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~~Post~~-Pandemic Pedagogies: Reclaiming the Lost Year


A note on the session name:

“Words create worlds.

“I’ve been thinking in terms of shifts and phases instead. The pandemic feels very present to me, and I’m not sure when or if that will stop being the case. That said, I do think we’ll shift into new phases that might include greater freedom, increased social anxiety, communication challenges related to transitions, and lots of other impacts, both positive and negative depending on your privilege and perspective.

“I’ll invite you to think about your words and whether or not they fit the global reality of COVID-19’s impacts.”

- Karen Ray Costa, “The Next Phase.”



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.

Welcome!

- Today's workshop is a time for structured reflection on the experience of the last year. I hope you'll play along.
- There will be opportunity – but no requirement – for sharing. Allow this to be as communal or as private as you like.
- You'll need:
 - paper or a notebook and a pen; or
 - a blank word processing document; or
 - an app to record voice memos.

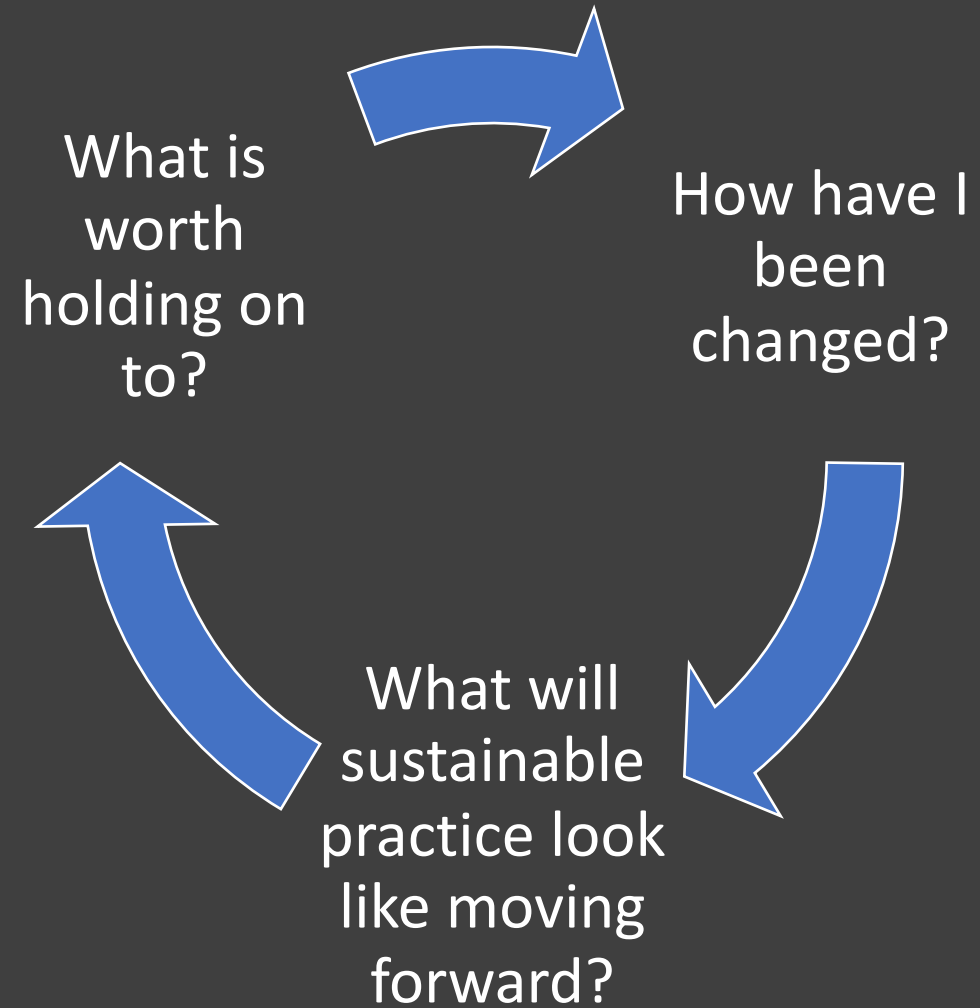
Why are we doing this?

- It's been a difficult eighteen months (understatement) and most of us lack time and space to process the experience.
- It's tempting to call last year a "lost year" and look ahead, but we've also:
 - built new skills;
 - experimented in new modalities;
 - adapted our practice; and
 - weathered an emotional storm.
- Let's not lose this labour of this time.

However...

- This is not to try to bury the traumas of the last year; if anything, my thinking is informed by trauma-informed teaching practice.
- Let's acknowledge – but not celebrate – our resilience.
- How can we build a better future from the lessons we've learned here?

Three Stages of Thinking:



What is worth
holding on to?

This can start small: an activity that worked, a moment you achieved balance, anything in your practice that was better this year than ever before.

This can reflect practice: a softening of rules, a reduction of content, a way of connecting, anything that felt authentically you about your practice.

Take five minutes now
and reflect on the
question, “What is
worth holding on to?”

Write, doodle, record a
voice memo, whatever
works for you.

How have I
been
changed?

Are you interested in the same subjects, assessments, ideas, communities?

What feels urgent to you now that didn't before?

How has your work, practice, or capacity changed?

Take five minutes now
and reflect on the
question, “How have I
been changed?”

Write, doodle, record a
voice memo, whatever
works for you.

What will
sustainable*
practice look
like moving
forward?

We know the kinds of hits something like Covid can throw our way. Is there a way to think about our practice so that it's always already pandemic-ready?

Many of us also recognized that our workloads were unsustainable during the (last?) height of the pandemic – are they sustainable in this moment?

Have your feelings about work/life balance and your own workload changed?

*From Oxford: “able to be maintained at a certain rate or level;” “able to be upheld or defended.”

Take five minutes now
and reflect on the
question, “What will
sustainable practice
look like moving
forward?”

Write, doodle, record a
voice memo, whatever
works for you.

Share in the chat, or
feel free to unmute to
discuss.

Is there anything about
your reflective practice
you'd like to share?

Next Steps

- Think about your reflections today in terms of personal goals, institutional issues, and systemic problems. Make notes to distinguish between them.
- How are you best placed to tackle this work? Where do you need to look for help?
- Take a minute or two now to note any action items or next steps you want to address from your reflections and give yourself a timeline.

The concept of sustainability in relation to pedagogy is complex and interesting, and a range of interpretations might prove fruitful. One way of viewing sustainability is the notion of supporting or bearing weight. In this way, pedagogy might be considered the vital component in teaching, or perhaps the metaphors of ‘cornerstone,’ ‘load bearing wall’ or ‘linchpin’ might be useful. Another view of sustainability is in the sense of sustenance that provides strength, encouragement, support and nourishment. If teachers are to sustain themselves over time and uphold up their ideals and heartfelt beliefs, the idea of community is suggested as a way of doing this. So does pedagogy require community nurturing? A further interpretation of sustainability involves the notion of enduring commitment or bearing up against adversity, which lends itself well to consideration of pedagogy – particularly in relation to performativity – or bureaucratic imposition.

**Julie White,
“Sustainable
Pedagogy.”
*Transnational
Curriculum Inquiry* 5.1
(2008).**

A small, vibrant green plant with several leaves is growing out of a crack in a grey, textured concrete surface. The background is a blurred, light-colored wall with some faint, brownish lines. The overall scene is a metaphor for resilience and growth in a challenging environment.

What, then, do we need to achieve a sustainable practice in 2021 and beyond?

How can we support each other in this work?

Questions? Further thoughts? Or please consider this an open invitation to follow-up.

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