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Centering Educational Resilience on Mission through Research, Professional Development, and Collaborative Teaching

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1 CENTERING EDUCATIONAL RESILIENCE ON MISSION THROUGH RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

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RESUMEN

Hay desafíos y presiones externas, como la pandemia mundial, que inevitablemente ha traído cambios de paradigmas en las instituciones educativas. Esto desafíos presentan oportunidades para re imaginar las posibilidades que la educación adventista puede aprovechar en las áreas de investigación, desarrollo profesional, manejo de crisis, instrucción diferenciada, aprendizaje colaborativo, y servicio estudiantil integral en persona y en línea. Basado en un modelo de investigación para la acción, esta presentación revisa los marcos de enseñanza eficaces y las prácticas educativas basadas en la evidencia. Estas prácticas se pueden aplicar en contextos variados y se pueden aprovechar para transformar los desafíos en oportunidades de realineamiento filosófico que estimulen la renovación de la misión y la mejora de la práctica. A través del estudio y reflexión de nuestra propia experiencia educativa a través de varias crisis, presentamos lecciones aprendidas que impulsan nuestro compromiso de transformar vidas a través de la educación.

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Palabras Clave: Innovación pedagógica, aprendizaje colaborativo, liderazgo adaptativo, mejora educativa, prácticas basadas en evidencia, desarrollo profesional, enseñanza, aprendizaje, misión, educación a distancia, educación en línea.

ABSTRACT

External triggers such as the global pandemic have inevitably caused paradigm thinking shifts. These challenging times present opportunities to reimagine the possibilities of Seventh-day Adventist Education in the areas of research, professional development, crisis management, differentiating instruction, collaborative learning, and holistic student service in person and online. Supported by action research, this presentation reviews effective teaching frameworks and best practices that education in varied contexts can leverage to transform the challenges into opportunities for philosophical realignment spurring renewal of mission and improvement of practice. Through the study and reflection of our own educational experience through crisis, we present lessons learned that drive our commitment to transforming lives through education.

Key Words: Pedagogical innovation, collaborative learning, adaptive leadership, educational improvement, best practices in education, professional development, teaching, learning, mission, distance education, online learning.

INTRODUCTION

Through the 2019-2020 global pandemic, educators experienced rapid and unprecedented change in education in many lands. As education

shifted to distanced or remote learning, educators scrambled to facilitate learning in alternate modes. Moving to remote schooling necessitated rapid adaptation and innovation to learning activities that could flex to include learners in diverse situations. This required new teaching strategies that took rapid research and professional development to adopt and adapt to new technologies. As student and educator movements were limited, educators at all levels had to respond with policy and process shifts at unprecedented speeds. This called for adaptive leadership as never before. In turn, changing student contexts required rapid changes to student support systems. Inclusion is yet being redefined, with access to technology a greater divide than ever before. For many educators, the flood of offers from software developers and educational resource networks was overwhelming. But those who chose a growth mindset seized opportunities to develop new skills and operationalize new tools. Einstein is said to have defined insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". In education, using the same teaching strategies through major disruptions and expecting the same outcomes is a recipe for stress, with failed missions the inevitable result. While the disruptions of pandemics and other major events are certainly challenging, they positively provide opportunities to develop educational resilience centered on mission.

ACTION RESEARCH

Recognizing similarities in resilient approaches to education through disruptions we experienced in civil unrest and pandemic alike, we chose action research to further explore and improve teaching and learning. Self-reflective action research cycles of 1) planning, 2) acting, 3) observing, and 4) reflecting on or reimagining teaching, learning and assessment in changing contexts shaped just-in-time professional development and experimentation with new technologies. Every adaptive move focused

on improving student learning outcomes applying best practices and experiential learning within our higher education contexts (Efron & Ravid, 2020; Koshy, Koshy & Waterman, 2011).

The driving research question was: what strategies can be deployed to make the most of educational disruptions? Improved practice affirming this participatory action research findings prompted collegial collaboration to report on applicable pedagogies and professional development opportunities.

FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS

A related research question guided literature review through cycles of participatory research in Christian higher education: what theories, models and frameworks inform the process of reimagining pedagogies in changing environments? We resonated with research and writing on learning organizations, clarification of Christian education mission, backward design, adaptive leadership and the network learning model.

Learning Organizations

In the 1990s, Peter Senge developed the concept of a learning organization as one that encourages and facilitates learning in order to continually transform itself to survive and excel in rapidly changing contexts. The 5 characteristics of learning organizations are systems thinking, personal mastery of the mission and vision, understanding the mental models of each person in the organization to be able to create a shared vision, and institutional-wide commitment to continuing education towards the shared vision, as a team. While first applied to business, educational concepts of professional learning communities have built on this framework. Notably, ascribing to the idea of being a learning school means that disruptive change

will inevitably happen in cycles of institutional improvement. To do this well requires "collective commitment, collaborative action, risk-taking, and deep changes" (Harris & Jones, 2017). Tips for becoming a learning organization include leading by example, focusing on coaching colleagues or employees, getting your team talking as everyone learns through both formal and informal communication, and through analyzing data you provide that they may have key insights to contribute. Add opportunities to celebrate success and cycles of continuous improvement through professional development and rethinking mission.

Christian Education Foundations

From the Seventh-day Adventist faith perspective, the mission of redemptive education is captured in Ellen White's vision for Christian education: "To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose of his creation might be realized - this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life" (Education, 15). This action research was situated in the context of Christ-centered higher education, guided by the mission of Adventist education, which, "prepares students for a useful and joy-filled life, fostering friendship with God, whole-person development, Bible-based values, and selfless service, in accordance with the Seventh-day Adventist mission to the world" (General Conference Policy Manual, 221). The Andrews University institutional outcomes (October 2020) apply this mission to Christian higher education allowing appropriate customization fitting each discipline and program level.

Reflecting on education disruptions resulting from civil war, pandemic, and natural disasters, in light of the biblically-based philosophy and mission articulated above, the quality of our care for the whole person in educational engagements with students and colleagues was key to innovation in teaching and learning. The intentional inclusion of essential

questions and other reimagined pedagogies can help students develop skills in connecting mission through studies and career preparation. This is the resilient bridge we build between the challenges and opportunities of the new normal, as our mission leads us to innovate in how we educate for eternity.

Backward Design

A teaching and learning framework enabling mission-centered education through disruptions is that of curriculum specialists Wiggins & McTighe (2005). From their writing on understanding by design educators gained the backward design curriculum model or framework. Backward design reminds us to start our educational work with the end in mind. In crafting learning, we best begin by asking what students should know, understand and be able to do. Educators then select outcomes that reflect the educational mission. Next, we decide how we will know if students have achieved the desired results. Evidence is collected through a variety of appropriately designed assessments. Rather than starting with what content to teach, backward design ends with teachers planning appropriate lessons and learning activities.

Using the analogy of a bridge, educational planning begins by preparing the banks. When mission is clearly defined in relevant institutional and student learning outcomes, educators can determine what evidence of learning would best demonstrate the desired learning has happened. Outcomes and assessment are constructed with equal care before the activity to build the bridge spanning the divide begins. The materials for the bridge approaches on each bank as well as the material used to span the gap are determined by contextual variables, and require communication and collaboration between engineers, local leaders, and construction crews. Similarly, the resilient educator will draw on research, professional development and collaborative experience to innovate in teaching practices and learning activities to effectively

rebuild broken bridges or rapidly embrace new tools to span the divide during pandemics, natural disasters, civil unrest and wars. The greater the disruptions experienced in education, the greater the innovation needed to span the divide between WHY we do what we do (mission-driven outcomes), and HOW we know we have achieved that mission (appropriate assessments).

Cycles of reflective pedagogical practice confirmed the value of a backward design approach to resilient teaching and learning through disruptions to society and education. Understanding that learning activities and teaching strategies by design should vary to connect outcomes and assessments empowers educators to innovate with available resources, choosing a growth mindset and affirming and centering educational resilience on mission.

Adaptive Leadership

Reflecting on lessons learned through adaptive leadership of 64 diocesan schools in Victoria, Australia through the COVID-19 pandemic, Goode, McGennisken and Rutherford (2021) note that leadership requires "flexible, vulnerable management of complexity. Present, transparent imperfection can be far more helpful and authentic than delayed, distant perfection" (p. 41). Drawing on existing strengths, flexing to consider innovative use of available resources shared through open lines of communication drawing in community resources outside the classroom and school system, proved essential. There is synergy in supporting each educator, student and their families, through frequent communication sharing adaptations as made based on best options available at the time of the decision.

Consider the adaptive approach David took to the disruption the Philistine giant Goliath was causing to the Israelite army, as the Bible described in 1 Samuel 17. While the Israelite soldiers fled at the sound of

the giant's bullying taunts, the young shepherd visitor thought outside of their box. David identified the real challenge as Goliath "defied the armies of the living God" (verse 36). From this frame of reference, David was confident that God, who had helped him slay a lion and a bear, could empower him to overcome this disruptive force. King Saul demonstrated adaptive leadership in grasping and resourcing the unconventional solution David offered with his clear sense of God's presence and mission possible. This and other biblical narratives inspired focus flexibility and adaptive leadership in unprecedented times for the participative researchers in this study.

Change management is challenging in any profession. Citing Heifetz and Linsky as defining adaptive leadership as "the act of mobilizing a group of individuals to handle difficult challenges" the Corporate Finance Institute shares four components resilient educational leaders and teachers need. Foremost is emotional intelligence which includes the ability to recognize the feelings of self, students and colleagues, in order to build trusting, quality relationships. Organizational justice is achieved through fostering a culture of honest and respectful inclusion in creating the best policies and practices for the group in dynamic times. A willingness to learn and reimagine enables individual and institutional growth and development. The principle of creative, transparent, and value-based character undergirds emotional intelligence, organizational justice and development of adaptive leadership.

Adaptive leadership at all levels requires proactive looking for opportunities and continually networking within and outside the organization to find and implement innovative solutions. In the 21st century, this involves an expanding array of options in networked learning.

Network Learning Model

Providing frameworks for a world changed by networked learning, Harold Jarche makes the case for building networks of people we trust to help us access and make sense of knowledge beyond ours. To this end, his Network Learning Model (Figure 1) demonstrates the importance of building communities of practice that rally for shorter-term purposes of shared expertise as educational disruptions precipitate.
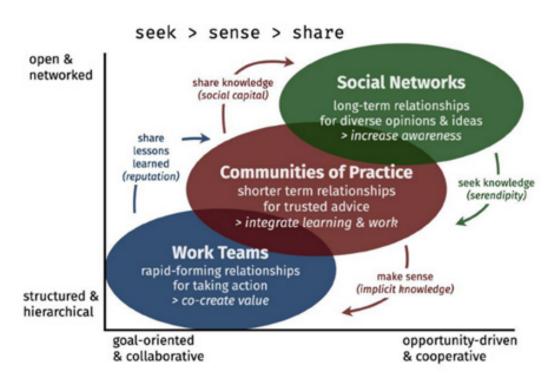
Figure 1. Network Learning Model (Jarche, 2020, Chapter 7, p.9)

As best practices for current crises are shared among departmental or small-school staff teams, informal learning takes place, strengthening communities of practice. Knowledge gained through each educator's chosen social networks in turn informs these communities and teams. Jarche observes that "we can't be innovative unless we integrate learning into our work." Personal knowledge management includes asking questions such as: "How do I keep track of all of this information? How

do I make sense of changing conditions and new knowledge? How can I develop and improve critical thinking skills? How can we cooperate? How can I collaborate better? How can I engage in problem-solving activities at the edge of my expertise?" (p.15)

Through communication of diverse views and ideas, our awareness is increased, and we seek knowledge through joining communities of practice. With expertise gained, we can serve on work teams formed to take specific actions, such as developing new curriculum, policies, and procedures in higher education. While space limits deeper consideration of this model, note the horizontal axis that moves from goal-oriented and collaborative to opportunity-driven and cooperative engagement, with the vertical axis bound from structured and hierarchical to open and networked learning. The importance and interplay of collaboration and cooperation are of interest as we rethink mission implementation through educational disruption.

REIMAGINING PEDAGOGIES

If there was a time where educators had to rethink and reimagine educational practices, it was during the global pandemic. Without discounting the tragedies brought by the pandemic, the possibilities can also serve as an inspiration for the way forward. This section of the article will focus on three pedagogical principles that, in their totality or partiality, can impact and improve teaching and learning. The first principle is to focus on the possibilities rather than the limitations, the second principle is to teach less and better, and the third principle is to partner with students as collaborators in the teaching and learning process.

Before digging a little deeper into these principles, it is important to establish that for pedagogies to work, students need to know, without

a doubt, that the classroom is a safe space for learning. No significant learning can take place without positive relationships. Considering that both educators and students have experienced trauma and loss because of the global pandemic, the pedagogical changes have to account for the care and compassion students need before learning can take place. Secondly, the recommendations are neither prescriptive nor applicable in their entirety to all settings and contexts. It is possible that embracing one of the three or all three or a portion of each one could have positive results in the student and the faculty experiences. Conversely, educators may choose any other principle that, when applied consistently, would have similar positive impacts. The bottom line is that when we make evidence-based decisions about teaching and reflect on them regularly and we reimagine what we can do in our classrooms, we will be effective teachers in pandemic or in non-pandemic times. We do not have to have a specific set of practices but rather deeply held informed positions about teaching and learning that we deliver consistently and coherently. By applying the participatory action research model of 1) planning, 2) acting, 3) observing, and 4) reflecting we are collecting valuable data on our practices that can inform the next steps in our decisions about teaching (Efron & Ravid, 2020; Koshy, Koshy & Waterman, 2011).

Educators around the world made monumental efforts to quickly change to remote delivery and to care for students' many needs because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Their work should be acknowledged and recognized. Additionally, many scholars and educators were able to generate recommendations for resilient pedagogies in remote learning environments and that work should also be acknowledged. The first section of resilient pedagogies focuses on a change of attitude towards the disruption. The challenges that the global pandemic brought upon educators and students can be reimagined as possibilities. Classrooms that were replicated in remote delivery exactly as they were taught face to face were less successful than classrooms where educators seized the

opportunity for innovation and creativity. Focusing on the possibilities rather than the limitations is a way to build educational resiliency.

The concept of resiliency in the educational context has risen to prominence in the last few months. Josh Eyler, Director of Faculty Development and Director of the Think forward Quality Enhancement Plan at the University of Mississippi defined resilient pedagogy as a design strategy that helps make your classes, assignments, and assessments as resistant to disruption as possible. The way to think about this is regardless of which modality you're teaching in—online, in-person, or blended— you're designing one time and one time only.

Why should pedagogies be resilient? Change is ever present, but the changes of the magnitude brought by the global pandemic and the rate with which change had to happen are unprecedented on a global scale. It would be important to note that educators around the world teaching in war zones and facing other types of social unrest and uncertainty face these disruptions constantly (Bill, 2020). Yet, the magnitude of this pandemic is unfamiliar for most.

Chow, Lam, and King designated the intentional way of planning for disruptions as crisis resilient pedagogy (CRP). This is how they define it, "This novel teaching and learning approach is a continuous progress approach to accommodate different types of crises. It enables teachers and students to adapt to changes effectively so that the impact of crises on teaching and learning can be minimized. It is a rejection of fixed and static pedagogy that cannot cope with changes brought by crises." (2020, n.p.)

Resilient pedagogies can help us develop a positive outlook in the face of change

Learning is multispatial

One of the ways in which pedagogies can be resilient is to recognize the multiple spaces where learning can happen. We can learn in our living rooms, on the patio, in the classroom, in the library, in the car, on the bus, or on the train. One strategy that I have used in my courses during the pandemic is the use of audio resources to maximize the time used for class preparation. The pandemic brought significant additional work for parents with children being schooled from home. Parents sharing some of schooling responsibility, caring for children and elderly parents, and an array of additional work that wasn't theirs before, created a vacuum of dedicated time for reading. By providing access to resources that could be hands free, students taking my courses could listen to important materials while washing the dishes or exercising. parents taking my courses had less time to read. A third of my course materials contain resources that can be listened to. According to Karl Luke (2020), an added benefit of digital course materials is that students can listen to them multiple times, pause, and repeat as needed. Luke's study found that note-taking and the summary of key ideas is crucial for knowledge retention. Therefore, as we consider digital course materials, we must pair them with pedagogies such as note-taking and summarization that will be conducive to retention of important concepts. Busy students can take short breaks to summarize and take notes as a powerful self-assessment on what they learned (Brown, et. al, 2014).

In the book Education, Ellen White notes that Jesus taught everywhere: in the house, on the mountainside, by the sea, on a boat (p. 85). When course materials are not readily available digitally to curate for a course, short lectures (7-10 minutes) can be recorded ahead of class time. This

would allow students to use the class time on Zoom or WhatsApp to work out problems, collaborate on a project, and have meaningful discussions. The shorter recordings encourage educators to keep the lecturing to the essential concepts, those you want students to remember when they leave your classroom. Not every concept has the same hierarchy. Pre-recording lectures offers the opportunity to sort out the most important ideas to be remembered. The technology to do this is easily found on phones or other devices using software such as Zoom or Teams.

Learning is multimodal

We can learn from our phones, our computers, books, TV. This is an incredible possibility because it expands access. The multimodal learning space is full of creative use of technologies and social media available. We are not confined to a space and we are not confined to a modality. Creativity and pushing the boundaries of more traditional spaces and ways of learning is now encouraged and in some cases, expected. Iannou, Vasilliou, and Zaphiris (2016) provide an example of how a technology rich environment expanded access and increased learning in a course using a problem-based approach.

Access to knowledge

Much of the content for courses has become digitized because we want to give our students access wherever they are. Some students may have planned to come to campus and a family member became ill, and they have to stay home. Students can still learn from home because they have access to the course materials and the course sessions available to them via learning management systems, Zoom, WhatsApp or email.

Shifting Roles

There is a warm feeling that comes from invitations to spend time with friends and family. This kind of feeling is what students get when they are invited to partake in important decisions in our courses. In his

book *What the Best College Teachers Do*, Ken Bain (Harvard University Press, 2004) makes an analogy that expands on this idea of an invitation. He says that we need to make our course syllabi an invitation to a feast. And he continues to say that in this invitation, we must trust that our students can partake with us on this feast, in this case, a feast of learning. Ken Bain argues: "trust in the students depends on the teacher's rejection of power over them." Effective teachers invited people to pursue ambitious goals and promised to help them achieve, but they left learners in control of their own education avoiding any sense of "commanding the troops into a tough battle." Proverbs 15:22 reminds us that "without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." Our work is enhanced by collaboration, including collaboration with students.

Many times, we see the teaching and learning process as a tension 1) between teacher and student goals, 2) between rigor, enthusiasm and lack of motivation, and 3) between completing the assignments and learning.

A collaborative model between educators and students suggests a change of "sides" if you will. It is an active process of working together to achieve the goals of the course. Boville and colleagues give us some recommendations of how faculty and students may collaborate to: evaluate course content, design learning processes, (Re)design the content of courses, research learning and teaching, undertake disciplinary research, design assessments such as essay questions or choose between different assessment methods, self-assessment, and peer-assessment to name a few.

The next few paragraphs will focus on the perceived limitations from a strengths perspective.

Perceived hierarchies

Educators and students were likely educated in hierarchical models. The educator is far removed from the student, both physically, such as teaching from the front of the room; and intellectually, being the only disseminators or generators of knowledge. Oftentimes, this distance is equated with respect. There is much value in the educator's training, preparation, and experience. However, shifting practices to bring the relationships closer (physically/digitally and intellectually) can have very positive effects in student learning. The literature supports collaboration and partnerships among educators and students in at least the following areas: teaching, learning and research (Barbera, Garcia, & Fuertes-Alpiste, 2017; Bell 2016; Cook-Sather & Abbot, 2016, Debelius, et. al, 2021), and diversity, equity and inclusion efforts (Cook-Sather, Addy, DeVault, & Litvitskiy, 2021).

Time limitations

Reflection and redesign take time. It is easy to get discouraged and overwhelmed when trying to imagine the possibilities. It is not unusual for educators to begin with great ideas and the course design or lesson design due dates put great pressure on the ability to deliver. However, more and more, we should realize that using the principle of "less and better", discussed in the next section, we free up time for better teaching. For example, if we abandon the notion that students have to produce some sort of assignment for each class session for accountability purposes, we free up some of their bandwidth and ours to prepare material for a collaborative presentation. Students can produce a larger assignment that is worked on in small portions throughout the term. This allows the teacher more time away from grading and accountability processes and more time to be present in supporting students through timely and meaningful feedback while they are doing their work. At the end of the course, there is one quality project or paper that the student and teacher are both very familiar with. How many times have we written papers a

couple of days before they are due never to return to those ideas again? Working over time on a project or paper students are passionate about, could enhance their course experience, improve their learning, and allow time for better teaching. When we focus on the possibilities rather than the limitations, we use our bandwidth in more productive ways.

Through the disruption, we found that learning is multi-spatial: learning can take place in living rooms, in the classroom, in the library, in the car, on the bus, or on the train. Learning is also multi-modal as books, phones, computers, TV and other devices are all modes through which teaching and learning can take place. Creativity and exploration of the boundaries of more traditional spaces and ways of learning is now encouraged. Preparing a variety of materials to facilitate student learning in many spaces is an important consideration. Access to knowledge is largely digitalized and therefore, of easier access. We can leverage this to the advantage of students. The second principle for a resilient pedagogy framework is a curricular shift and is related to the amount of content one can meaningfully learn in a delimited time.

Less

Students are developing skills and dispositions such as interdependence, collaboration, resilience, humility, and self-reflection to name a few. Educators do not have to feel the pressure to cover as much content. Students will remember the big ideas of the course and I can teach them how to search for the details. They are learning new ways of being and navigating life. They are more likely to use these skills and dispositions rather than details about the content of a particular course. They are more likely to use the metacognitive skills and the attitudes and processes of learning rather than the details of the content. They will remember the big ideas and where to find the details. Reducing, reusing, and recycling are key for long-term retention. Our brains are more likely to remember something we have used or heard seven times.

To have long-term retention, we have to reduce, reuse, and recycle course content. Our brains are more likely to remember something we have used or heard 7 times.

Retrieve and interleave

In his book *Small Teaching: Lessons from the Science of Learning*, James Lang notes that students need an opportunity to retrieve information to make long-term retention possible (2016). If they are always engaged with new concepts, they are not afforded the opportunity to find the content they have already learned and articulate it in a way that they can commit it to long-term memory. That is why, he recommends, cumulative quizzes and opportunities for recalling previous knowledge. If our content is always moving to the next thing, we are less likely to build retrieval opportunities in our lessons and notice that they do not always have to be evaluative. In addition to quizzes, there are many ways in which students can demonstrate what they know from one lesson to the next, from one chapter to the next, from one unit to the next. As well, Lang defines a process where multiple subjects, topics or skills are introduced and practices in parallel to improve learning as interleaving. For example, educational research students can learn how to create a survey in parallel with interviewing skills. We can train students to study using interleaving practices. Part of our responsibility as educators is to guide students to the essential knowledge and what strategies they can use to retrieve it when they need the information.

Better

Opportunities to revise and resubmit

Since we are hierarchizing knowledge to focus on the big ideas and key concepts, we have more time to provide meaningful feedback, opportunities to redo assignments or portions of them, and to polish course work for publication. This can be a collaborative effort between

the educator and the student. Publication does not have to take place exclusively in peer reviewed journals. Other types of publication and engagement in scholarship have become more widely accepted for tenure and promotion and would be a wonderful forum for student and faculty development.

Expertise is one aspect of the course

When students specialize within a course, they are more likely to take with them a body of references that they can access on demand. They are also more likely to share finished products and potential scholarship with larger audiences. They feel comfortable knowing that they can dialogue with both expert and lay audiences. Historically, college and university professors were the only ones with access to course materials and resources (at times those were mainly books). Today, everyone in the world with access to the internet has access to a large percentage of the available knowledge base in a discipline. As a result, there is a shift of responsibilities in the teaching and learning process. Students and educators today have access to the same information. This provides a great opportunity to engage students as partners in the teaching and learning process.

The third principle is centered around relationships. A resilient pedagogy framework includes the students as collaborators and partners in the educational experience. There are a number of benefits that have been recorded in the literature; these three are highlighted: Benefits include student motivation, commitment and perception of shared responsibility for learning, active engagement and meaningful learning through metacognitive processes, and recognition of student's prior knowledge and experiences (Bovill, et. al, 2015 and 2016).

Course design

Students can be involved in course design as co-creators (Debelius, et al., 2021). For example, students could receive course materials ahead of time, with the invitation to help inform topic selection towards the end of the course. To select topics for a course, students have to meaningfully engage in exploring the course content and the resources. This is a higher order experience for students. Educators who are more reluctant to leave course topics "up-to-the-students" may begin with one or two class sessions. It is possible that they will be surprised about the students' keen contributions and consider allowing them to choose more topics. In a recent course on Teaching in Higher Education, students proposed to have the Counseling and Testing Service Department and the Student Success Office do a presentation on services available to support students. As the educator of the course, I had not thought about this topic as an important component of the course. The students's contribution made the course better for them and for future students.

Other ways in which students can collaborate with educators in course design and delivery include: creating the course guidelines and expectations, assignment design, assignment choice, peer coaching, and research, increasing level of engagement. (Cecilie, Febe, & Karina, 2016).

Teaching and assessment

Bovill, Cook-Sather, and Fentel (2011) argue that students can collaborate with us in teaching and assessment. Students come with a wealth of knowledge and experiences that should be recognized. One summer, a student taking an intensive course in secondary methods had 20 years of teaching experience in the classroom. He was only taking the course to update his certification. Therefore, I invited him to co-teach a few topics in the course. This experience was beneficial for all. If in your field,

this would be an unusual situation, consider more student presentations. Presentations can be carefully crafted on the topics of the course and with your feedback and support to ensure students are successful as they engage in teaching each other. The skills needed for the workforce rarely require that someone would be alone at a workplace filling a paper with information. The workplace requires dialogue, collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking.

There are some potential challenges to collaboration between educators and students and they should be recognized. Bovill et al. (2015, and 2016) and Brooman et al. (2015) share that students may be resistant to change because of cultural influences, time investment, or the feeling that the design process is chaotic. Educators can underestimate student abilities to contribute and struggle to maintain a balance between rigor, control, and collaboration. However, the benefits of including students in course design far outweigh the challenges (Bovill, et al. 2015; Bryan & Brittany, 2012

Mentoring relationships

Most every educator would recognize that there were people in their forming years and as young professionals who took the time to teach, model, support, and cheer them on. In chapter 9 of the book Education, Ellen White examines what it was like to learn from Jesus. She opens the chapter by saying: "The most complete illustration of Christ's methods as a teacher is found in His training of the twelve first disciples." The opening phrase means that Jesus had a profound interest to form his disciples and to ensure that they were ready to advance Jesus' mission. Just like we are with our own students. I learned most of what I know through the generous contributions of mentors to my own development as an educator. This inspires me to look for opportunities to mentor others. (Kyla & Joya, 2013.) Following the example of Jesus, we offer two areas for consideration.

We are responsible for mentoring underrepresented people in our fields (Noelle, Joseph & Emily, 2016). At the university level, this would mean women and minority colleagues and students from underrepresented backgrounds. We are to seek opportunities to support and mentor those who are new to our organizations or who are otherwise needing gentle guidance. Matthew 5: 47-48 reads "And if you greet your brothers [and sisters] only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Furthermore, Christ discerned the possibilities in every human being. He was not turned aside by an unpromising exterior or by unfavorable surroundings. He called Matthew from the tollbooth, and Peter and his brethren from the fishing boat, to learn of Him. (p.232)

These are three practical recommendations: engage in hiring processes to identify people who may benefit from your mentorship, create institutionally supported mentoring programs that would allow mentoring pairs to have the appropriate spaces and resources if they are not yet existent and if they are, offer to help, support, affirm, celebrate, engage the formalized mentoring opportunities in your organization. Or support, affirm, celebrate, the work you see your colleagues doing informally.

Some strategies that can be helpful in disruptive times when it feels like we can barely do our own work or when we feel overwhelmed by everyday tasks and do not have the time to engage in mentoring practices.

- Hold walking mentoring meetings - whether in person or virtually, taking walks with a mentoring partner could have multiple benefi-cial effects. Exercise is key for our wellbeing and it is entirely pos-sible to hold a walking meeting with one other person. (Kathleen

& Pohanna, 2016).
- Have an agenda and make the meetings shorter. Digital tools like Google Documents, smart phones, email, text, Whatsapp, have made it possible for us to resolve small and big problems. While in a pandemic, make the meetings shorter (20-30 minutes maximum) and resolve any other pending issues through a quick text or email. (Desmond, Steven, Peter, & Jennifer, 2009)
- Mentoring is a component of educators wellbeing (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Bosica, 2019)

CONCLUSIONS

Without discounting the pain, disruption, suffering and terrible losses, these challenging times present opportunities to reimagine the possibilities of Seventh-day Adventist education in the areas of research, professional development, crisis management, differentiating instruction, collaborative learning, and holistic student service in person and online. As Christian educators we follow the example of Jesus by constantly engaging in creating classroom environments that prioritize relationships, that use time-honored and innovative teaching methods, and propel us to constantly reflect on our teaching practices to make them resilient to unexpected change. Every educator can identify three teaching strategies or models that inform practice and when done well, are transformative for the educational experience.

We also explored ways in which this can be done by envisioning possibilities, considering the hierarchy of knowledge to focus on the quality of the experience for long-term retention, to engage students as our partners and collaborators, and to forge mentoring relationships with students and colleagues. We shared the lessons we learned through action research informed by our commitment to excellence in Christian

education. We reviewed effective teaching frameworks and best practices that education in varied contexts can leverage to transform the challenges into opportunities for philosophical realignment spurring renewal of mission and improvement of practice. Through the study and reflection of our own educational experience during crisis, we presented lessons learned and practical steps using a participatory action research approach. These lessons have the potential of reinvigorating our commitment to transforming lives through education.

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