

Keep Changing – Teaching and Learning

Before joining SFU's graduate program in Education, my classroom teaching style was lectured-based accompanying several interactive learning activities. At that time, I thought lectured-based teaching with several interactive learning activities would be good enough to facilitate 'learning' and 'acquisition of knowledge'.

However, having worked with several leading educators within the Faculty of Education at SFU, my conception of teaching and learning has been transformed.

What is learning? The very first question that instructors often ask during the first-year graduate education courses. Now, learning is a meaning making, self-motivated, reflective, transformative, recursive process. Therefore, an educator's responsibility not only includes passing content-area knowledge to students but also giving opportunities to the students, so that they can reflect on the knowledge they acquire and make a meaningful connection on their own.

Developing Students' Critical Mindsets and Their Strength: A Decolonized Approach

Recently, one of my primary goals in the classroom has been creating an open but critical dialogue between myself and the students, giving them opportunities to critically evaluate the content they receive. Facilitating students' critical mindsets is also part of the decolonized initiative that modern educators have tried to achieve nowadays.

In training student teachers, I adopt the traditional three-stage PPP language teaching model in my classroom: Presentation, Practice and Production. Especially, during the practice stage, I invite students to critically evaluate what has been presented to them. I present a controversial scenario and facilitate discussions that will help them to understand the transformative nature of language education. For example, when I taught EDUC 468 that prepared student teachers in teaching EAL students (Sociocultural Perspectives on Language, Cognitive Development and EAL Instruction), I invited them to research recent news and role-play several real controversial scenarios based on the topics of racism, colonialization, and multilingualism. Through combinations of instructor-led and student-led critical discussions and conversations, these student teachers have understood that previous language teaching theories were situated in colonial perspective. Assimilation and reproduction were the main purposes of education in the past. In this way, I believe that these student teachers will start to make a meaningful, transformative change in their teaching practice.

Besides, I value learning, and I view learning in a more innovative way. I want the knowledge that I pass to students can retain over their academic journey. This is the reason why I am keen to work as a writing consultant at writing centre. As a writing consultant, not only do I read the essays that students bring to me, but I also invite them to self-reflect on their strengths and merits. I help them re-discover their strengths in writing, so that they can use their strengths in identifying problems on their own. For

example, a student booked my consultation and self-disclosed that she's an EAL multilingual student. She told me that her paper contained so many mistakes which she could not figure out what to do. Instead of going over the entire essay with her, I skimmed through her essay and realized that one of her issues was subject-verb agreement. Then, I gave a short subject-verb agreement grammatical test to her; in the end, she was able to pass the test without any problems, implying that she indeed had a strong metalinguistic knowledge. Consequently, I invited her to use her strong metalinguistic skill to self-edit her essay on her own. Through this scenario, my teaching was not linear, yet teaching needs to encompass some sort of 'transfer of learning' by viewing a student's strength instead of their deficit.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

I am committed to equity, diversity, inclusion and the promotion of a respectful and collegial learning and working environment. My classes at SFU are culturally diverse, and I work with people from many backgrounds in Vancouver, British Columbia, a highly diversified multicultural city on the west coast of Canada. Recently, When I worked with Dr. Robyn Ilten-Gee, she incorporated First Peoples' Principles of Learning in teaching Educational Psychology. In my tutorials, I adopted my materials and approached 'learning' from the indigenous perspective, helping students to critically evaluate the current state of Educational Psychology and how Indigenous Knowledge has been excluded and ignored nowadays. In addition, for students with disabilities, I communicated with the Centre for Accessible Learning and the course instructor at SFU about how I should support them. For example, one of my students with a declared disability needed additional time to finish the exam. When a course assignment required this student to engage in classroom activities, I served as the peer by to grant time needed while other students kept pace.

Conclusion – An Era of Change

Finally, I support meaningful change that informs social justice in society, and I advocate personal voices in teaching and learning environments. Ever since the pandemic began, many pedagogical views have started to change. Pedagogy that includes multiple perspectives during this time has continued to be prioritized and advanced in educational praxis. Having a critical and open mindset has allowed me to adapt to the rapidly changing teaching and learning environment.

I often ask myself: In what ways has my teaching style been influenced by the colonial perspective? How can I decolonize my teaching? How can I make my classes a better place for everybody to learn? What type of assessment method that I can use to evaluate performance without imposing any biases? How can I support students in this era of change through innovative technology?

These beliefs will eventually become parts of me and help make me a more productive, more perceptive teacher, scholar and person.