
The Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence is a bi-annual, open access, and peer-reviewed journal that aims to publish high-quality research and scholarship on instruction and education. The journal is funded by the [Office on Empowering Teaching Excellence](#) with support from the [Statewide Campuses Division](#) at Utah State University, and there are no article processing charges (APCs) for authors. It is committed to publishing high-quality, practical, and experience-based insights from higher education professionals to empower teaching excellence in today's teaching environments.

To submit, please visit <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/submit.cgi?context=jete>

All articles published in the journal are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which allows for the sharing and adaptation of the material for any purpose, as long as proper attribution is given to the original authors.

Empowering Teaching Excellence
Utah State University
5100 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322

Editors

Jason Olsen, Associate Professor

Editor in Chief

Utah State University Eastern, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of English, Price, UT

Nichelle Frank, Assistant Professor

Assistant Editor

Utah State University Eastern, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Price, UT

Editorial Board

Travis Thurston, Director of Teaching Excellence

Utah State University, Office of Empowering Teaching Excellence, Logan, UT

Michelle Arnold, Instructional Coordinator

Utah State University, Office of Empowering Teaching Excellence, Logan, UT

Erika Finch, Scholarly Communication Librarian

Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library, Logan, UT

Karin deJonge-Kannan, Principal Lecturer of Linguistics

Utah State University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, World Languages and Cultures, Logan, UT

Heather Jensen, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor

Utah State University, College of Education and Human Services, Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education, Logan, UT

Julia Gossard, Associate Dean for Research

Utah State University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, History, Logan, UT

Sarah Tulane, Clinical Associate Professor

Utah State University, College of Education and Human Services, Human Development and Family Studies, Logan, UT

David Law, Professor

Utah State University, College of Education and Human Services, Human Development and Family Studies, Roosevelt, UT

Neal Legler, Director

Utah State University, Center for Innovative Design and Instruction, Logan, UT

Rich Etchberger, Vice Provost

Utah State University, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Moab, UT

Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence, Spring 2023

JOURNAL ON EMPOWERING TEACHING EXCELLENCE, SPRING 2023

NICHELE FRANK, PH.D.; LANESHIA CONNER, PH.D.; V. NIKKI JONES, DSW;
JASON P. JOHNSTON, PH.D.; RACHEL TONCELLI, ED.D.; LEILA ROSA, PH.D.;
NICOLE LUONGO, ED.D.; MICHAEL FINETTI, ED.D.; KIMBERLY CASE; JAY
GARRELS, PH.D.; RENEE EVANS; ELENA TAYLOR, PH.D.; AND JESSICA
PARKS, PH.D.

Utah State University, Office of Empowering Teaching Excellence
Logan, UT



Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence, Spring 2023 by Utah State University is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), except where otherwise noted.

Users are free to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author. This is in accordance with the Budapest Open Access Initiative definition of open access. All articles published in the journal are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which allows for the sharing and adaptation of the material for any purpose, as long as proper attribution is given to the original authors.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Nichelle Frank, Ph.D.	
A Participatory Exercise in Developing Syllabi with Adult Learners	3
Laneshia Conner, Ph.D.; V. Nikki Jones, DSW; and Jason P. Johnston, Ph.D.	
On Becoming Online Educators:	15
<i>Developing Hybrid Learning-Centered Pedagogy</i>	
Rachel Toncelli, Ed.D. and Leila Rosa, Ph.D.	
Crisis Meets Opportunity:	32
<i>Empowering Faculty when Returning to the Higher Education Classroom</i>	
Nicole Luongo, Ed.D.; Michael Finetti, Ed.D.; Kimberly Case; Jay Garrels, Ph.D.; and Renee Evans	
Promoting Student Reflection Through Reflective Writing Tasks	44
Elena Taylor, Ph.D.	
"It's Not Always Poor Decisions":	61
<i>Shifts in Business Student's Attitudes Toward Poverty After Completing 'Spent'</i>	
Jessica Parks, Ph.D.	

INTRODUCTION

Nichelle Frank, Ph.D.

Around the time that I was in second grade, I started keeping a journal. What began as an exercise in emulating some of my favorite fictional and non-fictional heroes (those who kept diaries, at least) later became a practice of regular self-reflection. Although my personal journaling tended toward basic “documentary” writing, it created a moment for me to think carefully about how I spent my time, with whom, and why. Journaling slowed me down and laid everything out in front of me. I always felt like I could see life more clearly that way.

When I was a doctoral student, a professor recommended keeping a “research journal,” which resulted in some mental breakthroughs and served as a good way to stay self-motivated. As a professor, I’ve kept both a research and teaching journal. Why all of this journaling? My hope is that it makes me more self-aware and helps me identify the best choices moving forward. But is it actually working?

It is this theme of self-reflection that winds its way through this issue of the *Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence*. In the articles that follow, reflective work (granted, a more guided kind than the freeform journaling I describe above) emerges as a powerful tool for both teachers and students. In particular, the combination of evidence in these articles shows that self-reflection—on the part of instructors as well as students—improves student learning. Readers can walk away from this issue with valuable ideas for rethinking their roles and practices as educators as well as practical tools to implement in their classes. It is a dream combination of pedagogical thinking and practicality.

To kick off this analysis, “A Participatory Exercise in Developing Syllabi with Adult Learners” by Laneshia Conner (University of Kentucky), Nikki Jones (Spalding University), Jason P. Johnston (University of Kentucky) takes a critical approach to understanding pedagogy with adult learners by involving students in the creation of the syllabus for the course they will take. As such, the authors are questioning and challenging dominant ideologies related to the roles of instructor versus students while acknowledging student interpretations of intended course objectives and valuing those interpretations. For “A Participatory Exercise,” this included an analysis of the effects when educators shared the process of creating course syllabi with adult learners, specifically learners in a graduate social work course. As a result, students felt that their opinions mattered and learned a lesson crucial not just to social work but also to social relations—that is, what happens when power is less centralized.

In “On Becoming Online Educators,” Rachel Toncelli (Northeastern University) and Leila Rosa (EduCulture Consulting) analyze the experiences of adult learners and the educators who teach these adult learners, specifically the effects of online learning and teaching during COVID-19. The crux here is that the authors were educating teachers in how to be online educators at the time that the pandemic had suddenly thrown them into learning the best online education practices as well. In other words, the authors were scrambling to learn what they were needing to teach and journaled as a way to engage in personal reflection throughout the process. Deeply personal, researched, and informative, this piece promises to guide readers in thinking about their own instructional practices, power, and potential. The authors conclude that online learning led to greater depth and stronger individual participation that they want to translate to in-person learning environments as they “redefine what participation looks like.” Additionally, the authors advocate for more collaboration among faculty and more institutional support for such collaboration, including in the tenure process.

“Crisis Meets Opportunity: Empowering Faculty when Returning to the Higher Education Classroom” by Nicole Luongo (Saint Peter’s University), Michael Finetti (Saint Peter’s University), Kimberly Case (Saint Peter’s University), Jay Garrels (Saint Peter’s University), and Renee Evans (University of Miami) explores higher education as the

COVID-19 pandemic declined and instructors re-entered physical classroom spaces. Based on a survey of higher education faculty, the authors explain that teachers who implemented emergency remote teaching reflected upon what they had learned and empowered themselves with these pandemic teaching experiences as they entered physical classrooms in Fall 2021. While the threat of the pandemic evolved (and could continue to do so in the future), so must approaches to teaching during crisis. Among the successes outlined herein, the authors recognize the uses of new technologies for communication and instruction, addressing equity issues, and adding more inclusive practices to their classes. While many factors influence the ability of instructors to implement ongoing changes, including whether they have institutional support to participate in professional development opportunities to learn new best practices, the authors conclude that the experiences of the faculty during the pandemic can lead to more inclusive learning environments.

Jessica M. Parks' "It's not always poor decisions': Shifts in business student's attitudes toward poverty after completing SPENT" shifts our attention to the power of SPENT, a digital poverty simulation, in introducing students to the experiences of those living in impoverished situations. This article examines four themes in students' attitudes toward poverty: (1) laziness and poor decisions, (2) multiple causes, (3) low wages, and (4) importance of education. In order to understand student learning as a result of using SPENT, the author examined reflective essays about the simulation activity that students had submitted. Parks notes that a simulation like SPENT aligned students' views with a lived reality. Parks' study is an inspiration and justification for not just SPENT but also the development of other such simulations and assignments.

In "Promoting Student Reflection Through Reflective Writing Tasks," Elena Taylor (Utah State University) presents a generous selection of prompts used to promote student learning through a variety of written tasks. Taylor argues that assignments like reflective journals, reflections on writing assignments, reflections on teacher and peer feedback, writing-to-learn activities, and letters to the Reviewer can translate to various teaching contexts. To demonstrate the effectiveness of these assignments, this article provides samples of student work for each assignment type. Notable in the samples are the detailed descriptions that students include about their research and writing processes as well as looking ahead to methods they might implement for improvement in future work for the course.

Beyond the individual contributions of each article in this issue is their combined power in supporting the use of reflective work in higher education, both as educators and learners. Indeed, as the articles demonstrate here, educators are themselves lifelong learners who benefit from time spent reflecting. Moreover, it is not just what instructors choose to do that creates effective learning but how their students perceive the learning experience as well. So please excuse me while I go journal for a while about what I've learned from these articles. Will you join me?

A PARTICIPATORY EXERCISE IN DEVELOPING SYLLABI WITH ADULT LEARNERS

Laneshia Conner, Ph.D.; V. Nikki Jones, DSW; and Jason P. Johnston, Ph.D.

Abstract

Transformative participatory approaches in education are positioned to challenge traditional models where instructors bear all responsibility for knowledge creation and learners are passive recipients of knowledge. The promotion of participatory learning and critical pedagogy is essential to helping professionals seeking to understand oppressive structural barriers and employing strategies to dismantle these structures. This article describes a participatory approach undertaken to guide learners through an exercise to co-create syllabus content in a graduate social work course. Learners identified three themes, concerns, fears, and problems, related to the course material. Learners were also asked to think about how they could address the three themes to apply new information to problem solve. Through the syllabus cloud activity, learners shaped course content, decided on the format to deliver content, and applied their status as adult learners in an intentional way. As educators prepare to critically and intentionally dismantle aspects of the learning milieu that may perpetuate systems of oppression, collaborative learning and teaching can help to reduce oppressive practices. Reflections for formative and summative evaluation and future research are discussed.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, participatory learning, graduate education

Participation as an act of sharing is different than participation as an act of sharing power (White, 1996). Formal education has a history of occurring in schools under trained professionals and relies heavily on the participation of both instructors and learners. Instructors are positioned to exercise a great amount of authority over their learners, playing critical roles in their development, with institutionalized roles that often mimic the values of the dominant culture (Kumashiro, 2000; Strong, 2007). Previous scholars, such as Paulo Freire (2005), have created dialogues about this positioning, stating that instructors are often placed in positions that involve an oppressive dominant culture. Of note is that Eurocentric knowledge has been centered as legitimate knowledge, therefore, the experiences of other cultures and their learning styles and pedagogical needs have been greatly minimized (Kumashiro, 2000). There are many other challenges and complex nuances related to relational dynamics in education, as such, social constructivism provides a guide to understanding the interactional space that both learners and instructors can occupy, and that illustration of relational power can be mutually constructed and negotiated between the two groups (Manke, 1997; Kumashiro, 2000; Strong, 2007). The classroom is a place where power relations can be addressed, and instructors have an opportunity to raise awareness among learners while affirming and respecting the culture of the learners and their needs (Sidky, 2017). Even though instructors are bound to accreditation and department-specific standards, therefore unable to fully share power (White, 1996), it is hopeful that participatory models can be leveraged and used to increase the sharing of power with students. The transformative power of addressing the complexities of shared power inside the classroom have potential to address oppression, change narratives, and redistribute power among learners (Mertens, 2007).

Background

Paulo Freire led the discussion and development of reflecting on educational practices that are inherently oppressive and perpetuate the marginalization of learners (Adams et al., 2016). Freire (2005) challenged the banking concept of education, which views students as empty receptacles for teachers to fill, as an instrument of oppression common in all disciplines. While the application of critical consciousness in social work education is relatively new, this type of awareness is important for learners entering the workforce and for instructors during course development.

This paper reflects on the position of adult learners and their instructors and aims to provide an idea for human service educators with curriculum planning and considerations that actively involve learners in the learning process (Ismail & Groccia, 2022). When using terms, such as “participatory,” great care should be taken to understand the context of participation during learning activities. This becomes extremely important when participation is used as an action to change the development of a certain part of a course. This paper attempts to look at the challenge of sharing power in the classroom using a critical perspective (Freire, 2005; Knipe, 2020; Kumashiro, 2000; Kumashiro, 2006). A critical perspective, a lens that allows for the questioning and challenging of dominant ideologies while acknowledging different interpretations and valuing those differences, was adopted throughout the paper with a purpose of advocating a pedagogical stance that would encourage the empowerment of learners by way of sharing in the construction of course components. While in formative stages, it is the hope of the authors to communicate the intent behind the actions taken in an isolated observation to develop a better understanding of how to share power or redistribute power in the classroom.

Participatory learning and critical pedagogy (Bohman, Flynn, & Celikates, 2019; Freire, 2005; Kincheloe, 2004), while distinct in their origins and characteristics, share tools and strategies to develop the knowledge base of adult learners, which can contribute to educational developments that lead to social change and contextualized learning experiences (Bozalek & Biersteker, 2010). Participatory learning has roots in critical pedagogy, where radical transformations of education within educational institutions have resided (Taylor & Fransman, 2003). Participatory learning (PL) is an educational method that concerns itself with social and community justice and the collective approach to adult education (Missingham, 2013). Akin to the present reflection, PL draws upon the participants, in this instance adult learners, as the co-constructors of the learning experience. Through shared leadership, learning is more representative of the people involved.

Critical pedagogy shares in the collaborative process of reflexive thinking by innovating teaching practices to be more representative of adult learners; yet longstanding practices of graduate education are often resistant and, at times, counterproductive to the dialogic approaches in PL. An enduring convention of teacher-centered processes of graduate education include deficit approaches to pedagogy: the teacher is the expert, the curriculum is designed with the most salient components, conventional lectures serve the purpose of providing knowledge, exams are able to assess learners’ abilities and capacities related to course material, and, most importantly, the learners’ experiences are valued based on the quantification of memorized knowledge and performance-based assessments. As graduate programs continue to struggle to find constructive ways of engaging, interacting, and assessing learners across learning environments (e.g., online, face-to-face, hybrid, hyflex, etc.), analysis and critique of educational practices using critical pedagogies have advantages for adult education.

In keeping with the discussion about critical pedagogies, PL can be defined as an emancipatory educational approach with the ability to supplant traditional vertical relationships and “deposit-making” pedagogies with collaborative learning and “co-intentional practices” where both learners and teachers are subjects who create reality (Freire, 2005, p. 79). Historically, graduate education has participated in PL through explicit curriculum. For example, in social work graduate education, learners developing an action-oriented project in their field placement to learn anti-racist skills (e.g., Basham et al., 2001), having critical dialogue in a social policy course about reports of race-based laws that are unconstitutional

(e.g., Knipe, 2020), and developmental activities such as confronting oppression and developing critical consciousness through other frameworks using a transcultural perspective (e.g., Drabble et al., 2012).

In the late 1960s, John Dewey suggested that learners' needs should be integrated with social demands, encouraging freedom and structure to interact with one another as opposed to against one another (Williams, 2017). One of Dewey's larger contributions was the notion that learners' experiences must include a form of engagement through the creation of opportunities by the instructor. This is where the difference in the type of participation becomes paramount. How can instructors empower learners through emancipatory educational practices, with the goal of sharing power and not just sharing in participation? Using narrative discourse, this article reflects on a participatory approach to engage learners in sharing power, to the fullest extent possible, by guiding learners through an exercise to co-create topical areas of a syllabus in a graduate-level social work course. The syllabus is a physical artifact that outlines key elements of a course, serving as a contract for communication and record-keeping (Fink, 2012; Wheeler, Palmer, & Anece, 2019). While recent discussion has described the syllabus as a learning tool versus a contract between instructors and learners (i.e., Harrington, & Thomas, 2018; O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008), it provided the current opportunity to reflect on the imbalance of power that the syllabus as a contract created and encouraged the invitation to learners to help engineer parts of the syllabus to share power through decision making.

In social work education, a number of researchers have documented conscious and unconscious oppression within social work education, such as harassment, discrimination, different forms of violence, exclusion, differential treatment based on gender and race/ethnicity (Wagner & Yee, 2011). Less visible and yet equally harmful are ideologies that marginalize or minimize underrepresented groups and encourage learners who are non-White to conform to a mainstream ideology of learning. Learners respond to these treatments in different ways, which are not always easy to identify. For instance, a common way that Black students and other students of color conform is through code switching, which is when Black students change their interactional style to soften racial-ethnic identity in order to acclimate to the academic environment (Payne & Suddler, 2014). Hyper-performing and hidden injuries are terms associated with how learners can respond to oppressive treatments (Berila, 2016). Research has indicated that this conformity can negatively impact the social and academic performance of Black students (Payne & Suddler, 2014).

Some learners who internalize racial oppression have a lower value for higher education (Brown et al., 2016). Most traditional college students are emerging adults trying to configure an identity separate from their families of origin; however, as indicated by Payne and Suddler (2014), many Black students and other students of color are also reconciling a mainstream professional identity with their racial-ethnic identity. Therefore, it is crucial that academic spaces become more inclusive to reduce the strain and stress associated with marginalization and conformity within graduate social work education. Social work as a profession is complicated, as the effect of racist ideologies and power differentials can be observed across the curriculum in how programs value grading systems, program concentrations, and the diversity of its faculty. These decisions, among other observations, suggest that social work educators take swift action to address disparities, starting with what occurs in the academic space of a classroom. Like most disciplines, social work education is rooted in primarily Eurocentric discourse; thus, to eliminate racial bias and oppressive structures within the learning milieu, instructors will need to develop PL strategies and critical pedagogies that enable them to think alongside learners.

Kumashiro (2000) suggested two ways to develop inclusive and anti-oppressive education: (1) the provision of psychologically safe, physical spaces for learners and (2) teaching to all learners by incorporating facets of their identity into the classrooms. Paulo Freire (2005) challenged educators to critically reflect on oppressive teaching practices that reduced student voice and dialogue. Too often, professors present a classroom environment that turns a blind eye to pressing social issues due to fear of having to manage conflict, transference, and countertransference. The falsehood that classes can be declared 'safe spaces' needs to be disrupted because "[s]afe spaces emerge. They are not created" (Hunt, 2019, para. 9). Often the classroom space does not feel safe for a student from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group (hooks, 2014). What a professor might consider a "neutral space," where students are expected to quietly sit and listen to lectures,

may not feel safe for a student of color (hooks, 2014). So, race-based caucuses or affinity groups are important to offer as “within-group” safe spaces to support student engagement, reflection, and critical analysis (Abdullah et al., 2016; Varghese et al., 2019).

Further, anti-oppressive education extends beyond diversity to culturally relevant practices that challenge colorblindness or passive regard of learners’ identities. Andragogy, adult learning principles, carries out this second suggestion by supporting the idea that adult learners should be involved in the learning process (Knowles et al., 2005). The principles of andragogy provide insight into strategies for facilitating adult learning, such as incorporating life experiences, fostering responsibility for one’s own learning, and employing a self-directed approach (Deck et al., 2017). Central to the andragogical model is the assumption that adult learners have moved from being dependent on an authority for knowledge to being self-directed or independent in their self-concept as a learner (Knowles et al., 2005). Over time, adult learners’ cumulative experiences shape what and how they learn. Based on social roles that one develops over time, adults orient learning to tasks associated with those roles. An adult’s orientation to learning develops to an “immediacy of application” (Knowles, 1990, p. 119). Lastly, as one ages, the motivation to learn means something different and is more internal (Knowles et al., 2005).

Gitterman (2004) wrote that to create a climate for collaborative learning, the use of andragogical principles is needed. When learners give input, they transition from docile receivers of course content to co-creators with learning responsibilities (Freire, 2005). A syllabus exercise that invites, supports, and relies upon student participation and reactions to the course content and material is a learning strategy also described as a “liquid syllabus” (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020, p.11). With a liquid syllabus, the text is not in a fixed form until after class starts. In this way, the syllabus starts as a liquid rather than a solid. Learners help to shape and solidify aspects of the syllabus by negotiating with the instructor. Learners challenge the banking concept of education and internalized perceptions of themselves as passive recipients when they offer reactions to and help shape the course syllabus (Freire Institute, n.d.).

Ken Bain (2004), author of *What the Best College Teachers Do*, described a syllabus-creation scenario that encourages independent ways of thinking for future adult learners. A *promising syllabus*, which is not a phrase he constructed but one he adopted and enhanced, is the course’s promise to learners, indicating what they will gain from the course by the end of the semester. The syllabus describes the activities that they will engage in to fulfill that promise (Lang, 2006).

Adopting a new way of viewing the role of educator can pose a challenge, particularly when institutions of higher education have not prepared learners to think in a way that is intentionally anti-oppressive. As Freire (2005) noted, the traditional banking concept of education promotes passivity among learners; therefore, change may be difficult for learners who are unconscious about the oppressive nature of traditional education. These learners may be disinterested and undetermined to switch roles from a receiver of knowledge to a co-creator with learning responsibilities. Even with this challenge in mind, anti-oppressive education still supports the strengths perspective in social work practice (Saleebey, 2013) and active teaching and learning, which is common in higher education and widely validated as beneficial to students (Association of American Colleges and Universities, n.d.). Thus, based on the suggestion from Gitterman (2004) to encourage input starting in the first class and with the course syllabus, I, the lead author on this publication, created the syllabus exercise to overcome power relations in the classroom, promote mutual collaboration between learner and instructor on an activity, and employ a self-directed adult learning approach.

The Syllabus Exercise

This activity was not conducted as a systematic investigation to develop generalizable knowledge; therefore, IRB approval was not required. The experiences described herein are shared for reflective teaching and learning purposes only. The syllabus exercise was conducted in a graduate social work course, which was second in a two-course sequencing of

human behavior in the social context. For context, this social work course was delivered at a private teaching institution. The learners were registered as part-time, social work graduate learners and had the same instructor for the previous course. There was a total of eight learners who identified as female. The course was structured using a hybrid model with three face-to-face meetings and online course content in between the face-to-face meetings.

The guiding framework for this activity was a participatory learning framework, which can allow for reflective processes to uncover what learners know and help them create new meaning (Simmons, Barnard, & Fennema, 2011). The reason for the syllabus exercise was to encourage participatory learning and engage in shared decision making. Not many learners can look back and say, “I helped construct my course syllabus,” and “I directly influenced what I learned and how it was delivered.” The syllabus exercise was also a way to begin the course with a collaborative exercise to facilitate fuller participation.

During the first class meeting, the syllabus, which included standard information that is found in all syllabi (i.e., instructor contact information, meeting dates, course description, accessibility statement, course information, course objectives, textbook information, expectations, and a grading scale) was displayed. There was an additional page of an outline of the course schedule, with dates as placeholders and themes from the text. The themes were the focus of this course, including developmental stages, from pre-pregnancy to late adulthood. Therefore, it was easy to have text chapters correspond with the themes because the text went in the same order. There were no assignments listed in the syllabus, as the intention of the first meeting was to facilitate a conversation on the themes of the course and how to achieve knowledge of those themes. The draft syllabus was displayed on the projector and learners were given time to review it. The syllabus cloud activity was introduced and explained, with emphasis that we would build not only the activities for the course but also decide what practice skills they hoped to gain to make the knowledge applicable. Here is a breakdown of the agenda for the initial class meeting:

- For the first 15 minutes, the instructor explained their teaching philosophy, style, and beliefs and how they were informed by adult learning principles. This was a necessary first step because many learners have come from a traditional way of being present in a classroom where the instructor leads or wields power as the knowledge bearer, and they are participants, active or passive.
- Next, for the second 15 minutes, the grading and assessment philosophies were explained. It was explained that their participation in the critical reflection and critique of their peers was also a part of assessment.
- For the third 15 minutes, the Syllabus Cloud activity was introduced.

The Syllabus Cloud Activity

There were four primary steps involved in the syllabus cloud activity:

1. Introduction of main skills to be developed in the course.
2. Learners share fears.
3. Learners make connections.
4. Learners apply new information to problem solve.

A brief introduction of the main skills that learners would gain from the course was described. A few of these skills included studying human development in the social context, examining micro concerns of personal development, and using frameworks to evaluate theoretical explanations for human behavior across the lifespan. Afterwards, the syllabus was displayed on the projector to review the social work competencies and course description. The social work compe-

tencies in this course were engaging and assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). The next step was to invite learners to share their biggest fears. In a slide presentation, the following topics from the course schedule in the syllabus were listed: defining human behavior, pre-pregnancy to early childhood, middle childhood to adolescence, early adulthood to middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Each learner was given several Post-it Notes and asked to write down their top five fears or problems in each category as it related to micro theoretical perspectives that emphasize the biological, psychological, sociological, and diversity dynamics of individual human behavior throughout the life cycle. It was emphasized to learners that the classroom was a protected space, and they were encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and be transparent about fears and concerns.

Next, learners were asked to connect the dots between the activities and fears. Once they had completed writing on the Post-it Notes, they were then asked to pick their top five overall fears and write each one on a separate post-it. After that step was completed, they brought their Post-it Notes to an adjacent wall. It was explained to them that we were going to create problem clouds, an activity where we could see what problems or fears were common among them. A learner was asked to volunteer to read their problem and post it. Afterward, for those remaining, they were asked to look at their Post-it Notes and see if they had similar problems or fears. Those who raised their hand then proceeded to add their Post-it Notes to the wall. This step was repeated until all of the Post-it Notes were on the wall. This act of sharing and grouping was only intended to discuss the content of the Post-it Notes, yet conversations veered into other discussions *about* the Post-it Notes. The last step consisted of learners using the newfound information about fears or problems related to the course. This step was introduced with the statement, “We are going to solve these problems!” After I returned to the podium and pulled up the course schedule, which included dates and tentative deliverables, a column was added using track changes for students’ fears and problems. Using the groupings on the wall, and one by one, an inductive approach was used to analyze their statements based on the five topics of the course. The discussion was largely driven by the learners, with some moving their Post-it Notes to different ‘clouds’ after reconsidering or redefining what their Post-it meant.

Learners were asked to think about how they could address the three themes using course topics—an example of a concern related to adolescent development and parenting. A learner expressed concern that a parent could challenge their skills and knowledge because they did not have children of their own. Interestingly, the dialogue that followed this concern shifted the conversation. The learners came up with several categories of ways or activities that would be helpful in addressing their original perceived limitations. For tracking purposes, notes were recorded, and pictures were taken of the Post-it covered wall. As the class session concluded, we discussed how knowledge obtained from the course would help them solve some of their fears. The class was told that the syllabus would be updated and introduced before the next meeting.

Reflections

With the instructor as a facilitator, learners contributed ideas to create a syllabus for a graduate social work course. The syllabus cloud activity provided an opportunity for collaboration between learners and the instructor while slightly disrupting the traditional vertical hierarchy of education where instructors create a syllabus without input from learners (Freire, 2005; Knipe, 2020). The syllabus cloud activity was designed to move beyond what White (1996) described as nominal participation, that is, a display. It was intentioned that it would support instrumental and representative participation, where learners provided input and had an opportunity to leverage their influence about gathering and using learner input in the beginning stages of the course. This exercise also aimed to provide an opportunity for learners to shift from being consumers of education to co-creators, empowering them as well as exposing them to the issue of unintentionally perpetuating oppressive practices.

There are several important factors that should be considered before conducting the syllabus exercise. First, the exer-

cise may be challenging with larger class sizes and students and instructors who are unfamiliar with each other. The exercise was conducted with a small class of eight students and, therefore, was not difficult to execute with one instructor. Additionally, the instructor had a history with the learners. The established relationship contributed to a level of trust to speak freely and openly.

Secondly, a hallmark of most courses is a syllabus with a completed course schedule and corresponding assignments and activities. Consequently, the presentation of a draft syllabus and the absence of course information could provoke some anxiety or cause some learners to panic, as they look forward to reviewing the syllabus to gain an idea of key due dates and assignments. Departments may have requirements and expectations of teaching faculty to have information documented and publicly available for students, so there would need to be discussion with administrators and agreed-upon terms on how this would look in those instances.

As higher education prepares to accommodate online student learners due to the residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the flexibility that this activity affords needs to be modified for face-to-face, hybrid, and fully online courses. Conducting this exercise in person may look different in larger class sizes (e.g., with 45 learners or more) and require more prep from the instructor. With hybrid courses, creating room during out-of-class time for the review of the draft syllabus will be necessary, as with F2F, budgeting in class time will warrant the same type of consideration. For distance learning courses, this could be handled asynchronous or synchronous, yet also require planning from the instructor.

In addition to preparation, the type of assignments or activities that can be implemented based on the feedback from the activity will vary based on the method of instruction. Given that this course ran for six weeks, with three face-to-face meetings, politics related to participation were not fully explored. As illustrated by White (1996), participation is both a concept and practice (p.144), and it would be ideal to have a distinction of the type of participation this activity could yield (i.e., instrumental and/or representative versus nominal). A 15-week semester would yield more time for development compared to an even shorter term, such as 3- or 4-week accelerated terms. Finally, instructors are reminded to review and adhere to their program's guidelines for the assessment of student learning outcomes. The Council on Social Work Education's (2015) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards requires accredited programs to assess each of the nine social work competencies with two measures. Hence, prior to the syllabus exercise, instructors should identify the benchmarks necessary to measure and report assessment of student learning. As aforementioned, there are things that will limit the sharing of power, and this is one of them. Being able to have candid conversations about this during the activity may help with the power imbalance.

Discussion

Transformative participatory learning and the use of collaborative activities in social work education require that the instructor acknowledge their power and privilege as the facilitator (Mertens, 2007). This is an area that needs further investigation, as it relates to pedagogical practices, and development out into a richer exercise. If this activity was used as a form of evaluation, the positionality of the instructor would need to be assessed to account for variation in the instructor's perception of the outcomes of the activity compared to the learners' perceptions (e.g., Martin & Van Guten, 2002; Wager, 2014). Face-to-face versus online administration of this activity also needs further consideration to determine the advantages and disadvantages that participation play into the experience. While there is not much evidence to support that online learning can reduce certain biases, if the syllabus activity is used for any evaluative purposes, it will need to be modified. A way to address this is to use a summative evaluation of the activity. Summative feedback is another dimension that will add to this activity, as learners' input about their experience in engaging in the activity is paramount. Overall, student feedback post-class and post-course was encouraging. From the course evaluation feedback, a couple of comments were:

- “I like that way that she incorporated some things that we wanted to know and learn into the course.”
- “She encouraged everyone to participate.”
- “This professor is one of my favorites here at [redacted]. She ... knows how to keep everyone engaged.”

Lastly, a formative assessment of the syllabus activity could be insightful for development and use as a pedagogical tool. Exploring a study design with courses where this activity takes place, including questions that reflect the observations based on changes to the syllabus, would be indicators of how learners adopted the syllabus. A systematic investigation of the syllabus activity could address the questions: What do we know about learners who assimilate to syllabi and course content quickly without question compared to those who need more time to process the course information or those who do not understand it, compared to those who helped create it?

The syllabus activity illustrates how instructors can address the power dynamic often experienced in the classroom through a transformative participatory experience. Learners are asked on the first day of class to participate in this activity, allowing for a shift in power for the course. Decentralizing power is an essential step to enhancing social work education and empowering learners to set up the course for their learning experiences, moving instructors from nominal participatory practices to more instrumental and representative practices.

This reflection contributes to a growing body of literature on participatory learning, critical pedagogy, and active engagement. While such anti-oppressive approaches are important, there remains a limited discourse in graduate education about instructional methodologies consistent with this perspective. Moreover, learners are voicing concern about the lack of expansive material and approaches in social work curriculum that address marginalization of not just client systems but also student populations. As Freire (2005) noted, higher education systems were originally designed to mirror an oppressive society; for example, “teacher knows everything and the students know nothing” or “teacher thinks and the students are thought about” (p. 13). The pursuit of anti-oppressive education challenges the hierarchical nature of academic spaces and processes in ways that can be uncomfortable for learners and instructors. Still, anti-oppressive social work education must promote that learners knowingly and critically think about themselves and the world. As a result, from the perspective of Freire, these learners may

... perceive through their relations with reality that reality is really a process, undergoing constant transformation. If men and women are searchers and their ontological vocation is humanization, sooner or later they may perceive the contradiction in which banking education seeks to maintain them, and then engage themselves in the struggle for their liberation. (Freire, 2015, p. 75)

From anti-oppressive approaches, learners can also actualize behaviors consistent with professional competencies. This paper demonstrates how an anti-oppressive ideology using the syllabus activity with graduate students can possibly transform learners to have a more active and collaborative role in teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Graduate education has the capacity to pursue transformative pedagogical practices that benefit learners by way of inclusion and reflective practice. As researchers and educators continue to explore ways that graduate curricula contribute to the marginalization of student populations, we should also seek to answer what differences are made possible by using collaborative and participatory approaches. Graduate students continue to express feelings of unpreparedness and uncertainty soon after they enter the workforce (e.g., Tham & Lynch, 2017; Wilson & Kelly, 2010). By engaging learners in an activity such as the syllabus cloud, instructors model how to empower others by mitigating power imbalances, which is

a skill transferable to the workforce. Therefore, this exercise offers implications for social work programs to understand and apply participatory learning principles in preparation of doctoral students.

This paper has several limitations that readers should consider. Epistemology that demonstrates emancipatory potential was the focus for this teaching observation. As such, the authors chose to use a critical framework based on the contributions of multiple theorists and scholars, however, it is recognized that it is not without challenges as well as opportunities. To be noted is that this is only one position to take when examining relational dynamics between instructors and learners. There are other epistemological positions to contemplate when considering relationships that have hierarchical dynamics. There are several theories that can be included when examining underlying assumptions about life. A major criticism of critical theories is that they can present narrow rationales, mirroring the cultures they are seeking to change (Marzagora, 2016). For this reason, it would be important that in future observations and studies, scholars seek to use other theories to explore the influence, as there are multiple bodies of knowledge that support collaborative research in this area and can produce strong research and be successful. Another limitation is that while emancipatory paradigms are beneficial, they can fall short on challenging existing power structures (Kinsler, 2010). This is another area that will benefit from future inquiry, testing, and evaluation.

For future applications, instructors would need to consider how to accommodate class differences. One consideration would be to have a pre- and post-test to assess perceptions of power and relational dynamics. Including sociodemographic information of the learners would also be important as well as ranking and discipline for further analysis. An additional measure to consider would be on feelings of empowerment, as one of the goals of the activity is to embrace liberatory practices. Assessing how learners rate the activity and the outcomes of the course as a result of the activity would be important and insightful. For larger classes, instructors would need additional preparation to facilitate the activity and guide the students. Larger classes might consider using learning management systems to collect these suggested data as well as software to facilitate the cloud construction (i.e., programs like Padlet or live polling mechanisms). Additionally, learners would need reassurance that their level of engagement would not negatively impact their grade. Instructors would need to be creative in how they achieve this, yet it is important to consider for future applications. Lastly, considerations for online courses versus in-person classes would include budgeting time and levels of interaction.

This syllabus cloud activity demonstrates how to intentionally flatten power structures within a classroom to mitigate imbalances for learners. The activity, in the opinion of the authors, cultivates a collaborative learning environment that can lead to learner empowerment and increase participation and motivation for learning. By adopting this exercise, developing and current educators can become more effective instructors who model collaborative and liberatory approaches to education. Through this exercise, learners apply principles of critical thinking, reflective practice, and heightened awareness relative to their education. For educators who desire to provide adult learners with valuable skills that can be applied to learn anything, in academia, career, or life, we must be willing to support the process of learning in different ways and reject traditional, behavior-based pedagogies.

References

- Abdullah, C., Karpowitz, C. F., & Raphael, C. (2016). Affinity groups, enclave deliberation, and equity. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 12(2), Article 6. http://ckarpowitz.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Abdullah-Karpowitz-Raphael_JPD_Affinity-Groups-Enclave-Deliberation-and-Equity.pdf
- Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Goodman, D. J., & Joshi, K. Y. (2016). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. Routledge.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). *Higher-impact educational practice*. <https://www.aacu.org/node/4084>
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Harvard University Press.

- Basham, K. K., Donner, S., & Everett, J. E. (2001). A controversial commitment. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 21(1-2), 157-174. <https://doi.org/d78nq3>
- Berila, B. (2016). *Integrating mindfulness into anti-oppression pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Bohman, J., Flynn, J., & Celikates, R. (2019). *Critical Theory*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/>
- Bozalek, V., & Biersteker, L. (2010). Exploring power and privilege using participatory learning and action techniques. *Social Work Education*, 29(5), 551-572. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615470903193785>
- Brown, D. L., Rosnick, C. B., & Segrist, D. J. (2016). Internalized racial oppression and higher education values: The mediational role of academic locus of control among college African American men and women. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 43(4), 358-380. <https://doi.org/f93phx>
- Council on Social Work Education. (2015). *2015 educational policy and accreditation standards*. https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx
- Deck, S. M., Conner, L., & Cambron, S. (2017). Students' perceptions of service-learning in an advanced research course. *Advances in Social Work*, 18(2), 456-473. <https://doi.org/fcsk>
- Drabble, L., Sen, S., & Oppenheimer, S. Y. (2012). Integrating a transcultural perspective into the social work curriculum: A descriptive and exploratory study. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 32(2), 204-221. <https://doi.org/fcsm>
- Freire Institute. (n.d.). Concepts used by Paulo Freire. <https://www.freire.org/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire>
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. (Original work published 1970)
- Gitterman, A. (2004). Interactive andragogy: Principles, methods, and skills. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 24(3-4), 95-112. <https://doi.org/dxdhjj>
- Hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.
- Hudd, S. (2003). Syllabus under construction: Involving students in the creation of class assignments. *Teaching Sociology*, 31(2), 195-202. <https://doi.org/frxfjr>
- Hunt, E. (2019). *My classroom is not a safe space*. Human Parts. <https://humanparts.medium.com/my-classroom-is-not-a-safe-space-406927bfeab6>
- Ismail, E. & Groccia, J. (2018). Students engaged in learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, (154), 45-54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20290>
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). *Critical constructivism primer*. P. Lang.
- Kinsler, K. (2010). The utility of educational action research for emancipatory change. *Action Research*, 8 (2), 171-189. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/10.1177/1476750309351357>
- Knipe, M. R. (2020). Promoting critical consciousness in undergraduate social work classrooms. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 40(4), 372-384. <https://doi.org/fcsn>
- Knowles, M. (1990). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (4th ed.). Gulf Publishing.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (6th ed.). Elsevier.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2006). Toward an anti-oppressive theory of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 9(1), 129-135. <https://doi.org/fvj9q5>
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1170593>
- Manke, M. (1997). *Classroom power relations: Understanding student-teacher interaction*. Routledge.
- Marzagora, S. (2016). The humanism of reconstruction: African intellectuals, decolonial critical theory and the opposition to the 'posts' (postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism). *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 28 (2), 161-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2016.1152462>

- Martin, R., & Van Gunten, D. M. (2002). Reflected identities: Applying positionality and multicultural social reconstructionism in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 44–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053001005>
- Mertens, D. (2007). Transformative paradigm: Mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(3), 212–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689807302811>
- Missingham, B. (2014). Participatory learning and popular education strategies for water education. *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education*, 150(1), 34–40. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1936-704X.2013.03133.x>
- Lang, J. (2020, July 22). *The promising syllabus*. Retrieved October 08, 2020, from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-promising-syllabus/>
- Payne, Y. A., & Suddler, C. (2014). Cope, conform, or resist? Functions of a Black American identity at a predominantly White university. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 47(3), 385–403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2014.933756>
- Pacansky-Brock, M., Smedshammer, M., & Vincent-Layton, K. (2020). Humanizing online teaching to equitize higher education. *Current Issues in Education*, 21(2), 1–21. <https://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/1905>
- Perlman, H. H. (1975). *Social casework, a problem-solving process*. University of Chicago Press.
- Saleebey, D. (2013). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Sankofa, N. (2021). Transformative needs assessment methodology: A mixed approach for organizations serving marginalized communities. *The American Journal of Evaluation*, 42(4), 505–522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214020960798>
- Sidky, G. (2017). The power fame: Power dynamics between the teacher and the students in a graduate seminar. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 179–192. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p179>
- Simmons, N., Barnard, M., & Fennema, W. (2011). Participatory pedagogy: A compass for transformative learning? *Creative Teaching and Learning*, 4, 88–94. <https://doi.org/10.22329/celt.v4i0.3278>
- Strong, A. (2007). Educating for power: How higher education contributes to the stratification of social class. *The Vermont Connection*, 28, 51–59. <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol28/iss1/6>
- Taylor, P., & Fransman, J. (2003, December). Learning and teaching participation in institutions of higher learning: Overview. PLA notes, 4–9. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G02059.pdf>
- Tham, P., & Lynch, D. (2017). ‘Lost in transition?’ – Newly educated social workers’ reflections on their first months in practice. *European Journal of Social Work*, 22(3), 400–411. <https://doi.org/gbvsw5>
- Tilbury, C., Osmond, J., & Scott, T. (2010). Teaching critical thinking in social work education: A literature review. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 11(1), 31–50. <http://www.aaswww.asn.au/journal.php>
- Varghese, M., Daniels, J. R., & Park, C. C. (2019). Structuring disruption within university-based teacher education programs: Possibilities and challenges of race-based caucuses. *Teachers College Record*, 121(4), 1–34. <https://static1.square-space.com/static/5a4c047490bade38480c4fb4/t/5efd034bd5e1d93be95dcfa7/1593639756120/Vargheseetal.+%281%29+%28002%29.pdf>
- Wager, A. (2014). Noticing children’s participation: Insights into teacher positionality toward equitable mathematics pedagogy. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 45(3), 312–350.
- Wagner A., & Yee, J. (2011). Anti-oppression in higher education: Implicating neo-liberalism. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 28(1), 89–105. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41658835>
- White, S. (1996). Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation. *Development in Practice*, 6(1), 6–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0961452961000157564>
- Wheeler, L., Pamer, M., & Aneece, I. (2019). Students’ perceptions of course syllabi: The role of syllabi in motivating students. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.20429/ijstl.2019.130307>

- Williams, M. K. (2017). John Dewey in the 21st century. *Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education*, 9(1), 91-102. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158258.pdf>
- Wilson, G., & Kelly, B. (2010). Evaluating the effectiveness of social work education: Preparing students for practice learning. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(8), 2431-2449. <https://doi.org/f4v>
- Winkel, D. (2020, June 06). Build your entrepreneurship syllabus with your students. Retrieved October 08, 2020, from <https://www.teachingentrepreneurship.org/dynamic-entrepreneurship-syllabus/>

ON BECOMING ONLINE EDUCATORS:

Developing Hybrid Learning-Centered Pedagogy

Rachel Toncelli, Ed.D. and Leila Rosa, Ph.D.

Abstract

Recent global events pushed in-person learning to online formats. As K-12 teachers struggled with shifting from in-person to online teaching while adapting and adjusting instruction, and higher education prepared to do the same, two faculty members in a TESOL teacher preparation program joined forces to question assumptions about online teaching, reflect on praxis, and revisit pedagogy and practices through a critical autoethnographic study. Building from adult constructivist learning theory and collegial inquiry, the researchers utilized the pandemic as a stage for innovation and an opportunity to study their own ability, as teacher educators, to adapt and develop in changing circumstances. Researcher journals, course evaluations, student projects, and recorded classes and discussions were analyzed to question assumptions about online pedagogy, perceptions of professors and students, and what innovation could accompany the return to face-to-face learning or hybrid models. This article presents their findings and offers a discussion about the importance of faculty re-envisioning pedagogical practices that move beyond traditional lectures in favor of a more learning-centered classroom which prioritizes problem solving and applying new knowledge in a variety of contexts. Furthermore, the researchers note the importance of collegial inquiry to innovating higher education.

Keywords: online pedagogy, teacher education, adult constructivist learning theory, collegial inquiry, experiential learning, higher education, faculty development

Introduction

In March of 2020, campus life came to an abrupt halt while the COVID-19 pandemic took hold globally. As university faculty, we made an unexpected shift from in-person, on-campus teacher education classes into online, off-campus experiences. This abrupt shift raised anxieties, leaving us all searching for ways to adapt activities, engage students, and present content in innovative ways.

The nature of our work in teacher education came to the forefront. Teacher education consists of a duality between presentation of theory and research and the modeling of pedagogical strategy. The teacher educator explicitly uses the act of teaching to simulate the methods of teaching; such practices focus not only on delivering and discovering content but also in showing what that content looks like in classrooms. For many, conducting class online was especially challenging because modeling pedagogical strategies felt impossible without the four walls of the classroom. We have spent the previous decades ranting about the importance of preparing teachers for the twenty-first century student and seamless engagement with online platforms was baked into the narrative. We felt the weight of this responsibility and with it came the need to look into our own knowledge, skills, and comfort in working in a high-tech environment. The demand was

to “address the challenge while [...] in the act of working on it” (Wagner, as cited in Drago-Severson, 2016, p.39). We were living in surreal times.

Furthermore, around this time, Critical Race Theory (CRT) came under fire. CRT views the structures within which we work from the perspective of the interaction between race, racism and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As teacher educators in a Teachers of English Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program, we felt confused about the increased attacks on CRT, which was the underpinning of all of our work. We were in the eye of the storm, subsequent to conservative media attacks and the misportrayal of CRT (Hess, 2021). The context made the teaching of criticality challenging due to the polarization of the matter. And for the first time we saw images of parents protesting about CRT in front of schools. The impact, in particular for us, was frontal. We work with teachers who teach racialized, ethnically and linguistically diverse student populations. These populations are on the rise, yet schools are failing them as evidenced by lower achievement outcomes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; Sanchez, 2017). We were now feeling and clearly seeing what Zinn (2014) has said: teaching is an entirely political act.

While we were bearing the brunt of the moment, other faculty were eager for a return to “normal.” This was audible in the form of questions about when we would return to face-to-face classes and in comments about the stress of the moment. Minor (2021) reminds us that “[a]s soon as the pandemic hit, there [was] this really toxic discourse about, ‘When are we going to get back to normal?’” (Minor, C. as cited in Ehrenhalt, p. 48). For us, this was not an option. We could see how the pandemic was disproportionately affecting the racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse K-12 learners, children that our students would be or were already teaching. These events and our positions as untenured faculty challenged and shook us. From this position, we knew that our interventions in faculty meetings had to be measured against the reality of our professional futures.

Additionally, we felt concerned that an opportunity to revisit our pedagogy and practices would be wasted. Certain “that normal we left behind left far too many people at the margins” (Minor, C. as cited in Ehrenhalt, 2021, p. 48), we saw disruption as a needed opportunity in our field. We considered the pandemic a disaster that afforded us the opportunity to question and redesign a new normal. Instructors around the globe shared in the shift to online teaching. During the pandemic, 91% of universities around the world transitioned to online teaching (Oliveira et al., 2021). Prior to this emergency, however, higher education that focused on “classroom interactions solely [was] becoming outdated” (Oliveira et al., 2021, p. 359). Change was already needed prior to the pandemic.

Our mission to develop critical teachers who challenge hegemonic power imbalances in school and society which marginalize non-dominant racialized, cultural, and linguistic students and families further underscored this need for change. The intent of teacher education “has been to support novices to develop a vision of high-quality teaching that is content-rich, rigorous, and meaningful to students, and which novices can enact in their classrooms” (McDonald, Kazemi, & Schneider Kavanagh, 2013, p. 379) yet, despite this intent, teacher education has failed to create teachers who can fully operationalize critical practices (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018) that challenge hegemonic positions and lead to teacher advocates that are socially justice-minded. Thus, prior to the pandemic, additional research into teacher educator pedagogy was already past due. Becoming online practitioners forced us to abandon customary routines and practices and renegotiate why and how we do what we do.

Immediately, we took the opportunity to look within and conduct analysis of how our perceptions changed and opened the space to reconsider, question and reflect on our assumptions and practices about in-person versus online teaching and teacher education. This focus on adult development, and our own development, within the realm of teacher education, was essential as a correlation between educator learning and improved student learning outcomes exists (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 7). Online study became the reality so our pedagogical approaches should purposefully and critically adapt. In the consideration of returning to “normal,” we seek additional discussion of how to innovate towards a better normal through this study. Though CRT and fostering justice-oriented teachers are essential requirements of our work, the focus of this study is not how we are grounded in CRT or how we develop socially-minded teach-

ers; instead, our purpose is critical self-analysis of our teaching trajectory, during this very particular moment, to consider ongoing pedagogical improvement.

Research Questions

The central questions guiding this research are:

- In what ways have our perceptions changed in terms of face-to-face versus online teaching and learning?
- What are our perceptions about student engagement and achievement?
- What are our perceptions about how our professional positionality is altered in online teaching?
- What learning can we take with us should we return to face-to-face teaching?

Theoretical Framework

Following Kolb and Kolb (2005), we understand learning as a process which requires reflection on concrete experience. Thus,

all learning is relearning. Learning is best facilitated by a process that draws out students' beliefs and ideas about a topic, so that they can be examined, tested, and integrated with the new, more refined ideas. (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194).

Because adults bring more established and varied experiences and knowledge to new learning, and because we were reflecting not only on the learning of the adult students in our courses but also on our own ability to adapt in changing circumstances, this study was guided by adult learning theory. We have viewed our experiences and that of our students from the lens of Adult Constructivist-Developmental (ACD) Theory as first conceptualized by Kegan (1982; 2018) and extended to include collegial inquiry by Drago-Severson (2009). We explore ACD and describe how collegial inquiry guided this study.

Kegan notes that ACD considers “adult meaning making [as] a relational theory that places the thinking and acting person within a complex context” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 248). A constructivist theory of learning must first attend to learner epistemologies; ACD posits that adults not only change our meanings but also the very form by which we are making our meanings (Kegan, 2018). Thus, ACD considers not only diverse ways of knowing but also changing ways of knowing as development occurs. To better understand this distinction, a closer look at the three specific tenets of Kegan's ACD, constructivism, developmentalism, and the subject-object balance is essential.

Constructivism

Constructivism posits that we make meaning from our lived experiences (Drago-Severson, 2016) and “build a self through interpersonal pathways” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 248). According to Chang (2021), “people construct knowledge from activities and reflections rather than passively absorbing information” (p. 7), and constructivism builds from the premise that meaning making, and therefore knowledge construction, happens dynamically in the negotiation of lived experiences and new interactions, thus allowing the “complex context” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 248) of individual identities and experiences to factor into ways of knowing.

Developmentalism

ACD is also founded on the notion of developmentalism, which recognizes that adult growth is possible (Drago-Severson, 2016) and offers “hopeful principles about how to support adult growth so we can better manage the complexities of 21st century life” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 33). Adults need to adapt to changing circumstances (Kegan, 2018) and that developmental theory must account for the dynamics of “relationships to authority, responsibility, ambiguity and complexity” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 33). Developmentalism posits that adults progress through various stages of mental complexity, each with a unique way of knowing which stage affects approaches to incorporating new knowledge; these include the instrumental mind, the socializing mind, the self-authoring mind, and the self-transforming mind (Kegan, 1982). When approaching learning from an instrumental way of knowing, adults tend to treat learning transactionally; the instrumental knower has a “what do you have that can help me” (Stewart and Wolodko, 2016, p. 68) approach to knowledge creation. Accordingly, learning is about the “stor[ing] and process[ing] of information” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 250) with a focus on the “right” answer in a given situation (Drago-Severson, 2016; Stewart & Wolodko, 2016). Instrumental knowers seek learning contexts which provide them with information and a sense that a clear right and wrong answer exists.

In contrast, adults who learn from a socializing way of knowing have a more developed ability to think in psychologically abstract ways (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016), but they remain “other-focused...[and] often subordinate their needs to the needs of others” (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 68). Socializing minds are “strongly influenced by the opinions and expectations of the social milieu and culture” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 251), so they may feel compelled to align themselves with dominant norms of their learning contexts and communities. Socializing knowers will benefit from learning contexts which help them navigate collaboration with others to find their own voices so as to resist the urge to succumb to peer norms (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016).

Where socializing knowers require support developing their voices, self-authoring knowers are reflective enough about themselves and their contexts to recognize how their ways of knowing may differ from perceived norms (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016). The self-authoring knower “[has] developed the capacity to generate their own value systems and long-term purposes” (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 68). Despite this reflective state, self-authoring knowers “struggle with transforming their deeply held personal frames of reference or mindsets to make sense of new experience” (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016, p. 251). In contrast, the self-transforming mind is one that can see their own cultural lens and the effect of their lived experiences on their knowing (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016). These learners will naturally focus their attention on a more broad understanding of their overall learning and will benefit from learning contexts which allow them choice and agency (Stewart & Wolodko, 2016). Advancing adult development requires that learning is facilitated with scaffolds that consider that adult learners may be at any of these different epistemological places (Drago-Severson, 2016).

The Subject-Object Balance

As adults make epistemological shifts, there is an accompanying shift in the subject-object balance (Kegan, 1982; Kegan, 2018; Drago-Severson, 2009). This subject-object balance, which is an adult’s ability to reflect on themselves, is the third tenet of ACD. More specifically, this notion reflects “the relationship between what we can take a perspective on (hold as ‘object’) and what we are embedded in and cannot see or be responsible for (are ‘subject to’)” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 37). Thus, as adults’ ways of knowing become more reflexive, so expands their ability to see more as objects. This expanding worldview is the focus of our work as teacher educators, but also as we consider our own learning.

Collegial Inquiry

To consider our own learning, we rely on Drago-Severson's (2009; 2016) extension of ACD to include collegial inquiry, which "involves purposefully reflecting on one's own assumptions with one or more partners to further stretch one's seeing, thinking, and feelings" (Drago-Severson, 2016, p. 77). However, collaboration of this sort requires trust among collaborators (Drago-Severson, 2009); in related research, Sverdup and Schei (2015) suggest that genuine collaboration requires a sense of psychological safety. When these conditions are established, engaging in reflective practice with peers can "help us to develop a deeper understanding of our assumptions on our thoughts and actions" (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 157). This notion of collegial inquiry has guided our process.

Methodology

Qualitative Research Approach

This qualitative study uses a critical autoethnographic approach, which builds on the tradition of ethnographic research. Ethnography explores and makes meaning of a "culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In traditional ethnography, researchers seek objective distance from the culture-sharing group. A major critique of ethnography is this "crisis of representation" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 475) through which ethnographers claim authority to interpret a cultural group. In response to this critique, autoethnography, or the systematic analysis of personal experience, "challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, History of Autoethnography section, para. 1). Autoethnography recognizes the duality of a researcher as both researcher and participant within a culture-sharing group; researchers become the source of emic and etic data (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and offer their positionality and context to help the reader interpret the study. Autoethnography transparently shares the study's goal of offering truth as it is understood from the perspective of the researcher and not as if it represents a more global or absolute Truth (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). By refuting the notion of objective truth, autoethnography is "value-centered rather than pretending to be value-free" (Ellis et al., 2011, History of Autoethnography section, para. 3). Because the researcher is woven into the story, the urge to colonize the meaning of a culture-sharing group is diminished and the recognition that the researcher fundamentally affects the research is recognized (Ellis et al., 2011).

We used a *critical* autoethnographic approach which focuses on "changing the status quo" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 479) and was developed "in response to current society, in which the systems of power, prestige, privilege, and authority serve to marginalized individuals who are from different classes, races, and genders" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 92). Critical autoethnography is a "space for free speech, decolonized inquiry, and advocacy" (Holman Jones, 2021, p. 217) which "seeks a counternarrative to traditional qualitative research that positions the researcher as an omniscient expert" (Tilley-Lubbs, 2018, p.17). We recognize the privilege ascribed to our roles as university professors, yet also seek to explore the nuances of the hierarchies within academia and at the intersection of other aspects of our identities. We seek Freirian praxis (Freire, 2016) through which we engage in a learning dialectic alongside our students, and, as critical autoethnographers of this work, we also recognize that Freire's "conscientization is a fluid state, one that can only occur when we are willing to constantly confront our power and privilege" (Tilley-Lubbs, 2018, p. 13-14). In critical autoethnography, "theory and story exist in a mutually influential relationship" (Holman Jones, 2016, p. 229) as the researcher uses a theoretical lens to understand and tell the story of their experience within the culture-sharing group. In this study, we turned to theory, to our inner understandings, and to each other to make sense of our perceptions and experiences. This collective endeavor was conducted when the "world was in the throes of a global pandemic, racial vio-

lence, and environmental disaster” (Holman Jones, 2021, p. 217), and this collectivity served as a means for survival and sensemaking. Ellis et al. (2011) note that the co-constructed narratives of a critical autoethnography “illustrate the meanings of relational experiences, particularly how people collectively cope” (Autoethnographic Potentials, Issues, and Criticisms section, para. 9). In preparation for a return to “normal,” we use critical autoethnography to take with us the lessons learned to advocate for an enhanced new normal.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data for this study was collected and analyzed during the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning with our own journals and recorded meetings at the outset of the pandemic. In addition to capturing our individual experiences through journals and recordings of our discussions with each other, we gathered and reviewed course syllabi, evaluations, final projects, and class recordings for faculty-student and student-student interactions. Transcriptions, journals, and additional data were gathered as a collection of field notes and reviewed separately by each researcher who labeled units of text to “generate an overall cultural interpretation of the group from the analysis” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 95). We, the researchers, then compared the outcome of interpretations, which allowed for a measure of inter-rater reliability at > 87%. This process permitted collaborative sensemaking of our lived experiences.

The analysis process was ongoing as we consulted research and each other through the Spring of 2020 and, subsequently, the 2020-2021 academic year; this dynamic ethnographic analysis process allowed us to reflect and revise our practices as we navigated changing circumstances. We have pivoted repeatedly through changing circumstances and have gathered what we learned here to promote additional discussion.

Validity and Ethical Concerns

We do not purport a representative truth; rather, we foreground our own identities and professional context for readers to interpret the meaning of this work within their own contexts and applications. Following Boghossian (2006), we recognize a constructivist notion of truth which reflects “the idea that there are multiple perspectives, interpretations and truths, and that each perspective has its own validity” (p. 715). We embrace the recognition in Ellis et al. (2011) that autoethnography “is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher’s influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don’t exist” (History of Autoethnography section, para. 3). This study contains our collective understanding.

From an ethical perspective, because autoethnographers are *in* the research location, protecting the anonymity of our research location and colleagues becomes difficult, and we run the risk of “implicat[ing] others in our work” (Ellis, et al., 2011, Relational Ethics section, para. 1). To protect our colleagues’ privacy, we have not referenced any individual colleagues in an identifiable way, and we have asked peers from our shared research location to review this study for fairness and contextual accuracy. For this study, Researchers 1 and 2 were the only collaborators due to the need for trust and psychological safety within a larger hierarchy. No funding supported this research, and there are no competing interests to declare.

Cultural Context, Researcher Reflexivity, and the Collaborative Effort

To interpret the meaning of this study, a clear picture of the culture-sharing group as well as researcher identity is essen-

tial. In this section, we define our cultural context, explore our positionality, and frame the collaborative effort that guided this study.

Cultural Context

We prepare in-service educators to support multilingual learners in their PK-Adult classrooms. Our mission is to prepare educators to be highly effective, reflective, engaged, and equity-focused, and so our work centers the development of social-justice oriented teachers. Because multilingual students are on the rise in K-12 schools and their educational outcomes lag behind those of their English-speaking peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; Sanchez, 2017), our work preparing their teachers has an ongoing sense of urgency.

Yet no sense of urgency could prepare us for 2020. We left our offices for spring break in early March and soon learned that we would not be returning. We would complete the remainder of the semester online, and we were given an additional week to reinvent courses for this new medium of instruction. We quickly learned that not all faculty were starting from the same technological experience levels. Some had never used the college's online learning management system, and others, including ourselves, had some experience using these platforms. None of us had taught classes fully online, so the learning curve was steep. We had to rise to this adaptive challenge quickly because our students needed us to.

This adaptive challenge was greater for our students in the TESOL program because they are teachers in local public school systems who were stretched to their own limits at work. In addition to navigating a new approach to their graduate studies with us, they too were reinventing themselves at work. We all became remote educators, and, for some, teaching became a combination of masked-and-distanced-in-person teaching while also livestreaming to students at home. The means of instructional delivery changed regularly, so supporting graduate-student learning in this context required patience, flexibility, and a willingness to pivot alongside ever-changing circumstances.

Initially, we expected the pandemic to subside quickly and we could not imagine that the entire 2020-2021 academic year would be online as well. Whatever sense of reactive urgency we had in that first semester to give ourselves leeway was no longer acceptable in the following year, for which we had experience and time to prepare. We learned much about teaching, learning, and ourselves that we feel compelled to take back to our physical classrooms or continued online learning. To understand these lessons, it is first necessary that we share who we are and the nature of our collaboration.

Researcher Reflexivity

Peercy et al. (2019) recognize that, though there is a gap in the literature regarding the effect of teacher educators' identities on students and learning, teacher educators' social identities interact with their professional identities, and "harnessing the intersections between their professional and social identities benefitted students" (p. 4). Thus, to encourage sensemaking of our work, we center and make transparent who we are.

I, Researcher 1, negotiate a privileged identity and perspective-expanding experiences. As a white, English-speaking, educated, heterosexual, middle-class woman in the United States, I have easy access to privilege. However, beyond this surface description, I am an individual who has learned much, and continues to learn, from experiences and others. I am a bilingual who has lived, studied, and worked outside of the United States and has struggled to maintain my own children's bilingualism in an English-dominant educational context. I have worked with multilingual students from around the world. From them, I learned much about my own cultural perspective. They have helped me see the world through their cultural, linguistic, and racialized experiences, all of which has created within me the ongoing desire to check my own privilege and perspective. I see my role in education not as a teacher who owns a classroom, but as a partner in an educational endeavor in which we can all learn from each other. As a university professor, a certain level of power is auto-

matically ascribed to my status, yet this too is a more complex role than it appears from the surface. Within the university hierarchy, I reside at the bottom in an untenured, limited-term position. While this does not affect the importance ascribed to my work, it does negatively impact my sense of security and my level of comfort in shaking the system.

I, Researcher 2, am painfully aware that in most environments I occupy, I stand out as different. I am a bilingual immigrant, woman of color. When I must tell others that I am African born, I often feel I am understood as “exotic,” and secretly hope that the first picture that comes to the mind of my listener is not that of a starving child. I did not begin by feeling different or exotic. Often, in my quiet moments, I try to pinpoint when these feelings began. I have gone as far back as five years old, when a blonde blue-eyed grandmother admonished me about speaking Cape Verdean and demanded a quick switch to Portuguese, the acceptable language of the colonizer. I learned that there is right and wrong in the world and that most “wrong” things were within me. This knowledge lingers to this day and requires constant repositioning within any context I enter. I have become sensitive to who those around me are and this results in extreme care about what I say and when and how I speak. In faculty meetings, I am aware that most do not look like me. In front of a class, I also notice that the majority, sometimes all, are not like me. I have learned to use language in ways that maximizes acceptance by placing a veil over my identity, so, in many instances, I will use a “we” despite being aware that I am not part of the “we.” Sometimes in order to become acceptable, I must provide verbal alleys to allow others the opportunity to apologize or self-protect. I constantly feel responsible for understanding the ignorance of others and this can be deeply exhausting.

Our Collaborative Effort

Because we bring diverse experiences and realities to our work, we recognize that collaboration drives our ability to reflect, share, and innovate. Cloud (2021) notes that “[d]iversity of experience and background is important for *collective efficacy* to be achieved” (para. 1; italics in original); such efficacy “draw[s] on the cultural, linguistic, personal, professional and social capital that each of us bring to any worthwhile task” (Cloud, 2021, para. 1). Our diversity is our strength, and work fostering social-justice oriented educators “is more powerful when done collectively” (Picower, 2021, p. 19). In our collaboration, we have supported each other’s individual endeavors, perhaps recognizing in each other shared values and shared circumstances within the university hierarchy. If teaching in K-12 schools is an act of love (Love, 2019), so, too, is teacher education, and so mutual respect and care are essential to genuine collaboration. This care has been serendipitous— we cannot credit academia. In the process of tenure and promotion, work done alone is weighted more heavily than collaborative work. Despite this, and perhaps as our own coping mechanism within our professional system, we developed a relationship of trust and psychological safety which allowed for the vulnerability required to deeply engage in critical autoethnography and the reinvention of our professional practices.

Looking to the Literature, Within, and to Each Other: Shared Cultural Perceptions and Shifts

We have recorded here some of the perceptions that we held and perceived from colleagues regarding our roles as professors, who our students are, and what happened when we shifted from a physical to a virtual learning space. As we compared our field notes and reviewed the literature, we were forced to challenge these perceptions, which dramatically affected our pedagogical choices. In the next sections, we review these perceptions and share the experiences, literature, and reflection that continues to advance our thinking.

Cultural Perceptions About Professors

As we shifted into online teaching, we believed that professors were simultaneously de-skilled by this type of work, yet also buried under more busy work. We worried that faculty would not be as happy with online teaching and would also struggle with having less control and more superficial relationships with students in online classes. The emergency shift to online learning pushed us all to our limits, but as untenured faculty, we understood this pressure in uniquely personal ways. Researcher 2 noted some of these feelings early on in her personal journal:

I struggled with the idea of delivering online classes. Deep down I felt that the sessions would quickly be boring, hierarchical and isolating for students. I always insisted on classes that were interactive, discussion-based, hands-on. Delivering via online platforms felt like a huge compromise that challenged my creativity. (*Researcher 2 journal entry*)

We collectively worried about being obsolete and that teaching online would make us invisible to our students. We believed that we were somehow dehumanized when working behind screens, yet we also had to confront that perhaps what we had been doing in teacher-education, as a field, was not achieving its own goals and needed revamping.

According to Johnson and Golombek (2020), the focus of Language Teacher Education (LTE) is often on teacher knowledge with inadequate focus on what and why certain activities are chosen. Classroom engagements can be understood as unfolding simultaneously along two paths; first, the development of essential content knowledge required to be an effective TESOL teacher, and, second, the evaluation of teacher educator pedagogy as a potential model for effective teaching practice. Though teacher educators are initially prepared via rigorous academic credentials, “we lack robust scholarship on how second language teacher educators develop — as scholar-practitioners, as researchers and the implications for teacher learning” (Sharkey, 2018, p. 16). In general, pre-pandemic, we tweaked our course content and approach from semester to semester, but the pandemic provided the necessary push to rethink every single aspect of our courses. While challenging and exhausting, this felt like a necessary renewal. Though we had prided ourselves on creating interactive in-person classes, and we strove to engage in a dialectic with students, we were also still professors who, willingly or not, wielded the power that standing in the front of the classroom grants; thus, we were in charge of guiding the conversation and surely who we are as individuals had an impact on the learning. Shifting the medium of instruction forced us to completely break free from the habitus of our work which otherwise may have only shifted gradually. In essence, we were confronting our own fear, which we believe stemmed largely from our lack of experience with online teaching (Darby & Lang, 2019, p. xix). That is, we had countless mental models of what classroom interactions were and what professors did in those contexts, but fewer (or no) models of what online professors did (Darby & Lang, 2019). We had to learn by doing in a process of trial, error, and a willingness to pivot.

This process mirrored the McDonald et al. (2013) definition of “learning [as] a process that occurs over time in interaction with the particular settings in which and students with whom teachers learn to teach” (p. 381). We began to consider a framework for teacher education that abandons traditional lecture and embraces a process of learning from and with our students through modeling, practice enacting approaches and strategies, field experiences, and analysis (McDonald et al., 2013). Rather than the invisibility we assumed we would have online, we became more purposeful in the course design and engagement, but what also became essential was deeper thinking and transparency about why we ask students to do everything they do. Guided by Darby and Lang’s (2019) model for backwards design in online teaching, we reinvented our courses around target learning outcomes and then explicitly named the objectives for engaging with certain readings and types of activities so that no one fell into traps of busywork. It was more work to design online experiences and interactions in this way, but it was purposeful; rather than having less control, Researcher 1 noted:

Though I was originally concerned about how I could possibly cover all the content necessary to my course and still ensure students could apply their new knowledge, I noticed something unexpected. As I began designing new approaches to cov-

ering content and new application exercises, my students had to be more prepared to participate. I think before I had gotten the students used to only superficial preparation because they could come to class and I would explain whatever was challenging, yet, designing some asynchronous distance between their participation, and requiring them to participate before I offered feedback actually led to enhanced and deeper engagement. They became more independent and really dove into the content. I can't help but question to what extent my own pleasure at running a classroom might actually impede learning. This really has me thinking about my role as facilitator instead of lecturer. (*Researcher 1, journal entry*)

We had worried about being deskilled in an online context. In contrast, we found that careful design of asynchronous learning experiences demanded much skill, but also put students in control of their learning. This required more effort, more struggle than the comfortable classroom experiences we were all used to, yet this struggle can be essential to learning (Lang, 2021). Rather than a reliance on professors, our students dove into a series of curated experiences, which gave them agency and more control of the timing of their engagement. For example, students in Researcher 1's course in applied linguistics in TESOL were asked to analyze multilingual learner writing samples. Prior to online teaching, Researcher 1 would group the students and have them do the analysis together with her feedback as they worked, but this did allow for less confident students to receive support immediately or to take a back seat as others completed the group work. In contrast, during online courses, we did this work asynchronously on a shared platform, which allowed for the less confident students to first review peer responses and re-engage with readings and/or recorded lectures if they needed extra support before adding to the analysis themselves. This "struggle" led to the collective analysis achieving greater detail and depth. Ultimately, in this online experience, all students had to engage on their own before Researcher 1 weighed in with additional commentary and feedback. In becoming facilitators to learning, rather than lecturers, and by providing much feedback to asynchronous interactions, we engaged with our students regularly but could feel their engagement went further than in our traditional pre-pandemic practices. In course evaluations, students appreciated the regularity of the interaction with us and also the flexibility of asynchronous learning. In stepping aside—not out or away but aside—to create a pathway for interactive engagement for learning, our roles remained essential to the process though in completely new and productive ways. In comparing final projects from before and during online teaching, Researcher 1 noted a significant increase in the depth and quality of her students' work. Chakrabarti (2020) suggests that, after the pandemic subsides, educators will have to redesign the interaction with students and will have to "learn to teach in smaller chunks, create 'hooks' that sustain the learner's interest through surprise and suspense, and design arcs of learning that increase in intensity as the experience progresses." Johnson and Golombek (2020) "argue that greater attention to the design, enactment, and consequences of LTE pedagogy is critical in order to meet the needs of current and future English language teachers in an increasingly diverse, mobile, unequal, and globalized world" (p. 117). Our growth along this trajectory is only just beginning though we see its merits for faculty and students.

As noted in a recorded discussion below, we were hesitant about how we could build enough of a human connection with our students to foster the criticality that the TESOL field needs:

–*"How will we build relationships with our students?"*

–*"I am worried about how we can foster their criticality—really push their thinking—when we aren't even in the same physical space as they are."*

(excerpts from researchers' recorded discussion)

Though our initial worry was about being invisible to our students, we found unexpected advantages. As we shifted to online learning, our ability to push our students, in terms of critical reflection of their own racialized, cultural, and linguistic identities, shifted as well. In line with the findings from Toncelli (2021), for Researcher 1, when confronting systemic oppression and inequity in face-to-face classes, worries she is sometimes perceived as a woke white woman and perhaps dismissed as a "liberal, white professor" (p. 94), yet, for Researcher 2, the same in-person confrontation leads to

the perception that she, as a woman of color, is complaining or that this is just a “color issue.” Peercy, Sharkey, Baecher, Motha, and Varghese (2019) consider specifically how a teacher educator’s social identity interacts with professional identity. Teacher educators of color have to foreground identities in a physical classroom while white teacher educators have the privilege to choose to share other aspects of their identities or not (Peercy et al., 2019, p.5). As Researcher 2’s identity became less visible in online teaching and learning, she felt freed from the need to tread lightly on criticality:

Why do I keep saying we– they don’t even look like me and their cameras are off. I must say we, to bring along this idea without revealing myself. They will accept it better if it comes from someone like them. I used to say “we” a lot when teaching on campus. They can clearly tell I look differently. Do they notice that I am saying we and we are different? Most of their cameras are off- I am really me in this space. It does not feel right to say we. And if I am me, then they have an opportunity to hear all of me. I have to push harder. (*Researcher 2, journal entry*)

This came at a cost in Researcher 2’s course evaluations. Specifically, in a course about the sociocultural aspects of bilingual communities, some students noted their displeasure with the amount of discussion related to race and ethnicity. In discussing this, we called into question the very system we work in. It is our professional and moral obligation, as well as the mission of our School of Education, to push for criticality, yet we are also in need of decent evaluations to advance professionally. Without explicit support, we are at risk as untenured faculty, and this risk is more potent for Researcher 2, as a woman of color.

Also, a contrast between how some of our colleagues reacted and how we felt we could react became immediately evident to us during the first weeks of the pandemic when a tenured colleague declared in a large meeting that she was “freaking out” about the pandemic and the shift to online learning. While we could empathize with the humanity of the moment –because we shared these fears– we did not feel we could say it all out loud. This isn’t a critique of our colleagues personally. We work with kind and dedicated professionals. We just did not feel safe enough within the university hierarchy to participate publicly in the collective worry. There was urgency to all of our shared work, but, as untenured faculty, we did not feel protected from this not going well, and the feeling was isolating. Yet we did need to find ways to move forward, adapt our pedagogical practices using new tools, and find a safe space for emotional and professional support. In exchanges which centered our trusting relationship and where we felt a stronger sense of psychological safety, we could explore platforms, experiment with our pedagogy, and learn from and with each other. This collegial inquiry got us through, and, we hope, is making us better at our work.

Cultural Assumptions about Students

The shift to online teaching also required that we recognize and address the assumptions we held about our students, in particular the ways in which we felt millennial students represent a pedagogical challenge. Our worries were that they might seek to avoid or minimize academic work, would not connect, or would collaborate with their peers. As we considered how best to ensure the students enjoyed inclusive engagement with content, learned, and collaborated, we again looked to the literature and to our own reflective collaboration as we puzzled through the early, and then ongoing, pandemic-induced shifts to our work. We also recognized that flexibility in participation would be essential to our students because, as teachers in the K-12 system, they were also navigating changing educational terrains as the pandemic struck and stayed.

In many ways, we were guilty of pedagogy that, though highly interactive, was still lecture-based. The online shift required that we think through content delivery differently. We began to experiment with online platforms for interaction. In our first “emergency” semester, we did a lot of recording of lectures, and we were frankly displeased with the results. In fact, Wood et al. (2021) note mixed results in the effectiveness of lecture capture in relation to learning out-

comes. As we moved through the summer of 2020 and began planning for an uncertain academic year which would surely at least start online, we knew that streamlining platforms and avoiding wasting student energy on learning multiple platforms would be important (Oliveira et al., 2021); we wanted to be purposeful and transparent in our selection of activities and experiences so that nothing felt like busy work to students (Darby & Lang, 2019). Asynchronous planning offered much needed flexibility for our working students, so we needed to bake that into our plans. This flexibility also allowed those who needed additional time or a chance to review content before contributing to do so. Activities focused on individual exercises with personal feedback, group projects with peers, and optional one-on-one meetings with the professor, all of which yielded a notable difference in the quality of final projects.

We landed on a combination of synchronous and asynchronous classes. Asynchronous classes required students to complete work in advance to be able to engage in activities; whereas there was some of this requirement in in-person pre-COVID courses, we noted that students didn't seem to engage deeply with the content. It seemed, instead, that they skimmed it and waited for us to explain its meaning, making our classes more transactional than intended. Pre-COVID group classroom discussions sometimes veered towards students sharing extended personal vignettes that did not align with the learning objectives and also allowed others to sit quietly. In a fully online context, the learning truly became more student-centered. To complete the exercises, the students had to engage with readings and recorded lecture fragments. In response, we were able to provide personalized feedback to each student. Make no mistake, this was much more work for us, but we found it increased our sense of who each student was and where they were in their learning. This increased teacher availability has been identified as a positive outcome during the online learning shift of the pandemic (Oliveira, et al., 2021). Unlike live classroom lectures and activities, no one could sit quietly in this new medium of learning. Recorded individual participation online caused students to be more accountable for their own participation and prevented them from leaning on each other too much. In a study comparing synchronous and asynchronous communications in online learning, Giesbers et al. (2014) note that asynchronous communication affords students more time to think and reflect before responding, and this was evident in the quantity and quality of responses in our asynchronous and synchronous sessions. The asynchronous sessions allowed for scaffolded support and student agency as students could read, listen, note peer comments, and then choose when and how to engage. These supports, including the ability to rewatch videos and make use of closed-captioning also enhanced the inclusivity and accessibility of our classes. Though asynchronous learning seemed to make the most pedagogical sense, students seemed to miss the classroom interactions as noted by Researcher 1 in the following journal entry:

I have a few students who don't like asynchronous interactions. One, in particular, has been really vocal about wanting live interaction in synchronous Zoom sessions, but the asynchronous interactions have been meaningful and deep. I wanted to be responsive to all my students. I surveyed the whole class, and the majority preferred the flexibility of the asynchronous interaction. I decided to run the class both synchronously and asynchronously the following week, just to compare. I gave students full flexibility to either attend the live session or to do the asynchronous work, noting that each would cover the same content. What happened really surprised me. Of a class of 17 students, only three opted to come to the synchronous class. Notably absent was the student who most wanted the live session. During the live session, two of the three students engaged with me and advanced the course discussion. The third remained quiet. In the asynchronous session, in contrast, all students participated. They not only posted their own reactions to content, they also responded to each other. Afterwards, as I do each week, I went back and responded individually to each student as well. All told, the asynchronous online interaction got to greater depth, perhaps because there was greater participation or perhaps because the asynchronous nature created space for students to listen to me, listen to each other, reflect, and then participate. I think the asynchronous class actually created more support for inclusion. I don't know whether the quiet student in the live class was just listening and taking it all in, but she never had to participate, which would have enhanced her learning as well. I can't help but wonder if some students are just stuck in a transactional [instrumental] approach to classroom interaction and want graduate school to be about me giving them information. Do we want the live session because that is in our wheelhouse? Because we are comfortable in a traditional classroom space? (*Researcher 1, journal entry*)

As we consider this and look to the literature, we see that synchronous lessons create a needed and comfortable space for social interaction but also that students are less likely to talk during Zoom-style sessions (Oliveira, et al., 2021). Despite this accessibility in asynchronous learning, students still desire the live synchronous sessions as it “is more direct in the support of social processes” (Giesbers et al., 2014, p 31). Oliveira et al. (2021) note that students consider live online learning via platforms, like Zoom, to be “accessible rather than effective or enjoyable” (p. 1381). While asynchronous learning allows for flexibility and perhaps greater depth of learning, synchronous greases the wheels of social collaboration by offering more familiar learning spaces. The solution for us has been building required one-on-one meetings with students into our online courses as well as collaborative group projects. Course evaluations with this revised design balance show that students received it positively.

In preparing for an eventual return to face-to-face learning, we know that the social aspects of learning that students crave will be more easily met, but we hope to retain the depth of learning that students achieved in asynchronous learning. To our minds the solution lies in a deliberate effort at looking again at our classroom practices and the literature, which suggests flipping classrooms. Flipped classrooms require students to engage with online teacher-led content and lecture from home before attending class, so that classroom experiences can be led by student engagement, questions, and activities (Han & Røkenes, 2020). Hao (2016) notes that flipped learning will often be met with resistance as “some students [are] more accustomed to traditional face-to-face lectures [but] they appreciat[e] the flexibility that online learning resources provide” (p. 83). An increase in the flipping of content and the use of personal interaction for application, problem solving, and group work would be ideal.

We also recognize that there is great value to teaching online well, and we will likely continue the intentional offering of remote courses, so we need to plan for setting students up to be successful. Darby and Lang (2019) note that effective online students need self-regulation skills, or the discipline and motivation to stay on task with flexible online learning, so perhaps an assessment of these skills, or a deliberate effort at developing them, can help us advise students towards online or face-to-face learning. One additional concern of this online work, however, is the perception that teaching online can be a “plug and play” to very large classes. In reality, we have learned that well-run online courses are very high touch and labor intensive, requiring significant, timely, and personalized feedback. Universities should be careful to focus on quality and not just potential for increased profits when determining student-to faculty-ratios in online learning as larger classes can decrease student satisfaction (D’Orio, 2017) because the presence of the teacher has been found to significantly improve learners’ abilities to be “metacognitively aware and develop regulatory skills” (Garrison & Akyol, 2013, p.88). Therefore, we will advocate that online classes respect in-person course sizes to avoid stretching university faculty too thin and risk reducing the quality of online coursework.

Conclusions

We began this project to explore how our perceptions of face-to-face versus online teaching and learning changed during the extended shift caused by the pandemic. We also considered student engagement in this new format and permutations in our professional positionality. We have developed more nuance in our thinking regarding student engagement in synchronous and asynchronous learning as well as our own ability to facilitate learners away from instrumental learning and towards more reflective engagement. In the return to “normal,” we draw three key implications from this study, including the importance of faculty leaving their pedagogical comfort zones, the need to abandon the traditional lecture in favor of a more student-centered classroom which prioritizes problem solving and applying new knowledge in a variety of contexts, and the importance of collaboration in higher education. Each of these will be explored below.

Leaving Pedagogical Comfort Zones

Online learning can be well designed to create meaningful experiential opportunities for deep learning. Our face-to-face pedagogy needs revamping so that we become facilitators of transformational experiences rather than leaders of instrumental or transactional lessons. This requires that faculty step out of their comfort zones in both online and face-to-face pedagogy. We shouldn't need a pandemic to rethink our practices completely, but we can use this experience to reinvent ourselves in the long term.

Praxis within academia must call for spaces of reflection. Based on our learning through this study, we would encourage faculty circles, prioritization of shared projects, honest and critical dialogue about institutional dynamics, and explicit support for faculty who engage in and share their ongoing pedagogical shifts. Furthermore, faculty need meaningful professional development spaces to develop sophisticated mental models of online pedagogy. The aim of such development is to increase skill in the curating of intentional experiences that are clearly and explicitly tied to learning outcomes so that faculty and students alike are guided in the rationale for all learning activities.

Saying Goodbye to the Traditional Lecture

These ongoing pedagogical shifts remind us that we cannot return to the traditional lecture as it simply does not align with what we know about how adults learn. Though awareness of this is not new, higher education is resistant to change. Herein lies a paradox: while higher education should be the source of innovative practices, particularly in teacher education and the development of future generations of teachers, it seems trapped in familiar routines that rely on instrumental learning in which the professor imparts knowledge and students absorb with sporadic opportunities for whole class engagement through verbal participation. In contrast, we saw increased student depth in carefully curated online learning experiences that require more individual opportunities for reflection before participation. We propose that pedagogy merge online practices with in-person ones. Thus, in a return to in-person learning, we see a need to redefine what participation looks like so that students see critical content reflection as essential preparation and whole class activities focus on experiential problem-solving and applying content knowledge. Moving towards transformational learning in higher education requires teacher educators (and really, all faculty), step aside and become facilitators of student-centered learning that is more in tune with twenty-first century demands. We suggest that college faculty engage with professional development that meaningfully supports their ability to design online, hybrid, and face-to-face experiences to move well beyond instrumental learning.

Collaboration

We credit our ability to safely experiment and critically reflect through the process of shifting to online pedagogy to our collegial inquiry. Bui and Baruch (2010) suggest that “[t]he culture of universities is distinctly different from other sectors because academics are generally highly individualistic in their work” (p. 232). We hypothesize that this individualism is the result of the current system of academia, which prizes the first name on a publication over the importance of collaboration. This practice discourages such collegial inquiry and collaboration, particularly for untenured faculty. The valuing of individual work in the system of tenure creates a system that works against innovation and the development of our field. The result is that critical collaborative work through which we grow as individual professionals and together explore enhancements to our work and structures is not currently but should be prioritized.

We thus see a need for enhanced collegial inquiry in our field and in our academic roles. What is clear is that one size doesn't fit all for helping adults pivot because we are confident many did feel supported in those larger meetings whereas

we needed a space for more practical talk about trial and error in our classes. In general, the academy could benefit from more collaboration, especially cross-racial collaboration which creates a space to learn from and with each other's diverse perspectives and experiences (Picower, 2021).

Wenger and Snyder (2000) suggest a potential pathway to more collaboration through the intentional development of communities of practice; by sharing expertise and perspectives, teams “generate knowledge” (p.143) to solve challenging problems. Mandating communities of practice does not seem a plausible solution, yet leaders can foster collegial inquiry through communities of practice by “listen[ing] to members’ stories in a systematic way (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 145). Academia can address the systemic tension in the tenure process by explicitly valuing not only the work faculty do on their own, but also, and perhaps more importantly, work done collaboratively.

Additionally, leadership in academia can foster productive partnerships by noticing what is working and asking teams to share out. As untenured faculty take risks to pivot practices towards transformational learning and social justice, higher education leadership must openly protect faculty striving towards this shared mission by “supporting them to develop greater complexity [and] more capacities than they currently have” (Helsing et al., 2013, p.1). This support is needed by both untenured faculty whose courses require challenging learner ideology which might affect course evaluations and opportunities to professionally advance in the dated university structure as well as for tenured faculty who also need to sustain ongoing development of their positioning and pedagogy. Because many educational organizational cultures are conservative in their approach to change (Helsing et al., 2013, p. 18) and given the potential for collaboration to drive innovation, the existing systems of higher education need to critically self-reflect and pivot in the same ways that faculty do.

Recommendations for Future Research

We suggest that additional studies of the effectiveness of online, hybrid, and flipped face-to-face learning experiences be explored through collegial inquiry and further study of learning outcomes. Additional research on what professional development of faculty is most effective as well as the ways in which higher education leadership can support untenured faculty and promote collaboration will be essential to inventing a new, more effective normal. On a personal note, we will continue looking within and to each other in this endeavor.

References

- Boghossian, P. (2006). Behaviorism, constructivism, and Socratic pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 38(6), 713–722.
- Bui, H., & Baruch, Y. (2010). Creating learning organizations in higher education: Applying a systems perspective. *The Learning Organization*, 17(3), 228–242.
- Burciaga, R., & Kohli, R. (2018). Disrupting whitestream measures of quality teaching: The community cultural wealth of teachers of color. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 20(1), 5-12.
- Chakrabarti, R. (2020, August 12). *What will learning look like in a post pandemic world?* Forbes. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2020/06/12/what-will-learning-look-like-in-a-post-pandemic-world/?sh=749228196b61>
- Chuang, S. (2021). The applications of constructivist learning theory and social learning theory on adult continuous development. *Performance Improvement (International Society for Performance Improvement)*, 60(3), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21963>

- Cloud, N. (2021, July 2). *The power of “we”: Maximizing our potential together*. EduExChange. Retrieved January 5, 2022, from <https://www.edu-exchange.net/post/the-power-of-we-maximizing-our-potential-together>
- Creswell, J., & Guetterman, T. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th edition). Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th edition). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Darby, F., & Lang, J. (2019). *Small teaching online*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Delgado, R., Stefancic, Jean (2001). *Critical race theory: an introduction*. New York University Press.
- D’Orio, W. (2017, May 5). *Inside higher ed*. Online class sizes: one size doesn’t fit all. Retrieved October 7, 2021, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/05/17/online-class-sizes-one-size-doesnt-fit-all>.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2009). *Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2016). Teaching, learning and leading in today’s complex world: reaching new heights with a developmental approach. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 19(1), 56–86.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T., & Bochner, A. (2010). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum, Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1).
- Freire, P. (2016). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Garrison, D.R., & Akyol, Z. (2013). Toward the development of a metacognition construct for communities of inquiry. *Internet and Higher Education*, (17), 84-89.
- Giesbers, B., Rienties, B., Tempelaar, D., & Gijssels, W. (2014). A dynamic analysis of the interplay between asynchronous and synchronous communication in online learning: The impact of motivation. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 30(1), 30–50.
- Han, H., & Røkenes, F. M. (2020). Flipped Classroom in Teacher Education: A Scoping Review. *Frontiers in Education*, 5, 1-20.
- Hao, Y. (2016). Exploring undergraduates’ perspectives and flipped learning readiness in their flipped classrooms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 59, 82–92.
- Helsing, D., Kegan, R., & Lahey, U. (2013). *Supporting others’ development: Applying adult development theory to your role as a leader and within your organization*. Cambridge, MA: Minds at Work.
- Hess, F. (2021, November). Media’s misleading portrayal of the fight over Critical Race Theory. Retrieved January 5, 2022, from <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Media%E2%80%99s-misleading-portrayal-of-the-fight-over-critical-race-theory.pdf?x91208>
- Holman Jones, S. (2016). Living Bodies of Thought. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(4), 228–237.
- Holman Jones, S. (2021). Autoethnography and the Importance of Working Collectively. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 14(2), 217–220.
- Johnson, K., & Golombek, P. (2020). Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research: LTR*, 24(1), 116-127.
- Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self problem and process in human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (2018). What “form” transforms? A constructive developmental approach to transformative learning. In Illeris, K., *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists in their own words* (2nd ed., pp. 29–45). New York: Routledge.
- Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2), 193–212. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2005.17268566>
- Lang, J. M. (2021). *Small teaching: Everyday lessons from the science of learning*. Jossey-Bass, an imprint of Wiley & Sons.

- Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2017) *The condition of education*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp.
- Oliveira, G., Grenha Teixeira, J., Torres, A., & Morais, C. (2021). An exploratory study on the emergency remote education experience of higher education students and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(4), 1357–1376.
- Peercy, M.M., Sharkey, J., Baecher, L., Motha, S., & Varghese, M. (2019). Exploring TESOL teacher educators as learners and reflective scholars: A shared narrative inquiry. *TESOL Journal*, 10(4).
- Picower, B. (2021). *Reading, writing, and racism: Disrupting whiteness in teacher education and in the classroom*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Sanchez, C. (2017, February 23). *English Language Learners: How Your State Is Doing*. National Public Radio. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/02/23/512451228/5-million-english-language-learners-a-vast-pool-of-talent-at-risk>.
- Sharkey, J. (2018). Who's educating the teacher educators? The role of self-study in teacher education practices (S-STEP) in advancing the research on the professional development of second language teacher educators and their pedagogies. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 23(1), 15-18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v23n01a02>
- Stewart, C., & Wolodko, B. (2016). University Educator Mindsets: How Might Adult Constructive-Developmental Theory Support Design of Adaptive Learning? *Mind, Brain and Education*, 10(4), 247–255.
- Sverdrup, T., & Schei, V. (2015). “Cut me some slack”: The psychological contracts as a foundation for understanding team charters. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 51(4), 451-478.
- Tilley-Lubbs, G. A. (2018). Freire in a Changing World. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 11(1), 11–21.
- Toncelli, R. (2021). *Engaging self, story, and community to disrupt cultural deficit thinking: A poststructural narrative inquiry of teacher experiences in tesol preparation* (Order No. 28321548). [Doctoral thesis, Northeastern University]. ProQuest One Academic. (2524211207).
- Wenger, E. C., & Snyder, W. M. (2000). Communities of practice: The organizational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 139-45.
- Wood, A. K., Bailey, T. N., Galloway, R. K., Hardy, J. A., Sangwin, C. J., & Docherty, P. J. (2021). Lecture capture as an element of the digital resource landscape – a qualitative study of flipped and non-flipped classrooms. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 30(3), 443–458.
- Zinn, H. (2014). *Howard Zinn on history*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.

CRISIS MEETS OPPORTUNITY:

Empowering Faculty when Returning to the Higher Education Classroom

Nicole Luongo, Ed.D.; Michael Finetti, Ed.D.; Kimberly Case; Jay Garrels, Ph.D.; and
Renee Evans

Abstract

This article presents information surrounding how the COVID-19 crisis can lead to opportunities for empowering growth in faculty course development and delivery. The authors show how higher education instructors have implemented remote teaching experiences they used during the pandemic to create engaging learning opportunities for students as they are returning to the higher education classroom. The article explores innovative ideas for communication and instruction, equity issues, and inclusive practices. The authors address the overall changing higher education climate and share their personal experiences transitioning from teaching in a face-to-face setting to going fully remote and back again.

Keywords: remote teaching, technology, pandemic, higher education

Introduction

The threat of COVID-19 presents unique challenges for institutions of higher education. All parties —students, faculty, and staff—are doing extraordinary things regarding course delivery and learning. The changes in education due to COVID-19 have never occurred at this scale before. Although this situation is stressful, when it is over, institutions will emerge with an opportunity to evaluate how well they were able to implement emergency remote teaching (ERT) to maintain continuity of instruction. (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020, para. 27)

The authors of this article facilitated a presentation where they demonstrated how higher education instructors used their experiences during the COVID-19 crisis to empower themselves as they returned to a sense of normalcy on campus (Evans et al., 2021). The focus was on how faculty created new and engaging learning opportunities for students from the successes they experienced during emergency remote teaching (ERT) in the higher education classroom. ERT is defined as “a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances” (Hodges et al., para. 13). Some ERT successes include using new technologies for communication and instruction, addressing equity issues, and adding more inclusive practices. Furthermore, the authors analyzed today’s overall changing higher education climate as they shared their personal experiences in transitioning from teaching in a face-to-face setting to going fully remote and back again. Hence, the purpose of this article is to provide ways faculty can be empowered by using their ERT successes and victories in the higher education classroom.

Background of the Problem

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on higher education institutions.

Many schools are attempting to return to pre-pandemic norms by offering in-person classes and on-campus meetings. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asserts that “new variants of the virus are expected to occur” (2022, para. 2). Therefore, institutions continue to navigate the unpredictability and uncertainty that comes with this pandemic. Many institutions have had to readjust academic calendars in response to this ongoing emergency (Jaschik, 2022). Some schools decided to pivot to remote instruction for the first few weeks of the semester, as they discouraged students from returning to campus. Other institutions delayed the start of their semesters pending the results of data collection analysis from the COVID-19 spread. As Amin, Dhunpath, and Devroop (2021) asserted, “Two years have passed, and the crisis has not abated. In fact, more variants have emerged, with UHI and Deltacron being the latest ones. More variants are expected. Thus, the temporary move to emergency remote teaching may be prolonged for months, if not years” (p. 2). So, what can higher education instructors do to empower themselves to succeed in the classroom? Can preparing for the next variant or crisis give instructors a greater sense of empowerment?

The start of the pandemic prompted a quick transition from traditional, face-to-face classroom teaching to fully online ERT, which involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face (Evans et al., 2021). ERT assumes that instruction will return to the previous format once the crisis or emergency has subsided (Hodges et al., 2020). The COVID-19 ERT response was different for all educators and students, as it was unexpected and unprecedented; no one was prepared for the abrupt shift: “For the first time in world history, all students were required to take all their classes online and all teachers were required to teach online” (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021, p. 6700). Prior to the pandemic, most professors taught in front of a live class with a chalkboard, whiteboard, or an overhead projector. Suddenly, instruction was done via Zoom, by using Google Classroom, or by employing another online format: “Online learning, distance and continuing education have become a panacea for this unprecedented global pandemic, despite the challenges posed to both educators and the learners” (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021, p. 134). In fact, the switch to emergency remote teaching that occurred in schools during COVID-19 left many educators uncertain about the situation and unable to use technology effectively to communicate and teach (Shamburg et al., 2021). Faculty were expected to teach from home and assess students using unfamiliar online platforms. Moreover, this occurred while they were trying to take care of their own families and health situations.

Despite the challenges and changes to instruction, many higher education instructors prevailed by using innovative and creative ways of meeting the needs of all learners (Evans et al., 2021; Garrad & Page, 2022; Glantz et al., 2021; Johnson, Veletsianos, & Seaman, 2020). As Hodges et al. (2020) emphasized, “We have to be able to think outside standard boxes to generate various possible solutions that help meet the new needs for our learners and communities” (para. 14). During a 2021 investigation into remote classes during the pandemic period of COVID-19, Gopal, Singh, and Aggarwal (2021) found that certain factors (e.g., instructor quality, course design, prompt feedback, learner expectation) affected learners’ satisfaction and performance. It is important these elements are prioritized for future success and faculty empowerment.

During the switch to ERT, many instructors discovered and used new technology applications to connect and communicate with their students (Evans et al., 2021). As Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) explained,

The use of online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, virtual learning environment and social media and various group forums like Telegram, Messenger, WhatsApp and WeChat are explored and tried for teaching and learning for the first time ever to continue education. This can be explored further even after face-to-face teaching resumes, and these platforms can provide additional resources and coaching to the learners. (p. 137-138)

As the switch to ERT happened, “higher education’s COVID-19 response resulted in an unstructured boost in online teaching and learning, fast-forwarded the adoption of more broad-based online learning strategies and technologies, and demonstrated a resilience that created a prototype for excellence in online teaching” (Nworie, 2021, para. 4).

In a Fall 2020 EDUCAUSE study (Brooks & Gierdowski, 2021) aiming to gain insights into the student experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education students reported that the courses they took during the pandemic were well-organized (82%), offered a variety of interactions with course content (73%), and addressed accessibility issues (63%). Additionally, synchronous courses tended to be rated as better organized with greater opportunities for student–instructor and student–student interaction. Opportunities for formal interactions and communication with instructors had a clear advantage among students in synchronous courses (83%) over those in asynchronous courses (73%). Furthermore, the immediate need to pivot during the pandemic propelled faculty to find new ways to leverage tools to both teach course material and connect with students (Glantz, Gamrat, Lenze, & Bardzell, 2021). Another challenge for professors was managing advising/mentoring and research responsibilities. Most professors serving as mentors had to discover innovative ways to advise their mentees and conduct virtual research. They managed home life and school while making sure their students stayed on target for graduation. Above all, professors found success and empowerment teaching in a remote setting.

However, some faculty are looking forward to returning to their previous, pre-pandemic ways of teaching. As Nworie (2021) asserted, “it would be a mistake to assume that all faculty suddenly developed essential skills or an enthusiasm for online teaching as a result of the emergency remote teaching” (para. 23). This presents a challenge; how can instructors be encouraged to reflect upon and embrace the successes they encountered and use it to propel them forward? Do instructors go back to the way they taught in 2019? Or do they look ahead to 2025? These are important questions to ask as higher education instructors seek to move beyond the emergency remote teaching that occurred during the initial COVID-19 pandemic.

Faculty Survey

During the Fall 2021 semester, a faculty survey was sent out to 104 full-time and 220 adjunct higher education faculty at a private higher education institution in northern New Jersey. The survey assessed their experiences and perceptions about teaching and learning practices implemented as a result of the need to implement ERT due to the initial COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was approved by the institution’s Institutional Review Board and included closed- and open-ended questions that focused on instruction, resistance to change, and technology equity. The sample was identified by obtaining a list of the names and email addresses of all current full-time and part-time instructors at the institution. Via email correspondence, the potential participants were informed of the study and asked to complete an online survey. The researchers used two main instruments in this study: (1) an implied consent form that identified who gave consent to be involved in the study and (2) an online survey that measured attitudes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). The online survey was created using Google Forms and administered to all study participants. Participants were informed that the results of the survey were anonymous and confidential. Respondents included 13 full-time and 26 part-time higher education instructors. The majority taught undergraduate students in the traditional classroom for over 11 years.

In this article, the data collected from this survey is used and referred to as the results of the faculty survey.

On-campus and Online Instruction

In the survey, 11 of the respondents indicated that they taught mostly face-to-face courses; seven taught hybrid; and five taught fully online. As a result of going fully online during the spring 2020 semester, 35 of these respondents indicated changes in the design and delivery of their courses.

In early 2022, these faculty members found themselves again facing a similar crisis. As a new COVID-19 variant

named Omicron started to emerge, the faculty members were being asked once again to readjust and possibly pivot back to ERT. Yet, the CDC (2022) warns that “viruses constantly change through mutation and sometimes these mutations result in a new variant of the virus. Some variants emerge and disappear while others persist. New variants will continue to emerge” (para. 7). Hence, faculty will need to be prepared and proactive to adjust their teaching at a moment’s notice.

In the faculty survey, a respondent emphasized that he designed his course in both the face-to-face and online format, and indicated an intention to do so going forward. This individual stated, “I learned that it was much better to already have an online course ready to go than to develop it on the fly.” This course preparation method shows an example of a faculty member being empowered by the COVID-19 pandemic and not waiting for the next crisis to catch him or her off guard.

Course Format Factors

Higher education institutions can and should offer a range of courses in various formats to meet the needs of all learners (Evans et al., 2021). “If an on-campus program is planned for the coming academic year, physical distancing requirements will almost certainly prevent full classrooms at normal seating capacity. A variety of blended or traditional hybrid solutions can help institutions meet these new requirements” (Beatty, 2020, para. 7). Brooks and Gierdowski (2021) suggested investing in the design, development, and implementation of hybrid course models, as well as investing in the individuals (e.g., designers, staff, instructors) who support them. Hybrid courses should no longer be viewed as exceptions or secondary to face-to-face courses; these types of courses should be considered the “new normal.” This idea is supported by Johnson et al. (2020), who said that “given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that some form of online and hybrid models of learning will be the most viable options for course delivery for the foreseeable future” (p. 16).

Mode of Instruction Factors

Many instructors succeeded by offering their courses in various modes; hence, there should be a consideration of the various modes of instruction that can be implemented. One mode of instruction that was adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic was the development of the HyFlex classroom (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021). Furthermore, Beatty (2020) found the following:

The classic HyFlex (hybrid-flexible) course design model supports both in-class and online students in the same class sections, typically by using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online participation paths for students who choose not to, or are unable to, participate in traditional classroom instruction. (para. 1)

HyFlex classrooms are designed in various ways, with students and instructors being in the classroom, remotely, or on a rotating schedule. These classrooms provide opportunities for visiting professors or guest lecturers to be participants, even from a distance. HyFlex classes allow for effective participation modes that lead to the same outcomes and provide empowering learning opportunities for all students. Although this format is relatively new and needs more study, many faculty agree that this format could work. One respondent of the faculty survey stated that higher education institutions needed to “include students who can’t physically be in class but want to participate. Possibly record lessons that students can view if they are absent.” Another respondent agreed, “I would like to teach more courses in a hybrid format rather than strictly face-to-face.” However, Beatty (2019) stressed that instructors need to be able to handle the complexity of teaching students in multiple modes at the same time, which will most likely require professional development resources.

Course Design Factors

Another positive outcome of this crisis was the overall redesign of courses (Evans et al., 2021). Since instructors needed to adjust their instruction during the switch to ERT, professors evaluated how their courses were aligned and how the materials were made accessible to all students. Consequently, these teachers recognized the importance of using strong instructional design techniques that correlated to how students accessed, participated in, and showed what they have learned (Fulgencio & Asino, 2021). As Gopal, Singh, and Aggarwal (2021) explained, “the course design of online classes need to provide essential details like course content, educational goals, course structure, and course output in a consistent manner so that students would find the e-learning system beneficial for them” (p. 6939).

The survey revealed faculty use a variety of techniques to adjust the design and delivery of their courses, such as incorporating more multimedia instruction, changing timed exams to short answer and essay responses, and increasing the use of web conferencing to conduct discussions. Several participants reported, since they were already designing according to best practices, their transition to ERT was seamless, and the participants would continue to apply the same design methods going forward. In the open-ended survey results, one instructor reported, “I am glad I set up all my courses during the breaks on Blackboard...so if we need to change, my students have all the content and know that there will be very little disruption. I think it is best for students to have certainty, transparency, and continuity.”

Many of the revised ERT courses were updated to meet online teaching and learning standards and structured in a way that fostered student engagement. Professors were introduced to innovative best practices, such as the Backward Design model (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), as well as the Quality Matters rubric, a research-based tool that measures specific course design criteria. According to Quality Matters (2020), instructors can “focus on organizing weekly modules/learning units into folders that contain the materials and assignment information students will need for that week” (p. 26). Additionally, Correia (2020) recommended that instructors reach out to professional instructional designers who can provide insights on planning, organizing, and developing learning experiences that better address all students’ needs. One instructor who responded to the faculty survey described a change in course design: “I was actually quite happy with my design in Spring 2021 when compared with Spring 2020, I thought it was effective. The reason being that it was planned from the onset to be online.” This sentiment showed that professional development programs can help to empower faculty to make the necessary changes to their courses that will engage students.

Planning Factors

During this ongoing pandemic, educational institutions discovered the need to plan for future emergencies. Many institutions developed institutional-wide instructional continuity plans (Evans et al., 2021; Hooker, 2020). An instructional continuity plan (ICP) is a framework that presents guidelines and expectations regarding how learners will continue receiving education during emergencies and is another source of empowerment for faculty. An ICP provides a blueprint for faculty on what to do if learning is disrupted. An ICP can include information about the technology platforms that will be used for remote learning, as well as how to communicate with instructors and administrators. It can also contain specific campus-wide information that will be helpful for students in the event of a catastrophe or emergency. For example, each instructor’s ICP explains to learners how they can contact the instructor (email, via online office hours, through the learning management system), how often they need to log into the class via the learning management system, as well as which activities will be synchronous or asynchronous (Quality Matters, 2021). A strong ICP can allow instructors and learners to quickly pivot during the semester, and can be used for any type of emergency, such as a hurricane or snowstorm. This type of proactive plan is designed to empower all learners and faculty with the most optimal experience during a crisis. In response to developing an ICP, one faculty survey participant claimed, “My courses are set

up so that I can adapt quickly to an online learning format, which I had been able to do for some of my courses prior to the pandemic outbreak.”

Resistance to Change

Although professors are returning to classrooms better equipped to teach their students than ever before, there is resistance to teaching in the new remote environments; some professors want to return to the way they taught pre-pandemic (Evans et al., 2021; Ramos-Pla, del Arco, & Alarcia, 2021). Some professors are insistent that they want to go back to the traditional way of course delivery since the switch to ERT was not an easy transition and they faced many struggles along the way, despite the obvious safety benefits teaching remotely offers during a pandemic. The survey revealed that 12 of the respondents worried about safety related to the spread of the virus when returning to the face-to-face classroom. Interestingly, one participant stressed the need for a coordinated strategy that, if indeed another emergency happens, would provide a seamless transition from face-to-face instruction to remote teaching and learning.

Instructional Factors

Gratz and Looney (2020) cited challenging instructional factors, including appropriateness of online teaching for certain disciplines, lack of preparation time, and not having the skills to teach online. Even though 89.7% of the faculty survey respondents indicated changes in the design and delivery of their courses, resistance to change going forward was unveiled. Eighteen percent of the faculty respondents indicated that they would not make any changes to their upcoming courses since they will return to traditional, fully in-person classroom teaching. For example, one subject claimed, “Now that we are back to face-to-face classes, I have returned to the original design – the courses are no different from before the pandemic.”

Campus Factors

Higher education campuses are changing and evolving to meet the needs and desires of the current college student and educator (Evans et al., 2021). Technology is not going anywhere and needs to be embraced in order for individual institutions to compete in the higher education landscape. One has to look no further than an institution’s course catalog to see the expanding number of courses being offered in hybrid or online formats. Colleges and universities are investing in new technologies, such as HyFlex equipment and technology laboratories, with the expectation that professors will be using these tools in their classrooms. There are two caveats to this technological upscaling. First, professors need training and support to learn how to use the new equipment and platforms. Secondly, faculty need to understand why the inclusion of new technology will empower them (Ali, 2020).

Training Factors

The rationale behind the adaptability of professors to a new technologically-advanced classroom is that faculty have already accomplished it during the pandemic, and therefore, they can do it again. Despite critical barriers (and out of necessity), instructors learned new techniques and figured out how to deliver high-quality lessons while still meeting standards and goals set forth by their institutions (Ghazi-Saidi et al., 2020). There is some truth to this logic, but it is

not as simple as providing faculty with technology tools and expecting all parties to ‘just figure it out.’ As Nworie (2021) explained,

Faculty now need to be, and deserve to be, part of a professional development effort to improve on the emergency remote courses, acquiring the necessary skills for developing and delivering online and hybrid courses. Those faculty members who lacked prior online teaching experience before the pandemic will most especially need additional training to engage in online instruction. (para. 25)

Extensive training needs to continue to take place (Ali, 2020). As one professor who answered the faculty survey explained, “Teaching online takes a lot of time and preparation. All courses (face-to-face or online) should be designed in a way that assessments, activities, and learning objectives are aligned. If you have all materials online, switching to remote learning is seamless.” Colleges and universities need to invest in training their faculty to be proficient in these new technological areas. This venture takes time. Reasonable goals need to be established for how long it will take to fully incorporate and infuse the new technology into the actual teaching that will occur. Hence, professors should not forget what they learned during this time period; rather, the instructors should utilize their new skills where appropriate, even in a face-to-face setting.

Furthermore, implementation of professional development plans and support for faculty is needed as changes to instruction occur. Results of the Fall 2021 faculty survey identified critical areas in need of support. 89.6% of the faculty respondents indicated that they would need additional support. Specifically, 17.9% of the faculty said they would need the assistance of instructional designers to help with the implementation of best teaching and learning practices; 33.3% of the faculty indicated that they would require the support of instructional technologists to assist with technical support related to the use of Blackboard; 25.6% of the faculty indicated that they would need help making their courses more accessible for diverse learners; and 12.8% of the faculty expressed that they would need help with the delivery of their courses. By providing robust and relevant professional development training opportunities, higher education institutions will empower their faculty to be able to handle the ever-changing educational landscape.

Technology Equity Issues

Technological equity is a multifaceted issue that is affecting faculty and students during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Evans et al., 2021). Digital disparities are prevalent in technology access and innovative e-learning tool use because of differences in socioeconomic status, ability level, racial and ethnic identification, geographic location, and handicapping condition (Brooks & Gierdowski, 2021). During a 2021 investigation regarding technology equity during the COVID-19 pandemic, Erza et al. (2021) found that three main equity factors caused technology equity disparities: 1) socioeconomic factors, 2) language factors, and 3) juggling factors. These factors were crucial during the switch to remote learning because they led to lower internet quality and access, disrupted online class discussions and flow, and diminished student concentration. It is important for instructors to understand these factors and take the necessary steps to address them when designing their courses.

The survey asked about future plans of faculty to make their courses more accessible. Five of the faculty respondents indicated that they would pre-record lectures and make them available on YouTube with closed captioning. Several participants stressed the importance of making course materials more digitally accessible using digital textbooks, accessible .pdf files, and the use of additional multimedia resources.

Socioeconomic Factors

Principally, socioeconomic status affected many students during this time. Digital inequalities, such as the digital divide, existed before the COVID-19 pandemic (Correia, 2020). However, these discrepancies came to the forefront of higher education during this crisis. When higher education institutions flipped to ERT during the initial stages of the pandemic, many students were unable to connect from home due to poor internet connections and inadequate equipment (Erza et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Brooks and Gierdowski (2021), 36% of respondents reported that they always, very often, or sometimes struggled to find an internet connection that supported their academic needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, 16% of students in rural areas very often or always struggled to find an internet connection suitable to complete their required academic coursework, while 3% of students without computers relied on their cell phones to access classroom resources. Also, living in an area without a strong mobile internet signal caused digital equity issues, whereupon 23% of respondents stated that they had to leave their homes in search of a strong internet connection. Instructors will need to have a plan for those students who have difficulty with accessing a reliable internet connection.

Language Factors

Another equity issue that many individuals encountered during this time was language equity. For the purpose of this research, language equity refers to digital communication between faculty and students (Evans et al., 2021; Erza et al., 2021). In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, many traditional faculty members did not have the skillset to effectively teach or communicate online (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). Since many of these instructors were accustomed to in-person lectures and face-to-face conversations, they were unfamiliar with using newer technologies such as online discussion boards, Zoom video conferences, and mobile phone texting. Hence, professors did not have the technical vocabulary or online communication skills needed to connect with their students. A recent study on students' perception of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic indicated that teachers managing online learning were not in line with student expectations (Syauqi, Munadi, & Triyono, 2020). It was revealed that 38% of the students did not agree that teachers provided adequate mentoring, response, feedback, discussion, and clear information. Moreover, 52% of respondents reported that their experience in online learning did not increase in better knowledge, performance, productivity, and learning. Similarly, Means and Neisler (2021) found that students struggled to stay motivated without being able to talk to their instructors; students missed getting immediate instructor feedback and collaborating with their classmates. Instructors should provide ample opportunities for communication and collaboration during their course. Instructors can address this issue by using the communication and collaboration tools available to them in learning management systems such as Blackboard, Canvas, or Google Classroom. Instructors can use the announcements or email feature to send weekly messages, can use the discussion board to create discussion activities, or the journal tool for reflective writing exercises. Providing frequent and timely feedback can be facilitated by creating assignments and using the gradebook.

Juggling Factors

A final equity issue that was revealed during the initial COVID-19 pandemic was a newer term called juggling. According to Erza et al. (2021), juggling refers to the difficulties and demands faced by educators and students who attempted to juggle numerous demands during this time period. These demands included work responsibilities, family responsibilities, and academic workloads. Some instructors and students were taking care of family members or had children at home completing remote learning while they were working full-time jobs and managing their own health (Evans et al., 2021). Due to these intense juggling pressures, a reduced degree of concentration existed among these individuals. Similarly, the

survey revealed that approximately ten of the respondents indicated that their students struggled with balancing home and work life.

As the pandemic continues to affect all parts of life, educators need to be flexible and aware of this juggling phenomenon with students in their courses as well as themselves (Evans et al., 2021; Erza et al., 2021). In order to manage these juggling inequities, instructors may consider shortening the duration of synchronous sessions or shift to an asynchronous mode of instruction. Professors may also need to focus on their own time management and self-reflection skills. Finally, an open line of communication must exist between teachers and students when juggling factors start to impede performance. These small alterations can help all individuals involved in higher education to empower them to succeed.

Implications for Further Research

After considering the opportunities and successes that were revealed in this article, the authors concluded that there are implications for further research on the discussed topics. Although this article primarily focused on faculty perceptions and experiences, there is a need to examine other higher education populations, such as students, administrators, and other employees (e.g., administrative assistants, librarians, and instructional technology staff). These studies would be helpful to reveal additional ways to empower other higher education individuals who experienced successes and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, their perspectives could be compared to the ones that faculty experienced for a richer view of these issues.

There is the need for an analysis of instructional factors that were affected by the crisis, specifically the development and use of ICPs. During the current early 2022 COVID-19 surge, many ICPs have been implemented on higher education campuses. After the plans were used, more research is warranted on their effectiveness. How did faculty, administrators, and students feel about the ICPs? How can the ICPs be improved? Since higher education administrators and instructors have been encouraged to develop and maintain strong ICPs that would help during future emergencies, a deeper dive into this topic would be a relevant one.

Another idea for a future study is connected to the topic of resistance to change. A study is warranted into understanding what makes certain professors unable or unwilling to adopt new practices and utilize new technological tools. Before we can help professors evolve their instruction, it is crucial that the barriers that are preventing professors from naturally evolving on their own are identified. Furthermore, after the pandemic experience, it is necessary to explore why professors choose to revert back to pre-pandemic teaching approaches without the inclusion of the successes they gained while teaching in a fully remote environment. An investigation is needed into these areas first to better direct how to support and empower professors to advance their teachings to meet the expectations of the technologically-savvy student.

Finally, more studies conducted in the area of technology equity, including socioeconomic factors, language factors, and juggling factors, are needed. There is the need for an in-depth analysis on how socioeconomic equity factors impacted student success in higher education during ERT and what changes faculty made to assist during this time. Additionally, these changes should be examined to measure their effectiveness during ERT. Since many faculty were unfamiliar with using new technologies during the COVID-19 crisis, a future research study could examine the impact instructional technology coaches had on faculty managing their online courses and communicating with students. Another future research study may examine the strategies used by faculty and students to manage their juggling equity factors during the crisis mode.

Conclusion

As the swift change that has already occurred in early 2022 has shown, this pandemic is not over. How can higher education instructors use what they have learned to empower themselves and prosper in the new world? As Glantz et al. (2021) explained, “the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for positive change in traditional teaching methods. These adaptations can redefine engagement in and out of class while allowing learners increased flexibility and offering instructors greater ability to reach their students” (para. 28). The most important change, regardless of the policies individual institutions are developing, is a shift in thinking about COVID-19 (Jaschik, 2022). Instead of thinking of COVID-19 as something that will pass, it may be wiser to start refocusing with the idea of how institutions can reinvent themselves in the COVID-19 era. As was discussed by the authors, an astute idea would be to focus on the successes in course design and delivery that faculty have encountered rather than the setbacks. Hopefully, instructors can use the ERT experience as a springboard for what is next in higher education. Today’s overall changing higher education atmosphere is an exciting one, filled with promise and hope for empowerment and development of a more inclusive learning environment.

References

- Ali, W. (2020). Online and remote learning in higher education institutes: A necessity in light of COVID-19 pandemic. *Higher Education Studies*, 10(3), 16-25. <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v10n3p16>
- Amin, N., Dhunpath, R., & Devroop, C. C. (2021). Uncertainties and ambiguities of (re) learning to teach in the context of crises. *Alternation African Scholarship Book Series (AASBS)*, 1, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-6-4/2021/AASBS08>
- Beatty, B. J. (2019). Designing a hybrid-flexible course: Creating an effective learning environment for all students. In B. J. Beatty (Ed.), *Hybrid-Flexible Course Design*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/hyflex/hyflex_design
- Beatty, B. J. (2020, May 26). Can HyFlex options support students in the midst of uncertainty? *EDUCAUSE Review*. <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2020/5/can-hyflex-options-support-students-in-the-midst-of-uncertainty>
- Brooks, D. B., & Gierdowski, D. C. (2021, April 5). Student experiences with technology in the pandemic. *EDUCAUSE Research*. <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2021/4/student-experiences-with-technology-in-the-pandemic>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, April 26). What you need to know about variants. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html>
- Correia, A. P. (2020). Healing the digital divide during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 21(1), 13-21. <https://www.infoagepub.com/qrd-issue.html?i=p5f8cc0dae6290>
- Evans, R., Garrels, J. Finetti, M., & Luongo, N. (2021, November 20). *Crisis meets opportunity: Retaining successes when returning to the higher education classroom* [Conference session]. Faculty Resource Network National Symposium, Virtual. <https://facultyresourcenetwork.org/virtual-national-symposium-2021/>
- Ezra, O., Cohen, A., Bronshtein, A., Gabbay, H., & Baruth, O. (2021). Equity factors during the COVID-19 pandemic: Difficulties in emergency remote teaching (ERT) through online learning. *Education & Information Technologies*, 26(6), 7657–7681. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10632-x>
- Fulgencio, J. & Asino, T. I. (2021). Conducting a learner analysis. In J. K. McDonald & R. E. West (Eds.), *Design for Learning: Principles, Processes, and Praxis*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/id/learner_analysis
- Ghazi-Saidi, L., Criffield, A., Kracl, C. L., McKelvey, M., Obasi, S. N., & Vu, P. (2020). Moving from face-to-face to remote instruction in a higher education institution during a pandemic: Multiple case studies. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science*, 4(4), 370-383. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijtes.v4i4.169>

- Glantz, E., Gamrat, C., Lenze, L. & Bardzell, J. (2021, March 16). Improved student engagement in higher education's next normal. *EDUCAUSE Review*. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2021/3/improved-student-engagement-in-higher-educations-next-normal>
- Gratz, E., & Looney, L. (2020). Faculty resistance to change: an examination of motivators and barriers to teaching online in higher education. *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design (IJOPCD)*, 10(1), 1-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/IJOPCD.2020010101>
- Gopal, R., Singh, V., & Aggarwal, A. (2021). Impact of online classes on the satisfaction and performance of students during the pandemic period of COVID 19. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(6), 6923–6947. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10523-1>
- Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T. & Bond, A. (2020, March 27). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *EDUCAUSE Review*. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning>.
- Hooker, C. (2020, June 9). How to develop an instructional continuity plan for any emergency. *Tech & Learning*. <https://www.techlearning.com/features/how-to-develop-an-instructional-continuity-plan-for-any-emergency>
- Jaschik, S. (2022, January 3). Colleges face question of starting semester amid COVID-19. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/01/03/colleges-face-question-starting-semester-amid-covid-19>
- Johnson, N., Veletsianos, G., & Seaman, J. (2020). U.S. faculty and administrators' experiences and approaches in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Online Learning*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i2.2285>
- Kohnke, L., & Moorhouse, B. L. (2021). Adopting HYFLEX in higher education in response to COVID-19: Students' perspectives. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 36(3), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2021.1906641>
- Means, B., & Neisler, J. (2021). Teaching and learning in the time of covid: The student perspective. *Online Learning*, 25(1), 8–27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24059/olj.v25i1.2496>
- Misirli, O., & Ergulec, F. (2021). Emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic: Parents experiences and perspectives. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26, 6699–671. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10520-4>
- Nworie, J. (2021, May 19). Beyond COVID-19: What's next for online teaching and learning in higher education? *EDUCAUSE Review*. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2021/5/beyond-covid-19-whats-next-for-online-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education>
- Perrotta, K., & Bohan, C. H. (2020). A reflective study of online faculty teaching experiences in higher education. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 3(1), 50–66. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1253897>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). *Understanding research: A consumer's guide*. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Pokhrel, S., & Chhetri, R. (2021). A literature review on impact of COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning. *Higher Education for the Future*, 8(1), 133-141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347631120983481>
- Ramos-Pla, A., del Arco, I., & Flores Alarcia, Ò. (2021). University professor training in times of COVID-19: Analysis of training programs and perception of impact on teaching practices. *Education Sciences*, 11(11), 684.
- Quality Matters. (2020). Bridge to quality: A QM online course design guide. *Quality Matters*. <https://www.quality-matters.org/higher-ed-bridge-guide-basic>
- Shamburg, C., Amerman, T., Zieger, L., & Bahna, S. (2021). When school bells last rung: New Jersey schools and the reaction to COVID-19. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10598-w>
- Syauqi, K., Munadi, S., & Triyono, M. B. (2020). Students' perceptions toward vocational education on online learning during the cOVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9(4), 881–886. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1274581>

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). Backward design. In *Understanding by Design* (pp. 13-34). ASCD. <https://educationaltechnology.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/backward-design.pdf>

PROMOTING STUDENT REFLECTION THROUGH REFLECTIVE WRITING TASKS

Elena Taylor, Ph.D.

Abstract

Reflection is a necessary component of learning. Through reflective assignments and tasks, students are given opportunities to evaluate their learning and analyze strategies they use while acquiring and applying course material. Reflections also help students assess and think deeply about the information presented in class and thus better retain it. Through reflecting on their learning, students are also given the opportunity to formulate goals for future improvement. Reflective tasks can be implemented in any classroom, and writing is a powerful tool to do that. This article describes several writing tasks that promote student reflection both on the course material and on their own performance: writing reflective journals, reflections on writing assignments, reflections on teacher and peer feedback, writing-to-learn activities, and letters to the Reviewer.

Keywords: reflection, self-evaluation, writing

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience” (John Dewey).

Introduction

Reflection has long been seen in education as a necessary component of learning. John Dewey, the American philosopher, defined reflection as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1933, p. 118). The importance of learners’ awareness of their own learning processes and experiences has been emphasized by many educators and has become a foundation for several learning theories (e.g., Kolb, 1984; Mezirov, 1991; Revans, 1982). At the basis of these theories is the idea that learning is better achieved through experience and action, which includes learners’ reflection on their learning experiences and processes, rather than through the passive acquisition of knowledge and skills (Pais Marden & Herrington, 2021).

The literature describes a number of benefits that learners’ reflection has on the effectiveness of the learning process. When students reflectively approach their learning, they develop their critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies (Crane & Sosulski, 2020; Fullana, Pallisera, Colomer, Fernández Peña, & Pérez-Burriel, 2016; Pais Marden & Herrington, 2021). They can see the application of the knowledge obtained in the classroom more clearly by becoming better aware of connections between the materials learned in class and their own lives (Crane, 2018). Through reflections, learners also develop the ability to evaluate both successes and setbacks in their performance and make goals for improvement (N. Anderson, 2012; Ryan, 2013). As N. Anderson (2012) stated, “When learners engage in reflecting upon their learning, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve themselves [...]” (p.

182). Carefully crafted and regularly implemented reflective activities can also activate student metacognitive processes¹ by allowing them “to examine and evaluate their personal investment of time and energy in learning” (Crane & Sosulski, 2020, p. 86), thus creating the opportunity for deeper and more active learning (Pais Marden & Herrington, 2021). All these abilities facilitate learner autonomy and help students become independent and responsible learners in the future (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010; Andrade & Evans, 2013; Benson, 2007).

Reflective components find their place in my own everyday classroom routine. Based on several years of my language teaching experience, I noticed that through reflection on their own learning, the use of language-learning strategies, and factors influencing their learning, students can gain a better understanding of their language development. However, I also know that it may be challenging for students to engage in self-driven, independent reflection. According to Crane and Sosulski (2020), “Reflection [...] best serves students when it is carefully structured (e.g., written reflections and directed discussions), guided by another individual (e.g., a teacher or mentor), and linked to clear learning objectives” (p. 75). Therefore, as a teacher, I try to incorporate structured reflective elements in my courses, which primarily consist of English-language learners of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to maximize students’ learning experiences and help them succeed at the university and beyond.

The practical implementation of reflective elements in a course (e.g., tasks, activities, assignments) can take multiple forms: written and oral, group and individual, formal and informal. In my own language classes, I often implement reflective writing by assigning individual reflective writing tasks, which allow students to analyze course projects, activities, or their own performance and make personal goals for improvement.

Reflective writing is described in the literature as a process that involves a transformation of experiences and life events into thoughts and feelings, along with personal opinions, viewpoints, judgments, and critical evaluation (Moon, 2001). Ramlal and Augustin (2020) define reflective written pieces as “very personal but also very critical” because, along with a summary of life experiences, they also demonstrate the writer’s “critical thinking, critical engagement, critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis” (p. 520). Morrison (1996) suggests that through writing reflections, writers can critically assess their experiences and observations and make meaning of them, which may promote their personal development. Similar views are found in Gibbs (1988), whose model of reflective writing culminates in action plans that the writer makes as a result of analysis, reflective evaluation, and interpretation of thoughts and feelings.

Research on reflective writing also addresses its implementation in the classroom by describing reflective activities and discussing their pedagogical value and consequences for student learning. Grossman (2008) discusses four types of reflections—content-based reflections, metacognitive reflections, “self-authorship” reflections, and transformative and intensive reflections—and their implementation in a wide range of courses. Greene (2011) suggests that the implementation of guided student questions, letters to self, peer editing exercises, and creative writing activities can encourage students’ self-examination, deep retrospection, and metacognition. Orem (2001) focuses on one type of reflective writing, journal writing, and refers to it as a powerful teaching technique in a language classroom that can empower learners by giving them the opportunity to reflect on their learning processes and practice authentic language.

Some researchers describe pedagogical approaches and propose suggestions for promoting student knowledge of processes involved in writing reflections and enhancing their metacognition and reflective abilities. For example, Greene (2011) and Ramlal and Augustin (2020) propose modeling as a pedagogical tool that can increase students’ ability to write thoughtful, more evaluative reflections. Ryan (2011), on the other hand, suggests that providing students with models of effective reflections is not enough for the development of their own reflective skills; therefore, in order for students to achieve success in reflective writing, they need to be explicitly taught and scaffolded. Ramlal and Augustin

1. Metacognitive processes are defined as processes of “reflecting on and directing one’s own thinking” (National Research Council, 2001, p. 78).

(2020) found that implementing peer editing and collaborative group work may be beneficial in helping students develop their reflective writing skills. Using social media applications, such as Google Docs, was also described as an effective pedagogical strategy that improves student reflective writing (Marciano, 2015; Ramlal & Augustin, 2020; Zheng, 2013). Finally, rubrics that guide students' writing activities and help them critically evaluate their writing were found to be effective in promoting students' metacognitive skills that help them produce more critical reflections (Ramlal & Augustin, 2020).

In this article, I describe several writing tasks used in my own classes that promote student reflection both on the course material and on their own performance: writing reflective journals, reflections on writing assignments, reflections on teacher and peer feedback, writing-to-learn activities, and letters to the Reviewer. Following the description of each reflective task, I will explain how the task can be used in the classroom and provide a few examples of students' written responses. All reflective tasks described in this article were implemented in my own courses with English language learners, but they can be adjusted to a variety of instructional contexts and be applicable to diverse student populations.

Writing Reflective Journals

Description

Writing development is challenging to track. Based on my experience, students may not always be aware of the positive progression of their writing skills. Therefore, in my writing courses, I implement reflective journals² to facilitate students' self-reflection and help them notice positive improvements in their writing. The purpose of reflective journals is to provide students with the opportunity to think about and analyze their learning processes (Carroll, 1994; Farrah, 2012; Orem, 2001). Because I follow a multi-draft approach in my writing courses, students receive a short reflective prompt for each draft they submit over the course of the semester. Along with aiming to promote students' reflective and analytical skills and raise awareness of their writing development, I also strive to align these reflective journals with the course material. Therefore, the journal prompts in my classes are designed to help students reflect on the application of the material presented in the course to their own writing. For example, if we had a recent lesson on paragraph unity, a prompt may ask students to reflect on the flow and cohesion of sentences in their paragraphs.

Implementation

As I mentioned, in my writing classes, students receive a reflective prompt on each draft they compose in the course. Their responses are expected to be no longer than 250 words—not to overburden them with additional writing load and thus maintain their motivation. For convenience, teachers can design a labeling system to keep the prompts (and students' responses) organized. For example, to label prompts of reflective journals in my classes, where three drafts are normally required for each writing project, I use two numbers—the first one to indicate the writing project and the second one to indicate the draft (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). However, these reflective journals can also be implemented in courses (not necessarily writing courses) where students only submit the final version of their writing assignments.

Below I provide some examples of the prompts used in my classes:

2. An interested reader may also want to consider the following literature on reflective journal writing practice: J. Anderson, 2012; Boud, 2001; Boutet, Vandette, & Valiquette-Tessier, 2017; Dymont & O'Connell, 2011; Lew & Schmidt, 2011; Moon, 2006; Thorpe, 2004; Walker, 1985.

- 1.1 What did you do to come up with ideas for your paper as you were working on this first draft? What or who helped you? Describe and evaluate the effectiveness of this invention process.
- 1.2 You already learned about transition words between sentences and paragraphs. Describe what you did in order to decide where to use transition words and which ones to use in your draft.
- 1.3 Pretend a local newspaper is interested in buying your paper for \$10,000 in order to publish it. What revisions do you think you could make to polish this final draft so that the newspaper would be happy to pay that much?
- 2.1 Think about the audience of your paper. What rhetorical features (e.g., style, tone, language) did you choose in your paper to appeal to your audience? Are the overall content and organization of this paper appropriate for this audience?
- 2.2 What is the most important information you learned about integrating academic sources in your paper? How was this knowledge applied in your second draft?
- 2.3 Why do you think this annotated bibliography would be helpful to someone interested in this topic? What makes it effective? Provide specific examples.
- 3.1 What is the most helpful and important thing that you learned about integrating quotations? How did you use this information as you were working on your first draft?
- 3.2 What do you think can strengthen your argument? Providing additional support (evidence)? Including counter-claims with rebuttals? Something else? Provide specific suggestions.
- 3.3 You just completed the third project of this course. What do you think you have improved the most in your writing up to this point? What helped you improve it? How did you notice your improvement?

These prompts are designed to help students become more aware of their composing processes and notice their growing ability as writers. They can also help the teacher assess students' progress in the course—that is, their understanding of the material and its application to students' writing, their writing challenges that need to be addressed in class or during individual writing conferences (if applicable), and their achievement of the course learner outcomes.

Examples

Here are a few student examples of reflective journal entries:

Example 1

Question

What is the most helpful and important thing that you learned about integrating quotations? How did you use this information as you were working on your first draft?

Student Response

In the past, I rarely used quotations. For example, I used the famous words of a person to introduce a topic or improve my voice. However, I never used quotations from an interview for a paper. So, using quotations for this purpose was new to me when I started writing the first draft. The expert that I interviewed for my project gave me many helpful opinions, so I used his words in my argumentative essay.

The most helpful thing I learned about quotations was the format. The words and phrases given in class, like “in his or her opinion” or “he/she suggested,” were helpful to me. Learning about how to correctly use quotations helped improve my essay, and I hope to use this information in my future papers.

I also learned a lot about indirect quotations, and I never heard about them before. But the information in class helped me paraphrase some words of the expert that I interviewed for my project. I didn't use many paraphrases in my argumentative essay because I think it's easier for me to use direct quotes than to paraphrase them. So I think I need more practice in paraphrasing, and I hope to feel more comfortable using paraphrasing in my future papers.

Example 2

Question

You already learned about transition words between sentences and paragraphs. Describe what you did in order to decide where to use transition words and which ones to use in your draft.

Student Response

I wrote my first draft for this project as an interview report. My topic was about the dining problem faced by international students at our university. For my interview report, I first took the interview of a credible person with their insight into the problem. For my second draft, I made some changes based on the feedback I had received. Out of the changes I made, one of the major revisions included adding transitions to maintain the flow of the report. Transitions are an important and integral part of any paper. Transitions help the reader to continuously read the paper without feeling distracted or going off-topic. They help the writer to make a jump from one topic to another in a smooth way. In order to put transitions in my paper, first I proofread my draft and marked the points where there was a change in topic or an abrupt shift from one main point to another, which disrupted the smooth flow of the paper. This is how I decided on the places where I needed to put transitions. After this, I looked at the feedback I received from my instructor about transitions and added some more places where a transition was required. Finally, based on the conference I had with my teacher, I decided how and which transitions to use. I used simple transitions in areas where there was not a major shift and longer and more complex transitions in areas where there was a complete change of theme.

Example 3

Question

You just completed the third project of this course. What do you think you have improved the most in your writing up to this point? What helped you improve it? How did you notice your improvement?

Student Response

I think the most important parts that improved my writing were organization and sentence fluency. In the past, I learned a bit about this, and I always used to place a lot of importance on these aspects. However, I was still able to improve a bit more because I was able to learn more about transitions and styles that I could use in my writing.

Learning about quotations was also very important to me because I did not use them that often in the past unless I used a quote from a famous person to introduce my topic. I think having this opportunity to improve my quotation skills will help me in future research proposals and papers. Furthermore, having the chance to practice writing quotations also helped me become more comfortable with using quotations.

I was able to see my progress when I looked at my papers. Whenever I proofread, I began to notice that I used different transition words or phrases from what I used in the past. For the quotations, I was also able to see my progress based on my experience editing my papers.

Gaining these skills certainly helped me in this project, and hopefully, they would help greatly as I write my papers in the future. It is true that learning or gaining new skills may be a bit difficult because it may take time to learn and to fully integrate them into my work. However, reflecting on what I learn can certainly help me improve my writing in the future.

Reflections on Writing Assignments

Description

In addition to reflective journals, where students reflect on separate drafts of their writing projects, students can also be asked to evaluate and reflect on their overall experience writing a paper, that is, after the final product is completed. Therefore, this approach would work well in classes where students are required to submit only the final draft of their writing assignment. The purpose of these reflections is to give students a chance to reflect on their process of working on the assignment, express their “intellectual and emotional reactions” (Nilson, 2010, p. 169) to it, articulate the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, and formulate goals for future improvement.

Implementation

Students are assigned to write a short (500 words or so) reflective piece that includes a personal exploration of the work they did while planning, organizing, doing research, and writing their paper. To facilitate this process in my classes, I provide students with a list of guiding questions; however, students are instructed to compose a coherent, essay-like reflective paper rather than simply answer these questions. Here are examples of these questions:

The Assignment

- Briefly describe the assignment or the project you are reflecting on.
- What was your purpose for writing this paper/for completing this project? How did you accomplish this purpose?
- Who was your audience for this paper/this project? How did you adjust your writing to accommodate your audience?

Your Writing Process

- Describe your writing process. If you were not given a specific topic, how did you decide on a topic? How did you find the information? What changes did you make to your paper in each draft? Why did you make those changes? How did you proofread your paper?
- Of what value was an outline for your paper when you were writing?
- Describe the work with your team (if applicable). What was the hardest part of your teamwork? What did you learn from working with your classmates? What was the most rewarding part of working collaboratively?
- While writing this paper, what new things did you learn about the process of writing?
- Describe your research process. How did you decide where to put the researched information into your paper? What was the most difficult part of including research? How can you make it easier?
- What feedback did you receive that you think was helpful? Why was it helpful and how did you go about this feedback?
- In what ways is the final draft of your essay better than your first draft? Study both drafts and list specific ways it is

better.

General Questions

- What do you like about this paper? Why?
- What was the most important thing you learned from this assignment?
- What was the hardest/easiest part of this assignment? Why?
- Which ideas in your paper have you found the most exciting to write about? Why?
- What do you wish you could have done differently?
- What would you change if you were asked to complete the same or a similar assignment?
- What skills did you improve the most while working on this assignment?
- What areas of your writing and researching skills do you want to improve based on this assignment?

Examples

Below I include two examples of student reflections.

Example 1

The assignment was to write a research paper. I chose the topic of arguing that using affirmative action in the college application process is wrong and should be banned. My report was geared toward college students. The main purpose was to inform the students about this issue and show my viewpoint. To accommodate the audience, I had to use ethos, pathos, and logos to convince the audience to believe me. I started my writing by outlining to organize my ideas. This helped because if I didn't start with it, my ideas would be scattered without a direct line of thought. First, I chose my topic and then started gathering information from reliable sources. Then I had to do research more specifically on the use of affirmative action in colleges. During my research, I found most of my sources from the EBSCOhost database. Throughout this assignment, I learned how to use ethos, logos, and pathos to persuasively develop my argument. Along with this, I learned a new style of writing. Writing an argumentative paper is not like a regular report because you have to do a lot of research to know your topic thoroughly. You also have to demonstrate both sides. So, if you are arguing for something, you still have to address the naysayers who disagree with your point of view.

The most difficult part of the assignment was trying to find enough useful information. I also had to decide how I wanted to organize my paper, break up the paragraphs, and use transitions between those paragraphs. The easiest part was writing up an outline—I knew the direction I wanted my paper to go. It was just more difficult to get it down on paper. Since I got all my sources from an online database, this made it easier to obtain a great deal of information—I just had to sort through it all to see if I could use any of it in my drafts.

There are a few major differences between my first draft and my final draft. One of them is my paragraph style. My first draft was very poorly constructed with only two paragraphs, and they were just extremely long. In the final draft, I made it look professional by using smaller paragraphs with transitions in between. I found that writing this research paper was more difficult than I imagined it would be. If I had to do this assignment again, one thing that I would do differently is change the format of the first draft. If I would have gotten the paragraphs right the first time, I could have had more time to work on other areas of the paper. The skill that I have improved the most during this assignment is writing annotated bibliographies. I never had to make one before, so this was a learning experience for me. I hope that for the next assignment I can improve my writing skills even more.

Example 2

For this project, I was assigned to a group of five members, and we were instructed to do in-depth research on the various religions practiced amongst the students at our university and the different clubs, organizations, and facilities offered in affiliation to the different religions. I narrowed down my research by looking primarily at the religions that are the most widely practiced on campus and found that they are Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. We constructed a research paper and a PowerPoint presentation focusing on these three religions and the involvement of the members of both international and local students.

The first draft I made for this project was more rushed and not to the level that I usually do my work. I was at first disappointed in myself and actually had forgotten how time-consuming writing a paper was, but now I know how to better manage my time for it. However, I greatly appreciated our teacher's helpful suggestions and tried to use them in my final draft.

The religious aspect of this assignment made it more difficult to focus on the interaction with international students but the way I went about tying them together was by talking to international students and seeing how they involved themselves in these organizations and what positive experiences they took from them. I found that more international students than I initially thought surprisingly do not strongly affiliate themselves with a specific religious institution, but they find the different clubs, organizations, and institutions educational and helpful to them in achieving a better sense of unity and acceptance on campus.

Most students here feel like they need to believe in the religion to attend or participate in the organizations corresponding to that religion which is simply not the case. In fact, all religions have opportunities for prospective members, or simply students who are curious about the religion, to be involved. Considering that the audience for this project was the students at our university, I wanted to make sure I emphasized the copious amounts of opportunities available to everyone regarding the different religions and help them realize that the sole purpose for being involved with them does not have to be because you necessarily believe in that religion. These religions offer opportunities such as retreats, community service, dinners, and other ways to strengthen their religious community and bring about awareness of their faith.

This project was both an individual and team effort. It was individual because though I was working with others to find information and discuss our topic, I still did my own research and made my own conclusions based on the information I found. Each member in our group took a different route in conveying the information attained but focused on the same information. I enjoy working with others, but I usually find it difficult working in groups because the work is rarely ever distributed evenly, and some people end up picking up the slack from others. However, I found it very enjoyable working with an international student because it gave me better insight into the project, and I spoke with her a great deal about her personal feelings here on campus and her transition. I have not had that much experience working with international students and have heard that most people found it to be either a good or bad experience because of the language barrier, but I definitely had a great experience and strongly commend my partner for working so diligently despite the challenges. I think this was a beneficial assignment because it allowed me to become more comfortable with researching, writing, and presenting the findings of my research.

Reflections on Teacher and Peer Feedback

Description

Another way of helping students to self-assess their work and make goals for improvement is to have them reflect on the feedback they receive from classmates and the teacher on their performance. I implement this approach for oral presentations in my classes for English language learners. On each presentation given during the course, students receive feedback

from their peers and me. Then based on this feedback, students write a short reflection on what they learned from their classmates' and teacher's comments and how they can improve their performance in the future.

Implementation

This approach can easily be implemented in any course where students are expected to give an oral presentation. It can also be adapted for writing assignments if peer feedback is part of the curriculum. Here is an example of the prompt that I use (with slight modifications) in my courses for English language learners:

Instructions: Based on the feedback you received from the teacher and your classmates, write down your thoughts on how you can improve your presentations for the future. Include both your oral performance and your PowerPoint slides. Provide specific examples referring to the feedback (e.g., *"I was told my PowerPoint slides need to contain bullet points with key phrases instead of complete sentences. Therefore, for my future presentations, I will..."* or *"My classmate suggested I start my presentation with an interesting fact or question to catch the audience's attention. In my subsequent presentations, I will..."*). Remember: This activity will help you analyze your performance, develop critical thinking, and track your growth, which, in turn, will help you become a reflective and autonomous learner.

Examples

Below are a few examples of student reflections:

Example 1

In the feedback I received on my presentation today, I was told that I tend to rush through my slides, so in my future presentations, I will try to slow down and present the information better without skipping important details presented on the slides. Both my teacher and my classmates also told me that I need to cite my sources. Therefore, in my future presentations, I will give credit to the sources where I take information for my presentation. I think it will make my presentations more credible. Another comment that I received and that I will try to improve in the future is providing specific examples to illustrate my points. I will work on all these helpful suggestions in the future and try to improve in any way I can to make my presentations better. Thank you!

Example 2

My teacher suggested adding some visual elements to my PowerPoint slides; therefore, for my future presentations, I will include pictures and other images. I think if I include pictures in my PowerPoint slides, my presentation will be more exciting for the audience. I was also suggested not to use complete sentences but use bullet points instead, with keywords and phrases. I think it's an important tool, and I will try to use it for my future presentations. I was also told that I should provide a concluding slide because my today's presentation ended abruptly. I will make sure to include a conclusion for my audience in the future, so it doesn't end as a surprise for them. The feedback from my teacher and classmates was very helpful for me.

Example 3

The comments that I received for this presentation were helpful. For example, I was told that I need to improve my gram-

mar, that I could include a relevant video in my presentation, and that I could add more colors to my slides. I think those were good comments, and I will use them to make my next presentation better. I will pay more attention to my grammar when I practice my presentation. I will also try to find a video and add more colorful slides. I will also keep doing things that my teacher and my classmates said were good, such as good eye contact and body language, clear examples and explanation, and helpful pictures. I understand that pictures can help my classmates follow my presentation more easily and better understand what I am trying to explain. And in my personal opinion, I think I should provide more examples for my audience during my presentation.

Writing-to-Learn Activities

Description

My first experience with writing-to-learn activities was when I was a student in an intensive English program. The teacher in my academic reading class frequently implemented these activities in class to help us reflect on the content of the lesson and the reading materials we were discussing. As a language learner, I found those informal writing tasks engaging and beneficial as they gave me opportunities to express myself in English as well as analyze information presented in the course at a deeper level.

Writing-to-learn activities (WTL) are short and informal writing tasks that engage students in reflective thinking about key concepts, ideas, and material presented in the lesson. These informal writing activities can be implemented at different stages of the lesson and in any situation in which students could benefit from reflecting on what they are doing and learning in class. By encouraging students to actively think about the course material, WTL activities can help students more effectively retain the material (Nilson, 2010). They can also provide the instructor with valuable information about how much and how effectively students are learning. Finally, they can raise students' awareness of their own learning strategies and approaches and their cognitive processes, thus allowing students to better understand themselves as learners.

Implementation

WTL activities are versatile and can be used in various instructional settings, including university courses. As mentioned before, teachers can include them at any stage of the lesson to encourage students' active thinking about the material presented in class. For example, at the beginning of the class, WTL activities can help students review the content of the previous lesson and reflect on what they learned. Some examples of the WTL prompts that can be implemented at the beginning of the class include:

- Summarize one strategy you learned last class and explain how you will implement it in your other college classes.
- Write a note to a student (real or fictional) who missed the previous class. In your note, explain how one idea from that class is particularly important to your life/studies (Barton & Heidema, 2002).
- Write down, in one sentence, the importance or relevance of something you learned in the previous lesson (Barton & Heidema, 2002).
- Based on the assigned reading for today's class, what do you expect to learn during the lesson?
- Write one question that you have about the reading assignment for today's class. Explain how the answer to this question would help you better understand today's lesson material.

In the middle of the lesson, WTL activities encourage students to stay focused and promote their active participation. Here are a few examples of how a WTL activity can be incorporated in the middle of the lesson:

- The teacher pauses the lecture or the explanation of the material at the key juncture and asks students to predict in writing what they believe will happen next.
- After presenting the material or explaining a particular concept of the lesson, the teacher can ask students to write a question they may still have about this new material. To expand this activity, students can be asked to exchange papers and either answer the original writer's question or provide suggestions to the writer on how they can find the answer (Barton & Heidema, 2002).
- After having students complete a problem-solving strategy, the teacher can ask them to describe the strategy they used to complete the activity and explain why they used it.
- After reading a text (in a language class), the teacher can ask students to write the most interesting/important word that they learned from the reading. Students have to explain how and in which situations they will use this word.
- After completing a group activity, students will be asked to reflect on the importance of this activity.

Finally, at the end of the lesson, WTL activities can be implemented to identify what students learned during the lesson, assess their understanding of the discussed material, and encourage students to reflect on the lesson. Examples of the WTL prompts that can be implemented at the end of the class include the following:

- Imagine that you have to go home and tell your parents about today's lesson. What would you tell them?
- Imagine that you have to explain today's group activity to a little child. How would you do it?
- Tell me about your favorite activity from class today. Explain why you liked it. How can you apply what you learned in this activity in your future studies?
- What is the top single thing (e.g., strategy, concept, theory, principle) that you learned in class today? Explain why it is important/helpful/interesting to you.
- Finish the sentence: "The most difficult concept/topic/theory/strategy for me today was... because..." Explain how the teacher can help you with this difficulty.

Examples

A few examples of student responses to WTL prompts are provided below.

Example 1

Prompt

Summarize one strategy you learned last class and explain how you will implement it in your other college classes.

Student Response

One strategy that I learned last class is how to recognize the lecture language for the topic and plan, in other words, what topic the teacher will talk about during the lecture and the plans for the day. I learned that I should do this by listening very carefully for signaling words and phrases and by paying attention to the details at the beginning of the class. This will help

me in my college classes because there will be a lot of students in class, so it will be very important for me to pay attention in order to understand the topic and the plan that the professor has for the day.

Example 2

Prompt

Imagine that you have to go home and tell your parents about today's lesson. What would you tell them?

Student Response

In today's class, we learned how to write an effective lecture summary that only focuses on the main ideas and important details, so that not only I but other people will be able to understand what it is about. For example, if I was in class and my classmate didn't come and she asks me to see my notes/summary of the lecture, she needs to be able to understand the main ideas discussed during the lecture based on my summary.

Example 3

Prompt

Students were asked to reflect on the importance of a group activity.

Student Response

I liked looking at different examples of genres and discussing with my classmates the features of each piece that belong to different genres and also thinking about the audience. This activity helped me realize that each type of writing has individual characteristics, and if we want to think about the effectiveness of each piece, we have to consider the genre and audience. For example, we didn't think that the journal article was effective, and we thought it was boring, but we didn't think about the audience! It was a very interesting activity.

Letters to the Reviewer

Description

When it comes to teaching writing, research suggests that students should be actively involved in the revision process by reflecting on and analyzing their writing and meaningfully responding to teacher feedback (e.g., Shvidko, 2015; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Haneda, 2004; Hewings & Coffin, 2006; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997). By being engaged in the systematic analysis of their drafts, students become more attentive and reflective readers. To this end, in my writing courses, I implement a technique called *Letter to the Reviewer* that facilitates collaboration between the teacher and the student (Shvidko, 2015). A *Letter to the Reviewer* is a memo that students attach to each draft, in which they provide a short reflective note to their Reviewer (e.g., their teacher or peer) by identifying several strengths and weaknesses of their draft and asking for specific feedback on certain elements of the draft.

Implementation

Since I follow a multi-draft approach in my writing courses, students are asked to compose a *Letter to the Reviewer* for each draft they submit. Each letter has a distinct focus. That is, for the first letter (on the first draft), students are encouraged to focus on the “big picture” elements (sometimes called “higher-order concerns”), including development, content, and organization. To help students reflect on their drafts and compose the letters, I provide them with a list of guiding questions:

- What are the strengths of your draft?
- What are the weaknesses of your draft?
- Does the draft have sufficient support or does it lack support?
- Is the organization of the paper effective? Briefly explain.
- What part of the draft is in most need of further work?
- What would you like your reader to pay close attention to while reading your draft?
- Are you expecting feedback on any particular elements of your draft? If so, what are they?

The second *Letter to the Reviewer* should briefly identify the changes that were made based on the feedback students received on the first draft. Students may also request feedback on lexical and syntactic problems (sometimes called “lower-order concerns”), such as word choice and sentence structure, as well as mechanics and documentation of sources (if applicable). The guiding questions they can use while composing their letters include the following:

- Briefly identify the major revisions that you have made in this draft based on the feedback that you received from your teacher and your classmate.
- What difficulties did you encounter while revising this draft? What was the most challenging part of revising this draft?
- What makes this draft stronger than the first one?
- In what ways does this revised draft better fulfill the purpose of the assignment than the first draft?
- What parts of this revised draft still need further work? Identify specific problems that you feel need to be addressed.
- Are there any particular places in your draft you want your reader to pay close attention to?
- Are there any language concerns (e.g., grammar, word choice) that you would like your reader to help you with?

In their last *Letter to the Reviewer*, submitted with the final draft, students are encouraged to evaluate the overall effectiveness of their paper and identify the major changes that were made based on the feedback they received both from the teacher and their classmates (if applicable) throughout the process of working on the paper. Students may use the following questions as guidelines:

- Briefly identify the major revisions that you have made while composing this final draft.
- What difficulties did you encounter while working on this paper?
- What makes this final draft stronger than the previous ones?
- What are the major strengths of this final draft?
- Are there any weaknesses in this draft you want your reader to be aware of?

The above questions can be adjusted for courses where students only submit a single (i.e., final) paper of a writing assignment. The main point to keep in mind here is to give students a chance to analyze and reflect on their written product, identify the areas for improvement and, based on that, request feedback from the reader on these areas of their writing.

My observations of student work and students' self-reports on this technique demonstrated that these letters help students approach their own writing more analytically, ask the teacher and peers for focused feedback, engage in the collaborative revision process, provide more specific feedback on their classmates' writing during peer review activities, and recognize the connection between classroom instruction and their own writing.

Examples

Below are some examples of students' *Letters to the Reviewer*:

Example 1

Dear Reviewer,

This is my first draft of Assignment 2. I followed the instructions in the course packet and tried my best to extend the content of each graph, so I think this first draft does not lack information and reasoning. However, my reasoning sometimes could be illogical, for example, the two references in the first two paragraphs. I tried to evaluate the point from the second reference so that the paragraph could be read more logically, but I think I failed. Another problem is the transitional words. I tried some new words and phrases and it was awesome, but there were still many repeatedly used words. I will try to fix it. The last and the biggest problem is my procedure part and the purpose part. The last sentence makes me feel a kind of opposite to my research target, and I think this could cause trouble for my research. I would like to receive feedback on the content of these two sections of my paper: procedure and purpose. I also want to know if I used transitional words effectively.

Sincerely,

(Student Name)

Example 2

Dear Reviewer,

In this second draft of the interview report, I have added most of the additional information the last draft was missing as this time I actually had the data from the interview. One hard part of this draft was coding. It took me a while but I figured out the coding scheme to organize my findings. This draft is definitely better than the previous draft due to the changes I made to the content. However, even though this draft is better, there is still room for improvement. For example, I would like you to give me feedback on the analysis section. Did I present the procedure correctly? I am also not sure if I used direct quotations effectively. Could you please comment on that as well? Do I need to provide more quotations from the interview? I hope I will get constructive feedback from you so that my next writing will be of better quality.

Sincerely,

(Student Name)

Example 3

Dear Reviewer,

In this argumentative paper, I wrote my claim about nitrogen fixation fertilizer. I chose to give a counterclaim first, and then use my own claim to counter it. I believe that using this way to present my point is more convincing. My paper has the strength of being convincing, but also, I think it has the weakness of being unorganized. Before I started to write this paper, I was planning to develop two counterclaims. But in the end, I could only develop one. I think I need to have more logical organizing in the next draft. Could you please tell me if my organization is good and if it makes sense to the reader? Do you think I need to find more evidence to support my claim? Finally, I would like to know if I should add another counterclaim. I appreciate your suggestions!

Sincerely,

(Student Name)

Conclusion

Writing is a powerful tool that can be used in the classroom to facilitate students' reflection both on the course material (e.g., projects, assignments, and feedback) and their own learning processes. Reflective writing tasks, therefore, can give students the opportunity to think more critically and carefully about the material presented in the course and to learn more about themselves—their learning strengths and weaknesses as well as progress made in the course. Due to their versatility, the reflective writing tasks described above can be implemented in various teaching contexts and adjusted depending on the nature of the course, the material presented in it, and the learner population. Using these examples above, teachers can also design their own reflective writing tasks to create opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and the knowledge they acquire in their courses. It is my hope that the reflective tasks described here will help teachers include more reflective components in their own courses.

References

- Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. Jossey-Bass.
- Anderson, J. (2012). Reflective journals as a tool for auto-ethnographic learning: A case study of student experiences with individualized sustainability. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 36(4), 613-623.
- Anderson, N. J. (2012). Metacognition: Awareness of language learning. In *Psychology for language learning* (pp. 169-187). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Andrade, M. C., & Evans, N. (2013). *Principles and practices for response in second language writing. Developing self-regulated learners*. Routledge.
- Shvidko, E. (2015). Beyond “giver-receiver” relationships: Facilitating an interactive revision process. *Journal of Response to Writing*, 1(2), 4.
- Barton, M. L., & Heidema, C. (2002). *Teaching reading in mathematics* (2nd ed.). McRel.
- Benson, P. (2007). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(1), 21-40.
- Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 9-18.

- Boutet, I., Vandette, M. P., & Valiquette-Tessier, S. C. (2017). Evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of reflection writing. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2017.1.8>.
- Carroll, M. (1994). Journal writing as a learning and research tool in the adult classroom. *TESOL Journal*, 4, 19-22.
- Crane, C. (2018). Making connections in beginning language instruction: Structured reflection and the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. In J. Watzinger-Tharp & P. Urlaub (Eds.), *The interconnected language curriculum: Critical transitions and interfaces in articulated K-16 contexts* (pp. 51-74). Heinle.
- Crane, C., & Sosulski, M. J. (2020). Staging transformative learning across collegiate language curricula: Student perceptions of structured reflection for language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 53(1), 69-95.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process* (2nd ed.). Heath.
- Dymont, J. E., & O'Connell, T. S. (2011). Assessing the quality of reflection in student journals: A review of the research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(1), 81-97.
- Farrah, M. (2012). Reflective journal writing as an effective technique in the writing process. *An-Najah University Journal for Research-B (Humanities)*, 26(4), 997-1025.
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford.
- Goldstein, L. M., & Conrad, S. M. (1990). Student input and negotiation of meaning in ESL writing conferences. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24(3), 443-460.
- Greene, K. (2011). Research for the classroom: The power of reflective writing. *English Journal*, 100(4), 90-93.
- Grossman, R. (2008). Structures for facilitating student reflection. *College Teaching*, 57(1), 15-22.
- Haneda, M. (2004). The joint construction of meaning in writing conferences. *Applied Linguistics*, 25, 178-219.
- Hewings, A., & Coffin, C. (2006). Formative interaction in electronic written exchanges: Fostering feedback dialogue. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing. Contexts and issues* (pp. 225-245). Cambridge University Press.
- Fullana, J., Pallisera, M., Colomer, J., Fernández Peña, R., & Pérez-Burriel, M. (2016). Reflective learning in higher education: A qualitative study on students' perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(6), 1008-1022.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.
- Lew, M. D. N., & Schmidt, H. G. (2011). Writing to learn: Can reflection journals be used to promote self-reflection and learning? *Higher Education Research and Development*, 30(4), 519-532.
- Marciano, J. (2015). Becoming Facebook friendly: Social media and the culturally relevant classroom. *English Journal*, 104(5), 73-78.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Moon, J. A. (2001). *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Moon, J. A. (2006). *Learning journals: A handbook for reflective practice and professional development*. Routledge.
- Morrison, K. (1996.) Developing reflective practice in higher degree students through a learning journal. *Studies in Higher Education*, 21(3), 317-332.
- National Research Council (2001). *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*. National Academy Press.
- Nilson, L. (2010). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors*. Jossey-Bass.
- Orem, R. A. (2001). Journal writing in adult ESL: Improving practice through reflective writing. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 69-78.
- Pais Marden, M. & Herrington, J. (2021). Encouraging reflective practice through learning portfolios in an authentic online foreign language learning environment. *Reflective Practice*, 23(2), 177-189.
- Patthey-Chavez, G. G., & Ferris, D. R. (1997). Writing conferences and the weaving of multi-voiced texts in college composition. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 31(1), 51-90.

- Ramlal, A., & Augustin, D. S. (2020). Engaging students in reflective writing: an action research project. *Educational Action Research*, 28(3), 518-533.
- Revans, R. W. (1982). *The origins and growth of action learning*. Chartwell Bratt.
- Ryan, M. (2011). Improving reflective writing in higher education: A social semiotic perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(1), 99-111.
- Ryan, M. (2013). The pedagogical balancing act: Teaching reflection in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 18(2), 144-155.
- Thorpe, K. (2004). Reflective learning journals: From concept to practice. *Reflective Practice: International and Multi-disciplinary Perspectives*, 5(3), 327-343.
- Walker, D. (1985). Writing and reflection. In D. Boud, R. Keogh, & D. Walker (Eds.), *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* (pp. 52-68). Routledge.
- Zheng, B. (2013). *Social media and classroom writing: Participation, interaction, and collaboration*. Irvine: University of California.

"IT'S NOT ALWAYS POOR DECISIONS":

Shifts in Business Student's Attitudes Toward Poverty After Completing 'Spent'

Jessica Parks, Ph.D.

Abstract

This Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study examined whether undergraduate business students reported having different attitudes towards poverty after completing SPENT. SPENT is an open-access, digital poverty simulation offered through Urban Ministries of Durham. The author used the Reflexive Thematic Analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyze 17 student reflection papers. The students were enrolled in an introductory finance course at a small teaching institution in the Southwest. The student reflection paper prompts were based on the four-phase Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984). The author constructed four themes about the students' attitudes toward poverty: (1) laziness and poor decisions, (2) multiple causes, (3) low wages, and (4) importance of education. This research offers implications for college instructors who use simulations and those who teach about poverty.

Keywords: poverty, business education, poverty simulations, SPENT, attitudes toward poverty

Introduction

According to Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy (2022), an estimated 14.3 % of U.S. households in October 2022 lived in poverty. This was partially due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which drastically altered the USA's economy leading to mass unemployment and high inflation (Mutikani, 2022). While Americans are generally sympathetic to those living in poverty (Ekins, 2019), they have different beliefs about the underlying causes of poverty. Even though poverty is caused by both internal and structural factors, college students are more likely to hold that internal causes (e.g., laziness, welfare dependency) are solely responsible for poverty (Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Hunt, 2004). Efforts to align business students with the lived realities of poverty are worthy of consideration. The SPENT poverty simulation is a pedagogical tool used to teach college students about poverty (Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2016, 2017).

SPENT Poverty Simulation

SPENT is a free platform that is operated by the Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD). It was formed in collaboration with UMD and McKinney in February 2011 (McKinney, 2011). The simulation was based on the real-world experiences of their clients who encountered homelessness and poverty. SPENT players begin the "month" with only \$1,000, no job, no apartment, and no savings (Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019). Participants make three important choices at the beginning of the simulation: (1) job choice, (2) health insurance, and (3) housing. The participants choose between three jobs:

(1) restaurant server, (2) office temp, and (3) warehouse worker with varying hourly wages and work schedules. Next, the students choose between three health insurance plans with varying co-pays and monthly premiums. Lastly, students chose their residence. As noted in the simulation, student participants who choose to live closer to their jobs will have a higher rental obligation than their counterparts. After making these three selections, participants completed the rest of the simulation, making other day-to-day decisions. The goal of the simulation was to last until the end of the month with money remaining.

Scholarship of Teaching of Learning (SoTL)

The purpose of this Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study was to explore whether the SPENT poverty simulation caused a shift in students' attitudes towards poverty. SoTL work is intended to encourage reflexivity in teaching, foster new learning about teaching, and ensure teaching effectiveness (Chick, 2018). Therefore, this research offers the author and readers the chance to reflect on the value of a SPENT poverty simulation in various higher education classroom settings. The author used Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyze 17 student reflection papers across two sections of an *Introduction to Managerial Finance* course at a small, public teaching institution in the Southwest.

This research addressed three gaps in the literature. First, it added to the body of literature on the use of the SPENT poverty simulations in higher education studies. To date, few studies (e.g., Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2016, 2017) have used the SPENT poverty simulation. Second, few articles, if any, emanate from business programs since the studies are more concentrated in pharmacy and healthcare-oriented classrooms (Smith et al., 2016, 2017). There is merit to introducing poverty simulations to business programs since experiential learning approaches can be more efficient than class lecture alone (Gierach & Nesiba, 2018). Lastly, even fewer studies explore the shift in college students' attitudes toward poverty after completing SPENT outside of healthcare-related disciplines. Continuing this work on college business studies is worthy of consideration.

Literature Review

As of October 2022, an estimated 14.3% of households live in poverty (Columbia University, 2022). Poverty in the USA is quantified using an absolute measure, whereas anyone earning below a certain poverty threshold is deemed to be living in poverty. Poverty thresholds are produced by the United States Census for statistical purposes and specify the minimum income needed to cover basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. In 2021, the poverty threshold was \$14,097 for those under 65 years old (Creamer et al., 2022). Poverty in the USA has drastically increased due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic (See Table 1 for a four-year comparison of poverty rates).

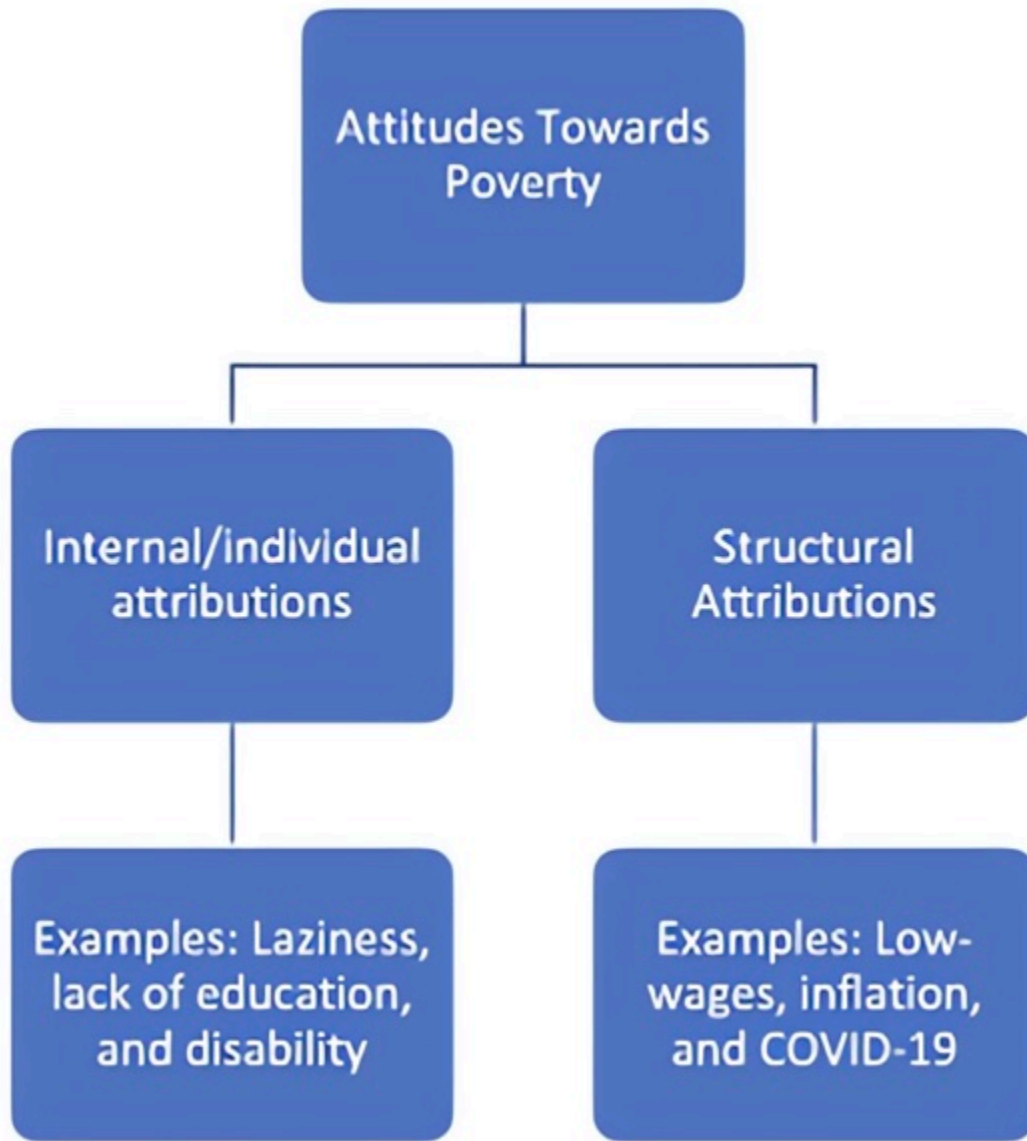
Table 1: *Official Poverty Rates by Year*

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Official Poverty Rate	10.5%	11.5%	11.6%	14.3% (October)
Poverty Threshold	\$13,300	\$13,788	\$14,097	Not Available

Attitudes Toward Poverty

Attitudes toward poverty can be organized as internal/individual attributions or structural attributions. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the types of attributions. Internal/individual attributions suggest that the person is living in poverty to their own “individual failing” (Rank et al., 2003). Examples include but are not limited to laziness, lack of motivation to work, disability status, welfare dependency, and low educational attainment. Research demonstrated that internal/individual attributions could be responsible for poverty. For instance, those living with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than their able-bodied counterparts (22.5% versus 8.4%) (Semega et al., 2020). In general, those with lower levels of education are more likely to live in poverty (Brady, 2019). Whereas only 4% of those with a post-secondary degree live in poverty, roughly a quarter of those with no high school diploma live in poverty (Semega et al., 2020). Lastly, welfare dependency (i.e., households receiving more than 50% of their total annual income from TANF, SNAP, and Supplemental Security Income benefits) can be a cause of poverty, encouraging persons to stay on welfare (Crouse et al., 2008).

In addition to internal/individual attributions, structural attributions such as institutional racism, increasing inflation, and low wages also contribute to poverty. A structural attribution suggests that a person is poor due to the ongoing “structural failings” (Rank et al., 2003) present in American society. With an increase in low-wage jobs, many full-time workers support their families on a Federal minimum wage of \$7.25 (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d). As a result, it is not uncommon for full-time, hourly workers to live in poverty or rely on social assistance. In fact, nearly 52% of all fast-food workers rely on social assistance, including SNAP and Medicaid (Miao, 2020). The Federal minimum wage has remained unchanged since 2009 and does not keep up with inflation (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation has increased dramatically from 1.4% in 2020 to 7% in December 2021 (US Inflation Calculator, 2022; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Inflation has led to higher costs of food, soaring home prices, and ongoing supply chain management issues (Mutikani, 2022).



SPENT

Research found that both internal and structural factors contribute to poverty (Brady, 2019). However, many college students believe that poverty is only caused by internal factors (Hunt, 2004; Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2016; 2017). As such, educational efforts to align college students' views with the lived reality of poverty are worthy of undertaking. Poverty simulations have been used widely in higher education and have been tied to general changes in students' understanding of poverty. Poverty simulations have also been tied to increases in critical thinking, understanding of others, and active learning among college students (Vandsburger et al., 2010). SPENT is an open-access, choose-your-own-adventure-style, digital poverty simulation offered through Urban Ministries of Durham (2021).

Specifically, the literature demonstrated the effectiveness of the SPENT poverty simulation in changing college students' attitudes toward poverty (Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2016; 2017). Smith and colleagues (2016) conducted a SPENT simulation during the 2013 and 2014 academic years with 108 pharmacy, physician assistant, and communication science and disorders students. Using pre and post Undergraduate Perceptions of Poverty Tracking Sur-

vey (Blair et al., 2014) assessment, results found that students reported changes in their attitudes toward poverty. Smith and colleagues (2017) examined the effectiveness of SPENT and the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) on changing pharmacy students' attitudes toward poverty. The CAPS program is another commonly used poverty simulation; however, it is offered in-personal as compared to the SPENT simulation. The 99 students attended Butler University in Indiana. Both the online SPENT game and CAPS interventions had positive effects on the students' attitudes toward poverty (Smith et al., 2017).

Hernández-Ramos and colleagues (2019) sampled 190 undergraduate students at a mid-size Catholic university in the western U.S. The students were randomly assigned to the treatment simulation (SPENT) or a control game (Free Rice). Results showed no post-test difference by treatment (Individual Attributions $p = .756$; Structural Attributions $p = .223$). Playing SPENT, as opposed to Free Rice, increased students' beliefs that poverty is attributable to structural conditions. It also diminished their beliefs that poverty is caused by individual factors. With the exception of a few studies, the SPENT poverty simulation has not been well documented in the literature. Additionally, poverty simulations have been rarely explored in finance, economics, and business literature (Gierach & Nesiba, 2018).

Methodology

This research was exempt from a full review as per the college's Institutional Review Board. The 17 sampled students were enrolled in one of two sections of *Introduction to Managerial Finance* (FIN 301). There were 32 students enrolled in section one and 23 enrolled in section two, with a total of 54 enrollees. Each of the course sections was taught by the same instructor and used the same textbook, syllabus, assignment deadlines, and course lecture materials. Since the course was amid the COVID-19 pandemic, both sections were taught synchronously via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays (Noon and 6:00 p.m.). FIN 301 is a required course for all business students at the author's particular institution and is a pre-requisite course for all upper-level finance courses.

The instructor gave students 15 minutes at the start of a Monday class to complete the simulation (<http://playSPENT.org/>). Then students were asked to complete a two-to-four-page student reflection paper. The reflection paper prompts were based on Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. Eighteen (33%) students out of the total 54 enrollees consented to the study. However, one paper was dropped from the study since the student did not answer all of the questions. Therefore, this research analyzed a sample of 17 reflection papers. Since the author was also the instructor for the courses, a third-party de-identified the data by stripping it of the students' names and other identifying information. The files were also renamed "Student 1" through "Student 17" and the findings refer to each student as such.

Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model and Reflection Paper Prompts

During the Kolb's (1984) four-step model, students engage in a concrete experience (i.e., SPENT) and involve themselves in new experiences. During the reflexive observation stage, the students described and reflected on their experiences with SPENT via a reflection paper. The abstract conceptualization stage is where the students compared what was just experienced in SPENT to their previously held beliefs and attitudes toward poverty. Lastly, during the active experimentation period, learners test the theories formed in the abstract conceptualization phase and use them to guide future decisions. See Figure 2 for an illustration of the Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. This model was used to guide the student reflection paper prompts:

1. Identify your job, healthcare plan and rent choice. Why did you choose them? Did you make it to the end of the month? (Based on concrete experiences and reflexive observation phases)

2. Provide a summary of your experience with SPENT. Discuss three choices you were faced with and the outcomes associated with them. (Based on concrete experiences and reflexive observation phases)
3. Before completing this poverty simulation, what did you believe to be the cause of poverty in the United States? (Based on the abstract conceptualization phase)
4. After completing the poverty simulation, what do you believe to be the major cause of poverty? (Based on abstract conceptualization active experimentation phases)

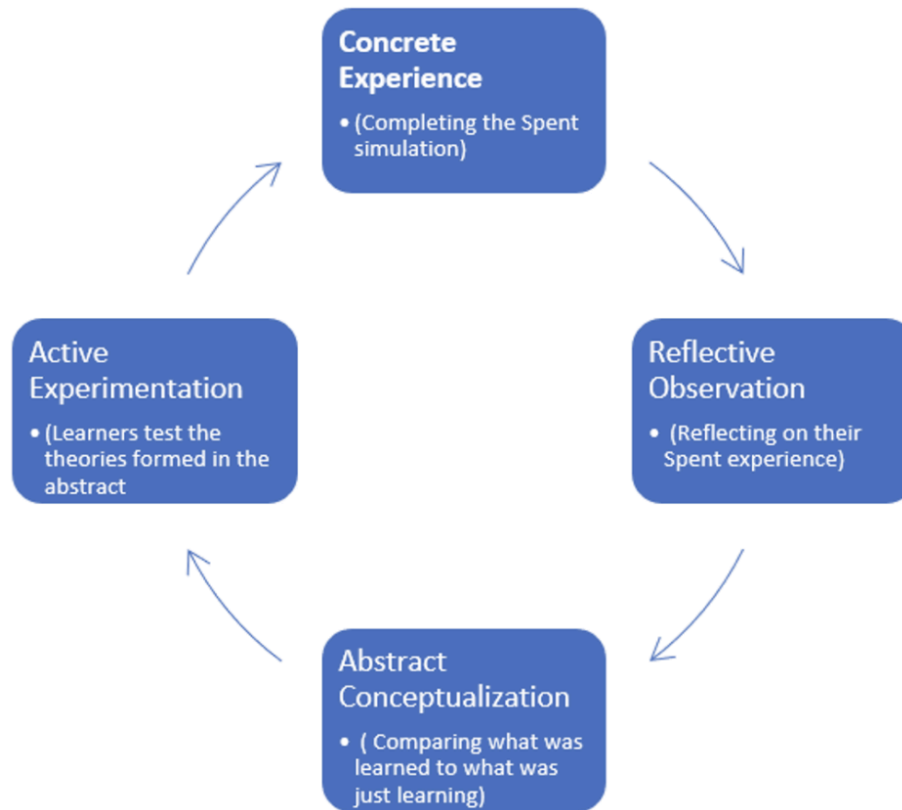


Figure 2. Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The six-phase Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyze the 17 student reflection papers. During the first phase, the author read all student reflection papers twice. While reading the paper, the researcher highlighted phrases and maintained a list of initial codes. During the second phase, the author compiled the initial codes from the first and second readings. In the third phase, the researcher organized those codes into meaningful themes. In the fourth phase, the author reviewed themes, ensuring that all the codes in that theme were relevant to the theme. The author then, in the fifth phase, named and renamed the themes until the theme's name fit with the codes. The researcher knew when all the candidate themes reflected the data when a specific name and brief description of the theme were generated. The final phase corresponds with the results section. (See Figure 3 for a visual representation of the Reflexive Thematic Analysis approach.)

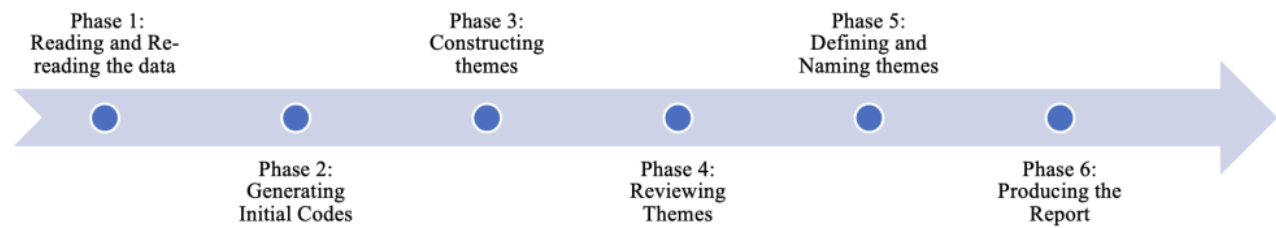


Figure 3. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Results

This research examined whether business students had shifts in their attitudes towards poverty after completing SPENT. Table 2 shares the job, health insurance, and rent choices for the 17 sampled students. The author constructed four themes: (1) laziness and poor decisions, (2) multiple causes, (3) low wages, and (4) importance of education. All student responses are presented exactly as original written by the student. Therefore, any grammar and punctuation errors are maintained to preserve the integrity of the student's voice.

Table 2: *Student Job, Health Insurance, and Rent Choices*

	Job	Insurance	Housing	Completion
Student 1	Warehouse	Gold	Over \$800	\$52 remaining
Student 2	Office Temp	Silver	\$790	\$1,592 remaining
Student 3	Office Temp	Bronze	\$725	Lasted 24 days
Student 4	Warehouse	Bronze	\$700	Lasted 30 days
Student 5	Warehouse	Gold	\$840	\$505 remaining
Student 6	Warehouse	Bronze	\$725	\$781 remaining
Student 7	Restaurant Server	Gold	\$808	Lasted 6 days
Student 8	Warehouse	Bronze	\$760	Yes, \$1,592
Student 9	Warehouse	Gold	\$725	Made It
Student 10	Office Temp	Bronze	\$705	Lasted 16 days
Student 11	Office Temp	Bronze	\$725	\$259 remaining
Student 12	Warehouse	Gold	\$725	Made it
Student 13	Warehouse	Bronze	\$840	Lasted 12 days
Student 14	Office Temp	Bronze	\$808	Made It
Student 15	Warehouse	Bronze	\$828	Made it
Student 16	Warehouse	Bronze	\$808	\$284
Student 17	Warehouse	Gold	\$807	\$73 left over

Theme 1: Laziness and Poor Decisions

Students shared they held negative attitudes about those living in poverty prior to completing SPENT. For example, Student 1, who simulated a warehouse worker on the gold insurance plan, stated:

[I] thought that the main cause [of poverty] was that people weren't motivating themselves to get a job or try and receive a better opportunity, that they weren't managing their money correctly, or that they wanted to get government benefits.

Like Student 1, Student 2 also held that poverty was the result of laziness, lack of motivation, and welfare dependency. Student 2 simulated an office temp on the silver health insurance plan. After making it to the end of the simulation, Student 2 reported:

As a daughter of an immigrant and as an immigrant myself, there was a time in my life when I thought that people in poverty were lazy, when in reality this issue is a lot more complex and deeper. I mean, my mom must work to jobs so that we are not in poverty, but if she lost one of her jobs and all the benefits that comes with it, perhaps we would be in poverty... Poverty is

not about people being lazy. Poverty is the result of a broken system, or perhaps of a system that was designed to do exactly what is doing.

Student 2 originally believed that poverty was the result of laziness. After the simulation, they reported that their attitudes toward poverty shifted. They now believe that poverty is the result of a “broken system.” Student 17, a warehouse worker on the bronze plan, shared that they believed that bad choices (such as gambling addiction) are the cause of poverty.

... bad decisions. The reason I say that is because unfortunately my father was a gambler and I know my parents got into some unnecessary debt due to this. I can totally see that being a great factor in a town like Las Vegas. Everywhere you go there's a gambling machine.

Both Student 1, Student 2, and Student 17 all articulated that poverty is the result of internal factors such as lack of motivation, laziness, and poor decisions.

Theme 2: Multiple causes

After completing the simulation, students shared that they now believe that poverty is the result of multiple factors. For instance, Student 8, who simulated a warehouse worker on the bronze plan, shared:

I think that there are many factors that someone can go through that can put them in a poverty and that as a society we overlook so many of those situations and assume that the person is at fault...Education being entirely too expensive, low-income areas having lower education outcomes, lack of marketable skills, the minimum wage being absurdly low, growing up in poverty with limited resources to get yourself out, job loss, I think I could go on and on.

This student, like others, shared that poverty is the result of both internal and structural factors such as lack of education and low wages.

Theme 3: Low Wages

Another reoccurring theme in the data was students' belief that poverty is the result of low wages, high cost of living, and low-paying jobs. Student 4, who simulated a warehouse worker on the bronze health insurance plan, stated:

I still believe that it all comes down to income and the ability to make or receive it. Everything costs money. To be able to live comfortably, eat better, be insured and enjoy some amenities, you need money. It is not easy to live in a country where you are struggling to make ends meet. In the United States there are many people who can't afford their housing or living style even though it is at a bare minimum. Take for example, big cities or states like California, where many are leaving their states and move to neighboring states because they can't afford it in California. However, the problem there is that they drive the prices in the new place they move to and now the residents of that location are also struggling to make ends meet because they can't afford it.

Other students also shared that they believe that poverty is the result of structural factors (e.g., low wages and high cost of living). Specifically, Student 7 (a restaurant server on the gold health insurance plan) stated:

I believed many things before doing this stimulation project what were the cause of poverty in United States...Low paying jobs are the cause of poverty. High price apartment, high cost of food and every extra thing that comes up on a weekly bases that you have to pay for causes people to choose to either have no more money until you get paid again or to give some-

thing away just to keep few extra dollars. Things come up every day that we have to pay for that we might not include in the monthly budget, like fees for dogs, replacing a tire, kids tutor lessons, being sick and needing to see a doctor. You almost have to make just enough to cover all of those expenses, but how much is enough?

Both Student 4 and Student 7 cited the role that low wages have as a contributor to poverty. Many of the students discussed low-wage in more detail before and after the simulation.

Theme 4: Importance of Education

Overall, students felt that “a lack of access to education is a major cause of poverty because uneducated people will have an even more difficult time navigating the system” (Student 2). Student 10, who simulated the warehouse worker on the gold insurance plan, stated:

Without education, it would be even worse and make it impossible to find a good job to leave poverty. I don't totally disagree with my points prior to the simulation, but I do have further points that support some of these ideas while also getting a clear image of what the problem comes from.

Additionally, Student 11 (office temp enrolled in the bronze plan) emphasized lack of education as a cause of poverty. Student 11 shared:

I truly believed that the cause of poverty is a lack of opportunity and sometimes a lack of education. I do not believe that everyone has access to the same resources and the same opportunities...I also believed a lack of higher education seemed to immediately close doors for many people. Higher paying jobs often require college degrees where certain skill sets are taught. If you did not have the degree to prove you have the needed skills set, those jobs were unavailable to you. You would have to take a job with lower wages that more people without credentials would be qualified for.

Both Student 10 and Student 11 emphasized the importance of education as both a cause of poverty and a tool to escape poverty.

Conclusion

This SoTL research examined whether business students reported different attitudes towards poverty after completing SPENT. This research used Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyze 17 student reflection papers across two sections of an *Introduction to Managerial Finance* course at a small, teaching institution in the southwest. The student reflection papers were based on the four-phase Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984). This research constructed four themes: (1) laziness and poor decisions, (2) multiple causes, (3) low wages, and (4) importance of education.

As outlined in Theme 1, students originally held that poverty is caused by laziness and poor decision-making. This finding aligns with research demonstrating that college students may have negative attitudes and hold internal attributions of poverty (Hunt, 2004). Theme 2 showed that students believed that poverty was caused by multiple factors aligning with the literature on internal and structural factors (Brady, 2019; Rank et al, 2003; Semega et al., 2020). In theme 3, many students shared that low wages are a primary contributor of poverty (Miao, 2020). This is not surprising given that all student-participant were placed into low-wage jobs in the simulation. Lastly, it is not surprising that students shared the importance of education as a tool to escape poverty (Theme 4). Lack of education, in the literature, has been well-documented as a cause of poverty (Semega et al., 2020).

This study adds to the emerging body of literature demonstrating that SPENT is an effective tool in changing students' attitudes toward poverty (Hernández-Ramos et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2016; 2017). However, this research is not without limitations. Although these findings cannot be generalized to all college students, they reflect this particular group of student participants. As noted by Chick (2018), students' participation may be tied to their adoration of the instructor or feeling as if the instructor might fail them for not participating. To remedy this issue, the instructor followed strict IRB protocols. Further, this research has implications for college instructors whose courses have an emphasis on poverty. These might include but are not limited to sociology, business, and human services. Future mixed-methods research might use both an attitude toward poverty scale (Blair et al., 2014) and student reflection paper data.

References

- Blair, K. D., Brown, M., Schoepflin, T., & Taylor, D. B. (2014). Validation of a tool to assess and track undergraduate attitudes toward those living in poverty. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 24(4), 448-461. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731513497404>
- Brady, D. (2019). Theories of the causes of poverty. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45(1), 155- 175. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022550>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chick, N. (2018). *SoTL in action: Illuminating critical moments of practice*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy. (2022, October). *Monthly Poverty Rate*. <https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/forecasting-monthly-poverty-data>
- Creamer, J. F., Shrider, E. A., Burns, K., & Chen, F. (2022). *Poverty in the United States: 2021*. (Report No. P60-277). United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/demo/income-poverty/p60-277.html>
- Crouse, G. Hauan, S. & Rogers, A. (2008). Indicators of welfare dependence: Annual report to Congress, 2008. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/indicators-welfare-dependence-annual-report-congress-2008/chapter-ii-indicators-dependence>
- Ekins, E. E. (2019). What Americans think about poverty, wealth, and work: Findings from the Cato Institute. Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/publications/survey-reports/what-americans-think-about-poverty-wealth-work#>
- Gierach, M. R., & Nesiba, R. F. (2018). What can teaching economists learn from poverty simulations run by nursing faculty? *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, 9(1), 128-143. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPEE.2018.092232>
- Hernández-Ramos, P., Bachen, C., Raphael, C., Ifcher, J., & Broghammer, M. (2019). Experiencing poverty in an online simulation: Effects on players' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors about poverty. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 13(3), 15-34. <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2019-3-1>
- Hunt, M. O. (2004). Race/ethnicity and beliefs about wealth and poverty. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(3), 827-853. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.00247.x>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- McKinney. (2011, Feb). SPENT: The first online game about homelessness. <https://mckinney.com/2011/02/09/SPENT-the-first-online-game-about-homelessness/>
- Miao, H. (2020, November 19). *Walmart and Mcdonald's are among top employers of Medicaid and Food Stamp bene-*

- ficiaries, report says*. CNBC. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/19/walmart-and-mcdonalds-among-top-employers-of-medicare-and-food-stamp-beneficiaries.html>
- Mutikani, L. (2022, May 31). *Rising cost of living hurts U.S. consumer confidence; house prices soar*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/us-consumer-confidence-dips-may-survey-2022-05-31/>
- Rank, M. R., Yoon, H.-S., & Hirschl, T. A. (2003). American poverty as a structural failing: 197 Evidence and arguments. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 30(4), 3–29. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-12331-001>
- Semega, J. L., Kollar, M. A., Shrider, E. A., & Creamer, J. F. (2020). *Income and poverty in the United States: 2019* (Report No. P60-270). United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html>
- Smith, C., Ryder, P., Bilodeau, A., & Schultz, M. (2016). Use of an online game to evaluate health professions students' attitudes toward people in poverty. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 80(8). <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe808139>
- Smith, C., Ryder, P., Blais, M., & Schneck, R. (2017). Evaluation of two different poverty simulations with professional phase pharmacy students. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 9(5), 903-910. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2017.05.018>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). *Federal minimum wage rates under the Fair Labor Standards Act*. <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/chart.pdf>
- Urban Ministries of Durham. (2021). *Play SPENT*. <https://www.umdurham.org/SPENT.html>
- US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, June 10). Consumer price index: May 2022. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf>
- US Inflation Calculator. (2022, June). *Current US inflation rates: 2000-2022*. <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/>
- Vandsburger, E., Duncan-Daston, R., Akerson, E., & Dillon, T. (2010). The effects of poverty simulation, an experiential learning modality, on students' understanding of life in poverty. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 30(3), 300-316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2010.497129>