

Editors' Introduction: Imperfect

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The *Transformative Dialogues* editorial team also includes Chas Brua (Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, Penn State) and Jacob Kelley (Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, Auburn University). Welcome to the Spring 2021 issue of *Transformative Dialogues*.

News and Notes from the Editorial Office

- We are pleased to let everyone know that the journal will officially be moving from its inaugural home at KPU to **Penn State**. The proposal was only recently approved, so we will be sure and let you know about any changes that may occur as part of the transfer that might affect you as a reader, author, or reviewer.
- If you are a *Transformative Dialogues* author or you cite work from the journal, you will be pleased to hear that, as part of the move to Penn State, we will be able to **provide DOI** to all articles published in *Transformative Dialogues* moving forward.
- We are also very pleased to welcome a new guest editor, **Adam Vincent**, who will be working with us to develop our capacity to support arts-based educational research (ABER). Adam's arts-based publications, which primarily focus on Poetic Inquiry, have appeared in a number of academic journals, including the Vol 13 No. 2 issue of *Transformative Dialogues*.

One of our favorite (now former) deans was known for the saying “do not let perfect be the enemy of the good,” a phrase that he had occasion to repeat frequently over the course of his long career in higher education. Collectively speaking, the articles in the present issue of *Transformative Dialogues* provide eloquent testimony to the beneficial power of the imperfect in teaching, learning, and scholarship.

In many ways, Lauren McKenzie's essay, "The Role of Dialectical Tensions in Making Sense of Failures in Teaching and Learning", serves as the philosophical framework for both this editors' introduction and the issue itself. She engages deeply with the construct of productive or meaningful failure, providing commentary that serves to highlight the tensions between the personal and professional experience of perceived failures in teaching and learning practice, with the intent of creating constructive spaces for learning from them. Similarly, Sandra Kile's essay, "From Ordinary to Extraordinary", emphasizes how students perceive their own failures and how we, as educators, can rely on interpersonal communication, both as a tool and outlet, to enable students to reframe, even reclaim, their personal narratives.

In two examples, we see our authors implementing new programs or projects that may not go perfectly on the first iteration but which provide clear, even at times unexpected, benefits for the participants. In one case, members of the Northwest Biology Consortium (NWBC) report on the successes of their inter-institutional collaboration, which focused on aligning learning outcomes in undergraduate biology courses. While the process of working together did not always go according to their initial plans, the authors found that listening closely to member feedback and providing flexibility in goal-setting led to unexpected opportunities for further collaboration. Amanda Stead, Breanne Thornton, and Marcia Frost discuss a short-term inter-professional education experience, in this case a two-day retreat focused on the clinical treatment of aphasia. Initially, the event organizers saw limited evidence of critical reflection on the part of the student participants, but they devised scaffolding that allowed participants to strengthen their reflective abilities over time, though the authors readily acknowledge that more depths remain yet to be plumbed.

Not only is teaching and learning practice rarely perfect, neither is the process of conducting research on that practice, as several of our authors attest in their contributions. Jet van der Zijden, Judith Scheerens, and Lindy Wijsman provide a detailed description of the results of their study of student perceptions of instructor feedback delivered via screen casting. While the study showed promising results for teaching practice, the authors found the potential impact was limited because of the incongruence with prevailing instructor beliefs. For their study Michelle Herridge and Gautam Bhattacharyya surveyed a large number of students (1,326) enrolled in introductory Chemistry courses at multiple institutions. Their initial analysis focused on conventional demographic breakdowns, but they found this method did not yield useful insight. Instead, they pivoted, and were able to identify an entirely new category of analysis, deemed experience congruence, which has the potential to open up new avenues of inquiry for other researchers.

Speaking of pathways, Robin Attas, Gabrielle Lindstrom, Lee Easton, and Michelle Yeo take the readers along a visual and poetic journey through their shared experiences of a faculty learning community focused on decolonizing their practice. The piece works on multiple levels, describing a physical trip the group took together, that was literally disrupted at multiple points, as well as the concomitant process of personal reflection that emerged through the use of intentionally disruptive interviews. And there is a third level—that of the research artifact itself. As they say themselves, "to tell our stor(y)ies, we deliberately push against the academic paper and its conventions, a strategy that also acts as a point of disruption." In a similar spirit, we hope that you find these collective insights into the imperfect world of teaching, learning, and scholarships, disruptive as well.