

Transcript for Lightning Session: PebblePad Teaching to Transform: Future Ready Learning (November 1, 2023)

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Presenter: Melissa Shaquid Pirie

MELISSA SHAQUID PIRIE:

Today, I chose a quick topic that is a big topic, so we're going to go through it really quickly. Teaching to Transform. What does future ready learning look like? And what is transformational learning actually comprised of? I first want to acknowledge that we are situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, the Squamish, and the Tsleil-Waututh. And I also want to say thank you to KPU and their team for creating a reflective template that helped guide me to think about what a land acknowledgment actually means to me and to incorporate how I feel about the land, I added images because as a geography and a geology undergraduate, the images help me understand the topography and the location of the people that came before us. Thank you, KPU.

Many of you now know you've been with us all day. That PebblePad is a global partner and that we partnered with several people in your province. And what I hope to talk with you about today is a little bit about the story of how I've been watching transformational learning unfold with your partners here in B.C., specifically Kwantlen Polytechnic, Portland State University in Oregon, the University of Waterloo, College of the Canyons in California, and all of our most recent partners.

The reason why I want to talk about transformation is again, the geography of transformational needs. I hope that you'll reflect as I look at some of the reasons why transformational learning is required. We have all of the scales. Remember I'm a map person, so I like to think about it from the wide to the granular. If we are looking at global complex solution-based problem-solving needs. And also looking at the intersections of national needs, and also looking at our regional needs and local needs. PSU's motto is "Let knowledge serve the city." And I'm assuming that all of our colleges are in place to serve our communities. And so thinking about how the local partners with education, transforming our curriculums and our organizations all the way down to the individual level. I heard a lot about professional development today, right? So how are we working on our own transformational learning?

What I see when I work with our partners is all of these areas of use. You may see yourself in this map around areas of use, but transformational learning is required across all of these areas of academia and at all of the scales that I just showed you.

This is the driving question for me. It's the question as an implementation specialist supporting all of our partners. But it's also the question for me as an educator and a professor at Portland State University. It's the way to talk across lived experience that's widely disparate from each other's. This is the question that drives me every day when I look at our curriculum and when I

work with our partners. What needs to be transformed and what needs to be conserved? Because that's sustainable. Problem solving, transformational growth at every scale.

The stages of transformational learning are pretty simplistic, but they are supported by our partners in many ways. There's always a triggering event. That can be an emotional event. It can be an academic event. It can be one that is composed for the learner, or it can be one that just occurs. But what we ask them to do then is look at their current assumptions, their critical questioning, their personal thinking, and their understanding of what that event is and what they have to use to solve whatever issue is there. We provide private critical reflection, solitary reflective, where they get to examine their assumptions about what is confronting them and challenging them. Then we allow our students and ourselves to take those private reflections and participate in critical discourse with our peers about how our lived experiences may be disparate. And also to recognize that we may not have the knowledge we need in order to solve the problem that pushes the students. And apply new thoughts, new actions, new information. And then we can empower and employ a high likelihood of success when those students realize that the newfound knowledge and the community that they're participating in can actually transform and provide solutions for the needs of our community, our regions, our nation, and globally.

This is an example I wanted to provide you with. This is a portfolio that's in use that provides equity lens to students in a first-year experience at Portland State University. It's focused on transformational learning and includes the components of that triggering event based on the students' social identities. They then participate in private reflection, scaffolded peer discourse, and an evaluation to share what their sense of well-being and belonging felt like. Not just for themselves, but with one another, and then also the campus. There's some quotes here on transformational learning, and there's a link to the article.

When we think about transformational learning, the mechanisms that allow for reflection, integration, experiential learning, and also to allow for the students to see their own growth and development relies heavily on folio thinking, which I know KPU talked about at their session today. The idea that a student can organize, reflect, and connect on their experiences alone and with others in a prompted, safe environment, with a high likelihood of success means we are actually honing ourselves and our learners into a place where we are becoming a problem-solving society.

One of the things that we do at PebblePad and one of the reasons why I began using it as a faculty, is that the process of transformational learning requires the development of the student to be taken into consideration. They need highly structured support for those early independent reflections and for a safe place for shared discourse. We also want them to have the sense of agency in these spaces. And with their own lived experience and talking across that with others. Then we allow them to move into this space where they become highly creative because they understand the process of transformational learning and are able to showcase that to our communities, to their employers, and to our organizations.

I guess as I'm closing down, I would ask that each of you think about this question. Maybe when I posed it, you thought about your own life. Maybe you thought about your curriculum. Maybe you thought about your organization. Maybe you thought about your children. But what do we retain to stay who we are and what do we have to transform in order to successfully move into the future? That question never leaves me, and I take that question with me to all of our partners, and in return, they have taught me more about transformational learning over the last four years than I could have ever hoped. I hope we continue to replicate transformational learning and that you ask yourself this question regularly and reflect on what you need to keep and what you can kill and what we can transform.

And if you're interested, since I have written quite a bit about it, I thought I would offer you a few slides of information where you can go to take a look at how applications of transformational learning have been happening in the classroom with previously incarcerated individuals, with underrepresented students in organizations and communities for the last 30 years. And to think about this old practice as a new way of seeking solutions for future ready learners. Thank you.