Chapter 4
No Size Fits All: Design Considerations for Networked Professional Development in Higher Education

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4.1 Introduction

Academic staff juggle multiple responsibilities including teaching, research, leadership, professional involvement, community engagement, and administration, and it is often difficult to make time for voluntary, noncertified professional development (PD). While literature on PD is growing, there is still a need to better understand the potential of continuous PD of academic teaching staff via networked learning, which emphasizes learner collaboration and autonomy (Mcconnell et al., 2011), whether conducted fully online or in blended formats (Coswatte Mohr & Shelton, 2017). We follow McConnell et al. (2011) in defining "networked learning," who position the philosophical roots of networked learning in the work of Dewey and Freire. These critical and emancipatory dispositions are also foregrounded in the commentary on "Networked Learning: Inviting Redefinition" published by Goodyear et al. (Networked Learning, 2020).

This definition of networked learning focusing on relationships and collaboration rather than technology promotes openness in attitude, learner collaboration, self-directed learning, and authentic learning. Goodyear (2019) adds the element of

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choice and control over how and how much one participates in the definition of NPD. While networked learning includes both off-line and online learning, connectivism describes networked learning enhanced by social media (see Bali & Zamora, n.d.).

This chapter reflects on three PD interventions[1] across the African continent: a blended course at a South African institution, a fully online course offered across the African continent, and an online curriculum offered globally. Our research question is: What design considerations can be used to analyze, contrast, and design NPD opportunities and course designs?

Using a collaborative autoethnographic (CAE) methodology (Bali et al., 2015), the three authors reflect on design considerations for different forms of NPD courses, based on their experiences of designing and facilitating NPD. We argue that design considerations, such as context, have become more complex and that understanding the dynamics between them is important for designing networked learning experiences. We advocate a "no-size-fits-all" approach to NPD and suggest that course designs can be positioned along a range of dimensions, such as open/closed, structured/unstructured, facilitated/unfacilitated, or certified/uncertified. Using our three courses we will make a case for context-sensitive, complex, and nuanced course designs, which need to be continuously reviewed and redesigned. While our cases are located in the landscape of PD, it may also be useful for emerging forms of blended and online university courses.

4.2 Background

Although interest in professional or academic staff development (as it is called on the African continent) is growing, there seems to be consent that in general it follows a "one-size-fits-all" approach and is relatively inflexible in terms of time and space, making it difficult for lecturers to participate equitably (Bali & Caines, 2018; Rhode et al., 2017). There is also a lack of research on NPD, essential to develop academics' understanding of the differences between teaching face to face (f2f) and online (Coswatte Mohr & Shelton, 2017). Literature focuses on both student learning and academic development when discussing NPD, with a seemingly greater emphasis on student learning, i.e., "the mission to prepare students for working life in such a qualitative way that students are able to understand the value of a lifelong professional development perspective in their future working lives" (Littlejohn et al., 2019, p. 5) with less emphasis on how staff "perform professional development within their own practices" (ibid.).

While studies on networked learning and design in higher education (HE) exist, few of these deal with design considerations of NPD courses for educators. Research

[1] We acknowledge that "development" and "intervention" are contested and normative concepts that imply a deficit when used in the HE context (Quinn, 2012).

indicates that effective PD is typically long term, offers opportunities for practical application, is integrated in the educators' daily practice, includes collegial sharing, is project or action research based, and is well supported (McQuiggan, 2011). Literature also stresses the importance of boundary crossing, linking learning to both internal and external networks (Littlejohn et al., 2019).

There is a small but growing field in the literature that explores more flexible, open, equitable approaches to PD (Bali & Caines, 2018). These approaches move PD online, allowing them to be "untethered," which Leafstedt and Pacansky-Brock (2016, n.p.) define as "learner-centered, grounded in the use of online networks to share practices, and [which do] not require faculty to be on campus to learn. It places value on sharing and the relational ties between faculty, as opposed to the number of people in a room at a particular time." There are also approaches that offer participants agency in choosing, within the same course, multiple pathways, from the more structured to the less structured, and approaches that offer participants agency in terms of dipping in and out of various portions of more loosely designed PD, with opportunities to be more or less heavily involved in various stages, depending on personal interest and motivation (Bali & Caines, 2018). However, literature on design principles for online and blended teacher PD (CADRE, 2017) and design issues resulting from lessons learned from online PD projects tend to read as "dos and don'ts," recipes, or advice (e.g., Vrasidas & Zembylas, 2004).

We also did not find studies that contrast the designs of NPD courses across different contexts, or studies located in or written by practitioners in the Global South related to NPD courses in HE contexts in Africa. This is not unique to studies of networked learning, but to the field of PD more broadly, where approaches "have been dominated by literature from the global North, which does not take into account conditions in resource-constrained environments" (Leibowitz et al., 2016). In similar fashion Pallitt et al. (2018) note the lack of formal research on learning design in African universities more generally and local meanings of learning design that depend on institutional resources, beliefs about learning and teaching, and a range of other factors.

Goodyear (2009) proposes design considerations for networked learning located on an axis linking space, place, and activity as an indirect approach, whereby activities, spaces, and organizations that we design rely on being inhabited by the teachers and learners who will "enact" our designs. While this framework is useful for analyzing networked learning practices, it is less useful for *designing* networked learning experiences. The varieties of networked courses have multiplied since Goodyear's earlier work. We now have a greater variety of online platforms and tools, social media, as well as open education movement where different approaches to "open" in relation to online courses have emerged since MOOCs. Goodyear's (2009) indirect approach involves different kinds of relationships between the three axes which differs from the interrelations of multiple design considerations where particular combinations can result in different kinds of opportunities and constraints. In this chapter, we argue that design considerations have become more complex and that understanding the dynamics between them is important for designing networked learning experiences.

4.3 Methodology

We chose to build our framework on concrete experiences we had in developing networked courses in HE contexts. We are academic developers, supporting others with their teaching, yet the contexts of our courses are different, and providing rich, thick description of those differences allowed us to tease out various dimensions involved in designing such courses. Over the course of several weeks in 2019, we each explained our different courses to each other, wrote narratives, and discussed them together, in order to compare their designs and what influenced the design decisions. We commented on each other's drafts in order to clarify each narrative further, and we met synchronously multiple times to make sense of connections and dig deeper into understanding each other's contexts.

Collaborative autoethnography (CAE) involves the collective negotiation of meaning and interpretation based on our individual experiences expressed as narratives, and then relating what we have to the literature (Geist-Martin et al., 2010). We feel that autoethnography "challenges the hegemony of objectivity or the artificial distancing of self from one's research subjects" (Chang et al., 2013, p. 18). CAE lies within the interpretive/critical research tradition and so does not conform to scientific/positivistic measures of validity and rigor. Autoethnography "seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis et al., 2010). But autoethnography goes beyond storytelling, in order to make "linkages between the micro and the macro . . . there is a need for thick description, analysis, and theorizing" (Wall, 2016, p. 6). As Hine (2015, loc. 34 on Kindle) asserts:

> . . . autoethnography is a powerful tool for exploring the ambiguities and uncertainties inherent in Internet usage and for exploring how online and offline sites are connected in contingent and flexible fashion. It also cautions against unthinking pursuit of a "complete" understanding of such a phenomenon, and counsels researchers focusing on complex online/offline phenomena to embrace the sense of uncertainty and "good enough" assumptions that permeate the experience of navigating such territory.

Conducting collaborative research enabled us to collectively question, revise, and refine our individual interpretations and conclusions, allowing us to interrogate the less visible dimensions of the PD activities we were analyzing, such as the motivations, off-line connections to the online events, and decisions made along the way that cannot be seen in the final output. Our process of developing our framework was iterative and nonlinear, growing from synchronous conversations, Google docs, WhatsApp chats, emails, and a shared Google Draw to visually compare our own experiences to our developing framework (see Fig. 4.1). The detailed narratives are not included in this document (due to space limitations) but are available in this commentable Google doc: http://bit.ly/NoSizeFitsAll.

Some of the key elements of digital collaborative autoethnography as a methodology are that the journey is messy, and the initial research questions need to be open and exploratory to allow for unexpected discoveries and interpretations. Doing it collaboratively, we started with open questions for describing each of our contexts,

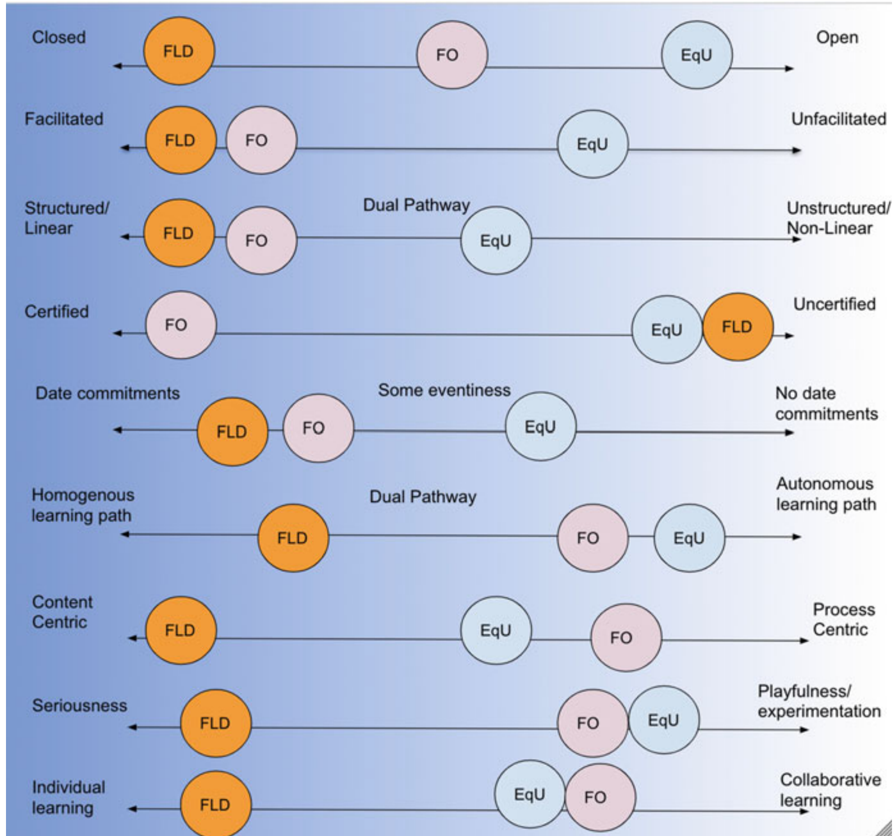

Fig. 4.1 The three courses mapped along the dimensions of NPD

and it evolved as we asked each other questions to try to understand deeper and find connections—the resulting analysis may seem neat and linear, hiding the complex realities of the process that led us to it (Baym & Markham, 2009; Bali, 2020).

4.4 Findings and Analysis: Design Considerations for NPD Courses

The following section discusses three NPD courses where the authors have been involved in the design and facilitation along 11 dimensions which emerged through the process of reflecting on our courses and their similarities and differences in design: facilitation, openness, structure, voluntariness, certification, linearity, eventiness, content vs. process/experience, learning path, playfulness, and collaboration (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Summary of courses along dimensions of NPD

Dimension	Flexible learning design—FLD	Facilitating online—FO	Equity unbound—EqU
Facilitation: To what extent were there facilitators working directly with learners?	There are weekly emails by facilitators but there are no further efforts to build community	Daily announcements, individual progress reports shared during consolidation weeks, facilitated asynchronous activities, weekly online meetings	Facilitators managed site and Twitter and facilitated studio visits. No learning facilitation for open participants, only our own students
Openness: To what extent was the course open to any participants outside an institution, and were materials openly accessible?	Closed course site. Only open to institutional participants. No pre-requirements. Invites are sent out by institutional channels, participants apply via online form	Open license version of the course site (without participant activity) and course leader's guide. Course site is built using an institutional instance of open source LMS, Sakai. There are selection and funding criteria	Open to anyone to participate, public website and social media presence, public livestreamed and recorded studio visits. Also open to anyone to contribute but only facilitators control web and Twitter content
Structure: To what extent was there course structure that was planned and followed?	Highly structured. Biweekly release of contents. Each topic follows the same structure: intro/screencast/reading/discussion forum and reflective blog	Very structured with some flexibility, since participants have considerable leeway to work around their ongoing work and family commitments	Semi-structured. Fortnightly themes; some events had dates/times like Twitter quick or slow chats and studio visits, but asynchronous possible
Voluntariness (related to structure): To what extent was participation of learners' voluntary versus part of something mandatory?	Voluntary participation. Might be recommended by HOD if the participant is part of curriculum design team	Support from a line manager or HOD required for application. Often participants want to take the course but for some, it is recommended to them by a colleague/boss. Participant agency is crucial for course completion	Participation to anyone other than students in class was completely voluntary. They could join any activity whenever they wanted or use the site in other ways. The facilitators themselves were unpaid volunteers
Linearity (related to structure): To what extent does the course flow in a particular order?	Linear	Collaborative activities within a particular time frame. Critical mass and energy—focused rather than dispersed across too many activities is encouraged	Fortnightly themes had dates so linear in that sense. But outside of synchronous activities, anyone could engage with the course in any way

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Dimension	Flexible learning design—FLD	Facilitating online—FO	Equity unbound—EqU
Certification: Was there certification at the end for completion?	Institutional certificate of attendance (no credits)	UCT short-course certificate for successful course completion, i.e., 75% completion of course activities and all mandatory activities	No certification for open participants. Students in our courses got credit for the course they took, which only partly included equity unbound
"Eventiness"—deadlines and commitments	New contents are released every 2 weeks. Workshops scheduled every 3 weeks	Consolidation weeks to catch up on activities 2 weeks prior after which activities are "closed." Some mandatory activities. Voluntary weekly online meeting (as a group)	Events included studio visits, Twitter, and annotation activities over an hour or several days. No deadlines. Students in our courses had deadlines for things they did for course credit
Content vs. process: extent that course is designed around content/learning outcomes vs. process goals (Smith, 1996)	Content driven. Following HEQSF application forms for new qualifications. Little sharing of experiences	A combination of process and content. As learning in this course is experiential people and processes are invisible "content." Value creation stories in progress indicate that networking and sharing of diverse experiences are valued among course participants	Informed by connected learning, open pedagogy, and process/critical curriculum approach. Values of equity and openness determine contents, not learning outcomes
Homogeneous learning path versus autonomous pathways (see Crosslin, 2018)	Homogeneous learning path, although participants are free to engage with the contents they are interested in	While there is a designed path, participants can lead their own topics of interest for the facilitation task	External participants choose learning path or follow the theme dates. Students in my class had some freedom and some set deadlines for common experiences
Playfulness: To what extent was "fun" used?	Low level of playfulness/experimentation online. Design activities usually done during workshop	Playful learning is a course principle but depends on participants' perception of playfulness	Playful learning was never explicitly used in our wording, but seemed to come naturally to us. Example is Twitter Scavenger Hunt activity

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Dimension	Flexible learning design—FLD	Facilitating online—FO	Equity unbound—EqU
Collaboration: To what extent is collaboration built into the course design?	No collaboration. Mainly self-study and development of qualification. Facilitators are drawn from the institution	A combination, the course design involves a progression from noticing individual needs to ways of being and working together. The course scaffolds socialization necessary to facilitate collaborative learning	Some interaction on activities like studio visit and Twitter chats. But no collaboration towards a particular product by participants. Students in my own courses did collaborative activities outside EqU.

4.4.1 *Course 1: Institutional Course at a University in the Western Cape, South Africa (FLD)*

Curriculum development is a complex process that requires a myriad of different skills and knowledges. Universities of Technologies in South Africa are undergoing an intense process of transformation including re-curriculation of its qualifications (Engel-Hills et al., 2019). The institution I am based at is required to re-curriculate more than 60 programs before 2021. The Curriculum Officers' (CO) project was introduced in 2012 at the institution to address the capacity development of COs in their respective departments to develop these new qualifications. Key concepts emphasized are the promotion of greater inclusivity among students at our institution, including making the curriculum more meaningful, and ensuring greater flexibility in the delivery of teaching and learning. Our center works primarily with teams that design postgraduate diplomas and honors degrees, which target learners in employment and need to offer increased flexibility.

In order to support these COs we decided to develop a blended learning short course (Entitled "Re-imagining Curriculum—Towards Flexible Learning Design," FLD in short), a collaboration of the Curriculum Development Unit and our center. We have been running blended course design workshops for a while, adopting ideas and structures from the field of design thinking, such as focusing on learner empathy, collaboration, experimentation, risk-taking, and problem orientation. Rejecting a "one-model-suits-all" approach, we developed a methodology that considers disciplinary contexts through design activities such as persona development, knowledge trees, and storyboarding. These are hands-on, fun activities, which involve a lot of post-its, colorful pens, and flipchart paper, but also conversations, discussions, and sharing across disciplines and faculties. We are also trying to encourage our colleagues to take more risks and work with possible failure, moving away from a desire for perfectionism, so abundant in HE. By creating safe spaces to experiment with technologies, reflecting on what worked and what did not, we aim to develop creative confidence in lecturers.

We offered the first iteration of this course over a period of 6 months f2f with 4-h workshops every 3 weeks. In these workshops, a range of facilitators from the institution presented on important topics around curriculum design, and design teams were supported in design activities to help them develop the necessary documentation for submission of their qualification. Design happened “on the fly,” workshop by workshop, responding to participants’ feedback. Approximately 40 participants completed the course. Participants in their feedback commented on the vibrant atmosphere and the opportunity to engage with colleagues from different departments and faculties. Participants also spoke about the importance of action and reflection. Some design teams managed to work in parallel on their design activities, but not all. For those who did, using Google Docs allowed facilitators to give regular feedback.

However, although this was a great learning experience for both lecturers and facilitators, workshops have limitations. We are a small team and not able to scale this kind of intervention across our multicampus institution and for the approximately 800 academics we support. This case study reflects on the second iteration of the course, which we decided to offer using a blended learning format. We chose this format to allow for more flexibility in terms of course participation for lecturers unable to attend due to their geographical location, but also workload, and to allow for a more authentic modelling of flexible/blended learning course designs.

This course runs over 3 months, with new topics released every 2 weeks on our institutional LMS, Blackboard. Weekly activities for Module 1, which focuses on Curriculum Design, follow a linear online learning structure: a screencast with an overview of the topic, some readings, a topic for the discussion forum, and a reflective blog task for participants to create “notes to self” about the content covered to highlight what would be of importance for their own projects. In total participants are expected to spend 2–3 h a week on online activities. The module content and structure were set up before the start of the course, although facilitators create content as the module progresses. Participants self-assess progress by ticking completed topics off. Participation is voluntary, although some of the participants might be sent by their Head of Departments (HOD) if they are working on new qualifications. Participants receive a certificate from the institution for completion of the module. The course is not accredited.

We have just finished the first module of the online course. What we can already see is that the model of engagement in workshops based on our combination of presentations/design activities/discussions, fueled by our own passion for flexible course design, is difficult to replicate online. Scheduled workshops allow participants to carve out time to engage in conversations and learning that is difficult to achieve in an online context. This is aggravated, if there is no incentive to participate beyond personal interest. Also, the beauty of f2f engagements, the break from normal day-to-day work, to engage with colleagues across the institution, falls by the wayside. Furthermore, Module 1 focused on Curriculum Theory and is content-heavy, and is often quite dry and procedural, which makes it difficult for self-study.

We are now thinking of how to offer Module 2 to allow more engagement. This module will focus on flexible and blended course design and could potentially be

more experience and process oriented. It is also not as content- and theory-heavy. We are planning to offer more synchronous engagement through weekly webinars, which should allow participants to adhere to a more structured learning routine and allow for more social learning and continuing, deepening conversations. We are also thinking of reducing the independent/online learning part to one or two online activities, which will focus on collaboration, such as collective annotation of readings and videos. We hope to find ways of reinserting the atmosphere of joy and playfulness that usually characterizes our f2f PD activities.

4.4.2 Course 2: Facilitating Online (FO), Regional Outlook (Africa)

This fully online Africa-wide course is offered by e/merge Africa, an online PD network hosted by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching at the University of Cape Town. It is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. A team of facilitators (usually three) from across the continent and two course conveners lead cohorts consisting of (usually) 20–30 participants. The course provides opportunities for educators and educational technologists to develop the necessary orientation and practices to become effective online facilitators. It adopts an active and experiential approach and is based on principles of fostering online learning communities, and playful and reflective learning. Learners are expected to spend up to 8 h a week on course activities, and get a UCT short-course certificate of completion for completing 75% of the assessed activities of the course including some mandatory activities.

While the course is a response to a continent-wide capacity-building need, it attracts mainly Anglophone Africans as the course is offered in English. Ease of communication in English may be a hidden barrier. The majority of course participants are not first-language English speakers and writers. For many, English is their third or fourth language. Most instances of the course consist of half the participants being from South African universities and the rest from other African countries, predominantly Nigeria, Kenya, and Swaziland. Participant diversity in relation to geographic location, job roles, educational backgrounds, experiences, and exposure to blended and online learning are important features to achieve the necessary diversity and "critical mass" for a successful course cohort.

While participation in the course is subject to application and participant activity takes place in a closed course site, the LMS used at UCT is open source (Sakai) and course materials are openly licensed. The course leader's guide is published as an OER and an open version of the course site without participant activity is available for view and LMS export upon request. Aspects of the course and course activities have been adapted by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) and the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa as part of a range of PD offerings.

The advertised length of the course is 8 weeks. This includes a Week 0: Arrival online orientation week where participants can explore navigating basic information on the course site such as the course program and information about the conveners and facilitators. While there are suggested deadlines, the course structure includes three consolidation weeks where participants are able to catch up on activities and reflect. At the start of each week following a consolidation week, activities in discussion forums from earlier weeks are closed and participants are encouraged to progress with the course together. Getting a critical mass of participants to move along together through each stage of the course activities is crucial. So while the deadlines are more flexible, they are not overly so. Participants keep track of their own completion of activities on a dashboard called "My Progress." The different course weeks and activities are released in stages to avoid overwhelming participants. As the course progresses, the types of activities become more complex and the information on the site overall becomes more.

During the course, participants engage in individual and collaborative online learning activities. The right combination of these is important, as well as the use of appropriate tools at different stages of the course. Participants experience the use of different tools as the course progresses rather than all at once. At first, the course experience is likened to that of a student taking an online course and by Week 2, once they are comfortable in the space together and know each other better they take on a more active role as emerging online facilitators in the form of peer facilitation. Through experiencing online facilitation strategies modelled by the facilitation team, they start to use these themselves. From Week 3 to Week 5 each of the participants takes on an online facilitation task in which they lead an online conversation.

Assessment in the course involves keeping track of satisfactory completion of activities rather than measuring how well a participant is progressing through the award of a grade for participant performance in the course. Individualized feedback happens via email on items such as their online facilitation capabilities, posts in a learning journal (renamed blog tool) where facilitators and course participants comment on individual reflections, and end-of-course feedback on personal development plans. Some participants are more invested than others or become invested more or less as the course progresses, owing to diverse personal motivations and circumstances.

In addition to facilitated forum discussions, weekly synchronous online meetings allow for facilitators and course participants to share their voices. The potential for a more human connection and energy of the live meetings should not be underestimated. In addition to course progress dashboards, the weekly live meetings assist in clarifying, extending, and deepening engagement with course activities. Each live meeting starts with icebreakers where course participants and facilitators share their highlights for the week, acknowledging their lives outside of the course. Weekly reflections are encouraged in the form of individual reflections in the learning journals and shared reflections in the forum, where each week has a dedicated topic for reflecting on the week's course activities.

The course seeks to grow a community of practice of online facilitators in Africa, primarily in the public HE sector. Participants stay connected via a public Facebook group (across cohorts) and a private LinkedIn group (per cohort) after the course. They also most often become e/merge Africa members and join webinars and online conferences offered by the network. Many go on to promote practices of online facilitation and blended and online teaching and learning at their institutions and present at national conferences and symposiums. Some even present back to the e/merge Africa network about developments in their contexts. Understanding the motivations and values of participants and how these are tied to incentives and interest in being part of a broader community during and beyond the course is important. Many courses are learning communities and few are communities of practice, so how participants come to understand this difference and decide which one suits their needs is important to consider. We are currently collecting value creation stories from course participants and will soon be designing a version of this course that global participants can apply to join.

4.4.3 Course 3: Equity Unbound (EqU), International Collaboration

EqU is an "equity-focused, open, connected, intercultural learning experience across classes, countries and contexts."[2] It is a collaboration between me, author 3 (American University in Cairo), Mia Zamora (Kean University in New Jersey, USA), and Catherine Cronin (at the time employed at the National University of Ireland, Galway). I teach a course that I designed myself locally at the American University in Cairo in Egypt (where English is the language of instruction) that focuses on digital literacies and intercultural learning. I felt that students would benefit from additional forms of equity-focused intercultural interaction that build on connected learning principles (see Ito et al., 2013) which helped me personally with my own teaching.

The website curates relevant resources (readings, videos, podcasts) and activities on a variety of themes, and suggested dates for doing certain activities so that we can communicate and collaborate with others around the world. A few other educators joined in, whether to do similar activities, to propose other activities, or to join some of our live "studio visits" (live video conversations with experts) to discuss the various topics.

We intended EqU to be less structured than traditional courses, mainly because we consider ourselves to be emergent teachers: we allow our courses to evolve in different directions, depending on how it flows that particular semester for those students. It is a teaching philosophy and influenced by our experiences with connectivist MOOCs (see Bali et al., 2015) which put less emphasis on content

[2] See http://unboundeq.creativitycourse.org/about and on Twitter @unboundeq #unboundeq

and structure, and more emphasis on relationships and connecting/networking. However, for other educators to participate with their students, we added some "eventiness" that gave it more structure and content focus than actually happens in our f2f classes.

EqU curriculum was open in several ways: the curated materials were openly accessible, anyone who had Internet access could participate and even contribute resources, and activities like public social annotation and Twitter chats were low barriers to entry and exit. But it was closed in other ways: a lot happened behind the scenes, and facilitators controlled the website. There was no certification for open participants.

EqU was not a cMOOC, but inserted connected learning into regular courses. Facilitators taught their f2f courses, curated online content, and led Twitter chats and studio visits, but did not facilitate otherwise. Online engagement was largely via our website for disseminating information about upcoming events, Twitter and Hypothes.is for some semi-synchronous interactions like fast and slow Twitter chats and collaborative annotation, and Google Docs. Studio visits were the synchronous video element, which became a source of emotional support for us, the facilitators. I still used an LMS for assignments and grades within my class.

EqU became a supportive learning community for educators interested in equity and digital literacy but did not succeed as much in engaging our students in sustained interaction. We are in the process of creating a new iteration using the same site starting September 2019.

4.4.4 A Comparison Across Dimensions

Through discussing differences and similarities between our PD courses, we developed a framework for design considerations along 11 dimensions, similarly to Dron and Anderson's "decagon of cooperative freedoms" (2014, p. 69). Their work describes characteristics of course design for online learning in groups, with a particular focus on the level of freedom of a learner to choose along ten dimensions of online learning, such as time or place of learning. Our dimensions talk to the designers' choices regarding learning design. Table 4.1 describes where each of our courses lies on the spectrum and Fig. 4.1 represents it visually.

Anderson and Dron (2011) differentiate three generations of online/distance learning pedagogy: those based on cognitive-behavioral theory (not networked, self-paced, or didactic online learning), those based on social constructivist theory (online learning for small numbers of participants within an LMS/VLE), and those that use connectivist approaches (Siemens, 2005) and leverage social media and the open web, which McConnell et al. (2011) suggested would support networked learning more than designs confined within closed platforms.

A pattern emerged from the dimensions we described above. We noted that dimensions along the right-hand side tended towards more open and connectivist learning principles, whereas items towards the left-hand side and middle tended

towards more traditional networked learning within LMS/institutional boundaries. For example, EqU, explicitly based on connectivist/connected learning, encouraged more openness, less structure, more collaboration, and less facilitation than other designs. FLD was built on a more social constructivist approach and thus had stronger facilitation and more structure within a closed platform. FO shows a combination of social constructivist and connectivist approaches, offering more autonomy and collaboration than FLD, and yet is more facilitated and structured but less open than EqU. Dual-pathway approaches (e.g., Crosslin, 2018), which are not studied here, would give learners a choice between a more socially constructivist networked course and a more open, connectivist learning experience. Note that a cognitive-behavioral approach would actually mix between sides of the spectrum, in being highly structured, content centric, and individual but unfacilitated and may or may not offer autonomy and playfulness, and may or may not have specific dates and certification (the first iteration of FLD would be positioned here).

4.5 Emerging Tensions in NPD

Through the CAE process and working with the framework three broader tensions emerged which we will discuss below: the tension between advocacy and usefulness; the tension between promoting choice and agency vs. institutional expectations and constraints, and finally the issue of certification, volunteerism, and unpaid labor.

4.5.1 Advocacy and Usefulness

Conducting PD for lecturers is complex, as we often think of modelling something that is meaningful and transferable to lecturers and at the same time pushes them out of their comfort zones, challenging their teaching and learning practices. To advocate for university teaching that promotes ownership and agency, PD for educators can model such practices (Bali & Caines, 2018).

However, designing and facilitating such learning experiences are difficult on three fronts: First, there are often insufficient numbers of staff with enough experience to design these activities. This is partly why EqU and FO have multiple facilitators from different institutions. Secondly, lecturers may resist new ways of learning and may not manage their time or engage at all. FLD faculty enjoyed the f2f aspects of courses, but online engagement was much lower. Teräs (2016) suggests to be careful and work with/support the "learning culture shock," the accustomization process the learners go through and which resembles the accustomization phases in a new cultural environment. Also, transferring passion and enthusiasm of facilitators in f2f contexts into the online spaces is difficult. Online facilitation is a complex skill that is honed with experience. Finally, from our experience, it is often difficult for

lecturers to implement more flexible approaches to teaching in credit-bearing courses, especially particular larger first-year courses, or in STEM fields, for example.

We acknowledge educators' desire for f2f contact and collaboration/networking. Relationship-building and ongoing collaboration between staff developers and academics are important (Gachago et al., 2017). The value of doing so online becomes more visible when interaction online is with people in different countries or cities but who share a common goal or purpose, such as learning to teach online in Africa (as with FO) or equity-focused approaches to intercultural and digital learning (as with EqU).

As our cases have shown, it is important for academic developers to remain aware of, and take risks to explore, different pedagogical approaches. However, we also risk leaving colleagues in our academic development centers behind—and becoming more distant from educators at our own institutions who prefer teaching in familiar ways. We recognized in our conversation the need for a balance between remaining up to date in our field and growing our external networks of like-minded educators while continuing to be relevant and useful in our institutional context and for the spectrum of educators with various teaching philosophies.

It is also crucially important to ensure equitable access to the learning opportunities we offer for PD, and to recognize that a course may be successful for particular learners and not others (Bali & Caines, 2018). For example, for people whose students are not on Twitter or cannot join for safety reasons, some parts of EqU were inaccessible. For some people, YouTube is blocked by institutional firewalls. The FO course attempts to alleviate some of these issues by creating a collaborative networked environment within the course, e.g., using the blog tool and discussion forums of an LMS rather than public blogs and social media.

4.5.2 Choice and Agency vs. Institutional Expectations/Rules

Our framework challenges a one-size-fits-all approach and promotes recognition of disciplinary and institutional contexts. Thinking through the different dimensions of our framework could support staff developers to choose the right design considerations for their own context and audience. Choice and agency are paramount, both for staff developers and lecturers. But this may clash with institutional expectations; e-learning policies may favor institutional LMSs over open approaches, thus limiting online collaboration and engagement. What helped us think through our framework was the concept of working along a continuum and shifting dimensions along it, even if shifts are incremental. We all have some space to shift our pedagogical practices—even if one small step at a time. Champions and mentors are needed to guide others on such a journey. This change also needs sustained engagement, experimentation, reflection, and continuous openness to new ideas and approaches to help teachers and learners engage with ideas, content, and each other.

4.5.3 Certification, Volunteerism, and Unpaid Labor

Certification recognizes people's work as valid accomplishments. But sometimes there are other forms of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation that drive learner commitment. People tend to participate in Twitter Scavenger Hunt activities because they find it "fun" and they like the brief connection with students. Sometimes, as with EqU, participants stay for the social/affective aspects of being part of a community of like-minded educators. This may explain why EqU worked more for educators than students—the educators needed this support, which possibly was not available within their institutions. On the other hand, if we offer uncertified/unaccredited courses in competition with the multiple responsibilities that academics have to juggle, we might have to let go of the idea of "completing" a course, and rather allow academics to dip in and out as they can and wish. Facilitators and participants were sometimes uncompensated and unrecognized in any formal way for work. There is intrinsic motivation, and learning and community are often their own reward without the need for financial compensation. However, not everyone can afford to volunteer their time in these ways. Also, free participation and unpaid labor are not a sustainable approach for long-term PD.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we suggest a framework for design considerations for networked learning for PD drawing on our own practices. This framework is neither prescriptive nor judgmental: each design consideration is a dimension, and location on the spectrum is contextual: there is no "best practice," no size fits all, and each decision should be gauged according to its fit for purpose, including readiness and philosophy of those designing and facilitating the learning experiences, institutional constraints or lack thereof, and participants' characteristics and needs.

This framework can support decision-making for course creation and revision, helping designers identify areas to tweak along the spectrum of one or more dimensions to meet certain goals. It can also be used to analyze courses, which may result in adjustments to the framework. It can help envision the future of a course, and what we desire to achieve, such as creating pathways to open, creative, collaborative networked PD. We invite fellow educators, designers, and developers to use the framework to contrast and discuss these and additional design considerations and, in the process, engage with their own beliefs and assumptions. We invite feedback and further development of this framework and approach.

4.7 Coda: Professional Staff Development After COVID-19

We wrote most of this chapter before the pandemic late 2019. COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown have suddenly made NPD part and parcel of academic staff development and have changed our own academic development practices radically. The explosion of webinars supporting academics from all over the world in moving their teaching online has created opportunities to hear more diverse voices, join international conversations, and become part of global networks. Offered by institutions of higher education, but also of national associations of teaching and learning, and often organized as inter-institutional collaborations, these webinars, courses, and programs have created a culture of openness and sharing.

From our own experiences we can see that:

- Educators value the relationship-building dimensions very highly, and within online environments, it seems that, in the absence of in-person events, they prefer synchronous communication with others when it is feasible, over asynchronous collaboration which requires more time management, autonomy, and organizational skills.
- Facilitating engagement in online synchronous PD is not an easy skill and there is an emergence of new facilitation techniques, such as virtual liberating structures (see Lipmanowicz & McCandless, undated, and resources created by OneHE & Equity Unbound, 2020), to create more interaction and engagement.
- The sudden increase in online academic staff development can seem overwhelming and emphasizes the importance of academic staff developers' role in curating and preselecting webinars and PD for their colleagues, to reduce complexity for colleagues unused to connectivist and self-directed learning experiences.
- Also these offerings are again often once-off interventions, without consideration for more sustained and context-sensitive PD.
- Finally, digital inequalities are surfacing in relation to these predominantly synchronous interventions, limiting access to those who have data constraints and who can engage in the English language (although there are some examples of localizing content such as the Arabic language webinars offered by e/merge Africa).

These emerging trends suggest that design considerations for NPD warrant further research.

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