these difficult times, not reduced.

- At present, it feels like the social model of disability is illustrated in practice in every day situations: all students have the potential of currently feeling 'disabled' by bad design.

- Add to that endemic stress and anxiety, and the very real risk of medical issues, and it is clear that it more important than ever to design inclusively.

Resources

- Akin, D., & Huang, L. (2019) Perceptions of College Students with Disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 32*(1), 21-33

- Bovill, C. (2019) Co-creation in learning and teaching: the case for a whole-class approach in higher education. *Higher Education*

- Chen, J. C. (2017). Nontraditional Adult Learners: The Neglected Diversity in Postsecondary Education. *SAGE Open.*

- Eveland, T. (2019) Supporting first-generation college students: analyzing academic and social support's effects on academic performance. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*

- Fovet, F. (2019) Not just about disability: Getting traction for UDL implementation with International Students. In: Kate Novak & Sean Bracken (Eds.) *Transforming Higher Education through Universal Design for Learning: An International Perspective*, Routledge, London

- Kieran, L., & Anderson, C. (2019). Connecting Universal Design for Learning With Culturally Responsive Teaching. *Education and Urban Society, 51*(9), 1202–1216

- Leung, E., & Flanagan, T. (2019) Let's do this together: an integration of photovoice and mobile interviewing in empowering and listening to LGBTQ+ youths in context. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 24*(4), 497-510

- Los Santos, D., Bain, S., Kupczynski, L., & Mundy, M-A (2019) Determining Academic Success in Students with Disabilities in Higher Education. *International Journal of Higher Education, 8*(2), 16-38

- Nieminen, J.H., & Pesonen, H.V. (2020) Taking Universal Design back to its roots: Perspectives on accessibility and identity in Undergraduate Mathematics. *Education Sciences, 10*(1), 12

- Tobin, T. (2019) Reaching all learners through their phones and universal design for learning. *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation*

- Wilson, J. D. (2017). Reimagining Disability and Inclusive Education Through Universal Design for Learning. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 37*(2)

Questions

- How can we encourage and support colleagues to embrace inclusive design?

- Why are we generally so reticent to embrace the notion of user experience (UX) in the design of our classroom practices?

- Why are we collectively so scared of experimenting with curriculum co-creation?

- How can we resist the danger of the 'just good enough' approach in the midst of a crisis?

Thank you!

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