

Title: Creative and Critical Pedagogical Practice: A Collaborative Collection and Exploration of Pedagogical Tools within the Neoliberal Paradigm for Reflection and Praxis

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Session Type: Workshop

Abstract:

Following the works of Freire, Giroux, Brookfield, and Shor, among others, we collectively seek to consider ways in which we can make intentional space for critical pedagogy and implement best practices which challenge ourselves, our students, and the institutions and communities in which we operate. We endeavour to create an alternative pedagogical ecosystem that challenges the neoliberal rhetoric that has become enmeshed in the academy. The aim of our workshop is fourfold: (1) **To reconsider** the definition of pedagogical space in tertiary institutions as one that confronts, rather than conforms to, neoliberal structures. Such structures are embedded in our everyday practice; they are everywhere and difficult to recognize in our familiar environments. This poses a challenge in escaping these norms. (2) **To inspire** a critical and hopeful dialogue in regard to the exploration of, and collaborative *sharing* of, critical and creative tools which may enhance our pedagogical practice. (3) **To reflect** on ways in which we can create meaningful opportunities and energize both faculty and students in the process of learning. (4) **To cultivate** an ecosystem (both at CTS and beyond) that supports reciprocity in the exchange of ideas and tools for confronting the neoliberal contexts in which many of us work. Our final aim underpins the juxtaposition between collaboration (the critical) and competition (the neoliberal), which our work endeavors to confront. Furthermore, it recognizes that power is not always coercive or repressive, but rather it can be a necessary, productive, and positive force within society (Foucault, 1991).

Specifically, our workshop will create a safe and inviting space for international seasoned scholars, newly minted doctorates, and graduate students at various stages to come together, exchange, *share*, reflect, and learn about the best, most creative pedagogical tools. We are seeking tools that not only energize and challenge students and ourselves to think critically about scholarship, but which also challenge the roles of students and ourselves as instructors, considering ourselves as change agents within our communities and beyond. In the spirit of internationalization, innovation, and inclusion, which are encompassed in many of our university strategic priorities, we endeavour to open our workshop up to an international and thus wide-reaching audience. Accordingly, the critical and cooperative workshop will encourage both face-to-face and online attendance and participation.

As an amendment to the traditional abstract, we request interested participants to submit a short 150-word description of a pedagogical tool and a short (up to a 3 minute) video blog simply recorded using a smart phone (vlogs) (via email). The vlogs will detail the tool implemented, the context (size and offering of the class), any challenges experienced, and the key learnings from the implementation of the tool. In order to ensure a safe space and adherence to university ethics protocol these videos will not be shared outside of the organizers/authors of this workshop. Participants, if selected will be asked to sign an ethics consent form, as the pedagogical tools will be collected, and an audio recording of the workshop will be kept and further analyzed after the workshop for research purposes. All participants will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Our workshop in Spain will encompass three components including a brief presentation by the participants following a “campfire session,” whereby the facilitation team will highlight the coming together of the team, the development of the idea for the workshop, and an overview of how the workshop will run. The goal will be to create an open forum in which our participants generate a majority of the discussion, have the opportunity to share their best practices with the creative tools they submitted, and network! Specifically, our campfire session will allow our participants to learn from multiple perspectives regarding the details of the tools which are shared among our participants so that they can return home with effective and inspiring tools to facilitate critical and creative tools which will enhance their pedagogical practice.

We are critical of the current system in which universities operate and wish to raise awareness of the unintended consequences for practice. We are hopeful that we can create an ecosystem of sharing and exchange. This workshop is purposely designed in juxtaposition to the current neoliberal paradigm that promotes climates of competition and rivalry among scholars. This experience will cultivate enhanced learning environments for ourselves and our students, creating spaces for reflection and social change. Join us!

References:

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin.