Embracing diversity in the digital age: The “new normal” of our times

Jin-Sun Yoon

Teaching Professor
School of Child and Youth Care
University of Victoria
jsyoon@uvic.ca
Acknowledge Lekwungen territory where UVic sits... WHY?
Why do I do this?

- **Set the tone**: intent on creating cultural safety especially to Indigenous students
- **Acknowledge** colonial history of Canada
- **Address** “political correctness” from the beginning
- **Unsettle** the dominant culture and conforming minority students
- **Commit** to transformative social change
- **Support** all students: must provide labour of CARE!
Introductions

• Name
• Tell us something about your name that is interesting
• Department
• Rank/Position at UVic (current and ideal)
• Years of teaching experience
• Why you chose to attend this session
How has university changed???

Once upon a time…
UNIversity

Today…MULTIversity
What makes up student “diversity” (visible and invisible):

- Race/culture/ethnicity (self identity and other-ascribed)
- Languages spoken
- Cultural worldviews
- Religion/Faith
- Gender and gender expression
- Age
- Class and/or educational background
- (Dis)Ability: Mental and Physical
- Learning and communication styles
- Size and/or physical presentation
- Sexuality
- Social skills
- Relationship status with or without children
- Nationality and/or citizenship
- Immigration status
- Mental and physical health
- Hometown (province/state/country)
- Urban/suburban/rural; provincial/national/international
- Language ("accent")
- Family history
- Ability and exposure to technology
- Neural diversity (e.g., autism)
- Introverts/extraverts
- ETC!
Global realities

- Technologies have made communication easier around the world including ONLINE and blended curriculum delivery
- Increasing pressure to be globally-minded and not ethno/geo-centric
- Unattended assumptions can land you in trouble (it takes one student to complain...)
- The “NET generation” are generally more adept at technology than most professors (but not always!): Be open-minded to hear their suggestions
- English may be one of several languages (be open to learn some phrases in another language)
What are the implications?

- Information is everywhere: do we become:
  - sense-makers?
  - knowledge-translators?
  - discovery-facilitators?

- **WE** (as educators) need to change and adapt to student diversity (e.g., legal accommodations, moral obligations, intent vs impact)

- Rethink what “university teaching” looks like for our specific courses and disciplines
What can we do to facilitate student success and maintain academic rigour?
Things to keep in mind:

- How are you setting the tone of your course to acknowledge the diversity in the classroom (virtual or in a classroom)?
- How are you creating activities to take into consideration the multi-switching abilities of the net-generation and different learning styles/needs/expectations?
- Are you looking for deficits or strengths in your evaluation methods?
- Are you personally prepared to teach across diversities in the classroom?
- What can you do personally/departmentally?
- How can UVic support your teaching skills in our current times?
Thank You