

Australia-ASEAN Academics Forum

Online education during Covid-19 and beyond.



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The importance of tending to relationships:

Cultural safety education in online spaces

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Health social sciences: contexts of wellbeing and recovery

Research focus:

- how does being responsive to cultural and social diversity contribute to positive health and education outcomes?
- developing social sciences theories and methods which include a diversity of experiences and voices
- how to best teach students to appreciate the links between culture, diversity and health

I lead the 'Cultural Safety and Health Care' teaching program at UTAS

Presentation overview

- Presentation makes the case for the importance of *tending to relationships* in online cultural safety education
- Outline of the *Cultural Safety and Health Care* teaching program at UTAS
- Distinctive features of cultural safety education
- Shared physical space (SPS) workshops go online during Covid
- Generated research question: How does the online classroom mediate dimensions of cultural safety education, for students or teachers?
- An exploratory study to comparing cultural safety education in SPS and online workshops
- How to further best practice in online cultural safety education

Cultural Safety and Health Care teaching program at UTAS

Nationally, all accrediting bodies for allied health, nursing and midwifery and medical professions in Australia require tertiary students to be culturally safe with regards to cultural and social diversity.

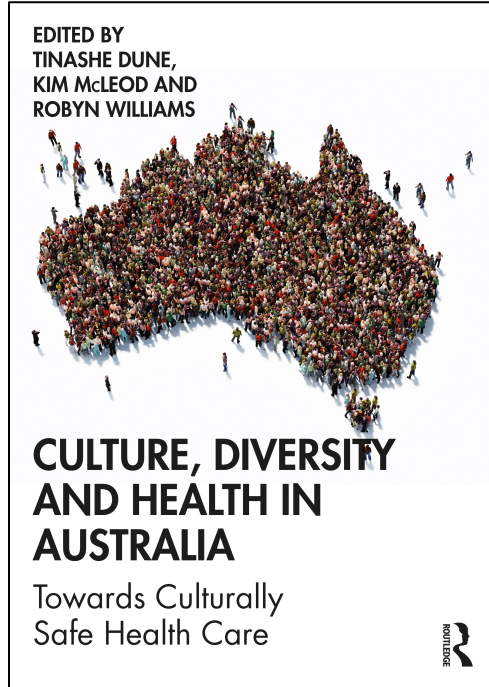
Culturally safe and sensitive practice involves an awareness of the cultural needs and contexts of all patients and clients, to obtain good health outcomes.

Key aims:

- Develop students' critical thinking about how broader context shapes health experiences and outcomes
- Cultivate self-reflection and cultural self-awareness and an acknowledgement of how these factors impact care (De Souza, 2008; Ramsden, 2002).



Cultural safety and Health Care teaching program at UTAS



Program underpinnings:

- Philosophy and practice of cultural safety (Dune, McLeod, Williams 2021)
- Transformative pedagogies (Mackinlay & Barney 2014)
- The frameworks and politics of decolonisation (Walter & Baltra-Ulloa, 2016; Nakata et al 2012; Ohito 2019; McLeod et al 2020)
- Relational pedagogies (Ljungblad 2021; Biesta 2020; Baltra-Ulloa, Vincent, Holla 2019)

Shared physical space (SPS) workshops go online during Covid

Pre-covid - mixed delivery

Online content, teaching and learning activities

Shared physical space (SPS) workshops, peer-led, tutor facilitated activities

During covid – online delivery

Rapid shift from SPS to synchronous online workshops

Aim of workshops – critical thinking about health contexts; cultivate self-reflection and cultural self-awareness and an acknowledgement of how these factors impact care

Shared physical space (SPS) workshops go online during Covid

- ❑ Going online of interest to the teaching team! Community of practice over several years
- ❑ Ongoing collaborative reflective practice with teaching team (Ng & Tan, 2009; Wegner et al 2002; Allard et al 2007); 3 research projects
- ❑ Effective cultural safety education requires positive, respectful relatedness between students, and students and teachers; a shared co-learning stance (McLeod et al., under review).
- ❑ Trusting, respectful relationships are critical to:
 - ❑ Ensure student resistance and discomfit become positive learning experiences
 - ❑ Manage the affective and emotional aspects of cultural safety education
- ❑ Little literature about the SPS environment – very little about online environment

Comparing cultural safety education in SPS and online workshops: an exploratory study

Research question: How does the online classroom mediate dimensions of cultural safety education, for students or teachers? With view to making a contribution to best practice.

Exploratory, qualitative research project led by Dr Robyn Moore, with Dr Natalie Maystorovich, Rachael Jones and I.

5 Tutors for units on cultural safety:

- all had previously facilitated the workshops in SPS classrooms.
- invited to reflect on challenges and rewards of online workshops, comparison to SPS workshops.
- shared their written reflections about online teaching with other research participants and participated in collaborative reflective conversations

The conversations were not solely focused on data collection, but also designed to cultivate a community of practice. In line with our aim of building collegial relationships, reflections were not anonymised.

Reflective writing and conversations thematically co-analysed by the research team.

The online environment affects 'turning up'

- 'Blackboard collaborate' web conferencing = the online environment
- Bandwidth issues for teachers and students - freezing, dropping out.
- Student learning environments – busy, noisy, avoiding turning camera on.
- The experience of teaching online highlighted the impact of economic inequality on accessing learning in the virtual classroom: use of phones.
- Some forms of contact and communication between students, and students and their tutor, no longer happened

The online environment shapes how students communicate

Students overwhelmingly relied on the written chat function

Enables	Limits
Opportunity for peer learning	Student responses short and perfunctory
Ask relevant questions	Difficult to elicit expanded response
Suits some students' preferred communication style	Often express agreement or indicate understanding, little reflection or critical thinking

The online environment mediates teachers' and students' bodily presence

Students avoided using video cameras: loss of body language and non-verbal cues

Tutors realised the value of students' embodied responses to the learning process, 'reading the room'.

“For me, the main classroom was like talking to the empty room I was sitting in”

Not possible to develop the relationships and relatedness so students can feel that it is a safe space to share their values, ideas and experiences

The online environment informs possibilities for critical discussion

A familiar range of responses, but:

Online classroom prevents conditions tutors know are required to facilitate critical discussion

“I want to have difficult, tough conversations that are going to ontologically disturb them, but you need to bring people close to that for that and you can't in this environment”

The online environment intensifies teachers' emotional labour

- Hard conversations, student discomfit and resistance – facilitation requires embodied responses and emotional labour
- In combination with teachers' attempts to engage students, the lack of reciprocity from students left teachers feeling 'exhausted', 'tired', 'drained' or 'pooped'.
- One-way exchange
- Increased 'performativity'
- Struggle to feel effective in teaching

The online environment mediates:

- how students 'turn up' to the teaching environment
- The kind of contact and communication that happens
- The aspects of experience, identity and self that are shared

All of this impacts relationship-building and community building

The technological affordances of the online space are co-creating the teaching and learning environment.

If creating trusting relationships is crucial in cultural safety education,

The importance of tending to relationships:
Including the affordances of the online environment

The importance of tending to relationships: *Including* the affordances of the online environment

Pedagogy and *then* “engage the technological infrastructures of our online learning environments, to explore how to cultivate environments that prioritise relational capacities” (Montelongo & Eaton 2019, p. 42).

Consider how students relate to online environments

Clarify intended learning outcomes of online teaching activities

Teacher training

Lines of enquiry

- How students engage with online content and learning activities
- How cultural safety philosophy and other critical frameworks and pedagogies are taken up in online teaching
- Relationship and community building activities that are effective in online spaces
- Embodied practices and online teaching

The importance of tending to relationships:

Including the affordances of the online environment:

A way to further best practice in online cultural safety education

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