Teaching – The Heart of a University

Kumaralingam Amirthalingam
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The quality of teaching at universities – particularly research-intensive universities – is a global hot topic. Conferences on teaching and learning in higher education are sprouting like mushrooms on a rainy day. Universities are rethinking promotion and tenure – and to a lesser extent – hiring policies and criteria in order to recognize and reward teaching excellence. The inaugural result of the United Kingdom's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) recently generated concern as many "top" universities did not fare well. While controversial, TEF nevertheless has three valuable takeaways. It evaluated teaching excellence at the institutional, not individual level; it focused on the impact of teaching on students; and it tied teaching quality to institutional funding.

In this context, how should NUS ensure that it continues to deliver the outstanding education that its students have come to expect?

Let me pose three questions:

- What should be the relationship between a university's strategy to foster research excellence and its strategy to foster teaching excellence?

- What is the relationship between effective teaching, scholarly teaching, and scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)?

- Is there a relationship between rewarding excellent individual teachers and ensuring that students receive a good institutional educational experience?

As universities around the world try to address the challenge of ensuring that students receive a good education, it is vital that policies and practices are driven by evidence, and not assumptions. In an illuminating article, MK Potter & EDH Kustra, "The Relationship between Scholarly Teaching and SoTL: Models, Distinctions, and Clarifications" (2011) 5(1) IJ-SoTL Art 23 put this issue centre-stage:

"The assumption that scholarly teaching and SoTL are directly related to improved teaching, and thus improved learning, has taken hold of higher education and is now shaping practice… If the foundational and motivational assumptions behind these practices are not warranted, our reflexive propagation of them must be questioned."

In laying bare some of the contradictory claims in the literature about SoTL and scholarly teaching, Potter and Kustra "delineate the relationship between scholarly teaching, SoTL, and effective teaching," reminding that an effective teacher need not be a SoTL practitioner and that a SoTL practitioner is not necessarily a good teacher, or even a teacher at all.

The hierarchical approach of moving from effective teaching to scholarly teaching to SoTL is rejected for reasons familiar to many educators today: "[T]he conflation of SoTL and scholarly teaching further delegitimizes scholarly teaching while SoTL rides the coat-tails of the established domain of respectability: research. Thus, the old paradigm is reinforced." Teaching is relegated further into the background.

It has become popular to deride the teacher as "Sage on the Stage" and to celebrate the teacher as "Guide by the Side". All good, as long as the teacher does not become the Hack at the Back! Effective teaching, scholarly teaching and SoTL all have a place in their own right, but without hierarchy … or even as firsts among equals. One should not have to add the epithet of "scholarly" to teaching in order to accord value to teaching. That is not to say that a scholarly approach to teaching is not necessary or essential in higher education. The Academy as an institution, and Fellows as individuals, will naturally engage with SoTL and the broader educational literature; indeed, these are invaluable to enhancing the teaching and learning environment, developing the curriculum, and fostering pedagogical innovation. The literature is also essential to self-critical awareness and promoting evidence-based strategies, as Potter & Kustra demonstrate.

At NUS, it is evident that teaching and learning are taken seriously. In addition to the Academy, the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL) and the Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), we now have the Institute for the Application of Learning Science and Educational Technology (ALSET), the Centre for Future Ready Graduates (CFG) and the School for Continuing and Lifelong Education (SCALE). The Academy will continue to organise Teaching and Learning Club (TLC) sessions to engage educators, administrators and students through dialogue and roundtables. We are also exploring better ways to foster a culture of teaching mentorship at NUS. Further, the Academy will reach out directly to the community through roadshows to share ideas and engage educators on the ground. We hope to have the first roadshow at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in the first semester of AY2017-2018.

We will continue our two flagship events. The Distinguished Lecture and Workshop, presented in May 2017 by Dr Steve Wheeler of Plymouth University, focused on social media and higher education. The Masterclass Week with Professor Diana Laurillard of University College London explored the future of higher education in the digital world. I invite you to view the lectures and workshops on the Academy's website at http://www.nus.edu.sg/teachingacademy/masterclass/. A new initiative the Academy plans to launch is an Annual Teach-in. This would involve educators from across NUS coming together to share their teaching and learning experiences and innovations through short presentations.

I invite all of you at NUS to contact the Academy with ideas on teaching and learning that you may have and to offer your contributions to some of our initiatives. Let me end by thanking the Provost's Office and CDTL for their support, the management team at the Academy, and Fellows from across the university who have come together to create a multi-disciplinary community that has heart, soul and mind.

Message from the Provost

Professor Tan Eng Chye
Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost

Higher education is fluid and dynamic, both internationally and also locally here in Singapore. Two trends are worthy of special notice: technological disruption globally and demographic developments locally. How do these phenomena affect us at NUS, and more particularly, our policies and practices around teaching and learning—and thereby the Teaching Academy?

The recent years have seen huge geo- as well as socio-political shifts in Asia, North America, and Europe. Part and parcel of globalisation is not only exciting international partnerships between Euro-American nation states and the burgeoning economies of Asia, in particular China, but also ever-increasing rivalry. Resistance to globalisation and income inequality (often blamed on globalisation) in part account for noteworthy recent developments in the US, in particular the election of Donald Trump as President, and also in Europe, with the decision of the UK to leave the EU.

To a significant extent, globalisation is driven by rapid changes in technology. These new technologies bring about challenges, but also vast opportunities. With regard to the former, first and foremost we need to accept that it is no longer sufficient to teach our students content knowledge and associated skills and behaviours only; important though transmitting such expertise is, we also need to find ways of teaching students to learn how to learn, so we can support them in becoming ever more agile. Such agility is necessary for them to be able to adapt to the huge changes being wrought by globalisation and technological disruption. There has recently been a lot of discussion of what is becoming known as the "fourth industrial revolution":

- The first industrial revolution, in the early 19th century, saw the advent of steam-driven machines.
- The second, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was marked by the introduction of electricity.
- The third industrial revolution, from the 1960s onwards, saw the rise of computing as a dominant force. From the introduction of the personal computer, to the spread of the internet, to mobile devices, computing has become ubiquitous in our lives.
- With the fourth industrial revolution, we are entering uncharted territory. It sees simultaneous and rapid changes in the fields of robotics and biotechnology, and ultimately perhaps their convergence in intelligent machines.

The implications for higher education are profound. What we are facing is a changing employment landscape, as automation and eventually artificial intelligence will render many of today's jobs redundant: from telemarketers, to accountants, to health technologists. This is a major reason why as educators we need to approach teaching in an evidence-informed way; this is why we need to learn how to move beyond disseminating content to our students, but also in addition how to support them in learning how to learn. This will be necessary if we are to find ways of preparing our students for jobs intelligent machines will not be able to do. Future skills with which we need to equip them include those associated with complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. These are skills that robots do not have (as yet). And they are skills we can and must teach our students when we teach them Chemistry, or Music, or Mathematics,

or Engineering. The fourth industrial revolution compels us not only to teach knowledge, but also sophisticated ways of doing things with that knowledge in innovative ways.

But aside from presenting us with challenges, disruptive technologies also present us with opportunities. As the learning sciences have discovered, we can use the affordances of technology to transform our learning environments in ways that will help us approach our teaching to move beyond transmission of knowledge. Technology can help us create active-learning environments. Computers can provide scaffolding, for example through adaptive tutorials that provide students with opportunities to engage in deliberate practice through online videos and quizzes. Based on their performance, which can be assessed using software, students follow personalised learning paths. This helps them to prepare for face-to-face class meetings, where the expert teacher can then model problem solving, synthesise what students have learnt, and provide direct instruction where necessary to supplement gaps in knowledge.

I would like to challenge the NUS Teaching Academy to think through how it can support our efforts at NUS to develop the kinds of changes needed for us to fully leverage on learning technologies, thereby equipping our faculty members as they teach students in enhanced ways in order to better prepare them for the future. This needs to include finding ways to support the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL), the Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), and the new Institute for Application of Learning Science and Educational Technology (ALSET) in their endeavours to enhance teaching and learning. In particular, I urge the Academy to consider good practices at other similar Academies locally and abroad.

Moving to the second trend alluded to at the start: once again, as is well known Singapore is experiencing significant shifts in our population, which is greying as people live longer and the birth rate declines. Already we are feeling the effects of these shifts in declining cohort sizes at our schools and also, now, our universities. This

trend of course has various implications. In the future, we will have fewer undergraduate students and instead more working adults returning to university in order to upskill in response to the changing job market. It is for this reason that in Singapore we now have significant initiatives such as SkillsFuture, and why recently at NUS we established our School of Continuing and Lifelong Education (SCALE). There are significant budgetary implications as funding will increasingly need to be diverted towards programmes geared towards Continuing Education and Training.

In light of these two huge trends that I have highlighted—associated respectively with technology and demography—we need to take a step back and ask some hard questions about our strategies at the university. What value do our various initiatives actually add? To take just one example, but an important one: how exactly does our investment in teaching awards advance our strategic direction? To what extent do teaching awards motivate faculty members to enhance their practice in order to meet the challenges and opportunities discussed here? Is the output of these awards commensurate with the financial and logistical inputs required, or are there better ways of inspiring and equipping faculty to enhance their practice? What role can the Academy play in fostering such enhancement, and therefore: what is the value that the Academy itself adds to NUS? These are difficult but important questions that we should not shy away from asking. I hope that the Academy will ask these questions and study how it may best respond.

The NUS Teaching Academy has been instrumental in promoting excellence in teaching and learning at NUS. I wish the Academy continued success for the year ahead.

OUR NEW FELLOWS SPEAK

The Academy welcomes the four new Fellows who were inducted at the University Awards ceremony on 28 April 2017. They are: Kelvin Foong Weng Chiong, Suzaina Kadir, Yanika Kowitlawakul and Tan Wee Kek.

They share their teaching aspirations and wishes for the Academy.

How technology may enhance learning and inspire confidence
a personal experience with Google Maps

Kelvin Foong Weng Chiong
Orthodontics and Paediatric Dentistry
Faculty of Dentistry

The prospect of learning a new subject could arouse different emotions in a class of students. Some are excited and eager, some may adopt a "wait and see" approach, while some may feel anxious and intimidated by the unknown. These emotions are normal. The reactions to the "unknown" are very real; they could either serve as the impetus to brace oneself to face the unknown or hinder the learning and potential for progress. When clinical students are placed for the first time in a learning setting where there is an expectation of high accountability in the performance of a procedure that has consequences to the well-being of a patient, technology-guided learning provides a scaffold for novice students to build confidence.

On a recent 13-day self-drive family vacation in Iceland, my wife and I covered much of Iceland by car, moving from one destination to another using Google Maps. It was indispensable though we had a physical road map. Prior to this trip, we had never been to Iceland. Starting out from the car rental company location, Google Maps gave us unambiguous directions to our next destination, and the next, on surfaced and unsurfaced roads, covering nearly 4,000 km in total. It's a piece of amazing technology that is simple to use, but it doesn't get the location of the destinations right all the time. We were once directed by Google Maps to a farm when we wanted to visit a series of pseudocraters in a place called Skutustadir, much to the chagrin of the farm owner. She, in perfect English, complained that she had informed Google Maps many times that her farm is not a pseudocrater!

How did Google Maps enhance our learning of the unknown (Iceland is a huge island) and inspire confidence as we made our journey from one location to another? I typed in the name of a destination, it listed the options, and I chose the preferred one. In travelling by car, Google Maps provided the most optimal route, the distance, and the estimated time to each destination. The guidance was visual; as we started out and made the journey, Google Maps gave verbal directional instructions, and we stayed on course. When we veered off course, visual directions and verbal instructions guided us back on course. Wonderful!

A destination on Google Maps is analogous to a learning goal. As educators, we set learning goals; students are expected to reach these in their learning journey. We deliver the content in modalities we deem appropriate, we guide and give feedback as students take initial tentative steps towards their learning objectives. The guidance from Google Maps is based on sound educational research evidence on what constitutes feedback. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback that is effective in helping students achieve learning goals comprise three questions, (i) Where am I going? (What are the goals?), (ii) How am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and (iii) Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?). Google Maps exemplifies this feedback model.

The feedback model of Google Maps offers a compelling framework on how to develop a piece of well-designed technology for teaching and learning. It should be simple to use, and it should give visual and verbal guidance from one learning goal to the next. When learning goals are not being met, additional feedback gives guidance to correct the learning course. Technology which guides an individual along the learning journey has the potential to build confidence and enhance learning, just as Google Maps did for me in Iceland.

Thoughts on Teaching and Learning

Suzaina Kadir
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

My fundamental teaching philosophy has not changed over the years. My focus is both very simple and very clear: my students and their deep and critical learning of the subject, enmeshed in an evolving global/ national context. I want my students to be able to explain the intricacies of politics and public policy, for example, but also to develop a critical mind when understanding the concepts and applying theoretical frameworks from within the discipline. Since joining a professional, graduate school, I see the importance of ensuring that my students not only understand with a critical mind, but also apply their learning in concrete ways through a simulation of the policy problem in the classroom.

Why is this critical, deep understanding important? Educators, in my view, have a mission. We are not just conveyers of information in preparation for the students who join the workforce. Our mission must be towards enhancing citizenship (both local and global) for the greater good of society. One of my mentors instilled this belief in me when I was first contemplating an academic career. As an academic, I must always remember to serve the wider community, he used to say. My passion for teaching stems from this educational mission.

To achieve this, I see myself and my students as key partners in the learning process. I may have disciplinary knowledge and carry the responsibility of designing a classroom that would enhance my student's learning, but I am not the conveyer of truth. Over the years, I learnt that my approach is what Paulo Freire describes as liberation pedagogy, where professors are not the single source of knowledge in the classroom but are engaged in the process of helping students become active creators of knowledge and ideas (Freire, 1968). My students and I are therefore part of a perpetual process of learning, where the classroom must be a microcosm for understanding and contribution to the wider globalized society.

I am deeply honoured to be part of the Teaching Academy, and hope that I am able to contribute fully to the work here. I would very much like to explore how we can best re-design classrooms to enable an effective mix of different learners so as to enhance the overall learning environment. Hence, I hope to contribute towards projects that will explore the use of technology in the classroom as well as address how we can include adult learners in a dynamic learning environment.

My Teaching Philosophy

Yanika Kowitlawakul
Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

In my years as an educator, one of my core values is to understand my students' backgrounds and cultures. Each semester and each class had its own unique culture and atmosphere. Even though I may teach the same subject in two different sessions, each session holds a different learning experience for me. I always adapt myself to the new environment and position myself within each class and its dynamics. My teaching strategies are flexible with each new group of students to meet their needs, but I apply similar standards across my sessions. I enjoy stimulating conversation within my classroom and discussing real-life application with my students.

With advanced technology, such as smart phones and web-based applications, ways of learning and teaching have changed drastically over the past decade. I have incorporated the use of information technology into my teaching by demonstrating to my students how they may find reliable information and data as well as how to analyse and implement information into practice. My students have been trained to think like scientists who are able to provide the rationale for their actions while they care for their patients. Additionally, I believe in creating a comfortable environment for students as they learn, so they would not feel intimidated, and can enjoy discussion with their classmates comfortably. I have also always respected my students' opinions and continually encourage them to respect others with different backgrounds, knowledge levels, and experience. I also learn from my colleagues. My colleagues and I often share new knowledge, teaching materials, and information that would help us to guide student learning. Hence, I feel that not only am I a source for learning, but I seek continuity in knowledge building by learning from the people I interact with as well.

To enhance my quality of teaching, I have always reflected on my student feedbacks, peer reviews, and results from my research studies. Whenever I adopt a new teaching method, I often conduct a research study to collect the students' perceptions in the form of feedback in a scientific and comprehensive way. The results of the study help me further improve my teaching methods to reach optimal learning outcomes for my students.

I also have attended educational courses and conferences regularly to keep myself updated on the new knowledge and pedagogy of learning. In addition, I have contributed to scholarly teaching through presentations, workshops, and publications locally and internationally.

Being a part of the NUS Teaching Academy is my privilege and it gives me an opportunity to give back to the NUS community. I plan to work with Academy Fellows on: 1) the effective adult education project to explore the adult learners' needs, and 2) the teaching mentorship project to develop a teaching mentorship guidebook. I look forward to working and learning with the Fellows in the Teaching Academy.

Teaching Aspirations

Tan Wee Kek
Information Systems and Analytics
School of Computing

Technology is increasingly being applied at universities all over the world to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the human teacher will, and must, continue to take centre stage. A good human teacher carefully designs the syllabus and learning objectives, strategises how to teach (albeit with the aid of technology), crafts the learning materials, constructs assessment tasks, assesses learning progress and outcomes, and provides timely feedbacks on learning. Executing these tasks requires not just mere knowledge but wisdom, and not just mundane supervision and tracking but genuine care and concern. I aspire to be a good human teacher who possesses wisdom to teach my students, and show them that I genuinely care and am concerned with their learning, a good human teacher who cannot be replaced by technology.

As the old saying goes… "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." Only a good human angler can teach someone else how to fish.

In this regard, I envision myself serving with the Teaching Academy in various roles to explore how technology could be purposefully adopted not to replace the human teachers but to aid them in teaching more effectively. Some of the areas that I hope to concentrate on include technology-enhanced learning (TEL) for both undergraduates and adult learners, blended learning, and assessment of the efficacy of TEL using data science.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND WORKSHOP

Assoc Prof Steve Wheeler
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Plymouth Institute of Education

The NUS Teaching Academy's Distinguished Lecture 2017 was held on 17th May at the University Hall Auditorium. Associate Professor Steve Wheeler, our distinguished speaker, shared about his *Learning Journey: From Inspiration to Innovation*, to an audience comprised of our Guest-of-Honour, NUS Provost, Professor Tan Eng Chye, Past and Present Academy Fellows, guests and members of the NUS Teaching community.

On 18th May 2017, Associate Professor Steve Wheeler conducted a workshop on *"Social Media and Learning: Why technology will transform higher education"* for the NUS Teaching community at the Global Learning Room in the Education Resource Centre at University Town.

My Learning Journey: From Inspiration to Innovation

A Review of the Distinguished Lecture

by Associate Professor Steve Wheeler

Although Associate Professor Steve Wheeler's lecture began with a retrospective account of his learning journey, it was really an exploration of how "inspiration for a lifetime of learning" could be sustained. Assoc Prof Wheeler pointed out that curiosity would motivate students to explore and find their own ways to use technology, and that by listening between the lines and examining students' user experiences, educators can discover surprises and inspiration as technology evolves.

Assoc Prof Wheeler posited that the search for dialogue and interaction drives students' engagement in social media, and the degree of interactivity offered by any social media platform would determine its "power" and pervasiveness among young users. Students engage with others through social media to create and curate content, as well as share and connect through said content. Understanding how students engage through social media, and engaging with them through such platforms would allow for student-centred activities that can involve many students all at once.

The following are some suggested ways in which social media (such as live-streaming, twitter, facebook, blogs etc.) can be used as "back channels" for students to "perform learning":

- On Twitter: a unique hastag could be created to put up content related to a lesson/lecture, and students could then question and challenge points raised, and engage in live conversations about the lesson. Authors whose books or theses were being discussed could also be tagged and if they responded, there would be even more opportunities for clarification and debate.

- On blogs: students could be asked to write blog entries to present their learning to an audience. Typically, students "up their game" when asked to present in this way, and there would be more crystallization of their own thoughts and more personal engagement with what they are learning.

- On Wikipedia: more advanced students could be tasked to find a gap in knowledge and to write a wikipedia entry to see how it was challenged and how long the entry could remain before it was completely revised or taken down.

- "Blimage" across social media platforms: people – students or educators, could be asked to respond thematically via blog-writing to images selected by others, e.g. educators could be challenged to write blog posts about learning in response to a random image selected by a peer. Unexpected insights and coorelations could result.

Citing David Warlick's exhortation that "we must prepare students for a future we can neither describe nor predict", Assoc Prof Wheeler demonstrated how educators can exercise the modern adage of "learning, unlearning, relearning" through using social media as a launchpad for remixing, reusing and repurposing content, individually and collaboratively. When students and educators engage in "Darwikianism – survival of the fittest content", it was postulated that they would find inspiration to do well in the (likely technology-based) jobs of the future, as these will likely still require skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and creativity.

Learning in the Digital Age

A Remixing and Reflection on the Distinguished Workshop

by Associate Professor Steve Wheeler

Ng Cheng Cheng
Manager, NUS Teaching Academy

Promising the "discovery of … new and emerging pedagogies, practices and theories around learning with new technologies" (workshop abstract), the Distinguished Workshop dealt with real behaviours on social media that participants could take note of and potentially leverage on.

Postulating that "identification through digital mediation has become the new cultural capital" (Wheeler, 2009), Associate Professor Steve Wheeler pointed out that people are now members of many different "digital tribes" (ibid.), capable of switching rapidly between different tribes with their particular behavioural norms. Easily tapping into the affordances of multiple digital tribes, platforms and modes of behaviour, new learners in particular, are likely to be "more self-directed, better equipped to capture information, more reliant on feedback from peers, more inclined to collaborate, [and] more oriented towards being their own nodes of production". (Waters, 2011) The following slide captures the kinds of participation they can engage in:
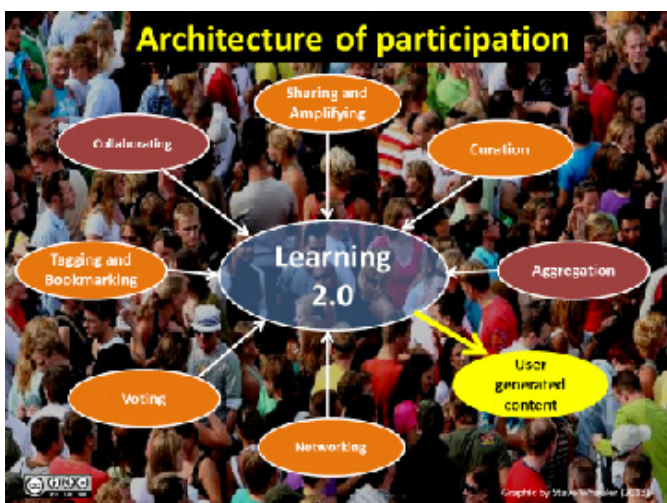

The challenge for educators would be in devising ways to tap on technology and tools, and the networks of these digital communities of practice, to enable students to learn with the help of knowledgeable others. If students are more likely to "learn by making", "remixing", "repurposing" and then "performing", "what would happen if we could harness [students'] actions for really good pedagogy?"

To craft sound pedagogies where the use of technology serves good purpose (to enhance, enrich or extend learning and/or research), it might be useful to be mindful of the following:

- Learners of different age groups can have very different understandings of acronyms and language use on social media, which hence necessitates judicious explanation.

- As individuals derive from different contexts, hold different frames of reference and hence have different purposes (e.g. to tap on communities for curated content, to reach wider audiences, for personal branding, to build networks for collaboration opportunities, to garner reactions to/critique of created content etc.) and even fears underlying their use of social media, some conscious cognizance of these can help educators devise better-informed learning processes and guidelines.

- When content makers have to share publicly, there is often increased incentive to engage in more reflection, more accurate presentation of data and citations, better proof reading etc.

- Some students need to be reminded that what is shared publicly will leave digital footprints and can no longer be controlled.

- There are crowd behaviours such as folksonomy (also known as social tagging, collaborative tagging, social bookmarking etc.) where users classify and highlight to other users electronic data such as websites, pictures etc. -those tagged more become more important to the community. This reflects the wisdom of crowds where the collective group can be much more intelligent than the most intelligent members. However, there are times when such behaviours might unfortunately be mob mentality, or might just simply prevent digital natives from acquiring broad-based understanding of concepts or fields of study. Technological tools such as data analytics can also be used to collect, measure, and analyse data about behaviours and contexts.

- There may be need to manage the downsides of technology / social media use (such as information overload, anxiety, distraction, boredom and even simple technical issues like setup time.)

Assoc Prof Wheeler opined that educators and learners now need digital literacies, and transliteracy (i.e. the ability to communicate/translate between platforms, presenting/expressing self equally well regardless of technology/platform) appears the most important:
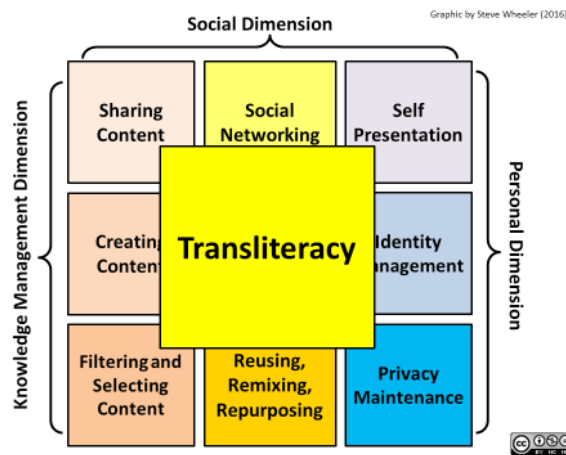
Some theories shared in the workshop for more nuanced understanding of learning in the digital age include:

- Rhizomatic Learning (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004): which postulates that things digital are all connected under the grid in a convoluted, extensive way, with no centre or boundary, like plant root structures. Oftentimes, people learn through serendipitous discovery, like Baudelaire's Flâneur (Benjamin, 2006) strolling through the streets.

- Connectivism (Downes, 2007): the thesis that knowledge is distributed across a network of connections, and therefore … learning consists of the ability to construct and traverse those networks" explained in the workshop as "It's not what you know, but who you know".

- Heutagogy (Hase and Kenyon, 2000; Blasche, 2012): the study of self-determined learning (non-linear and self-directed)

- Paragogy (Corneli & Danoff, 2012): the theory of peer-to-peer learning and teaching which addresses the challenge of peer-producing a useful and supportive context for self-directed learning.

Besides the above, Assoc Prof Wheeler also took participants through several activities to simulate some of the digital behaviours discussed, invited discussion and reflection about current ways in which learning technologies are used, and shared about tools such as content aggregators and learning activities (e.g. blimage, blideo, twisted pair etc.) incorporating social media. The workshop hence gave participants welcome insights into digital/social media behaviours, and ways of leveraging on them.

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TAKE-HOME LESSONS FROM THE DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND WORKSHOP

Fellows share their thoughts

Damith C Rajapakse
Computer Science
School of Computing

Dr. Steve Wheeler's talk, while peppered with lighthearted observations about all things related to teaching, and anecdotes from his own learning journey, was also punctuated with insights very relevant to the audience. For me, the most important takeaway from the talk was the need to identify learners' personality, aspirations, and their reliance on the teacher for guidance and support, for teachers can have a profound impact on the trajectory of a student's future. I think his predictions about the future of T&L is definitely worth some thought as we ourselves evolve how we teach.

Aaron Danner
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Faculty of Engineering

Prof. Wheeler's lecture was engaging from the very beginning. I learned something from his lecture style – an effective way to connect with an audience. At one point in the lecture he said "Do we have any Americans in here?" or "Do we have any ____ in here?" to get audience members to respond in a personal way. I liked that very much!

Stephen Lim Wee Hun
Psychology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Assoc Prof Steve Wheeler's lecture was a timely reminder in regard to how social media technologies such as Facebook and Twitter that originally served leisure purposes are fast becoming potential pedagogical channels for connecting and communicating with learners in higher education today. As university teachers in this digital age, we are compelled to acknowledge the ways in which students are embracing technology in their daily living, and challenged to imagine how best social media technologies can be incorporated into traditional pedagogies to optimise teaching and learning.

Seow Teck Keong
Biological Sciences
Faculty of Science

The lecture was entitled 'My Learning Journey' and it was a learning journey for me too. One of the lessons I was reminded of from the lecture was to always look for evidence to support claims that are made. The example given was the use of the term, "digital natives", which many, including myself, had used, but has turned out to be a myth after all. As a matter of fact, a recent article in Teaching and Teacher Education (P. A. Kirschner and P. D. Bruyckere, Teach. Teach. Educ. 67, 135-142; 2017) that was featured in Nature (Nature 547, 380; 2017), presented numerous studies that provided evidence that digital natives do not exist, and hence, the need to be mindful of the instructional designs that revolve around this myth. The lecture was a significant milestone in my personal learning journey.

Teaching and Learning Club (TLC)
Our Adjunct Faculty: Integral and Indispensable!

A Report by:
Heng Cheng Suang (Information Systems and Analytics)
Susan Ang Wan Ling (English Language and Literature)
Report condensed by Ng Cheng Cheng

Above: A/Prof Heng Cheng Suang leading the TLC session on "Our Adjunct Faculty: Integral and Indispensable!"

A participant sharing her views

Dr Susan Ang, co-facilitating the session

The Teaching and Learning Club's discussion *"Our Adjunct Faculty: Integral and Indispensable!"* was mooted and chaired by Academy Fellows - Associate Prof Heng Cheng Suang and Dr Susan Ang. Held on 23rd March 2017, the TLC sought to ascertain how adjunct faculty presence could be 'optimised' to provide an enriching experience for all - departments, students and themselves. It was met with delight by many adjunct faculty who expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in such dialogue.

Before the TLC discussion, a preliminary survey was sent to almost all adjunct faculty from all NUS faculties/ schools, and the results of the survey were compiled and shared with the participants in the TLC. As the Academy's main function in this TLC was to serve as facilitator and conduit for adjunct faculty members' perspectives and concerns, we have recorded all the major concerns raised - i) Teaching, ii) Research, iii) HR and iv) other general issues. However, as all non-teaching-related issues e.g. HR-related, have been conveyed to the relevant entities in NUS, this article will focus on the Teaching.

The pre-discussion online survey and the discussion itself made salient the following:

- To optimize utilization of adjunct faculty expertise, a significant minority felt that departments could give more consideration to modules/topics of interest suggested by adjunct faculty. In particular, those adjunct faculty who are also working professionals might be able to offer current perspectives on the basic knowledge or adequate foundation required of young graduates in their professions (i.e. they could contribute to curriculum design). There were also opportunities for the cross-fertilisation of departmental curricula or the development of cross-faculty curricula;

- To support adjunct faculty better in teaching, resources such as (i) dedicated mentors to help orient them to departmental practices/guidelines; (ii) library resources and access know-how; (iii) designated work space/ computing/wifi access; (iv) funding; (v) updates on new pedagogies & teaching technologies; (vi) more varied feedback on their teaching, could be made more easily accessible.

- To boost adjunct faculty morale (and hence indirectly enhance quality of teaching), there could also be consideration of (i) more dedicated recognition such as teaching awards for adjunct faculty; (ii) more standardisation of adjunct-related practices across faculties, and (iii) more opportunities for adjuncts to engage in dialogue with adjunct faculty peers and university administration. In addition, as it was the adjunct faculty who are semi-retired or former members of the department that derived the most satisfaction and the strongest sense of social and professional integration from their adjunct arrangements, other adjunct faculty could likely benefit more from conscientious integration efforts by NUS and departments.

Following the TLC, the results of both the survey and discussion have been presented to the Teaching Academy, the Academy Executive Committee, Provost's Office and other relevant entities in NUS. We appreciate the constructive inputs by all adjuncts who have participated and believe that appropriate follow-up actions will be taken to address concerns raised. We hope that through the sharing of concerns and best practices, this TLC will indeed bring about improvements to the optimization of adjunct faculty expertise and teaching.