

Waiting to exhale in a safe & authentic learning space

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Introduction

2020 is an overwhelming year with far-reaching changes

Once-off public event VS private, informal community with regular engagements

Formed to make sense of challenges we were facing together

Space became what we needed: safe space to vent, exhale, share, reflect, learn

“CREATING ENABLING LEARNING SPACES FOR ALL”

HELTASA 2020 Bloemfontein, Free State



Context

Individual institutional contexts:

- When the uni went online
 - Different Institutions went online at different times depending on a number of factors
- Types of capacity and support structures
 - All different LMS's and varied T&L Models
- When & how online assessment happened
 - Largely dependent on when the individual institutions went online

Shared context: COVID-19 pandemic and being in supporting roles at traditionally face-to-face research intensive universities

Theoretical framing

Critical, Exploratory, qualitative
research paradigm and design

Ganzs Organsing /
Civic Pedagogy
(2011)

The story of Self, Us and Now
Storytelling - exercise agency; develop
individual & collective identities;
motivation to act

Mobilise social movements - tell a new
story - identities of storytellers and
listeners - acquire leadership; agency,
mobilise resources

Hochschild's theory
of emotional labour
(2003)

Enhancing, faking, , modifying,
suppressing emotions - emotional
rules for workplace behaviour

Collective emotional labour - informal
communities of coping among
'frontline' service workers - ways to
survive systemic tensions of work -
management can see as resistance

Guiding questions for free writes

Q1. What has kept us awake at night over the last two months?

Q2. What has been our practice pain points over the last two months?

Q3. What has been our practice gains over the last two months?

Q4. What do we see as post COVID 19 possibilities?

Methodology



Story of me: Findings for self

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E
<i>Kept awake by</i>	How to assist lecturers in dealing with what is	Lack of preparation time	LMS upgrades	Capacitating staff to learn how to use the LMS	Coping with remote assessments
<i>Practice Pains</i>	Need for setting boundaries	Exhaustion and dealing with the rush	Too much going on	Outdated technologies and lack of capacity	Lack of support staff capacity
<i>Practice Gains</i>	Building a community around online teaching	Learning with technologies	Relationship building	Willingness of staff to learn and adapt	Creation of support resources
<i>Post-Covid Possibilities</i>	Rethink use of time and resources	Alternative modes	Uptake in blended learning	Uptake in blended learning	More innovation in teaching

Story of us: Findings for collective

We needed to exhale - emotional work

Kind of support required intensified & changed in some ways

'Who I thought I was and who I am now to different people'

'Providing support and being support'



Story of now: How collective will use findings

Who do we need to be going forwards?

How have the roles & the work changed?

What is the role of AD/ID/ etc

What capacity do we need to grow - more of the same or different?

What practices do we need to continue and where do we let go?

What does/should the nature of support work involve now?



Conclusion

For us: we're not done yet...

For others:

Co-create your own communities, based on your needs

Be open to emergence and let structure & activities develop organically in collaboration

Collaboration should be non hierarchical

Value in small communities of trust: - wearing a mask is not required to exhale in a safe, authentic space

Reflecting together can morph into research - possibilities beyond small private community



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