

# Diverse and Expansive Ways of Knowing

Summary of virtual panel event held on October 28th, 2021  
[\[Link to video\]](#)



Knowledge comes in many forms beyond traditional academic texts and exercises. We must recognize that critical knowledge and creativity stems from each student and instructor's unique identity, background and perspective, and respect diverse and expansive ways of knowing.

Join us for an engaging reflection and discussion on the ways in which we can foster diverse and expansive ways of knowing through our shared experiences in teaching and learning this year and beyond. Participants will have an opportunity to hear from panellists and to ask questions during a live Q&A.

## Panelists:

Rodrigo Narro Perez: Postdoctoral Fellow, Office of the Provost and the Faculty of Science

Stacy Ann Creech: Sessional Faculty, Department of English and Cultural Studies

Sarah Wojkowski, Assistant Dean, Physiotherapy; Director, Program for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research

Adrienne Xavier, Acting Director, Indigenous Studies Program

## Panel Questions:

What are you and or your department or faculty already doing or planning to advance diverse and expansive ways of knowing and how have students influenced these initiatives?

How can students and instructors incorporate diverse inexpensive ways of knowing across and beyond courses and what role can students faculty and university leadership play and contributing or advancing to diverse and expansive ways of knowing?

## 5 Key Takeaways from the panel

1. Think about the context in which you learn. What we learn and teach can be affected by multiple factors such as race, culture, and language. Addressing these factors is crucial to thinking beyond your own knowing [21:09-23:39]
2. We can have multiple identities that impact our personal, professional, and academic experiences. Gathering and expressing those identities helps to navigate ways we learn and teach. It is also important for fostering generative, thoughtful, and supportive learning spaces. [26:36-29:23]
3. If we want students to feel like they are being reflected in what they are learning, we must open pathways that allow them to interrogate, to be critical, and to position themselves at the centre of their own learning [30:57-31:35]
4. Students are significant drivers of action and change in curriculum and program operation. University leadership and faculty must be able to accept feedback from students and work with them to improve teaching and learning at the school and program level. [40:36-42:21]
5. Instead of asking 'Where are you from?' replace it with 'Where do you know from? Where do you learn from? Who are your people?' because it allows learners to bring their heritage, family, and history into these academic spaces that often separate identity from knowledge. [52:33-55:00]

## Some key takeaways from each panelist

### Rodrigo Narro Perez, Postdoctoral Fellow, Office of the Provost and the Faculty of Science

- The work you do outside of your courses can influence how you teach. Integrate examples from your own research or work into lectures. This allows you to bring in your own perspective of the field you are working in. [13:06-13:38]
- Self-teaching is a huge part of learning and expanding your knowledge. This can be done through reading, expanding your network, and interacting with others to discuss the topic. [15:14-15:56]
- There are many ways to challenge how we learn in a way that is more expansive and inclusive. Consider for example the languages we use to learn and teach. It is possible to move beyond the confines of English. [17:56-19:09]

### Stacy Ann Creech: Sessional Faculty, Department of English and Cultural Studies

- Consider the voices and experiences that you bring into the classroom such as through readings given to students or inviting guest speakers. By centering the voices on specific groups, we can bring in multiple worldviews to understand the historical and cultural context of the past which can also be reflected in the present day [29:43-30:57]
- When starting each class, ask students about their day or week. Share a piece of news and ask them about their opinion or ask about what they're engaging with outside of the classroom through verbal or written communication. This prompts them to make connections across their multiple identities and between their academic life and interests [32:18-33:08]
- Try to go beyond asking stereotypical icebreaker questions as these can end up alienating students of colour. Adapt this notion of icebreakers into an opportunity for students to think about what led them to taking this course and to express what they would like to get out of this experience [33:28-34:20]

### Sarah Wojkowski, Assistant Dean, Physiotherapy; Director, Program for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research

- Identify opportunities for teachers and students to listen to each other's perspectives. Meet with students and allow them to share from their own lens what the curriculum means to them and how their experiences impact their journey within in the curriculum. This helps to understand their goals and how instructors can help achieve them. [43:16-46:24]
- Create brave and open spaces for dialogue. Work towards supporting students so that they have the courage and comfort to share their perspective in class but also support faculty and facilitators who may not be well versed in this way of learning and teaching. [46:25-47:37]
- Support each other's learning by recognizing that our learners come from diverse communities and have different perspectives. Making sure those perspectives are brought to the table and are heard is important for our learning to be continuous and open.[48:29-49:55]

### Adrienne Xavier, Acting Director, Indigenous Studies Program

- Do you have to think about your identity and the way that you know the world in order to do your job? You may or may not do so but acknowledging that other people have to go through that is an expansive way of knowing. [57:54-59:25]
- It is important to create safe spaces in the classroom because it reflects who the instructor is as a person. It shows students that you do not need to censor yourself to fit into the system. [1:00:55-1:01:09]
- What does expansive ways of knowing look like for students? How students expand their knowledge is often through assignments. In social sciences this can range from handing in spoken word poetry, to an essay, or even a dance. Being open to different ways of expressing oneself is crucial to allowing our whole selves and ways of knowing to be present. It allows students to make connections between their academic world, social world, family and then also the process that you went through to get it. [1:01:50-1:04:12]

Referenced Resources:

['WHERE DO YOU KNOW FROM?': AN EXERCISE IN PLACING OURSELVES TOGETHER IN THE CLASSROOM](#)