

Chapter 2

Enabling inter-institutional co-design and co-facilitation of a postgraduate diploma module in educational technology: Uncovering sites of struggle, negotiation and accommodation among course facilitators

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Abstract

The development of a curriculum for a diverse group of students is challenging, whether at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. Various social, organisational, political, cultural, and personal factors are at play in the process of designing a curriculum that is learning-centred and responsive to societal needs. The notion of learning-centred curriculum development has been addressed extensively in the literature; however, scant research focuses on the interests of agents, as well as the cultural and structural considerations at play, when designing a postgraduate module for participants from diverse and unequal

backgrounds. Analysing written reflections and reflective conversations on the various events, mechanisms, and structures encountered during the process of curriculum development, we shed new light on the covert issues facilitators have had to acknowledge when designing a learning-centred curriculum for participants across vastly diverse higher education contexts in South Africa. Drawing on sociologist Margaret Archer's research, we seek to provide insight into the interplay between structure, culture, and agency when course facilitators from different institutional backgrounds collaboratively designed and facilitated a postgraduate module in educational technology.

Keywords: curriculum design, co-design, inter-institutional collaboration, co-facilitation, PGDip, educational technology, structure, culture and agency, South Africa

Introduction

We present facilitators' reflections on inter-institutional conceptualisation and facilitation of a module that forms part of the Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education offered by three differently positioned institutions in the Western Cape, South Africa. As authors and course facilitators, we have worked together for many years and have offered this module three times since 2015. In the Western Cape, there is a drive to support such inter-institutional collaboration, driven by the Cape Higher Education Consortium (see www.chec.co.za), instituted to support systemic collaboration between the four higher education institutions (HEIs) in the region, namely the University of the Western Cape, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town. This is one way of sharing resources and redressing some of the historical inequalities in terms of student access and success in the Western Cape.

Collaboration across such differently placed institutions is not without its challenges. We use our experiences to unpack some of the opportunities and tensions in inter-institutional collaborative postgraduate teaching. In the conceptualisation of the elective module 'ICTs in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,' we, as facilitators, had to consider a number of factors. While we occupy similar positions at our institutions, namely, supporting academics in the acquisition of digital literacies, course/curriculum development, and advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning, our institutions have different histories and cultures. These contextual factors impact our approach to curriculum development, possible theoretical frameworks to consider,

understanding of how learning transpires, and how facilitators subsequently respond to creating learning experiences.

One particular challenge is the inequalities observed within all of the represented HEIs, manifested to varying degrees of prominence. We define inequalities here as avoidable, morally unjustified, hierarchical differences (Therborn & Aboim, 2014). Therborn and Aboim (2014) refer to three forms of inequality: vital inequality, resource inequality, and existential inequality. Vital inequality refers to survival rates and life chances. Studies indicate that educated people generally live longer (Meara, Richards & Cutler, 2008), as do their parents, since they have the socioeconomic resources to take better care of themselves and their children (Friedman & Mare, 2014; Ingraham, 2014). HEIs in South Africa are characterised by heterogeneous student cohorts, with many being first-generation students. Retention of some of these first-generation students is often at risk, as they are unable to draw on the socioeconomic support of their parents (Bui, 2002). Failure to succeed in university studies as a consequence of being inadequately supported may diminish their life chances and further exacerbate prevailing vital inequality.

Therborn and Aboim (2014) also refer to existential inequality, another form of marginalisation or discrimination. For example, teacher-centred pedagogical practices may be deemed inadequate to address the higher-order learning needs of students in general and first-generation students in particular (Waghid, 2019a). Such pedagogical practices are still prominent at many of the aforementioned HEIs. Finally, resource inequality refers to the unequal distribution of resources (Therborn & Aboim, 2014). Although primarily concerned with the uneven distribution of material resources, this has been expanded to include the lack of skills and competencies to function effectively in higher education (HE) and beyond (Waghid, 2019b). Given the presence of participants from different HEIs in South Africa, we had to acknowledge how these intersecting inequalities were playing out at the different institutions and consider participants' attempts to mitigate them. Not just the participants' contexts had to be considered, but also the respective levels of inequality in the institutions of the facilitators.

We offer a reflection on the facilitators' teaching and learning practices in the PGDip module, which interrogates these processes as they relate to the co-design and co-facilitation of the curriculum. This involves being cognisant and intentional about negotiating differences, contextual accommodation, embracing co-creation of learning, adapting the approach to uncertain spaces, and sharing ownership. This chapter also outlines a theoretical lens through which

we consider how structure, culture, teaching and learning, as well as curriculum, could shape an inter-institutional curriculum design and facilitation process.

Structure, culture, and agency: An overview

The interplay and interrelatedness of structure, culture, and agency need to be considered in terms of the way facilitators acknowledge the interaction between themselves and the collaborative teaching environment. We offer insight into the dualism between structure, culture, and agency to describe various social and cultural phenomena that occurred in the conceptualisation and implementation of this collaborative design module.

In terms of our understanding of structure and agency, we draw on the research of sociologist Margaret Archer (1995) and her morphogenetic approach; she argues that both structure and agency consist of emergent powers, which are distinguished from each other. Archer (1995, 2000) warns against limited approaches to understanding social behaviour and suggests that individuals, as well as the social world in which they act, have powers and influences that should be acknowledged. Mutual interaction between the two entities results in relational interaction with one another. This implies that there is “no difference between the individual and society, rather there is a continuous and ubiquitous interaction and symbiosis between these two” (Banifatemeh et al., 2018, p. 59). This implies that we had to acknowledge that as agents in our different social contexts, we are not separated from the structural contexts we emanate from because there is a link between ourselves and the social world we represent.

To explain the social world and the interrelated nature of structure, culture, and agency, Archer (1995) posits that the social world could be either dynamic (morphogenesis) or stable and an extension of the current societal systems (morphostasis). To be enabled to uncover the processes of morphogenesis or morphostasis, the process of analytical dualism was useful.

Through the process of analytical dualism, structure and agency could be separated analytically over a period of time to interrogate the interplay between them (Zeuner, 1999). This enabled the relationship between them to be analysed further (King, 2010). It implies that, as authors, we could separate our own experiences of structure and agency over a period, to consider the relationship between the two entities. Although, according to Archer (1995), structure and agency are closely linked, the impact on each other could really only be understood when these notions are analytically separated (Zeuner, 1999). Through the separation of structure and agency, the agents are better able to understand the opportunities and challenges in their respective

structural contexts (Newman, 2017). Additionally, reflexive activities afford agents the opportunity to duplicate or expand on structural components (Newman, 2017). We used reflexive activities in our methodology to establish an awareness of unique structural components that we had experienced in our various institutions, and how these impacted on our choices and agency in the design and facilitation of the module.

Archer (1995) emphasises two aspects of structure: first, the assumption that structures are emergent and impacted by “material resources, both physical and human” (p. 175), and second, that in practice structures are aligned with “roles, organizations and systems” (Archer, 1995, p. 175, also cited in Leibowitz et al., 2015). Through this insight of Archer (1995) we established a close link between the differently resourced institutions (which we represent), as well as the cultural dimensions of each.

Culture refers to our “common beliefs and conventions which are unique to a particular group” (Van Wyk, 2011, p. 337). According to Archer, society further consists of a “cultural system” or “sociocultural layer” (Banifatemeh et al., 2018, p. 61). This implies that the social world consists of different knowledge forms, as well as a variety of belief systems. Therefore, agents have the capacity to influence one another through the sociocultural level of epistemic views and positions (Banifatemeh et al., 2018). To understand the difference between agency and culture, Archer’s research explains that *culture* is a collective endeavour, whereas *agency* implies what we choose to do, or react towards, individually (Banifatemeh et al., 2018). In the context of this chapter, it was necessary to examine the aspects of the collective, which were evident in our various institutions, and the manner in which we decided to act in relation to the cultures we represent, while collaborating with each other and with participants in the course.

Human agency can be explained by an individual’s ability to reflect on his/her actions, which is closely aligned with a process of “internal deliberation in which concerns, commitments and knowledgeability play a role” (Leibowitz et al., 2015, p. 318). Personal agency implies that we each have the ability to action activities through a series of choices, possibilities, and duties. According to Archer (2007), agency is further understood through the process of reflexivity and internal deliberations that people employ to reflect on their current structural context, as well as how they are to further their association with such (Newman, 2017, p. 5). Archer’s (1995) three levels of agency could be explained in terms of interest groups, social action, and personhood. Interest groups relate to the structures in which agents live and are reared, while social action refers to the different positions agents occupy in society. Lastly, personhood

suggests that “any individual who changes roles or interest groups maintains their sense of selfhood as a single person, knitting together their past and present lives into a single life-story” (Newman, 2017, p. 6).

When considering our own practices, many structures and mechanisms are at play that will impact our experiences (Khan, Qualter & Young, 2012). Archer (1995) suggests a deeper understanding and acknowledgement of the interplay between structural elements, our own agency, and the institutional culture. To respond to the notion of emergence, as underscored by critical realism, the morphogenetic approach accentuates the need to interrogate relations between various emergent properties, namely the structural emergent properties, cultural emergent properties, and personal emergent properties (Mogashana, 2015).

Through the process of curriculum development based on our own teaching philosophies, personal and institutional backgrounds, and the contexts of the course participants, the structural, cultural, and agentic elements were evident in our curriculum decisions.

Curriculum decisions

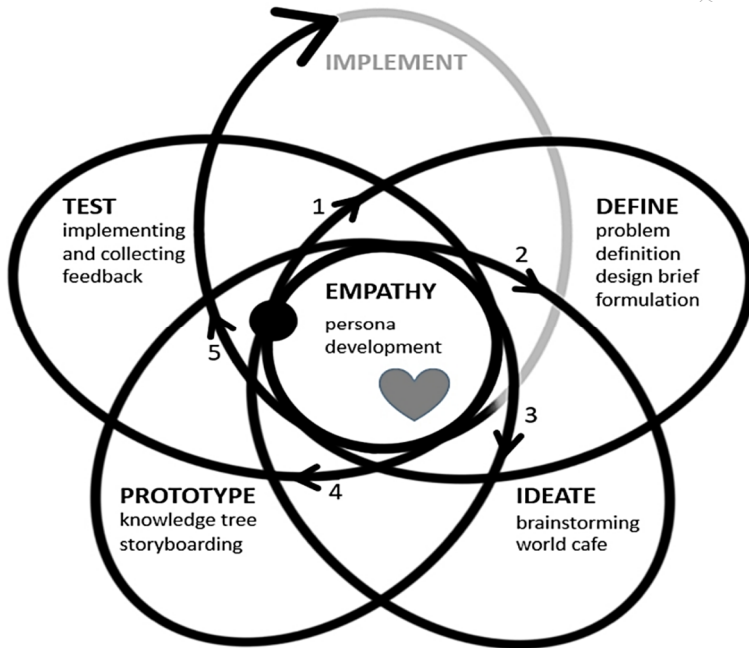
We embraced a learning-centred approach to the curriculum development of this module; this veers away from facilitator-led initiatives, to thinking carefully of “how and how well students are learning” (Blumberg, 2016, p. 303). This requires facilitators to reconsider aspects such as the role of content; the responsibility of the teacher (or facilitator) and student (or participant); the reason for and approaches associated with assessment; and the power relations between teachers and students (Blumberg, 2016). A learning-centred approach emphasises the process of learning, and not—as seen in many HE practices—the transmission of knowledge (Von der Heide & Quazi, 2013). A common misconception in HE suggests that students need to be *taught*, instead of highlighting what they could contribute to the teaching and learning process. These teacher-centred pedagogical practices leave little room for student engagement, and may be deemed undemocratic. A form of democratic education was proposed throughout this PGDip, which would leverage participants’ involvement while drawing on the ideas of French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2006).

Rancière (2006) offers a progressive understanding of democratic education. Traditional practices involve organising teachers and students to engage with one another critically. As a student of Louis Althusser, during the 1960s Rancière dissociated himself from his teacher’s work due to his understanding of the notion of equality (Simons & Masschelein, 2011). Rancière (2006) argues that Althusser viewed equality as a promise or reward to attain through democratic

education practices (Simons & Masschelein, 2011, p. 3). Consequently, a void is maintained between inequality and a distant equality, resulting in student and teacher remaining separated. Thus students, who are incapable of deliberating, and those who can deliberate remain apart. Rancière (2006) challenges the aforementioned view of equality, and argues that equality is an entitlement for all. By implication, democratic education “is no longer a process of inclusion of excluded parties into the existing [democratic] order; it rather is a transformation of that order in the name of equality . . . [and the] impetus for the transformation does not come from inside but from the outside” (Biesta, 2009, p. 110). In a way, democratic education is about those who have no or little power, are less qualified, or less competent, but nevertheless intervene to install a momentary disruption and dissensus. For Rancière (2006, p. 18), democratic education is sporadic. It affords individuals from the *outside*, with less powerful voices, the opportunity to disrupt or interrupt the practices claimed as democratic education, in the name of equality.

Design thinking is a design approach that values collaboration, experimentation, and contextualisation as driving forces for innovation (Brown, 2009). Moving from designing *for* participants to designing *with* participants promotes a make-do mind-set, working from a position of strength and viewing challenges as opportunities to innovate. Instead of pointing out the resources that are inaccessible, it starts to list which resources are available, and builds solutions around those (Brown, 2009; Kelley & Kelley, 2014). This refers to the importance of considering resource inequality. Design thinking also allows us to understand learning in places of uncertainty, in ill-defined contexts, while attacking wicked problems (Buchanan, 1992) with no simple answers. A design mind-set embraces this uncertainty, and sees it as a space to grow and be creative. This links to Berger's (2004) ideas around innovation in teacher education. She argues that innovation and transformation happen in liminal spaces, on the edges of knowing (p. 338). These are spaces outside our normal practices that push us into the unknown. This learning on the edge of our knowledge could be enjoyable as well as produce anguish in participants. It is essential that facilitators of such processes are aware of this continuum and offer careful facilitation, providing, as Berger explains, openings for participants to push against the edge, and being company for them as they stand at the edge; once they are there, the growing edge is its own teacher.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the iterative nature of our learning design process, and the importance of empathetic, learning-centred approaches, by placing the learner at the centre of our curriculum design and facilitation process.

Figure 2.1. CPUT's learning experience design model

(Gachago, Morkel, Van Zyl & Ivala, 2021)

Methodology

Our chapter aims to uncover various factors associated with structure, culture, agency, the curriculum and pedagogy, and provide a deeper understanding of inter-institutional collaborative design and co-facilitation, by attempting to make meaning of notable categories as described in the literature, following an exploratory research design (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). We adopted a deductive reflective approach to interrogate underlying factors that impact inter-institutional co-designing and co-facilitation of a module. We chose to engage in critical reflective conversations in the form of written individual reflections, which we shared and commented on, as well as ongoing conversations via MS Teams, which we recorded and transcribed, during the process of writing this chapter (Mezirow, 1990). As mentioned previously, through internal deliberation and reflexivity we started to uncover the different levels of agency, as well as the interrelation between it and the structural and cultural contexts of ourselves as module facilitators and participants. The topics that guided our reflections were based on the contexts we emanate from, an overview of the institutions we represent, reflections on our own identities, different theories we draw on, our different reasons for joining the collaborative course design and teaching initiative, as well as what we have learnt through

the collaboration, and how it resonated with structure, culture, agency, curriculum, and pedagogy.

This collective engagement vis-a-vis similarities, sites of struggle, and examples of negotiation/accommodation in our practice of co-designing and co-facilitating, continued throughout data collection and analysis. Through thematic analysis the following findings could be observed as a product of our similarities, sites of struggle, and instances of negotiation, while mirroring our collective sense-making. A holistic overview of our experiences would go beyond the scope of this chapter, but we exemplify moments in our engagement based on a collective sense-making of our individual reflections. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Table 2.1 provides some context of the facilitators.

Table 2.1: The facilitators' contexts

Facilitator	Context
Facilitator 1	Academic staff developer in a central support unit at a University of Technology, which serves predominantly underprivileged students. Been in this role for 20 years.
Facilitator 2	Academic developer at a centralised professional support centre, focusing on scholarly integration of learning technologies in the HE curriculum. Working at a historically advantaged institution which is research-focused. Has worked across further and higher education for 17 years.
Facilitator 3	Teaching and learning specialist with a focus on educational technology as a pedagogical practice at a University of Technology. Working in HE for 10 years across a range of different HEIs. Some of the roles include lecturer, staff developer, learning designer, project manager, and researcher.
Facilitator 4	Academic learning and teaching specialist at a historically disadvantaged institution. Has 12 years' experience in HE, with key focus areas in curriculum development in health professions education, learning with technologies, and professionalisation of learning and teaching.

Results

The results provide an analysis of our reflections on co-designing and co-facilitation of a module, involving the five categories explored above, namely structure, culture, agency, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Structure

In terms of structure, we agree that our collaboration in the module is situated outside our normal practices, within in-between, or liminal spaces (Berger, 2004). This allows freedom to innovate and push boundaries that may be less flexible in our own institutional contexts, as shown later. We see these liminal spaces as the origin for innovation, experimentation and learning, which we could transfer into our own individual practices, as Facilitator 1 reflects:

Working outside one's own context and practice does allow sometimes innovation that would usually not be possible within one's context. You are allowed to experiment, push boundaries, challenge existing routines and practices more easily than within one's own context.

Working outside our institution helps with moving beyond our comfort zones. I have been in the same institution—in the same position for 10 years and one can become comfortable in what one does. Having to expose myself to outside colleagues, helps me stay on my toes, innovate my practice.

In these liminal spaces, there is opportunity to work on a range of capabilities and concepts:

I think it goes beyond curriculum and it goes beyond what you are able to do in a class. You know sometimes there are softer skills or softer social competencies that you are able to evoke onto people who cross your path, whether they are students or whether they are staff. (Facilitator 4)

What is also evident are the stark differences regarding resources from which individual lecturers and institutions can draw, be it facilities, internet access, devices, digital literacies, or epistemic access to the discourse of teaching and learning, as well as curriculum and course design. Although inequality exists across all institutions, this is experienced to different intensities by staff and students at the various institutions. Our colleagues from previously disadvantaged institutions indicated that they primarily provide support to more vulnerable students, who have little to no access to teaching and learning resources. In contrast, colleagues from more established institutions commented that it is, to an extent, potentially easier for them to support students with resources, if required.

Unequal resource access raises issues of social justice and equitable access, and emphasises the importance of creating learning spaces and experiences that allow equitable access and engagement, where possible. The shared face-to-face workshop spaces and online learning platforms and tools chosen for the cross-institutional application in this module helped to bridge some of

these divides. The face-to-face interactions were crucial to support participants in the more unfamiliar online space:

The initial [face-to-face] sessions set the scene and provided a safe and secure platform from which the unfamiliar and often frightening online space could be explored. (Facilitator 2)

However, the question of how to transfer what we and our course participants were exposed to within a relatively well-resourced PGDip module, into their own practices, needed constant negotiation and consideration. As discussed under pedagogy, this strongly impacted our learning design.

Culture

We represent HEIs ranging from older, well-established institutions to those that only recently achieved university status. In terms of managerial styles, we work in institutions that engage a more centralised approach, and some with more dispersed decision-making powers. Within these distinct contexts, innovation in teaching and learning is driven in different ways. For the more mature, centrally governed institutions, flexibility in teaching and learning could potentially be impacted by well-established institutional policies and structures:

I did mention the fact that it's a very much a privileged work environment that we have access to [with] quite a lot of funding that we have ... [with] different projects that are institutionally driven as well (Facilitator 2)

This context is atypical to those of us from less privileged and younger institutions. Here innovation in teaching and learning is driven by the need to accommodate vulnerable students, many having restricted access to teaching and learning resources as well as limited institutional support:

We are definitely the lowest, we're the institution with the lowest resources and with the less privileged students. We also have the Technikon history so our, you know, we are still trying to understand what it means to be an institution of higher learning, a university. (Facilitator 1)

This has necessitated that technology-enhanced teaching and learning activities take into cognisance that staff and students may not have access to the most state-of-the-art technologies. This means, many times, we just have to make a plan. (Facilitator 3)

The module drew on our knowledge and experience as academics and academic developers. Our staff development activities are predominantly based on the ideas of experts in the field of curriculum development and educational

technology, namely Gilly Salmon and Diana Laurillard. Our adoption of their views was contextualised very differently, due to the institutional cultures we found ourselves in:

For me it was interesting to observe the similarities but also differences in our approaches to curriculum development during our planning processes. It is here where our own institutional and personal perspectives come to the fore and it then becomes a space of deciding what to include in the curriculum. (Facilitator 2)

This could be considered a site of negotiation:

We bring with us the shadow of our institutions that we represent. Perhaps it sounds as a negative metaphor, but I actually try to explain that we cannot escape where we come from. It is part of us, and it influences our choices and approaches to working with others outside of our institution. (Facilitator 2)

We all concurred that the module represented an opportunity for cross-institutional learning, not only between facilitators but also between facilitators and participants:

I'm always of the opinion that—and it's a saying that learning is a life-long journey and I think in our field of educational technology, it's ever-evolving. It's ever-changing, there's always new things and to keep abreast of all the developments, we attend conferences. We read papers and I see this facilitating with colleagues on a PGDip as another way in which I can continually also improve my understanding in the field of educational technology. ... if I may be confronted with a similar context that some of the—for instance, the Venda¹ students encountered and then it gives me that experience to be able to advise effectively. So that was my approach, you do not know everything, and you will never know everything, and you can always learn from others. (Facilitator 3)

Agency

Our reflections strongly suggested a shared passion for social justice and acute sensitivity for inequalities. We discussed our drive to create caring learning experiences that are equitable, and consider context and learning needs. We

¹ Participants from the University of Venda joined the PGDip for the first time in 2018. This is a South African comprehensive rural-based university located in Thohoyandou in Limpopo province. Throughout the course these participants struggled with access to reliable internet connectivity.

share an understanding of the importance of individual differences and positionalities, as well as how these impact the way we engage with each other. We acknowledged what these differences bring to the teaching and learning space, and how we shape learning experiences for ourselves and others.

Remarkably, though, the drive for social justice stems from the facilitators' diverse disciplinary fields and theoretical approaches. Some of us are teachers at the core, having worked in secondary education prior to joining academia. Some view themselves as teachers and scholars, or teachers and academic staff developers, while others have a more vocational background (for example, health professions educator), or are positioned firmly within adult education and academic staff development. The theoretical frameworks that we draw on range from social realism (Archer, 1995), and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), to Rancière's (2006) democratic teaching, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic learning, as well as critical feminist care theories, such as Tronto's (1993) ethic of care, and Fraser's (1999) participatory parity. These impact our world view, as well as the way we interact with each other and our participants. Some of us talk about learners or students when referring to our PGDip participants, while others view them as participants or colleagues. What helps to bridge these different views of the world is a shared recognition of the messiness and complexities of teaching and learning, and openness to listen and engage with each other's world views. We all believe in collective problem-solving, trusting in each other's expertise and strengths:

In this way, we are able to draw on each other's expertise and experience in the field of educational technology, across a range of different higher education institutions. (Facilitator 4)

I've learnt through participating in these programmes that it's okay to share what you know without sounding like the bastion of knowledge, but it's also okay to share what you don't know and it speaks to the safe space that this PGDip environment has been built. (Facilitator 4)

We as facilitators were comfortable enough with each other to draw on each other's strengths during the course. Some of us are much more technologically inclined and inquisitive towards the technical parts of the course. Others prefer the theoretical perspectives, approaches towards care or to continuously engage with participants via different mediums. I once again realised that such an approach contributes to levels of trust as well as an ability to further learn from each other. (Facilitator 2)

Curriculum

Throughout the offering of the course, the facilitators viewed educational technology as a pedagogical practice, instead of merely referring to the use of digital technology. The facilitators agreed that a one-size-fits-all solution to address the complex contextual factors at play does not exist. Viewing education as a practice allowed the module to be more responsive to the needs of the enrolled participants. A potential challenge related to the fact that the participants were not on an equal footing in terms of integrating technology into teaching and learning. For some participants it was quite easy to devise a method of integrating digital technology to augment their teaching and learning practices. This was primarily due to the institutions they were connected to and related infrastructure, knowledge, and pedagogical support. Some participants lacked necessary resources to support technology-augmented teaching and learning activities. Facilitators needed to be continually sensitised to the fact that participants were not all on an equal footing:

It was very much an engagement between the participants and ourselves and we came to an understanding of what would possibly work for them ...]. (Facilitator 3)

The design thinking process adopted for this module encouraged all facilitators and participants to problem-solve collectively, to generate innovative ideas on responding to the unique needs of participants.

Teaching and learning (pedagogy)

An aspect that was quite prominent throughout our reflections was the notion of learning-centeredness, as we are all strong proponents of learning-centred pedagogical practices:

I've always seen education as this engagement between a teacher and a student and a lot of my writing also then centres around [this]—about moving away from teacher-centred pedagogical practice towards more democratic teaching and learning practices and that is why I can link a lot of my ideas to social justice, equality, autonomy, rhizomatic learning. (Facilitator 3)

There was a strong emphasis on social forms of learning, as proposed by Laurillard (2012), such as learning through discussion, and through collaboration:

Whether we use technology to support that or we use conventional methods, it's just about that engagement between a teacher and a student and that conversation that I feel we should be focusing on because that is where the learning for me happens. (Facilitator 3)

The shift in the elective module, from being theoretically intensive to being far more practical in nature, was also quite prominent:

It was so interesting how [things] shifted when some of the older professors left because it was suddenly so much less theoretical and there was suddenly so much space to innovate and a bit more practice. You know the whole design thinking all of that only came in you know after and I'm not saying theory is not important, but I think it's that theory-practice [link] and the ... and the experimenting. For me, the PGDip especially is such a fantastic space to innovate and experiment because we are given the space to do things but to do things in a credit-bearing course you know. (Facilitator 1)

Discussion

The interplay between structure, culture and agency was evident in our reflections. Not only did this impact our choices, it also prompted us to consider the design of a responsive curriculum as well as implementation of innovative pedagogical practices in the module. We discuss the findings under themes that we observed to be particularly important.

Negotiating different world views

Considering that we facilitators are from diverse cultures, our social worlds comprise various interconnected disciplinary fields, which provide richness of knowledge and experiences for ourselves and participants. Our views of the world are shaped, produced, and reproduced based on our personalities, cultures, institutions, and institutional boundaries. We possess different transformative capacities, based on our different backgrounds, contexts, and quest for social justice and equitable access for our participants (Bozalek & Leibowitz, 2012; Waghid, 2014). Our approach to curriculum development could therefore be considered a product of collective cultures and structures, shaping our actions in the design and facilitation of the module.

In many ways, this realisation provided the structure in which we were able to negotiate and accommodate one another, through our own world views that shaped our actions. Our collaboration led to co-construction of an innovative and responsive curriculum, and allowed us to cut across cultural and institutional differences to produce this outcome. We developed collective agency through the engagement we had with one another as well as with our participants, who were mostly colleagues.

This demonstrates the relational interaction (Archer, 1995) between ourselves as individual facilitators and our practice within our learning environments, evidenced in the ways we were able to acknowledge differences within our

inter-institutional spaces. Our responsiveness to the varied dynamics of diverse social systems has in many ways transformed learning spaces into settings that fostered inter-institutional, cross-cultural learning and engagement, for both the facilitators and the participants.

Accommodating different contexts

Most prominently, these differences emerged in the considerations of our different contexts. For example, consideration of the types of knowledge appropriate for this module, or the kinds of tools and technologies appropriate to our contexts, created the opportunity for negotiation and contemplation of numerous contexts as well as the participants' needs. We represented three different HEIs, where academic development and training in educational technology are offered and engaged with differently. In the process of designing and facilitating this module we had to reflect on our own institutional practices, and negotiate approaches and tools that we believed would contribute to the quality of the collaboration. Decisions had to be made regarding the importance of theoretical perspectives, the course platform to serve as a basis for communication as well as teaching and learning, not to mention the type of educational technology tools we felt would empower our participants in their own unique contexts.

Through these emergent powers of structure, culture and agency (Archer, 1995) we were afforded the opportunity to accommodate diverse contexts. Our institutional structures, cultures, and beliefs related to agency motivated us towards the agreement that we would like to explore and embed innovative and creative pedagogical practices. For us, pedagogical innovation implied that we move beyond conventional approaches of professional development towards the notion of experimentation, and creation of a safe learning environment. We wanted participants to reflect on their own contexts, while simultaneously drawing on the expertise and collective knowledge of the whole group. We encouraged the practice of collective reflection, where participants had the opportunity to share their ideas as well as to act on feedback received from their peers (Colet, 2017). Design thinking supported this, with its emphasis on participatory methodologies.

Importance of co-creation

Our awareness that our participants' context and learning needs were important and different (Council on Higher Education, 2017) impacted our actions and deliberations, emphasising the importance of co-creating curricula with them (Bovill & Woolmer, 2019). Conceptualisation and implementation of the module were based on the process of collaborative curriculum development. We argue that the participants bring their own expectations to such a course,

which are rooted in their own unique circumstances and motivation for module participation, their personal experiences, and what they believe such a module should entail (Pauler-Kuppinger & Jucks, 2017). We drew on their previous knowledge and expertise, as much as on our own. This approach underlines democratic values as well as acceptance of the multi-faceted nature of learning (Bergmark & Westman, 2018), and requires flexibility and the ability to respond with agility to participants' feedback. Design thinking, with its iterative nature and focus on rapid feedback cycles, helped create a responsive learning space.

Embracing uncertain spaces

The liminal spaces (Berger, 2004) we found ourselves in allowed the freedom to explore, examine, ideate, design, and experiment, which subsequently is transferred back into our own practices. The module design and implementation phases evolved into spaces where we stretched ourselves and our participants to move beyond existing practices and beliefs, in order to actively engage with the multifaceted elements associated with integration of technology into different curricula and contexts. Our own agency was highlighted in the way we acknowledged and considered our own structural backgrounds in terms of culture (Archer, 1995). Our approach and openness to experimentation and responsiveness to participants' needs paved the way for a safe learning environment, in which they felt comfortable and encouraged to dip into the unknown and spaces of discomfort (Berger, 2004). From the facilitators' perspective it also provided conditions to experiment, draw on each other's expertise, and create and nurture a collective and collaborative space (Colet, 2017). Our main quest remained to encourage participants to consider their unique contexts, and not shy away from innovation within their institutions—moving away from a deficit approach to identifying challenges as design opportunities, while drawing from the collective wisdom of the participants and facilitators. Here the design thinking process was again helpful in engaging participants in critical reflection on their own contextual needs, placing these at the centre of the design process, to create an intervention which formed part of their final assignment and that could benefit their own institution or individual practice.

Towards shared ownership of learning

What we agreed on as facilitators is that we wanted to embed our course in a learning-centred approach. This approach moves the emphasis away from teachers and their actions towards questions related to how well students are learning (Blumberg, 2016). A learning-centred method focuses on learning, and not on the process of knowledge transmission so often prevalent in HE (Von der Heidt & Quazi, 2013). This underlined the importance we as facilitators

placed on attempting to understand how participants (i.e. students) learn. Learning-centred pedagogical approaches view students as independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning (Von der Heide & Quazi, 2013). In the process of creating an enabling environment (Von der Heide & Quazi, 2013), the participants demonstrated agency while we teachers became facilitators, and not only content transmitters. Being facilitators meant embodying different roles at different times in the course. On the one hand, we were formal facilitators who taught an accredited postgraduate course, while on the other we were also working with colleagues and peers engaged in professional development, and positioned as experts in their own fields and institutional contexts. Although this was not always an easy tension to handle, and required release of control and trust in a co-creative process, it allowed us to share the responsibility and ownership of learning with our participants, to create more participatory and democratic learning spaces.

Conclusion

Working across institutions can be a highly enriching experience. It is not an easy task, and needs an appreciation of difference as well as a willingness to work across cultural, disciplinary, and institutional boundaries. In particular, when working with technology integration into teaching and learning, differences in resourcing become marked and could potentially be frustrating and disruptive. Working with a learning design process that is focused on the learner/participant, their context and needs, and that affirms complexity and diversity, allows for collective problem-solving. This positions each participant as an expert knowledge holder of their disciplinary content, acknowledges student needs and context, and leads to the kind of innovation that is sensitive to our contexts and circumstances.

The use of educational technology espoused throughout the module characterised support for the less powerful, or previously less included voices, whether those of facilitators or participants. The facilitators were encouraged to realise their autonomy, thinking innovatively to create new learning experiences that would afford participants their equality and contribution to the pedagogical process. We would argue that the democratised, learning-centred pedagogical practice advocated for in this module may mitigate existential inequality, as participants' perspectives and ideas were continually taken into consideration. This causal relationship between democratisation and the mitigation of inequalities was not sporadic, but a product of a design thinking approach underpinned by a concern and empathy for the learner.

Our journeys in working collaboratively on an inter-institutional co-teaching (and now co-researching) project will always be unique, due to our different experiences and disciplinary backgrounds. Being willing to draw a picture of

these similarities and differences through a reflective process of negotiation is an essential ingredient of such collaborations. It encourages us to become reflective practitioners, and to continuously re-evaluate and redesign our own practices in this module, as well as in our own individual contexts, in ongoing deliberations for identifying similarities and sites of struggle, accommodation, and renegotiation.

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