



A Pedagogy of Slow: Integrating Experiences of Physical and Virtual Gallery Spaces to Foster Critical Engagement in SoTL

ABSTRACT

This article makes a case for SoTL practitioners to engage in what we term a pedagogy of slow. Here, “slow” connotes with waiting and patience. It takes time to learn and acquire the skills that a SoTL scholar needs. “Doing SoTL” we therefore argue, requires a pedagogy that takes time and sees time as an ally instead of as an opponent. In what the university has become, there seems little room for a pedagogy of slow that both offers and allows for time. In this article we present a case for considering engagement with the visual arts as part of a pedagogy of slow and the development of SoTL. By making the familiar strange, we acknowledge the implications of visual thinking strategies for social engagement by highlighting teaching and learning as relational. Working with colleagues in the context of continuing professional development, we collected data via focus groups and written reflections within physical and virtual gallery spaces to glean insight into participant experiences of slow looking as the antithesis to fast-paced and pressurised environments. We highlight how learning to become a SoTL scholar is an iterative process that requires time and generates what we term “productive friction.” This is the iterative process which creates dislocation and uncertainty within participants, but which also has the capacity to nudge towards a transformation of the professional self.

KEYWORDS

slow looking, visual thinking strategies, dialogic teaching

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on “slow time” for enacting and processing learning. Here, “slow” connotes with waiting and patience. We propose that “doing SoTL” requires a pedagogy of slow that deliberately takes time and sees time as an ally instead of as an opponent that has to be conquered and beaten. It allows time to marinate and mature. This study builds on the work of Harvard’s Project Zero (<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/>) and “slow looking” (Tishman 2017), in addition to work undertaken by Cronin (2015) and Supple (2018, 2020) to make the case that a pedagogy of slow highlights the values of time and space as dimensions in the social and relational dimensions of learning and teaching. Our aim for this study was to go slow in order to foster intellectual development and critical thinking as expressed through dialogic teaching. This emphasis on taking time to slow points to an implicit critique of the dominance of a culture of speed in the contemporary neoliberal university (Karkov 2019).

As a consequence of the global suspension of normal teaching due to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, we were graced with an opportunity to revisit our research and to reflect more intentionally on the implications of designing a pedagogy of slow that connected with dialogic teaching. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted just how much teaching and learning are social and relational modes of conviviality by heightening the importance of social connections as we remain physically distant.

CONTEXT FOR THIS STUDY

Carl Honoré coined the term “the slow movement” back in 2005; the antithesis, he argued, of all that is modern: fast-food, fast-information, fast-fashion, and so on. Honoré’s argument is that this fast way of living is not only eroding our planet, but also our wellbeing.

The concept of “slow” has also been extended to the context of academia, by Berg and Seeber (2013, 2016) who argue the necessity of pushing against the neoliberal agenda of universities and against publishing, teaching, research, and administrative pressures. Inspired by these fundamental concepts of “slow,” our study broadly constitutes the pedagogical value of “slow” as it plays out through space. This resonates with recent scholarship by M’Balía and Carvajal Regidor (2021) as well as Franzese and Felten (2017). M’Balía and Carvajal Regidor operationalize principles of “Being Lazy and Slowing Down” (BLSD) to “de-privilege” the need for a result, and to “decenter” the mind as the primary source of knowledge in order to make space for the body and spirit. Their work addresses the need to question the epistemological construction of Western ways of knowing as output orientated. Further, as per Franzese and Felten (2017) this study resonates with the experience of contemplative pedagogies, aiming for connection-building and meaning-making. In our case, it is the specific association we make between a pedagogy of slow and dialogic teaching that aligns our study with the inquiry-focus of SoTL projects.

The Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) at the heart of this study delivers a fully online qualification in the professional development of staff who teach in higher education (including both faculty and professional services staff across the community as participants at University College Cork). Its curriculum is firmly grounded within a SoTL framework, which focuses on the teaching portfolio as a document where participants demonstrate evidence of their teaching and student learning. The online program is orientated towards the continuing professional development of staff who teach across the university community and aspires to form a community of practice of scholarly teachers who are intentional about their teaching and student learning. A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Members are brought together by a learning need they share; their collective learning becomes a bond among them over time, as experienced in various ways, and thus not a source of homogeneity (Wenger 2007). The community of practice model is one of mutual support and scaffolding of the learning enactments within the program.

The process of forming SoTL scholars in the accredited program involves the structuring of participants’ time within a community of practice model that is enacted within the virtual program by a multidisciplinary team of both faculty and professional services staff—known as teaching fellows—led by a program coordinator. These fellows are full time faculty in their own disciplines and are drawn from the four principal colleges of University College Cork—College of Arts, Celtic Studies Social & Sciences; College of Medicine and Health; College of Business and Law; College of Science,

Engineering and Food Science. All of the teaching fellows have significant experience in teaching in their own discipline and act as critical friends for a group of up to eight participants who are both faculty and students in the online accredited certificate program.

Throughout the certificate program, we as a teaching team frequently encounter questions such as: How do we make explicit the experiences of learning and teaching both for ourselves as teachers, and our colleagues across the disciplines? How do we create a common language for teaching and learning in various contexts? These questions require the slow time necessary for formation of scholarly teachers as reflective practitioners. Continuing professional development programs that support opportunities for continuing education for staff and faculty who teach in higher education are structured to take account of the nature of time as the single most valuable commodity. These participants, as teachers of their disciplines and as students of an accredited program, require time as a means to process new learning and to make connections with their professional practice as scholarly teachers within their disciplinary domain or professional practice.

MAKING THE FAMILIAR STRANGE: ARTS IN EDUCATION AND THE CULTURE OF “SLOW LOOKING”

Arts in education that focuses on the metacognitive dimension or learning to learn about the process of learning has been proven an enabler to finding common ground and developing a shared language of teaching and learning across disciplines by bridging an exploration of faculty as students (Kador, Chatterjee, and Hannan 2017; McCarthy 2010). A way in which this has been possible is that arts strategies make the familiar strange and so offer quality time for participants to explore together to find common ground at the metacognitive dimension, despite many participants being unfamiliar with the visual arts as a teaching medium.

Our primary consideration for a pedagogy of slow is to foster intellectual development and critical thinking as outlined in this table that charts “slow looking” as a series of iterative levels in which participants uncover the meaning of an artefact that can then be teased open through dialogic teaching.

Table 1: Slow looking in the gallery space with questions to prompt dialogic teaching

Captioning	What information does the title communicate?	Who is the producer of the work? What is the size/medium of the work? Where is the work located?
Close looking	What do you see?	What does the subject-matter tell you about the subject’s meaning?
Closer looking	What meaning can you make?	Is there anything that stands out for you?
Connecting	What connections can you make?	How does context inform meaning?

Project Zero researcher Shari Tishman at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in her book *Slow Looking* (2017) has proposed a practice of observing detail over time to move beyond a first impression and create a more immersive experience with a text, an idea, a piece of art, or any other kind of object. As a practice, it clears a space for students to be present to themselves and the world around

them. The process of being present requires “patient, immersive attention” to artworks, providing “scope and space for meaning-making and critical thinking that may not be possible through high-speed means of information delivery” (Tishman 2017, 24). The usefulness of “slow looking” is its application as a framework for learning how to learn, but this requires both time and space for the formation of reflective practitioners (Cronin 2015). This is “mindfulness with a purpose” (Supple 2018, n.p.).

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This study presents the key findings from a focus group and online reflections. We applied “slow looking” as a framework to foster learning about how to be present as a reflective practice for program participants through virtual and physical gallery experiences. This research engaged two cohorts—the first were the teaching fellows who physically attended a gallery and engaged in a face-to-face session and reflective focus group. The second were students from the fully online faculty development program who engaged with virtual artworks.

The gallery site helps to flatten out power dynamics in what is essentially a neutral space. We practiced scaffolded dialogue that involves the following:

- Interactions which encourage students to think, and to think in different ways;
- Questions which require much more than simple recall;
- Answers which are built on rather than merely received;
- Feedback which informs and leads thinking forward as well as encourages;
- Contributions which are extended rather than fragmented;
- Exchanges which link together into coherent and deepening lines of enquiry;
- Classroom organisation, climate, and relationships which make all this possible.

The on-campus Glucksman Gallery provides a rich and dynamic discipline neutral space for learning; a perfect backdrop for the coming together of interdisciplinary knowledge communities, such as the teaching fellows. The exhibition policy is committed to using art to engage scholarly debate; the exhibitions provide ongoing means for interaction and engagement. For the online cohort, program participants were given the choice of two virtual art museums and were able to select artworks to engage with.

The prevailing idea for both the face-to-face and virtual settings were that any gallery space—either physical spaces such as the Glucksman Gallery or the virtual gallery spaces provided by virtual exhibitions from the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) [<https://www.moma.org>] and the Van Gogh Museum [<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en>]-present alternative teaching spaces that contrast with traditional teaching spaces where knowledge and power are circumscribed by traditional campus architecture (Kador, Chatterjee, and Hannan 2017). These galleries do not assume one person as the “knower” who stands at the top of the room, but rather they invite flexible, inclusive dialogue between participants. The galleries are spaces which are ripe for interdisciplinary exploration—they are in fact “discipline agnostic” (in other words, not associated with a particular discipline), and provide playful and creative spaces away from both “traditional” campus-based and virtual learning environments. Indeed, the very location of a gallery suggests a space “set apart from our everyday lives” (Geismar 2018). Our intention through this exercise was to encourage program participants to become momentarily estranged from their familiar faculty contexts through their experience of the physical and

virtual gallery experience. This would make the familiar strange with the intention of promoting presence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slow looking: a conceptual tool to make explicit processing time

We have noted that the usefulness of “slow looking” is its application as an embodied framework for learning how to be present as a reflective practice. We argue that this process is grounded in learning and teaching as social and relational encounters. This concept of teaching and learning as relational is rooted in socio-cultural theory, as represented by the writing of the Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky (1978) who has been a significant contributor to social constructivism in educational studies. To accept teaching and learning as relational and social is to accept interconnections between speaking, thinking, and acting that makes explicit the dynamics of reflective practice as an embodied experience that has a social dimension. We see these processes as a direct counter to the neoliberal agenda of consumerism which according to Berg and Seeber (2013) “propels the belief that time is money, resulting in superficial learning” (5) and where the student is constituted by the market as being a consumer rather than as a co-producer of knowledge. Therefore “time for reflection is not, then, a luxury, but crucial to effective teaching and learning” (Berg and Seeber 2013, 6). Time and space are necessary in the formation of reflective practitioners within a community of practice as a social and relational circle of conviviality.

What we are suggesting now is the time to reclaim authentic presence as part of deep communication that facilitates deep learning. We contend that deep communication and, therefore deep learning, is enabled by engagement in dialogic teaching. Proponents of dialogic teaching see the learning process not as the adoption of a particular item of knowledge but rather as participation in a certain type of discourse (see, for example, Sfard 2008). The goal is to lay out various positions, with knowledge understood not as given but as gradually constructed through interaction (Mortimer and Scott 2003). This happens by:

1. Fostering a non-judgmental space (here we see the interplay of the physical arrangement of space and the psychological nurturing of well-being);
2. Active listening and open facilitation;
3. Respectful turn-taking;
4. Wait time to give others time to think and respond;
5. Openness to alternative viewpoints; both teacher and learner views are equally respected and encouraged.

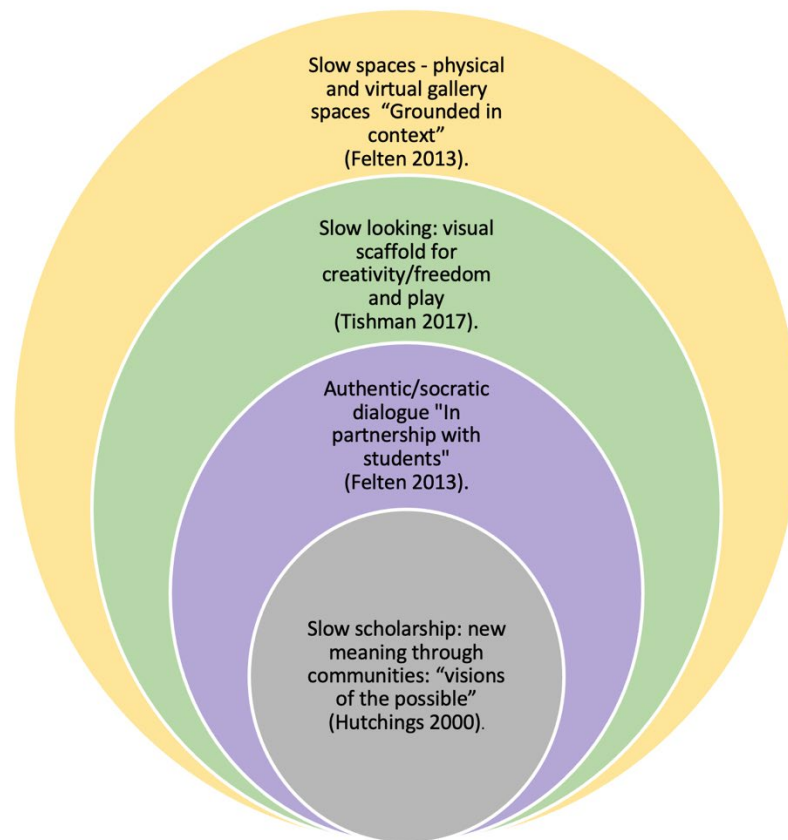
We also see parallels here with the tenets of Socratic dialogue which recreates a world of listening and mutual respect for reason.

“Slow looking” within a gallery space operates as a visual scaffold to support the process of dialogic teaching as an iterative and recursive process that has the potential to lead to transformational teacher awareness over time; awareness of, for instance, the inextricable link between “teaching and teacher influence on student learning” (Felten 2013, 122). Dialogic teaching is grounded in research on the relationship between language, learning, thinking, and understanding, and in observational evidence on what makes for good learning and teaching. The emphasis is on the iterative nature of slow change, which cuts against the educational managerial model of fast action for change.

We adapted the methods used by Klara Sedova (2017): “A case study of a transition to dialogic teaching as a process of gradual change,” in order to embody “slow looking” as a framework to 1) help students navigate complex systems and build connections, 2) to foster empathy and self-awareness, 3) so students can build off the ideas of others and think together, 4) as students learn to describe in detail.

Our conceptual framework for this research therefore is based on the inextricable links between slow looking, authentic dialogue between teachers, learners and near-peers, and the creation of slow scholarship, allowing a meaningful exploration of students’ learning and its relationship to teaching. We represent the relationships between these concepts and their connection to SoTL frameworks below:

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for this study, as informed by Felten (2013), Hutchings (2000), and Tishman (2017)



APPROACHES TO “SLOW LOOKING”

Questions in dialogic teaching are structured in such a manner “as to provoke thoughtful answers, which in turn ideally provoke further questions. This serves to create a coherent line of enquiry” (Alexander 2006, 41). The dialogic teaching approach is based on such teacher-student communication, in which higher forms of cognitive processes are dominant on the student’s part. Students in this kind of teaching are actively engaged, endowed with high levels of autonomy, and empowered to influence the development of the classroom discussion to a certain degree.

Dialogic teaching is more likely if it follows the principles below as argued by Alexander (2006). In Table 2 below we expand on Alexander’s descriptions by providing contextualised examples from how these are realised in our own teaching practice.

Table 2: Dialogic teaching in action

Principle	Description	Example
1) Collective	addressing learning tasks together	Teacher asks the students to use the resources available to the group to seek the answer to a question/solve a problem.
2) Reciprocal	listening, share ideas, exchange views	Teacher prompts discussion with the group and encourages interaction and contribution from all members, either as a large plenary or in smaller groups. Teacher encourages peer work for reciprocity.
3) Supportive	a safe space where participants share ideas without fear of judgement in a mutually supportive environment	Teacher establishes “ground rules” and indicates the space as being one of openness and inclusion, communicating expectations around respect. Encouraging multiple forms of contribution formats, for example allowing space for anonymous participation such as via online polling or anonymous feedback via post-it notes at the end of class.
4) Cumulative	building on responses and chaining these into a deep argument	Teacher works to scaffold questions which increase in complexity, for example moving from “who/what/where/when” etc to “how might we?” for problem solving or encouraging critical thinking by suggesting students take a standpoint, which is the opposite to one they might usually take.
5) Purposeful	the dialogue is open, but it is structured on specific learning goals	Teacher indicates the purpose of the discussion and skills development, i.e. develop critical thinking, concise communication skills, confidence building, and may link these explicitly with learning outcomes within their program. Students therefore see a purpose for the discussion rather than it being a “chat.”

Crucially, this process requires the necessity of slow time to allow participants to make connections that allow for authentic learning experiences.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research sought to find answers to the following research questions:

- How can physical and virtual gallery spaces be harnessed in the movement towards slow scholarship?

- What are the implications of shifting subjectivity in professional faculty development?

METHODS

Methods in this context mean “a sequence of actions” (Sedova 2017, 279). In this research, we applied the following methods for engaging students in dialogue:

1. Interaction—encourages slow looking focus;
2. Questions—encourages openness and not just one answer;
3. Feedback—which reiterates and moves the focus forward;
4. Contributions—are extended rather than fragmented;
5. Exchanges—building on contributions and deepening enquiry. Questions in dialogic teaching are structured in such a manner as to provoke thoughtful answers, which in turn ideally provoke further questions;
6. Space—the space and time is how the activity unfolds.

Learning is not just cognitive, it is also affective and “slow looking” is a tangible demonstration of learning as holistic engagements as well as embodied experiences.

There were two sites for data collection which took place: (1) face-to-face in a gallery space, and (2) in an online virtual gallery. Ethics approval for the study was granted through the Social Research Ethics Committee of the university.

DATA COLLECTION 1—FACE-TO-FACE AT THE GLUCKSMAN GALLERY WITH TEACHING FELLOWS

The Glucksman Gallery at University College Cork is a modern art gallery based on the university campus. Opened in October 2004, the gallery prides itself in fostering creative connections between people and disciplines by enabling public understanding of the visionary research undertaken in all four colleges of the university, and welcoming students, staff, and visitors to explore, enjoy, and learn about art right in the heart of the campus.

In October 2018, teaching fellows attended the Glucksman Gallery as part of pre-semester training and were set a simple task: to carefully look at the works in the gallery (engaging in a process known as “slow looking” or “seeing slowly”) and think about what the artworks might be “saying” about teaching and learning. After this exercise the group came together and were joined by the gallery art director for a conversation and reflections which were audio recorded.

For this research, the artworks within the gallery were on display as part of two exhibitions: “Please Touch: Tactile Encounters” and “Josef and Anni Albers: Voyage Inside a Blind Experience” (July 27—November 4, 2018). These exhibitions became the framework for talking about complexities of teaching and learning in an online space.

One member of faculty from each of the following disciplines was present: applied psychology, education, Irish language, alternative therapies, disability support services, microbiology, neuroscience and anatomy, medicine and dentistry, learning and teaching, as well as the exhibition curator. As peers and members of the teaching team, participants were emailed about the workshop and asked if they would like to participate and if they would like further information. Those who were interested volunteered their time on the day. All participants were provided with a research information statement about the context of the research and consent forms before the workshop. A briefing about the exhibition took place by the gallery curator and the first author of this article. Participants were then

given approximately 40 minutes to interact with the various works on display—this being an exhibition which allowed for tactile interaction as well as simply visually observing pieces. The group then came together to discuss their reflections which were audio recorded.

Participants were given the following tasks and questions:

- Walk around the gallery and consider the various artworks.
- Consider first: how does being in the gallery space make you feel?
- Then: choose one artwork to focus on and reflect on the following questions:
- Why were you drawn to this particular artwork?
- What story do you imagine as being behind the artwork?
- What connections can you make between engaging in the gallery space and problems, dilemmas, challenges, questions, curiosities you have about your teaching and your students' learning?

For this section we have mapped the elements of the indicators and methods and how these were explicitly manifested in each context. The relevant indicators and methods as per Sedova (2017) appear in quotes.

Participants engaged via the principles for dialogic teaching in the following ways: The task was “collective” and “reciprocal” in that participants had the freedom to look at the works of art in their own time and talk with others who might have been looking at the same artwork at the same time. The environment was “supportive” and the final discussion at the end of the session enabled ideas to become “cumulative”—building on responses and chaining these into a deep argument. Being provided with a series of questions to consider also meant the dialogue was “purposeful.” The collective discussion at the end of the session encouraged participants to actively listen to each other and so performed the action of being present both to their own ideas and to that of other participants who had experienced the gallery from different perspectives.

Regarding the methods for dialogic teaching, the “interaction” with various artworks encouraged a slow looking focus. The questions participants were to consider encouraged openness and not just one answer. Essentially they were asked to observe the artworks while considering one question: “What story does the artwork tell you about teaching and learning?” Other questions during the group feedback phase (focus group) prompted further questions which enabled collaborative and cumulative idea formation. The focus group also allowed for extended contributions and exchanges within the gallery space.

DATA COLLECTION 2—ONLINE VIA GOOGLE ARTS AND CULTURE VIRTUAL GALLERIES WITH STUDENTS

The second approach for data collection was as part of an online class activity which took place over a series of weeks. Students in the certificate in teaching and learning in higher education were asked to select from one of two virtual art galleries—Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) or the Van Gogh Museum. They were then asked to focus on an artwork of their choosing and respond to the prompts in relation to the chosen artwork. These responses were uploaded to an online visual repository created via the online platform Padlet [<https://padlet.com/>].

Students engaged via the principles for dialogic teaching in the following ways: Participants had the freedom to explore the galleries and choose their artwork. Using Padlet, they could see each others’

reflections and interpretations of the art from their peers. This collaborative and visual discussion enabled reciprocity. The environment was “supportive” in that all students were able to participate and if students preferred, they could remain anonymous. The nature of Padlet as an online repository of ideas means it is naturally cumulative—building on responses and chaining these into a deep argument. Being provided with a series of questions (listed below) to consider also means the interactions were purposeful.

Regarding the methods for dialogic teaching, the interaction with various artworks encouraged a slow looking focus. The questions which participants were to consider encouraged openness and not just one answer. Students were asked to consider the following for the activity:

- Describe which artwork you have chosen. Then describe who or what in your chosen image you think is the most important figure or object.
- Draw the object or person that struck you most in this artwork.
- What story do you imagine as being behind that aspect of the artwork?
- What connections can you make between this exercise [engaging with virtual artworks] and problems, dilemmas, challenges, questions, curiosities you have about your teaching and your students’ learning?

A teaching fellow responded to the comments from the groups as part of a group feedback phase and was able to prompt further questions from the group, enabling collaborative and cumulative idea formation, further contributions, and exchanges within the online space. A total cohort of 85 students, who were faculty members, participated in this exercise as a requirement for the collaborative element of their online learning; the Padlet responses were drawn on for the first data set. The students had come from a range of disciplines including medicine and health, engineering, food science, arts and humanities, languages, education, psychology, and mathematics with a minimum of undergraduate degree level in their discipline up to a doctorate degree.

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACHES

Data was analysed from both sources (audio recording from the physical gallery and data generated on Padlet in response to the virtual gallery task) using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a way to identify, analyse and report patterns (i.e. “themes”) within a dataset (Braun and Clarke 2006; Clarke and Braun 2017). We were drawn to thematic analysis as “it can be a method which works both to reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 9).

We followed the stages of thematic analysis as per Braun and Clark (2006) represented in Figure 2¹ below:

Figure 2: Thematic analysis stages based on Braun and Clarke (2006)



Step 1: Familiarisation of data

Focus group audio for data set 1 was transcribed by a third party. For the second data set, we first exported the data from Padlet to a more workable format in Excel spreadsheets. We then engaged in

multiple active readings of both sets of the data—meaning that as we were reading we were searching for connections, similarities, differences, and interesting perspectives, highlighting the Microsoft Word transcripts and Excel spreadsheets with multiple colours and taking observational notes within these documents.

As part of this step we coded the participants in the focus groups in order to maintain anonymity, but felt retaining their disciplinary identity was important. For the data generated from Padlet we simply assigned code names of Student A, B, C, etc.

Step 2: Initial coding

Braun and Clarke (2006, 18) state that for this step, “Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst.” Therefore, observational notes and highlighted ideas/phrases were considered and compared for similarities and differences across both data sets. We began to streamline ideas across the data sets and decide on common colours in which to represent this information, leading into steps 3, 4, and 5.

Steps 3, 4, and 5: Generating, reviewing, defining, and naming themes

For the latter stages of steps 3, 4, and 5, we looked across all the coded information and took a broader perspective—looking for common themes on a level “higher” than the minutiae of codes. We created thematic mindmaps of the different ideas and checked whether these mapped across both data sets, returning multiple times from the data to the mindmap and back again. It was at this stage where we decided which themes to keep and which to discard as more minor or irrelevant in relation to the research questions. We discussed, reviewed, iterated, and revisited the themes multiple times, driven by the information within the data. Finally, we decided on the themes we will present in the results section. We pulled out one key quote for each of the themes which we felt encapsulated its essence in order to underscore the meaning and depth of the theme itself.

The following section presents common themes pertaining to the impact of engaging in these activities in both real and virtual gallery spaces from both data sets.

RESULTS

The results are presented under three themes pertaining to dissonance, difference, and creativity. Key quotes have been extracted alongside each of the thematic names in order to emphasise the main thread of the data.

Theme 1: Personal and disciplinary dissonance

“It’s a very unsafe space in a way”

The “slow looking” framework can be performed at any age and helps participants to navigate complex systems and build connections in order to foster empathy and self-awareness. This process can be synthesised within an atmosphere of estrangement that intends to make the familiar strange. Participants in both the virtual and physical gallery settings were inducted into a new culture and space. They were made uncomfortable, their familiar sense of being on campus became strange. There was a dislocation with familiar spaces: removing from familiar spatial cues that condition both teachers and students. We tend to fall into roles of either teacher or student within the confines of traditional spaces, and this is what the gallery does: it destabilises. We see the value of dissonance as researchers for shifting

subjectivity as articulated in this quote from participant G, a faculty member in neuroscience and anatomy:

The openness of the [gallery] space alone does contribute to that feeling of being a very unsafe space. There's always an element of safety in traditional classrooms—desks and chairs and four narrow walls . . . [being out of that traditional space] it's challenging. (participant G)

Productive friction is necessary as part of the learning process in sense-making and the application of new meanings to prior contexts. For example, Ward et al. (2011) argue that, “Productive friction at the boundaries . . . involves how teachers experience the conflicts of multiple worlds and how these conflicts stimulate them to reflect on their practise in ways that move them towards improving student learning (15).” Again this is apparent in comments from participant G:

it's a very unsafe space in a way. It really does challenge you to put yourself out there. Especially if you're coming from a background that's much more, say like scientific or—you know, for me. So I think it's also very challenging. But in a very good way. (participant G)

The gallery is a liminal space or space of estrangement that makes the familiar strange and gives teachers an approximate empathetic experience of how students struggle with complexity. This experience helps teachers to become more empathetic.

The main finding [for me out of this activity] is that going out of my comfort zone and interpreting art or involving art in teaching (perhaps in this case more learning than teaching) does not have to be a bad experience. (student A)

Student B shares, “Doing these exercises involving reflections on works of art has not been comfortable for me, but is really getting the message across to me about how vital it is to consider our differences in teaching and learning.”

These perspectives show how a productive friction leads to more sophisticated rendering of teaching practice and meaningful student engagement. Holding cognitive and emotional dissonances in productive tension is a sign of maturity (D'Mello et al. 2014). Dissonance and the related emotional state of a confusion play an important role in coping with complex learning tasks of all kinds. Only when dissonance takes place and a confusion is experienced can there be any deep learning. Again echoed in the following from student C regarding the online experience:

By answering questions on this work of art, I thought more deeply about the photo than I would if I were to have visited the MOMA and seen it in person. While answering the probing questions asked in this exercise I started to think about the emotions being portrayed by the picture, the colours, and what they represent. As a logical thinker, this would not be my natural inclination. However, I can see that my students likely possess different intelligences and when I present a pharmacy case study to them, some students

will naturally start to think about the emotions of the “patients” in the case study. (student C)

These comments also align with Findlay (2017) who suggested we should be asking when we look at a work of art, not “what does it mean” but rather “how do I feel?”—this changes the experience and encounter with the object into something transformational. We argue that this type of transformation can only take place in a space which allows for this slowing down of thought.

Theme 2: Difference

“We should always remember that each student sees the world differently”

The gallery space allowed for being present to be performed. The time and space afforded by the gallery allowed for these reflections:

With an artwork you like to observe it, then walk away, then think about it. Think about what your reaction is to it. And that’s how some students are. They like to kind of . . . reflect on it [a session] . . . so they might just need more time. (participant B, faculty member in learning and teaching)

The very first day I walked up to [one of the artworks] . . . and I thought . . . that what you might believe you have prominent and foreground when you are teaching your class . . . may not be what the person experiencing that sees straight away. (participant N, faculty member in microbiology)

Similarly, for those students involved in online reflections, there was an equal level of engagement, reflection and comments indicating transformative thought about their own students’ learning: “I believe that this reflects the need for teachers to remind themselves that although we emphasize particular aspects of subjects that we teach, we should always remember that each student sees the world differently” (student D).

No two students are exactly the same, as no two trees or leaves are the same and so they do not learn in the same way. That each student will have their own ways to interpret information best, as each leaf [sic] reflects the sunshine in its own way. I also see a connection that as a teacher I need to have the understanding which allows me to teach each student in a way that I reach them all and find a path as the sun does to the undergrowth. (student P)

In considering fostering being present within both the physical and virtual gallery spaces, we agree with Mountz et al. (2015) who suggest that: “By slowing down—to listen and read what others have to say, to expand our experiences by getting out of offices and classrooms—we can do our best scholarship, teaching, and mentoring . . . We learn by living” (1247).

Theme 3: Creativity

“That kind of creative work that we all need to do as scientists and researchers is really linked to play”

Being creative is integral to all disciplines, yet it is not often mentioned as an explicit skill for development in higher educational contexts, such as syllabi or course outlines (Jackson and Shaw 2006; Kleiman 2008; Marquis et al. 2017; Marquis, Radan, and Liu 2017). “Creativity surrounds us on all sides: from composers to chemists, cartoonists to choreographers. But creativity is a puzzle, a paradox, some say a mystery” (Boden 1994, 519). The act of being present is a performance primed for creativity.

However, the modern “super-complex” world is likely to require qualities and dispositions beyond that captured within a language of skills and outcomes (Barnett and Coat 2005 as cited in Jackson and Shaw 2006); qualities such as an ability to understand and integrate different perspectives and viewpoints or emotional intelligence. As a scientist, this was articulated by participant G:

The arrangement of lines, being able to stand there only a couple of inches away and looking closely at that is fantastic, because for me, what I take from that is . . . we work on brain wiring and how cells grow together and so on. And that’s what I see. But somebody else could equally see a Celtic knot, for example . . . [The process in the gallery] helps to make connections between where you’re coming from, and how what you’re looking at makes you feel. (participant G)

For “Colour Threshold #3,” gallery visitors are invited to wear a cloak provided and walk between the screens. This piece prompted discussion by participants to think of concepts such as play and creativity.

That piece [Colour Threshold] also really reminds me of the ease of play that children have. It is so important to try and recoup into our teaching our learning. And you know, they are so uninhibited in how they engage with that . . . And to me, that kind of creative work that we all need to do as scientists and researchers is really linked play. Because it lets us kind of have this unburdened exploration. And hopefully the museum space and the online space can share that. (participant F)

Participant F’s comments reflect the notions of creativity in higher education: the definition of which can be distilled down as the ability to “imagine, explore, synthesise, connect, discover, invent and adapt” (Jackson and Shaw 2006, 90), which works across multiple disciplines.

For much of art not all of the information is presented to you. You are given a piece of art out of context, often without all (or any) of the biographical information about the artist. Thus, you have to think for yourself about the meaning of the art and try to marshal evidence for these beliefs. This is common to many ideas we try to grapple with, especially in science where data is scant and theories are regularly updated. (student K)

Participants from both the gallery as well as the online virtual gallery also came to realise elements from their disciplines which may not have come to light previously. “[T]he exercise . . . introduced me to alternative media for teaching and learning utilising technology to actively

engage with learning and visual arts to express and develop my analytical and reflective skills.”
(student O)

I realised that the tactile things [in the exhibition] that are there helped me to see things in the art that I wouldn't have seen otherwise . . . this helped me think about teaching students how to look down a microscope. It's not just the physical act of using the microscope. Students know that cells are tiny. But when they look down the microscope they don't know what they're looking for. (participant R)

REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

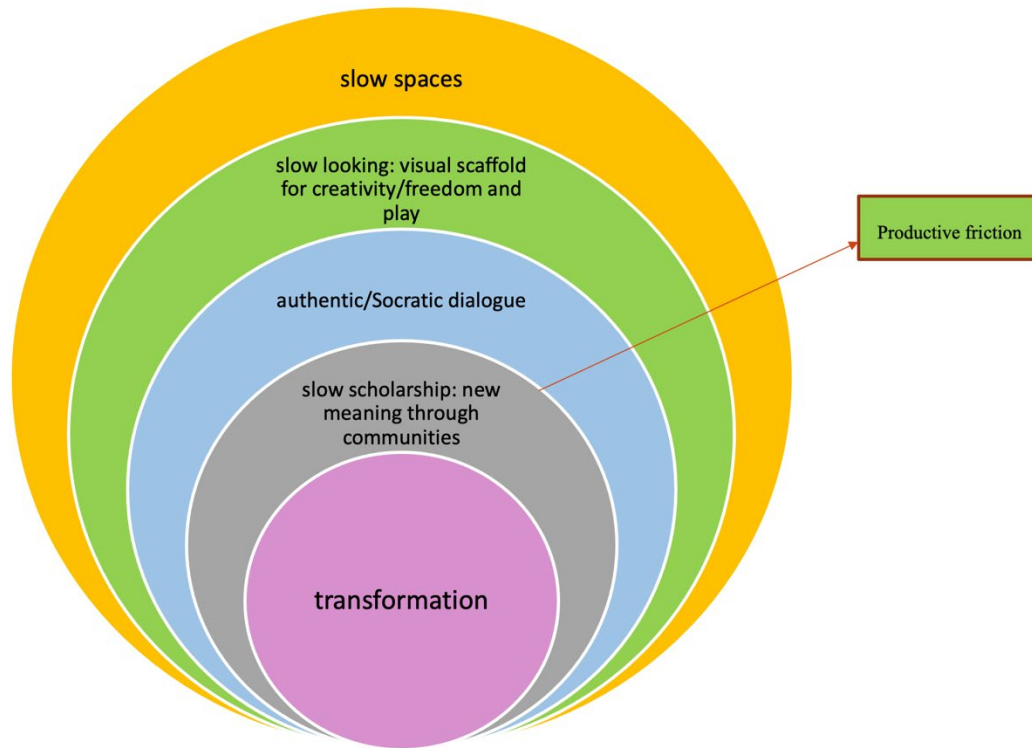
How can physical and virtual gallery spaces be harnessed in the movement towards slow scholarship?

We argue that the way this can be achieved is via viewing the gallery space as a space that creatively dislocates the viewer by removing the assumptions and power elements at play within “traditional” disciplinary spaces. We also suggest a deliberate scaffolding of elements towards dialogic teaching in order to foster presence. This requires a number of steps: 1) preparing the cohort to enter the space, giving time for them to reflect on the elements of dialogic teaching such as those listed in Table 1. This orientates the participants towards the shared goals for engaging in a gallery space for learning and 2) creating an awareness of the tensions and personal discomfort which may become apparent through being in a space which is out of the ordinary for everyday teaching and learning experience, and naming this to students as “productive friction” and a transformative part of their learning.

What are the implications of shifting subjectivity in professional teacher development and the resulting impact on student learning?

Although some artwork may seem odd, confusing, or boring, “there is likely to be an aspect of [an artists'] ambitions that we can, with sufficient self-exploration, relate to in a personal way” (Botton and Armstrong 2013, 49). This is why art works so well across disciplines, because the fear of vulnerability and opening up personally in relation to a work of art can be ameliorated by looking at it through a disciplinary lens. Teaching fellows in the face-to-face gallery workshop weren't asked to give their personal perspectives on the art per se, but to look at it through the lenses of a teaching and learning context. Using artworks gallery space as the starting point, and the artworks as inspiration, the dislocation of people from a comfort space made the meaningful come to light. This also has implications for participants in thinking about their own students—what are the implications of spatial forms of slow scholarship on student learning more broadly?

The gallery space to enact presence as a disposition of slow scholarship also allows for an articulation of interdisciplinary differences and commonalities.

Figure 3: The conceptual framework reimagined

Here we see the reimagining of our conceptual framework with the addition of the notion of “productive friction”—the space between slow looking and authentic dialogue, where a sense of dislocation and uncertainty occurs, and the sense of all of these layers leading towards transformation of self as both student and teacher.

REFLECTION

This study has helped us to appreciate “slow looking” as a pedagogical framework that has the potential to concentrate the quality of the experience of time and space through the process of learning how to learn that can be enacted both in physical and virtual environments. Crucially, this process requires slow time to allow participants to make meaningful connections for authentic learning experiences. The lesson here is that learning is not just cognitive, it is also affective. We have given primacy to pedagogy that can be further developed as a post-pandemic pedagogy of slowness as a means to amplify the centrality of metacognition in learning design. We encourage readers to take time to experiment and to refine the proposal we have presented here as a point of departure on the centrality of time and space in the learning experience.

Naturally, we are also conscious of the differences between engaging with participants in a face-to-face versus an online setting, which has been brought into particularly stark relief as we adapted our teaching during the Covid pandemic. One perspective to consider is the extent to which engaging in an online platform enabled more of an openness to engaging with the art itself, in contrast to being within the strange surrounds of a gallery space. We can also reflect on the extent to which being in a live group, co-located with other participants and synchronous, may have enabled greater engagement and depth of thought. This is something which may be further explored.

IMPLICATIONS

The implication and arguably a limitation of this study for replicability in other contexts relate to context and space. Not everyone may have easy access to an art gallery or equally, have the infrastructure and technological tools for a virtual gallery. However, we argue that as SoTL scholars and practitioners, we need to reclaim spaces, both physical and virtual, to collaborate on problems within disciplines, and to slow these processes down.

There are implications for multi-sensory learning experiences—the participants in the physical gallery space had access to objects which they were able to engage with in a tactile manner; this is something we need to foster in an online setting. There was feedback pertaining to autonomy as participants in both the virtual and physical settings were able to choose which artworks to engage with. The application for teaching and impact on learning allows us to consider “choice” in a broader context. For example, students being given the freedom to explore and the choice in formats of assessment, creation of learning objects, and accessing a variety of mediums as resources—text, audio recordings as well as tactile materials. These learning modes foster presence. We would also like to think that these approaches could be experienced as a cascade approach in that the participants (being our students) have their own students. We would posit slow pedagogy and productive friction could certainly be explored with a variety of students in multiple teaching and learning settings.

CONCLUSION

This experience of engaging in slow looking to foster presence provided a space which was out of the ordinary for the usual feedback and professional development workshops for staff and students. The artworks provided a further means and depth for exploration and in-depth consideration of the nuances of teaching and learning for both the gallery and online cohorts. Engaging with artworks prompted language and thought around processes and concepts which arguably would not have otherwise been articulated with such clarity.

Faculty members, as students being forced out of their comfort zone and into an unfamiliar space, was a transformational moment in helping them to realise the complexities and challenges their own students face and possible emotions their students feel when interacting in an unfamiliar environment. It enabled thinking about different patterns and energy, of the observational and reflective learning timelines of their students. However, this is difficult to achieve in the usual spaces in which we carry out our day-to-day work, in offices and classrooms; the gallery is the perfect place for the enactment of slow scholarship.

The implications for further development of the practice of slow looking extends beyond the context of this research and into other realms of slow scholarship work, as it is multi-faceted and applicable across all disciplines and expertise levels, can involve staff as well as students, and can be fully inclusive.

If teachers adopt new methods or skills, they must step beyond their way of being or gestalt and establish new forms of behaviour. But the original gestalt will not disappear; it remains part of the teacher’s repertoire and can regain dominance over the newly introduced behaviours. A complex symphony of circumstances is necessary for implementation of a sustainable change. Dissonance needs to be introduced, because the reflection process would not be deep enough without it, but the dissonance must not lead the teacher back to the gestalt. The reflective process [dialogic teaching through “slow looking”] is a lynchpin of this change process, in which the teacher acts within their

learning spaces, then looks back at these actions, gains awareness of essential aspects, plans an alternative approach, and then changes his/her subsequent actions in the classroom accordingly (Korthagen et al. 2001). Teaching is more likely to be dialogic if it is: collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, and purposeful.

Any transformation of teaching is a time-consuming process, and an effective faculty development program must therefore be of sufficient length. It is impossible to avoid stages of disharmony in the process of such complex change, and it is therefore necessary that the participant teachers experience dissonance. In this context, the researchers define the theoretical frame, offer new pedagogical tools, and support the teachers in experimenting with them. At the same time, the teacher is given sufficient freedom to autonomously look for ways to implement these tools, because a change of teaching practices is not possible without processes of appropriation and meta-appropriation. We have argued that fostering presence in the moment and with others is the ground on which slow values rest.

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NOTES

1. Figure 2 is Supple and Cronin's own interpretation and graphical representation

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