

Chapter 8

Designing an Inclusive Intercultural Online Participatory Seminar for Higher Education Teachers and Professionals



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Abstract How do we design an inclusive, collaborative online learning space to encourage deep discussion, analysis, and practical change in the pedagogical practices of present and future university teachers? How especially do we foster this engagement around “difficult” and “common sense” conversations? With these questions in mind, the authors explore their development of a relational, reflexive, dialogical, and praxis-oriented online learning space as a springboard for co-creation of intercultural teaching and learning knowledge and practice among education professionals. The authors draw on their locations as an experienced educator of future teachers and a graduate student in youth leadership, both rooted in social justice activism and interdisciplinary scholarship to discuss developing a seminar that (1) embodied its content (intercultural, inclusive learning and teaching) in praxis, (2) supported development of networked learning connections between learners, teachers, resources we collectively brought together, and (3) extended to the communities that participants entered daily as teachers and learners. This chapter details the process of co-designing such a seminar, discusses some of the pedagogical processes utilized to promote the co-production of knowledge with participants, and explores the outcomes of these efforts with participants.

Introduction

We have spent our careers working within educational traditions that elevate the importance of connectivity and the co-production of knowledge, two key elements defining networked learning (Beatty et al. 2010). Our experiences as participants in

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higher education – as learners and instructors, teaching mentors and educational consultants – shaped our belief that an advanced course exploring inclusive intercultural learning and teaching would greatly enhance professional development for future university instructors in first-level teaching professional development courses. In our learning and mentoring roles, we have observed experienced, well-intentioned teachers fumble or fail in fostering deeply inclusive environments that enable learning for all students in various learning spaces. In our teaching and educational consulting roles, we have learned that creating inclusive intercultural environments requires setting aside many “common sense” teaching practices to consciously create learning spaces that support a broad range of learners when they are with us in a course and when they move into other learning and life spaces rife with messages and practices that marginalize diverse learners and impair learning for many students.

These multiple roles and our shared commitment to social justice philosophies combined with requests from past students and current teaching colleagues prompted us to initially propose the Multicultural Inclusive Learning and Teaching seminar we explore in this chapter. To support broad access to the seminar, we gained Center for Educational Innovation authorization to develop a modified open boundary online course (Kernohan 2013) so that anyone whose higher education role engaged them in working with university and college students would be able to engage the seminar.

In this initial stage, we turned to work by two sets of pedagogical mentors Septima Clark (1962, 1964) and Myles Horton (2003), education director and founding director of Highlander Folk School, respectively, and to Minnesota-based scholars Carolyn Shrewsbury (1987) and Stephen Brookfield (2007), whose feminist and/or critical pedagogies work and writing embody practices established at Highlander. Opening in 1932 as a cultural centre with a focus on leadership among “local people” located in the Appalachian region of the southern US state of Tennessee, Highlander Folk School has always existed as an interracial, intercultural organization, even in times when state legislation banned such gatherings through the 1960s. Work during the initial decade was deeply linked to labour organizing and building of cross-class alliances; from the 1940s onward, civil rights and social justice work have been at the heart of Highlander’s work. Horton and Clark both advocated participant-generated education, organization, and leadership. Participants during this rich civil rights era included Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King early in their activism; groups of primarily white college students and full-time teachers from northern US states joining with students and community organizers of colour from southern states to staff of the 1964 Freedom Summer schools and community centres hosting the voter registration efforts; and community leaders training to become teachers in Citizenship Schools that would prepare black voters for successfully passing restrictive voter registration requirements in the segregated US south. Now called Highlander Research and Education Center, the centre remains a place where people pursue Highlander’s mission of “com[ing] together to interact, build friendships, craft joint strategy and develop the tools and

mechanisms needed to advance a multi-racial, inter-generational movement for social and economic justice”.

From these activist teacher roots, we committed specifically to:

1. Incorporate learning practices developed at Highlander Folk School – relational, reflexive and praxis-oriented – to reflect our understanding that classrooms as learning spaces can be “treated as a consciously experienced set of conditions and surroundings, where people can come to understand the nature of society by examining the conflict situations and the crises thrust upon them, in their own personal lives...” (Horton 2003, p. 243).
2. Draw on practices embodied in Shrewsbury’s description of the classroom as a networked learning space, “characterized as persons connected in a net of relationships with people who care about each other’s learning as well as their own is very different from classroom that is comprised of teacher and students” (1987, p. 6).

In the process of designing, three compelling, emergent questions required our attention as we collaborated with students from previous courses, teaching colleagues, disability resources student services staff and academic teaching and technology consultants:

- How do we design a seminar as an open online learning space where teaching professionals explore rich pedagogical histories, intercultural and inclusive learning theories and boundary crossing practices through dialogical discussions (Coffield and Edwards 2009; Lather 1991)?
- How do we counter repressive tolerance – the practice of allowing all voices to be heard, even if they play on systemically harmful narratives (like racism, sexism, etc.) (Brookfield 2007)?
- How do we wrestle with the pervasive “problem of time” (Wallace 2000) – practitioners’ ongoing hope to infuse multicultural learning and teaching practices that is often sidelined by perceptions of them not having enough time to “deal with” classroom diversity or enough support to “get to” the work of building more intercultural learning and teaching practices?

This paper details the process of codesigning such a course, discusses some of the pedagogical processes utilized to promote the co-production of knowledge with participants and explores the outcomes of these efforts with participants. We begin by exploring the course design process, including the background behind goals and aims, pedagogical approach and module design. In the section that follows, we further explore the selection of content, activity, assessment and discussion practices to support creation of an inclusive learning community that would support participants from across disciplines and institutions to co-produce knowledge within and beyond the seminar. Finally, we draw on data collected from the first two iterations of the course to explore outcomes for participants and to address changes we have made based on feedback.

Designing an Inclusive Intercultural Teaching-Learning Space

To begin, we addressed Dee Fink's ideal impact guiding questions: "What would I like the impact of this course to be on students, 2–3 years after the course is over? What would distinguish students who have taken this course from students who have not?" (Fink 2004, p. 10). Our largescale goal for this open online participatory seminar would be to focus on inclusive intercultural learning and teaching with teaching-oriented higher education practitioners (e.g., teachers, student support professionals and pedagogical administrators across disciplines, geographies and cultural and personal identities) working dialogically and collaboratively to develop pedagogical practices agile and robust enough to support the broad range of learners enrolled in our colleges, programs and courses. Further, participants would work together to re-examine and expand individual, collective, collegial and cultural ideas about *what* we teach, *how* we attend to *who* is in the classroom, *when* we address tensions/conflicts, *where* to be transparent and *why* all this matters.

As seminar designers and facilitators, we would amplify three components embedded in the ideal impact goals:

- Action *teacher* as convener, facilitator, participant, advocate, questioner/questioner, lecturer, responder, hub, researcher, organizer and specialist roles for all participants.
- Pluralize theories *and* pedagogies in selecting materials, just as we would see students in the plural in terms of demographics, identity, interests and liminality (Burke and Crozier 2012; Waite et al. 2013).
- Foster relationships among all participants through collaboration, co-construction and critical and reflective reflection within dialogue across identities and institutions (Beaty et al. 2002).

Our design practice also built on our experiences within cMOOCs and pMOOCs – connectivist and project-based MOOCs – that each of us participated in as professional development learners (e.g. CMC11, Mooc Mooc, OLDS MOOC, EC&I 831 and FSLT12 and FSLT13). Across these engagements, especially as we reflected on our own experiences of learner and lurking roles in Oxford Brookes' First Steps in Learning and Teaching modules (Waite et al. 2013), we recognized the importance of "lurking learners" – whom we came to identify as *lurners* – as active agents to keep in mind throughout our design process.

From these experiences, we needed to select a virtual learning environment that would allow participants to choose among multiple modes of participation – from enrolled for credit, to badge-earning, to participation in peer discussion within or beyond the open online participatory seminar (OOPS) learning space and on to dipping in for reading, uploading and downloading materials that supported an individual's further *lurning* (the acts of lurking for learning). As a seminar that would include graduate students enrolled for credit as well as practitioners seeking professional development, with both constituent groups newly exploring aspects of inclusive intercultural teaching and learning practices, we sought to build our learning

space within a platform where it would be safe to risk exploration and expression of new ideas. For this we selected our university-supported VLE, Moodle, as a place where all who registered for the seminar could access discussion forums, open resources and badge-earning activities including peer exchange and feedback. The addition of a YouTube channel and seminar blog made it possible to share seminar materials in a public, open access mode.

Lastly, to cap this stage of designing for inclusive learning, we adopted a *design for inclusive learning* process. For us, this approach blends work by several scholars on multicultural teaching and learning (Biggs and Tang 2007; Chávez 2007; Gómez 2008; Kaplan and Miller 2007; Wiggins and McTighe 2005). Alongside this, we relied on an inclusion framework offered by CAST, the Center for Applied Special Technology's Universal Design for Learning, which considers how to best serve students with disabilities and extends to course design that "take[s] into account the wide variability of learners in higher education environments" (UDL on Campus n.d.). Design for learning is the base from which we build inclusive intercultural learning and teaching practices and spaces. To design backwards, we composed five learning aims to guide us in the basic work of constructing the seminar curriculum and site design (selection of seminar materials, development of discussion forum prompts – which would become the core seminar materials – and constructionist badge activities and creation of frameworks for feedback and assessment):

- **Interact** with – respond to, analyse and discuss – readings in a reflective practice mode, reviewing via multiple lenses, considering diverse perspectives, addressing personal contexts and imagining professional possibilities.
- **Develop** a personal – contextual, robust and dynamic – understanding of MILT through participation in discussion forums and activity workshops.
- **Engage** ideas in multiple ways – spoken, verbal, visual/audio and written – in order to create teaching/learning activities and/or artefacts.
- **Apply** core course design constructs – course alignment, universal design for learning and a range of critical multicultural pedagogical principles – to one's teaching roles and learning responsibilities.
- **Stretch** to create among ourselves – and beyond this course – learning spaces akin to those we seek for our students as we exchange and expand our viewpoints through our new interactions.

In all, for the first run of our seminar, 70 participants signed up in response to our small-scale email and social network postings. They came equally from science, education and liberal arts departments and identified across multiple sexualities, ethnicities, genders, home places, teaching spaces, class backgrounds and family affiliations. More than half of the registered participants ventured into at least two of the six modules, with 13 signing up for credit, which would require ongoing participation in all module discussion forums and completion of the four badge activities, and nearly an equal number of registrants participating regularly in the *urning* mode. The following list sets out module topics and badge activities:

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with tabs for Welcome!, M1: Who Are We? What Might We Explore?, M2: What is MILT?, M3: Why Begin with Learners and Learning, M4: Where do MILT and Course Design Align?, M5: When Do Discussions Become Dialogic?, Seminar Badges, and What's Next?. Below the navigation bar is the title 'What is Multicultural Inclusive Learning and Teaching?' and a sub-header 'This Module is open from 27 September - 18 October.' A large image of a red sign with white text that reads 'CHANGED PRIORITIES AHEAD' is displayed. Below the image is a 'Your progress' indicator with a small square icon. The main content area is titled 'Introduction' with a plus icon. The text under the introduction reads: 'We invited colleagues at UMinnesota to respond to the question "What is MILT - Multicultural Inclusive Learning and Teaching?" All the invited speakers experienced teaching and learning in a variety of college and university classroom settings. To launch Module 2, we've shared four of those responses in the YouTube Playlist you'll find just below. A hyperlink to the transcripts is listed just below the embedded video link.'

Fig. 8.1 Sample module page

1. Seminar Welcome
2. Who In the World Are We?
3. What is MILT? / Badge 1 – Philosophy Statement
4. Why Begin with Learning and Learners? / Badge 2 – Assignment Design
5. When Do Words Fail Us?
6. How Do Discussions Become Dialogic? / Badge 3 – Discussion Reflection
7. Where do MILT and Course Design Align? / Badge 4 – Course Design

Within each module, we incorporated four sections: *Introduction* to frame a module's topic within learning and diversity science literature, *Information* to showcase 2–3 open resources as seeds for participant-driven content creation through discussion, *Insights* to feature resources expanding the research and practice base in light of participants' contexts and *Activities* as the anchor for each module, linking to a discussion forum, and to badge activity exchanges of artefacts and feedback. Materials within the Introduction, Information and Insights sections included images we selected; meta-essays we composed to synthesize core theory/history/praxis ideas into a 2-page, hyperlinked essay; video-based resources we scripted or invited to showcase intercultural learning and teaching ideas developed within our own networks; and curated texts (articles, blog posts and essays, as well as samples drawn from colleagues teaching materials) that allowed us to embed materials offering an intercultural array of pedagogical voices and approaches (see Fig. 8.1 for a sample module page screenshot). While we designed the full seminar in advance, we also integrated new resources in an emergent design as we learned more about seminar participants through discussion and feedback forums.

Ethos: Community and Climate

There were two main areas of concern guiding the design process: (1) the community and ethos of the seminar and (2) the seminar climate, or learning atmosphere, we hoped to create to support a range of participation and participants. These frameworks are discussed next.

Community and Learning Circles

Our intention was to work within each module as we would within other learning circle spaces (Wallace 2011, p. 12). Learning circles were foundational to Highlander Folk School's praxis in hosting racially (class-, gender-, age-, education- and sexuality-) integrated workshops. Highlander's founder Myles Horton says this of learning circles in a conversation with Paulo Freire:

"Circle" is not an accidental term, for there is no head of the table at Highlander workshops; everybody sits around in a circle. The job of the staff members is to create a relaxed atmosphere in which the participants feel free to share their experiences. Then they are encouraged to analyse, learn from and build on these experiences. Like other participants in the workshops, staff members are expected to share experiences that relate to the discussions, and sources of information and alternative suggestions. (Horton et al. 1990, p. 150)

Learning circles are first and foremost a gathering of people. They are distinct from a community of practice in that participants do not necessarily share a common craft or profession but rather hold in common goals related to community activism and social change. At Highlander, topical focuses for workshops, typically spanning 3 days, are pre-established in response to current community issues, cultural developments and citizenship concerns in light of civil rights legislation and social and economic justice goals in a US context. Historically, and still, Highlander workshop attendees are people already engaged in such endeavours and recognized in home communities as local leaders who were also small business owners, community organization volunteers and teachers. Participants sought out the workshops to learn more – in realms of ideas and activism – from others pursuing similar goals and facing similar obstacles, to personalize national movements and to return to home communities for cocreating next actions. Highlander's face-to-face workshops feature three learning circles, each a "discussion round" building on the previous one. In planning for two learning circle discussions on a Saturday and one on a Sunday, facilitators would prepare "open-ended questions designed to elicit answers that draw creatively on experiences and interests that participants bring, on a topic that you know is alive for them" (Wallace 2011, p. 13). Thoughtfully scripting questions allows facilitators time for "thinking through what the overall shape and sequence of discussions is going to be, what questions and what texts or videos to [use to] set up questions..., and draft the wording or at least important parts of the wording of the questions with those plans in mind" (Wallace 2011, p. 14). Each

round of a learning circle can be structured in multiple ways for multiple learning space formats, with each round sharing this pattern overall: The facilitator poses a question; each participant speaks, building on what they have heard in others' responses; in moving around the circle, participants may also choose to pass at their turn in order to further listen, mull or reflect before speaking. Once all in the circle have spoken, the discussion opens to crosstalk –follow up questions, requests for clarification, amplification of ideas and extended reflection as part of sense-making. In an exchange of stories listened to and ideas expressed (Alexander 2013), participants create what we will describe as “thick thread” discussions in a later segment.

During each of the three rounds, facilitators also take a turn in responding, choosing when and how to enter the crosstalk. Expected to be acute listeners, facilitators are poised to offer follow-up questions, perspective-taking synthesis, resource-sharing examples and personal reflection and/or provide a “discussion inventory” (Brookfield 2011) so that participants attend to conversational elisions and instances of repressive tolerance, as well as trace developments of new ideas and insights. During breaks between rounds, facilitators will act improvisationally to phrase the next round prompts based on their sense of how the discussion is, or is not, unfolding (Elbow 1983; Wallace 2011).

In our seminar, the learning circle concept is acted as a structuring method for writing forum prompts as well as for posing next queries to deepen/expand, or redirect/extend, a forum discussion. Our hope in designing and teaching the seminar from this perspective was that the community-building nature of learning circles would foster a deep co-inquiry in our online learning space. We planned the overall template of Introduction, Information and Insights resources also to align with the 3-part learning circle model, which facilitators often state in a series of shortened questions: *What?*, *So What?* and *Now What?* In each module's forum, we scripted *What?* questions: What resonates for you – in the reading, relative to your experiences? What bubbles up – as you make connections among the readings or to others' postings? We could post-follow-up *So What?* questions within discussion threads: So what might be a way to leverage these ideas – in response to a problem you posed, in further developing a course in your context? So what might be responses of students, of administrators and of a particular author to what you're proposing? So what might happen if you take this other resources or perspectives or contexts into account? Finally, *Now What?* questions could suggest lines of discussion in response to identified problems: Now what actions or collaborations or alliances or further research might you, or we, need to engage to make the change you, or we, have proposed?

Our decision to build the open online participatory seminar with learning circles in mind is supported by contemporary discussion as a way of learning research. Specifically we drew on Brookfield and Preskill (1999), Brookfield (2011), Dennen (2008) and Pentland (2014) as scholars investigating patterns of effective discussion in multiple learning spaces. Each underscores the importance of short, overlapping, dense interactions via comments generated in response to authentic discussion prompts, with Brookfield providing reminders that discussion works when it builds on reflection or reading, when there is room for silent thought, when we recognize

that discussion is always culturally grounded and when discussion facilitators accept a responsibility to “intervene to structure true, democratic participation. Otherwise a pecking order of contributors will quickly develop and those who hold power outside the discussion will move to dominate the conversation”. Dennen adds that inbuilt practices of metacognitive reflection further support knowledge creation and long-term learning. Pentland adds that discussion practices of high-performing cooperative groups enhance understandings of why or whether to validate or invalidate emergences of consensus and dissent. With Elbow, Wallace, Dennen and Pentland in mind, we recognized our discussion process as improvisation, as we would be asking students to “yes, and” their way into sharing what “bubbled up” in responding to springboard seminar materials, discussion prompts, previous experiences (whether cognitive/affective/embodied, personal/professional/public) and others’ words (Sawyer 2004). Learners took this seriously, most conversations taking tones of expanding and seeking understanding and of engaging cognitive and affective thinking/responding, even with contentious issues.

Climate and Safety to Take Risk

While the learning circle structure provided a heuristic, we turned to the scholarship of multicultural teaching and learning to think through how we would design the whole of the seminar in principle and practice. For this, we drew on Alexander’s (2007) approach to infusing inclusive intercultural learning and teaching across the entirety of a course and Chávez’s six elements of an “empowering multicultural learning environment” (Table 8.1) (and we included an extract of Chávez as a reading early in the seminar as an act of reciprocity, the sixth of Chávez’ elements). Within the classrooms she studied, Chávez notes, “teachers worked with all students to create collective, empowering learning experiences that utilized and honoured multicultural realities within a shared and rigorous academic experience” (2007, p. 278).

We incorporated Chávez’s elements in the design of the seminar in an effort to build on the cocreative and co-productive elements of networked learning approaches. We fostered the safety of the environment through (1) the modified open boundaries of the course; (2) the framing of the discussion prompts and participation, which invited personal sharing and “yes, and” conversations, rather than confrontations; (3) and modelling of inclusive participation in the forums (Ryberg and Sinclair 2016). Following this, risk-taking was also an aspect of our modelling, wherein we wrote content and recorded videos that shared our personal stories and did this in our forum posts as well. In our selections of content, we focused on congruence between a given topic and the authors/speakers we chose (as well as proactivity in the design and selection of materials), assuring that these folks came from a diverse array of backgrounds, as well as national and international contexts. We hoped to encourage multiplicity by drawing on an array of personal narratives, blog posts and varieties of academic writing in the content. We planned to encourage

Table 8.1 Chávez (2007) elements of an empowering multicultural learning environment

Safety	Respect and support for individuals in making room for respectful confrontation and minimization of the effects of hierarchy
Risk taking	Given the broad range of learning preferences, experiential perspectives and needs related to exploring ideas in a classroom, facilitators and participants work together in an “uncomfortable process of bringing issues and ideas out into the realm of respectful dialogue [which] distinguishes an empowering learning community” (p. 281)
Congruence	Course materials are both consistent with expressed aims and reflect realities of the <i>broad range</i> of participants
Proactivity	Proactivity “brings with it a need to utilize a diversity of knowledge, methods, styles, and relationships in various processes” (p. 283)
Multiplicity	Embodied learning, which calls on minds and hearts and physicality and spirit as factors in facilitators’ course design, becomes a factor as facilitators infuse courses with “a multiplicity of ways of knowing, knowledge sources, realities, relationships, and experiences” (p. 283)
Reciprocity	Involves learners and facilitators as <i>stewards</i> developing new knowledge, rather than as standard bearers guarding knowledge traditions, and as <i>allies</i> in the creation of new knowledge and meanings in the interaction of ideas crossing personal, cultural and disciplinary boundaries in cognitive and affective realms

learners to bring their hearts and minds to the work, sharing their own stories and personal experiences, as well as what they have read and seen. Finally, we hoped for participants to become cocreators and co-producers of knowledge as they brought resources they encountered elsewhere into the seminar and reflected on this and our content. The hope was that we would both foster new ideas together and take ideas new and old into practice in our classrooms.

Through this application of Chávez in the design of the seminar, our intention was to promote the connective possibilities of the seminar: of participants to facilitators, participants to each other, participants to content within the seminar and participants and facilitators alike to content outside of the immediate context. Additionally, we hoped to involve participants not only in connecting knowledge and theory in new ways but to build a reciprocal relationship between theory, discussion, co-production of knowledge and practice. This dialogue between theory and practice would ideally also be a dialogue between an array of possibilities and the realities of local contexts: positionality, career status, field specialties and institutional types (Beaty et al. 2010).

Also, as we planned, we knew that the roles each of us would take in the seminar would be based on the practices conveyed in Chávez’ matrix. At Module 2 we realized that, though we jointly created, commissioned and/or selected the resources that spurred initial conversation, we were taking on different instructional roles. Ilene often read forum posts through Brookfield’s (1998) four lenses of critically reflective teaching (lenses of our own autobiographies as learners, of learners’ eyes on the seminar, of peers’ observations of our teaching and of the pedagogical literature) as part of providing responses to queries, and in reflecting critically on her own experiences. Alex, with fewer years of experience teaching, often came with his

own curiosities and questions that prodded conversation, much like other participants. While we ultimately assigned grades and issued badges, learners provided feedback on each other's work, which they drew on in revising *and* in developing self-assessments using sample instruments. The exchange of feedback as well as the mindful reviewing of it as part of a revision process further fostered a sense of networked peer learning collaboration (Steeple et al. 2002). Rather than prioritizing a traditional student/teacher relationship, this approach joined instructors and participants together as learners engaged in feedback and with multiple roles in assessment loops. Rather than *illuminating the way* or *getting out of the way* (Gómez 2008), we conceptualized an in-between space that would make it possible for us to find *ways into* participating by listening to what bubbled up in us, by lurking within the densely voiced forums, by reflecting on questions that wrangled into place through various threads and by discerning why, when and where to enter the interchange.

Data Digging with Design in Mind

In this section, we present data gathered on the ways our design operated in practice. These data are presented in four sections. The first three are data gathered during the first round of the seminar, which took place in 2015: (1) an examination of the dynamics of the discussion forums that demonstrates the deepening networks of participation as the seminar progressed, (2) feedback from participants on their experiences of the seminar, and (3) an exploration of the experiences of “lurers” – those participants who did not fully participate in badge activities but were present in the seminar nevertheless (Milligan et al. 2013). Though by no means conclusive, these data offer a snapshot of some of the results of our design practices. The fourth section, entitled *Learning in the Redesign*, (4) examines the changes made based on data from the first round of the seminar and the impacts of these changes on the second run of the seminar.

Discussion Forum Graph Analysis

These modes of instructor participation are evident when examining the three graph analysis diagrams (see Fig. 8.2) capturing some discussion dynamics as the seminar progressed. Though the instructors never disappear as nodes within the conversation, participants become more central, with the participants' responses building “thick thread” discussions in patterns of more dense engagement with each other. One participant describes their experience of the changes in discussion over time:

Looking back at my earliest posts [...] I wasn't searching for big ideas; I was looking for minor suggestions and affirmations. In some way, I suspect I'd been infected by the very same apathy and disinterest that I was attempting to avoid. I was convinced that the Big

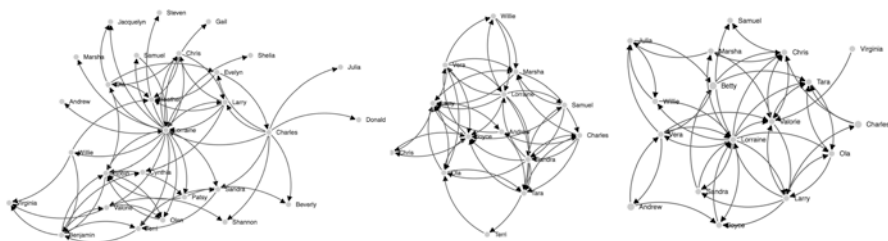


Fig. 8.2 Graph analysis for Welcome, Module 2 and Module 5 discussion forums

Problem (MILT in STEM fields) wouldn't really have any Big Answers. [...] Rather than engaging only in "safe" topics (related specifically to STEM fields or on subjects that I felt experienced in) I began to seek out discussions from people in vastly different fields. I started to grasp onto threads that were less familiar to me and ask myself "what about that? How could I address this in my classroom?" [...] I started to engage more in "yes, and" conversation rather than simply stating my thoughts in essay form. I listened more. (Larry, physics)

In addition to a deeper space for listening, a space for critical, grounded engagement of the topics evolved. The first instance marking potential for such discussions emerges in the *Welcome Module* forum where two threads break from the pattern of participants taking turns to introduce themselves. This forum includes the largest number of "starter" threads with 29 participants offering posts in response to a "What's 'bubbling up' for you as participants drawn to this seminar?" prompt; of those introductions, nearly all featured subject lines with variations of *hello* and *hi*. Overall, this forum functions as a populating of the person-to-person network(ing) to be built. The two bolder subject lines – "Hi! (and MILT in science)" and "Hello there!" – are the only two with double digit exchanges within the thread, with 12 and 10, respectively. With the graph analysis clearly mapping out the thickness of these interactions, the qualitative analysis reveals these entries as introducing discussion and epistemological threads that will recur in the seminar – STEM content as not being "culturally 'neutral'" and collectively pushing against "single-story" narratives that often drive disciplinary narratives. While Heather (science) and Robin (social science), who composed the anchor entries in these threads, each carried on in the seminar as learners, those who wrote in response to these initial posts would continue as active participants in discussion forums, their names often linked in the graph analysis to more central nodes.

Our *Module 2* featured a set of short videos through which university instructors, advisors and staff shared components of their MILT philosophies, and few of the discussion forum posts explicitly referred to the speakers or their ideas. Rather, the nine thick discussion threads mainly revolved around various MILT principles that required teachers to engage in "embracing contraries" (Elbow 1987), which had been the focus of the meta-essay we composed as a secondary text for the module. Elbow posits that good teaching is a challenge specifically because it requires instructors to embrace these contraries: obligations to students, to learning *and* to knowledge to society. Our prompt invited participants to consider how MILT

intersected with the contraries in shaping their own – and their disciplines’ – principles and practices, whether about classroom climate, content or creating assessments. The graph analysis for Module 2 maps out five primary nodes that gained much multidisciplinary traffic in exploring intersections of loyalties to students and to knowledge and intersections among students’ and teachers’ roles and responsibilities in creating MILT spaces and knowledge. In this one-to-many, many-to-one networking the two-part theme can also be posed via these two questions: How might teachers and learners bring their “whole selves” to learning? How might we shift teaching and learning principles and practices within disciplines so that the embracing of contraries also embraces MILT?

In *Module 5*, a discussion forum thread critical of a reading we shared (on critical thinking, no less) became a major topic of conversation. Participants were open in their challenges to and extensions of the reading, testing it against their experiences as students and teachers. Further, they shared (more even than in earlier modules) their own resources on the topic, deepening the questions and conversation. In this module, the people-to-resources networking took on its deepest and broadest connections. Finally, across the seminar’s six major discussion modules, the seminar evolved into a networked learning space where participants and instructors had the opportunity to share, teach and learn—all grounded in participants’ experiences.

Participant Feedback Survey Items

One question in an early-seminar survey invited participants to share perceptions about discussion as a way of learning, asking, “When you participate in class discussions, what tends to get you to ‘step forward’ into the conversation?” With word cloud visualizations and thematic analysis, we devised a paraphrase characterizing participant responses, which overwhelmingly focused on discussions in the teaching-learning context: *We will appreciate participants’ learning and teaching experiences, ideas and questions in conversation.*

At this point, the majority of participants would have previously engaged in face-to-face discussions with multidisciplinary colleagues (typically through earlier participation in “Teaching in Higher Education”, the core Preparing Future Faculty course) and would have just read the welcome module’s “Characteristics of a Participatory Seminar” meta-essay, which concluded by listing from Dennen (2008) and Pentland (2014) characteristics central to motivating “discussion for learning” in an online environment: inviting dense interactions, diversity of ideas and meta-cognitive reflection. By the end of the seminar, regularly engaged participants took part in up to six forum and four badge discussions (totalling some 9570 views among ~30 regularly active learner/lurner participants). The six forum discussions, as we’ve noted above, featured “thick threads” – an average of 9 discussion threads (ranging from 6 to 11) per forum that were sustained by multiple participants stepping forward in multiple ways: extending ideas, adding experiential observations, offering resource, proposing a synthesis of ideas, posing astute questions, linking to

would hope that after one semester, my students would be much different, and improved, learners at the postsecondary level as well. In turn, they may go on to become effective instructors themselves, thereby broadening my sphere of influence. (Tara, education)

Another participant remarked on their deepening engagement as linked to two invitations to participants: to build a climate in which it is possible to take learning risks (Chávez 2007) by making use of “yes, and...” discussion tactics (Sawyer 2004):

From this deeper engagement, some new creative thoughts began to develop: thoughts on making safe spaces, thoughts on sharing resources with students, thoughts on new methods of group discussion, thoughts on even developing a curriculum or book on inclusive science history. These thoughts were shaped and guided by my discussion partners and broke me out of my pattern of assumptions. I realized that there was a much broader range of issues to be addressed than even the ones that I had felt were under-valued in my own department. The encouragement and engagement of my colleagues led me down these paths, and I’m still finding others. (Larry, physics)

In the official SRTs (student ratings of teaching), one participant’s response to an open-ended question – “It was clear that [Ilene and Alex] were really wanting an honest discussion, not just looking for the ‘right answer.’” – reflects our overall sense that we met our goal of creating an online community climate. The selection of course materials, crafting of springboard discussion prompts and our own reflectively honest responding within the forums did invite participants to step forward, to stretch to create the bulk of content by seeking to learn more with and because of one another.

As the centrepiece of our seminar, module and badge forums integrated cognitive and affective, personal and professional, learner and teacher, public and personal dimensions of learning. In coding forum data, we are gaining a greater sense of “how” the participatory foundations worked for those who wrote their presence into the discussions. In preparing for the Fall 2016 seminar, we will be setting up a focus group to learn more about the role the online discussions played within small clusters of student affairs/advising learners who were active readers within the seminar but then moved into personalized face-to-face discussions beyond the seminar.

That participants quickly developed “thick thread”/“yes, and...” discussion patterns remain heartening as we review feedback data and review quantitative participation data to gain an overall view of discussions. This supports our sense that the seminar supported people-people networked learning within its forums. In addition, preliminary reviews of late modules (on dialogic discussion and course design) point to ways that participants in general carried the conversational substance and practices in their daily teaching learning lives.

Learning from the Lurers

Given our intentions to design a seminar that would serve enrolled students, badge-seekers and “lurking learners” – those we referred to as *lurers* – we made a specific effort to understand the experiences of this latter group. By examining Moodle

access logs and participation records, as well as through interviews and other correspondence with lurners, we were able to develop a picture of the ways lurners participated.

The seminar ended with a spectrum of lurners who participated in ways we predicted as well as in ways we did not predict. We had anticipated that lurners might access resources independently and read forum posts. Though we invited their participation, even offering some ways to mark a reading presence (e.g. a discussion comment that might simply state *yes, great point, new idea for me* or *listening in on this conversation was___*), we assumed those adopting lurner roles would not overtly participate in the forums and would likely not participate by seeking badges. However, some lurners did end up taking part in each of these areas.

The majority of lurners did not actively contribute to forums or badge work. They accessed resources and occasionally read forum posts. When interviewed, one such participant shared that she gathered a small group of student affairs professionals at her local university as a “reading group”. For each module, this person would download the available resources and share them with group members. Group members would then split the downloaded resources and read them prior to a group meeting. At the group meeting, they would share what they had learned and discuss these readings in the context of their student affairs work. They did this for every module, though they never posted in the forums. When interviewed a year later, this participant shared that group members were continuing to use these resources to design their work with students. Though we expected – and respected – the desires of some to work in these ways, this particular approach made us curious about how to invite this kind of participant to contribute something to the seminar, given the time and energy they were spending thinking about it and the potential value of such contributions to other participants. During the interview, this particular participant suggested creating local meet-up events with specific invitations to those accessing resources but not regularly contributing.

Another group of lurners accessed some of the forums as readers of course materials discussion posts according to the LMS logs and sometimes “popped in” when they were particularly interested in a conversation or set of resources, but otherwise tended to download and read rather than directly engage. When they did post in forums, they were responded to by other more regular participants in the seminar. There were, as is often expected of seminar of this type, several who participated in the early modules and dropped away completely during later modules.

A few lurners did participate in badge activities. One completed work to earn all of the badges, while participating sporadically and unevenly in the regular forum activities. Yet another participant read and responded to the public badge activities of others, but did not actually complete the badges herself. These lurners invested in the seminar, presumably, during parts that most interested them.

Learning in the Redesign

These data led to several changes in the second offering of the seminar, in process at the time of this Fall 2016 writing. This included changing the number and order of modules to (1) better align resources with discussion focuses, (2) change timing across modules in an effort to reduce bottlenecks in workload toward the end of the semester and (3) make content changes relevant to current events. We describe these changes next and discuss their impacts on the course thus far.

Our Spring 2015 seminar had included a penultimate Module 4 titled “When Do Words Fail Us?” with a focus on undergraduate and graduate classroom-based scenarios featuring “flash point” moments raising critical questions beyond the specifics of the individual scenario that would engage seminar participants in critical reflection and discussion regarding interpersonal, cross-diversity, teacher-student or student-student interactions played out in higher education beyond the particular fields/units/disciplines represented in the scenarios. Responses to these scenarios were rich, reflective and detailed across 67 posts in 7 discussion threads. In reviewing the course discussion logs, we found that the points raised actually overlapped with – and therefore drained energy from – what we had intended as the focus for our Module 5 discussion, which was meant to focus on ways to and why to foster dialogic discussions as part of formal and informal discussions in multiple learning spaces. In Module 5, the five threads focusing on the intended discussion were overshadowed by one thread taking on a reading focused on critical thinking. With 23 posts in the critical thinking thread, the other 5 posts in that forum garnered an average of 6 responses, and the proposed what and why of learning space discussions faded away.

When we opened the Fall 2016 seminar, we removed the old Module 4, incorporating its focus on repressive tolerance into other modules, drew on ideas from the scenarios as part of responding to posts in our Learning and Learners module and reorganized the closing Module 5 with new resources and prompts for the focus on dialogic discussions.

Based on data we reviewed from round one of the seminar, feedback from learners, review of Moodle activity logs and analysis of high- and low-engagement discussion threads, we made modifications that would cut one module and would wrap the seminar with a welcoming section to foster early personalized introductions and a closing section where participants could all reflect on “take-away” understandings, and we could post a document linking to the “for future use” resources noted across the seminar.

The following represents our planned line-up:

0. Seminar Opening: Welcome
1. Who In the World Are We?
2. What is MILT? / Badge 1 – Philosophy Statement
3. Why Begin with Learning and Learners? / Badge 2 – Assignment Design

4. How Do Discussions Become Dialogic? / Badge 3 – Discussion Reflection
5. Where do MILT and Course Design Align? / Badge 4 – Course Design
0. Seminar Closing: What's Next?

Two local learning environment (VLE) infrastructure challenges impacted this second offering of the seminar: one complicated university course registration access for those who wished to enrol for course credit and the second complicated the issuing and activation of guest accounts for those who registered as professional development learners and lurners. Thus, the second round had fewer registrants (45) than the first round (70). Discussion threads this semester remained deep, but there was less overall participation. In each offering of the seminar, conversation has primarily been driven by the ongoing presences of credit earners, rather than by professional development participants and lurners. We wonder whether greater participation in the first round leads to a virtuous cycle, with more lurners finding spaces of interest to enter the conversation when more and expansive conversations were taking place. We wonder, further, whether the combination of the resulting later start for the seminar with the final months of the 2016 US presidential campaign and election impacted seminar participation. We know from personal communication and personal experience that – for this seminar cohort, composed of people engaged already as inclusive intercultural learners and teachers – the social, political and psychological dimensions of the campaign were wearing; commitments to community organizing are even more pressing; and work to address public rhetoric normalizing hate-speech and repressive tolerance regarding racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and homophobia was unceasing.

Within the registration number of 45 participants, analysis of Moodle logs shows 7 persons as never logging into the platform, 17 persons as occasional visitors, 10 as regular lurners and a further 9 as core participants. The *occasional visitor* group is composed primarily of professional development participants who sometimes posted and responded to others in discussion forums and sometimes perused seminar resources; overall, these participants have logged this “sometimes” pattern of activity for three of the six modules. The *regular lurners* group includes mainly postdoctoral fellows and graduate students who entered the seminar site regularly, primarily to interact with course resources (ranging from 4 to 14 interactions per module, either to review materials or view discussions), and posting in either a discussion or badge forum two or three times. The *core participants* group includes, along with the seven credit-enrolled participants, two professional development participants, Elena and Greta, each full-time lecturers with more than 15 years of classroom experience who also hold department leadership roles. Overall, these two core participants interact with each module – through accessing module resources; accessing, posting and responding in forum discussions; and contributing in varying ways across the badge activity forums. Moodle activity data show Elena and Greta accessing each module approximately 18 times, generally between Sunday and Tuesday. In personal communication Elena has contacted Ilene twice with regard to sharing course materials with others in her department, and once regarding a larger

curriculum development for a course shared among multiple instructors. Greta has also spoken with Ilene about her engagement with the seminar, summing up ideas from those conversations within an email message:

I committed to lurning in OOPs this fall with a goal to do just slightly more than lurn but hoping I would at least keep up enough to do some lurning. I found after the first module that with relatively little investment (i.e., less than an hour) I was getting huge pay-offs. Within just one reading or video I had huge “ah-ha” moments..., or I just had totally new revelations on how I could change my courses to be more accessible and inclusive.

I’ve also found the course really approachable. At no point have I felt like I’ve been teaching “all wrong” and harming my students with my “one story” version of [my social science discipline] (which makes me squirm!!). I’ve felt accepted for my current knowledge and skill level and challenged and supported to take my work a step further, and a step further. I have felt a lot of support and seen great idea-sharing. I have sometimes wanted to dig a bit deeper on issues and wished the online discussions had gone deeper. But, this is honestly a good thing as I cannot commit to having the ability to get into longer, sustained and deep conversations at this point.

As we write, the combination of contextual factors prompted us to accept that this would not become a semester to “undo” the seminar-ending bottleneck in badge activity forums and that we would need to switch the order for our final two modules so that the individual reflection and collective analysis of discussion would come at close the seminar. The following reflects our amended line-up, with bold text indicating a change in order and crossed out text indicating a dropped module:

0. Seminar Opening: Welcome
1. Who In the World Are We?
2. What is MILT? / Badge 1 – Philosophy Statement
3. Why Begin with Learning and Learners?/Badge 2 – Assignment Design
4. **Where do MILT and Course Design Align?/Badge 3 – Course Design**
5. **How Do Discussions Become Dialogic?/Badge 4 – Discussion Reflection**
0. ~~Seminar Closing: What’s Next?~~

In moving the “Where do MILT and Course Design Align?” to precede the “How Do Discussions Become Dialogic?” module, our adjusted aim was to provide participants with learning circle space to address the impact of the highly charged US presidential campaign on personal and pedagogical work this semester, to dig a little deeper (as Greta noted) and to join together in understanding ways the cultural political context may impact pedagogical planning for learning spaces in the coming semesters.

From the start, our seminar planning involved acts of curating, collating and considering resources to enact a course design that would address these gaps in inclusive intercultural learning and teaching by supporting aims we’ve noted at the start of this paper. The seminar data are helping us to understand how we did engage new and experienced university teachers and staff in this area of academic professional development. We are beginning to see where we missed opportunities to strengthen people-material connections, how we might make bridges with lurners and how we make room for large-scale and ongoing world and local events that impact participants’ thinking and acting as MILT practitioners.

Looking Forward

During the Fall 2016 iteration of this seminar, Ilene taught a second online seminar in the Preparing Future Faculty curriculum, “Teaching for Learning.” This seminar enrolls students whose financial and timing budgets cannot accommodate the in-person PFF teaching course; in redesigning this other online course, Ilene has applied the learning circle practices to structuring and scripting forum discussions and prompts and has infused inclusive intercultural resources into a course structure organized around episodes in a teaching semester. On average, this second seminar enrolls 20–25 graduate students whose forum interactions have been more often monologic than dialogic. Based on a first comparison of current and archived discussion records for this online course, the shift to a learning circle approach has enhanced participation with more learners responding to other learners to extend conversations, expand upon ideas and make connections among already posted threads.

As we plan for Fall 2017, our third iteration of this seminar, our clear understandings about the seminar are these: With things already in place for registration and VLE platform access, we can make good use of multiple networks to share what we and our participants have learned as part of recruiting new seminar participants; further, based on what we have learned from the inclusive intercultural seminar and the teaching for learning course, we will finalize a seminar timeline in consultation with past participants. In the proposed reorganization, we will continue to prioritize learning circles as a structuring method: Modules 0, 1 and 2 address the *What?* of our seminar, with Modules 3 and 4 encompassing the *So What (do you make of all this)?* query, and Module 5 plus Seminar Closing making space to explore *Now What?* Further, we will reconfigure the activities, staggering and consolidating them, so that all enrolled participants complete the philosophy and discussion activities while choosing – based on personal interests and teaching contexts – whether to complete an assignment or course design activity. Finally, we will move from issuing badges as micro-credentials to providing personalized letters to recognize individual participants’ contributions to and professional development within the seminar. The following represents the new scheme:

0. Seminar Opening: Welcome
1. Who In the World Are We?
2. What is MILT?/Activity 1 – Philosophy Statement
3. Why Begin with Learning and Learners?
4. Where do MILT and Course Design Align?/Activity 2 – Assignment or Course Design
5. How Do Discussions Become Dialogic?
0. Seminar Closing: What’s Next?/Activity 3 – Discussion Reflection

In many ways, the US higher education context acted as the core problem launching our research and subsequent course development. Here, professional development linked to teaching and learning is almost entirely optional and then typically

addressed through one-shot, hour-long workshops open to all instructors who can be on campus for the sessions, or via departmental mentoring programs for new teaching assistants (doctoral students or postgraduate researchers), or within a 2-day orientation program for new instructors (typically tenure-track instructors with teaching, research, advising and service requirements). Some universities support ongoing teaching centre programming such as semester- or year-long learning communities organized around career stages or emergent instructional practices (flipped classrooms, serial teaching, teaching across difference), monthly open-invitation journal club gatherings, regular social media posting via a centre-generated blog or social media account and course- or certificate-based postgraduate/postdoctoral teaching professional development programming. As an example of the latter option, the University of Minnesota offers both a Preparing Future Faculty Program (which sponsors our seminar alongside three other course offerings) and a Teaching Assistant Professional Development program that include workshops and observations of teaching. A further problem across these offerings is that multicultural, intercultural and inclusive teaching is typically a “problem” to be addressed rather than an integral element of learning and teaching infused across workshops (Connolly et al. 2016).

We are also working with colleagues from the Center for Educational Innovation and the Provost’s Faculty and Academic Affairs office to link the seminar to newly formalized professional development programming now open to new faculty and to advanced-standing graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. In these development program schemes, new faculties who completed six professional development sessions from the list of offerings are recognized with a letter (copied to unit chairs and college deans) and reception; and future faculty who will complete eight teaching-related sessions across a matrix of three categories will receive a letter outlining their specific teaching professional development achievements. In linking the seminar to these programs, those engaged in either professional development program will be able to earn one-half of program requirements. The linking should benefit seminar discussion forums and make possible more than one-off professional development engagement related to inclusion.

As our learners showed us, there is an interest in professional development opportunities of this type. Across the seminars, some learners used the modules to fuel work place professional development conversations. This demonstrated the ways open participation and open access to resources made it possible to organize learning experiences that generally did not make it back to the seminar forum discussions. Our group of student affairs professionals serves as a good example. They organized a study group, used the resources and discussion to fuel conversations and applied the content and thinking directly to their professional development in student affairs. Our hope – that openly talking about learners and learning would remove the shaming that often occurs with the term “lurker” – seems to have created a role for participants in the course that allowed them to take what they wanted and participate when it was useful for them. We see this as a site for future experimentation in networked learning practice, starting with the question: Can we give name to possible forms of participation, legitimize them and, by so doing, invite a more

diverse group to participate in our courses, in more diverse ways? While the example group above did not directly contribute back to the discussion forums of the course, their conversations with us at the close of the course influenced the design of the second iteration. Other learners dipped into the forums in the middle or end of the course and added new perspective. Still others downloaded the content and read the discussion forums, but never contributed directly back to the course. One goal as we design future iterations is to further consider ways to encourage some form of contribution to integrate the ideas of those choosing to be lurkers.

Our experience with this course contributes to a belief that it is important to offer conscious choices of how to participate in the course. As detailed earlier, we invited participants to reflect at the beginning on how they have participated in similar past experiences, how they wanted to participate in this one and what kind of participant they might be. Being a learner was a legitimated choice about how to participate. In our course evaluations and conversations with others, we are hoping to uncover other ways that folks might want to participate. Whether we create specific titles or roles for these different modes of participation, we imagine that learning more about them will increase our ability to tailor the course to diverse audiences.

This paper detailed the conceptualization, design, ongoing development and outcomes of an open online participatory seminar designed with the intention of involving participants in the co-production of knowledge and class resources to address inclusive intercultural learning and teaching in higher education contexts. Our seminar work has involved acts of curating, collating and considering resources to design a seminar that would support aims we've noted throughout this paper. The seminar data are helping us to understand how we did engage new and experienced university teachers and staff in inclusive intercultural academic professional development. We are beginning to see where we missed opportunities to strengthen people-material connections, how we might make bridges with learners and how we make room for world and local events that impact participants' thinking about and acting in learning spaces. As the course moves to its third iteration, we anticipate these learnings will translate into a deepening of the pedagogy and content of the course, as well as to the design of other professional development teaching- and learning-related seminars of this nature.

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