I live and work on the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc territory within the unceded traditional lands of Secwepemcúl'ecw (Secwepemc Nation), where learning has taken place since time immemorial.

Today's Session

- Check-in
- Follow-Up on Your "Homework"
- The Documentation Paradox
- What we know so far about accommodation and return to campus.
- Principles of design for the semester to come.
- Further reading and resources.
- Reflection and Homework

Feel free to unmute or to share in the public chat.

How are you doing today?

I think we're going to be called to keep adapting on the fly, one day at a time. There are things we're just not going to be able to plan for, so I think the best plan is to take care of ourselves and each other. Let the other chips fall where they may.

Karen Ray Costa, "The Next Phase."

https://karenraycosta.medium.com/the-next-phase-a7912bc6a453

Last Week's Prompts

- How would you approach the following accommodation requests? What boundaries might you decide to set?

  - A student who has documented medical reasons to not come to campus and cannot attend classes.

  - A student who has no documentation, but discloses issues with anxiety since the pandemic and seeks additional time.

  - A student with disabilities who discloses that they found class a lot easier to attend online.

The Documentation Paradox

It's crucial to keep in mind that documentation – which is meant to open doors for students! – can act as gatekeeping.

There are a lot of reasons why people might not have necessary documentation.

Connect them with Accessibility Services anyway!

But also… what if we design to minimize the need for accommodations in the first place?

What We Know So Far

- Research from UK return to campus showed an increase in community spread and a "heterogenous" experience of learning, including better exam results for online versus in-person students.

- Research from US and Bangladesh students showed an increase in anxiety and stress (and decrease in academic performance) due to financial strain.

- Graduate students are more anxious about returning to campus than undergraduates.

From the Covid-19 Return to Campus Primer from the BC Government

"Institutions are strongly encouraged to develop and/ or follow established accommodation mechanisms **to ensure that students who cannot physically be on campus (e.g., they are ill, adhering to quarantine rules, self-isolating, attending a vaccine appointment, etc.) are not significantly disadvantaged in their educational pursuits**. Institutions are also strongly encouraged to waive any requirements for medical documentation from students for absences given the strain this will cause on the medical community."

Suggestions, not dictates (and certainly not based on anything, like, official).

Principles of Design for Fall?

Principles of Design for Fall

Maximizing accessibility

Care and trauma-informed pedagogies

Simplest possible content delivery

Retain / Reuse / Remix

Maximizing Accessibility

Look to UDL principles: multiple means of (a) engagement (the why), (b) representation (the what), (c) action/expression (the how).

- In other words, offer more than one way to connect with, understand, and demonstrate skill with course materials.

Plan now for how you will handle absences from class; this is also a good conversation to have within departments.

Remember that you can connect with Accessibility Services when you are unsure.

Check out: https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

From the Accessibility Services FAQ

"The University has an obligation to make the necessary efforts **to reasonably accommodate a student** with a disability but, at times, due to the nature and degree of the disability, no reasonable accommodation would enable a student to fulfill the essential requirements and therefore, they cannot be accommodated."

What's "reasonable"?

"Providing access to online learning **is a reasonable accommodation**. A lot of people didn't want to acknowledge that before, but this is now undeniable. We just did this for a year+. You don't get to say now that it's not an option[…]

"I hope those among us who can learn safely in an in-person environment think about how they would've felt to be forced into unsafe learning conditions during COVID. I hope we listen to and center the voices of disabled staff, faculty, and students."

– Karen Ray Costa

Care and Trauma-Informed Pedagogies

- The practices we established this year will likely continue to be necessary:
  - Flexibility around late penalties, deadlines, documentation.
  - Maintaining predictable course structure and expectations.
  - Consistent plans for contact and connection (and boundaries).
  - Can assessments stay "scaled back" and still do the job?

Trauma reactions are often domain-specific.

Karen Ray Costa, "The Next Phase."

https://karenraycosta.medium.com/the-next-phase-a7912bc6a453

You see your student laughing with friends in the cafeteria. Later that day, he asks for an extension on the upcoming paper because he says he's having a tough time. You think, "No way. He's lying. I saw him the other day, and he looked fine to me."

Yeah. No.

Trauma responses don't work like that. We can thrive in some areas and struggle in others.

Simplest Possible Content Delivery

- Livestreaming of lectures will likely be out of reach for most areas of the university.

- Even where possible, it raises issues: privacy of other learners, changes in classroom dynamics when recording is in process, etc.

- Can we plan now for the simplest version of course content that "does the job" for a learner in need of accommodation?

  - Is an audio file of your lecture "enough"?

  - Is the classroom space a "value add," with the content primarily available elsewhere?

Retain / Reuse / Remix

You have done so much good work this year: what can you save, and how can it serve this need to be flexible?
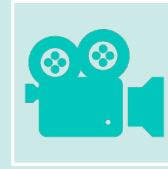
Maybe a recorded video isn't your favourite piece of work, but will it fill a need for a learner who needs you to accommodate them?

Treat the work you've done this year as a resource to mine.

And think about what existing resources you might also draw on.

Further Reading and Resources

- Helping students thrive in times of trauma.
- Removing barriers to success.
- How Covid may change grading.
- Why UDL is essential for the "new normal."

Principles of Design for Fall

Maximizing accessibility

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Simplest possible content delivery

Retain / Reuse / Remix

Homework

○ Your task this week (if you like) is to reflect on what designing to minimize accommodations will look like for your own classes.

Anything else you want to talk about today?
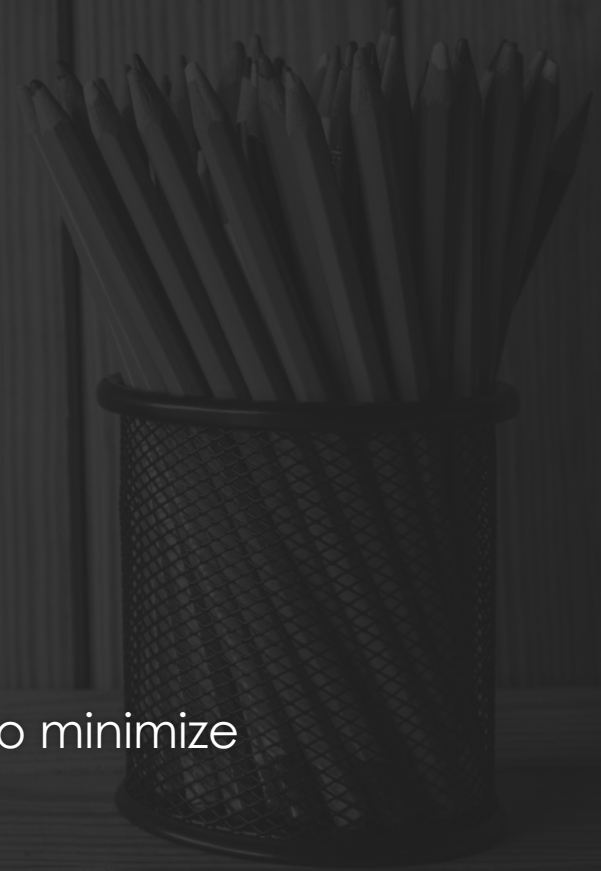
Follow up anytime: bgray@tru.ca

Let's Play III: Talking Back

How to Increase Engagement, Solicit Feedback...

and Have Fun, Too!

Mostly, we'll only have time to tease each of these tools today.

But you can follow up with us anytime to learn more!

learningtech@tru.ca or moodlesupport@tru.ca

Let's start with Sli.do!

Head to sli.do in your web browser and use the code #play.

Why Classroom Polling?

01
Check understanding.

02
Solicit feedback.

03
Allow students to "upvote" questions to be addressed.

04
Break up long lectures with interactivity.

And why Sli.do and not Kahoot or TopHat or something else?

Sli.do has passed a PIA.

It collects a minimum amount of data and students don't need accounts.

We can support it from our office!

Next Up:
Mattermost

Think: Slack for School.

Why Another Platform?

- Allows for threaded discussions, integrated BBB, direct messaging, and more.

- More like "team communication" than classroom tech.

- Conversations tend to be more organic, less stilted than in forums.

- Consider Mattermost + Wordpress as a Moodle replacement.

- Review the data on its use from UBC: https://wiki.ubc.ca/images/5/5f/Mattermost_Outcomes_(1-Pager).pdf

Discussion Forum Fails

ahaha
@Andre_BrownJr

College discussion board:

Jim: 2+2=4
Me: Wow Jim I totally agree. I like how you added the 2's together and got 4, very insightful.

7:05 PM · Mar 22, 2017 · Twitter for iPhone

49.1K Retweets   **4,124** Quote Tweets   **113K** Likes

They're also a source of overwork and frustration...

Weight

... appropriate to the labour involved. How many words are you asking for over the term?

Limit

... them to every second week. Or, better yet, give students choice about which weeks they post.

Ladder

... them into other assignments, like essays, so students see the value.

What Makes for Good Discussion?

Open-ended questions with more than one right answer and lots of room for discussion and debate.

Questions that require outside reading/research or application.

"Jigsaws" where students are responsible/accountable for different components of the question.

Build Back Better Series

Week 2: Building an Equitable Practice

What does "equitable practice" mean to you?

In general, equitable practice…

… seeks to make sure all students have access to the tools they need to succeed.

… is mindful of how power dynamics and other systemic forces make the classroom space inequitable *unless we work to dismantle inequities.*

… recognizes the institution's roots in various inequitable practices.

Recognize that all learners are not the same, and that the forces shaping their learning impact all learners differently.
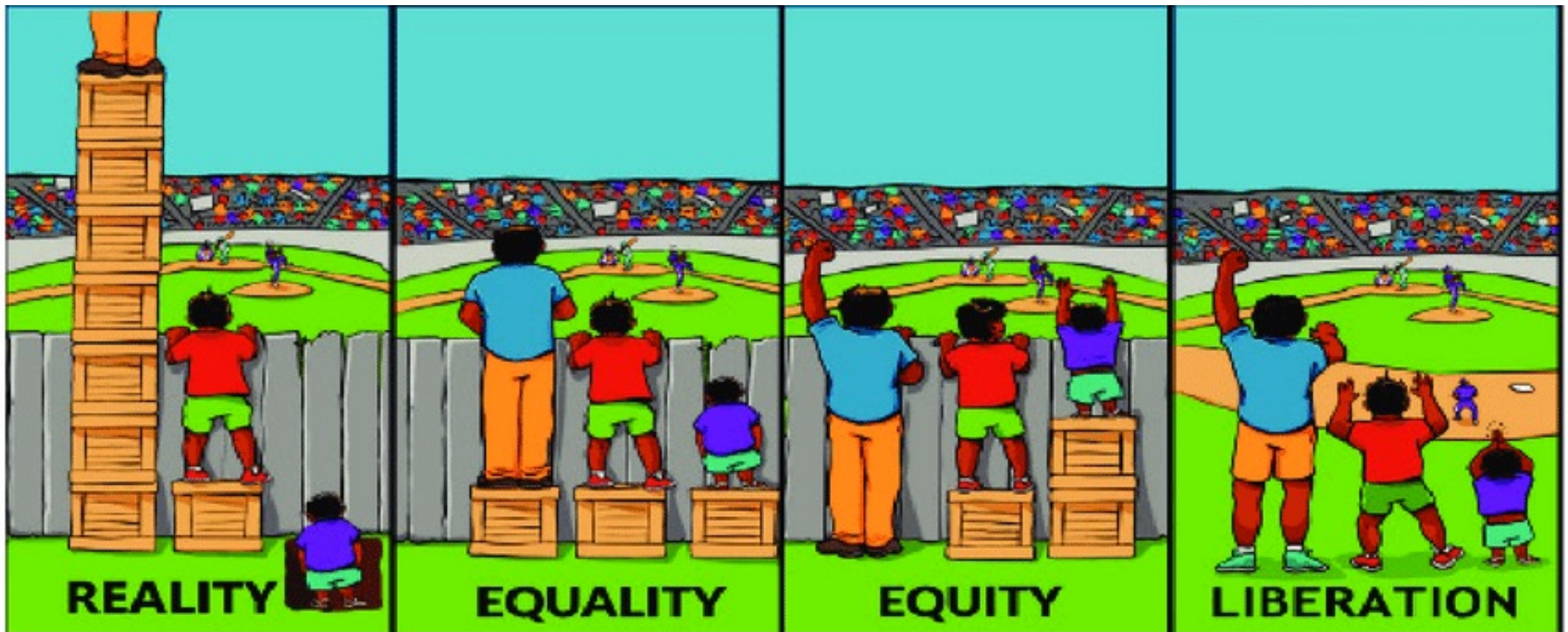
The difference between the terms equality, equity, and liberation, illustrated; © Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

Examples of Inequitable Practices Universities Have Largely Normalized

- Blanket tech/laptop bans.
- Strict mandatory attendance policies.
- Online exam proctoring.
- Many language norms and expectations.

The goal isn't to erase power differences or authority, but to be aware of them and willing approach them critically.

Start With the Syllabus

"I took a good long look at my syllabus, and realized I had communicated everything in it from a position of absolute authority." – Cate Denial, "A Pedagogy of Kindness"

- To what extent do the framing documents of our classroom position students and instructors as antagonists, rather than co-creators of a learning environment?

- Do you welcome or alienate?

- Is there room for an official course outline *and* a document that more reasonably reflects your own philosophy and pedagogy?

Syllabus Reflection – Instructor

- How might you experience the syllabus if you were:
  - A first generation student?
  - An Indigenous student?
  - A disabled student?
  - A financially insecure student?
  - A student whose native language is not English?
  - A student with limited access to a laptop/computer, but unlimited access to a smartphone?

Syllabus Reflection – Instructor

- An equity-minded syllabus promotes significant learning by asking the following questions:
  - Does the course design include affordable books and materials?
  - Does the course material invite students to engage in the material in ways that are personal and meaningful in their everyday lives?
  - Does the syllabus send a message of high expectations and that support will be provided to help them meet your expectations?
  - Do the course assignments and readings help students of various backgrounds connect to the academic topics?
  - Does the course enable dependent thinkers to become independent thinkers?

Adapted from California Community Colleges:
https://sites.google.com/view/anequitysyllabus/significant-learning

Syllabus Reflection – Student

- What do you see when you look at the syllabus? How does it make you **feel**?

- What is most strongly communicated in this syllabus? In other words, what's your main

- **take-away**?

- How clearly is the instructor's personal teaching philosophy stated? What is clear to you

- about what the **instructor values** and what is important in this class?

- What **resources for course success** and overall college success are included?

- Does the syllabus emphasize **inclusion, student-centeredness**, and **commitment to**

- **your success** as a student? How so?

Other Ways to Signal Equity

Statement of inclusion.

Expectation setting around discourse.

Heads-up about sensitive content.

Sharing instructor pronouns (not "preferred" pronouns).

Sharing support resources (and your own experiences with resources, where appropriate).

What assumptions about learners might shape your interactions with students?

Students will seek help when they are struggling in class.

Students have a basic facility with university jargon.

Poor writing suggests limited intellectual ability.

Older students or students with disabilities are slower learners.

Students whose cultural affiliation is not European-related are not native English speakers.

A student affiliated with a particular group is an expert on issues related to that group.

Students only relate to characters or historical figures that resemble them.

Adapted from University of Kansas:
https://cte.ku.edu/creating-inclusive-syllabus

"If you are ever called out for exhibiting biases, or if you witness microaggressions in class, your ability to respond effectively in the moment greatly improves if you've already put in the deep work, practice, and reflection."

Sharon M. Ravitch, Professor of Practice at University of Pennsylvania

Ravitch's Tips for Responding

Listen — Listen calmly for understanding, not simply to respond or defend yourself.

Work — Work to understand and own your impact; step into accountability instead of dwelling on and defending your intentions.

Ask — Ask about the other person's emotional experience — listen compassionately and take in their discomfort or pain.

Consider — Consider how you can improve, and then commit to a plan and do the work.

Any thoughts to add?

Next Session...

Making space for uncertainty.

Get in touch anytime!

bgray@tru.ca