On Becoming Online Educators: Developing Hybrid Learning-Centered Pedagogy

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Abstract

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

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Research Questions

The central questions guiding this research are:

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

Theoretical Framework

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

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

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

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

Constructivism

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

Developmentalism

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

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

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

The Subject-Object Balance

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

Collegial Inquiry

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

Methodology

Qualitative Research Approach

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

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

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

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

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

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

Validity and Ethical Concerns

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

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

Cultural Context, Researcher Reflexivity, and the Collaborative Effort

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

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

Cultural Context

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

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

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

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

Researcher Reflexivity

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

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

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

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

Our Collaborative Effort

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

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

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

Cultural Perceptions About Professors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

–*"How will we build relationships with our students"*
–*"I am worried about how we can foster their criticality–really push their thinking–when we aren't even in the same physical space as they are."*
(excerpts from researchers' recorded discussion)

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

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

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

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

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

Cultural Assumptions about Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

Leaving Pedagogical Comfort Zones

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

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

Saying Goodbye to the Traditional Lecture

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

Collaboration

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations for Future Research

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

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