

FLO Friday: Powerful Questions to Facilitate Online Learning & Strengthen Relationships
BCcampus: FLO Friday, December 2, 2022
Guest speaker: Marina Jaffey
Host: Gwen Nguyen

GWEN NGUYEN:

We are at 11. So hello everyone. I got to be a little bit careful with this, so good morning and good afternoon. And welcome to our workshop. And thank you for choosing to be with us on a Friday. It's a very cold and gloomy Friday on Vancouver Island. And though we gather here on digital space, we very much appreciate that you share an hour to come here and join us for this workshop on a Friday. My name is Gwen, and I'm a teaching and learning advisor at BCcampus. I'm very happy that I have an opportunity to coordinate a series of FLO Friday courses this year. And I know that our facilitator Marina has a full session for all of us. But before that, I would like to go through a few housekeeping items. And I also like to acknowledge the special presence of BCcampus IT support team, Abigail and Dave, in the back end. So thank you. This session will be recorded and it will be shared with any additional resources after this session. If you do not wish to be recorded, you're welcome to keep your camera off and feel free to rename yourself to FLO participant. Live captioning has also been enabled. At the end of the session, we would like to ask you to participate in a short anonymous survey and the link will be put in the chat. We just wish to know your feedback of this learning event and perhaps to find a way to organize more fruitful activities to support teaching and learning around B.C. in the future. And if you will still stay with us till the very end, I will have some upcoming FLO events at BCcampus to share.

And so our topic today is Powerful Questions to Facilitate Online Learning and Strengthen Relationships. And as many of you and my colleagues here at BCcampus, I'm committed towards the process of decolonization in education and in my practice of territorial acknowledgment today, I would like to start with some powerful questions by the Indigenous scholar Gregory Cajete. So he mentioned, as educators, we should always ask ourselves three questions. The first one is, how are we going to deal with the environmental crisis as it is today? The second one is, how are we going to learn to live with each other? And the last one is, how do we take care of our own selves? And we live in an era where the rhythm of lives are changing significantly. And as agitator, I think that we do have a great deal of power and possibility to influence the next generation of learners. And in particular, the way that they respond to some of those burning question. Recently, there has been a discussion among us around territorial acknowledgment to do or not to do. And I know that why there is a lot to be done to actually respond to the historical and continued barriers facing the Indigenous people. I believe that engaging in meaningful territorial acknowledgement helps me personally think about how I have to come to be here and my sense of responsibility and belonging to learn more about the people whose land we live on. So I'm, I'm joining you today from my home office in Gordon Head, Saanich, located in the unseated territory of the Lekwungen speaking people, including the Songhees Nations. And Esquimalt people, Saanich people whose historical relations with the land continues to this day. When I came here in 2015 to pursue my study at the University of Victoria, I fell in love with the space right at first time. And I live here every day

with gratitude. And you're invited to share your introductions and territorial acknowledgment in the chat if you wish. Back to our topic today, we are very delighted to be able to collaborate with Marina Jaffey, who's an inspiring online learning facilitator and a professional coach to offer this FLO Friday on this important topic. How do we use powerful question to really strengthen a culture of inclusion and respect and deepen learning and strengthen relationship. So here you go, Marina, I'm very happy to put myself on mute now to enjoy this learning, ride with all of you. So welcome and thank you, everyone.

MARINA JAFFEY:

Thank you, Gwen, for your very thoughtful welcome. And I was particularly struck by those three powerful questions that you posed at the beginning. It would be lovely if you would share those in the chat, if you'd like. Thank you also, Abigail and Dave, our tech support for today. And welcome everyone. As Gwen mentioned, my name is Marina Jaffey, and I am here at Camosun College interurban campus today. And this campus is on the unceded traditional territories of Legwunken, and WSÁNEĆ Peoples. And it's been a place where I have come to work, to engage, to build relationships with students and colleagues since 1997. And so it really is a second home for me, and I'm so grateful for just outside my window is this lovely little Gary Oak meadow. And as I was walking into campus to my office this morning, it is a way for me to feel grounded. And so I invite you to settle into your space today wherever you are and just get comfortable. I know it's a very busy time of the year and I'm so grateful that you have chosen to spend some time together in this workshop. And so settling in, having your favorite beverage with you. And we'll get started.

I do hope that you have a good learning experience this morning. And so we're going to, we're going to have our first activity, which is on the next slide. And thank you for those of you who shared in the pre-workshop, survey. Your hopes, what you'd like to take away. And so what I would like to invite you to do is just think to yourself what attracted you to this workshop. And this is what we call a waterfall activity. Some of you may be familiar with this activity. It works well in an online environment when you're working with students or you have a work team meeting. So think to yourself what attracted you to this workshop and type your answer in chat, but press, don't post it yet. So I'll just give you a moment to type in chat. What attracted you to this workshop? Powerful questions. Okay. All right, everyone. So pressing, pressing, send. Oh, this is fabulous. Using questions as a primary tool. I know just given that we have quite a number of participants today. And so what I'd like to do is, our chat is being saved, and so you will receive an email after the workshop, which will include these PowerPoint slides, as well as the saved chat. And you'll have a chance to actually see what some of the other participants have indicated. What attracted them to the workshop. Things like we're working with diverse learners, diverse work teams and how to engage with them. Perhaps more of a having a coaching conversation. How do we engage online? What do powerful questions look like? How can I use them? And how you can use them in facilitation and being more intentional. And so all of these all of these reasons why you were attracted to the workshop, some of which I'm hoping we will be addressing today and please feel free to, if you have a question, to either pop that question in chat as we go along or turn your mic on and ask the question. This is really

an opportunity for you and I would like to acknowledge the depth of learning in the room and so an opportunity to learn from one another.

And so on the next slide, it's a slightly different way to engage with your team or engage with students. This is another way of looking at a similar question. What would you like to get out of this workshop today? This is going to be a poll. And so Abigail is going to show the poll now and you'll have a chance to respond and we'll see what the results are. So take a moment and choose what you feel best represents what you'd like to get out of this workshop. And if the option isn't one of the ones shown here, please do type in chat another response.

So here we see the results. New teaching tools, ideas to inspire and engage students: 79%. In fact, new teachings tools and ideas to inspire and engage students, we are going to be looking at several applications of powerful questions that you will experience and may be able to adapt or use with your work groups or with your, with your students. How to use powerful questions to deepen learning. And as we'll see, powerful questions are a way to have a coaching conversation and we'll talk about what powerful questions look like and how they can be used to deepen learning. Ways to use proper questions to coach students teams, and using powerful questions to support each other. So, in other words, not only you as team lead or, or classroom facilitator or instructor or professor. It's possible to have your students learn these skills as well or your work team to learn these skills as well and use them with each other. Great. Thank you. Thanks, Abigail, for sharing that.

So what to expect today? On the next slide, we'll see, see our agenda for this, for this workshop. And powerful questions are a coaching tool. And so I'll show you the co-active coaching model as a framework for having meaningful conversations using powerful questions. So we'll talk briefly about what powerful questions are, why and when to use powerful questions. Then giving you that opportunity to experience how powerful questions can be used through these. There are three different applications here that we're going to look at. Then as part of your resource package, there is a list of resources as well that if you do want more information, those resources are helpful. And I'll also share my email address and I encourage you, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have an idea or a question about anything that we talk about today.

So powerful questions are a skill or a tool that coaches use to create curiosity in others. And listening is, of course, is an important part of asking powerful questions. So we're going to look at what deep listening looks like and deepening and forwarding the learning. So the three aspects of this collective model that we are really focusing on today with powerful questions is creating, creating curiosity, invoking curiosity, listening skills, and deepening the learning, and forwarding the learning. So these are the three aspects of the coaching model that you'll experience today. Okay? And my hope is that you'll leave with these tools and ideas that you can implement and start to use right away, either in the classroom, in person, or online with your work team. Let's take a look at some examples of powerful questions.

So in your participant guide, there on pages 1 to 3, there are some examples of powerful questions. In your mind, what makes a question powerful? What did you notice about some of, or what do you notice about the examples that you see? What makes a question powerful? You can pop your answer in chat if you like, or turn your mic on. What makes a question powerful? You're just like, Oh. Sorry, go ahead.

GWEN:

We start to see some answers in the chat, Marina.

MARINA:

Oh, yes. Okay. They're self-reflective. Yes. I draw on the participant's own experiences and opinions. Absolutely, they do. They do require a person to be self-reflective. They're open-ended, and they can't, you can't answer with a yes or no. What else do we see here?

GWEN:

Tina also has a really great answer. The question that evoke strengths and possibilities. There's absolutely, there's no right answer. Yeah. It's a powerful question is meant to stop a person in their tracks and really have them think, wow, I hadn't thought of that before. So it's an open-ended question that invokes reflection and a different way of thinking.

And so on the next slide we'll look at when can powerful questions be used. Well, basically, using powerful questions can be with your work team, with your students. It can be with your partner, with a child, friend, anytime, anyplace, by anyone. So it's part of having that coaching conversation and a meaningful conversation with someone. And if we're thinking of a project, a work project, or a course that you teach, powerful questions can be used at the beginning to get to know one another, to get a sense of what is possible here. It can be used in the middle of a project with your team or with your class to incite reflection. How are we working together? How are we progressing toward our end goal? They can be used at the end as well. For again, reflection on what did we do well? What were the strengths here that we really would like to build on as we move forward.

So in this first breakout activity, you'll have a chance to get together with three other people, three other participants. And what I invite you to do is discuss these questions. What are some powerful questions that you are asking now, either of your work team or of students? And when are powerful questions or when do you find powerful questions most useful or helpful? Do you find that you use powerful questions maybe more at the beginning of a project or the beginning of a course, or the middle or the end? So what are some powerful questions that you tend to ask and when are powerful questions most helpful for you? And so these questions are in the chat, so they'll go with you to the breakout room, and you'll have five minutes to discuss with your group.

Hey, welcome back. I am really curious. Anyone want to share some highlights of what came out in or what came up in your group? And you're welcome to or not. Feel free to either pop it in chat.

GWEN:

I think, Kara. Sorry for my pronunciation. But yeah, I think you have your hand up.

PARTICIPANT:

Yeah. No, it's okay. It's Cara. Like Car A and Car B have a race, and Car A gets to win the race. So we all came from different backgrounds, safety, health care, education. And, I think primarily we use powerful questions when people are stuck, people that we're trying to help move forward, which is also like when they're most useful is as well as solving complex problems. It's not just a stepping from A to B kind of thing.

MARINA:

Right. Helping to think outside the box and come up with other ideas.

PARTICIPANT:

That might also have big implications that, so that's what I mean by big decisions. So they're complex, but that they might have, maybe a longer lasting impact or affect more people.

MARINA: Okay. Great.

PARTICIPANT:

My observations.

MARINA:

Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you for sharing that.

PARTICIPANT:

Thank you for asking that question actually, because I hadn't thought of that before, so that was cool.

MARINA:

And as I mentioned at the beginning of the session, I really do want to acknowledge the wisdom in the room, and this is an opportunity to do that self-reflection. When am I, when am I using powerful questions now, as I do my work or am I in my personal life? Great. Thank you. Well, asking powerful questions is one side of the coin. Of course.

Having someone listen to your response as you're responding to a powerful question is also an important coaching skill. And so, what I would like to. I'm going to just read something out. It's a reflection so feel free to, if you're comfortable, close your eyes, or just think about someone in your life who you feel heard by. Not just to your words, but to the meaning behind your words. Someone who you feel really knows and understands you. So think of that someone in your life who you feel heard by. Then, what do they do that makes you feel heard? What are some attributes of that? What do they do that makes you feel heard? And you're welcome to share in chat. They listen. What does that listening look like? There are different levels of

listening. And so, Birgitta, I am really curious what they asked. So what does that listening look like? They ask you qualifying questions as you go along.

PARTICIPANT:

Okay, there it's active listening, but also giving silence. Reading the situation, using your nonverbal cues to know when it's appropriate to ask further questions, when it's time to provide some validation, when it's time to silently listen.

MARINA:

So knowing what's, what's needed when, as that conversation is moving along. Thank you, Brigita. Use of body language. I'm just looking at other comments here in chat. They remain quiet and focused on what you are saying. Can feed back what you say and get that deeper meanings or ask about that. Non-judgmental. Yeah, that's a really important quality, isn't it? They're curious, asking to know more about what you chose to share. The use of body language. Yeah. Ginny, what does what kind of body language indicates that someone is listening? What might that body language look like and those non-verbal cues?

PARTICIPANT:

I would think making eye contact or lightly nodding or adding some facial expression?

MARINA:

Yeah. Maybe leaning forward a little bit. Great. Question. You may get this, but how can you improve listening to students in an online environment? Oh, Susan, That is a fabulous question. And actually, in just a moment, we're going to do an activity that involves both asking powerful questions and using deep listening or what we call in coaching level three listening. Where you're aware of what the person is saying, but you're also, you have that soft focus on sort of 360 of what's going on around you, but we aren't going to get to that. So if you can, hold on, we'll talk about how you can help students develop that skill or team members if you're non-teaching faculty or a team leader. Summarize what I said, but use different words. Build on what you said. Follow up in the future. Yeah, so come back and check in to indicate that they had heard you. Love that. Positive and supportive and ask what communication style you like. So adapting to, adapting to your preferred way of communicating. Really great insight.

And so I'd like to share this quote from an Elder. It was from the Paddling Together series that BCcampus created about Indigenizing. And Elder Terry P'ulsemet Prest, said, we have to learn to listen so we can listen to learn. And this little waterfall is fairly close to where I work and live it in SNIDØEL or Todd inlet. And young paddlers would have to listen for this waterfall in order to navigate the waters because there were two inlets that looked fairly similar. And the Todd Inlet has this waterfall and they would know they were on the right path if they were able to listen and hear the waterfall.

Let's get into this next activity. It's called Heard, seen, respected. It's one of the liberating structures that you may be familiar with. So you were asked to think about a positive experience leading student or other teams. So think about a positive experience that you've

had leading student teams, leading a work team. And you will be paired up with one other person. One of you will be one of you will be the coach, the other will be the coachee. The coach is the one asking the powerful questions and listening. The coachee is the person sharing their positive experience. So as the coach, your role is to explore and deepen that person's learning through using powerful questions. So questions like, what happened that made this a positive experience? What was your role? What was that like? What did you learn from that you'd like to continue to do? Or that you didn't already know and what else? So those are some examples of powerful questions and those are in chat so you'll, you'll have those as cues as well. On the next slide are just some tips around listening. So again, you'll have 5 minutes each to share your experience and be asked questions. If you are the coach asking the questions, those powerful questions. Just a few tips. Keep your questions short. Like, what else? What was that experience like? Self-management is part of being a good listener. So try not to interrupt or contribute your own story or commiserate. Also, don't feel that you need to clarify your question. Ask the question and then just use silence. And again, encouraging you to bring your full attention to what the other person is saying. Okay. Any questions before you go off into a breakout room? Okay. So again, taking turns sharing a positive experience, leading a student team or a work team, and the other person asking powerful questions and really listening, being present. Okay, So we go.

Welcome back, everyone. And so on the next slide is a list of some questions that it will take a moment to think about. What did you notice when you were sharing your story? So any thoughts about that? Either in chat or what did you notice when you were sharing your story? What was it like? We'll put all the questions out there all at once. So what, what did you notice when you were sharing your story? What was it like asking powerful questions? And when you were listening, what was that experience like? Any thoughts around your conversation with your partner or your experience? Any insight? Okay, So what do we have in. So Carolyn, you're saying super interesting. So it was hard to not interrupt and say, Wait, tell me more about the first part of the sentence. Yeah. That interrupting, especially when the conversation is really, there's a lot of connection there. Sharing a story a little bit vulnerable and you're speaking with somebody you don't know. Yeah. And it's interesting that you raise that point, Tina, because trust is at the basis of your relationship and that's trust with your work team, trust with your class, with your students. The next, the next application that we look at is what's called a designed alliance. And it's a way to build trust, but that's a really important piece. In order to have this rich, powerful conversation. You need that trust and Lee, you day the positive reinforcement. So whether that's through nonverbals or someone saying thanks for sharing. That was really meaningful for me to hear two and a smile was encouraging. Yeah. And as part of the, as part of this, Alex, as you said, you felt no need to fill silences. And that's an important self-management skill because there is that tendency to, at least in our culture, in Western, in Western culture, to want to fill those silences. And so thanks for sharing that. It was hard not to commiserate or comment. Yes, I know. And again, self-management is one of the. It's part of the coaching model and awareness is the first step in developing that ability to self-manage. You have way more to say than you thought you would. Interesting, and Ginny, did the powerful questions that your partner asked, I'm assuming that's helped you to reflect more on that positive experience?

PARTICIPANT: I would say so, absolutely.

MARINA: Yes. Yeah. And it felt good to be acknowledged and to share that? I hope so. I'm wondering, Barbara, you're saying you felt like you felt they knew how they felt and could relate, and we didn't talk about this until a ways in your chat. Yeah, So having that connection helps with asking those questions as well. Thinking about the question that might help is tricky. When sharing it can be hard to feel we are explaining well without first establishing a shared point of reference. So taking a moment to set the context may help before you move forward with the sharing. Yeah. Yeah. And that's fine too. And being transparent about that in your conversation. A nice, nicely balanced combination of challenge to analyze an opportunity to share. And that's where again, the purpose of the powerful question is to lead to deepen the learning. Helping that person really see and build on their strengths. Okay.

And in terms of, in terms of the listening, this next slide has some tips about what needs to be, what it takes, what needs to take place to be fully present. And as we agreed, I think at the beginning of the session, it's an incredibly busy time of the semester or in your work and all of these things on your to-do list. And so just, really before meeting with your team or before going into a class, whether it's online or in person, just grounding and helping the students ground themselves as well. I remember working with a coach initially before I became a coach. She would come into my class and we just did sort of a deep breath, getting the students to clear all the mental clutter that's going on because students are really busy as well, or your people in your work team are really busy as well. And clearing. Sometimes it's hard to be fully present if you have a sick child at home or if you yourself are not feeling 100%. And so just, just sharing, I just wanted to know you to know that I've got something going on right now that's taking up some of my thoughts and I'll try my best to be as present as I can right now. Alex, as you mentioned, allowing silences and being comfortable with that and being unsure can be a strength as well. I don't know if any of you found yourself thinking about, well, what question am I going to ask next? I need to think about. It's okay to be unsure and say, you know, what question would you want to ask yourself at this time? And so I'm not always having the answers is okay. So let's look at, I'm just aware of the time.

And so this next question is a takeaway reflection for you. How or when might you use this activity Heard, seen, respected to encourage students or your team to ask powerful questions and to listen. In one of my fourth year courses, I've used this activity and students, they couldn't believe how good it felt to have somebody listen to them as they were talking. So I invite you to think about when you might use this activity with your students or with your work teams.

So a couple of other applications that I would like to share with you. And this next one is one that can be used at the beginning of a work project when you have a team come together. Or it can be used at the beginning of a course with your class. And it's what we call in coaching a designed alliance. And it's several powerful questions. Here are some examples that are used to get to know one another and develop a better understanding of what's important and how you

want to be together and work together. And so these are some of the powerful questions that I use with students in both my in-person as well as my online classes. How do we want to be with each other? What kind of culture do we want to create? What's my personal commitment to making this happen? And that's something that each student can share. What's their personal commitment, as well as me as the instructor. What's my personal commitment to making this happen? And what are some things that we might do if we find that things go off the tracks a little bit? In your participant package, you'll see an example of a class designed alliance. This is an example of a designed alliance that one of my classes and I came up with. And I also have my student teams create their own designed alliance. And there's a sample student team designed alliance as well. And I've had my students tell me. This is different from a team charter. It really seems that it's not just checking the box, we're really getting a better understanding of how we're going to work together. So again, there are examples in your participant package that you can take away with you. I also use a designed alliance with the people that I'm coaching. So a one-on-one relationship. And I know one of my colleagues, a fellow coach, she and her partner came up with a designed alliance. This is any relationship that you're, that you're in. You can create this designed alliance, how you want to be together, and how you're going to, what your personal commitment is. So those are some examples and designed alliance is, one last thing about them is they're living, breathing documents. They're meant to be reviewed and looked at throughout the relationship and they can be changed and revised as the relationship grows.

And another application of powerful questions is the team self-assessment. This works. I noticed that in most of my courses and most of the courses in the department in the school where I teach, we have students working together in teams. And they're often some challenges around that. And so I use this team self-assessment during the semester, a couple of times during the semester. This is an example of what it looks like. And I've just recently tweaked it to include powerful questions with each element that the student team is discussing. At their first team check-in, which, in my case is week four, the student teams will each meet, whether online or in-person. And they'll assess how they're working together so far in terms of communication, interpersonal skills, et cetera. And they'll discuss and take notes for each of the powerful questions that they're asked. And so it's an opportunity for the students to see what powerful questions are, how they can be used in deep listening because they have to take notes and turn this in. As a summary of the tools that we've looked at today. We've done a quick dive into powerful questions. What are they, when can they be used, and when are they most useful? We had an opportunity to apply our powerful questions skills and deep listening skills in the Heard, seen, respected activity. To other applications that you might consider using with your work teams or student teams are the designed alliance and the team self-assessment. One final reflection for you is, how might you use powerful questions? I'd like to invite you to take some time to mull that question over and think about in the next maybe in the next week and the last week of classes. Maybe in January as you start a new semester or a new semester with or a new period of time with your work teams. So thank you very much.

GWEN:

Well, thank you very much, Marina and everyone. Thanks, Marina, again for sharing your knowledge and inspiring us with some deep conversations. Challenging our thinking with how

to ask powerful questions as a way to create greater possibilities for new learning and open up a new level of discussions. I think that for myself, I try to use this tool with my two little kiddos first. Addie and Susie. To enhance our relationships, mother and daughter first things. So thank you. And as I mentioned in the chat, earlier, in the chat, so please help us with the feedback related to this workshop. And we are offering FLO labs on crafting positionality statements. And we will offer Flo Friday on digital well-being in January. So stay tuned with us. Thank you for joining us again today and we look forward to your feedback as well as seeing you again in our upcoming events. Have a great day, everyone. Thank you, everyone.