

Don't waste your time teaching in an on-line environment

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I address one question asked by teachers who teach online—"How can I build community among my learners in my class?" This paper provides an answer; in fact, it provides ten possible answers, in the form of ten models for teachers to use to build community in on-line courses. Each model has been tried and tested over ten years of post-secondary experience in designing and teaching twenty-nine online courses at four institutions in Canada. Community can be built in online courses.

Each model offers ten unique approaches regarding how to develop community among learners and teachers in a course. The tacit notion hidden within and throughout each model is that courses that develop community and good pedagogic relationships among learners and teachers are those that are intentionally designed to do so. Each model described in this paper includes a unique structure of ideas, a rational for the model's use and some strong theoretical support. Each model is a particular expression of the general concept of constructivism—that thinking is socially constructed, and knowledge a social construction. When intentionally designed to do so, an online class activity of socially constructing some project or collaborating to design a scenario can lead to the development of sound pedagogical relationships. The premise in this paper is that community development in online courses must be designed for and intentionally built into in the architecture of a course.

Community is a particular way of being in the world that comes about through right relationships; when we are in the world in particular ways we bring about right relationships, and bring about community. When power is exercised so as to bring about psychological control over a learner, right relationships are not brought about. When forgiveness for a mistake is asked for by a teacher, and in turn offered by an offended student, a right relationship is brought about. As learners in a course recognize a teacher's request for forgiveness, community develops. Particular ways of being in the world (e.g. offering and receiving forgiveness, dignifying each person's answers, truth telling to name a few) and many other right and good attributes in both teacher and learner are created in healthy community and in turn create healthy community, one that comes to be characterized by good pedagogic relationships. Community is essentially dialectical, a verb whose essence is right relationships. Community is sustained by particular attributes and not others. This conceptualization of community, while subtle, is the important basis for this paper and my presentation of the ten models for online course design and teaching.

This paper draws from anthropology, psychology and sociology—how theorists in each discipline propose that community is best developed and nurtured. The paper draws heavily from best practices in education in North America. The ideas within each model are also drawn from my analyses of student feedback of twenty nine course evaluations .Finally, the evidence this book draws from includes learning theory and what is known today about how people learn in community and through relationships.

The instructional designer with limited teaching experience may need to suspend disbelief regarding a model, to interrogate the methodology within each model until they try and test it in the heat of instructional battle. Each model will ring true for the experienced educator

Both the experienced educator and experienced designer of instruction will be able to give that “experiential nod” to what is presented in each model, and know why each model as proposed can develop community among learners. Experienced teachers know not to waste time teaching. They will recognise that each model offers much promise for building community among learners and teachers in on-line courses.

Key Words: Community, pedagogic relationships, model, on-line environment, program, methodology

INTRODUCTION

Each model presented in this paper includes at least one core idea taken from the discipline of psychology. Each idea was chosen because it is supported in the social psychology literature. Each idea contributes something essential to each model and effective teaching and learning in an online environment generally, and to the formation and nurturance of relationships specifically in an online environment. For example, one idea to be developed in this paper is that community is built when people gather around a great idea (Palmer, 1998). Despite claims to the contrary, genuinely positive and empowering relationships can be built in an online environment, especially when teacher and students ‘gather around’ a great idea, an idea that ‘lives in the world’ and has implications for real problems, real questions and real issues. The psychological implication (Weiner, 1986) is that learners are most likely to engage in a task when there is a 50/50 chance of success and learners have a subjective sense of the importance of the topic, and acknowledge the significance of the investigation. Adult learners are motivated by significant inquiry into real issues, ones that live somewhere in their real world. For example, in a graduate level learning theory course at the University of Calgary, school leaders identify one real issue to be meaningful professional development for their teachers. They value highly the opportunity to inquire into and develop relevant professional development programs for their teachers. In addition, school leaders comment regularly regarding the value of feedback from other school leaders in the course. Many school leaders claim that the course highlight was the learning activity of inquiring into and developing a meaningful and relevant teacher development program for eventual use in a school. Interestingly enough course evaluation comments refer directly to the value of the online activities (e.g. conversations, feedback given and received) of gathering around this great idea of teacher development.

Each model includes at least one core idea taken from the field of learning theory. For example, one important idea for course designers, one often neglected in face to face learning environments, is that the more cognitively active a learner immediately before, during and closely following a teaching activity, the more likely it is that some form of understanding can occur, provided other conditions are in place. Despite the common criticism of online courses, that they are no more than an expensive and elaborate system of brokering in abstractions, strategic and intentional course designers can build courses in which learners are cognitively active. For example, a course can include a component or activity in which students write their first response to readings, responses that are affective (what idea in the reading most engaged your interest) to be followed by a week’s end response regarding the same initial response, though and after reflection on some research, best practices or concept

Each model includes at least one indicator of effective teaching, taken from the research on effective teaching and learning. For example, reciprocity and cooperation when established

among students (Chickering and Gamson, 1991) is one indicator of effective teaching. The online environment offers opportunities for reciprocity and cooperation not always afforded in face to face formats, because ‘time’ is more favourable attribute for doing so in an online environment.

This paper is intended for educators who see themselves as architects of learning experiences in courses that are in whole or in part intended for an online learning environment.

MODEL 1: TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION IN ONLINE COURSES

Time Matters

Time is important need for a learner to engage meaningfully in a teacher’s designed learning activities. Time is the online environment’s greatest inherent advantage. Time matters for learners who want to develop deep and personally meaningful understanding of an idea or insight into a concept. Time matters when it comes to learning. A teacher’s normal interest for learners to have enough time to engage meaningfully with information is beautifully served in online environments, particularly when transmission of information is the goal of the teacher. The learner’s interest in time, to engage meaningfully with any transmitted information (e.g. text, pictures, video), is also served efficaciously in on-line learning environments.

Transmission is the presentation of content (information) to learners. Implicit in this perspective is that there exists a stable body of knowledge that can be ‘accurately and efficiently’ (Apps, p. 40) delivered to learners. The emphases are on the teacher and the content to be transmitted, and the efficiency of the teacher as an “architect” of learning experiences. What is uniquely afforded to both teacher and learner in transmission based design of online courses, because time serves the best interests of both teacher and learner, is the opportunity to develop deep, meaningful and pedagogically sound relationships.

Relationships

Communication is best understood as a transactional activity between and among individuals. Learning is primarily transactional, in which relationships exist in overlapping and yet different settings. Unlike linear models of communication (as in a telephone conversation or lecture in a live classroom), transactional models presume that immediate encoding is neither reality nor even necessarily desirable; processing time is expected (Adler et al, 2008). Context is important, as is simultaneous processing time (as opposed to a back and forth linear based way of thinking about communication). Relationships are active, constantly in development, never finished and contribute to the transactions that go on in the online environment (Adler et al, 2008). Transmission of information face to face can be transactional, but often isn’t. In an online environment it can readily be so; online learning environments are uniquely suited to transactional based relationships.

Learning Theory and Application

There is general agreement among cognitive psychologists that multiple cognitive processes exist before, during and closely after the time a learner draws inferences from written and online text (Ashcraft et al 1976). For example, in the psycholinguistic guessing game

called reading, a learner will make predictions, use a number of self-regulatory strategies to read for comprehension.

A reader would make meaning of this paragraph by asking if the words used mean the same as they have come to understand them. They will likely unpack the meaning of a word used in the section (perhaps the word “cognitive”) as well as pour meaning into that word, all somewhat simultaneously in that workroom of their mind sometimes referred to as the active or working memory. In brief, online learning environments provide learners with a decided cognitive advantage- time to deploy a variety of reading strategies and making personal meaning regarding information, all deployed carefully in the workroom of their minds.

The same advantages are not always afforded to learners in face to face learning environments. Better thinking, reading and problem solving are possible in online environments, largely because the online environment permits good thinking. The environment shifts the learning emphasis from simultaneous consideration of lots of information (in face to face classrooms) to self-regulation of cognitive processes such as inference making, abstracting and elaborating on information, each cognitive activity known to enhance long term memory (J.R. Anderson, 1995). Good thinking in courses is always a good idea.

The cognitive based learning advantageous are overwhelmingly in favour of online learning environments. Here are just a few more possible advantages. First, inference makers in an online environment can use a number of well known comprehending references when drawing inferences (Adler et al 2008). They can use syntactical and semantic cues (e.g. gendered pronoun use direct us to what we need to retrieve into our active memory); retrieve information that needs to be kept in active memory, made available for the connection-making, or inference generating that must occur; and, regulate how meaning is integrated (knowing that the masculine use of a pronoun does not preclude the feminine). Online transmission of text, or information, permits more self-regulation of inference making, in large part because time and opportunity exist for self-regulated ‘inference and reference making’ of text messages. Ironically, instead of being inherently advantageous for maximizing cognition, face to face teaching environments should, instead, simulate the advantages of online learning, to provide adequate time to process and organize information using these and many more cognitive processes. Unfortunately many face to face teaching environments do not allow for adequate enough cognitive processing time and learners simply do not learn much in these “cover the material efficiently” types of teaching environments; information, in face to face learning environments, almost always flows like a fast moving river under the bridge of a student’s comprehension. Learners are neither hard wired nor soft wired to process and interpret information that is transmitted in most face to face learning environments, particularly in lecture formats. The critique of transmission methods of teaching continues to be well earned and richly deserved. Transmission of information in face to face teaching environments is far too often a waste of everyone’s time.

On-line teaching environments on the other hand may not be a waste of anyone’s time. Learning time is quite often well spent because the student has time and opportunity to use multiple cognitive processes.

Indicator of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is recognized as such by learners, particularly adult learners, when a number of conditions for learning are intentionally designed for and put into operation by the teacher. Here are just a few. Good teaching is recognized as such when teachers affirm that

concepts can be constructed by the learner and not merely memorized from the course materials (Ramsden, 2003). Good teaching for adults is rarely valued when it is about some elaborate from of trivial pursuit for credit (Meyers, 1998). Good teaching need not lead to and stop at emphasizing only the basic of cognitive activity of memorization (Bloom, 1956). Adult learners, I have found, are rarely won over by teachers who emphasize recall of facts over the meaning of those facts. Most learners, particularly adult learners, sooner or later want more. They want to make meaning of language they negotiate on-line-in a text or in a classroom, and above all to pour meaning into language informed by, and in turn used to inform, their lived-experiences. While younger earners may downshift in schools (Caine and Caine, 1994) but stay in their classrooms and try to memorise the trivia they are told is important for them, adult learners vote with their feet. Adult learners want to learn more about what they live, meaning in the context of their real problems, real issues and real questions. They want to learn what lives in the real world. Online learning environments provide learners with time to engage with real problems, questions and issues. The teacher's task is to design the course so that students actually do engage with information so that information is not the end, but the means to solving real problems, addressing real issues, answering real questions.

The most important things in life (i.e. real problems, issues and questions e.g. how to have a good marriage or raise a responsible child, solve world hunger....) hardly stand up for long consideration under the weight of mere memorization. Adult learners in particular want more; for the adult learner, to learn is to make meaning, to develop insight through engaging cognitively with the information. Meaning-making is most important for learners (Scott and Scott, 2010); older learners in particular want to experience 'learning' that is full of opportunities for meaning-making. They want learning experiences in which information provided in language-based transmission formats (e.g. a posted article that is the basis for a threaded discussion) is taken up cognitive in a form of 'shared praxis' (Groome, 1981). The article would come alive as learners relate to it in a set of pedagogic movements, that begin with identification of the learners own "article-related" behaviours in their own professional practice and assumptions that give rise to those actions. In fact, there is ample evidence that praxis when shared with others is an important way of coming to know (Groome, 1981). Also, adult learners want to experience teaching that merely "covers the material," but teaching that intentionally and deliberately attends to addressing their misconceptions. Why? Because meaning-making with others is indeed a high value for adult learners. Real problems, real issues and real questions calls for course design and teaching online that is about the actual professional life of the adult learner.

Transmission of information in asynchronous ways (projects, student led inquiry, or in online learning management systems that are static and which students access on their own time) can include intentional and designed strategies like misconception checks (Cross & Angelo, 1993) for example, through which a learner can safely yet deliberately disaffirm a conception.

Course Design: Enhancing cognitive activity and nurturing community in the online environment

In the Cast Study courses in the University of Calgary's Master of Teaching program, students are to read information presented in the form of cases, to unpack the meaning of each case and pour personal meaning into each case, using guiding questions and teacher designed tasks to do both. A surprising unintended outcome for me as an instructor in the program was

how much time learner's devoted to engaging in the main designed learning activity of each case- identifying their initial response for each case (what they paid most attention to in the case), engaging in a class discussion of each class learner's initial response, then , over a week identify and state a considered response, a reflection-based, personal summary of their conclusions regarding the case, conclusions regarding course design, teaching approaches called for and interests of learners. An even more surprising outcome for me was the relationships that were nurtured among us in the class, learner to learner and learner to me, their teacher. For students, a dignity producing effect characterized the classes and course. On-line course design lends itself beautifully to the use of initial and considered responses, and to the development of relationships.

Initial Response; Considered Response

An initial response is a person's initial response to a chapter, passage or section in a book, article or media based presentation. The initial response is personal; it is an individually relevant and meaningful first response to a small piece of something (e.g. book chapter read or DVD viewed). A useful Instructional design (ID) approach is to formally ask for an initial response to be posted at the beginning of each week (13 initial responses for 13 weeks of course work). A helpful ID approach is to pose two questions, each written into your course outline. They are:

- What did you find yourself paying attention to in the chapter?
- Why? What assumptions, values, theories or beliefs do you believe caused you to pay attention to this information in particular?

A considered response is the person's response to the chapter, section or medial based presentation. It is 'considered' in the sense that the person has engaged in a week's reflection on the information presented in the online discussions, commentary from classmates in chat room type settings and in the invariable and lingering insight generated in those curious non classroom/non on-line settings (e.g. on a run). A considered response is also individually meaningful and personally relevant. A useful considered response approach is to ask for a considered response at the end of each week (13 responses at the end of 13 weeks). A helpful ID guide is to pose three questions, each written into your course outline. They are:

- How did (Week One's, etc) each week's conversation conform your initial response?
- How did each week's conversation call into question your initial response?
- What new behaviour regarding the week's topic does your considered response call from you?

Why Used?

An initial followed by considered response approach increases affective engagement, i.e. it draws the person into the text in an emotionally laden way; each person has a vested interest in reading and seeking confirmation of an initial response , while being hesitantly open to having an initial response called into question. In addition, the initial response serves as an advanced organiser, that alerts each person to what they need to use (e.g. a piece of declarative information they have schematised or conceptualised) to make sense of the information to come in the week's readings or conversation.

Enhancement of Relationships

The response approach in instructional design opens up the possibility that one's learning can be meaningful, personally relevant and valid. It is a social construction of knowledge based way of learning, and as such, creates a good dependency on the ideas of others, where a person looks intently into the ideas of classmates, authors and oneself. Above all, its use is a dignity producer, an enhancer of self efficacy and truly valued by learners

Where Best Designed

The initial and considered approach is best designed in courses that include formal readings, the instructional design use of initial and considered responses can be integrated into readings or viewing, formalised into week by week responses that are posted in a thread or online forum.

MODEL 2: NURTURING-SCENARIO-BUILDING IN ONLINE COURSES

Self Efficacy Matters

Efficacy is a learner's confidence that they have a skill or competence to perform a task (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy is often mistaken for competence (efficacy is a consequence of competence) and confidence (confidence is a consequence of competence). Quite often adult learners' most characteristic learning attribute is low self-efficacy. The most significant contributor to increases in adult efficacy in the online environment is well developed competency, the ability or capacity to complete a specific task (e.g. give a public presentation) and do so successfully. Competency precedes confidence. Competency precedes efficacy. Words of encouragement, praise, affirmation and nurture may not only contribute little to an adult learners development of self efficacy, these well worn teacher practices may actually undermine it, causing the adult learner to lower task performance to bring encouragement more in line with what they are comfortable in receiving. Nurturing involves more than offering praise.

The online environment is ideally suited to competency development-it offers a form of psychological safety not afforded in face to face environments. Competency development, the basis for self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995)-the belief in one's abilities to execute and action and be successful-is uniquely provided for in the online environment-because a response characterized by risk-taking can be rehearsed, practiced in the silent and safe confines of one's computer before being put out in a forum or online post. The online environment permits adults to choose moderately difficult yet personally challenging goals, mastering a task on their own terms and time, attributing success or failure (Weiner, 1986) to their effort and skill and not to chance, luck or a teacher's poor communication (attribution that are characteristic of adult learners with external and sometimes quite stable yet undermining loci of control) (Weiner, 1986)

To nurture is to direct learning activities to the inner world of a learner. To nurture means to carefully, with wisdom, design nurturing based learning experiences that are intentionally and carefully woven into courses and their design. For example, adult learners find feedback highly nurturing. However not all feedback is "created equal." The timing of feedback, along with the choice of words and 'tone' with which the words are delivered all influence the effect of feedback. Online courses in which there is a live or synchronous session or in which there are chat rooms, opportunities for Skype based conversations are best for

providing feedback. Emailed or written feedback can be misinterpreted as most teachers know. To nurture is to focus on some psychological need of the learner. Self-efficacy is one example from the inner world of a learner and personal communication rich with appreciation, truthfulness and intentional patience and care for the learner's well being including communication can serve to nurture a learner.

Scenario development is one example of an intentional activity that can be woven into a course design. Scenarios are useful when working with students who require nurturing because evidence of low self-efficacy. Scenarios are descriptions of ideal practices in a workplace, church home or school. Scenarios can also be descriptions of ideal strategies, tactics, logistics or relationships. (Shoemaker, 2006) Scenarios are best designed in partner or collaborative work with one other person. In online courses generally and in the process of scenario development specifically, teachers have time to 'read between the lines,' recognize need and determine an appropriate response

Relationships

Community is built when people gather around a great idea (Palmer, 1998). Relationships are built during the activity of gathering around a great idea. Nurturing of one's sense of self-efficacy is possible during an activity of participating in creating alternatives to current systems, solving big problems, addressing real issues and answering real questions. Relationships are formed in part through affirming the value of each other's responses, appreciating each other's contribution (Cooperrider, 1987) and deliberately integrating each person's ideas into the scenario development framework.

Learning Theory and Application

As people work together to construct a meaningful new answer, solution, way to address an issue or scenario, they spread their learning task across many minds (Bereiter, 1990) and draw on multiple knowledge bases and ideas (Ormrod, 2008). The support for distributed cognition remains strong (Rogoff, 2003, Ormrod, 2008) and for good reason. Cooperative approaches in online learning may allow students to practice important transferable cognitive competencies (Ormrod, 2008). Learners can safely clarify ideas, elaborate on what they already know, identify misconceptions, discover how different cultural groups may view a topic, question, issue or problem, widen one's epistemology, learn a new self-regulatory approach, arrive at consensus without compromising deeply held ideals, bring expert knowledge into the development of new ideas (p. 429).

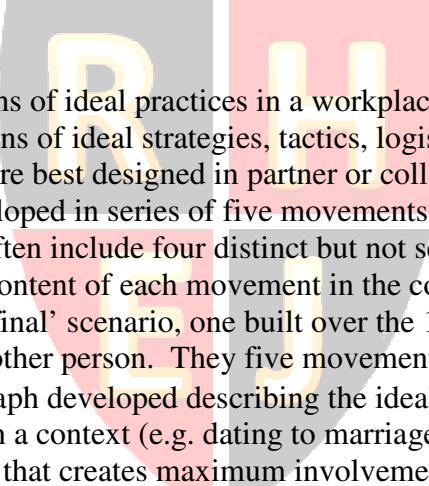
Scenario building allows for these and other important and necessary cognitive activities that have implications for learning (J. R. Anderson, 1985). The online environment gives learners opportunity to safely take up other's ideas, to choose when to respond and to whom. Above all, the online environment provides more than one opportunity, in fact many opportunities, for learners to self-regulate their work and learning in a course. Many students in my courses have commented in course evaluations that they have "learned more from my colleagues and classmates than I have from the instructor." From course evaluations I have read the reason appears to be the opportunities for learners to engage in personally developed self-regulatory strategies for learning. I have read scenarios submitted by learners and thought, 'where did this or that good idea come from.' Clearly learners in my courses have accessed the

opportunities provided in the online environment to sit back, as it were and enter into more than one conversation, more than one idea and more than one possibility for a scenario.

Indictors of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is characterized by respect for all view points and diverse talents, including diverse ways of learning (Scott & Scott, 2010). Effective teachers design learning experiences so that multiple entry points are possible into a learning activity. Scenario building affords each learner one or more entry points into the learning activity. Why? Scenarios included identification of potential problems in the original proposed scenario and analyses of what might be the core or essential “problem in the problem.” Analytical thinkers will enter readily into this activity. Scenarios also include identification of what might be worth preserving from the original scenario and carried over into the revised scenario. Future oriented, speculative and elaboration oriented thinkers will readily enter into this activity. Scenarios include reconstructing originally conceived scenarios into new ones, and accommodation oriented thinkers will readily enter into this activity. The complexity of scenario creation offers learners multiple opportunities to use their preferred learning approach.

Course Design



Scenarios are descriptions of ideal practices in a workplace, church home or school. Scenarios can also be descriptions of ideal strategies, tactics, logistics or relationships (Shoemaker, 2006). Scenarios are best designed in partner or collaborative work with one other person. A Scenario can be developed in series of five movements, best designed over the 13 weeks of a course. Scenarios often include four distinct but not separate movements. A useful ID approach is to describe the content of each movement in the course outline and to include a date for the submission of the ‘final’ scenario, one built over the 13 weeks of the course, best built in collaboration with one other person. They five movements are:

- (Movement 1) A paragraph developed describing the ideal scenario, the best possible imagined practice within a context (e.g. dating to marriage; raising a child with special needs; teaching practice that creates maximum involvement).
- (Movement 2) A one page description of the problems inherent in the ideal scenario, the systemic and relational problems each partner knows from lived experience will likely undermine the scenario from succeeding. In addition, in the same page, the partners identify the ‘problem within the problem,’ the core issue in each problem identified.
- (Movement 3) A one page description of contextually appropriate solutions to each problem, ideally because it the core issue, the ‘problem in the problem’ has been addressed in contextually appropriate ways.
- (Movement 4) A one page description of what must be kept in the scenario, the ‘hill to die on’ for the next movement, the revised scenario
- (Movement 5) A one page description of the new, revised scenario

Why Used

The scenario building approach is uniquely designed for learners to not only gather around a great idea, as Parker Palmer (1998) suggests, but develop relationship-developing attributes in the activity of developing the scenario. Learners practice active listening, avoidance of pathologising the ideas of others, and dialectical thinking skills, as learners together modify it and deliberately work towards envisioning the scenario being enacted in a real context. Scenarios are great ideas developed with others; and, in turn, develop the ability to develop great ideas.

How Scenario Planning Enhances Thinking

Scenario building approaches in instructional design affirm creativity and imagination. Scenario building approaches are clear illustrations of constructionism, a form of constructivism that allows for thinking to be socially constructed; knowledge to be a social construction. As such, it simulates the actual day to day lived experience in homes (e.g. e.g. in decision making), educational institutions (committee work) and in much learning in groups.

Where Designed

The Scenario Building approach is best designed in Group/Partner Projects, assignments that are due at or near the end of a course. The description of Scenario Building should be explicit within the assignment as found in the course outline. Each movement's deliverable should be included in the final submitted assignment

MODEL 3: GUIDED DISCOVERY IN ONLINE COURSES

Teaching the Unfamiliar from the Familiar Matters

A learner's prior understandings (propositions, frames, scripts, concepts, schema and worldview) influence what a learner will be able to perceive and understand regarding new learning experiences (J. R Anderson, 1985). The influence of prior understandings can be positive or negative. In the case of misconceptions and learning, a cognitive influence is always exerted. However, the influence, whether positive or negative, may actually turn out to be quite an important catalyst to learning for meaning in the online environment. When identified but not elaborated on (i.e. undue or excessive attention drawn to it), a misconception may alert a learner to pay attention to antecedents and consequences of inappropriate or wrong previous understandings; leading learners to 'want to want' to form more accurate concepts to be used in interpreting new experiences, including ideas presented in the online course and in a learner's professional practice. In some cases learners may undergeneralise (exclude exemplars) or overgeneralise (include non-exemplars) (Joyce and Weil, 2005). In both cases of misconception representation, teaching opportunities are rich. For example, a teacher may expect children to sit still and upright because to do so is polite and required for learning. This expectation is based on a number of misconceptions (undergeneralisation based). Children at the age of six have about 50% of the muscle fibre of an adult; their muscle fibre is watery and underdeveloped. Children get tired holding themselves upright as a consequence and therefore need to move, shift and find new positions. Adults who understand the accurate concept (children's muscle make-up) quite

readily engage in a new set of interpretations and more importantly behaviours based on new conceptions.

Guided discovery is the teacher led systematic scaffolding of learner attempts at a response, guesses at solutions to problems, application of strategies and understanding of ideas. Guided discovery is most useful when working in courses or classes when a teacher is guiding students into some sort of discovery, ‘finding’ some idea or principle, notion or concept on their own. Scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1983) is a variety of activities that collectively help students complete certain tasks designed into courses. The variety of activities includes helping students map out an approach to learning, modeling, enhancing attention of students through creating anomalies or unusual events, bring students back to the purposes of learning, providing an approximation of the desired terminal behavior (e.g. a bounce is allowed in volleyball classes) and allowing that approximation to serve as a legitimate response (Ormrod, 2008, p335). The prevailing view is that scaffolding is best mediated socially; students need deliberately planned cooperative based learning activities through which they can access “...cues, reminders, breaking a problem down into steps, provision of exemplarsanything that allows learners to grow in independence as a learner (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 45). The online environment supports provision for the learning and the development of higher level problem-solving skills (Vygotsky, 1983) because teachers can build scaffolding into the course-using that most important of all supporting systems, i.e. language to do so (Vygotsky, 1983)

Relationships

Community is built when people work *interdependently* in a discovery based activity, one guided by a teacher. Time on task and proximity (i.e. online proximity, available by simply turning on one’s computer and entering into the course online) leads to relationship building. In addition, in cooperative and collaborative learning, relationships are enhanced through the activities of elaborating, explaining and debating (Webb, 1989), all integral to cooperative and collaborative activities designed for groups in the online environment

People are drawn to look to others to provide alternate ways to address complex issues in real situations-to draw from competent people in the group in order to expand their list of possible solutions. In the context of guided discovery we can comfortably align ourselves to those we view as most competent, attractive intellectually and human, all revealed in anonymity in guided discovery learning activities in an online environment.

Learning Theory and Application

Facts are best understood in a conceptual framework, from a concept that ours meanings into a fact. A concept is an ordered rule each person has that determines where something (a fact, an action, a thing....) fits and what it means. Concepts share similarities (Ormrod, 2008) and whether abstract (beauty, justice, intelligence) or concrete (dogs, fruits, teachers), concepts help us make sense of the world. Without concepts “nothing would be meaningful.” With concepts, everything can be meaningful, because we make sense of the world through our concepts. Some people ‘learn’ concepts by first engaging in specific instances of it (dogs bark, can bite, shed hair) so other instances of ‘dog’ lead one to recognize that ‘animal’ as dog. Given that concepts develop over time, may change and are learned based on features and rules, hypothesis testing and active experimentation in many cases, guided discovery permits

identification of numerous and varied positive instances of a concept (Ormrod, 2008, p. 260). Once again, the online environment is ideally designed for learners to negotiate their understanding of the dynamic relationship between facts and concepts, considering through reflection in the quiet of their computer, how their practices and the lingering effects of their experiences (i.e. memories) inform and, in turn, are informed by, the concepts being considered.

Indicators of Effective Teaching

Effective teachers allow for adequate time on task (Scott & Scott, 2010). Students need time to learn management of organizational skills, and the online environment as well as carefully designed school and university face to face programs can be designed in a structured way for teachers to guide activities in guided discovery. Courses and learning activities in online environments can be designed with more than one scaffold present, helpful aids to accommodate different learning predispositions. Online learning environments permit course designers to place concepts into a permanent and heuristically useful place (e.g. permanent forum), so learners can revisit each, to rethink and reframe the unique relationships among facts and concepts-learners can engage in conceptual analyses over time, as new topics are taken up.

In my learning theory course I pose the question, “Why do we know a lot more about learning and how young people actually learn than we ever apply to teaching?” In this the course I guide learners through a number of learning theories, from behaviourism, social cognitive learning theory, brain and behavior and onto into motivational theory. The learners in the course almost invariably answer this initial question quite differently after thirteen weeks of guided discovery than they answered the question on that first day-the online environment provided them opportunities to engage in conceptual analyses in a systematic and guided way.

Course Design

Guided discovery is most useful when working in courses or classes when a teacher is guiding students into some sort of discovery, ‘finding’ some idea or principle, notion or concept on their own.

A useful instructional design approach to misconception checking is in formative assessment and assessment for learning activities. In the first case, formative assessment, the teacher designs a way of gathering information about learning, not to evaluate the information gathered in ordered to assign a grade, but to provide both the person being assessed and the teacher information that can used to inform and modify an existing concept, or modify a misconception. Four misconception check approaches (Cross and Angelo, 1993) are:

- One Minute Paper-ask students to submit a one minute paper in which they identify the main idea of a previous section of reading, transmitted message or media presentation, their main conclusion regarding that main idea, and what remains fuzzy for them ? Collect and quickly review, in a break online. The misconceptions clearly become evident in the third section of the One Minute Paper, and can be addressed before the end of the online session
- Triangle, Square, Circle-students draw the three shapes and identify the three main points of the previous section, ways in which the previous section’s information ‘squares’ with what they believe or know, and where their thinking is going around in circles

- Warehouse Grid-place information in a grid, as one would place objects on a shelf in a warehouse. Identify the features (shelves) of the presentation and ask learners to sort the information onto the shelves. For example, in a session or teaching on parenting, the shelves might be opportunities and challenges; or, might be most important/least important-most satisfied/least satisfied having accomplished biblical based training.
- Application Paper-in two minutes write a so what paper, an application paper asking for the one place or time in daily activities when the main idea of a presentation can be applied
- Q/A-invite questions with the condition that there are no dumb questions
Misconception checks work best in Live Classroom settings and in Discussions, one on one in interactions with learners. Misconception checks can also be part of an instructor's Summative Assessment or Examination approaches in a course.

MODEL 4: PROJECTS IN ONLINE COURSES

Deep Knowing Matters

Projects are student led investigation into a topic. Projects lead learners into the territory of deep knowledge. Learners are in charge of the procedures used in the investigation. The purpose of projects is for students to experientially understand that there are solutions to problems, answers to questions and better than worse ways to address issues. The outcome of projects is deeper understanding and a broader knowledge base regarding a topic. Projects encourage students to use a coordinated set of skills (including inquiry, problem solving and presentation), to build a base of knowledge about an issue, question or problem. The best projects include research into 'living cases,' real situations or an actual problem. Online courses are uniquely designed to permit projects to be taken up because time, opportunity to reflect, communication that is transactional not linear and informed access to relevant project information is possible in an online environment.

Relationships

Relationships are built, group identity formed and community develops when people are 'over and against' some issue, idea, person or system. For example, of necessity it appears, the formation of identity in a school staff includes being over and against authority. Community also develops when adult learners give something to the group (work on a piece of a project), give something up for the group (e.g. time spent with another group in the course) and have created some symbolic representation of the group (e.g. a group name) (Rohr, 2005). In workplaces, sport teams and families individuals often form closeness and community through some or all of the above. Often, relationships are best formed though a consequence of being over and against another team, a coach, a boss or colleague. Healthy or not, relationships are formed and identities forged in the conversational activity of being over and against some idea, person, system or issue. Online conversations, particularly threaded ones that involve many conversations, draw people together.

Learning Theory and Application

Cognitive dissonance or disequilibration can lead to change because conceptual change is most likely to occur when learners "...encounter evidence that blatantly contradicts what they currently believe (Ormrod, 2008, p. 274). As students compare and contrast their current theories, beliefs, assumptions and values with differing ones, teachers should guide students to deliberately shed or revise an original conception. Projects provide opportunities for students to 'deal with' or accommodate conceptions to new information, to be engaged with refutational texts (Ormrod, 2008) in which ideas that refute a concept are deliberately presented then refuted, discarded, to serve as an 'inoculation' to future counter arguments. In online environments any possible embarrassment experienced in the face of a refutational text is minimized if not entirely removed. No one sees another person blush or stammer while communicating a refutational idea in an online course.

Indicator of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is indicated when students are active when learning, activity that includes real time communication. For many learners clarity of ideas comes through communicating them, not necessarily or generally prior to communicating them. Online environments provide clarity producing opportunities engagement through writing, discussing and applying in simulations or real life solutions to problems inherent in a project, again, with time, safety and feedback all readily available.

Course Design: Competency Precedes Confidence

Efficacy, a person's confidence in having the competency required to be effective and even succeed at a particular tasks, develops on the foundation of a person's competency development. Teaching activities should allow for and promote skills to be practiced in frequent, dispersed and time wise time periods, and the resultant competencies assessed and reinforced to alert the learner of the presence of the competencies

A project is an activity of production and implementation of a course, technique, tactic, relationship or strategy. A project is best implemented in the actual workplace or home of a learner. Projects that are least likely to succeed are those with no assessment attached to them. With feedback from the instructor or outside person projects can legitimise the reason for the course and assignment, where projects are best placed. The best projects are designed as follows:

- Identification of core issue, problem or question inherent in workplace (family, counselling, church) that the project may address
- Creation of perceived need; casting the problem, issue of question in a way that engages the learner's awareness e.g. in a course on teaching and learning in the church stating "A lot more is known about learning than what is ever applied to teaching." Why?
- Create a way for the project to be implemented, realistically, and with assessment for and of learning activities to be attached to the implementation of the program.

Projects work best as the course's Major Assignment.

MODEL 5: INSIGHT GENERATING

Communication Matters

Most communication and its success is through hearing what the other person is in fact saying, and hearing comes through active listening for what is beyond and behind the words, for the issues in the issue, the meaning in the words, the intent in the question (Adler et al, 2008). In the online environment we have unique opportunities to hear the adult learner and attend by way of response to what she or he means through the words used, in large part because the online environment permits conversations to take place in a variety of ways-in Café, through forums, over Skype and in other forms of synchronous ways.

Insight generating is the deepening awareness of the importance of one's commitment to choosing actions consistent with one's real life (Lonergan, 1972), arrived at through engagement with the data of one's life, understanding what the data means and choosing ethical actions accordingly. Communication is essential to insight formation; the online environment essential to more than one form of communication.

Relationships

Social psychologists refer to the centrality of relationships in identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 2002). One's identity remains a powerful contributor to one's success or not in occupations demanding high demands for social engagement, including relationships demanding pro social skills (marriage). Insight into one's identity is determined by relationships and in turn, determines the quality of one's relationships. Online courses allow for additional, autonomous research regarding the meaning of one's life, the circumstances, challenges and opportunities, to judge those events in some carefully measured and informed way then to make choices of ethical actions. More than one student evaluation comment shows up in professor evaluation comments that refer to how a course 'helped them understand' better who they were as a person, father, mother and graduate student. Unintended as this outcome has been in courses, it is nonetheless gratifying to read such comments. Arguably, this outcome can be attributed to the unique contribution of the online learning environment to identity formation. Learners can consider exemplars, defining attributes, prototypes (Woolfolk, 1995) and do so in self-regulated and carefully measured ways. In other words, they can "learn to learn" about their self-identity and do so safely.

Learning Theory and Application

Bias leads to confirmations not always consistent with the presentation of facts. Adult learners lean towards bias regarding their self concept (Adler et al 2008). Often, learners in graduate courses are self-deprecating to a fault. In being so, they communicate a self that is false (not bad, just not true). Rarely, but it does happen that a learner projects more of a positive self-concept by course end. Learners will communicate that they have come to a clearer understanding of who they really are, of their true self through the learning activities designed for them in my online courses. Online teaching and learning allows safe and time supported opportunities to work through bias. Perhaps this positive outcome is the result of number of weeks of affirmation for ideas? Perhaps online learning permits a gradual bracketing and

negotiating of prior self-deprecating understandings? Professors reading this paper will no doubt refer to evidence in their own course evaluations that fallacies, ones that are often present and debilitating in face to face encounters and teaching, can be more deliberately and anonymous discussed in online courses. Professors can quietly in an online environment address fallacies of (learned) helplessness, causation, over-generalization, perfection, should, approval (Adler et al, 2008). In addition to the important cognitive process of confirmation bias, learners try to maintain their self perceptions, or self concept, so as to keep their world predictable and controllable. Learners tend to seek stabilization; in other words, maintain a chronic view of their self (Adler et al, 2008). Online courses may offer only a small solution to what sometimes appears to be an epidemic of fuzzy self-concept among adult learners.

In online learning environments learners may have the benefit of ignoring clues or triggers that sometimes, in face to face environments, set off or catalyse a bias (mood, body language, subliminal factors and schema). The relational distance or interpersonal space experienced by an online learner may actually work to reduce bias, prevent quick and automatic judgments. In other words, learners in the online environment may come to expect and therefore experience positive relationships and develop affirmative self-concept.

Indicators of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is portended when a course designed intentionally allows for attention to a real purpose for the course, where the topics ‘live in the world’ including the learner’s personal world. Insight into the nature of important questions, regarding one’s true identity for example, is an indicator of effective teaching. In the online environment, in a ‘place’ designated to do so (e.g. a Café) learners can post an emerging insight, a developing ‘a ha’ that becomes one of the shared community building pieces for the class. Unlike the flow paper type of recording of emerging insights, (where the flow paper often “disappears into the round file cabinet in the corner of the room” at the end of the class, and we wonder how important, exactly, was my and other’s insights), the insight remains up and open for feedback and thoughtful, hopefully appreciative, commentary.

Course Design

Best used when the intended outcome of a session, course or program is insight that leads to engagement in new, more redemptive ways (e.g. parenting children). Insight means a deep awareness of causes or motivations of one’s actions. The notion of coming to insight has been written about by Bernard Lonergan, the Catholic philosopher and theologian, in his books *Insight* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1972). The notion of coming to insight is one small part of a larger theological method espoused by Lonergan. In coming to insight, the rational, affective and cognitive elements of knowing are taken up. In Lonergan’s method there are four steps or methods in the pedagogy or andragogy (adult learning). According to Lonergan insight lays compacted, amorphous within a person, requiring the necessary conditions to unfold; The necessary conditions are the methods below. They are:

- Paying attention to the data of one’s life (e.g. what are the conditions of one’s marriage that undermine or strengthen the marriage; what are the elements of my work that bring joy or woe, hope or fear)

- Understanding the meaning of the data (what is the purpose of the conditions, i.e. what agenda or end, mine or another's, is being served by these conditions ; what is it that I know for is true about these conditions and what is it that is unclear about these conditions.
- Judging the value, place, role and efficaciousness of the data (e.g. shall I carry on as business as usual; what is the likely outcome if I do)
- Action chosen as a consequence of paying attention, understanding and judging the data of one's live.

Why Used

Insight generating is the deepening of one's commitment to choosing actions consistent with one's real life, i.e. the lived experiences encountered and lived through in home, community and work.

Insight and Relationships

In context of an online course the outcome is both the cause of deepening relationship with one or two others or the effect of a deep relationship with others.

Where Designed

Blogs and Chat Rooms are best contexts for insight generating. The teacher can describe Lonergan's method in theology and in particular, coming to insight as described above, either in the course background description or in a separate email to students. The Assignment most suitable for this method, in accommodating the four steps in the pedagogy is a mission statement, philosophy statement, life plan statement or some document that codifies the decisions made in the course, through interaction in Blogs or Chat Rooms. In courses where students might have opportunities to design practices and interpersonal based actions (e.g. counselling, preaching) the students may provide a report later, after the course has been completed officially, describing the outcomes of using insight generating approaches with others in the 'others' development of sk

MODEL 6: TRAINING AND ONLINE COURSES

Competency Matters

Training is the systematic shaping of observable behaviors, through the planned use of reinforcers. Implicit in this perspective is that people may 'act their ways into new ways of valuing and thinking' (Palmer, 1998). The online environment provides teachers with a unique opportunity to shape at least three important behaviours-writing with clarity, responding to classmates in appreciative yet truthful ways, and negotiating accommodations to timetables, assignments and schedules, and doing so professionally (e.g. submitting late assignments)

Relationships

Reinforcement, if genuine, specific to a task, appreciatively presented and ‘scientifically’ applied can deepen trust and enhance relationships between student and teacher. Students are quick to dismiss perfunctory comments in an online environment (e.g. good post). Students are also equally quick to be drawn into meaningful and truthful feedback that would direct the student to alternative ways of thinking or completing an activity.

Learning Theory and Application

Behaviourism remains psychology’s only real success story in the empirical world (Gerow, 1995). Reinforcement has been proven to work. However, because something works does not necessarily make it good or right. The science and art of application of principles of behaviourism, the judicious and intentional application of its guiding ideas, is what makes it right and good. In the online environment reinforcers and their use can be managed and regulated in ways not always available in face to face environments. In online environments both teachers and learners can pay careful attention to the science and art of the application of reinforcers. For example, because shaping behaviours involves reinforcing successive approximations of a desired terminal behavior, such as commenting appreciatively with information-laden commentary when “catching” a learner offering an appreciative comment to another learner’s post, a teacher can schedule the timing, ratio and quality of language used to offer the reinforcers. The science of reinforce use is hardly ever as possible in most face to face learning environments, unless deliberately planned.

Indicators of Effective Teaching

An indicator of effective teaching is provision of informed, thoughtful and high quality information regarding a student’s work, feedback that is directed to a task but which gives evidence of thoughtful and wise interpretation of that work.

Course Design

Training approaches are most useful in courses where skill development is a requirement and clearly identified as an intended learning outcome. Despite many people’s misgivings and opposition to training, the systemic shaping of behaviours through the use of reinforcement, (behaviourism) remains psychology’s flagship notion. Reinforcement works to shape behaviours (Gerow, 1995). Training through the use of reinforcers (both positive and negative) is so persuasive and omnipresent, unavoidable and inevitable, instructors may be misguided in attempting to avoid it. In addition, the misconceptions regarding reinforcement use and behaviourism are common. For example, virtually everything you and I do today will be a consequence of some previous or current reinforcement; intrinsic motivation is the long standing myth in education and parenting. We erroneously believe that we are intrinsically motivated to workout, eat properly, serve the Lord, be kind, show up at our workplace all and more for intrinsic motivation. Remove the good feeling or weight loss, lowering of your ten km time and you would not run. We stay with our marriages because we are extrinsically motivated; we pursue true self ways of being as opposed false ways of being because we are extrinsically

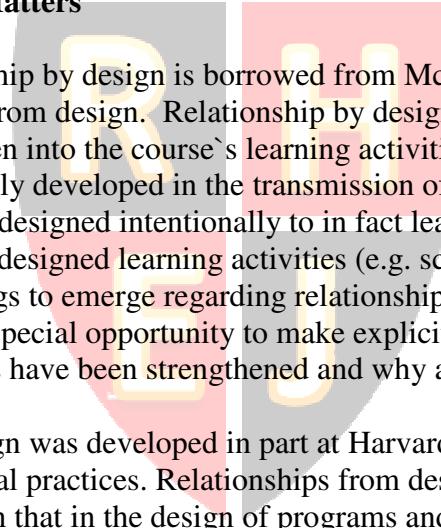
motivated. If my premises are correct and reinforcers are central to life, are unavoidable and inevitable, we instructors do well to design instruction to accommodate them. The best reinforcement is:

- Designed to shape behaviours toward a desired terminal end, a recognizable and specific intended outcome (e.g. loving one's spouse in the context of her/his love language)
- Appreciative as opposed to non-appreciative focus; identifying what is working well towards achieving the desired terminal behaviour and reinforcing that behaviour
- Use of a schedule of reinforcers that is scientific, e.g. reinforcing new behaviours on a regular schedule; using intermittent reinforcers when a behaviour is fairly well learned (to avoid habituation or 'being used to' the reinforcer)
- Feedback use becomes the main reinforcer; praise is avoided unless it is genuine and specific to a specific behaviour

Reinforcement works best in one to one Discussions on line and, with caution, in public responses/feedback to learner's work

MODEL 7: SHARED PRAXIS AND ONLINE COURSES

Relationships from Design Matters



The notion of relationship by design is borrowed from McTighe and Wiggins (2005) and their notion of understanding from design. Relationship by design means that opportunities to develop relationships are woven into the course's learning activities (what the learners do). Relationships are not necessarily developed in the transmission of information, unless the transmission of information is designed intentionally to in fact lead to the development of relationships. Participation in designed learning activities (e.g. scenario development) contains opportunities for understandings to emerge regarding relationships and how they are formed. The online teacher has a very special opportunity to make explicit and draw learner's attention to where in a course relationships have been strengthened and why a comment worked to build community.

Understanding by design was developed in part at Harvard (Project Zero) and popularized in K-12 educational practices. Relationships from design, adapted and modified for the purpose of this paper, mean that in the design of programs and classes, the teacher (i.e. the architect of learning experiences) builds activities to nurture good relationships into the actual learning activities of the course, in what have been typically non-relationship building activities such as assignments, conversations and threaded discussions in forums. In other words, through the learning activities designed intentionally to do so relationships are developed and community is nurtured. For example, teachers can design a relationship building assessment activity for each online session. To illustrate, learners may be asked to identify at what time in the week's discussions were they most engaged, least engaged and most troubled; what idea or activity caused each response? In this designed assessment activity learners engage meaningfully with the week's information, as well as with theirs and others lived experiences. The learning opportunities lay dormant, amorphous and designed, ready to unfold in the careful implementation of both time and application to do so.

Shared praxis for this workshop means coming to know or understand something, through deliberate reflection on one's previous actions and behaviours. In this form of

experiential based learning, a student, through teacher-questioning, returns to a previously experienced action, and with a teacher's careful guidance, reengages with that action(s) by considering critically how some teacher-introduced new information' calls into question or not the student's actions and reasons for the actions. What is produced is a way of knowing that the Greeks called praxis, a word that roughly means knowing through reflecting critically back into some social engagement (Groome, 1981).

Relationships

Community is formed and relationships nurtured as people enter into the particular way of being in the world that comes about through right relationships with others, self, the world (society/culture) and God/divinity. In turn, as people take up and practice the principles of right relationships (e.g. forgiveness, listening for the core issues) what can be produced are right relationships, community that permits freedom and risk taking in ongoing learning. Online courses and teaching organized around a shared praxis model give learners needed time to interpret messages and consider how to synthesise new ideas into current ones, to accommodate schemata to new information.

Learning Theory and Application

Thinking is socially constructed. Knowledge is a social construction. Shared praxis approaches make intentional and deliberate the often taken for granted and implicit activities of learners, as interpreters and synthesizers of information. The nature of relationships and community development, dialectical and verb based, is nurtured in the activity of socially constructing some meaning in the online activities of some assignment, some discussion or some inquiry

Indictors of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is indicated when teachers make the information being taught meaningful and relevant. Good teachers do not broker in abstractions as much as they situate the course's information (content) into the learner's context, a place within the past and current actions that typify the learner's lived, daily experience. When information is situated or contextualised into a learner's story and vision for the future, the information itself becomes purposeful.

Course Design

Shared praxis is most useful when the main goal of a course or program is ethical action, choosing ethical behaviours and actions for one's life. Praxis is reflection on action in order to come to an ethical action. The concept of coming to know through reflection informed by action, and action informed by reflection first appeared in the writings of the Greeks. Currently, the notion has been used in workplace learning popularised in the writing of Donald Schon (1983) and others; in education in the writings of William Pinar (1975) and in theology and theological education in the writings of Thomas Groome (1981). In Groome's notion of shared praxis there are six integrated movements. All movements together are a methodology, not a set of distinct methods. As such, the movements can be thought of a theoretical construct or frame

of reference, not a series of steps or methods, strategies or tactics. In shared praxis a learner “moves” deliberately and intentionally, with a teacher’s guidance, in two ways towards more ethical actions, first by considering their own actions and reasons for that action; then second by considering the implications of the profession’s best practices, research and wisdom (the story and vision of the profession) and dialectically, synthesising current actions into newly chosen ethical action.

As useful course design approach is for shared praxis to be the conversational framework, the intentional design in a course’s threaded discussions. The six movements, drawn from the work of Thomas Groome (1981) are:

- Naming present action in the light of some topic (e.g. what do you when praying; what are your prayers consisting of, language used and consistent forms deployed to pray)
- Identifying reasons for current action (what are one’s hopes in maintaining current actions)
- The presentation of the profession’s Story and its Vision (a piece of the story presented relevant to the topic at hand (e.g. assessment of and for learning)
- How does best practice and research regarding assessment affirm or disaffirm present action and its reasons (hermeneutical)
- How does one’s present actions and reasons call forward more meaning regarding assessment, the models and theories we have in practice and research regarding assessment
- What action, ethically chosen and consistent with current context, is now called for? (dialectical)

Why Used

Shared praxis honours individuals coming to know that is personal and yet informed by the greater community, outside the person on one hand; deeply connected to the person in another way. The relationship built with others in the course is by design, like that of an engaged couple recognising that they will share in the happiness and sorrows, challenges and opportunities of all those who have preceded them into marriage. The relationships extend horizontally to others in the course; each is coming to know in lived situations through shared experiences, common to us all

Shared Praxis and Relationships

Shared praxis in instructional design affirms knowing that is contextual and situational. We best share the heartache and joy, the hope and fear of real life, hardly ever in abstractions and almost always in stories. Abstractions brokered in classrooms, particularly in the online environment, may be less persuasive and pervasive in relationships than we think. Ideas are not nearly so powerful stimuli in decisions than are values and actual experiences. On the other hand, narrative based teaching and sharing of narratives offers a great deal to learners and teachers in terms of developing relationships. Listeners have a role to perform, as do story-tellers in narrative based ways of teaching (Wilmot, p 24, in Galvin, 2011). Both open up windows into sharing what is acceptable. As learners engage in the collaborative act of overlapping narratives, they define and re-define their selves (Wilmot, 2011), and in the safety of the online environment to do so is highly appealing to adult learners. Shared praxis pulls all

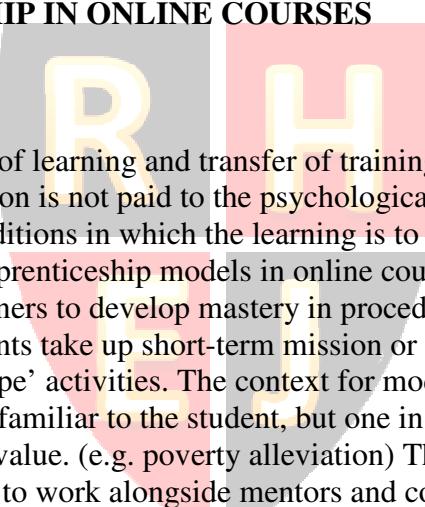
learners together into a common place where narratives are safely shared. In shared praxis the stories we tell become incarnational or our inhabited ways of knowing. Shared praxis offers an unintentional learning outcome, a hidden curricular effect, i.e. a comforting and relationship-building ethos in that we are all together in this thing called life.

Where Designed

Shared praxis is best designed in Discussions. The teacher acknowledges present action, draws out one's current actions and reasons for current actions in a series of questions posed in the online environment. Over the thirteen weeks of a course the teacher poses pieces of the profession's story and its vision, intentionally seeking the hermeneutic and dialectic outcomes described above. In order to capture and make legitimate the new action described by a learner, the ethical action chosen at the end of a series of movements framed in questions, an Assignment that asks for a action plan, a mission statement perhaps in which the person describes the proposed ethical action chosen, its conditions for practice, its strategies, tactics, logistics and relationships necessary for the ethical action to become real and applied in context.

MODEL 8: APPRENTICESHIP IN ONLINE COURSES

Transfer of Learning Matters



The problem of transfer of learning and transfer of training remains unresolved in learning situations where attention is not paid to the psychological conditions of the learner (e.g. readiness), the sociological conditions in which the learning is to take place (new learning conditions) (Haskell, 2001). Apprenticeship models in online courses can address this need, if the outcome intended is for learners to develop mastery in procedural skill related to a value. In modified apprenticeships, students take up short-term mission or work trips, international work projects, and 'outward bound type' activities. The context for modified apprenticeships is work in a challenging context, one unfamiliar to the student, but one in which the student recognizes opportunities to address a deep value. (e.g. poverty alleviation) The possibility for learning values rests in the opportunities to work alongside mentors and coaches, as novices experience directly but in abbreviated ways what the mentors experience daily. In online courses "assessment for learning" activities can be integrated, assignments included that require an apprentice and protégé relationship. In addition, online environments permit cognitive apprenticeships (Collins, Brown & Holum, in Woolfolk, 2000). Cognitive apprenticeships share many of the features of regular apprenticeships but differ in that the objectives are not skills but cognitive attributes, such as reading, problem-solving, analytical thinking, through provision by the teacher or other learners of models, tutoring, scaffolding opportunities to articulate their emerging knowledge, and suggestions for ways to explore and transfer new knowledge (Woolfolk, 2000, p 334).

Relationships

Trust may be developed in problem solving based learning (Johnson, pp. 70-77, in Wilmot, 2011) provided effective problem solving strategies are deployed and are therefore shown to be effective. Online courses do not appear readily designed for apprenticeship

practices. However, an apprenticeship element can be designed for and ‘added’ to an online course—an assignment that requires a program review or assignment development alongside a mentor, over time, with deliberate attention to the need of both mentor and protégé to meet together and enter into conversations. For example, each Bachelor of Education student in Ambrose University College’s Education Program is mentored by a classroom teacher, one who volunteers to come alongside the education student for two years of the program. Without pay, official recognition or career advancement for doing so, mentors readily stepped up and each student in the Bachelor of Education Program has a two year (minimum) commitment from a classroom teacher. Courses and programs designed online can include apprenticeship type elements, such as mentorships and professional directorships.

Learning Theory and Application

Cooperative group problem solving in which the concepts and principles inherent in solving the problem are discussed provide opportunities for students to see the interrelationships among things, clarify their own thinking, observe and model tactics and relationship approaches necessary to solve problems and become efficient in approaching new and similar problems (Ormord, 2008, p. 424). Authentic apprenticeship activities increase the likelihood that transfer of training and transfer of learning can occur, transfer in both its forms-in the working memory of the learner and in real life situations.

Indicators of Effective Teaching

Good teaching is indicated when learning is transferred, and transfer of learning is enhanced in authentic activities, those similar to what students do or will encounter in their school, workplace or families (Haskell, 2001). When learning is meaningful, it is likely that transfer is near, positive and horizontal, and students recognize the connections to their ‘real world’ outside the classroom or online course.

Course Design

Apprenticeship models are best used in courses where competency development is an intended learning outcome. Students develop mastery in procedural skill related to a value. In modified apprenticeships, students take up short-term mission trips, international work projects, and ‘outward bound type’ activities. The context for modified apprenticeships is work in a challenging context, one unfamiliar to the student. The possibility for learning values rests in the opportunities to work alongside mentors and coaches, as novices experiencing directly but in abbreviated ways what the mentors experience daily. Novices join communities of practitioners, first being participant-observers then gradually assuming increasing responsibilities in the new setting. Situated learning (learning in the situation through gradual assumption of roles) and action learning (problem-solving while in the field) are the two main learning requirements for modified apprenticeships. Unlike real apprenticeships, where mastery is the goal (Pratt, 1998), modified apprenticeships are expected to experience a conscientization (Freire, 2006), a raised consciousness of the knowledge skills and attributes of the community and what practitioners value most highly and why, and what they value less highly and why best designed in settings with trusted and experienced experts, as the Practical Assignment of a course.

MODEL 9: CASE STUDY IN ONLINE COURSES

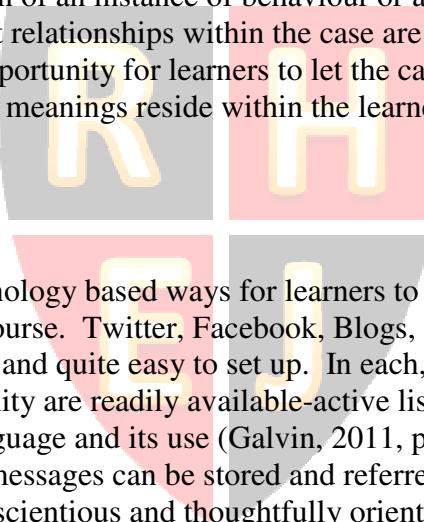
Power shift Matters

Best used in courses where interpretation is valued and non-positivistic ways of understanding the lived experience of people in context

The learner's lived experience in an online environment is often one characterized by a shift in power and control, from teacher to subject matter (Pratt, 1998). As a result, the learner in the online environment can focus on the information and attending activities designed for learning in the online environment, one developing the skills, knowledge and attributes identified in the course and stated in course objectives and goals. The teacher no longer holds the trump card in terms of course success for the learner, particularly for the learner whose attributional make-up is characterized by luck (Weiner, 1995). The information and all attending learning activities designed by the teacher become most important for the learner.

Case study is a process where learners read a selected case, a particular instance of a behaviour or action, and then describe and analyze the events in the case to 'see' what themes make up the event or behaviour. Case study-based learning tries to encourage 'thick' description of the case (thorough description of an instance of behaviour or action), analyses of the particular instance so that cause and effect relationships within the case are revealed (Pratt, 1998).. Also, case study-learning provides opportunity for learners to let the case interpret them, for the learner to let be revealed what personal meanings reside within the learner, regarding the case's main causes and effects.

Relationships



There are far more technology based ways for learners to work together in case studies than what will be used in one course. Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, instant messengers and text messaging are readily available and quite easy to set up. In each, the elements necessary to build good relationships and community are readily available-active listening, responding, feedback use and the actual nature of language and its use (Galvin, 2011, p. 90). The use of social norms, netiquette, and awareness that messages can be stored and referred to later on all require learners and teachers to be far more conscientious and thoughtfully oriented to developing and preserving relationships than they might be in face to face learning environments. In other words, the very nature of online environments motivates teachers and learners to practice the communication competencies that in fact develop good relationships.

Learning Theory and Application

Case study approaches provide for a form of negotiated collaboration, a unique way for learners to not deal with the implicit but otherwise very real competitive, self-interest oriented classroom typically found in most university programs. In case studies, subjectivity, emotion, cooperativeness, intuition and community concerns characterize the experience (Putnam, 1996). With the predetermined goal of analyses of the case, learners deploy the language of negotiation, thereby practicing, of necessity, creativity within collaboration.

Indicators of Effective Teaching

Effective teachers deploy a wide range of helpful listening and responding skills. They analyse and interpret problems and difficulties, reassure and support (but do not placate or inadvertently undermine the learner's problems), question and probe, paraphrase and acknowledge the emotions inherent in the problem (Putnam et al, 1998).

Course Design

Case study is a process where learners read a selected case, a particular instance of a behaviour or action, and then describe and analyze the events in the case to 'see' what themes make up the event or behaviour. Case study-based learning tries to encourage 'thick' description of the case (thorough description of an instance of behaviour or action), analyses of the particular instance so that cause and effect relationships within the case are revealed. Also, case study-learning provides opportunity for learners to let the case interpret them, for the learner to let be revealed what personal meanings reside within the learner, regarding the case's main causes and effects. Finally, a case-study learning experience is inductive, and learners can and should be permitted to extrapolate from the case to other cases, similar and particularistic cases. One main outcome of case study-learning experiences is for the learner to recognize how the particular context, the reality aspects inherent in the case influenced and were in turn influenced by, the events and their cause and effect.

Best designed as one Assignment and integrated with other assignments, conclusions drawn from research integrated into major paper

MODEL 10: INQUIRY IN ONLINE COURSES

Relevancy matters

Adult learners maintain a default interest in most course's abstractions, theories and concepts. They assume an interest in abstractions because they are required to continue to do so, to broker in abstract ideas in their many courses and programs. Adult learners are primarily and fundamentally interested in inquiry-solving real problems, discussing real issues and addressing real questions. I have found in my courses that adult learners respond with heightened involvement and deeper, more intimate relationships with their teacher and other learners in a course when my course is designed to be inquiry based.

Inquiry is the systematic investigation of a problem, issue or question (I.O. Intelligence Online, www.myio.org). The distinguishing feature of an inquiry-based learning experience is that the lesson may develop from student responses, and therefore the problem, issue or question being investigated may 'open up' into new questions, issues and problems (I.O. Intelligence Online, www.myio.org). If an inquiry is allowed to be open-ended, the teacher should accept that at least for the time being, for the student, there is no right answer, and no conclusion is required to end the inquiry (Davis, 1993). Inquiry can continue.

Relationships

Social penetration theory (Altman and Davis, 1973) proposes that communication moves from superficial to more intimate forms during the process of relationship formation. The social penetration theory premise is that relationships are intimately connected to communication, and that relationships develop in predictable and invariant stages-orientation, exploratory affective exchange, affective exchange and stable exchange (Turner and West, in Galvin, 2011). Inquiry designed learning require time and involvement in communication; these are essential elements and open up the possibility for the fourth stage of social penetration theory i.e. stable exchange, to be realized. Inquiry permits numerous opportunities to discuss, seek clarification, work through and accept idiosyncratic ways of communicating (Galvin, 2011).

Learning Theory and Application

Inquiry approaches in course design mean cooperative and collaborative learning opportunities are inherent, designed for and able to be practiced. Jigsaws lead to interdependence; reciprocal question leads to insightful thinking about a problem, issue or question; and, directed ways to work in partners leads to competency development (e.g. switching roles assigned to learners-sometimes a scribe, sometimes a listener, sometimes a summariser) (Woolfolk, 1995).

Indicators of Effective Teaching

Good teachers recognise that conversations work best with adult learners when they are substantial and cause engagement that is both cognitive and affective. Good teachers do not just let conversations happen in an online learning environment; they organize the conversation within a framework that includes questions that both connect and lead to comprehension, rules for conversing that maintain dignity and respect and above all, expectations that are made intentional and explicit for how the conversation is to take place online. For example, good inquiry usually involves some hypotheses formation, laying bare assumptions, collecting and presenting data that tests the hypotheses, forming conclusions and returning to the original question, problem or issue to reframe it. (Woolfolk, 1995). Inquiry approaches take many forms and expressions but remain firmly aligned with the outcome most highly desired in adult learning online-that both content and method or process of learning the content-are equally important and worth learning (Woolfolk, 1995).

Course Design

Inquiry is designed to help students deduce a better solution to a problem, a better answer to the question at hand or a more appropriate conclusion to the issue being investigated, the teacher will enter into the student's inquiry with more facilitative questions designed to limit and focus student responses. Finally, if an inquiry is designed to foster creative responses and artistic expressions of some insight, it will through the ways a student has taken up the problem, issue or question. The ultimate goal of all inquiry, regardless of intent, is to generate new knowledge and understandings of that knowledge (Davis, 1993).

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