IMPLEMENTING A CO-CREATED CURRICULUM IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM: PREPARING TO WALK IN UNPREPARED

A Scholarly Research Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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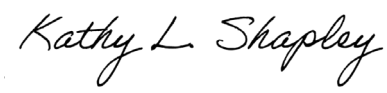

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ABSTRACT

Colleges face growing pressures to maintain or enhance the quality of what they offer while being challenged to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of students. Staff in higher education face the challenge of supporting students to feel they belong and are valued. The co-creation of teaching and learning is one model in which we may be able to meet these challenges. The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. A qualitative research methodology was used to explore and describe the implementation of a co-created curriculum model in a college classroom. Ethnographic field notes of the researcher's reflections on implementing a co-created curriculum were collected in narrative form, and data from students' perspectives were collected using open-ended survey questions. This study found that co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom included the process and preparation of implementing the model. Similar to previous research, this study's results show the benefits of autonomy, gaining experience and skills, motivation and engagement, and challenges that fall under the categories of resistance and institutional norms and practices. Implications for practice from this study include implications for both students and faculty. Implementing a co-created teaching and learning model allows for greater collaboration and engagement for students and faculty and develops a stronger sense of community in the classroom.

Keywords: co-creation, engagement, ethnography, pedagogy, qualitative research

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my husband, Bruce; my parents, James and Anna Marie; daughter, Briana; and my son-in-law, Jacob, for all the support, encouragement, and love they have shown me throughout my educational journey. It is also dedicated to my granddaughter, Hailey, showing her that anything is possible and that it is never too late to achieve your goals. Finally, it is dedicated to all the students I have been lucky enough to teach, collaborate, and build relationships with. Students are the focus of this research and why I love what I do.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Co-Creation of Teaching and Learning 1

History of Co-Creation of Teaching and Learning 2

Challenges and Benefits 2

Challenges 2

Benefits 3

Rationales 5

Statement of the Research Problem 6

Research Purpose and Questions 6

Research Background and Assumptions 6

Significance of the Study 7

Organization of the Research Report 8

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 9

Introduction 9

The Co-Created Curriculum Model 9

What is Co-Creation? 10

Historical Context 13

Co-Creation Models 16

Challenges in the Co-Created Curriculum Model 17

Resistance 17

Institutional Practices and Norms 19
Creating Inclusion 21
Benefits of a Co-Created Curriculum Model 22
Increased Engagement, Autonomy, and Empowerment 22
Enhancement of Teaching and Learning 24
Gaining Transferable Skills 26
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS 28
Introduction 28
Research Methodology 28
Qualitative Methods 28
Autoethnography 29
Qualitative Surveys 29
Action Research 30
Participatory Action Research 31
Research Context 31
Research Setting 31
Participant Recruitment and Selection 32
Participants 32
Researcher Positionality 33
Research Methods 34
Data Collection 34
Instruments 34
Procedures 36

Data Analysis 38

Procedures 39

Synthesis of Data Analysis 41

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 43

Introduction 43

The Co-Created Teaching and Learning Classroom Experience 43

Findings 44

Qualitative Analysis of Student Survey Data 44

Process of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences 45

Benefits of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences 47

Autonomy 47

Community 48

Experience and Skills 49

Engagement and Motivation 50

Challenges of Co-Crating Teaching and Learning Experiences 50

Co-Creation Process 50

Conflict and Decision-Making 51

Negative Feelings 52

Qualitative Analysis of Researcher Field Notes 53

Process of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences 54

Preparation 54

Implementation 54

Student Buy-In 55

Structuring the Co-Creation Process 56
Benefits of Co-Creation Teaching and Learning Experiences 57
Student Voice 57
Choice 58
Collaboration 59
Negotiation 60
Challenges of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences 61
Control and Preparedness 61
Workload and Time 62
Negative Feelings 63
Discussion 64
Research Question 1: Process 65
Process 65
Preparation 66
Research Question 2: Benefits 68
Autonomy 68
Gaining Experience and Skills 68
Engagement and Motivation 69
Research Question 3: Challenges 70
Resistance 71
Institutional Practices and Norms 72
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION 74
Introduction 74

Implications for Practice 75

Suggestions for Future Research 76

Limitations 76

Conclusion 78

REFERENCES 79

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form 89

APPENDIX B: Student Survey Questions 90

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Alignment of Data Collection to Research Questions	35
2	Alignment of Survey Data to Research Questions	36
3	Alignment of Data to Research Questions	39
4.	Data Analysis for Research Questions	41
5.	Summary of Student Survey Data	45
6.	Summary of Researcher Field Notes Data Analysis	53

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES		PAGE
1	Ladder of Student Participation in Curriculum Design	11
2	Five-Step Co-Creation Process	67

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is an increasingly complex environment. With students coming to study simultaneously, resources are being reduced at many institutions. Colleges face growing pressures to maintain or enhance the quality of the educational services they offer while being challenged to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of students. In addition to teaching academics, staff in higher education face the challenge of supporting students to feel that they belong and feel valued. The co-creation of teaching and learning is one model in which we may be able to meet these challenges. This chapter introduces the study's research problem, provides background information, and discusses the challenges and benefits of a co-created curriculum before describing the research purpose, the study's research questions, the researcher's background and assumptions, and the significance of the study.

Co-Creation of Teaching and Learning

Co-creation of teaching and learning occurs when students and faculty share decision-making about specific curriculum elements, such as input on assignments, the course schedule, grading methods, or the entire curriculum for a course or program. Co-creation of teaching and learning has been described as one of the key pedagogical ideas in higher education (Bovill, 2020a). Many different forms of curricular co-creation exist, from a small number of students giving input on curricular design to a whole class of students engaged in creating the curriculum for a course. Faculty implementing a co-creation model recognize that students have valuable perspectives and contributions to bring to teaching and learning, which implies deeper engagement than might be found in common forms of active learning and interaction (Bovill, 2020b).

History of Co-Creation of Teaching and Learning

In the early twentieth century, renowned educator John Dewey (1916) argued for more progressive, democratic classrooms and school environments, influencing many scholars and students who followed. For example, in 1968, Martin Heidegger released a book titled *What is Called Thinking,* where he challenged ideas of the teacher-student relationship, suggesting that more freedom and openness were needed (Bovill, 2020a). Similarly, Carl Roger's book *The Freedom to Learn*, published in 1969, returned to many of Dewey's ideas, including calls for students to participate more fully in the co-designing learning process (Bovill, 2020a). The 1970s saw several critiques of formal schooling, including Ivan Illich's book *Deschooling Society*, Paul Willis' book *Learning to Labour*, and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that proposed popular education was more valuable to people than formal education (Bovill, 2020a). In the 1980s, there was a rise in critical pedagogy, which focused on students and staff negotiating and collaborating to co-create new forms of knowledge from their own experiences to challenge existing views of the world (Bovill, 2020a). Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the co-creation of, and students as partners in, learning and teaching across universities internationally (Bovill, 2019; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2020).

Challenges and Benefits

Challenges

Although a positive picture of the benefits of a co-created curriculum is emerging, there are also challenges. The first challenge is overcoming resistance to curricular co-creation. Some faculty and students may have genuine and well-founded concerns about changing their teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning. For example, faculty may have concerns about handing over power to students when they wish to cover substantial content, and they are

unconvinced that students know enough about the subject to create classes (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020). Such concerns may prevent instructors from even considering a co-created curriculum.

The second challenge is navigating institutional structures, practices, and norms for curricular co-creation. Many universities are set up in ways that envisage teaching as something done to students in which students play a minimal role (Meinking & Hall, 2020). University systems for course design and approval typically take a long time, and some teachers interpret these structures as closing down possibilities for curricular co-creation (Bovill, 2020a). Additionally, the customs and culture of higher education often make it difficult for students and staff to take on new roles and perspectives (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). The difficulty navigating institutional structures may discourage instructors who attempt a co-created curriculum.

The third challenge is establishing an inclusive approach to curricular co-creation. Ensuring inclusivity in curricular co-creation and partnership is a growing area of concern (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020). For example, some teacher-student collaborations may engage already engaged students and may, in some instances, exacerbate existing structural inequalities; thus, establishing an inclusive approach to partnership can be challenging (Bovill, 2020a; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). The possibility that a co-created curriculum could increase student marginalization may cause instructors to stick with the status quo.

Benefits

Despite the challenges, there are many benefits to students and faculty from the processes and outcomes of co-creation, which are based on three broad areas. First, co-creating teaching and learning leads to increased engagement and empowerment (Bovill, 2020a; Bovill, 2019; Bovill et al., 2011; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bovill, 2021; Mercer-

Mapstone & Bovill, 2019; Owusu-Agyeman & Fourie-Malherbe, 2019). Collaborating with faculty in developing pedagogical approaches inspires students to experience an increased sense of engagement in the form of enhanced motivation and greater learning.

Second, curricular co-creation enhances learning and teaching. Evidence of learning and teaching with students and faculty reporting improved teaching and learning experiences (Bovill, 2020a). Co-creation fosters enhanced awareness as students gain a greater meta-cognitive awareness of how they and their peers learn, helping them develop a stronger sense of identity, competence, and confidence (Bovill, 2020a). Faculty also report a greater awareness of why they make particular choices in their teaching as well as the impact of those choices (Bovill, 2020a). When students work with academic staff to develop pedagogical approaches, they gain a different perspective and a deeper understanding of learning (Bovill, 2019a; Bovill et al., 2011; Kaur et al., 2019). Students who experience curricular co-creation can learn about the course design process (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; Owusu-Agyeman & Fourie-Malherbe, 2019).

Third, when students and faculty co-create curriculum, students gain transferable skills personally and professionally. Students gain higher-order skills and attributes required to work effectively in successful partnerships (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019). Students' development as reflective and active learners who can articulate their leadership and other transferable skills are powerful benefits that can be transformative for students (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019) in their personal and professional lives. Co-creating the curriculum also has an impact on developing students' professional skills in leadership (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), teamwork (Bovill, 2020a; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), independent and critical thinking (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), communication and negotiation (Bovill, 2020a; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), resilience (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), and willingness to embrace challenges (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019).

In one study, in-depth interviews of students by Lubicz-Nawrocka (2020) found that students in higher education who had the opportunity to co-create curriculum with a teacher were the best courses they had experienced. Such positive student experiences and the benefits discussed here suggest that educators may want to consider implementing co-creation in their classrooms.

Rationales

Teachers who have implemented a co-created model for pursuing co-creation have done so for various reasons. For some teachers, co-creation is a way to try a new, more engaging approach to teaching (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Other teachers are influenced by the beneficial outcomes of co-creation and the variety of valuable perspectives students bring to the learning process (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Still others argue that co-creation democratizes the classroom and enables students to negotiate and share decision-making (Bovill, 2020a). Whatever the reasons for implementing a co-created curriculum model, co-creation has been described as a key pedagogical idea in higher education and is beneficial for students and teachers.

In the Netherlands, Bron and Veugelers (2014) outlined five arguments for involving students in co-creating teaching and learning. First, students should have a say in designing their own education. Second, students are capable of co-designing the curriculum. Third, students are not a homogenous group, and we must include diverse student voices. Fourth, students will learn useful knowledge and negotiation skills through curricular co-creation. Finally, when students influence the curriculum through co-creation, it makes it more relevant and engaging. All of Bron and Veugelers' (2014) arguments for involving students in co-creating teaching and

learning point to the need for the implementation of a co-created curriculum model of teaching and learning.

Statement of the Research Problem

Co-creating a curriculum, which entails involving students in the creation of content, has been shown in the literature to have many benefits for students and instructors, such as gaining a deeper understanding of learning, enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm, as well as building confidence and competence (Doyle et al., 2019). Despite the many challenges, benefits, and rationales for using a co-creation model, co-creation implementation is not widely practiced in United States higher education.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
2. What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?
3. What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?

Researcher Background and Assumptions

I am an instructor at a community college in the Pacific Northwest, teaching Communication Studies. Throughout my decade-long teaching career in higher education, I have become more interested in different pedagogies to increase student engagement and retention.

Active learning is one pedagogy that I implement in all of my classes, so co-creating teaching and learning with my students seemed like a natural progression in my quest to involve students in their learning. Hence, I designed and implemented this study.

I believe that implementing a co-creation of teaching and learning model in my college classroom will create a more democratic classroom environment in which all students in the course are given an opportunity to give input into the course design. When students have more autonomy and control over the course curriculum, I believe they will be more likely to stay in the course, be more engaged with the course materials, their peers, and their instructor, be more satisfied with their course learning experience, and ultimately be more successful in the course. By engaging in an action research project where I co-create a teaching and learning experience alongside my students, I believe the students and I will have a transformative experience through this collaboration.

Significance of the Study

Higher education is an increasingly complex environment. Students are coming to study, and at the same time, resources are being reduced at many institutions. Colleges face growing pressures to maintain or enhance the quality of what they offer while being challenged to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of students. Faculty and staff in higher education face the challenge of supporting students to feel they belong and are valued. According to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) (2017), students are more likely to succeed when certain conditions are in place. Described as the "Success Factors Framework," students must be directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued. Co-creation of teaching and learning has been described as one of the key pedagogical ideas in higher education (Bovill, 2020a) and is one model in which we may be able

to meet higher education challenges. This study can inform teaching faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education on a model to support student success, faculty professional development, and institutional values, missions, and goals.

Organization of the Research Report

This chapter introduced the study's research problem, provided background information, and discussed the challenges and benefits of a co-created curriculum before describing the research purpose, the study's research questions, the researcher's background and assumptions, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will review the literature, including the types, benefits, and challenges of co-creation. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology and methods of the study. Chapter 4 will report on and discuss the findings of the study. Finally, chapter 5 will discuss implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Co-creating curriculum, which entails involving students in the creation of academic content, has been shown in the literature to have many benefits for students and instructors, such as gaining a deeper understanding of learning, enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm; and increased confidence and competence (Doyle et al., 2019). Despite the benefits, a co-created curriculum model is not widely implemented in the United States higher education system. The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
2. What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?
3. What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?

This chapter reviews the literature on the co-creation model, including its history, types, challenges, and benefits.

The Co-Created Curriculum Model

What students do during college generally matters more than where they go to college regarding what they learn and whether they persist to graduation (Kuh et al., 2005). It has been suggested that academic development is about creating conditions that liberate everyone

involved in teaching and learning in higher education (Felton et al., 2019). As a college instructor for over a decade, I have become very interested in actively engaging students in learning. What if we were to reimagine our work by taking the perspective that students have essential roles as actors in and agents of academic development? To understand the co-created curriculum model, we must understand what co-creation is, the historical context of co-creation, and the various types of co-creation.

What is Co-Creation?

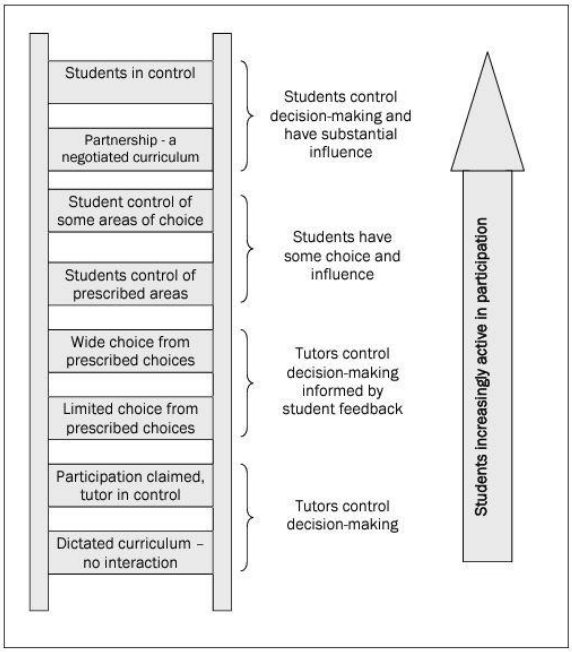
The practice of co-creation in classrooms comes from the work of Students as Partners (SaP), which embraces students and faculty working together on teaching and learning in higher education (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). SaP is a way of thinking and practicing in higher education that re-positions students and faculty as active collaborators in the diverse processes of teaching and learning - empowering students to be actively engaged in and share the responsibility for their education founded on (1) a way of thinking that positions students as partners, experts, and colleagues in - rather than evaluators of - teaching and learning, (2) a way of engaging where teaching and learning is something that is *done with,* rather than *done to*, students, and (3) a way of working that nourishes partnerships based on respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019). As a concept and a practice, SaP works to counter a deficit model where faculty take on the role of enablers of semi-empowered students, which is implicit in some forms of student engagement, aiming instead to acknowledge differentials of power while valuing individual contributions from students and faculty in a shared process or reciprocal learning and working (Healey et al., 2014).

While SaP can encompass a range of practices and pedagogies, the common thread is a re-positioning of the roles of students and faculty in the learning endeavor grounded in values-

based ethos. Student-teacher partnerships can happen within or outside curricula, between individuals, small groups, large cohorts, within a course, or across entire academic programs (Curtis et al., 2020; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Importantly, partnership positions students and faculty as having different but equally valuable expertise to contribute to teaching and learning (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019). When considering possible levels and types of partnerships, Bovill and Bulley (2011) offer a visualization of eight possible levels of participation using a ladder continuum to illustrate the different levels, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Ladder of Student Participation in Curriculum Design



From Bovill, C. and Bulley, C.J. (2011) A model of active student participation in curriculum design: exploring desirability and possibility. In Rust, C. *Improving Student Learning (18) Global theories and local practices: institutional, disciplinary and cultural variations*. Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Staff and Educational Development, pp176-188.

The first rung on the ladder, 'dictated curriculum – no interaction,' is the curriculum equivalent of Freire's (1993) banking concept of education (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). The seventh run, 'partnership – a negotiated curriculum,' implies that faculty and students collaborate to negotiate

and create the curriculum (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). This is the level at which a co-created curriculum model positions students and faculty participation.

The terms *students as partners, partnership,* and *co-creation of teaching and learning* are often interchangeable. The term *co-creation* will be used throughout this study for three specific reasons outlined by Bovill (2020a). First, co-creation does not assume the level of equality sometimes implied by the word partnership. Second, faculty are resistant to using the term partnership. Third, the term students as partners has been critiqued for naming one of the partners involved.

Co-creation of teaching and learning is where students and faculty share decision-making about the design of the whole curriculum or elements of curricula (Bovill, 2020a). Co-creation within education is constructivist in nature. The constructivist theory is based on the idea that learners are active participants in their learning and that knowledge is constructed based on experiences (Kurt, 2021). Successful collaborative co-creation of the learning experience requires the active participation of learners and educators. In a co-creation context, understanding is not merely a product to be accumulated but must be an active and evolving process the learner uses as part of the creative endeavor. Co-creation provides the meaningful context mandated by constructivism. Students and educators are creating a shared experience that has real consequences for both partners in the process (Doyle et al., 2019).

Whole-class co-creation in teaching and learning involves inviting an entire class of students studying together in any teaching setting, face-to-face or online, to actively collaborate and negotiate elements of the learning process with the teacher and one another. This collaboration might include negotiation of the content or subject matter, the purpose of their work, the teaching approach, the many ways in which they can work and learn together, or their

preferred approach to evaluation (Bovill, 2020b). Co-creation overlaps with the concept of active learning, which aims to move the student from adopting a passive role in learning to an active role involving interaction between teacher and students and between students and students. In co-creation, the purpose, approaches, and outcomes of teaching and learning are jointly negotiated, and there is a shared responsibility for learning that implies a greater level of student agency and empowerment than in active learning (Bovill, 2020b).

Co-creation involves nurturing and developing deeper relationships between student and teacher and between students and other students. Education is perceived as a shared endeavor where teaching and learning are done *with* students rather than *to* them. Students are commonly engaged in course evaluations and departmental faculty-student committees. Still, it is rarer for institutions to go beyond the student voice and engage students as partners in designing the curriculum and giving pedagogic advice and consultancy (Healey et al., 2014). However, institutions implementing such initiatives have seen significant benefits for students and faculty, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Historical Context

Co-creation and relational pedagogy draw upon some common theoretical frameworks and authors. A long history highlights the importance of relationships going back to Aristotle. In the early twentieth century, educational reformer John Dewey (1916) argued for more progressive, democratic classrooms and school environments. The democratic classroom has become a term used to describe one of the ways instructors can implement the tenets of what Dewey referred to as critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy comes from the work of Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire's 1968 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Critical pedagogy attempts to understand how power works through producing, distributing, and

consuming knowledge within particular institutional contexts and seeks to constitute students as informed subjects and social agents. Critical pedagogy is thus invested in both the practice of self-criticism about the values that inform teaching and a critical self-consciousness regarding what it means to equip students with analytical skills to be self-reflective about the knowledge and values they confront in classrooms (Freire, 1968/1970; Giroux, 2010). In such courses, the instructor takes on the role of an observer (removing their voice from decision-making discussions), a guide (offering perspective on such discussions), or a co-decider (working alongside students as they make decisions about the course) (Meinking & Hall, 2020). In this way, students are given the agency to critically develop a course in ways that work for them.

John Dewey (1859-1952) influenced many scholars and students who followed him. For example, in 1968, Martin Heidegger released a book titled *What Is Called Thinking,* where he challenged ideas of the teacher-student relationship, suggesting that more freedom and openness were needed (Bovill, 2020a). Similarly, Carl Roger's book *The Freedom to Learn*, published in 1969, returned to many of the ideas Dewey had proposed 60 years earlier, including calls for students to participate more fully in co-designing their learning process (Bovill, 2020a). The 1970s saw several critiques of formal schooling, including Ivan Illich's 1972 book *Deschooling Society*, Paul Willis' 1977 book *Learning to Labour*, and Paulo Freire's 1968 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Each of these books proposed that popular education, the process of bringing people together to share their lived experiences and build collective knowledge (HREC, 2021), was of more value to people than formal education (Bovill, 2020a).

In the 1980s, there was a rise in critical pedagogy, where learning became synonymous with liberation (hooks, 1994). Liberationism calls for the democratization of the classroom and a new way of looking at the roles of teacher and student by breaking down traditional classroom

structures (Greenwood, 2020). During this period, it became common to see students and faculty negotiating and collaborating to co-create new forms of knowledge from their own experiences to challenge existing views of the world (Bovill, 2020a). Many authors built on these ideas and those of Rogers (Bovill, 2020a) to argue that students should share the responsibility for curriculum planning. It was also in the 1980s that Noddings (1984) brought the idea of relationship approaches into mainstream school education discourse in the USA.

From the 1970s onwards, research evidence in higher education emerged demonstrating the benefits of student-faculty and student-student relationships. Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the co-creation of, and students as partners in, teaching and learning across universities internationally (Bovill, 2019; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2020). However, despite this rich evidence base supporting more relational forms of education, today's higher education faculty seem willing to prepare students to assume only some responsibility for their learning (Bovill, 2020a).

The current place of students in education positions them as objects in, or data sources for, academic development. Even at the college level, it is far more common for people to be talking *about* students than talking *to* or *with* them. Students, in neoliberal culture, the economic and political favoring of a free market (Lawn & Prentice, 2015), are often positioned either as consumers or products of academic development. The least common position of students is as legitimate actors and agents of academic development. It aims to create space for students to increase and embrace their agency in higher education. (Felten, et al., 2019). The history of pedagogical practices has varied over time, moving along a continuum of education from something *done to* students to something done in *collaboration with* students.

Co-Creation Models

There are many different ways in which researchers and practitioners can co-create curricula. In some models, students lead the design of a course from scratch. In other models, students design the curriculum as a course progresses, while other models describe students working alongside faculty on curriculum design committees (Bovill & Woolmer, 2018). Student-faculty partnerships have taken many forms in different contexts. Mercer-Mapstone and Marie (2019) noted five common types of partnerships that can happen within and outside classroom settings. First is *co-teaching,* where students take on and/or share the teaching responsibility, such as conducting peer-assisted study sessions. Second is *disciplinary co-research,* in which two (or more) students collaboratively research topics specific to their discipline as partners rather than assistants to faculty. For example, students and faculty work together to research and publish work specific to their discipline. Third, *education co-research,* in which students collaboratively research topics that focus on teaching and learning or the student experience. For example, students and faculty survey students regarding their experiences on campus. Fourth, *co-creation* or *co-development,* where students co-create or develop aspects of the university related to teaching and learning and the student experience, such as curriculum resources. For example, students and faculty research areas of support students access on campus to find gaps in services. Finally, *co-review* or *co-enhancement* is where students consult or engage in teaching and learning review, evaluation, or enhancement processes. For example, students and faculty evaluate teaching methods and offer suggestions for improvement.

Bovill and Woolmer (2019) discuss the difference between the co-creation *of* the curriculum and co-creation *in* the curriculum. Co-creation *of* the curriculum is the do-design of a program or course, usually before the course occurs. For example, a small number of future

students or past students collaborate with course faculty to redesign a course. Conversely, co-creation *in* the curriculum entails co-designing teaching and learning during the course. For example, an instructor invites students in their course to design portions of the entire curriculum. Variations in the types of co-creation may include students co-researching and acting as change agents, students taking on research and scholarship projects with faculty, students participating in course design or course design review committees, students providing feedback on teaching observations, students and faculty co-assessing work or courses, students co-designing courses and curricula, students and faculty writing collaborations, and students designing academic development work (Bovill, 2020a). Co-creation *of* the classroom offers a chance for select students to help design future courses. In contrast, co-creation *in* the classroom allows all students to work collaboratively to design the curriculum as the course progresses. Using co-creation in the classroom creates more significant equity as it allows for more engagement with more students.

Challenges in the Co-Created Curriculum Model

Although the literature paints a positive picture of a co-created curriculum model, there are also challenges. The first challenge is overcoming resistance to curricula co-creation. The second challenge is navigating institutional structures, practices, and norms for curricular co-creation. A third challenge is establishing an inclusive approach to curricular co-creation.

Resistance

The first challenge is overcoming resistance to curricular co-creation. Not all students or faculty will likely embrace a partnership model. Working and learning in partnership is rarely automatic and can present significant challenges to existing ways of being, doing, and thinking (Healey et al., 2014). Faculty and students will have different motivations for engaging in a

partnership. The different positions occupied by students and faculty may create tensions around differences in power, reward, and recognition of participation, identity, and responsibility for partnership work (Healey et al., 2014). Established systems may react negatively to attempts at student-faculty partnerships as they give students too much power (Acai et al., 2017; Curtis et al., 2020; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

A co-created curriculum model requires that the power of decision-making about teaching and learning is shared (Bovill, 2020a). For example, faculty may be concerned about handing over power to students when they wish to cover substantial content. They may also be unconvinced that students know enough about the subject to be creating classes (Bovill, 2020a; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020) or relinquishing control over pedagogical planning (Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). These perceptions may lead to negative attitudes toward student involvement (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Tuhkala et al., 2021) or faculty unprepared to partner with students (Bovill, 2014).

Students may perceive a lack of necessary expertise to carry out curriculum design (Tuhkala et al., 2021), and they may also experience fear or antipathy toward a new style of learning (Serrano et al., 2018). Students may also have a lack of familiarity with a co-created curriculum model (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2014; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019) and may feel doubtful that their recommendations will be included in the curriculum design since faculty are the ones who make the final decisions in curriculum design (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Tuhkala et al., 2021). These student perceptions may lead to hesitation toward students' willingness to participate (Tuhkala et al., 2021) and difficulty with participant buy-in (Acai et al., 2017).

Institutional Practices and Norms

Higher education institutions often have a prevailing pedagogical model that is authoritarian and hierarchical, where the professor's voice is the privileged transmitter of knowledge (Bovill, 2019; hooks, 1994). One reason for this dynamic is that many of today's teachers were educated in classrooms where teaching styles reflected the notion of a single norm of thought and experience, which we were encouraged to believe was universal. That usually means the professor lectures to a group of quiet students who respond only when called on (hooks, 1994). The literature shows that today's college and university instructors must acknowledge that our teaching styles may need to change. The urge to experiment with pedagogical practices may not be welcomed by students who often expect us to teach in the manner that they are accustomed to (hooks, 1994). Many students may already be convinced that they cannot respond to appeals that they be engaged in the classroom because they have already been trained, through the current culture of education, to view themselves as not the ones in authority, not the ones with legitimacy (Bovill et al., 2011; hooks, 1994). Today's college students often think it is the teacher's job to teach, and the student's job is to sit, listen, and take notes (Bovill, 2020a; Serrano et al., 2018). All too often, college and university faculty have been trained as professors to assume that students are incapable of acting responsibly and that there will be mayhem if they do not exert control over them (hooks, 1994).

In contexts where student satisfaction survey results, employment outcomes, and global rankings dominate the minds of some institutional leaders tasked with strategic planning for teaching, learning, and the student experience, academics, and senior administrators are caught in a web of measurable outcomes to be achieved, which diminishes the time, energy, and resources devoted to building, power-sharing learning relationships. Moreover, faculty often feel

institutional pressure to deliver courses and programs on time and within budget (Bovill, 2014). There are accepted teaching and learning norms that may be difficult to deviate from without experiencing discomfort (Bovill, 2014). There may also be constraints from subjects where a professional body sets particular knowledge and competencies required of a graduate and meets professional requirements (Bovill et al., 2011).

Many universities are set up in ways that envisage teaching as something done to students and in which students play a minimal role (Bovill, 2020b). A partnership approach may be directly at odds with principles embodied in key drivers and mechanisms that strongly influence behavior and attitudes among faculty and students. These principles emphasize the importance of quantifiable information and the achievement of specific outcomes and impacts. In contrast, a partnership approach values a creative process that may result in unexpected outcomes (Healey et al., 2014).

Other institutional challenges may include university systems for course design and approval, typically taking a long time. Some teachers interpret these structures as closing down possibilities for co-creation (Bovill, 2020a). There is often no sustained institutional support for liberating pedagogical practices such as co-creation (hooks, 1994). In addition, there often needs to be more clarity regarding roles, goals, and expectations (Acai et al., 2017). There may be a fear of losing students' respect that comes with co-creation's informality. This could equate to a lack of seriousness, discouraging many professors from trying new teaching practices (hooks, 1994). Finally, implementing co-creation takes time (Bovill, 2020a; Bovill et al., 2011), and many faculty members already experience time and resource pressures (Serrano et al., 2018). Despite a desire to implement a co-created module, institutional structures and norms can create barriers to implementing such a pedagogical model.

Creating Inclusion

Research in student engagement suggests that one way to equalize access to learning within higher education may be to engage students in ways that position them as actors in learning rather than as objects in learning (Felten et al., 2019). By developing students' agency and empowerment through student-faculty partnerships, students can actively shape their own educational experiences (Mercer-Mapstone & Bovill, 2019). One of the limitations of current Students as Partners (SaP) practices is the extent to which they can include a diversity of students and faculty (Bovill, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019).

A challenge to creating an inclusive co-created model or student partnership is that most partnerships include only a few students selected to participate (Bovill, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone & Bovill, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019). As noted in the varying types of co-creation, there are few examples of whole-class co-creation models. When only a few students are invited to participate in these partnerships, some selective partnership projects may simply engage already engaged students, exacerbating existing structural inequalities (Bovill, 2020b; Bovill, 2019).

Despite the attention to engaging and including diverse student cohorts, students are rarely *included* in this academic development space (Felten et al., 2019). Co-designing courses and curricula takes those practices from the individual to the group level, directly influencing the educational experiences of many more students and making higher education radically more inclusive and welcoming for all (Felten et al., 2019). To ensure that student-faculty partnerships in teaching and learning are inclusive of all students, today's higher education leaders need to overcome institutional structural discrimination so we do not risk partnerships exacerbating

existing inequalities, particularly partnerships that only involve a small number of students (Bovill, 2019).

Challenges to implementing a co-created curriculum model include resistance from both students and faculty as it is something new, time-consuming, lack of buy-in, and control and power issues. As co-creation differs from a typical pedagogical approach, the implementation may be challenging within institutional structures, practices, and norms. There is also a challenge to creating an inclusive co-creation approach if only a select number of students are involved in the implementation.

Benefits of a Co-Created Curriculum Model

When students are legitimate actors and agents in academic development, they not only are profoundly informing teaching practice, but they also are enacting new ways of being in higher education for all involved in the shared work of learning and teaching (Felten et al., 2019). Lubicz-Nawrocka (2020) found many benefits to students and faculty from the processes and outcomes of co-creation, which are based on three broad areas. First, co-creating teaching and learning leads to increased engagement and empowerment. Second, curricular co-creation enhances teaching and learning. Third, when students and faculty co-create curriculum, students gain transferable skills personally and professionally.

Increased Engagement, Autonomy, and Empowerment

As a concept, student engagement is ambiguous and contested. Teaching and learning can be divided into two broad areas: student engagement, which is how students invest time and energy in their learning, and how students are involved and empowered by institutions to shape their learning experiences (Healey et al., 2014). Partnership in teaching and learning is a way for faculty and students to learn and work together to foster engaged student learning. A partnership

approach, such as co-creation, is valuable because it enables a more authentic engagement with the nature of learning itself, understood as an experiential process of reflection and transformation concerning oneself and others (Healey et al., 2014).

Research has shown that students and academic faculty experience enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm (Bovill, 2020a; Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). This enhanced engagement comes from co-creation, not just learning outcomes (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Students demonstrate significantly higher levels of engagement and a stronger sense of community within the course (Bovill, 2020a; Bovill, 2019; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2020; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Increased engagement comes in the forms of enhanced motivation, enthusiasm, and more significant learning (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2020a; Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2010; Deeley, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017) because students feel empowered to engage due to the trust and respect that come from co-creation (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

Student autonomy allows students to feel independent and have more control or ownership over their learning (Bovill et al., 2010; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2020; Deeley, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017). Through co-creation, students have freedom and independence, and this autonomy carries with it a sense of control (Meinking & Hall, 2020), increased self-regulation, responsibility (Bovill, 2020a: Deeley & Bovill, 2017), and confidence (Bovill, 2020a; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). When students take more responsibility for their education, teaching and learning become community property, with students recognized as active community members (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). This investment in a joint effort to engage in and support learning creates a collective responsibility for students' contributions to the larger community (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014).

Empowerment, where power is distributed appropriately, and all parties are encouraged to constructively challenge ways of working and learning that may reinforce existing inequalities (Healey et al., 2014), is another significant benefit of the co-creation model. All parties are encouraged to challenge and critique practices, structures, and approaches that undermine partnerships and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning (Healey et al., 2014). Genuine partnership in teaching and learning is an act of resistance to the traditional, often implicit but accepted hierarchical structure where faculty have power over students (Matthews, 2017).

Students as Partners (SaP) is a way of thinking and practicing in higher education that re-positions students and faculty as active collaborators in the diverse processes of teaching and learning, thus empowering students to be actively engaged in and share the responsibility for their own education (Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019). Strong positive relationships are often built during co-creation because teaching and learning become a shared endeavor where the teacher is learning, and the students often contribute to teaching. This overlapping and redefining of roles means that teachers often learn as much from students as students learn from teachers (Bovill, 2020b). The empowerment of students through co-creation allows students to develop a strong sense of identity (Felten et al., 2019) as they realize they are being listened to and taken seriously (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2014; Deeley, 2014: Deeley & Bovill, 2017). Students also report greater cohesion, self-directed learning, responsibility, and engagement through this autonomy (Curtis et al., 2020).

Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

Student-faculty partnership work aims not to change for change's sake but to achieve a deeper understanding of teaching and learning that comes from shared analysis and revision

(Cook-Sather et al., 2014). There is evidence of enhancement of teaching and learning with students and faculty reporting improved teaching and learning experiences (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2020a; Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2011; Huxham et al., 2015).

As students take more responsibility for their learning and their peers' performance, they develop greater confidence in their abilities, achieve deeper understanding, and make meaningful progress in their learning (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Through co-creation, students create not only student-faculty partnerships but also student-student partnerships focused on learning, enhancing their awareness of how they and their peers learn (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2020b; Bovill et al., 2010; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). By becoming more active in co-creation, students gain insight into faculty members' pedagogical intentions (Felten et al., 2019). They often find their work more relevant and feel inspired by the faculty's trust in them (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). The shared sense of ownership in the teaching and learning process promotes a conducive learning environment that promotes knowledge sharing. A sense of ownership in the teaching and learning process (Owusu-Agyeman & Forie-Malherbe., 2019), in turn, builds trust, respect (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018), and a different way for students and faculty to relate and understand each other (Bovill et al., 2011; Bovill et al., 2010; Dollinger, & Lodge, 2020).

The curriculum becomes more relevant for students and faculty (Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2010). Faculty have reported a greater awareness of why they make particular choices in their teaching and the impact those choices have (Bovill, 2020a), thus allowing faculty to develop new or better teaching or curriculum methods (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017) as they gain an increased understanding of students' experiences and new beliefs about teaching and learning that change practices for the better (Dollinger, & Lodge, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017)—

for example, understanding students' ideas regarding grading, attendance, participation, and content topics' relevance.

The collaborative learning environment allows faculty to become more reflective and responsive while creating more democratic classrooms where partnership becomes the norm (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Felten et al., 2019; Knight & Pearl, 2000; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018). Faculty can transform their thinking about teaching and teaching practices with a changed understanding of teaching and learning by experiencing different viewpoints and reconceptualizing teaching and learning as a collaborative process (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

Gaining Transferable Skills

Participation in Students as Partners (SaP) models, such as co-creating curriculum, has been found to enhance skills for future personal and professional development (Bovill, 2020a; Deeley, 2014; Owusu-Agyeman & Forie-Malherbe, 2019). Students can move learning beyond the course and transfer learning into new contexts and/or greater academic aspirations (Bovill et al., 2010) and become more confident in contributing to the broader society (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

Research has shown that participation in co-creation improves academic performance or the quality of work of students (Bovill, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017), which can transfer to a professional work setting or in higher academic endeavors. Other enhanced skills for future professional development include building teamwork (Bovill, 2020a; Deeley, 2014;), leadership (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), and negotiation skills (Bovill, 2020a; Bovill, 2014; Deeley, 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019) and increasing critical thinking, reflection, and communication skills (Bovill, 2014; Deeley, 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019). Other transferable skills that are

cultivated through participation in co-creation and other SaP models include the promotion of peer support, learning responsibility, preparing for working with uncertainty and complexity (Healey et al., 2014), a willingness to embrace challenges, resilience, enhanced confidence, motivation, and enthusiasm (Bovill, 2020a; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018), as well as practice working democratically (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2020a). Moreover, students feel an increased perception of employability (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020) from the skills they gain through the process of co-creation.

There are benefits to both faculty and students who participate in a co-created curriculum model. Benefits include increased engagement for students and faculty and a sense of autonomy and empowerment for students over their learning. Faculty and students also report enhanced teaching and learning by understanding student-teacher relationships and decision-making processes. Students also gain transferable skills, personally and professionally, in teamwork, leadership skills, and decision-making. The short-term benefits for faculty and student partners who participate are substantial (Millard et al., 2020, p. 134), and the long-term benefits for future students through a student-led design of their learning experience make the investment and vision worthwhile.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on the co-creation model, including its history, types, challenges, and benefits. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology and methods of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
2. What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?
3. What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?

This chapter describes the research methodology, research context, and research methods.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Methods

A qualitative research methodology was used to carry out this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define qualitative research as an "approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). Qualitative research explores and understands the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem and uses words rather than numbers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It enables an in-depth approach to a problem or phenomenon and starts with the assumption that the research topic must be understood holistically (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020).

Qualitative methods employ small samples, draw on cases chosen in an opportunistic or purposive fashion, and are often focused on particular individuals, events, and contexts (Gerring,

2017). Qualitative research aims to describe and interpret experiences, gather new knowledge, and gain understanding without starting assumptions. Qualitative research is ideal for exploratory analysis. The data obtained are deeper, more detailed, and richer precisely because of the unstructured research strategies. It increases our understanding of the problem because the level of analysis is much more detailed and deeper than that usually covered by traditional research methods (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Gerring, 2017).

Autoethnography

The study utilized the qualitative approach of autoethnography, or self-study because it focused on one's personal and professional self to understand how practitioners learn their craft (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Ethnography is a qualitative inquiry from anthropology and sociology (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Autoethnography is a unique qualitative methodology that draws upon several qualitative traditions, including narrative research, autobiography, ethnography, and arts-based research (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022). Autoethnography fills a gap in traditional research where the researcher's voice typically is not overtly included as part of the research (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022).

Qualitative Surveys

The study also used qualitative surveys with open-ended questions. Qualitative surveys provide descriptions of a population's trends, attitudes, or opinions by studying a sample of that population. Responses from qualitative surveys can be used to generalize from a sample to a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Open-ended surveys, where individuals provide their own responses (Mertler, 2020), are tools for measuring qualitative data that aim to examine how perceptions change over time or serve to gather information about the key experiences of

respondents (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). The use of qualitative surveys in this study provided data about participants' key experiences.

Action Research

In addition to a qualitative methodology, the study was considered action research because it took place within the researcher's college classroom. Action research is "inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them" (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 3). It is a pragmatic co-creation of scientific and practical knowledge with, not on, those people with a stake in the issues at hand (Mertler, 2019; Rumsey et al., 2022). The action research process can be described as action alternating with reflection. Compared to most other social research, the wide varieties of action research conspicuously pursue action and improvement (Dick, 2015). The understanding generated by action research is *from* action and *for* action (Dick, 2015; Radloff et al., 2016). It is often described as an 'empowering' methodology that promotes social transformation by addressing the inherently unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched (Rumsey et al., 2022). In higher education, action research is defined as any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environments to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how students learn (Mertler, 2020).

While action research may not be as widely used as traditional approaches to research (Mertler, 2020), there are several advantages. Action research allows researchers to collect a wide variety of data to get a more holistic picture of the phenomenon under investigation (Mertler, 2020). Participants are empowered. As participants act on a situation, their understanding is likely to improve. People affected by an action are involved as equals in the

choice of goals, the development of plans, and the implementation (Dick, 2015). It provides immediate results, can take place at any time, provides information to improve teaching and learning, builds strong relationships, and provides alternative ways of viewing and approaching educational questions and problems (Mertler, 2020). The result is personal and professional development, which entails continued personal and professional development for teacher researchers and educators (Radloff et al., 2016).

Participatory Action Research

Specifically, this study employed participatory action research (PAR). PAR is a transformational perspective that is part of a continuum of participatory research approaches in which power is redistributed between researcher and participants and consists of participation, engagement, empowerment, mutual learning, and the fulfillment of both research and action agendas (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Participatory action research asserts that research cannot be done on others but that people carry out action research together on themselves and with the key stakeholders and partners, aiming to bring about social change (Mertler, 2020; Rumsey et al., 2022). PAR was used in this study to include participants and the researcher in implementing a co-created curriculum.

Research Context

Research Setting

The study was conducted at a large community college in Oregon, where the researcher is a full-time faculty member. The college is one of 17 public community colleges in Oregon and serves more than 25,000 students annually in a 4,600-square mile area through transfer, career technical, and personal enrichment programs. All colleges and universities in Oregon are

governed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and are regionally accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (HECC, 2023).

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The target population for this study was currently enrolled college students at the researcher's institution. Participants were randomized based on the courses in which they registered. Participants invited to participate in the study were from a convenience sample, which is a sample where respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this case, students who registered for a course taught by the researcher during the fall, winter, and spring terms were invited to participate in the study. During each of the three semesters, participants were given general information about the study and were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could discontinue participation at any time. A paper informed consent form was given to each student to be completed with their decision of yes or no to participation, signed, and dated. Each semester, the completed paper forms were deposited into an envelope by students and collected by the researcher after all students had left the classroom. The researcher secured the signed consent forms in a locked cabinet in the office of the division dean.

Participants

All students 18 years of age and older enrolled in one of the three communication courses taught by the researcher during the fall 2022, winter 2023, and spring 2023 terms were invited to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included anyone under 18 or students who dropped or did not complete the course. A total of 71 students were invited to participate in the study. The fall 2022 cohort had 25 students enrolled past the official drop date. The winter 2023 cohort had 22 students, and the spring 2023 cohort had 24 students. Across the courses, four

students (one fall, two winter, and one spring) did not complete the course; one student was under 18, and all five were excluded from participation. Of the 68 remaining students eligible to participate, 38 completed the survey, which is a 55.8% completion rate.

Researcher Positionality

We all have experiences that shape our perspectives. Positionality is the multiple, unique experiences that situate each of us. The term positionality describes an individual's worldview and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context (Holmes, 2020). Few things are more difficult than to see outside the bounds of your own perspective—to be able to identify assumptions that you take as universal truths but which, instead, have been crafted by your own unique identity and experiences in the world (Takacs, 2003).

As an insider (the teacher-researcher) collaborating with other insiders (my students) to research pedagogical practices, there was a focus on my own personal and professional self throughout the three semesters of the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). My position as a reflective practitioner in a self-study, "those who learn to learn about their practice to become better practitioners" (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 43), was used to discover the process of implementing a new pedagogical model. In education, as noted by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), "for public theory to influence education practice, it must be translated through the personal" (p. 15). While self-study researchers acknowledge the role of the self in the research project, such study "does not focus on the self per se, but on the space between self and the practice engaged in" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p.15). Self-studies in teacher education are about the problems and issues that make someone a teacher, and researchers are obligated to improve the learning situation for the self and the other (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001).

As the researcher, I acknowledge that I hold a position of power within the classroom. To reduce that power and make the process more equitable, the topic of power was discussed within the classroom with participants, and they were offered an opportunity to share that power with the researcher through collaboration. As the course curriculum developer, I also acknowledged that a bias exists because I create the best curriculum content for students. To overcome this bias, students were co-developers of the curriculum, taking on more ownership of content, grading, assignments, the schedule, etc.

Research Methods

Data were collected through researcher field notes and a qualitative survey to accomplish the study's purpose. Ethnographic field notes documenting the researcher's reflections while implementing a co-created curriculum over three terms were collected in narrative form via Google Docs (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022). Data reflecting students' perspectives were collected from open-ended survey questions, which are useful in descriptive research (Jain, 2021).

Data Collection

Instruments

Ethnographic Field Notes. Field notes were used to collect self-reflective data, by which the researcher journals their reflections about their experiences and perceptions related to the topic (Cooper & Lilyea (2022). Google Docs was used to collect all field notes and reflections for later thematic analysis. As noted in Table 1, several sources support the use of ethnographic field notes as a valuable source of data collection.

Table 1

Alignment of Data Collection to Research Questions

Research questions		
RQ1: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	RQ2: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?	RQ3: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
Data collection strategies		
Ethnographic field notes/reflections	Ethnographic field notes/reflections and student surveys	Ethnographic field notes/reflections and student surveys
Supporting data		
Cooper & Lilyea, 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Herr & Anderson, 2015	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998

Student Survey. Qualtrics, an American experience management company founded in 2002 (Chapman, 2012), was used to build and distribute the study's qualitative survey. Qualtrics is a cloud-based platform for creating and distributing web-based surveys (Kent State, n.d.). The platform is widely used in academics and market research, powering over a billion surveys yearly (Qualtrics, 2023).

Three identical surveys were created for each of the three courses in the study. The survey's first question was a second informed consent statement that needed to be reviewed, agreed to, and electronically signed before students could continue to the rest of the survey. Students were invited to participate in the survey during class announcements, the learning management system (LMS) news and announcements, and via email. Participants were given a link and a quick response (QR) code to access the survey. The survey's five questions were open-ended questions about students' experiences with co-creation (see Table 2). Each question

was aligned with the proposed research questions and supported by the literature on qualitative research, action research, survey research, and grounded theory, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Alignment of Survey Data to Research Questions

Research questions		
RQ1: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	RQ2: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?	RQ3: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
Specific survey questions		
Question 6	Questions 2 & 4	Questions 3 & 5
Supporting data		
Cooper & Lilyea, 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Herr & Anderson, 2015	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998

Procedures

The data collection process took place in multiple phases over several months. The procedures have been divided into two phases: collecting ethnographic and qualitative survey data.

Ethnographic Field Notes. A Google document was created in Google Drive in a Data folder to capture researcher observations, notes, and reflections before the academic school year began in September 2022. Field notes were first collected to describe the process of prepping for fall term classes using the co-created pedagogical model. Notes, observations, and reflections continued throughout the academic year, culminating in a final reflection in June of 2023. The notes were kept in running order and delineated by term and course. No participant

names or other identifying information was used in the notes, and notes were kept electronically on a private Google drive.

Qualitative Survey Data. The survey data collection was accomplished in three steps over the course of each term. The same three-step process was repeated for each class in the study over three consecutive terms: fall 2022, winter 2023, and spring 2023.

The first step occurred during the first week of class each term. The researcher discussed the topic of a co-created curriculum with students and the purpose of the study. Students were asked to vote on whether or not to implement a co-created curriculum model in their class. All three classes in the study voted to use the pedagogical model.

The second step of data collection occurred at midterm. The researcher explained the purpose of the study for a second time and discussed the informed consent form. The researcher answered questions from participants and passed out paper copies of the informed consent. Students were informed that there were no consequences for non-participation in the study, instructed to opt in or out of participating in the survey, and asked to sign and date the form. An envelope was provided for returned forms, and the researcher asked the last student to return a form to seal the envelope. The researcher left the room while students completed the consent forms and returned after the classroom was empty to retrieve the sealed envelope. The envelope was marked with the term (e.g., winter 2023) and placed in a locked cabinet in their supervisor's office. The researcher opened the envelopes after the completion of data collection.

The third step in data collection occurred during weeks 9 through 11 of the term. In week 9 of the term, the researcher informed students that the survey was open and available to complete. The researcher showed students the announcement of the survey on the LMS news page and explained the process of accessing the link or the QR code. After class ended, the

researcher sent a follow-up email to the class with the same information discussed in class and available on the LMS. In week 10, the researcher gave a verbal reminder about the survey during class announcements and sent a reminder email. In week 11, finals week, a final reminder was sent via email to students, reminding them of the survey and that it would close on the Friday of finals week.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory is a theory derived from data systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) whereby the research derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Because the researcher was co-creating the curriculum for the first time, a grounded theory approach was used to analyze the field notes and survey responses to find themes correlating to the co-created curriculum model.

The qualitative data were analyzed to develop themes from the data. The data were systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction related to a particular environment grounded in the views of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data analysis began with aligning research questions to the data collected, as noted in Table 3.

Table 3

Alignment of Data to Research Questions

Research questions		
RQ1: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	RQ2: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?	RQ3: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
Data collection strategies		
Ethnographic field notes/reflections	Ethnographic field notes/reflections and student surveys	Ethnographic field notes/reflections and student surveys
Specific survey questions		
Question 6	Questions 2 & 4	Questions 3 & 5
Initial data analysis strategies		
Descriptive analysis & thematic analysis	Descriptive analysis & thematic analysis	Descriptive analysis & thematic analysis
Supporting data		
Cooper & Lilyea, 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Herr & Anderson, 2015	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998	Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023; Mertler, 2020; Mertler, 2020; Strauss & Corbin, 1998

The data analysis process was then divided into two phases: analysis of ethnographic field notes and analysis of qualitative survey data

Procedures

Ethnographic Field Notes. Field notes were analyzed to find themes regarding the three research questions involving the process of implementing a co-created model and its challenges and benefits. Notes were read the first time in their entirety. A second and third, more detailed reading highlighted keywords and phrases that were added to a data analysis chart

aligning research questions. The data analysis chart was used to determine common themes in the data relating to the research questions.

Qualitative Survey Data. The data were analyzed first by course so a comparison between classes could be made, and then the data was analyzed per question for overarching themes. Several data readings were made to note keywords and phrases on a data analysis chart from which themes were identified. Data from the open-ended survey questions were analyzed to find themes related to the research questions. Research question one was answered by survey question 6, research question two was answered by survey questions two and four, and research question three was answered by survey questions three and five, as noted in Table 4.

Table 4

Data Analysis for Research Questions

Research Question 1 What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Qualitative data Answering: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	Students Q6: What advice or suggestions would you give about a co-created curriculum model for future semesters?
Research Question 2 What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?	
Qualitative data Answering: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?	Student survey Q2: Describe what you liked best about using a co-created curriculum model in this course. Student Survey Q4: Describe one thing you learned in this class that you wouldn't have learned if we had not used the co-created curriculum model.
Research Question 3 What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Qualitative data Answering: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	Student survey Q3: Describe what you liked least about using a co-created curriculum model in this course. Student survey Q5: Name one thing about using the co-created curriculum model that made learning, class time, or assignments more difficult or challenging than they would have been if we hadn't used a co-created curriculum model.

Synthesis of the Data Analysis

The collected data were organized and sorted by research question into a data grid. Student surveys were entered into the grid using an identifier for each student. For example, a fall student would be coded F1, a winter student W1, and a spring student S1. This allowed for comparing experiences between the three classes, and the overall coding aligned with research questions. Words and phrases were highlighted and color-coded, such as feelings coded as

yellow, time and workload as blue, and conflict and decision-making as purple. Overarching themes, such as negative feelings, were identified using the highlighted words and phrases. Direct quotations from student surveys and researcher field notes were used to elaborate on the data. The data was used to compare and contrast the experiences of students with the teacher-researcher, the findings from previous literature, and to answer the study's three research questions.

Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology, research context, and research methods. Chapter 4 will report on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

Co-creating curriculum, which entails involving students in the creation of academic content, has been shown in the literature to have many benefits for students and instructors, such as gaining a deeper understanding of learning, enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm; and increased confidence and competence (Doyle et al., 2019). Despite the benefits, a co-created curriculum model is not widely implemented in the United States higher education system. The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Three research questions guided the study:

4. What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
5. What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?
6. What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?

This chapter reports the findings of the qualitative survey data and researcher field notes, discusses the findings, makes connections between the findings and current research literature, and answers the study's three research questions.

The Co-Created Teaching and Learning Classroom Experience

In retrospect, implementing the co-created curriculum model was messy and chaotic

compared to the traditional model. The researcher went into the first week of classes not with a complete syllabus and schedule but armed with poster-sized papers filled with grading examples, attendance policy examples, an incomplete schedule, and content to be (or not be) covered. Students roamed around the room outfitted with the papers taped to the walls. They wrote ideas, voted on topics, added to the schedule, and discussed grading and assignments. It was organized chaos, collaboration, confusion, and community building. For the teacher-researcher and for the students, it was a learning experience that needed to be shared.

Findings

Qualitative Analysis of Student Survey Data

Data analysis of student surveys addressed the three areas of co-created teaching and learning identified in the study's research questions: the process, the potential benefits, and the potential challenges. Qualitative coding of the three areas produced various themes, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Student Survey Data

Research Questions and Themes	Frequency
RQ1: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Process	9
Positive Remarks	9
Unsure	5
RQ2: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Autonomy	20
Community	14
Experience/Skills	14
Motivation/Engagement	9
RQ3: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Process	22
Negative Feelings	13
Conflict/Decision-Making	10

The code frequency table lists the number of codes derived from the initial analysis to examine their distribution (Miles et al., 2020). The student survey data table summary provides a tally of the most frequent codes identified within themes developed from secondary analysis. More detailed findings follow.

Process of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

Research question one, which asked about the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in the college classroom, was answered by question six of the student survey. Question six asked what advice or suggestions students could give about a co-created curriculum model for future semesters. While five students stated they had no advice or were

unsure of what to offer for advice, nine students discussed areas of the process that could be improved.

Process

The process of co-creating and negotiating the curriculum in this study involved several steps over the course of two to three days at the beginning of each term. The first step was to explain why students did not have a completed syllabus on the first day of class and why that was an intentional choice. The second step was to explain co-creation and the rationale for implementing it in the class. The third step involved identifying co-creation areas such as grading method, attendance, schedule, and required assignments that students could negotiate. The negotiation step followed. Taking two to three class periods, negotiation was the longest and messiest part of the process. Students used a voting process in which they used checks or hash marks to indicate preferences on posters hung in the classroom. Those posters contained each of the areas they could negotiate. For example, one poster listed grading options that students could vote for. Another poster had book chapters students could vote on with the number of votes creating the order of chapters covered; the more votes, the sooner the chapter would be covered. While no names were attached to the votes, students could see how many and for what votes were cast. The final step in the process was for the instructor to create the completed syllabus that reflected students' co-created and negotiated curriculum.

In response to survey question six, which asked for advice or suggestions students had about the use of a co-created curriculum model, the process-specific answers included direct replies such as “making,” “choosing,” “voting,” “clarifying,” and “structuring.” For example, one student suggested “explaining more how [things] are going to be formatted.” Another student suggested “clarifying expectations.” The process of negotiating the curriculum can be

confusing and messy, which, for some students, can cause negative feelings in the beginning. However, negative feelings disappeared quickly after the negotiation step was complete and students had a final syllabus and schedule. As one student stated, “The first two classes were pretty uncomfortable since there were no rules set already. These feelings did go away and initially came up because this wasn’t something I was used to.” While students expressed negative feelings, this study found that those feelings were short-lived.

Benefits of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

Research question two, which asked about the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning, was answered by survey questions two and four, which asked what students liked or learned about the co-created curriculum model. The emerging themes included autonomy, community, and gaining experience and skills.

Autonomy

The first major theme was autonomy, which included students having a choice or flexibility in what topics to study and when and how to study each topic. Students appreciated having a voice in expressing their opinions, - openly discussing issues, and having control over the curriculum and their learning. One student noted, “I especially enjoyed being able to choose the course load and what assignments we’d have to do.” Another student appreciated “how [students] could decide how [they] wanted the classroom environment structured.” Many students commented that they liked having a voice. One student noted, “Everyone’s voice got to be heard,” while another commented, “I felt like I really had a say in what went on in the class.” A third student stated, “I feel like I was actually granted an opinion on how I get to learn.” Control was another area with many positive comments. As one student stated, “[The co-created curriculum] gave us much more control over how the class would be run than a regular class.”

Another student noted that they "felt a lot more control of the workload and order of chapters discussed in class," while a third student expressed appreciation for having "a great deal of control about my learning environment, materials, and curriculum." The fact that this student used the possessive pronoun "my" expresses the ownership of the learning experience that some students came to feel as a result of the co-created curriculum experience.

Community

The second theme, community, emerged from student comments about building community, togetherness, and collaboration during the co-created course. Fourteen students brought up the idea of community and togetherness in the survey. One student noted, [The co-created curriculum] brought the class together at the start." Another student discussed the "communal effort" of developing the class together, while a third student commented, "[Deciding together how the course would happen] immediately opened the class up and made it feel like a community rather than a class we just show up to, get lectured, and leave." One specific area of community building that occurred as a result of negotiating the curriculum was collaboration between students and the instructor. One student noted that students could be creative and "communicate with other classmates on what we want." This student emphasized, "The professor was creating it with us!" Speaking further about the autonomy that co-creating the curriculum encouraged, another student stated, "I had the chance to work together and participate in a process of designing a course that worked for all of us." A third student commented on how co-creation "caused a really awesome collaboration" and "made everyone excited to participate together." Co-creation is about partnership and working together which builds a sense of community in the classroom.

Experience and Skills

The third theme that emerged from students' survey responses was experience and skills. In the survey, students identified gaining experience with course creation and specific skills they gained as benefits of co-creating teaching and learning experiences. Several students commented on gaining an understanding and experience with how courses are (or can be) created. One student said they "learned that it's possible for professors to let their students create the class they want." Another student commented, "I wouldn't have known there were so many different ways to run a class," adding, "A lot of thinking goes into laying out a course!" A third student reported learning "how difficult it is for teachers," specifically noting that there "is a lot more to grading… [Teachers] have to make more decisions than I realized!" Yet another student commented, "It made me appreciate [teachers'] effort and time more."

Students also listed specific skills they acquired during their co-created curriculum experience. As one student noted, "It made me actually learn to interact and figure out how to problem solve." Another student commented on gaining social skills: "I was encouraged to work with my classmates and ended up being fairly comfortable speaking to them…I was not necessarily used to that." Others noted gaining skills in conflict management. One student stated, "One thing I probably wouldn't have learned [in a traditional class] is how to engage in conflicts and their styles." During co-creation discussions, students did not always agree but learned how to handle those disagreements and how others handled the conflicts. Another student reflected, "There was compromise as we all decided together. That meant not always getting what I wanted."

Other students said they learned about time management, accountability, and problem-solving. One student said they learned "to interact and figure out how to problem solve."

Another said they learned "time management," while another said they "learned about time management, accountability, and decision-making" skills. The experiences and skills gained by students through the co-creation process can be used personally and professionally in the future.

Engagement and Motivation

The final theme, engagement and motivation, addressed comments regarding students' perceptions of the co-created class. For example, one student noted, "[Being involved in the course planning] made me more motivated to come to class because I felt that I had helped to create it, so I wanted to be a part of what I created." Another student stated, "Being a part of making the course curriculum made me feel more engaged throughout the course." A third student noted that co-creating teaching and learning made them more engaged in the class and the assignments "because it's what I chose to do." A total of nine students included positive remarks about their co-creation experiences. One student encouraged, "Do it again!" while others wrote, "Keep it up," "Use it more," and "It's great!" Other students commented on the quality of the co-created curriculum, including that a co-created curriculum is "a solid system" and that they "appreciate it and the instructor" who initiated it.

Challenges of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

Survey questions three and five, which asked about dislikes and challenges of co-creation, aligned with research question three concerning the challenges of a co-created curriculum model. The themes that emerged in this area included the co-creation process, conflict and decision-making, and negative feelings.

Co-Creation Process

The first major theme related to challenges involved the co-creation process. Students noted issues with the co-creation process, such as the significant amount of time it took. One

student noted, “Deciding the course curriculum took a couple days that wouldn’t be involved in a normal class.” Another student stated that the “discussion for how to format the class took up a lot of time than a regular class would’ve, but it didn’t ever take away from our learning.”

On the topic of workload, several students indicated that their own decisions may have made completing the course more difficult. One student reflected, “Some things were too unrestricted, such as deadlines. It felt too easy.” Another student said, “We made our course curriculum with a lot of free time [between assignments]. I got too relaxed and [put] off [completing] the assignments.” Another workload issue concerned class attendance. One student noted, "We chose not to have mandatory attendance, but then [chose to include] participation points, which is basically like attendance.” Yet another commented, “As a parent, it made it more difficult for me when we decided that class time could not be made up beyond two [missed class periods].”

A final concern about workload involved lacking a strict schedule of assignments and deadlines. Because students created the course with “recommended” due dates and a make-up day, some students felt the lack of hard deadlines was problematic. One example was provided by a student who noted, "If you don’t have strict deadlines throughout the term, you must have the self-control to get the required [work] done…to avoid having to complete [everything] all at once.” Another student commented, “Not having a strict schedule and deadlines is hard for me, but for the majority of the class, it was better.”

Conflict and Decision-Making

The second major theme in regard to co-creating teaching and learning was the challenges of conflict and decision-making. Students learned that working with 25 to 30 students to decide on a curriculum they can all agree on will inherently create conflict. For example, in

the winter 2023 class, several students disagreed about course requirements, leading to the teacher-researcher managing the conflict. Because this was a conflict management class, the conflict did serve as a teaching and learning opportunity. As one student noted, “There was a lot of tension, I think, because we could decide what we wanted to do, and some students didn’t always agree with each other.” Another commented, “I can see that if two or more people disagree on what the class should be structured like and cannot find a median, then that might cause issues.” A third student discussed the challenge of making decisions. “Having to make decisions about how things like grading were going to work” was challenging, but “for the most part, I think it made things easier.” Another student noted, “Choosing what we wanted the class to be like on the first day was hard.”

Negative Feelings

The final theme related to challenges was students encountering negative feelings associated with co-creating the curriculum. Several students noted that the co-creation was unfamiliar and difficult, at least at first. One student said they “didn’t like how confusing it was at the beginning.” Another student expressed uncertainty about “different styles of the course [that could] be integrated.” A third student noted, “[Co-creation] was a little intimidating and confusing at first, especially since this was my first class back to school in [some time].” Students also reported feeling stressed and uncomfortable. One student noted, “Starting out was confusing and a bit stressful.” Another student stated, “The first two [class sessions] were pretty uncomfortable since there were no rules set already.” Most students who reported negative feelings also reported that those feelings occurred at the beginning of the co-creation process and did not last. As one student noted, “These feelings did go away. [They] initially came up because

this wasn't something I was used to." While students expressed negative feelings, this study found that those feelings were short-lived.

Qualitative Analysis of Researcher Field Notes

As a secondary measure to affirm, elaborate, and/or question students' survey responses, data analysis of researcher notes also addressed the research questions' three areas of the co-created teaching and learning: the process, the benefits, and the challenges. Each of the three areas produced various themes, as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Summary of Researcher Field Notes Data Analysis

Research Questions and Themes	**Frequency**
RQ1: What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Implementation	10
Preparation	8
Student Buy-In	7
Structuring Co-Creation	5
RQ2: What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Voice/Discussion/Generating Ideas	16
Choice	10
Collaboration/Negotiation/Creation	8
RQ3: What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?	
Control/Prepared	14
Workload/Time	11
Negative feelings	4

The researcher field notes data analysis summary provides a tally of the codes identified within each theme developed from the secondary analysis.

Process of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

Coding regarding research question one, the process of co-creating teaching and learning, included the preparation involved in creating and implementing a new (to the teacher-researcher) pedagogical model.

Preparation

The preparation for creating a new pedagogical model involved having a Plan B, creating new assignments, and developing sample grading methods, attendance policies, and late work policies. Because co-creation required not having a class fully prepared, the researcher wrote, "I had to figure out how to go into class without my usual plan." This lack of preparation felt "very overwhelming." The researcher reflected, "I knew I had to prepare *something*" to "make myself feel better" and to guide the co-creation process. For the study's teacher-researcher, preparation for creating a new pedagogical model began with professional development, which included researching different grading methods to "show students and allow them to choose from or combine to create something new." Different attendance and late work policy ideas were written up to present to the class, and extra assignments were created "beyond what I already had so students could have more choice." If students voted not to participate in a co-creation model, the researcher created a Plan B. Plan B involved preparing the class as usual. The researcher wrote, "I had the full syllabus ready, the schedule complete, the required assignments and policies."

Implementation

For the study's teacher-researcher, the implementation process involved explaining to and discussing with students why they were starting the term without a completed syllabus, students' autonomy over their education and the course content, and the co-created curriculum model itself. Therefore, co-created teaching and learning implementation involved collaboration,

discussion, and negotiation of course policies, grading methods, content schedules, and course requirements. Finally, the process involved students voicing their needs and concerns and voting on how the course would be created.

On Wednesday, September 28, 2022, the teacher-researcher wrote, “Armed with my class list, rolls of poster paper, and some notes, I entered my 100-level communication course.” Early in the class period, a discussion was initiated about students' perception of control over their learning and what happens in the classroom. The teacher-researcher noted:

> I explained there was a reason [students] did not have a syllabus on the first day and asked, ‘How many of you feel like you have control over what happens in the classroom?’ All of the students responded no, that those classes were already set when they walked into the classroom on the first day. I asked if they would like to have more control over the decisions teachers make about what happens in the classroom. They responded yes, and so I provided an explanation of the co-created curriculum. I explained that we would decide what to do in the class as a team.

Student Buy In

After some discussion, students voted by a major majority to adopt a co-created curriculum model. The teacher-researcher wrote:

> Over the course of the first week of class, which included two class periods, grading methods, attendance and participation, late work, course requirements, and the course schedule were all discussed, debated, voted on, and adopted. With final decisions made collectively and democratically, I presented students with a final syllabus and schedule on the first day of week two, the third day of the term.

Students were generally receptive to the idea of co-creation; however, getting buy-in for some elements, such as attendance and required assignments, was not as easy. Some students were eager to debate ideas, while some noted that they "didn't really care one way or the other." Other times, students debated for long periods of time, which reduced student buy-in for many students and required "starting over and breaking down options for discussion." Each class had one or two students who, in the teacher-researcher's words, "just went along with the process." However, approximately 95% of the class were very invested in the process and what they were creating.

Structuring the Co-Creation Process

Preparing the course after implementing the co-created curriculum model involved updating the course learning management system (LMS), creating the grade book, and creating tracking redundancies. Based on the newly co-created curriculum the LMS course shell needed to be updated to accommodate a different teaching schedule. The teacher-researcher reflected:

> I was no longer moving from chapter one to the end of the book. Instead, we moved from topic to topic in order of what students wanted to learn most. Students voted on a type of contract grading with no points assigned. Met, partially met, and not met were used for grading instead of points or the traditional A, B, C, D, and F grading scales, which were only used for final grades. I had to rethink my grade book and how it was presented in the LMS. Because the LMS did not handle the type of grading students voted on, a new tracking system needed to be prepared. I had to quickly find a way to keep track of what had been turned in as well as student participation.

Because the LMS had limited options for grading, attendance, and assignments, the teacher-researcher "created a color-coded spreadsheet" to offer "a backup to the LMS to track everything

going on." The spreadsheet offered a better way to track student requirements such as makeup work and attendance, late work, assignment work, and students' grade status. Because this preparation was done after the course started, the teacher-researcher reflected, "The second week of class was more labor intensive [for me] than usual" due to the short timeline to complete the updated LMS, grade book, and tracking system, but "things smoothed out" after they were completed.

Once the final syllabus was set and students knew the course expectations, the course ran much like a traditionally run course for the rest of the term. By week two of class, the course content, classroom activities, and discussions were implemented like any other class. With the exception of tracking course requirements newly created by the students, the course felt "familiar and routine."

As the end of the term approached and registration for the next term opened, students began asking about other classes I was teaching and, specifically, "if I would be using a co-created model again." The teacher-researcher was happy to hear that students were interested in taking classes offering "that teaching method."

Benefits of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

For research question two, the benefits of a co-created curriculum, the teacher-researcher's field notes included entries about student voice, choice, collaboration, and negotiation.

Student Voice

The teacher-researcher's field notes mentioned several aspects of student voice. For example, on the first day of the fall term, the notes read, "Students were invited to write down their ideas," which led to "several discussions about content and grading." Several notes were

also made about the classroom discussions themselves, including discussing with students “what would meet the passing baseline” and how to “use participation as part of the grading process.” Notes regarding the winter term indicated longer and more robust conversations than the fall term class. On Wednesday, January 11, 2023, the teacher-researcher wrote:

> Students debated for quite some time on what would be used for passing through A [grades]. We worked through revisions and what would be considered for participation/attendance. Finally, we discussed due dates, which brought up a conversation that surprised me. It started with everything being due by the end of the term. One student stated that they had to consider the teacher and that it would be a lot of work to grade everything at the end of the term. They discussed how they needed to be fair to themselves and the teacher.

Students had a say in what they created for themselves and used their voices to advocate for each other and for the instructor. While the teacher-researcher was initially surprised by the suggestion, she was even more surprised by students’ consideration of her as well.

Choice

The topic of choice was a second theme that came from teacher-researcher’s field notes. Notes taken during the fall and winter terms included the teacher-researcher’s desire for students to actively have class choices. The notes in preparation for the fall term stated, "I also created extra assignments for the class beyond what I already had so students could have more choice.” Another area of choice indicated in the notes was the teacher-researcher’s desire for students to have control over what, how, and when they learned. Therefore, each term's first day of class involved a discussion about students’ perceptions of control over their education and what happens in the classroom. For example, the teacher-researcher often posed questions to the class,

such as, How many of you feel like you have control over education and how? Do you feel like you have control over what is happening in the classroom? Would you like to have more control over those decisions? Students discussed wanting more control over their learning and the classroom and were surprised and happy about having the opportunity to do so.

Collaboration

Collaboration and negotiation were two other themes that emerged from the field notes as benefits of co-creation. Like students having voice and choice, students and the instructor worked as a team to collaborate and negotiate on creating the class. This began on the first day of each term with an explanation that, as a team, the class would decide what to do in the class. This included creating "the grading system, attendance, late work, all of it." Everyone worked together to "create policies," "define our contract grading," and "choose assignments that would fulfill the course learning outcomes." One example of collaboration came in the fall term when choosing assignments that would fulfill the course learning outcomes and fulfill students' choice of contract grading:

> The only requirement they had in assignments was that they had to give a presentation. Students looked through all of the available assignments. I suggested choosing from any assignments versus selecting certain ones for everyone to do. They [students] liked the idea and decided to categorize the assignments as small, medium, and large based on the number of learning outcomes met.

Several students were taking a second co-created course with me during the spring term:

> Like previous classes, I used large sheets of paper for students to write out class expectations, vote on a grading method, and choose the topics to cover. What was different [spring term] was the leadership from former students. They helped other

> students understand the process and gave examples from other classes on how they created other classes.

Because of the leadership of students who had already experienced co-creation, the collaboration felt stronger, given that the ideas came from peers who had already gone through the process.

Negotiation

Students' ability to collaborate effectively eventually led to their ability to negotiate. One enlightening example of collaboration and negotiation came during the winter term. The teacher-researcher reflected:

> During a discussion about assignment due dates, students wanted everything due by the end of the term. One student stated that it was important to consider the teacher and that it would be a lot of work for the teacher to have to grade everything at the end of the term. This led to a discussion about negotiating the needs of the students and balancing students' needs with the needs of the instructor. I was grateful for this type of understanding and discussion to be more equitable.

During the fall term, students asked about creating new assignments. This led to a negotiation of assignment descriptions and criteria:

> Students were required to do a presentation in this class, and after looking through presentation assignment options, asked if they could create additional assignment options. I said yes and asked for their ideas. Students began to offer ideas for presenting other than giving a formal speech. Students asked to present course content, asked to present a report on another assignment, and asked to do a media-related report [book, movie, video game] that related to interpersonal communication. Together, we negotiated the

assignment requirements, such as the length and number of sources needed. Students seemed proud of creating alternative assignments that would fit everyone's interests.

The collaboration and negotiation benefitted both students and instructor, as field notes indicated, "By the end of day two, people were very pleased with what they had created."

Challenges of Co-Creating Teaching and Learning Experiences

Finally, research question three asked about the challenges of a co-created curriculum. Three themes emerged from the teacher-researcher's notes: control and preparedness, workload and time, and negative feelings.

Control and Preparedness

In the area of control and preparedness, the teacher-researcher noted that, as an instructor, implementing a co-created curriculum model was "in direct opposition to how I [normally] prepare for teaching." During the fall term, the teacher-researcher elaborated:

> Typically, the entire term is prepared in advance, and I have detailed plans for the class. Using a co-created model meant I had to figure out how to go to class without my usual plan, which made me feel very unprepared.

Several of the field notes discussed the teacher-researcher's "need to prepare to feel in control." During the preparation for the fall term, fieldnotes indicated:

> As an admitted control freak, this system [co-creation] directly opposes how I prepare for teaching. I prepare the entire term in advance and have detailed plans for the class. Now, I had to figure out how to go to class without my usual plan. It felt very overwhelming and I felt very unprepared.

The feeling of being in control was directly linked to being prepared. Despite the desire to give students more control, going into the classroom to teach without solid preparation and a finalized class equated to not being in control of the class.

Workload and Time

Workload and time were the second themes that emerged from the field notes. The teacher-researcher wrote that preparing to implement a co-created model took a great deal of initial time to "prepare to walk in unprepared." During the summer prior to implementation, the teacher-researcher noted:

> I started preparing for the fall term, in which I would teach my first co-created class over the summer of 2022. I started by finding different grading methods that I could show students and allow them to choose from or combine to create something new. I wrote up different attendance and late work ideas, and I listed out all of the course content chapters that we could (or should) cover. I also created extra assignments for the class beyond what I already had so students could have more choices.

Several hours were spent researching grading methods and attendance policies and preparing additional assignments. The teacher-researcher described further preparations prior to the fall term:

> Just before the term started, I got large sheets of paper and created visuals for students to review. One for students to write out ideas for classroom atmosphere and expectations, one for voting on chapters to cover, one for different grading methods, and one for attendance policies. I also created a plan B. If students did not want to participate in this pedagogy, I prepared my class as usual. I had the full syllabus ready, the schedule complete, and the required assignments and policies.

Essentially, the teacher-researcher's time and workload were doubled by creating the course in two different ways.

There was also an increase in workload and time after the course had been negotiated and created. In the field notes, the teacher-researcher stated, "I found setting up the class to be a lot more work…I had to rearrange my LMS…I had to rethink my grade book…I also had to find a way to keep track of course requirements." The teacher-researcher notes for the fall term indicated that while each term went more smoothly than the last, "the front-end work was [still] labor intensive." However, after teaching one co-created course, the time and workload challenges lessened after the systems were in place and could be adapted and reused for the following classes. Reflecting on the three terms, the teacher-researcher realized the professional development benefits resulting from the co-creation experience.

Negative Feelings

The final theme that emerged as a challenge to the teacher-researcher was experiencing negative feelings. The majority of negative emotions happened prior to and during the first term of implementation of the co-created curriculum model, but some negative feelings, such as nervousness, continued throughout each term. Nervousness was mentioned in the field notes during both the fall and winter terms simply because it "was a new class to navigate" and the teacher-researcher "was actually implementing co-creation" for the first time. By the spring term, the third term implementing co-creation, the feelings of nervousness had dissipated and were not mentioned in any field notes that term.

Another negative feeling experienced by the teacher-researcher was the feeling of being overwhelmed as a result of her feelings of nervousness and anxiety. As field notes from the first week of the fall term indicate, "It felt very overwhelming, and I felt unprepared." Fortunately,

after completing the syllabus and other course materials, negative feelings "were visibly eased." Field notes written on Wednesday, October 5th (week two of the term) noted:

> Day three, I brought students a final syllabus with the finalized schedule, grading method, and policies. Once students saw the syllabus in print and discussed it more, and I answered questions, the confusion and anxiety in the room were visibly eased.

As the teacher-researcher's field notes indicated at the beginning of the winter term, these negative feelings lessened as time went on:

> Winter term 2023, I taught my second co-created class, Introduction to Conflict Management. This is a 200-level [upper-level course at a community college] with mostly returning students. I was more confident starting this class after having been through the process fall term.

While negative feelings can occur for both students and instructors utilizing a co-created curriculum model, the teacher-researcher was relieved to find that those feelings tend to be short-lived and reduced over time.

Discussion

Co-creation of teaching and learning has been described as one of the key pedagogical ideas in higher education (Bovill, 2020a). Many different forms of curricular co-creation exist, from a small number of students giving input on curricular design to the involvement of a whole class of students engaged in creating the curriculum for a course. Faculty implementing a co-creation model recognizes that students have valuable perspectives and contributions to bring to teaching and learning, which implies deeper engagement than might be found in common forms of active learning and interaction (Bovill, 2020b). Based on the study's findings, this discussion answers the three research questions regarding implementing a co-created curriculum model.

Research Question 1: Process

Research question 1 asked, what is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom? This study used whole-class co-creation in the teaching and learning model, which involved inviting an entire class of students to actively collaborate and negotiate elements of the learning process with the teacher and one another. This collaboration included creating the grading system, the course requirements, the course schedule, and relevant course policies. This study found that co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom included the process and preparation of implementing the model.

Process

Students offered advice about the process for future terms, including ensuring all students are heard. Bron and Veugelers (2014) argued that students are not a homogenous group, and we must include diverse student voices. Students' ability to collaborate effectively eventually led to their ability to negotiate. However, as students in this study noted, louder voices can overpower others. It is important to ensure everyone gets a say and is involved in the process.

Second, students commented on the voting process. Students felt that having open voting might "make some students follow the majority" instead of voting how they felt. Students suggested making voting anonymous or voting outside of class time. One of Bron and Veugelers' (2014) five arguments for involving students in co-creating teaching and learning is that students should have a say in designing their own education. Ensuring a fair and anonymous voting system is integral to students having a say in the process.

Finally, students noted that co-creation was unfamiliar to them, which caused some negative feelings, such as confusion, stress, and tension during the process. However, most students who reported negative feelings also reported that those feelings occurred at the

beginning of the co-creation process and did not last. As prior research has shown, not all students or faculty will likely embrace a partnership model (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Working and learning in partnership is rarely automatic and can present significant challenges to existing ways of being, doing, and thinking (Healey et al., 2014). Faculty and students will have different motivations for engaging in a curriculum development partnership. As sometimes occurred in this study, the different positions occupied by students and faculty may create tensions around differences in power, reward, and recognition of participation, identity, and responsibility for partnership work (Healey et al., 2014). What was different in this study was the leadership from former students who took a second co-created class. Returning students helped other students to understand the process and gave examples from other classes on how they created other classes. The peer-to-peer collaboration with students familiar with co-creation helped ease tensions and confusion, allowing for a smoother process.

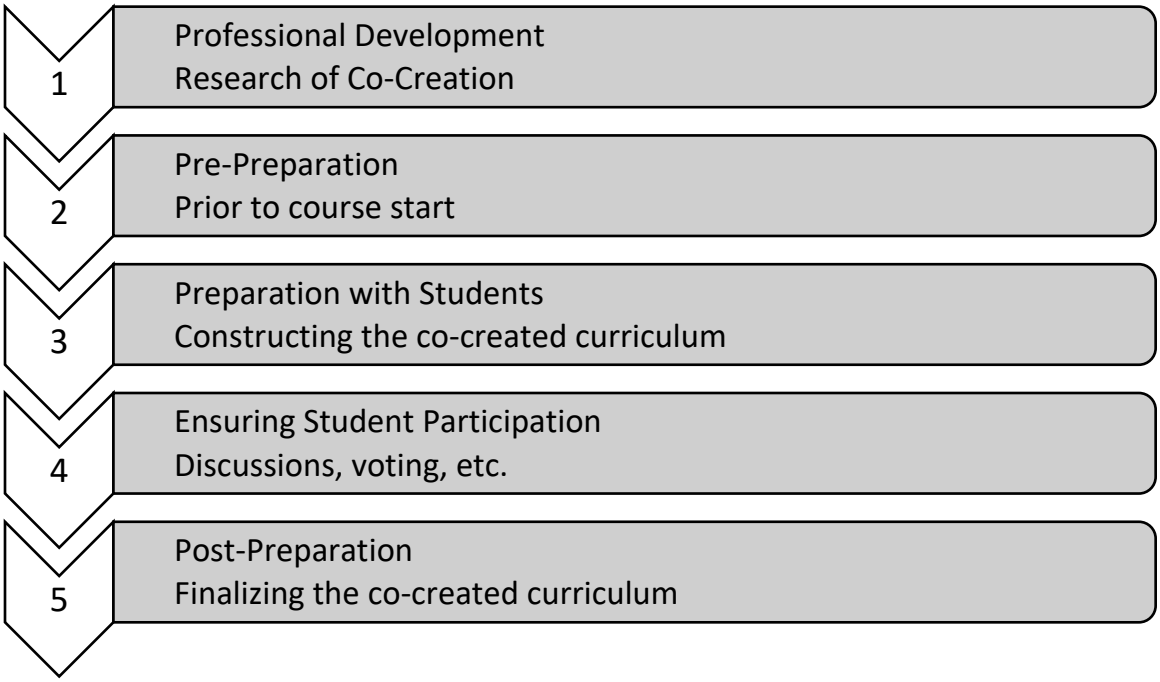
Preparation

The second area of the process is preparation. While a large amount of literature exists about co-creation in teaching and learning, the literature on the practical application or how-to of co-creation is slim. In the book *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning in Teaching: A Guide for Faculty*, Cook-Sather et al. (2014) note that patience is one strategy for getting started, warning, “However well you prepare for student-faculty partnerships, things will not always go according to plan” (p. 146). These authors note that, just as the teacher-researcher in this study noted, faculty need to be prepared for expectation mismatches, differing perspectives, resistance, and the fact that the creation of partnerships takes longer than you expect and does not go as smoothly as it could.

The teacher-researcher's notes used the terms prepared and unprepared several times. First, there was preparation to understand the co-created curriculum model (professional development), which was done through research. Second, there was preparation for the course before the term(s) began (pre-preparation). Third, there was preparation with students to construct a co-created curriculum. Fourth, there was preparation to ensure student participation. Finally, the course was prepared after completing the co-creation process (post-preparation). Figure 2 shows the five-step process in more detail.

Figure 2

Five-Step Co-Creation Process



Note. The process repeats for each co-created course to refine, revise, and implement the process.

Based on the findings revealed in this study, one process for co-creating teaching and learning in the college classroom involves ensuring student participation and preparing before, during, and after the implementation of co-creation.

Research Question 2: Benefits

Research question two asked, what are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom? Lubicz-Nawrocka (2020) found many benefits to students and faculty from the processes and outcomes of co-creation, which include increased engagement and empowerment, enhanced teaching and learning, and students gaining transferable skills personally and professionally. Similar to previous research, this study's results show the benefits of autonomy, gaining experience and skills, and motivation and engagement.

Autonomy

The first major theme was autonomy, which included students having a choice, voice, and control over the curriculum and their learning. Students in this study discussed the importance of having a say in their learning and having choices and flexibility. Researcher notes also commented on giving students a voice and choice, which included robust discussions, generating ideas, and offering choices to students. Other studies affirm that, through co-creation, students have freedom and independence, and this autonomy carries with it a sense of control (Meinking & Hall, 2020), increased self-regulation, responsibility (Bovill, 2020; Deeley & Bovill, 2017), and confidence (Bovill, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

Gaining Experience and Skills

The second theme from this study that coincides with previous research is the benefit of students gaining experience and transferable skills. While not widely discussed in previous literature, in this study, students listed gaining experience with course creation by understanding that there are many different ways to run a class, that much thinking goes into laying out a course, and that planning and preparing a new course can be quite difficult for teachers. Students in the study also noted that they learned that it is possible for professors to let their students

create the class they want and gained a new appreciation for teachers making a good class by listening to students.

Participants also specified skills they gained through the co-creation experience. Previous research has shown that participation in co-creation improves academic performance or higher quality of work from students (Bovill, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017), which can transfer to a professional work setting or in higher academic endeavors. Other enhanced skills for future professional development include building teamwork (Bovill, 2020; Deeley, 2014;), leadership (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019), and negotiation skills (Bovill, 2020; Bovill, 2014; Deeley, 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019). Increasing critical thinking, reflection, and communication skills (Bovill, 2014; Deeley, 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019). Like previous research, students in this study reported gaining problem-solving, time management, and conflict management skills in this study. Other skills participants in this study discussed were time management, perspective-taking, collaboration, and personal accountability.

Engagement and Motivation

The final theme, student engagement and motivation, addressed comments regarding students' perceptions of a co-created class. Research has shown that students and academic faculty negotiating the curriculum experience enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm (Bovill, 2020; Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). This enhanced engagement comes from the co-creation process itself, not just from the learning outcomes that result (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). As noted in this study, students involved in co-creating teaching and learning experiences demonstrate significantly higher levels of engagement and a stronger sense of community within the course (Bovill, 2020; Bovill, 2019; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2020; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

Increased engagement comes in the forms of enhanced motivation, enthusiasm, and more significant learning (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2020; Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2010; Deeley, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017) because students feel empowered to engage due to the trust and respect that come from co-creation (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

In keeping with other studies that have been conducted on the topic of co-created curriculum, students in this study stated that they felt more engaged in class and assignments and "got more out of it" than they believed that would have in a traditionally taught class. Students also reported feeling less stressed and more curious and excited about the content than they would have in a traditional class model. Several students noted that they felt more engaged due to the strong community built at the beginning of the class and were more motivated to come to class because they created it themselves. Similarly, the teacher-researcher observations noted that students were likelier to attend class, engage with each other and course material, and do the required work because they were invested in what they had created and wanted to see it succeed.

Research Question 3: Challenges

Research question three asked, what are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom? The literature identifies challenges to implementing a co-created curriculum model, including resistance and institutional practices and norms. Resistance can come from students and faculty as it is something new, shifts in power and decision-making, and a perceived loss of control (Acai et al., 2017; Curtis et al., 2020; Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). As co-creation differs from a typical pedagogical approach, the implementation may be challenging within institutional structures, practices, and norms (Bovill, 2019; hooks, 1995; Meinking, 2017; Serrano et al., 2018). This study found similar challenges that fall under both categories. Students' feelings of resistance included issues

of control, conflict, and decision-making. Students' discomfort with changes that differed from established institutional practices and norms included the process, workload and time, and negative feelings.

Resistance

Prior research on negotiated teaching and learning noted that faculty may be concerned about relinquishing control over pedagogical planning (Bovill et al.,2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). This study, however, found that control was not related to relinquishing control of planning to students, but rather control was equated to a sense of preparedness. Because co-creation requires not having a class fully prepared, the teacher-researcher felt that she did not have control over the class. This differs from previous research in that allowing students control was not where the resistance came from. The resistance came from a perception of lack of control due to the nature of co-creation, which may have less preparation for the instructor.

A co-created curriculum model requires that the power of decision-making about teaching and learning is shared between instructor and students (Bovill, 2020); however, working and learning in partnership can present significant challenges to existing ways of being, doing, and thinking (Healey et al., 2014). This supports this study's second theme of resistance: conflict and decision-making. A co-created curriculum model requires that the power of decision-making about teaching and learning is shared (Bovill, 2020a). Students may also have a lack of familiarity with a co-created curriculum model (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2014; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019) and may feel doubtful that their recommendations will be included in the curriculum design since faculty are the ones who make the final decisions in curriculum design (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Tuhkala et al., 2021). These student perceptions may lead to hesitation toward students' willingness to participate (Tuhkala et

al., 2021) and difficulty with participant buy-in (Acai et al., 2017). While students gained skills in conflict management, several students and the researcher found challenges with disagreements and decision-making, causing tension, less outgoing students participating, and students going along with the majority rather than speaking up.

Institutional Practices and Norms

Like resistance to something new, institutional structures and norms were challenged by the teacher-researcher's decision to engage students in the co-created teaching and learning model over three full terms. Institutional practices and norms include dealing with structures already in place, the time-consuming nature, and the discomfort caused by changing practices (Acai et al., 2017; Curtis et al., 2020; Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). This study found challenges that conflicted with institutional practices and norms related to workload, time issues, and negative feelings.

First, implementing a co-created curriculum model takes time (Bovill, 2020; Bovill et al., 2011), and many faculty members experience time and resource pressures (Serrano et al., 2018), even without trying an unfamiliar and challenging pedagogical practice. This study found that it took approximately 20-plus hours to prepare the class before, during, and after the implementation of co-creation, and it took time from the beginning of class (two to three class periods) to explain and negotiate the co-creation process. While the study found that the time taken at the beginning of class did not take away from students' overall learning, the time and resources required for faculty members to engage in co-creation can be a challenge to implementation.

Second, the process of implementing a co-created curriculum model can cause negative feelings for students and faculty. Students may perceive a lack of necessary expertise to carry out

curriculum design (Tuhkala et al., 2021), and they may also experience fear or antipathy toward a new style of learning (Serrano et al., 2018). Students may also have a lack of familiarity with a co-created curriculum model (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill, 2014; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone & Marie, 2019) and may feel doubtful that their recommendations will be included in the curriculum design since faculty are the ones who make the final decisions in curriculum design (Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Tuhkala et al., 2021). These student perceptions may lead to hesitation toward students' willingness to participate (Tuhkala et al., 2021) and difficulty with participant buy-in (Acai et al., 2017).

The different positions occupied by students and faculty may create tensions around differences in power, reward, and recognition of participation, identity, and responsibility for partnership work (Healey et al., 2014). A 2017 study by Mercer-Mapstone et al. found that students, faculty, and staff reported stress, anxiety, and other negative feelings during co-creation. This study had similar findings, with students and the researcher reporting feelings of stress, confusion, and discomfort during the process. However, negative feelings were reported by students and the researcher to be short-term.

Summary

This chapter reported the findings of the qualitative survey data and researcher field notes, discussed the findings, made connections between the findings and current research literature, and answered the study's three research questions. Chapter 5 will conclude the study by discussing implications for practice and offering recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in one college classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What is the process of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?
2. What are the benefits of co-creating teaching and learning in a college classroom?
3. What are the challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in a college classroom?

The findings from student surveys and researcher field notes revealed mostly positive but also challenging themes around the process and preparation of implementing a co-created curriculum model. Fourteen of the 23 student responses yielded either positive remarks or no advice on the process of co-creation, signifying overall satisfaction with the process. The benefits of co-created teaching and learning in this study, similar to prior research, included autonomy, gaining experience and skills, and motivation and engagement. Also, similar to previous research, challenges fell under the categories of resistance and institutional practices and norms. In the resistance area, challenges included control issues, conflict, and decision-making. Institutional practices and norms in this study included the process, workload and time, and negative feelings. This chapter concludes the study with implications for practice, a discussion of the study's limitations, suggestions for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice from this study include implications for both students and faculty. Implementing a co-created teaching and learning model allows for greater collaboration and engagement for students and faculty. Research has shown that students and academic faculty who engage together in co-created curricula experience enhanced engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm (Bovill, 2020; Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). A second implication is that students and faculty who engage in the co-created curriculum model may develop a stronger sense of community in the classroom (Bovill, 2020; Bovill, 2019; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2020; Dollinger & Lodge, 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). A third implication for students is the autonomy of co-creation, which allows students to feel independent and have more control or ownership over their learning (Bovill et al., 2010; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2020; Deeley, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017). Through co-creation, students have freedom and independence, and this autonomy carries with it a sense of control (Meinking & Hall, 2020), responsibility (Bovill, 2020; Deeley & Bovill, 2017), and confidence (Bovill, 2020; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). The final implication of this research is student success. Students are more likely to succeed when they are directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued (AACRAO, 2017), and co-creation is one model that fosters these conditions. In this study, the student surveys reported a direct connection to three of the six success factors: engaged (major themes of engagement and motivation), connected (community building and sense of community), and valued (opinions were valued).

To summarize, when students participate in co-created teaching and learning, they are likely to be more successful in class, remain enrolled in the class, and complete the class successfully.

Suggestions for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research is that whole-class co-creation of teaching and learning be implemented in more classes across more locations in the United States so that a range of findings can be compared. Future research could include best practices for discussing and implementing whole-class co-creation of teaching and learning utilizing data gathered from students and faculty. The creation of best practices could then be used for training purposes for faculty members implementing the co-created curriculum model.

A second suggestion for future research is to compare retention and completion rates between students in a co-created learning environment and those who are not. I suggest using an equal number of sections for one course (e.g., two sections of Introduction to Communication Studies), where half of the sections use a whole-class co-creation model. In contrast, the other half uses a traditional teaching model. This comparison would allow researchers to determine whether co-creation increases retention and completion. Additionally, this study would allow a comparison of students' pass rates and final grades.

Finally, another area of future research suggested would be utilizing a co-created teaching and learning model in online courses. Implementing co-creation in an in-person classroom has the advantage of real-time discussion, negotiation, and collaboration. Research on how to replicate a co-creation model would allow for the expansion to more students in various modalities.

Limitations

A total of 68 students were eligible to complete the student survey, but only 38 students finished it. This small sample size does not allow for generalization for students beyond the study's sample. The survey was available to students online and completed outside class time.

Had the survey been offered in an alternative paper format and allowed to be completed during class, the sample size may have been more significant.

Because the researcher was part of the study, a second limitation of this study may have been courtesy bias. Jones (1963) defined courtesy bias as when a respondent provides information that will please the researcher because the norms governing interpersonal relations call for them to do so. As Anderson (2010) noted, "The researcher's presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable in qualitative research, can affect the subjects' responses" (p. 3).

A third limitation of the study may be selection bias. Selection bias is a distortion in a measure of association due to a sample selection that does not accurately reflect the target population (Alexander et al., 2015). Because this study used a convenience sample, there may been some selection bias, which may have skewed results.

Another type of methodological bias that may have been a limitation is procedural bias, which is related to how the instruments are administered (Worthy & Romero, 2020). Harzing et al. (2013) found that paper/pencil surveys were overwhelmingly preferred by their participants, a sample of international human resource managers, and had much higher response rates when compared to the online survey. A procedural bias may have occurred due to the data collection format being exclusively online, eliminating participants who may be less tech-savvy.

To reduce these limitations in the future, implementing co-creation in multiple classes may ensure a larger sample size and reduce selection bias. To reduce procedural bias, both paper and digital formats of the survey should be offered. Reducing courtesy bias may be more difficult if the researcher remains part of the study, which the nature of co-creation demands due to the collaborative nature between students and faculty.

Conclusion

The co-creation of teaching and learning is one model in which we may be able to meet higher education challenges. Colleges face growing pressures to maintain or enhance the quality of their offerings while being challenged to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of students. Staff in higher education also face the challenge of supporting students' feelings of belonging and value. Co-creation of teaching and learning has been described as one of the key pedagogical ideas in higher education.

With the administration's support, higher education faculty can recognize that students have valuable perspectives and contributions to bring to teaching and learning and implement a co-created curriculum model. Many different forms of curricular co-creation exist, from a small number of students giving input on curricular design to the involvement of a whole class of students engaged in creating the curriculum for a course. Still, any form of co-creation implemented can provide deeper engagement than might be found in more traditional teaching and learning pedagogies.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Participant Consent Form

Study Title: Implementing a Co-Created Curriculum in the College Classroom

Student Investigator: Laura Pelletier
Contact: Phone: 507-304-5077
Email: pelletierl@lanecc.edu or lpelletier@mail.bradley.edu

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in the college classroom from the perspectives of both the teacher and students. The study consists of completing an end-of-term survey asking questions about your experience with a co-created classroom model. This is an anonymous survey, your participation is voluntary, and there is no connection between participation in the study and students' grades for assignments or the course. You may choose to skip questions or discontinue the survey at any time. Your participation in the survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes.

Compensation: There is no compensation for your participation. The researcher sees no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. However, it is possible that participants could feel uncomfortable disclosing opinions in the survey. While there are no direct benefits to participating in the study, participants may feel a sense of accomplishment and growth from their experience participating in a co-created curriculum model.

Questions about this study may be directed to Laura Pelletier at 507-304-5077 or either email listed above. If you have general questions about being a research participant, you may contact the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects office at:
1501 W. Bradley Ave.
Bradley Hall Room 18
Peoria, IL 61625
Phone: 309-677-3877
Email: srast@bradley.edu

You are voluntarily making a decision to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate means that you have read and understand the information provided and decided to participate. Agreeing to participate also means that all of your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. Deciding not to participate will have no negative impacts. If you have any additional questions, you should contact the researcher.

Please circle if you agree or do not agree to participate.

I agree to participate. I do not agree to participate.
Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to describe the process, benefits, and challenges of co-creating teaching and learning experiences in the college classroom from the perspectives of both the teacher and students. The study consists of completing an end-of-term survey asking questions about your experience with a co-created classroom model. This is an anonymous survey, and your participation is voluntary there is no connection between your participation, or lack of participation, and your course grade.

There is no compensation for your participation. The researcher sees no foreseeable risks for participating. However, participants may potentially feel uncomfortable sharing opinions about their experiences. While there are no direct benefits for your participation, participants may feel a sense of accomplishment from co-creating the curriculum.

This survey consists of 6 questions and will take 10-20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and you can skip questions and/or stop at any time. Agreeing to participate means that you have read and understand the information provided and decided to participate. By signing below, you consent to participate in this survey.

Q2. Describe what you liked best about using a co-created curriculum model in this course.

Q3. Describe what you liked least about using a co-created curriculum model in this course.

Q4. Describe one thing you learned in this class that you wouldn't have learned if we had not used the co-created curriculum model.

Q5. Name one thing about using the co-created curriculum model that made learning, class time, or assignments more difficult or challenging than they would have been if we hadn't used a co-created curriculum model.

Q6. What advice or suggestions would you give about a co-created curriculum model for future semesters?