MAY CURRICULUM WEEK | KEYNOTE | May 11, 2021

AS WE STEP FORWARD, WE MUST STAND STILL: CRITICAL DIGITAL PEDAGOGY
AND THE PRAXIS OF TAKING TIME
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TRANSCRIPT:

CARY DIPIETRO:
Welcome everyone, good afternoon. I'd like to welcome you all to today's keynote presentation
by Sean Michael Morris. Before we begin, I'd like to provide just a brief overview of the format
for today's discussion, and if you can hear drilling in the background, it's the worst possible
timing. I've got construction going on in the room right behind me, so please bear with me. In a
moment I'm going to introduce Caroline Langill to open the conversation and introduce Sean a
little bit more formally. Sean's keynote is going to last for about 30 minutes, after which time
Jess Mitchell from the Inclusive Design Research Center will lead question and answer session
with Sean. As you'll see, the chat feature of Zoom is not currently enabled, but it will be enabled
for the Q&A. So, if a question occurs to you during the keynote, please do make a note of it and
and then you'll be able to add your question to the chat or turn on your mic, raise your hand at
that time as a reminder. Please keep your mics muted during the keynote itself and during the
Q&A portion. Please keep them muted when you're not speaking, but you are welcome to turn
your video cameras on If you would like to provide a visual audience for our guests today.

A quick access check-in, the university is committed to providing an accessible environment that
reduces the need for you to disclose a disability or impairment for the purposes of
accommodation. In doing this together, we strive to welcome disability and the changes it brings
into our space. If you have particular access needs during the presentation that isn't being met,
please let us know and we'll attend to it by emailing FCDC@ocadu.ca. Note that you can turn
the closed captions on. You can turn the close captions on. There is a button at the bottom of
the screen. Your zoom screen that says live transcript, CC. So, if you turn that on you can see
the live transcript. One final note for today, the presentation is being recorded, so please be
aware of that, and it will also be made available after today, asynchronously and Open Access.
We'll be sending out details about the recording once it's available, probably sometime next
week. So, with all of that said, I will now pass the floor over to Caroline Langill, our Vice
President, Academic and Provost, to open the keynote and to welcome our guest speaker.
Caroline over to you.

CAROLINE LANGILL:
Thanks very much, Cary. First, I'll do a land acknowledgement and acknowledge that OCAD
University is on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, the Mississaugas of
the Credit, the Anishinaabe and the Huron Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians
of the land upon which we live, work and create when we're on campus in Toronto and that that
land is also shared by the Metis and the Indigenous urban communities and the Inuit. And that
I'm presently in Peterborough, Ontario on the land of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe, and I'm
very grateful to be here. So, this is our traditionally our May Curriculum Week, and like
everything else, there is a bit of a pause, I think, on Curriculum Week. In some ways, I think we

felt like every week has been curriculum week this year as people have pivoted to online and also you know, we've been putting through the changes through the IQAP, so many, many changes and a lot of curriculum work is ongoing. So, some faculty, one faculty, I think is meeting this week, whereas Design and Faculty of Arts and Science have made a decision to move some of their curriculum work off to the fall. Nevertheless, it's a good time to come together to think about what this year has meant.

I was at an OCAD meeting this morning where we heard from Jeffrey Selingo, who's written on the hybrid campus and he acknowledged that the pandemic has really wreaked havoc on the standard model of higher education. That, you know, everything has been upended, and so this keynote is really, I think, welcome at this time. It's also, I mean not just at OCAD, but I'm sure everywhere has felt like it's just been in an accelerated mode, so I also really welcome this notion of pausing that is being offered through this keynote.

So, on that note, I'll introduce Sean Michael Morris who we're very pleased to have with us. He is a senior instructor of learning design and technology in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado in Denver. He's also the director of Digital Pedagogy Lab, an international online gathering for educators committed to issues of diversity, equity, antiracism, critical digital pedagogy, and imagining a new future for education. He has coauthored "An Urgency of Teachers: The Work of Critical Digital Pedagogy", and coedited "Critical Digital Pedagogy: a collection" and "Voices of Practice: Narrative Scholarship from the Margins", and he's editing a forthcoming book, "The Critical Instructional Design Reader", which sounds very apropos for our institution. So, on that note, I will turn it over to Sean. Thanks very much.

SEAN MICHAEL MORRIS:
Thank you very much, Vice President Langill for that introduction and thank you Cary for inviting me to talk today. I'm just going to quickly share my screen so you can see my slides. Make sure everyone can see that yes. I'd also like to thank Jess Mitchell for monitoring the Q&A portion of our time later today and for the last minute, late night encouragement that she offered me yesterday. We had an interesting miscommunication, an email exchange that ended up actually being really great, so it is a real pleasure to have this opportunity. I've got to get my slides going. There we go.

So, we have come upon a watershed moment for digital education as we climb our way out of the pandemic and the necessary turn to online and remote learning that resulted. We are faced with an opportunity to remodel our digital pedagogies. What will be needed now is not to rush into new strategies and practices, but instead a pause. A moment where we can consider what we didn't know before and that we do know now. And whereas Paulo Freire writes tomorrow is possibility, one which will require as much imagination as compassion to produce. As I've watched us all work our way into and through and out of pandemic teaching and learning, I've had one primary concern and I think that is your concern too. How to sustain a human and humane connection between education and students during this time? I've advocated for teachers to teach through the screen and to be gentle with students who are struggling under the multiple traumas of a global pandemic. Unemployment, food insecurity and the threat of poor health or death in their families. Here, in the States, the pandemic was made more difficult by a president and federal government that wouldn't act, and by the aggressive police state that occupied our cities and continue to threaten Black lives.

The confluence of violence, trauma, and the sudden disappearance of students from our classrooms made one thing clearer maybe than it ever has been. We do not know the stories of our students. And as progressive and inclusive as we would like to be, those stories and the communities to sustain those stories are what needs to impact our pedagogies and design going forward, whether online, hybrid or on-campus. Now as I am wont to do, when I give keynote presentations, I'm going to start with a story. When I speak, I tend to weave around a bit to find my way in and out of the matter I've been asked to address, so I thank you for your patience and attention as my method unfolds.

The practice of taking time, which I speak of in the title of this presentation, means this is going to take a little time. I came out of the closet shortly after my 26th birthday, 26 years ago. In 1995 there was no Will and Grace. Ellen DeGeneres hadn't come out yet. LGBTQ people couldn't get married, but they could be fired from their jobs. There was no Internet and the iPhone was more than a decade away, so there were no apps to help gay men meet each other, which meant that the club and the bar and personal ads in newspapers were the way we stayed connected. And pride celebrations. That first year of my gay life, 50,000 people converged on Denver and for the first time I realized how really vast our community was.

Community permits certain freedoms. When women are with women, Black men are with Black men. Mexican grandmothers with their Mexican grandsons, gay men with gay men, and people who share disabilities gather together voices become more articulate within each of their cultural contexts. No one is in a closet and politics of respectability can be left at the door. At that very first pride event, but also at the club and in the bar, I discovered a language for being gay. But I didn't need to practice and that allowed me to shed the splinters of the closet that still clung to me. But on every normal day and in every environment outside of the bar or the club or the little table situated out of the way for a first blind date. I walked about unmarked by my sexuality. I look straight. I act straight. I have a heteronormative fondness for the idea of marriage and a guilty love of romantic comedies. No one needed to know that I was gay, and so I didn't usually tell them. I didn't talk about my weekend at work or my social plans, even though my coworkers would on the regular regale me with theirs. This didn't make me feel oppressed. I had a good job, good friends, people liked me and I was already a private person so not talking about being gay didn't seem problematic.

But the truth is that any omission of character in favor of a dominant paradigm is oppression. Even when it's a voluntary omission. There's another omission I voluntarily live with and that is my disability. It's invisible to all those, but who know me - all but those who know me very well, and I leave it out of conversations because my experience of it is generally unrelatable. And when I have revealed it, I've received back soft eyes and sympathetic cheeks, and quiet "oh"s of compassion. Softness, sympathy, and compassion are all good things, but they are also the signs of being marked. Marked by my disability. Just as talking about dates with men would mark me as gay. And the problem with being marked as gay is that your idea of gay or my colleague's idea of gay is not likely aligned with my experience of being gay. You see what you think is an accurate communication or description of my gayness, but you only see what I'm able to communicate or describe using words and terms for gay that are necessarily heterosexual.

In the essay "Have We Got a Theory For You: Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism, and the Demand for the Woman's Voice", Maria C. Lugones writes, "We and you do not talk the same language. When we talk to you, we use your language, the language of your experience and of

your theories. We try to use it to communicate our world of experience, but since your language and your theories are inadequate in expressing our experiences, we only succeed in communicating our experience of exclusion. We cannot talk to you in our language because you do not understand it." So, even while I'm here looking as white and male as a person can look, I have under my skin an experience of life which I can't speak to any who have not been gay, to anyone who does not share my disability. I can tell you. But I cannot tell you. Because I have told you I'm gay now, you will always know that I am not a perfect fit for the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy that bell hooks speaks of. The dominant paradigm. The hegemony.

I've also told you that I'm disabled and now you will see that on me too. Sorry, I just lost my place. I'm very sorry. Just one second. So now you'll see that on me too. And if I told you my disability, you might have questions, you might feel you have more access to my experience. You might say to others, "Sean Michael Morris lives with..." and the wisdom of my story might become partly yours. And of course, I'm not alone in this, nor is my story the most complicated of stories. But I can walk unnoticed for my sexuality and my disability is as much a privilege as it is oppression. But it is a privilege. I'm not Black, I'm not Indigenous. I'm not a person of color. I am not trans or a woman or visibly disabled. I can go unmarked if I want to, and those who cannot, those whose bodies out them as marginalized, they can tell me their stories. But they cannot tell me their stories. In part this is because I do not or cannot listen because the language of my own experience has limitations. But this is also because I have adopted the language of experience that doesn't belong to me. It belongs to those non-gay and non-disabled white people who have tried to tell me how to talk about my experience. This has made it so I do not have ears to hear if you will, because when someone Black or Indigenous or trans tries to tell me, they must use my language, which cannot express their experience, except as one of exclusion.

This reminds me of a conversation I was having with a colleague a couple of weeks ago. She's putting together a leadership course focused on equity and as a white woman, she did not want to be the only voice speaking during the course. She asked me for recommendations for guest speakers. She said, "How do you find BIPOC people doing this work? Are they just not as well known?" "You have to go looking", I responded, not because they're hard to find - but because we white people do not have the training or the apparatus for hearing and seeing them. As she mentioned in my introduction, for the last several years I've run an event called Digital Pedagogy Lab. The lab is billed as an international professional development gathering for educators committed to issues of diversity, equity, anti-racism, critical digital pedagogy, and imagining a new future for education. As part of the foundational ethos of the lab, I've always sought to put at the front of the stage voices which are not usually heard at educational events.

The idea behind this is that education has been for too long, voiced by heterosexual, cis white men, and so if we're going to imagine a new future for education, it stands to reason that listening to the same voices will only lead to a repetition. A future less about possibility and one narrated, instead by reifying practices. Practices like behaviorism, evidence-based teaching, reliance on learning outcomes and more. Those reified practices are what Digital Pedagogy Lab resists and even seeks to dismantle. The method to that quixotic madness is critical pedagogy, or critical digital pedagogy, approaches that emphasize imagination, problem posing, education and inquiry and then situate, students and teachers as learners in that process. In relationship with educational technology. Critical digital pedagogy applies that same methodology of asking

questions and imagining new possibilities to both the platforms and the practices we employ to deliver digitally inflected teaching and learning.

But to be perfectly straightforward about it, critical pedagogy and critical digital pedagogy are not approaches with best or even predictable practices. But rather, they are responsive to the situation, the technology, the classroom. And most of all, the human being involved in trying to learn or teach in that situation. These are humanizing pedagogies and liberating pedagogies and the pedagogies, which I try my damnedest to proliferate in the world. But there's a problem, isn't there? I am gay and I'm disabled and I can speak at those margins, but how from my place, my social location, my own intersectionality, can I presume to create an event, an environment, a stage where, for example, a Black voice might be heard? How can I, when I have had no Black experience of my own? Isn't the stage I provide, the stage they walk onto, necessarily a white stage? A cisgender stage? A male stage? There's a question even as to whether my ability to provide that stage is a mark of my own privilege. Liberating pedagogies for those whose teaching or design is supported by their privilege are pedagogies which would give marginalized people access to a relationship to privilege. In other words, we who stand at or nearer the center can give others access to that center. This though does not change the fact that we who stand at the center are in control.

Paulo Freire writes "the oppressors use their humanitarianism to preserve a profitable situation. Thus, they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality." In other words, marginalized people are free to join the center, but they should not ask too many questions or try to change what they find there. Additionally, freedom to join the center is not the freedom which critical pedagogy advocates for. For bell hooks, for example, there is power at the margins. And again and again her invitation is to question assumptions about the need for the marginalized to be absorbed into, to be included at the center. For the white supremacist, patriarchal institution or teacher, or instructional designer, the idea of freedom resolves in freedom to explore the center, to take part in the benefits the privileged can impart. Freedom to the privileged is privilege to have what they have. People with privilege can give marginalized people what we want them to have, which is the same as what we imagine they want to have. This is precisely the assumption that critical pedagogy and critical digital pedagogy interrogate and seek to dismantle.

Let me try to put this a little more concretely. If we look at the learning management system, for example, what we find is an instrument designed to mimic components of a teaching environment. We have a place for content, a place for syllabus, a place where video lectures can be posted, a place where discussion can happen, a place to hand in assignments, a place to post grades. These structures, which surround our ideas of formal learning, are coded into the digital environment. But what else is coded in? A list from Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" provides some insight. The teacher teaches and the students are taught: the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about. The teacher talks and the students listen meekly. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the teacher. The teacher chooses the program content and the students who were not consulted adapt to it.

Most importantly though, what has been coded into our digital learning environments is an assumption about the linear direction of learning. A linear direction that moves chronologically and by subject across the term, AKA the curriculum. But also, the linear direction, which is the

pipeline of information between students and teacher. A pipeline that originates at the teacher and terminates at the teacher. Even the most beautiful, valiant attempts at student-centered teaching find their end in the teacher. The teacher evaluates, the teacher grades. The teacher decides whether a student has achieved what they should achieve. Imagining anything otherwise can be confounding because the teacher represents the active learning more than the students themselves do. Our digital environments for learning, our strategies and designs within those environments are grounded in one way of knowing. A linear, decidedly European way of knowing. And the location of knowledge always finds its seat in the teacher. What this means is that students, marginalized or not, though within education, students always stand poised at the margins, are invited to partake in the privilege of knowledge which the teacher is willing to share. Students must return to the teacher again and again to validate their place in the university to receive the blessing of belonging. For the teacher, freedom means having the freedom to know what he knows to have what he has. The teacher devoutly committed to his students hopes they will learn his knowledge, and he imagines that's their hope too.

Writ badly, this is inclusive pedagogy. The drawing in toward the teacher students of every kind. Diversity in this case is not counter hegemonic, but rather a broader audience for an institutional way of knowing. Institutions in the US which are designated Hispanic-serving or AAPI-serving are congratulated for bringing people identified by those margins to the seat of knowledge which is the university or the teacher. But the expectations around learning don't change. The primary tenets of instruction don't change, just the color of the faces in the classroom changes. bell hooks writes at the opening of "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness", "Those of us who would participate in the formation of counter hegemonic cultural practice must identify the spaces where we begin. The process of revision. Do we continue to stand in political resistance with the oppressed, ready to offer our ways of seeing and theorizing of making culture towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing where transformation is possible?" Part of what we must do when we are thinking of stepping forward and instead choose to stand still, is to do this work of identifying the spaces where we must begin to revise our work. Our approaches are ways of thinking. When we talk about decolonizing the university or education for instance, we are inviting ourselves to participate in a radical realignment of power in order to provide access to knowledge. And in turn transformation for everyone.

However, we cannot decolonize education by inviting Indigenous students to campus. We must be willing and ready to unseat the teacher and to evolve a university where learning isn't necessarily always linear. See, even when we welcome marginalized people to our institutions, our classrooms, our conversations, we usually ask them to shuffle off enough of their identity as marginalized in order to adapt to the expectations we will inevitably have for them. Which is not just to blend in, to practice respectability, but at a liberal institution concerned with the practice of freedom that emanates from that institution. To preserve enough of their marginal identity to remain marked as other even as they are welcomed by us, the compassionate privileged. In other words, an Hispanic-serving institution not only needs students to identify as Hispanic, it needs Hispanic to be a category of otherness. Never mind that many Hispanic assigned students don't use that term to identify themselves. Without that marker of difference, diversity cannot be achieved. Without that marker of difference, there is no institutional show and tell.

Now the markers of identity which do not mix with the markers of hegemony must be shed. Students whose cultural backgrounds include learning through storytelling and sharing or whose

cultural norms do not include Western ideas of punctuality or the five paragraph essay. These students must learn to get along with those expectations, nonetheless. And yet still the markers of difference of where they came from must never be erased. If you are brown, you're brown. If you're Deaf, you're Deaf. If you're trans, you're trans. Too often that is liberal inclusiveness. The liberal white supremacist wants a marginalized friend to be different enough.

Hooks points out, "Often this talk about the other annihilates erases. No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice, only tell me your pain. I want to know your story and then I would tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I'm still the author, the authority. I'm still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my life."

What's happening here when those from the margins join even the liberal center is worse than silencing. It is the oppression of omitting some part of one's character and then the amplification of a rewritten story. A stolen voice. White ventriloquism we cannot allow our work to become this. We cannot allow our inclusive designs and pedagogies to write or rewrite stories that are not ours to enforce a normative language for speaking about difference. We cannot put everyone in the same box and give them the same knowledge and call it equity.

To return to my story about coming out, shortly after I came out, I discovered in my neighborhood a coffee shop where the gay community gathered. Walking in there as a young and still glowing gay man, I was greeted by eyes and voices, chatter and glances, flirtation as much as well welcomeness. Flirtation, see, is part of gay parlance. We speak to each other with the once-over. our Hello's are as much greetings as they can be hints of seduction. Gay men are as willing to invite each other to brunch as to breakfast the next morning. This is part of the charm with each other, but it doesn't necessarily translate that well outside of the community of gay men. Part of my identity is wrapped up in those glances. Part of my identity today is formed by greetings on dating apps. "Hey, handsome" among the most common. I know myself in part because of how I flirt and I'm flirted with. At my first pride event I was hugged and winked at and jibed and propositioned by a dozen or more men and all as part of the celebration of our community. Outside of that context, this behavior would be harassment. But within my little marginal group, this behavior is an affirmation for all of us. Within what design for digital learning can this particular way of knowing, knowing through joyful flirtation and happy encounter find purchase?

Do our universal designs for learning allow Black people to gather with Black people, to speak to each other and learn from each other in the ways that are most relevant and real for them? Can Indigenous people gather together with Indigenous people? Trans or lesbian or gay with others who share their voices? When we design for digital learning, whether online or hybrid, we design for a specific class, a set of content, a semester's worth of teacher student relationship. We don't design for community. And when we don't design for community, we're not designing for diversity. See this moment right now is about much more than what we do next with digital learning because the pandemic didn't just teach us lessons about how inadequate our digital approaches have been in the past and how desperately we need to improve them. The pandemic also taught us that when the classroom disappears, too often so do students. They disappear from sight, yes, and they disappear from our physical knowing of them. But they also disappear into the lives they lead that are not academic. They're only shades and shadows when they're in our classrooms, but that possessed them entirely when they had to turn around

and go home. They disappear into communities we don't see. We don't. We don't know or understand and for which our instructional design makes no room or even acknowledges. Because one disabled person in my class does not an understanding of disability make. Access and inclusion are not necessarily liberating. Our very best efforts at inclusion will always fall short if we don't begin to see that being disabled or being gay, and I'd wager being Black, Indigenous or person of color, is a communal experience. An experience informed by and dependent upon others who share those characteristics. Others with whom one can have language and play and empathy and understanding.

And so, when we include a marginalized person in the lead in the learning our institutions provide, we're inviting them to participate in the privilege we see as freedom. But which may not be freedom in the language they speak. We must look at what our designs are. Our designs on education are designs on students are designs on design itself. And we must look at the font from which those designed to spring. Are these the designs of Indigenous voices heard? Are these the designs of Black voices listened to? If that's what they are. They're still not adequate. Because they must be Indigenous designs, they must be Black designs. They must be the designs of the disabled, not for the disabled. Designs of LGBTQ folk, not for them. It must be the designs of soft eyes and sympathetic -- they must not be the designs of soft eyes and sympathetic cheeks and quiet "oh's of compassion. It must not be the designs that mark bodies and minds as other, as different or designs that respond to the margins. They must be designed of the margins, and they must relocate our understanding of learning and knowing to those margins.

Put another way, the one really big mistake that universal design for learning makes is presuming there is a universal anything. And that we designers can comprehend what that might be. Now I want to be careful here. Because there are a lot of good people listening right now and you have done a lot of - a great deal of hard, deliberate work to create open spaces and opportunities for unheard and undetected voices. I've long admired the work that OCAD and Inclusive Design Research Center do, and I'm practically sycophantic about the brilliant Jess Mitchell, who will be reining me in during our Q&A very soon. But I also want to be careful not to not be too careful. Because the work that we're doing that you're doing the work that needs to be done is not halfway work. It's not partial work, it has to be complete work, and it has to be stunningly wrought so that it dismantles what needs dismantling. Which includes me talking right now. I'm so grateful to have been invited here. And please do not invite me back. Please do not ever invite a cis, white male like me back to speak. We have spoken enough. And our voices drown out the voices of practically everyone else. I am gay and disabled and so I have done my speaking at the margins. But here on this screen you cannot see my gayness. You cannot detect my disability. You see a bearded white male speaking again. How many times does this need to happen?

The work we need to do must happen outside of our comfortable walls of academic dialogue. Outside of our being used to seeing white men speak outside the walls of our institutions in places where we feel more vulnerable, stripped of our books and rhetoric. We cannot dismantle white supremacy if we're only ever looking to include people and privilege. We white people cannot expand our ways of knowing and doing and being and relating until we stop thinking about expanding, including making accessible our way of doing things. Going forward, what we need to learn the most has nothing to do with digital technology, but also everything to do with digital technology. Everything to do with who digital technology omits, what omissions it

requires. The silence is so deafening we never heard them before the pandemic made them relevant to all of us who haven't gone unheard.

And so, as we step forward, we must stand still. The opportunity for us is not technological, is not simply curricular. Even if it must be grounded in the frantic and be willing experiences of technology, both technological and curricular, which we have endured during the pandemic. The opportunity for us is one of humanizing education to degree and at a depth which we have not attempted before. And we may discover by standing still, that it is someone else who will step up. To step us all forward. A voice speaking a language we don't yet understand, but must be humble enough, to learn. A speaker at the margin refusing to come in where we are comfortable calling us instead to see here, and not an education that we thought we tamed an entirely new way. Thank you.

JESS MITCHELL: I feel a roar of applause, and I hope you do too, Sean. Stunningly wrought.

CARY: Thank you Sean. I'm going to pass the floor over to you Jess, but just in terms of process for everyone, the chat, I believe, is now open. Sayeda's confirmed that it's open. Please join me there in thanking Sean for his keynote. If you have questions that have occurred to you that you would like to post there, please do and Jess and I'll also keep an eye on it. And of course, you're also welcome to raise your hand. So, with that I will pass it back to Jess and also thank Jess Mitchell, Senior Manager at the Inclusive Design Research Center, for leading the Q&A. If you don't know Jess, you need to. So, there I'll leave it at that and pass it over to you, Jess, thank you.

JESS: Thank you so much. Just give you all a second to put your questions into the chat here. I just wanted to say a quick thing, Sean. Everything about this moment, this stark background, you're just you. Nothing behind you. I'm encased in this kind of jungle, you've got light coming in from the side. It's heavy, it's in terms of humanizing, not very. [laughs] I love it because it's so meaningful, but in full disclosure, I have to tell people Sean is my Bob Dylan and what I mean by that is many musicians attribute pretty much anything that they've done to Bob Dylan or say that it originated with Bob Dylan. So, Sean has taught me bravery. He taught me how to teach many years after I first taught in Graduate School, it should have happened earlier. But you taught me so much about students and about instructors and the relationship that you can have. One of the things I wanted to start out with as I start to organize some of the questions here is, I want to hear a little bit about building trust online and building communities online, and I'm quite aware that you problematize the notion of building. And us, because, inevitably, there's a "them" on the outside, even of the classroom. So can you talk a little bit about that. And I imagine some of these questions are going to be quite practical, like how do you do this? How do you do assessment? And some will be quite theoretical, so I hope you will dance between the two easily.

SEAN: I'll try. The practical is harder honestly, but I'm always willing to entertain those questions and try to figure that out with people. So, building trust online to start with that. That's actually it's an interesting question considering that I'm here giving a keynote. People I don't know, and I have to trust that they trust me and that I can trust them. I think that is there right from the get go. There has to be an assumption of trust on the part of the teacher to the students. We need to start by trusting students, which is a phrase that my colleague Jesse uses all the time and by acknowledging that we trust students in a very clear way. One of the things that happens in

digital spaces is that communication is not as... it can't be as subtle, so we have to be very clear about what we're saying, so literally I will write to students and say, at the very beginning of the term, I'll tell them that I trust them and I'll tell them that I believe that they are there to be scholars and they're learning to, in certain cases, prove me wrong and try to establish that very, very clearly. I mean, it's just a very straightforward dialogue with them. Beyond that, though, the behaviours that then keep reinforcing that trust are being responsive to students, actually believing students when they say they can't get something done and giving them the opportunity to revise what you expect of them if that if that makes any sense. So, for example, if you set an assignment that you want them to do and someone comes back to you, one student comes back to you and says, can I do it this way or can I do it that way and you say, sure. Saying "sure" is a way of trusting somebody, letting them know. Look, I know you're going to take this and run with it and you're gonna do good job that trust has to be a lot more than textual. It has to be. It has to be here. We really have to actually trust students. Once we do that. What I found is the trust comes back then they trust a trust in me as well and I also make it clear that I'm not going to pull any rugs out from under them again, textually, like in a message. To them, you know, not in syllabus because no one reads the syllabus. So have to actually communicate it directly too. I don't know if that begins to answer your question or not.

JESS: It does, and maybe just a follow-up question to that. We all have stories, and you shared that perspective in your own, well, one piece of your own story with us. There's so much more to each of us than one story. I'm wondering how you encourage students to share stories about themselves and how you safeguard against that storytelling, perpetuating the privilege and the power that so often is associated with storytelling. So, there's a history that in those situations those in power have not done the right thing with the stories that have been told and how do we make people who do not have power feel they can make themselves vulnerable? And this is part of this trust building, but I wonder how you get to this authentically in your in your teaching.

SEAN: Those are really good questions and a lot of it has to do with specific circumstances, and I can relate a couple of stories that happened even this last semester probably. But to start with, I encourage people to tell stories by telling my own stories. There was a recent presentation that I gave where I revealed that I recently got a divorce and I did that in a blog post and in the other presentation and I did it very pedagogically. So, I'm not a person who shares personal stuff online unless its pedagogical, unless there's a reason for doing so. So, when I'm sharing in class and I'm sharing this story, I'm using it as an example of this is we can we can do this together, we can tell these stories to each other. But similarly, to the sort of appropriate behavior around sharing pronouns, for example. So, I may tell people these are my pronouns, but I'm not going to go around and ask people to tell their pronouns, because that's inappropriate. They may not want to be outed as having different pronouns. So similarly, I don't require students to tell stories in those spaces. What I often have is I'll have students, and this happened past semester, I'll have students who reach out to me to tell me their story, but not to share it with the rest of the class, and I'd make a safe space for that, and I have a conversation - more than one - with that student. There was also another situation this past - this was fascinating to watch. There was a situation this past semester where there were a couple of people in class who were fragile white people, I guess I'm going to say, and they would try to - they would express that and boy, the diverse people in class, the marginal people in class just took over the conversation and it was fascinating to watch because they did it themselves. I didn't have to like set a stage. I didn't have to like, course correct or anything, they just do it themselves and I don't know how. I don't know how that happened, I don't know how the community was set up in such

a way that they felt empowered to to reclaim the conversation, but they did and so, I don't know, I guess it's a really difficult question to answer because it really depends on the situation. I make myself - so I guess one thing that I could say about digital learning and online learning, and hybrid learning is that we don't get to not relate to individual students just because we're no longer in the room with them. When we are in a room with students, we can see when something's going wrong. We can see it on their face. We can see them in their proxemics. We can see what's what's happening and we can address it. That's much more difficult to do online, but we have to be attentive to sudden silences. Students who were speaking and suddenly now are not speaking anymore and reach out to those students and see what's going on. Students who reach out to me with the story they want to tell just to me, but they don't want to relive everybody else. That's a moment for me to be engaged with that one student, and I have to take that opportunity because otherwise they won't feel that they are at home. And welcome in that environment. And it's very difficult to feel at home and welcome in an environment that isn't actually an environment, that is just a screen. So always remembering that we can't not have that human connection just because now we're digital and we can work in our underwear if we want to.

JESS: Thank you Sean and just an amazing anecdote from my teaching this year. I had a student who looked like she totally disengaged. Stopped showing up week six to the synchronous lectures. It was after we had a chat about a midterm project, and the project idea wasn't working. And I pushed a little hard on her about choosing a different project idea, and then she disappeared. The end of the term she sent me a URL. The entire term, she had been writing all of her weekly reflections, and had redone her entire report, her entire project. She created this beautiful website and the only explanation I had for why that it happened was the following. She told me that she knew something about herself now and that was getting negative feedback or getting feedback that 'this didn't quite work, try something new' hit her really hard. That she was in a male-dominated field. She was a computer science major, and so she found a way to make it work for her. She moved outside of the structure of the class that was created, so we had created this community. She found comfort and a place to express herself outside. I told her she'd knocked my socks off. That she was incredible. We had a really lovely back and forth about it and it just everything felt huge and wonderful. OK, some questions here that I want to get to. Ryan White asked, what role does the digital play in the pedagogy you describe. When the digital is, first of all a tool of surveillance, the monetization of education exacerbation of economic difference and the isolation of the individual. All that.

SEAN: All of that! It's an easy question. [laughs] No, actually it's a brilliant question because that is exactly what my work is, is to try to remember that. That the technology is in our way when we are trying to teach through it. It is not designed for teaching. It has never been designed for teaching. It is designed for surveillance. It is designed for data collection and monetization, yes. All of those things. I mean it is a corporate business. And and teaching is not. And so trying to find, trying to remember that what you're doing doesn't actually take place on the screen. Nothing is taking place on screen. What's happening is you have to find a way to connect through that screen to students on the other side, and that often is by... I've never said this before, but now it's occurring to me as potentially true... by simplifying the way that you do things so. One of the things that educational technology wants to do is to add things, right? So oh, you can add this thing to your LMS, and you can add this thing to this and all of a sudden you can monitor students' heart rate, which is actually true. These things exist out there. [laughs] But and instead of doing that, instead of adding those things, try to simplify - and

simplify can mean that you are writing students a letter and, and that's instead of a lecture like, you writing to them in a way that's very human, in a way that's very you, and it breaks through this boundary that we put up by the platform that you're working through because you have the ability to just be yourself, and you have the ability to encourage them to be themselves. But often what has to happen is you have to sort of break down the expectations that the technology has for us. We can't let technology teach for us, so we have to find ways around that.

One example I want to bring up, and I may refer to the story you just told Jess, actually. The... oh no, I just lost it completely. So the... Finding a way to build, and I saw another question down the line too, about sort of building environments where students can feel like they're gathering in community. One of those sort of tenets of instructional design, one of the ways that we are told best to teach online best practice-wise is to respond to student posts all the time in discussions, right? So, you're in a discussion forum and you're supposed to always respond to student posts. I throw that out the window and I let students respond to each other, and in fact I don't even post prompts anymore, so I don't even tell them this is what you should talk about. I just let it be there. This is where you can talk to each other and then they do what they're going to do in there. And that's one way that they start to come together as a community. That's also one of the ways that they start to form smaller communities, because they meet each other in that space, and they take themselves out of that space and talk to each other in those spaces. That happened this last semester, and I can't see it happening, and I can't evaluate it, and I can't assess it, and that's fantastic. I don't want to. I want them to do it themselves. But that's one of the ways in which just trying to support the system through technology, by saying I'm not going to do what you want me to do, I'm going to. I'm going to mess around and I'm going to do something completely different because this is more authentic to way that I teach. So, the question that you asked, Ryan, is a giant question and it is basically the body of my work. There's a lot I could talk about, but that's a small answer to help there.

JESS: One of the things about technology and about the learning management system that drives me nuts is the swim lanes. You've got Intro to Music and maybe you've got Chemistry. Never the two shall meet, except that's where all this wonderful stuff happens, right where we start to mix these things. So, what I try to do pedagogically is encourage students to come in with their major, whatever it is that they're interested in, and then maybe connect something that we're doing in class to that and make it part of a portfolio. I know others do that as well. Next question from Jutta. Thank you, Sean, beautifully said. I have one question that I worry about. What happens to people that are marginalized who don't have community, no kin with a shared language or experience? And I think that this gets at this community of practice within the classroom and this kind of creating an "us" that is permeable, but I'll let you say more.

SEAN: So, as a teacher, as teachers, we have certain limitations. I cannot provide community to someone who has difference from me, who doesn't - who can't find commuting in me. I mean, I'm trying to say this delicately, but there's certain things that we just have limitations on, and we have to accept this, those limitations. However, we can always be receptive. We can always be there in case someone wants to reach out to us. It's also really important if a student doesn't have community within their own marginalized group, if you will, I use the word marginalized all the time and I can't stand the word actually, it's so "us and them". But if a student doesn't have community, one of the things that's really important for a teacher to be able to do is to know what resources in the community and in the university or the surrounding community might be available to that student. So not knowing or being able to find spaces where that student can

find a community or can't find kinship, that's something that we can do as a resource. Otherwise, I think what you were just saying, Jess, really trying to create community in the classroom that is welcoming to everybody. Where everyone can have it where we can have a voice and and I think that is done by having actually less structure and less interference from the instructor.

JESS: I wonder if you have students like I do who panic about the less structure. It seems like by about week four they realize, oh I get it now, I understand why...[laughs]

SEAN: oh yeah, this last semester I had students who said "I didn't understand who this professor was. He was never in discussion." And I'm like, well, you'll find out! [laughs] And then they find that they don't need me, and that's the best thing.

JESS: And that's the questioning and disrupting the power in the classroom. OK, next question from Angelika and then Ryan Rice is going to ask a question himself. I'm collecting both questions and raised hands, so keeping keep 'em coming. So, Angelika says, could you please share how you set up smaller and larger community spaces online in class and outside where students feel comfortable and can find each other? This is an interesting question. Angelika, I just watched a video of Alfie Kohn who also was addressing this because a lot of this unstructured-ness, Sean, and I'm sure you've heard this before and people ask about how does this scale. How can you do this in larger classes? Yeah, go ahead.

SEAN: So again, teachers have limitations if you have - God forbid - you have 500 students in your class, and if you have 500 students in your class, please be making some sort of progress at your university - this should never happen! It really should never happen! [laughs] But so my best experience with this has actually been in teaching a massive open online course. Years and years and years ago my my colleague Jesse and I ran a MOOC that was about books, and it was run on Twitter and it was actually run on Twitter and through Canvas the LMS. And so what we would do, is we post stuff in the LMS that was basically some readings and discussion points, and that's everything. If they wanted to, they wanted to do that and then we would hold twice weekly hashtag chats on on Twitter. What ended up happening, we had about 5000 people in that MOOC. What ended up happening was that people there would be certain people whose voices would rise to the top and what we found was that was not just white guys, but it was actually a lot of different folks having their voices rise to the top, and then those folks would sort of be magnets for other folks and then they would find each other. So much of what has to happen in larger communities, and this happens in larger communities outside of the institution, is people find each other and they try to find each other. What you can do is you can try to create spaces where they can find each other, or you can invite them to create spaces where they find each other. One of the things that's actually that's been starting to happen at a lot of conferences, for example, especially now that we're online, and this will happen in digital pedagogy lab this year, is an encouragement to create affinity groups so that students can or attendees at a conference can say, ok, we're we're all Pacific Islanders and we want to talk to each other. And we don't want to talk to anybody else. We want to talk to each other, so we're going to go over in this room and have a breakout session all of our own. And so you can try to encourage students to create these sort of affinity groups. Are you interested in this kind of thing? Is this where you come from? Is this how you identify? These might be ways to to sort of help students congregate together. And then they're going to talk to each other, just as community members, but they'll also potentially talk to each other about, you, know content in the course and the work that they're doing in the course. But regardless, if they do that latter

thing, if they do the former, it's good for learning, so that would be one thing that you could do is you could just encourage them to sort of - and there are technologies that support this and there are technologies that don't support this. The LMS does not really support this because the LMS is teacher-centered, but for example, when I teach I use Slack and Slack - I don't know if people are familiar with Slack, but it's a team communication tool that was originally designed for corporate, and it's been sort of subverted for educational uses. But it allows students to create their own sort of small groups that they can just discuss and you can't see them if they don't include you and so if you can find a tool that allows you to give students permission to create those groups themselves, then that's one way to make that happen. I can't do it, so let's take that off the table. Like, you can't as a teacher, you can't do it. You can't create communities. You have to foster this. The environment where communities can be created by the students who want them.

JESS: It's been incredible teaching on Zoom because you can do these breakout rooms and have no idea what's going on in them, and sometimes affinity groups. But sometimes randomizing it is nice too, because then people get a lot of practice. I heard this term so many of my students petrified of showing their video or speaking up in the technology. You know, it's a good reminder that we spend so much of our time here but not everybody does. Okay, Ryan Rice will you unmute so you can ask your question? Hi Ryan!

RYAN RICE: Hi, Sean. Listening, a lot of things trigger in terms of things that I'm pulling out of this, and there are just two things. One struck me is that when you talked about the practice of freedom, it made me think of, this is what fueled residential school. Right. This is a history of the way that you're positioning it has consequences through to a greater history, but I also want to caution you when you talk about marginalization and how it regards to historically excluded people. Because I'm a citizen of the Mohawk Nation, we're a sovereign nation. We don't consider ourselves marginalized. We position ourselves at the center. At OCAD, with Indigenous faculty and staff, we position ourselves at the center, and we have also shared this prospect with OCAD, and say we are the heart and everything has to go out of it, right? So my question is, you talk about people listening, but do people actually hear? And my question is from your position, what do you say about the silence that happens after someone like myself, speaking from my center, is silenced. There's no response. In a room full of... none. In a room full of colleagues in the institution.

SEAN: So that's an interesting question. As a...as a 'this' person, that has not happened to me usually. I think that - so one of the things that I've been trying to work on here at CU Denver and the university is trying to work on... sorry, it's so...it's both problematic and hopeful at the same time. When people are trying to work on diversity issues at a university and one of the things that I've been trying to get across to people is that the best thing that we can do is to listen, is to try to listen whether or not there, whether someone can be heard. I don't know. I really don't know. It really depends on where people are coming from and how sort of fragile they might be and whether they're willing to be humble enough to learn something new. What's interesting about your question, of course, is that I'm terrified to answer with silence. [laughter] I want to say that, first I want to say that I think it's fantastic that you're positioning yourself at the center. That is actually what I'm trying to get to in in my talk is that we can't keep talking about this as marginal, it's just not. That's not appropriate and it doesn't work, because then there's a center. And that center is occupied by very specific people. So I like that - I like the fact that that's where you're coming from. Getting there is - and I would I'd be curious how, when you position

yourself as the heart at OCAD, how it is, how it is received and how you have done that and how you language it, how you message it, how you embody it. Because at an institution like mine, for example, it is, that is just not happening now. My institution, I didn't name them in my talk, but they're very proud of being an Hispanic-serving institution and an AAPI-serving institution. And to me that feels - that doesn't feel like we're like we're shifting where the center exists. That is just bringing people to the center and asking them to participate in an educational model that they didn't invent. That may not even respond to them so that the work that's trying to be... the work that's being done here is partial, it is the work that I am trying to push against. Even in the talk that I gave. But one of the reasons, I guess, one of the reasons why I am struggling for an answer to your question is because I haven't actually been in a position where what you're talking about is happening. I haven't been in that position and I don't mean because I talk and people listen. I what I mean is, I haven't been in a situation where 'marginalized' people are positioning themselves as the heart of an institution. That simply hasn't happened to me before and so. That's that sounds like. That sounds amazing and wonderful and appropriate. And I also can't even comprehend it, which I love. That I can't comprehend it because that means that I have so much work to do and that's what I mean. That's what I thrive on so I have completely inadequately tried to answer your questions, thank you.

JESS: Ryan, don't run away just yet! I want to ask another follow up question I think related to your question that Sean's talk brought up for me, and that is this question of how do we re-calibrate and welcome in different epistemologies, different centers, without being threatened, without sinking into imagined relativism, without defensiveness, or worse. And I think that that's really what you're getting at. And I know it's answering a question with a question, but I love that you're here. It's great to see you. Thanks for your question.

RYAN: It's a matter of knowing where you are. Whose land are you on? Whose territory do you occupy? What is your position? What is your responsibility? How come you don't know your history of where you are situated? And if you don't know that you can never have a relationship to the land or to the people from that land, so you can never understand those perspectives. You know we have, you know, we're situated in that treaty area, Dish with One Spoon territory, which is about equity and that equity people say is an ambition that was from the past. It's still there today. Anyone occupying this territory belongs to the Dish with One Spoon. So, if you know, we talk about, we're all treaty people. Treaty people. That is saying is you have a nation-to-nation relationship. So, if you don't understand that you can't move your center. You can't understand my center. And you occupy a space where I will always be marginalized.

SEAN: One of the things if I can, so my university sits on- so it actually is part of a campus that has three universities on it and it's Auraria campus here in Denver, and it sits on land that was, that when it was first settled, was essentially an Hispanic community, Latino community, and it was taken from them in order to, in order to put the university down, in order to build buildings. They were then in turn told, okay, well, for three generations or four generations your kids can go to school for free, which has happened, and people have taken advantage of that, which is great. But when you think about the fact that this this campus sits on land that was taken from people who were there already and now we're an Hispanic-serving institution, how incredibly problematic is that? Because it's just, it's this weird erasure of what we did wrong, and it's kind of like a bandage that we're putting on it and so. What like - you've successfully broken my brain and made me want to have a very different discussion here at this university about that. That whole thing about the whole idea of the Hispanic-serving institution, and specifically because of

the campus's history which I'm very aware of. But not everyone is sort of aware of but, but not really understanding how that affects our efforts toward well. I was going to say reparations, but that's not what's happening, it's not reparations, it's a sort of accommodation, and that's kind of it. So yeah, so that I just wanted I just threw it out there because what you say about history, that is incredibly important, and I don't think that many - like, people who work at my institution don't even understand the very recent history, much less the history of Indigenous Americans who were here.

JESS: That history continues to be marginalized and ignored. I just read an article about how the new citizenship pamphlet needs to be updated yet again because of the way that it represents the relationship with Indigenous people and as somebody who just took that exam and read that, I was thinking, I wonder if Ryan read this [laughs] this does not seem as though it's been vetted. [laughs] So it's wonderful to hear your thoughts and good to see you. Thank you. OK, so we have a lot of questions. Judith Doyle. I think your question was answered. It was about class size. Immony, your question's next, then Michelle, you're after Immony, and then Maria-Belen Ordonez is making some really scintillating commentary that I'm enjoying immensely. Some comments so may ask that you you get a chance to speak up as well. So Immony's question was, I truly appreciate the experience, convictions and knowledge you shared with us that gesture to acknowledge your presence in a space is so important to understanding its impact implications with the audibility of BIPOC minor voices within art and design education. Do you want to say some more about that, Sean, about how you bring voices in?

SEAN: Sure. I'm having, I'll be honest, I'm having a bit of... I'm continuing to have a little bit of trouble here only because I think one of the ways... so I'm going to sort of answer this question in a couple of ways. Bringing voices in depends a great deal on being being quiet, and I saw a comment about being silent, and I think that there has to be a difference between being silent and being quiet. Silence can often be complicity, and it can also be a silence of fear, but being quiet and this is of course the rhetorical distinction that may not be real, being quiet is to say, okay, I'm here and I'm listening. And we're here together and I'm going to be quiet while you talk or I'm going to be quiet while you're quiet and but we're here together. Trying to figure out we're trying to find ways to create that sense of quiet, that sense of receptiveness to other voices, to students, is really vital, and again, it's not something that there's a best practice around. There are certain things you can do, for example, not doing discussion prompts, letting a discussion be an ungraded space. There are certain things you can do to help support that in an online classroom. But primarily, it's a human-to-human connection and it is something that you have to sort of figure out. You have to feel it out and you can do this in a room. People can do this in a room if they've been teaching for a while, you can do it. You can also do it online. It takes a different kind of practice, but it can be done. The other thing that I want to say about this is that. I'm no longer going to do speaking gigs, I'm just not going to do it anymore because because I just don't believe that I should be the one talking anymore and so that's one way of bringing voices in is by refusing to be one. If you're one of the dominant voices, backing off removing yourself is actually a really important move to make.

JESS: Your voice in your writing better stick around. [laughter] Before, Michelle, we get to you, just apropos of what you're talking about - voices, Maria gets at this: University structures are not set up to listen. Agendas, so voices outside of the neoliberal logic will not be heard. Nevertheless, we find each other like termites gathering to hopefully shift what knowledge is in

the first place. This is this relationship between form and function, right? The way things begin matters the way things are built matters. The way you walk into your class. The way you structure your syllabus, what are you falling into? What assumptions have you just tagged along on your back into the space or the room that you can play around with that you can get rid of? What how can you make your liquid syllabus in otherwise right?

SEAN: Yeah. And even if you can't make your syllabus more liquid or flexible, recognizing that the very first word of your syllabus matters, that that the very first thing you say to students matters. How you format the front page of your LMS matters because that if especially if they're going to see that same page over and over and over again every time they log in, be aware that that is now what they see when they come to class. And can you imagine if they were walking into class and you wore the same clothes everyday and you said the same thing in the same tone of voice every day? That would be weird. So trying to remember that your text and the formatting, I mean this is so weird, right? But the formatting, the text, the pictures you use, all of it is an extension of who you are as a teacher. It's what they're going to know about you, and it's how they're going to relate to you. So being very conscious of the words you use, the very first words you use, how you approach students, how you talk to students. And being you know, let down on the formal language, because unless you really speak like that. It isn't really authentic, so trying to think of ways to be authentic on the in those digital spaces is really important.

JESS: One of the ways that you've made me brave and risky, Sean, and this is one of the questions coming up, is your writing has encouraged me to write, which is scary and horrifying, and all kinds of things. But I wrote a little something about those first few moments in the classroom and how there's whether it's the classroom or zoom. There's an opportunity in those first few moments, and I think about those first few moments a lot because they matter a lot. And I think about what our friend and colleague Jesse does with the syllabus where he reads the syllabus. And at the end adds, "because I said so" and then if it reads like a mandate, he goes back and he fixes it because it's not what the syllabus is meant to be. Create just enough scaffolding, just enough guardrails that people can take off, like my student did where she she went to her own website. She got her own space. I mean, how could that not be a good thing? How can that ever... Michelle, you have been so patient and lovely. Will you ask your question now?

MICHELLE FORSYTH: Thank you. Yes, when I started teaching online last semester, I was so worried because my body does not allow me to be smooth or slick or have a beautiful, even tone. And I was terrified of this video, which couldn't capture my audio. So it took so long to write the captions until I decided okay, I'm just gonna start to play with these things and let them happen in my videos like and the things that I've been thinking a lot about is how do you include, like, the stutter - the slip? The rough edges, all of those things, the afterthoughts. The secrets, the whispers, in addition to the main voice, and I've been doing that through using the captions or word bubbles or things like that in new ways. Or working silently for a while. But I'm just wondering, like, you know, a lot of the videos - not all students will go online and look at those videos. I do go on screen in class and after I get comfortable with students, my body tends to relax more. Because, you know, stress of communicating with others affects me more and more. And I just get worried because of surveillance about, you know, looking back. You know, are you supposed to be fluid and perfect? Because I have a progressive disease, you know, so you know, I'm just wondering what other kinds of strategies along those lines can we use in the construction and implementation of our courses?

SEAN: Great yeah, thank you very much for the question and I - Thank you for coming forward and asking the question because you've said that that's uncomfortable for you beyond video. So, I just I'm grateful for you for doing so. When you write, so, one thing that I would say right off the bat is that when you write something, when you write a lecture or you write a post to write whatever it is you're writing your students just first draft it. Don't edit it, just first draft it because you know what, when you're in front of a student, in front of a classroom, you're going first draft it, like, that's all that's going to whatever comes out of your mouth with your mouth, and we all make mistakes. So if you can do that, that's one of the first strategies I would say is just let yourself be fallible, because if you're fallible in front of students they know they can be fallible in front of you, and that's genuine. In terms of, I do really want to address this issue around surveillance because if we are being surveilled, if our teaching is being surveilled, either by your institution or by something like zoom. We need to be. We need to work around that and that means that we need to talk to our institutions about well, hey, are you surveilling me and we need to ask them about the about the technologies that they're using. We need to know about those technologies ourselves. There's lots of people out there doing this research and lots of people who have access to or that you have access to that will - that can tell you don't use this tool or don't use this tool. It don't use this tool because they're so problematic. They surveil students, they surveil us and they're gathering data for. We don't know what reasons. And I don't mean to sound dystopic about it, but actually that's actually what's going on. So that's something that we need to be very conscious about this, that we need and this is like a call to arms, I mean seriously, like you really have to know about the technologies that you're using and you have to know what's happening to your data to your students data like we just have to know this stuff. So if you don't know, I mean this is as relevant as like knowing anything else about your educational institution about how your job works. If you don't know those things, find out those things. Ask about those things. If there isn't a committee at your university who's looking at the technology that's being adopted for equity reasons or for surveillance reasons like that committee needs to be formed like there needs to be people who are looking at that stuff and this is something to raise your voice is about because it's absolutely essential. So yeah, I just wanted to put that out there because it is a real concern, especially for teachers who don't feel very confident on video or who teach in different ways, and I think that that really needs to be addressed and figured out.

JESS: You know Michelle, just to answer this, some of my students told me that my class was the only synchronous class that they had, and they actually appreciated it. They felt so socially isolated they felt so disconnected from their peers and from their instructors I had the attendance like you wouldn't believe. So, I think that I never even considered doing the recordings and then making them available. What did happen is I recorded every one of my classes. It had captions that had audio transcripts as well, and throughout the term my students were saying that was really, really helpful. I could go back and reference this thing, and to me, that felt like the moment where technology was doing what we had hoped it would do. It was additive. It wasn't taking away any of the human experience that we had with each other.

MICHELLE: Thank you. I just finished teaching at a residency program in northern BC, virtually, for the last month. And it was very groundbreaking in the sense that it it didn't feel like a classroom because we were all put on the same level. Like, we were all peers there were - it didn't feel like students and profs, you know, even though the profs were hired to give advice or to meet one on one. Because I think it was because we had these coffee break sessions in the morning once a week and we had these evening based sessions. And Jess, I would like to kind

of use my synchronous classes in that kind of way to kind of say, okay, hey, let's just break it down and have a conversation. You know, just let's open it up a little bit, kind of like we're doing here right now, yeah.

JESS: That's wonderful, I was just going to message Maria who is making these comments in the chat about whether or not you wanted to say something. But I realize - look at the time. This isn't fair. How come the clock speeds up sometimes? I don't know. Well, maybe Maria if you want to unmute and say something, you've been making some really amazing comments in the in the chat and I'm thinking this is your moment to say something.

MARIA-BELEN ORDONEZ: That's a lot of pressure [laughter] only because, you know, listening and what's in the chat, but also what people are saying. I think there's some really interesting places here of action maybe? At the same time, I feel that we've had these conversations quite a bit. I want to come back a little bit and just to try and tie up at least a couple of my points. I think we've been talking a little bit about what matters and all of these things. How we teach, how we learn all about, and that's great. I also think it's important to think about how we actually, you know, tear things down, if that's what we're doing. And I think that language is often not used as sort of. Being open to completely undoing something that has clearly created power inequities, I want to insert the word here power as a sort of a mainframe for a lot of the inequities that are happening that are often not necessarily identity based or asserting one's identity. But recognizing that many who are in power wield their power and sometimes use their identity to wield their power. And so, I kind of want to sort of think about that a little bit in relation to how we talk about decolonization, for example, and how we maybe can't talk about decolonization until we look at the structures that play that actually perpetuate in significant ways. And I think that's part of the discussion here. Sort of to think about. And I also want to come back and say that I think it's important to not say that I will not speak again because I think some of the issues that we've been talking about here has been to highlight the importance of difference, and not just difference representationally, but also difference in knowing and learning and the importance of neurodiversity for example, and the importance of being attentive to the technologies. For example, you know, I think zoom and teams as much as faculty have tried to work really hard with these. With these platforms they've been useful and they've gotten us, you know, past this year of emergency in a pandemic, but I think to really think deeply about these platforms, I think this is where the pause is also - and to acknowledge, for example, what does it mean to join a conversation and have limitations around who gets to speak right? So those limitations around who gets to speak may not necessarily be because you're on the margins. It may just be the way that the technology is set up so that there's no chat access. There's no opportunity to interrupt. There's no opportunity to do all those wonderful things that we do when we're in physical spaces, and so how do we make room for that? Because that, I think, is part of the diversity that exists in the way that people express themselves in ways that may not always be from a position of marginality, but maybe from a position of knowledge making right? So how do we interact with each other? But there's so much here in your presentation that that begs kind of like longer discussion, and one that can probably hopefully bring in more people in their diversity, and also in their way in their mode of expression, expressing so I don't know. Maybe that sort of haphazard put together, but those are my top of my head thoughts.

JESS: A longer discussion that then leads to action as well. Robert, we didn't get specifically to your question, but I'm wondering if you want to unmute and say something. Sean does a little bit

with the risk to instructors and the students. Talking about the surveillance and teaching sensitive topics. This is also occurs to me when students start telling their stories. Yeah, Robert, go ahead.

ROBERT TEIXEIRA: Thank you Sean, for the excellent presentation. It reminds me of my years at OISE in the critical pedagogy department there and which I miss these conversations a lot, actually. But, I mean, what really struck home for me during this pandemic and really increased my anxiety to a level I've never experienced before last summer was the - not only just the, you know, having to transform our courses for online teaching, but the fact of the matter around the kind of topics and courses I teach delve into matters around sexuality and sexual representation, pornography. Childhood and youth sexualities, which bring together a whole host of what some people might consider very problematic conversations, or at least sensitive - at least ones that are, you know, typically talked about at cocktail parties. For example, I had students write about the recent controversy over the film Cuties, which for some is - are in the media, you know, are depicted as just fodder for pedophiles or media sexualization of youth. So I need space to deconstruct these. Have these conversations that are incredibly sensitive and they pose incredible amounts of risk. And I'm getting emotional here because it is very stressful. I'm a sessional teacher, I'm engaging in incredibly sensitive material and I feel very vulnerable. Is there something about - that we can do about the design of an online teaching that might help mitigate these risks, or how might we approach this topic and continue this conversation around risk in the classroom, which is an important dimension of critical pedagogies, but also there is the far end of the risk paradigm, which are teachers are being harassed in the United States. For example, recent news about a classical history professor who writes about, you know, Greek pederasty being assaulted viciously at his university in Austin, Texas, for example, and you know, I worry about these things. You know, I am vulnerable to these kinds of attacks when you have material that I put online that is openly available perhaps. And it's a very different matter. Teaching online, as you know, Sean, and being in the presence of students I can see when students are having trouble with the material and I can adjust or... And there's a sensuousness to teaching in the classroom that has completely evaporated, and this concerns me greatly, and I wonder if you have anything, you know, we can - how do we approach this conversation?

SEAN: Thank you, and this is a great - it's a lot of good questions, and a really great observation about the lack of essential nature of teaching in an online space. And that can't be mitigated by being on screen together, right? It's just not the same, and I think that that's something that I want to make really clear. There is simply no way to teach online that mimics what happens in our classroom. It just. Stop trying, it's not going to happen. It's never going to happen. Recognize that you can do certain things online that you can't do in the classroom, and vice versa. Those are two different media. So, a couple of things I want to say in terms of risk. If you are - and I'm assuming, I don't know the Canadian system that well - a sessional faculty means you're not protected? You're precarious, essentially, the same thing as here with adjuncts or contingent in place. So there need to be protections for sessional employees that don't need to be, and I think that at the institutional level, especially when we go online, and especially we're teaching online, and especially for teaching risky subjects. We need to have the we need to have the administration at our back and they need to know that we're taking these chances, and that they're going to support taking these chances so that alone that that should be - that anxiety should just be taken away because it really should be, you should be supported by the university to do this. In terms of in terms of risky conversations, there are a lot of ways to

close conversations to the web, right? So there if you're working with inside an LMS for example. No one can get in there without the password. You know whatever, so that's a closed conversation. If you want to have, if you're using Open Access resources, it doesn't - If you're in inside an LMS, your closed conversation, it's still safe. If you are... There are other Open Access tools. I'm thinking specifically of a tool called hypothesis which is in a social annotation tool, which can be really, really useful in getting students to discuss a text, and there's a way to close that off from the public as well. It also exists out on the web, but you can close it off from the public as well, and they can have really great conversations, rich conversations about the text right there, and again, no one else can see them but but but you and students in the room. Online, just as in - so this is something that happened when we moved the digital pedagogy lab online. We had to think about ways to make sure that that online space was safe for everybody, because a lot of stuff gets talked about at DPL. Similarly, when we were on ground, of course we had to have a code of conduct. This is how we behave. This is who we are. You walk outside this, you get to go home. And so having that sort of code of conduct that is about protecting students rights to say what they need to say, to make the observations they need to make amongst their community of students. Having that really clear and don't - again, put it in the syllabus if you want to, but they're not going to see it there. So communicate in other ways. And be really, really clear about, look we're dealing with really sensitive subjects here, and you need to be free to say anything that you want to say and make the observations that you want to make and make the mistakes you're going to make in those conversations, and be really, really clear about it and emphasize that over and over and over again. And then watch. Well, the problem with sensitive topics of course is that you then have to be - you don't have to moderate or monitor or surveil students, but you do need to be very aware of everything that's being said, only so that you make sure that everyone is being treated kindly and fairly and be ready to intervene as soon as it's necessary, but otherwise again, having an open space where students are not being graded for the observations that they're making and are not being prompted to say certain things so that they're just, you know, letting you know they did the reading, but instead an open forum where they can talk to each other about anything that might be coming up for them can actually create a safer space for people because they actually are there to support each other. They recognize they're all taking the risk, and so they were kind of in it together in that way. So that's those. Those are some. Those are some basic things, but I mean, what you're talking about is something that honestly is better taught in person just this? And there are certain subjects - some people will tell me science can't be taught online, and actually what you're talking about probably shouldn't be taught online, like, it should be taught in a classroom. But as as it is being taught online, I think there are certain things you can do to insulate the classroom, but also to free up that conversation to keep people feeling safe and free. To have the discussion that need to have.

JESS: It reminds me Robert, there are some really wonderful Open Access community participation guides. The sorts of things that Sean is referencing, and one of the practices in open communities is to come together at the beginning when you're creating that community of practice together and discuss those, amend them, add to them, take some things away, discuss what might come up, and you might say, well, that's all great, but students don't know week one what's going to happen. The other wonderful thing is you can revisit that throughout the term and have it as a living document. My students made unmerciful fun of me for calling the syllabus a living document. They never heard that phrase before and they thought it was so weird and creepy so. We had a good chuckle about that, but it was a living document and so there's some.

There's some that we can point to. Mozilla Foundation has a really wonderful community participation guide which isn't focused like so many of them are on an event, but rather on the continued participation in community. Great good stuff. Anybody else have any questions or any comments you wanna unmute? Bring your voice in here. If you don't, I have more questions. So I think we're scheduled to go until three, Sean, if you're okay with that. Maybe you were not told that, but now you've been told!

SEAN: I'm fine, I'm having a good time so it's fine.

JESS: I'm loving this. I want to go back to your first paragraph where you were talking about Sir Paulo and talking about how tomorrow is possibility one which will require as much imagination as compassion to produce. So, I want to talk a little bit about how do we mix these things, imagination and compassion. But I want to also say I'm not sure I've been at a meeting at OCAD where there's been such generous and supportive and wonderful sub comments to people's comments in the chat, and maybe that's because I don't go to a lot of meetings. I think that you've had an impact on this here, so maybe some some more thinking about how we mix this imagination, compassion, business.

SEAN: A lot of the work that I sort of some of the explorations I've done around imagination, it comes out at the work of Maxine Greene, who is a critical pedagogist who worked in the arts here in the states. And she really emphasized this idea of imagination as being a piece of critical pedagogy, and that it's a necessary piece of critical pedagogy, because we can, you know, with following Freire's model, we can read our world. We can recognize what's going on. We can recognize that we have the agency to intervene, and then we can intervene. But the step between recognizing that you can intervene an intervening is imagination. And recognizing that okay, so. But what do I? What do I do to intervene? Because all I have are the models that I've been given. So when Maria was talking about tearing everything down, there's a digital lab, for example with my colleagues. We've had this discussion back and forth. Do we need to burn everything down? Is burning everything down bad? Should we just keep some of the structures? And the truth is that what we need to be able to do is imagine something we've never seen before. And it's going to take certain kinds of minds to do that, and it's going to take certain kinds of people stepping away from that conversation because of what they bring to the table, in terms of structure. And that is where that compassion piece comes in. I think recognizing what do you have to contribute? What do you? What you do not contribute? Because what you're trying to do is build something. For a much larger community in a way that you've never done that before or that isn't prevalently present at the moment in our educational landscape. So I think that there is... so Jesse Samuel talks a lot about like taking apart something and then rebuilding it using the pieces that you've that you've taken apart. So he refers to Lego a lot. When you're taking apart the Lego castle, and then making something else out of it. I would say that actually with imagination, what we need to do is we need to sort of go we don't want to use lego, we're going to use these things instead, and we're going to build something else from that. So we really need to do that. Sort of what Maria is talking about. We really need to do that sort of revisiting our foundational ideas of what education is supposed to be. And when I say revisiting it, I don't mean going back and sitting on our laurels and saying we like it, we know what education is. We need to go back and go. We don't know what education is because what we've done is we've formed it this way. So now we need to go back and we need we need to have more people talking to us about what education is and then we need to build something new. So that creates that. That's an active imagination. It is also an act of intervention and

agency, so it is exactly what critical pedagogy is kind of aimed at. Like I said in my keynote, we won't get rid of white supremacy by asking people to participate in this privilege like that. That just fans more white supremacy. We won't reconstruct education by asking people to come be in this institution that we've created and don't want to change. So, we do need to figure out a new way of doing things. And so these sorts of conversations are great and the conversation around decolonizing the institution. Those are great conversations to be having they are not there yet. They're inadequate at this point talking about inclusive pedagogy, which I know is some you know, a big part of what you do. Is also not. It's not there yet. We're not there yet, primarily because we keep using the word inclusive, but we need to figure out that sort of imaginative piece of it, and we're not going to create something new that works for people. Unless we're also doing it from a position of compassion, and also that sort of that quiet. I'm listening. So make any sense?

JESS: We've talked about the burning it all down a lot, so much so at digital pedagogy lab that somebody gave me a little look at matches later. And she was wonderful. She said she carries it to all of her meetings. And of course, she's not a pyro, but she wants that constant reminder. Do we need to tear this down, dismantle it, and then rebuild it, not with Legos as you said, but really, think about the way things begin, matters and think about how we begin this conversation. How we begin this rebuilding in this reconstructing.

SEAN: I want to just chime in really quickly because along these same lines, so Michelle just put a comment in the chat about Naropa university in Boulder, which I'm very familiar with. I grew up in Boulder, Naropa was just part of the community there. The whole atmosphere, Naropa was part of the whole thing. Naropa University is a Buddhist university and it is more progressive. It does have a progressive pedagogy behind it. It is also founded on a patriarchal system. And so this is what I'm talking about, like, we need to be so critical and we need to know what we're talking about when we're talking about we need to keep this. This goes back to Ryan's idea about history, like we need to know our history. We need to understand where all of this comes from and Naropa's a great university for a lot of reasons and they do have a different pedagogy. They're also incredibly expensive, so they're not really accessible to people. And they do have this sort of patriarchal backdrop so. When we start doing this, when we start talking about burning something down or tearing something down, we all kind of need to be pyromaniacs a little bit, but we need to understand what we're tearing down, and we need to understand what we need to resist, because otherwise we're just going to repeat the same mistakes again. We're just going to do it over again.

JESS: Back to Ryan's point about understanding the histories right, and that's storytelling that pulls that out.

SEAN: Yeah, exactly.

JESS: Nadia said something. It's sort of a layering of communities, right? So, the community of practice layered with a community of care. That places the most vulnerable in the community at the heart, all work begins and continues from there. And when we're creating these communities and in our courses in our little zoom rooms, I struggle with making sure that people understand this is a community that we should be able to welcome someone else into and so every once in a while. Having a guest lecturer come in and kind of a beautiful thing happens as the students help the guest feel welcome. So help them understand what have we been doing here. How do we talk to each other? What sorts of things? If we agreed upon you know, if you're

if you're using some of those community guides like Robert was talking about to establish participation, what is it that this person who's coming in after the beginning needs to understand and I think that that to me is the measure of success is how well somebody comes in and is brought in.

SEAN: Yeah, I would agree with that. I think with regards to digital pedagogy lab for example, for a long for a lot of a lot of the time people will come to the lab and they will say at the end of the week that we like. I feel like I found my people. That's great, and then what happens is they start just talking to each other. And now you have this insular community. And so, as the director of the lab, I am constantly pushing against that. Like. No, we are not an insular community. Anyone can come here. And the only way we're going to get anything done is if everyone can come here. And that's actually, I mean, that's a really important. That's a really important piece of that. I do want to emphasize again that as a teacher, or he's a director of an event. If you're at the head of a community, it is not within your purview or your ability, or it's not your job to create community. You have to let the community do it otherwise. Otherwise, it just becomes this thing that you've built and that will expire when you leave at the end of the semester, you leave, and so then the community is gone. So, what I've found actually this past semester using Slack and not using discussion prompts and letting students run their own, their own discussion in their own community is that students have actually made serious connections with each other and they do plan to keep those connections as they leave, not with me. Which is fine, but they, but with each other in a meaningful way. And I think that the way that happened is I was hands off.

JESS: It's another measure of success, right, when the semester ends and you walk out of the zoom room. What what continues? What? What carries on? And I'm glad that this conversation didn't focus so much on assessment and on measurement. That's a whole other kettle of fish, right? So, but, but some of these hints at opportunities for ways to assess success in learning and in your teaching.

SEAN: I was just going to say. Alexander put in a comment and I like the idea of moving beyond imagination. I personally think there is like Imagination is the ingredient, but I think that what we one of the observations that you're making Lego example is proof that some find it really hard to build a future for new ingredients. Absolutely, if you've been using Legos your whole life and Legos have benefited you, then you're going to keep wanting to use Legos no matter what. But if you take your Lego Castle down and then you sit back. And you see what other things people bring? They have the new ingredients. And then the synergy between you is also a new ingredient. It can't be done, it can't be done with one head. It can't be done. It has to be done with multiple people in conversation. Otherwise it will absolutely fail.

CARY: So, it looks like we're just about out of time. In fact, over time because I've told different people different things. Sean, I think I told you that we were only 90 minutes today, but we've taken up a full 2 hours and I thank you for your graciousness in allowing us to detain you. Please join me everyone in thanking Sean for his thoughtful and thought-provoking keynote for today. Very timely, of course in terms of where we are, truly, truly wonderful. My head is spinning with so many ideas and I just want to circle back to that question that you started with about how to sustain human and humane connections to our students. You know, taking what we've learned over the course of the past year and the pandemic and and you know seeing where their learning intersects so significantly with their lived experiences and how we take that forward. We've had so many thoughts and ideas and questions to work with here that it that it's

really quite wonderful and you've given us a lot to carry forward, so thank you, Sean. Thank you also to Jess for your own insights. The knowledge that you bring to this conversation and also your incredible facilitation skills. You are very, very good at leading a Q&A, and so you're putting the rest of us to shame. That was really, really, fantastic. Thank you to Caroline for opening the discussion today to all of our participants who shared their questions and comments really thoughtfully. Also, Sayeda Akbary in IT and within my office, Rakhi Dewan for coordinating the event today and the communications really, really, wonderful. So yes, once more thank you and look, you can see the thanks and congratulations streaming in in the chat window. So yes. Look forward to the next time though. I hope there better be a next time, as Jess says.

SEAN: Thank you very much. Thanks everyone really, really, wonderful to be here.