

Transcript for FLO Friday. Not “just,” but Just: Conversations on Diversity, Social Justice, and Culturally Responsive Teaching (November 17, 2023)

BCcampus event hosted November 17, 2023

Facilitator: Carmen Rodriguez de France

Host: Gwen Nguyen

GWEN NGUYEN:

All right. It is 11 now. And hello everyone. Welcome to our Facilitating Learning Online. FLO Friday. I need to say Facilitating Learning Online because, you know, some people ask what FLO means. But anyway, thank you very much for choosing to be with us today. My name is Gwen and I'm a learning and teaching advisor with BCcampus. A few housekeeping items that I would like to go over. This whole session will be recorded and you're welcome to keep your camera off. And feel free to rename yourself to "Participant." Live captioning has also been enabled for us. I would like to express my special thank you to my teammate Kelsey Kilbey for her unwavering support behind the scenes during the BC October and November months at BCcampus.

Before we dive into the conversation, I'd like to begin with the territorial acknowledgment. BCcampus has two offices located in Victoria and Vancouver. The unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, Musqueam, W̱SÁNEĆ and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of the Lekwungen-speaking Peoples. As we responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, we continue our journey of learning and relationship building. Personally, I'm joining everyone today from Victoria, the traditional land of diverse Indigenous people. A very beautiful day in Victoria. Beautiful like a rainbow. My daughter, Susie would say mama again, like I usually say, beautiful like a rainbow. But it's true as I come from a place with summer vibes all year round. I'm very grateful to live and work in a place so close to nature and with four beautiful seasons. Every day is actually beautiful for me. And it is a true journey in itself. Feel free to share your introduction and territorial acknowledgments in the chat if you wish. Typically, we usually share the survey link at the very end of the session, but recognizing that some of us might have very tight schedules and need to pop out in the middle of the session, I'd like to mention upfront. We really invite you to participate in the short, anonymous survey. The link is in the chat and Kelsey helped me pop the link in. So your feedback will help us shape our future professional development events. Let's circle back to our topic today. Not "just," but Just: Conversations on Diversity, Social Justice, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. It is my pleasure to welcome and introduce our facilitator, Dr. Carmen Rodriguez de France. Her intensive and inspiring expertise in this field. We are very thrilled to see such a robust interest in this critical topic reflected in a very high number of registrations, more than 120 people registered for this. Rest assured that you're in excellent hands today. I had a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Carmen Rodriguez de France during the Summer Intensive Program for teacher candidates at University of Victoria, I think, 2017. During that time Carmen was typically involved in integrating Indigenous educational approaches. And I was focusing on teaching principles of English as an additional language to this cohort. So Carmen is known for her very gentle, caring, and passionate approach to teaching. I'm really impressed with her

ways of weaving, storytelling, reflection into the teaching methods. I believe that it's really powerful, and Carmen actually embodies the essence of a social change agent. And I think that it set a remarkable example for all of us as educators. We know that Carmen has a full session for us today. Without further ado, Carmen, we're very eager to learn from you and we are delighted to have you lead this session. Please take us away. Thank you.

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ DE FRANCE:

Thank you, Gwen. It's a very, very generous introduction, I will do my best to live up to those expectations. Thank you, everyone, for being here. As Gwen said, my name is Carmen Rodriguez de France. That's a short version of my name. If you can go to the next slide, please.

Before, before anything, I just also want to acknowledge my relations in the form of my beautiful mountains from the place where I come from, northeastern Mexico, a city called Montanas. Actually, the map shows us there a little bit of where that place is and my connection to the beautiful Rocky Mountains. My mountains from the Sierra Madre are connected to the Rocky Mountains here. When I do a land acknowledgment, I have that in mind. My connection to my land, to the place where I was born. My connection to my relations in the form of my family, siblings, parents, their spouses, my nieces, nephews, my partner supports work that I do, and my three gems. I'm a proud mother of triplets who are now, have always been, on their own journey to be whom they are meant to be. They are 19 and a half. The parenting experience also continues to be an important relationship that I have established, and to see the world through their eyes is very important to me. Especially because I didn't grow up and I'm learning how to be a parent in a context that is unlike mine. In a moment where it's unlike mine, with the use of technology and other media. I appreciate having also that opportunity to be a learner through their young minds and hearts and through their eyes.

I'm also aware if we can go to the next slide of the importance of recognizing a place where Indigenous people, communities have welcomed me with open hearts and open arms in the places where I have been very privileged to participate. I hold that also with a lot of responsibility, with gratitude, and respect to the more specific place where I dwell. Sometimes when we do these land acknowledgments, we recognize the Lekwungen-speaking people, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. I also acknowledge them specifically the place known as Gordon Head here in Victoria, and by the way, the original name of Victoria is Metulia. I also recognize Metulia, more specifically Gordon Head where the university is also located, where I live is known as Kwatsech. I continue to grow in this learning and I continue to embrace the Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of being, also through language. I hold a lot of responsibility and respect for this work and to have been entrusted with doing this work. Thank you to all of you for trusting me today in this brief session that we have. Hopefully, I'll be able to answer some of those questions that you posted, some of you, as you filled out the registration form. We might not have time to address all of them, but I will do my best to address some of the concerns or the aspirations that you have for today that also, perhaps, might relate to my own aspirations for this session.

If we can get to the next slide please, which would be for us to reframe our ways of thinking. In our ways of thinking, maybe we can think about... This is a cartoon, some of you might know the late cartoonist who used the pen name of Quino. His original name was Joaquín Salvador Lavado Tejón. He was from Argentina. He started at a very early age as a cartoonist. And his comic strip, Mafalda, based on a six-year-old girl who was very disobedient. Reflecting the situation of the time, these comic strips were published between 1963 and 1973. And they have outlived even his own life, translated into many different languages. But I thought that this comic strip, to start us off thinking about reframing our understanding of our own worldview and our position in the world as we engage with these conversations on critical pedagogy or culturally responsive pedagogy.

In the first strip, I will translate to the best of my abilities. Quino is saying, "This idea about globalization has allowed us to better understand that people from other places and other races and other cultures fall in love the way which we do. They make love the way we do. From that love, children are born and they care for their children the way we do. They also need to express themselves through music, through song to dance, and have fun the way we do. And they cry their losses with tears like ours. And they share their happiness with laughter the way we do. They even watch the same movies the way we do. They eat fast food and they drink pop the way we do. What does this tell us? What does this show us? That they, seemingly so different from us, are just like us." In the last image, he says, "It's easy to say 'like us'. How long will it take until we start saying, 'We are like them'?"

Just a moment of reflection for us to think about how, when we position ourselves in a particular way within a particular understanding of the world, we probably are following what, in the next slide.

In the next one please. And then we'll come back to this one. Yeah, we can skip that one as well. In this slide, what social justice educators, Sensoy... Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo, say that "The way we make sense of the world is often invisible to us. But we can't address issues of social justice without first examining the maps we are using to identify the problem and conceptualized solutions. Our responses to social issues will depend on where we see the 'problem'. (And it's in quotation marks, because even this notion of what constitutes a problem, it's problematic when we're not considering different standpoints.) After we consider where "the problem is located, we need to appreciate how we see ourselves and what our role is in the problem." We're going to come back to this quote in a few minutes. Maybe Kelsey, we can go to the slide with aspirations, please.

The aspirations. Basically, I'm going to tackle or approach three different aspects of doing this work. It will be to describe and examine the foundations of culturally responsive teaching. Recognize the importance of students' lived experiences and utilize those in teaching and learning. And examine the role of us as teachers, instructors, facilitators as change agents. Illustrated by some examples, a few examples throughout the session of culturally responsive

teaching practices to develop strategies for our classroom and other educational spaces. Thank you. We can please go to the quote by Sensoy and DiAngelo. This one.

Thinking about this and reframing our understanding of the world. And going back to the cartoon by Quino, I want us to think about concepts such as "dropout," "low retention," "high attrition." Universities and post-secondary institutions use these terminologies, these constructs to identify problematic students or students who do not fit. Because the expectation is for everybody who comes to university, wherever that is, not just in Canada, but around the world. A person who comes from far away from a different worldview is expected to fit into what the university has to offer. I'm going to invite some forms of reflection. We're going to think about our own examples, our own experiences, probably as learners and as instructors, in order to reframe some of these ways of knowing and being, or help us reframe our understanding and how we can actually implement, enact, and embody some of these potential changes. We can go to the next slide, please.

We know that when it comes to worldviews, especially in education, as it can be in many other professions. But in education, we have to acknowledge first that it is not value free. It is not value neutral. This has implications for our social justice practice and for social justice education. What I mean by it not being value free is that we bring all of who we are and we bring our own understanding of the world and our own way of responding to the world and those interactions. When we are in a teaching situation, we have certain expectations about what constitutes behaviour. We have expectations about what constitutes tardiness or promptness, or being on time. We have certain expectations about how students should even write some essays, right, according to the English language, and so on and so forth. We bring all of who we are. Some of you might have seen this image before of the Google mappers. And the Google mappers go in their cars when they go on concrete streets and asphalt streets. There is this little car that has that bubble on the top of the car to do their mapping. But when they arrive in Nunavut, they met with the Elders and they asked if they were going to map out the area, and one of the Elders said to one of the Google mappers, "Well, do you want to map the roads in the winter or in the summer? Because we use different ways to get to one place depending on the season." Because in the winter everything is, as in this photo, hard with snow. But in the spring, we have to use different pathways to get to the same place. And the Google mappers, we're not ready for that answer because in their mind, getting, being used to following certain paths, certain roads, certain streets was taken for granted. Sometimes this is what stops us from thinking differently. When it comes to culturally responsive teaching, cultural responsive pedagogy. We certainly need to have an openness to be able to refrain not only our understanding of the world, but to be able to appreciate what the students are bringing into that experience. If you can please go to the next slide.

We're going to start with foundations, which is the first point that I have in our aspirations. For foundations. I chose the work of Dr. Geneva Gay. If we can please go to the next slide. This idea of cultural responsive teaching is not. You probably have heard of Dr. Sonia Nieto, We're also going to see in a few minutes Gloria Ladson-Billings and Dr. Geneva Gay, who defines culturally

responsive teaching as an approach to "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively." Which could mean developing knowledge about the groups that are in our classroom, converting this knowledge into culturally responsive curriculum, ensuring effective communication with culturally diverse students, and diversifying the delivery of instruction. I'm just going to give us a few, one minute to think about how we can approach these possibilities to develop knowledge about the groups in our classroom. The groups that are present in our classroom. Whether it's linguistically diverse, ethnic, culturally diverse, value diverse, belief diverse, and how do we convert that into a curriculum that addresses that knowledge that students bring? How do we ensure communication with all of the students, or most of the students or many of the students? And how do we diversify our approaches within our course outlines, within assignments, within assessment, within engagement in the classroom? And we're going to look at some examples also in a few minutes. One of the things that I do want to stress and emphasize is that some of you might be thinking, well, what do you do if you have a group of 200 students? How do you engage all of them? How do you develop knowledge about everyone? There might be some strategies where I acknowledge that we might not get to know everybody in one term. We might get to really establish close relationships. But there are ways in which we can make some changes that are going to be meaningful, even if to us they might seem minimal or insignificant. There are ways in which we can enhance the classroom experience and the learning experience for students. But I don't want to get ahead of myself. We're going to look at that when we look at how we can be agents of social change. Continuing on with Dr. Geneva Gay's definition or understanding of culturally responsive teaching, we can go to the next slide.

This is where the title of this presentation comes from. Because she says, "Acquiring this knowledge is not as difficult as it might appear... It just has to be located, learned, and woven into the preparation programs of teachers and classroom instruction." When I first read this quote, I thought, well, it seems to me that just saying like it just has to be located, it obliterates the complexity of what this means. Right? Because we have to dedicate time and commitment and energy to look for this information. Whether it's in books and videos directly from the students or other sources. We have to learn it and weave it into the preparation. But it is not simple, is not just because she says, "acquiring this knowledge" so when I apprehend knowledge, when I truly understand and make something mine, it requires, it's a process. It is not just to be located, learned, and woven. Because that to me sounds like ticking a box. Okay. I'm asked to do this work for Indigenization. Check. Which, by the way, I know that some of you ask where is the intersection or does this intersect with Indigenization or teaching and learning for Indigenous students? Yes, I have to say that in my understanding of all of these approaches, which some of you might also think, well, this sounds a lot like universal design for learning. I also want to emphasize that this is one doorway. Culturally responsive teaching is not the end all, be all of teaching and learning in pedagogy. It is one approach similar to universal design for learning, similar to decolonization, similar to Indigenization. These are approaches and some of those might fit better with our topic, our subject area, the student body and the composition. I see them as an ebb and flow. Some of them will be more present in our courses at some times.

Some other approaches might not be as present or might not be as needed. To me, all of them come together and intersect at different moments in time. Yeah, I also wanted to stress that it is not like a magic wand. There is no to-do list. We know our students and if we don't get to know them personally and closely, there's always ways to build those relationships and make our places feel welcoming to everyone. We can please go to the next slide.

The invitation for us is to think of this approach as a mindset of how we organize our instruction and how we allow flexibility in our teaching. Where we base our teaching and learning in the strengths that students bring. I have had a number of situations. I've been in a number of situations where the instructor in conversation will share with me, "Next term. I have students who don't speak English as their first language. And I'm just thinking about how much trouble I'm going to have understanding them." To me, that's already starting from a deficit perspective. When I say we need to reframe our understanding is in how we have been doing things or thinking about our learners, whomever they are and wherever they come from. And how we need to have a strength-based approach. How do I use the knowledge that students bring? Their experiences. And sometimes one term, 12 weeks or 14 weeks is a very short time to have this knowledge plus bring the content that we're supposed to bring in the classroom. But if we utilize a strength-based approach, then we will also need to look for a way in which we can establish relationships. Relationships from instructor to learner, from learner to learner, from instructor to material. Because as a person who is going to facilitate a conversation on a particular chapter might have read the chapter 5, 6, 10 times. But the students might only have time to read the chapter or the assigned reading only once. And if this is their first year at university where they're still adapting, perhaps to being a student, developing study habits and so on and so forth. If they come from a different place, if they speak different languages and so forth, that might add to what is possible in the classroom. I might have certain expectations because I know the chapter front and back, upside down and backwards. But the students might not have the same understanding, or the same appreciation, or the same in depth that I might be expecting. The students also relate to the material differently from how I might relate to the material. This has to do again with their beliefs, with their values, with their worldview. Something that might seem to go back to Sensoy and DiAngelo's quote, a problem for me, or challenging, or difficulty, or something that needs to be discussed, might not be that way for my students, or some of my students. I need to also focus on those relationships or how we are interacting with the material that is being required for the course. If we do that, if we start with a strength-based approach, we will honour the students' identities, hopefully promote diversity and inclusion and support critical thinking. Just this idea of inclusion is a word that I've been trying to re-evaluate for myself and I prefer the use of the word "belonging," to promote diversity. Belonging. Inclusion can be also part of that, but inclusion, again, speaks to me as the main frame I am accepting. I am including you. I also invite that reflection from all of us to think about the use of the word "inclusion" and maybe scratch that, and in turn use "belonging." Maybe we can go to the next slide, please.

So this is a short video that describes what critical, responsive, and relevant pedagogy is. Is from the University of, it's from Ottawa from a round table that was part of a larger gathering. This is an example of what culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy might look like.

[Video begins with music]

Hi, I'm Dr. Nicole West Burns and I'm here today to talk about culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, affectionately known as CRRP. In the Ontario context. Really what that means is that we're attempting to engage in a pedagogical approach that actually recognizes that the schooling system is not fair and equitable for all students. And what CRRP is based on are two bodies of work from the states. Culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant teaching and pedagogy, which come from a place of saying that we recognize that the schooling system is not for all students. This work was actually predicated upon the experiences of Black students in schools in the United States, knowing that the educational system was failing them in many ways. And what these two bodies of work do is they help us to understand possibilities for us as educators to think differently. Right? A lot of the literature at the time that these two bodies of work came forward was really tied to deficits, tied to Black kids and their ability to even learn. And the creators of this work knew that these were nothing but racist ideologies that really fed that kind of thinking. And so what they said is we're going to look at ways to make the educational environment more successful. But the onus is on us. This is about a system that actually is a part of systems of oppression that operate in society. And so what can we do as educators to push back to that? So I always want to be clear that CRRP is not a multicultural approach. Although there are components of honouring identity and diversity within, it is an approach that actually recognizes it's more closely tied to critical social justice. That there are oppressions that exist in society. In order for us to really move students forward, we need to recognize that and we need to address that within our actions. CRRP is an active pedagogical approach that is pushing back to dominant ideologies and pushing back to dominant narratives, while at the same time helping us to move students forward in classroom spaces. In the Canadian context, in the Centre for Urban Schooling In 2008, we pulled culturally responsive and culturally relevant together. We amalgamated them because we thought that they fit nicely together in terms of helping to build success. We also broadened it for us to think about culture, not in really monolithic ways, but culture as complex and tied to the intersectionality of identities that students have. And I think that's a mistake that we make sometimes. We want to relegate certain groups of students to being one way, but identity is very complex and we need to understand that as we engage in this work. Additionally, what we did is we said if we want to think about CRRP, we need to think about it, not just an individual teacher operating in their own classroom space. But how do we really think about stretching this, expanding this into all areas of equity that are important in schools for us to think about. And so we developed seven tenants, myself and my co-writer, we were the lead writers on the text. Karen Murray from Toronto District School Board. We created the text, the Equity Continuum. And within it we have seven tenets of things we need to think about as we apply this lens of CRRP. So we want to think about our classroom climate and instruction. We want to think about the student voice and space. We want to think about the school climate. We want to think about community connections. We want to think about the ways that we're engaging

and valuing parents and caregivers. And we want to think about school leadership. Furthermore, which ties really a lot into the critical consciousness component of culturally relevant teaching, we want to think about how are we building our knowledge as professionals doing this work? So that area of professional development.
[Video ends]

CARMEN:

Okay, we're going to stop it here. You will have access to the recording and if you google this particular video, you can watch the full video. Just in the interest of time, we're just showing this excerpt. Some of you may think, well, this focuses on the idea of parents or caregivers is more perhaps for high school students or younger students, but the rest of the ideas in terms of how we think about our students and the knowledge that they bring. And again, the strength-based approach. I think those continue to be pertinent regardless of where students are at. Maybe we can go to the next slide.

There are some questions for reflection. For thinking about how welcoming is our classroom? Maybe think of a few examples. By welcoming our classroom, I know that it is not the same to have a middle school or elementary school where you have posters and you have books and you have different representations of people from all walks of life. But at universities or post-secondaries we usually don't have the same classroom. We do have it for the term, but there's many classes and many people who go in and out of that space. How welcoming is the classroom and how can we make a classroom welcoming? An example of how we could do this could be... That ties with the next question about resources, special financial resources, and human resources. If we have a reasonable size class, let's say 20, 25, could we offer at some point maybe sliced apples and welcome the students with a small snack? I know that this ties with budget and other financial constraints, especially these days at the universities. Could we offer, and I know that we also need to be mindful of dietary restrictions and so forth, but to create a space where, or even just greeting the students. Welcome, good morning at the door. Not by our desks, because sometimes we're by our desk taking care of PowerPoints and the things that we need. And we just might raise our head, "Oh, hi, yes. Come in." But actually be present. Be there to welcome the students. Are there any other forms? Can we give out a sticker that represents perhaps the topic that we're going to be discussing? Or take some groups of students at some time in small groups. If we have a large group, one of the things that I have done in a first year class is to have a bounty ball. Just a thing that is not spiky or that is not going to hurt anybody. I will randomly choose. I will choose one student, divide the students in small groups of 10. The first day I might welcome 10 students by throwing the ball and asking them to say their name and one aspiration that they have. It doesn't have to be about the class. It can be an aspiration for the day. Getting out of this class quickly or going and having a snack. Or riding my bike or whatever it is. It's 10 students. If I have a teaching assistant, the teaching assistant will write down or mark the names of those 10 students so that next class it's a different group of 10 students who will stand up, say their name and something different. It's not always an aspiration. It varies with the topic sometimes or something else, a hobby that they have, etc. That way that gives space for the students to say their name. If we

have students from diverse backgrounds, culturally and ethnically linguistically to say their name the way it's supposed to be said. When I introduce myself, I say my name is Maria de Carmen Rodriguez of France. I didn't say Maria because that sounds different and foreign to me. When I'm pronouncing my name, I will say Maria because that's the way it is supposed to sound. That's a way in which students have the opportunity to say their name out loud, even if it's only once in the term. If we have more opportunities, that's really great. But if it's only once in the term, they will stand up and do that. They always have, of course, the opportunity to pass. But I can tell you that in all the times when I have done that, no student has refused. They actually stand up, say their name in response to whatever the prompt is. I give the option, of course, if you don't want to. If you feel comfortable, if you're not in this position today to share anything? You can let me know at the end of class and I will call you next time. Sometimes students have done that, but nobody has ever refused to stand up, say their name, and answer the prompt to me. That's a way in which you start building some kind of connection. Because you also learn about the students and they learn about each other. And maybe they both like skating or rowing or basketball, and they haven't really found each other. So that gives an opportunity for them to also find commonalities. Or they come from the same place and they've never met and so on and so forth. That's also a way which we can simply dedicate the first 5 minutes to do that round. Sometimes if we can't afford it, to offer somebody tea, suggested on the chat. A cookie, a Timbit, a slice of apple, a sticker. Maybe we can create our own prompts or thank you for groups of students with index cards and be creative that way. We can please go to the next slide.

We're moving to the second part of the aspirations for today, which is how do we understand and appreciate honour and respect student lived experiences? Before we go into a couple of videos, brief videos about their own experiences, I want to contemplate thinking about reframing worldview if you see any difference, if you find any difference between coming to university and going to university. Coming to university is the institutional aspiration, but the university has to offer the students. Come to university, policies are in place, strategic planning, expectations and so on and so forth. For a student, it might be very different to contemplate, I am going to university. That's their worldview. Those are their aspirations. I don't know that students are looking at conforming, are looking at fitting a mould. Because I believe that institutions of education are not for us to conform. And yet, that's sometimes what we have in place with all of these structures. I'm not saying we shouldn't have structures, but I'm saying that some of those structures continue to be discriminatory, continue to be racist, continue to be dismissive of what the students bring to these places of learning. We're going to watch two videos. One is from a panel of Indigenous students, actually, that was held at Trent University. And they had students from different backgrounds Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee. And we're going to listen to Papatsi Kotierk, who is an Inuit student and some of her experiences at the university. Again, I want us to think about the complexity as the previous video said of identity. How in the experience of this Inuit student, she feels that Inuit are most of the time, most often excluded. It's important to also realize that here in Victoria, in Matulia, and in the province, the Inuit population is growing. I think it's important to keep in mind that when we think of Inuit, it's not just individuals who live up in the North, but actually people who are coming to all

provinces and increasing also the need to pay attention and be mindful of those experiences and worldviews. We can go to the next slide please, and the video.

[Video starts]

[Woman speaking in Inuktitut.]

My name is Papatsi Kotierk, and I'm from Iqaluit, Nunavut, but my family is originally from Igloolik, Nunavut. I grew up in the Arctic for most of my life. I never doubted as a child that I would go off to post-secondary. And I think that has to do with my mother having been my role model. She is a Trent alumni. Five out of seven of my aunts and uncles went to university and graduated from university. So I just felt like it was something I was supposed to grow up and do. When I was graduating from high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I had a talent for sewing. I loved to sew, I loved to design garments, and I enjoy it, and I thought I could do this as a career. I applied for the two universities OCAD in Toronto, and then another fashion school in Toronto with Ryerson. I didn't really know how to navigate the online system and I ended up accidentally resigning my applications. I was like, What am I going to do So I asked my sister who was at Trent at the time. She said, "I'm taking Indigenous studies, and yeah, I really love it." And so I went online and I made a last minute application to Trent University, and I just accepted it on the spot, and we drove to Peterborough. Everyone was so excited for me, everyone was so proud of me, and I was just so scared, kind of in shock the whole time. And then I remember the first day that I had class, I was literally shaking. I wanted to be small and invisible. I didn't feel like I deserved to be there. I feared that I would be called upon and then said something that would not sound intelligent. That was me for about the first week of school. In all my classes, I was so scared. This has to do with, I guess, living where I do. Because when my peers in high school would go down to the South, they would say, "Oh, it was so challenging." I doubted the education that I was getting at my high school. And I didn't know if I could stay afloat in this academic institution. As the week passed, I still felt really uneasy. It was until I got my first assignment back that was a pretty good mark. I thought, "Okay, maybe I can do this. Maybe I do deserve to be here." It was for me, a lot of self-doubt that I put on myself. Coming down to the South was very challenging for me, especially coming from such a large family and such a supportive community back home to be on my own. I don't know if I would have been able to do it had I not had my sister at this university with me. Because whenever there was times where we were feeling alone, like we could just call up each other and it felt a little bit more like home. Then my first year was so profoundly positive for me here in the Indigenous Studies program. Because in this program, although it's not really reflective of me and my culture and my people. It's too much. The Inuit are left out a lot of the time. Even entering the gathering space, I looked up at all the flags that hung up there, and I didn't see myself represented. Next time I went home for Christmas holidays, I bought a flag and I said, here you go. You can put this up now. [laughs] It was so profoundly positive for me because I realized that I could do it, you know, I could stay afloat in this academic institution. And I grew a lot as a person because I learned more about my history, my people. In my first year, I cried a lot in class. I cried a lot after class. And now I'm able to speak more without the tears. When I went...

[Video ends]

CARMEN:

Thank you, Kelsey. Certainly, more to discuss than the time that we have. For you, perhaps if you're like me having an old fashioned way of taking notes, writing down some of your feelings. What came up for you in terms of the feelings and the thoughts and experiences of this particular student, who are not different from the experiences of many students, even many of us. I know I speak for myself as having been an international student here and now working in this very privileged position at the University of Victoria. I certainly go back to those experiences. The feeling lonely, the being inadequate. I don't deserve to be here. Unless the students tell us about these experiences and these feelings and these ideas, we might not know what is happening. And these days, certainly other concerns, such as a place to live, food to eat, families to look after are also part of those complexities. Just a moment to acknowledge the experiences of the students and how can we support understanding and acknowledging that we cannot be everything for every student. But that doesn't mean that we cannot do our best with the resources that we have at a particular moment in time to support them beyond and outside of the content area that we are facilitating. This is another brief video for lived experiences for students in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It's a brief video that also speaks to some of these other experiences of some students. If we can please show it, Kelsey.

[Video starts]

This girl was blaming me for my coach saying I don't wear green because that's a terrorist colour. What I used to touch, she would be like, "No, I'm not going to touch that because you are killers.

For some reason kids just wouldn't want to be near me or something like that. They would call me names here. [Woman speaking] We were speaking in our language and there were some boys who kind of like making fun of us talking

The same thing when I speak in Arabic. Maybe it's like different for them and they're not used to it. So they probably think that like I'm different from them or something.

I just wanted to have a friend and just, you know, be a normal kid. But that didn't really happen because I was different.

[Video ends]

CARMEN:

Thank you again. So how do we transform or support and help transform these experiences? The example that I gave about tossing the ball or tossing the ball of yarn, have students identify who they are, what their aspirations are. Hobbies that they have. Creates a sense of feeling welcome if nothing else during the term, feeling welcome during your first day and subsequent weeks and have other examples of community work in large groups. In this first year class that I was teaching, I created, I asked students to get in small groups. Sometimes they were sitting in the same place. That's something that is, I think not unlike within our human nature to tend to

sit in the same place. That also helped create throughout the term, a group that the students, if I ask them to share in the small group or discuss or get a quote or whatever, they then created their own little community in this very large class. One of the things that happened that is also difficult sometimes to address, but we also need to be in the mindset of calling things for what they are. I have this experience in this same first-year class, but a different group. We were reading an article, a chapter, on the experience of an Indigenous teacher using drums in her school. The commentary throughout the chapter was that their administrators and her peers, and even some of the parents, were against the use of drums because the drums symbolize ritual and they symbolize favouring certain cultures and so on and so forth. I asked the students how they responded to that particular chapter. It was really interesting that they were saying, "Oh, the behaviour that was disrespectful of the Indigenous students, this was this. It was dismissive and so forth until one student got up and she was a so-called student of colour. And she said, "Whatever, I feel that all of those reactions are racist." I asked them, "What took us so long?" We danced around with all of these other words, dismissive, disrespectful, when it was something that was clearly racist. But it took us a while to come and actually say it the way it was. And I asked the students, "Why did it take us this long? Why do you think?" There were different reactions, "Oh, we're not used to saying things out loud," or "It's easier to say other words, or to use other adjectives to describe behaviours," but they were clearly racist. Then we had a conversation around racism and how it manifests in subtle ways and overt ways, and so on and so forth. But that is something that I was happy that somebody addressed as such, because it would have been easy to just accept those comments and then just continue a conversation in a very friendly and amicable way, when actually there was space to discuss racism and anti-racist approaches. How would you respond if you had been the teacher or how would you have responded if you had been a parent who is a parent of an Indigenous student and so forth. So there was a conversation that followed after that. But it was important to acknowledge this. It makes me go back to the quote by Sensoy and DiAngelo that says that the way we make sense of the world is invisible to us. How we cannot identify issues of social justice if we are dismissive or sometimes because they are outside of our sphere of knowledge and knowing. When it comes to being agents of social change, we don't want to be like the teacher in the next slide.

In this caption, the student is asking, "Miss Jenkins, why isn't Pluto a planet anymore?" And the teacher responds, "That's a good question, Jimmie. But it won't be on the standardized test, so I'm afraid we don't have time to discuss it. Next?" This, of course, is comical, but it is not a joke when a student who actually wants to learn and asks a question. As instructors, we dismissed it because it's, well, it's not important for that. There are many ways in which we could have responded. The teacher could have said, "Right now it's an important question. I'm going to answer the next class." Right now, we would like to focus on the topic, but next class I want to start by answering your question." Acknowledging the student as opposed to dismissing. Well, it's not going to be on the test, you don't have to worry about it. And we don't have time. Acknowledging that the question is important and maybe direct the student. If you want to see me after class, I can direct you to some resources. That acknowledges that we can also have a question if we don't know the answer, and also say, "I don't have the answer to that. But let's

look up some resources that might answer the question." There are many ways in which this could have gone. We don't want to be this kind of teacher. We want to be the teacher that acknowledges that a question is being asked because the questions might be more complex than this question that we have on this caption. We can go to the next slide, please.

We talked about worldviews and in worldview also has to do with our positionality. We have heard this construct and this notion of positionality that brings together our own experiences. The context where we find ourselves at a time in the multiplicity of identities that we embrace and that we hold. These questions for reflection will ask, Where do I position myself? Vis a vis my students, vis a vis my colleagues, vis a vis my communities. Has this position changed in the past two or three years? For us to also think how has it changed and why has it changed? Maybe I used to think about a particular challenge, issue, problem in a certain way, but maybe I had an experience that enlightened me and reframed my understanding of what I used to believe and to think. Sometimes my language and my choice of words affect the students and the relationships I build, or not. When I was, when I was looking and trying to think about an example of ideas for reflection. Because some of you said, well, I want to learn about strategies, or I want to learn new ways of thinking about these notions. I don't know if anybody, we go to the next slide, if anybody has come across or utilized the Johari Window.

The Johari Window is a framework for understanding our conscious and unconscious biases that can help increase our self-awareness and understanding of others. It was created by two psychologists, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, and they named it Johari, putting their last names together. And this was created in 1955. Example of this reflection is when I was doing my doctoral work here. I was in a doctoral seminar and the instructor asked us to write about a life-changing experience for us, something that dramatically changed our life. I wrote at that time about my grandfather being hit by a car. He was in a car accident. He was subsequently in a coma for eight months and he passed away. I wrote about it. It was a very good experience for me, for many different reasons. The next class, the instructor asked us to exchange our writing with a colleague. My colleague shared her writing with me. I don't remember a lot about her story, but I do remember something that struck me and forever also changed the way I thought about my own life, which was reading in her story that she was adopted. There was a line in her writing that said, not knowing who my parents are, I will forever wonder if there's somebody who looks like me out there in the world. And that even hits me right now emotionally because I never had to think about that because for me, my life was the opposite. People, wherever they saw me with my dad or who knew my dad, will say to me, "Oh, you look exactly like your father." I never had to think about those feelings of thinking if there's somebody who you resemble or who resembles you because of your features, because of where you come from. I never had to think about that because that was my taken-for-granted. I was used to seeing the world only through those eyes and that perspective. And it was only until I read that piece in her writing that I thought, oh wow. I started thinking, how many more "oh wows" are there out there that I am totally unaware of? I know that one life is a short life to have every experience that one can have. But we can learn and how those moments hit us in changes are very unique and very special. The Johari Window is a framework that can help us realize, and it has the four

quadrants. What is known to self and what is known to others, so it's very open. The one on the right, on the upper side, is what is unknown to me, but other people know about me. The one in the bottom left is things that are hidden that are known by me, but that other people do not know about me. The last one, the most difficult one, is things that are unknown to me and to others. You might ask, well, Carmen, how do I get to know what I do not know? That's going to be up to each of us. In the case of my writing and the exchange with my colleague, to me that was one thing that I didn't know about. Then I started to think more about it because of that experience. We need this openness because we don't know what we don't know. But if we are open, and one of the ways to be open is actually embracing our students and what the students can bring and teach us. Of course if we are open to that, then we will be in a much better place to do this work. We can please go to the next slide.

Dr. Sonia Nieto, who is now Professor Emerita in Language and Culture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. You might have come across her work. She says that these principles might help us to do this work, which would be engaging in self-reflection. And I cannot stress how important that is. I cannot stress enough how important it is to examine our own values, biases, strengths, and limitations, and how these can affect the relationship with students. The next one is having a mindset that respects the students' individuality as well as their culture, their history and experiences. A continued commitment to learning. And insisting on high quality and excellent work from students. This is one thing that sometimes we might fall into that trap of saying, "Oh, well, this student, I'm just going to see that they pass or they do the minimum because we don't have those high expectations." And students, I think, need to hear from us that it is important that they know that what they know and who they are is important and therefore, there are these expectations. But those expectations don't have to comply with what we expect. It can be a conversation and a dialogue in which we engage if possible, or as much as possible to let them know that we expect the best work from them. We can please go to the next slide and I know that we're at 12:00.

I just want to give a few examples. And just direct our attention to the four Rs of education that Dr. Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt developed in 1991. These four Rs, and many more Rs have been added to this work. But we start with respect, relevance, reciprocity, and relationships. Just very briefly, if we go to the next slide please.

To have a respectful context, what our classroom looks like, what arrangement we have, are there any jobs, responsibilities for the students? We need to co-create clear guidelines and maybe consequences for expected behaviour and for unexpected behaviour. And making space for learners' voice and choice for self-regulation and accountability. If we can ask the students for their input throughout our courses for feedback, informal feedback. And give an option as much as possible to hear their voice. For them to have choice not only in how they do the work, but also we can offer some choice in different forms of assignment, in different ways of demonstrating their learning, in guidelines that embrace also who they are and what they are looking for in this space of education. We can go to the next slide, please.

Relevant curricula and this is important as is everything else when we work with students. I have these three images for us just to think about the importance of how we read the world, how different cultural and ethnic traditions also learn to see the world. We have a beautiful pole that was carved by the late Charles Elliott Tolson. I like this pole because text goes from bottom. The story is told from the roots following the contact with the tree, the former tree, in the form of a pole. Now the representations of the story. In the next image we have an image of how some people in certain cultural traditions do not use numbers to count the way we do, do not use the 12 base system in the way we say a dozen or half a dozen or tens, hundreds and ones, but they actually use the different parts of the body to count. So number eight, if I wanted eight of something, it will be elbow. If I wanted a dozen of something, it will be ear, right? Right ear, left ear, and so forth. So this is a different way of understanding the world. And we cannot assume that everybody learns to count and to use numbers in the same way. Similarly with this Nestle advertisement from many years ago where they represented the use of Nestle powder in the supporting the growth of your toddler, from baby to sitting to crawling to walking. But what if you are a student who uses Arabic? Who understands texts from right to left? Is Nestle helping me go backwards? Or what does this mean? We also have to pay attention to as many sources of knowledge as possible when we are conveying the expectations for our class. The kinds of resources that the students are exposed to and so on and so forth.

Relevant curricula, if we go to the next slide, please, can also come in the form of different considerations. Students and especially more adult learners are looking for applicability of what is being learned. They're looking for clarity in expectations. We need to understand that their needs are different depending on many variables. This might be their second career or their third career, or they're switching careers. And also to appreciate that their learning experiences influence their new learning for better or worse. If we go to the next slide, please.

Reciprocal relationships. Earlier I talked about my position, vis a vis the content, my students, the students with each other. It's important to consider all of these relationships. Not just my relationship to the students, but also to consider, am I open to learning from my students? Do I have the time? Can I give the time to sit with them throughout the term or with a few of them? Or to ask for other forms of establishing relationships, indirect feedback, conversations in small groups. Can I take the time to stay 10 minutes, if they can, to talk to me? For me to talk to them? Are there opportunities for them to learn from each other? I describe the possibility of doing perhaps small group work in your large groups, or the example of tossing the ball, and that way is an indirect way to learn about each other from each other. How can I, if I can, incorporate reciprocity into my work, how can I give back? How can I demonstrate that I'm paying attention to who they are, that I'm valuing who they are? And it can be in bringing an excerpt from a book that I read that reflects students' identities. It can be a quote that I use, it can be a clip from a video. There are ways and it doesn't have to occupy the whole time of our class. But I can bring certain excerpts to say, oh, what do you think about this? Or this is what was relevant for me from this particular clip. That I give back to what the students are giving me and teaching me about who they are. We can go to the next slide, please.

Then the last thing I'm going to invite us and thank you for staying. What are our shared responsibilities? How do we take up this work? And it's not easy and it won't happen from one day to the next. But we need to give ourselves the time and the opportunity to learn constantly, to advance our knowledge, and to continue to develop ways in which we can actually honour, respect, and value the students for who they are and what they bring to the educational experience. To stop being the person who needs to deliver all the information, but actually learn from their reactions, from their responses, from their exchanges, from their interactions and their relationships that we establish with them. I'm going to leave you with a quote from my favorite writer who was Mr. Richard Wagamese. In thinking about diversity in this country, this comes from his collection of short stories from *One Native Life*, and it's entitled "To Love This Country." He said, "I have learned that to love this country means to love its people. All of them. But when we say, all my relations, it's meant in a teaching way, to rekindle community in us, the knowledge that we are all part of the great, grand circle of humanity that shapes this country and that we need each other. It wouldn't be Canada with one voice less."

With that, I'm going to thank you for staying a little bit longer in this session. Thank you to Gwen. Thank you to Kelsey today and to BCcampus for the opportunity to share this space with all of you. Hopefully, we'll meet again before tomorrow. Well, thank you very much everyone for staying with us till now.

GWEN:

Thank you very much, Carmen, for your insightful work and thanks for being an integral part of our journeys towards understanding and embracing diversity, social justice, and culturally responsive teaching. Everyone, please help us with the survey feedback. And also we have one more FLO session in December, that's going to be the final for this year. The FLO Friday is going to be on positionality with our facilitator, Bhuvinder Singh Vaid. Also I have it here, the QR code to our upcoming events. You can download the sheet with all the links for register. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day.