## Session Title:

Designing, Building, Influencing, and Supporting: The Artistry of Reframing Teaching

## Abstract:

Diversity of thought holds the power to awaken the learning environment. Drawing on Experiential Learning, Gestalt Psychology, and Self-Determination Theory, the art and practice of teaching and learning are reframed for virtual and in-person delivery. Implicit instructor preferences impacting course design and delivery are explored. By incorporating diverse lenses of teaching and learning, co-created instructor-student reflexivity, and modeling, a psychologically safe student-centered learning environment is enabled, leading to greater self-and social awareness, choice, and development. Through experiential activities, we present key findings from instructor and undergraduate student perspectives. Participants will leave with enhanced self-awareness and strategies for reframing teaching.

## Keywords:

Reframing Teaching, Self-Awareness Development, Diversity and Inclusion

## Session Type:

Professional Development Workshop

## Session Preferences:

90 minutes; in person preferred with tables and flipchart or similar shared (large) paper for notes.

## Introduction:

In the management classroom, we teach students a combination of knowledge and skills without providing experiences for practice and application. Students have difficulty engaging in coursework or information that is not intrinsically motivating. We develop reflexivity, the examination of values, beliefs, and biases impacting behavior, in partnership with students (interdependent reflexivity). The coursework and information become a medium through which students explore and develop the core competencies of emotional and social intelligence while learning and developing expertise with course content.

One of the best methods to learn about group dynamics and the process of managing and being within groups is to have a large amount of group experiences with diverse connections to many different types of people. When interdependent reflexivity is added to this mix, the learning expands to include learning about self and core awareness competencies of emotional intelligence that are otherwise difficult to develop in a traditional classroom (Doane, 2003; Case, et al., Expected October 2022; Boyatzis, 2018; Boyatzis et al., 2019). Students and educators become facilitators of others’ learning, creating space and safety for team members to take risks to describe their experiences of the world. Both become courageous learners, trusting in the other people present to help them hold the entirety of their experience, while learning from the risks and observations others make about themselves.

The benefits of interdependent reflexivity do not extend only to learning about the self or group process. Additionally, it addresses core psychological needs for intrinsic motivation described in Self-Determination Theory, *competence, autonomy,* and *relatedness,* by creating a sense of shared belonging (relatedness), an environment that meets students at the edge of their competence without being too overwhelming (competence), and a space where students can choose what and how much of themselves to share (autonomy) (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Applying experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2017), this approach addresses every part of the learning cycle by asking students to reflect (reflective observation), learn course content and knowledge (abstract conceptualization), practice and apply learning to experiment with new experiences (active experimentation), and to use their experiences and the experiences of others to inform their understanding (concrete experience). It acknowledges that each individual is the expert of the self; that what we present to the world is a singular *figure* (an individual) amidst a deep *ground* (their context), concepts important to Gestalt Psychology (Liechty, 2018; Perls et al., 1951). This type of teaching led to high student performance, satisfaction, and learning in our undergraduate leadership development course.

An important and often-overlooked aspect of diversity in learning is diversity of thought. In creating teams, we paid attention to more structural forms of diversity, in order to ensure lack of tokenism within group membership. However, more important was ensuring teams held diverse orientations to course material based on assessment, providing a wider range of skills and insights. Additionally, utilizing crucial societal issues impacting organizations (like Black Lives Matter protests and organizing, sexual harassment and the #MeToo movement, and the impact of the ongoing pandemic) created opportunities for students to analyze organizational leadership responses while engaging authentically even with different perspectives on the issues as they developed trust within their teams.

The process of co-creating reflexivity with students directly integrates diversity and inclusion into the process of learning, relying on students and educators alike to create inclusion and prevent exclusion within the teams, and the class as a whole, along more widely acknowledged forms of diversity and other types of difference, too (Case, Schwartz, & Ehasz, Expected October 2022). This process is not easy. It can be emotionally fraught and interactively challenging. Students are rarely used to so little hierarchy, not always knowing what is appropriate to ask for or what is too much. As educators, we tended to accommodate learning preferences more than we should have, swayed by the sense of closeness and belonging with our own students, which caused an increased workload on our part. Finding that balance was a crucial skillset developed over time and in conjunction with our students.

Participants in this PDW will explore how the examination of core assumptions about teaching and learning, approach to teaching, and experiences of process can support and enhance all types of learning in the classroom (Case, Schwartz, & Ehasz, Expected October 2022; Rainey & Jones, 2014), while developing strategies to incorporate reflexivity in their own practice of education.

## Learning Objectives, Engagement, & Takeaway:

Our **objectives** as presenters for this PDW are to:

1. Develop participant awareness of implicit preferences in teaching.
2. Uncover how implicit theories of organizations frame instructional design and delivery.
3. Introduce a new model of multiple lenses for teaching design and delivery that creates inclusion, honoring student diversity (See Table 1 for Model).
4. Address what is involved in co-creation of a classroom experience for student-teacher interdependent reflective learning and its value to effective performance, learning, and satisfaction.
5. Provide first-person student insights as a participant in this interdependent, co-created, team-based classroom for inclusive learning, enhanced self-and-other awareness, and application to practice.

The key takeaways of this PDW are:

* Awareness of implicit assumptions, beliefs, and judgements about teaching and how those assumptions affect course design and delivery
* Participants will practice reframing teaching and reflective approaches to use-of-self
* Awareness of role-shifts an instructor takes on in just-in-time teaching to enhance student performance, satisfaction, and learning
* Understanding the ways to incorporate reflexivity in a classroom at any level for student learning, growth, and engagement.
* Modeling interdependent reflexivity in teams and the classroom facilitates inclusion across diversity, deep learning of course content and understanding of self and others for both students and educators.

## PDW Overview:

Participants will engage in a mixture of individual and group/team reflection, instructor and student stories of teaching and learning in a reframed experience, and dialogue. Active engagement will include the opportunity to “try out” reflexive activities and reflect on strategies for incorporating this approach in their classroom or organization.

The general format and flow of the workshop:

* (5 min) Introduction with objectives
* (20 min) Activity with participants
  + Organizational metaphor
  + Implications for instructional design and delivery
* (10 min) Learning approaches, implicit theory, and theory in action
* (10 min) Reframing teaching – four lenses
* (10 min) Student experience – co-creating, reflexivity, engagement, and application
* (20 min) Participant activity
  + Individual work
    - Organizational frame assessment (5 min)
  + Group work
    - Alignment of metaphor with frames of teaching and organizational frame assessment
    - Meaning for pedagogy
    - Key learning for designing and teaching differently
* (10min) Debrief learning
  + Our learning from experience of reframing teaching
  + Participant learning from workshop
* Questions and Discussion

We start with a quick introduction of the presenting team, followed by session objectives, then moving into a reflective activity. Participants respond to the prompt, “An organization is like a/n…” with a metaphor, explaining it to others. These embedded, implicit theories participants hold influence how they teach. Cognitive approaches view metaphors as tools for conceptualizing reality that impact the ways we behave and act (Trčková, 2014). Through engagement with each other around their metaphors, a relatively well-rounded theory of organizing becomes a form of introduction to the rest of the group. The workshop then examines how these implicit theories impact the ways we design a course, form objectives, deliver content, and create culture, drawing on observations from the participants and presenting team’s experiences in an undergraduate virtual classroom focusing on leadership development.

Next, we briefly discuss approaches to learning and the presenting team’s foundations in Experiential Learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2017), Gestalt Psychology (Perls, et. al., 1951; Rainey & Jones, 2014; Liechty, 2018), and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) that influenced the design and delivery of this experience. These implications are important; they change both how we approach instructional design, and how participants or students can interact with learning. Students become co-creators of their learning experience. This allows us to present a model for reframing the way we approach teaching through four distinct lenses and roles that were shared and enacted (Bolman & Deal, 2017), providing examples from experience and soliciting strategies and practice for implementation from participants.

Next, one of the students from the undergraduate course will discuss the student experience of this approach and how it impacted their learning experience. They will provide a learner perspective of a co-created classroom experience for interdependent reflective learning, sharing the impact of assignments, teaching team modeling, and structured group learning. They will speak to the impact of reflective learning and the change in student learning it creates.

Finally, we will close with an assessment activity from the class that was used to organize teams. This enables participants to practice reflexivity while building strategies to integrate this type of teaching approach into their future work as an educator. Through this PDW, attendees interact with the workshop’s topics through exercises and dialogue, practice reframing teaching, and experience interdependent reflexivity from a learner’s perspective. In addition to the experience, attendees will leave with classroom activities and exercises for their personal use.

# Works Cited

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| **Teacher as:** | | | | |
|  | **Structural Designer** | **Student Developer** | **Culture Creator** | **Politician** |
| **Image of teaching** | Social architect | Catalyst | Inspiration | Advocate |
| **Central concepts** | Environmental design, roles, objectives, strategies, assignments | Needs, empathy, relationships, pro-active engagement, honesty, skills, authenticity | Safety, norms, bonding, play, narratives, story-telling, humor | Power sharing, collaboration, risk-taking, humility |
| **Teaching process** | Co-creation, learning facilitation, interdependence | Role model, listening, support, dialogue, feedback, feelings, intuition | Mirroring, commitment, adaptability,  flexibility, “just-in-time,” celebration, motivator, passion | Choice-making, negotiation, vulnerability |
| **Ethical mandates** | Effectiveness | Caring | Purpose | Fairness |
| **Teaching challenge** | Aligning learning structure to learning need | Aligning classroom processes to student needs | Creating meaning and significance | Equalizing power |

**Table 1  
*Reframing Teaching***

*Note:* Table drawn from future publication by the author(s) (Case et al., 2022)