

Dan Reeve: Hi, this is another applied learning podcast. I'm your host, Dan Reeve. Today I'll be speaking with Kerry-Ann Dompierre, who works in nursing and she'll be talking a little bit about her experience of applied learning and the nursing school. All right, so let's begin. Thank you for being here Kerry-Ann.

Kerry-Ann: Pleasure.

Dan Reeve: So, just a few background questions, just a little bit about you, the area you teach, which program you are in and the classes you teach.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah. I'm currently teaching in the nursing program. My position is 50% continuing simulation educator coordinator and 50% teaching. I've taught a variety of courses within the nursing program from first to third year, including clinical lab and theory.

Dan Reeve: Great. And then perhaps you could talk just generally about the values of teaching and learning that inspired you to sort of start on a track of a more applied learning approach.

Kerry-Ann: That really comes from my simulation backgrounds. So, simulation is a form of applied learning. It's all applied learning but in teaching a theory course this term, I wanted to see how I could take some of those principles and apply them to a theory class.

Dan Reeve: Okay. And could you briefly, because I really want to dive into this, just talk about this third year class you're teaching, this theory class and what sort of brought you, just a little bit of background for the listeners a bit about the class.

Kerry-Ann: So, it's a third year course for nursing students called "Relational Practice". It's got a lot of theories that students need to dive into related to their practice. Also communication skills I think are an integral part of that. So, actually, a theory class is up to 41 students and I thought, how can we take these theories they're learning and make them less abstract for them and really apply it to their clinical practice which they're out in at the same time? So, you know, I've taken an applied learning approach and use my "sim" background in terms of how I would develop these applied learning activities. So, with my "sim" background, I have a way of developing simulations that's based on a method. I've just done that within the theory class and tried it.

Dan Reeve: Okay, well that brings us right into the first of our four principles that have to do with curriculum development and preparation. Typically in the way they applied learning principles setup is that, in the first sort of circle of four, the conversation starts internally for each instructor in terms of how they're going to set up their course and ideas. You've really already hit on it. The first principle is intention. I guess when you ... and you kind of hit on this already, when you were planning this class, this relational class, what did you hope students would get out of the activities that you've created? Like what was the goal from these activities?

Kerry-Ann: Yeah, so we kind of worked, I think I have "intent" when we're developing simulations as our needs assessment or problem or something that we're working towards, so our

intent. The course has a course syllabus and I kind of have to work from that. So, I would take the concepts within the learning outcomes and develop activities that would allow the students to take, like I said, those abstract theories and put them into practice, but actually like really use the theory. I think the only way to do that is maybe to give you an example-

Dan Reeve: Sure.

Kerry-Ann: Or am I getting off topic?

Dan Reeve: No. It's right.

Kerry-Ann: Actually one of my biggest things was, could I implement a simulation within a class of 41, when simulations are generally run with eight to 10 students? So, we would...the students would have read about a certain theory. Currently, we just finished loss and grief and there were about eight different theories they have to examine related to loss and grief and the students had an opportunity to delve into those readings and actually formulate a way to use those theories with actual patients. So, they had to prepare for a simulation in which they knew about those theories, so they had to pull aspects of those theories into the conversation with the patient and prepare for a simulation, which was an actual life event in which I took on the role of four different people grieving.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Kerry-Ann: Small scenarios and then the students have to apply aspects of those theories. They had to say which theory they pulled from, in actually engaging with that patient. And what was really kind of magical about it was that they came up with ones that they loved. Beyond being able to explain what was part of the theories and how the theories worked, they were actually able to apply it into their practice.

Dan Reeve: That sounds excellent. Okay. So, let's focus now on your preparation. Now you told me before, this is the first time you've taught this course with this applied learning approach. Is that correct?

Kerry-Ann: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: So, when you were planning and you have the simulation background, what was your thought process to consider? Like the equipment, the logistics, the learning materials that you need to put these theories to life for the students. Can you just sort of walk us back from its last spring and you're trying to think, "Okay, how can we do this?"

Kerry-Ann: I wish I had had that much time. I didn't have that much time to prepare this course. I only found out I was teaching that in August.

Dan Reeve: That would never happen at Camosun.

Kerry-Ann: It is an ongoing. I do spend a fair amount of time in preparation, but sorry repeat your question; I'm a bit lost.

Dan Reeve: I just kind of, what was your thought process? What even now as you're kind of going on the flight, it sounds like a little bit, what's your thought process to develop these activities? So, you know, when you're thinking about, "Okay, if the concept is grief and loss and there's eight ideas", how do you make that an experiential process for your students and what's your process kind of to do that?

Kerry-Ann: I worked from the course syllabus. I usually take the learning outcomes for that week and I say "intent", how can I take those learning outcomes? This is hard to say. The intent talk. Can I turn those into something that the students can use in practice? So, I start with learning objectives related to the learning outcomes. In "sim" we always start from the learning objective. So, what is the goal of the class, what is the objective and I make those very clear to students as we start. I plan those out so it may be taking eight theories of grief and loss, exploring them, being able to understand them and then apply them to an actual clinical experience. So, you know, I identify the first three objectives: might be, be able to identify principles in each learning or each separate theory of grief and loss. Then second, it might be, prepare for an encounter with a patient who's experienced a certain type of grief and loss. Explain how you've used that theory to engage in that encounter and how, what did you pull from that theory to engage in that actually encounter? Intent, what am I trying to get across to the students? What is the goal of it to make that clear to the students develop those objectives? Then what do I need to do that? Am I going to use ... so "Improv" is my thing right now. I've been playing with this and I call it "Improv" only because I'm kind of interested in this aspect of "Improv", but I would call it within stimulation a "standardized patient role". I think it's the same as "Improv". I give the students the scenario.

That's one thing that I could use. I might use a group activity in which they have to develop something and report back. What other things have I done? I might use something I have not used. I might use another type of technology. I might actually bring a piece of a simulator in or a monitor to have them follow a certain scenario. Whatever the tools are that I'm going to use, then the implementation, and then the evaluation of it, then the debrief piece and now formerly in simulation, a debrief, I have a certain way of going about debriefing. It's called the ... what's it called? the "debriefing a good judgment moral" of debriefing is what I use.

I'm finding with these applied learning activities I often roam the room as the students are preparing to either get ready to engage and/or report back and develop debriefing questions as that's happening because I may have a few to start, but I may actually add to those because I'm hearing some of the conversations that are going on and I sort of just add to the debrief or the reflection piece. Sometimes I have students reflect quietly. This is another aspect in sim that I use is that not everyone, especially in a class of 41 is going to want to speak up knowing that their reflective piece is the most valuable aspect of an applied learning activity. Sometimes allowing students to quietly reflect, giving them a few questions to quietly reflect. I did that with an activity this past week, so

created those debriefing questions and handed them out to quietly reflect and then go into a larger group to a debriefing.

Dan Reeve: It sounds like you have like despite this coming a little bit late, I mean because of your previous experience, you know, you've got a pretty good ... for someone who's just started "Oh, off the top of my head." Then you're walking through a fairly developed set of approaches, like a fairly developed path which I think will be informative to anyone who says, "It's only informative for me." I want to move on a little bit and tie this into one of the key aspects that I think in some ways is the one of the touchstones probably for all of Camosun, whether people are aware of like applied learning or the principles that are up, it's the idea of authenticity, that creating some kind of a connected experience or event in whatever discipline, that makes students feel like this connects to the real world of their discipline, wherever that touches. I guess my question is: what is it about your..., the way you set up your student experience that ties it to the most current and foundational elements of your profession?

Kerry-Ann: Authenticity I think is synonymous within my stimulation background with realism and that brings authenticity. I can say within my simu, I've spent a lot of time on developing that. In the Sim realm we use simulators which are giant robots and which the simulator is male and I never actually used my female voice with a simulator. I really tried to draw students into the experience. On a very basic level, like if a student was going to put on nasal prongs on the simulator, the minute they touch the nose I'll say, "Oh! that tickles."

Kerry-Ann: Then there's this connection through that inanimate object to try to bring them into the experience. Within the theory class, I've done that with the Improvisation a little bit. I get the students and I think that the characters that I take on, I have to say I think some of the authenticity comes from some of my nursing experience and pulling from those experiences to develop characters that are realistic.

Dan Reeve: A hybridity of your past experiences as a nurse and kind of pulling those forward.

Kerry-Ann: Totally. Yeah.

Dan Reeve: Okay. Well, let's move on to a piece you've kind of already talked about and it's vital both for students and for faculty. I want, I want to put it in the lens of factor and that's the idea of reflection. When and how do you reflect on an applied learning activity and like do you have, do you have a pattern for that or is it what, how do you, as you're teaching this, this third year course for the first time, what's your process of reflection?

Kerry-Ann: For my own reflection?

Dan Reeve: Yeah your own reflection. Even when you're preparing, I don't just mean maybe now, but also in those moments, weeks, let's pretend miles, that you had to plan this activity, what was your reflective practice throughout?

Kerry-Ann: I'm always wondering what students take away from it. Essentially that's what we want from these activities. We want to not have these activities that are for non..., we want

to know are they actually taking something away from this? So, I'm constantly reflecting on that aspect. The teaching team that I have for the theory course right now is just lovely and we're all working at warp speed from week to week and we throw out different applied learning things or we might take, when we did this privilege beads exercise, it actually came from the Internet, but we adapted it each in our class and tried different things. We come back as a group and group reflect on that, "Oh, I tried this aspect of the activity and it seemed to work well, I tried this and then we try to." I find that peer reflection too when you have a teaching team really beneficial.

Kerry-Ann: What the students take away from it, adaptations. In my sim world, the idea that I brought in, the idea of that quiet reflection, is because even within a small group of 8 to 10 that I might have in a sim environment, there can also be crickets around the debriefing team. I was like, is there more there? Is it just that they just don't want to speak up or... The minute I implemented those, I implemented what's called debriefing worksheets and it's like what went well and was there anything you do differently? What was the story you just went through? They were filled. I thought, what the reflections there, let's give people lots of ways to reflect. In my own reflections, I think, "Okay, how else can we change an activity to bring about more reflection from the student's perspective and or learning logistics?"

Kerry-Ann: Sometimes logistically things just don't go well. You think, how could I make that better? I've done two kind of "Improv" sims or standardized patient sims in this class of 41. The first time I did it, I had no clue if this would work. I had to pick a student moderator to keep the groups going through. I had to explain to everyone that even though you may not enter the scenario, you were playing an observer role. There were all these setting things up and then I have to reflect well, "Did that work well, what else could I do better to keep things moving, what else could make it more authentic?"

Kerry-Ann: The second time around I brought in an object to differentiate the characters or something that the character would focus on. I guess I'm just always looking to see how I can make it a better experience. I really value the peer feedback, like I said, the teaching team aspect to know we might try the same learning activity but tweak it a little and then come back together and what worked what didn't.

Dan Reeve: Right. It's nice having a team because usually like you're on your own, you have tweak year after year with tweets coming sort of every spring, hopefully. Whereas if you have a team you can do the same activity three different or four different ways in a week and have some really good ideas of what worked and what could be slightly what took more too more time than we thought, what took less.

Kerry-Ann: Exactly. Yeah. Very valuable and then if you don't have that team, I just gotten involved with a group in the college who's talking about lesson study. I think that's another opportunity to reflect and be able to see whether your applied learning activity is a valuable one. Maybe I won't get into what that is, but it's another option.

Dan Reeve: Maybe we can save that for the end because I am intrigued. I want to turn our focus a little bit now and I should say that as the listeners to the podcast know that, the

principles of the first internal principles that we've covered so far, they're not a hard wall. Of course when we talked about reflection, we're also going to be talking about student reflection. Now we are going to focus a little more on the student experience, but also the student experience is mediated in some ways through our experiences. Teachers, we will hopefully set up the environment so that they are having that best possible experience. We want to talk a little bit about orientation and training and engagement. This is kind of the preparation you take to get the students ready for an applied learning approach.

Dan Reeve: I think it's interesting in this class you've taken because maybe it had a history as, like I teach a theory class, it has a history of being maybe not as practical or maybe dry. I wanted to know like how do you explain the applied learning approach to your students? You may not even use that language, how do you explain why are we doing this? Why are we doing it this way? How do you connect that to the why, to how? You've said it already, I would call it mediateaching, putting or your teaching goals out there for students to see, not hidden, but really front of mind. We're trying to get to here. This is how we're trying to get there.

Kerry-Ann: I think I do that partly by, like I said, putting up those objectives. In the simulation world, we don't work with more than three to four objectives per applied learning activity because it can become confusing. I really hit on those to explain what we're trying to get at. I guess the metacognition'll explain that we're doing this activity so that you can concrete really apply some of these abstract concepts and theories. I'll be very straightforward about that. Beyond that, I'm not sure if this is what you're getting into, but is also the ground rules of engaging in applied learning and in the simulation world, especially in healthcare simulation, there's a lot of risks and I don't know if that's spoken of this in the same way and the applied learning wrong. I believe there are a lot of risks to students and engaging and applied learning they're putting themselves out there.

Since I took over the simulation role within the nursing program, I created something called a simulation agreement that students sign in the first year of the program, which outlines conduct for both facilitators and participants of applied learning or simulation. What I've done more recently, that I just presented at the faculty meeting this week, is the idea that one, the simulation agreement I've had now vetted by some faculty at Harvard University and their center for medical simulation. I got some feedback because I took a workshop from them in the spring. I've tweaked that simulation agreement. It is the basis and I always say it's more than just something they sign in first year.

It's more than something that just needs to be referred to in a simulation environment, but any time you're using role play, case scenarios, any type of applied learning where students are putting themselves out there. The idea behind it is creating a safe learning container. That safe learning container that I just said, container, I actually take from a semi or one of our leading Canadian simulation, collect a 40 doll from U of A. She's kind of coined that term. I engage in a pre brief and I have something a pre brief is something that comes from simulation lingo and a pre brief is setting up the ground rules for your applied learning activity.

Kerry-Ann: They talk about team learning, mutuality, respect, confidentiality. It's the ground rules and on a more basic level, open heart, open mind. I think whenever we engage in applied learning, we really have to set that environment that both the facilitator has this ethical code of conduct and the students do as well.

Dan Reeve: That community of trust allows students to really come out of their shell and feel safe.

Kerry-Ann: Exactly. Yeah.

Dan Reeve: Okay, that's amazing. Let's turn now to how do you sort of monitor and improve upon the stuff that you're organizing with your students. Like recognizing that sometimes activities don't always go the way they do sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. How do you assess your students' experience in light of your learning goals?

Kerry-Ann: Yeah. I'm actually constantly monitoring. I'm very used to simulation does not always go as planned. I've learned from doing this theory class and trying to do applied learning. Sometimes things don't go as planned, so sometimes I've put instructions that they can't read, it's too small. They're not getting something I'm constantly circulating throughout the class to hear the conversations that are happening as they either engage in those activity is or are getting ready to engage. I adapt on the fly. I think I've gotten really used to that from the sim environment where technology's involved and it doesn't always work and you really have to when things go wrong, just tell students, "Okay, that's not working let's try this."

That's my whole idea around debriefing questions too, because in the sim environment I had a stage, I go through emotions, understanding and wrap up. Those are like three phases I totally worked from, but in the theory class, like I said, now I find as I circulate, I'm coming up with other debriefing questions that are really important to include. I'm almost creating those as we go based on what's happening as students engage. I try to circulate and really be attentive to how things are going.

Dan Reeve: That sounds ... and I've heard it from so many other instructors in any pick a discipline about owning when things go sideways.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah we have to.

Dan Reeve: Students will immediately know and if you pretend to be oblivious to it, they lose faith in your ability to ascertain that, "Hey, this didn't go as planned." Whereas if I think, conversely say, "Yeah, so this didn't go as planned, our goals were this for this class We're halfway through and we're not getting there, how can we take it?" I think the class can kind of breathe a sigh of relief and then be, "Oh, she's on top of this, yeah, she noticed too, good." Then there's that faith is reinstalled, "Okay, we're still trying here."

Kerry-Ann: Yeah and things can go sideways so quickly and it can be very emotional depending on what you're talking about. I did a social justice activity in the last class and it went sideways and like you said, you really have to contain that and fess up to it and move forward and figure out. You can't ignore it. You absolutely can't.

Dan Reeve: Yeah. I think one of the things that other folks have said and I take this as sort of one of my motto's is the courage to try things and the courage to admit that they don't always work.

Kerry-Ann: Oh yeah.

Dan Reeve: I think that's a modeling for your students. That's kind of a little more I don't know if the word is failed positive, but the idea that not everything is going to go the way you expect it, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try new things. In fact, that's just the way try new things works.

Kerry-Ann: Absolutely and that's our motto and the Sim world and that you come in here, you're going to have this experience if you do everything perfectly. I don't really have a job. You're going to come in here, you're going to try to make, you're going to do your best and if you make mistakes, we grow and learn. Same for me. That simulator might not work the way I want to. I'm going to tell you about it and we're going to grow and learn from the whole experience.

Dan Reeve: Yeah. Well, that's interesting to hear that, that echoed idea across really the whole school from almost everyone I've talked to them about that same idea. All right, so we're going to move on now to assessment and evaluation. You've been fairly rigorous in the way you've set up the class, the processes, even though this course is a bit on the fly, the processes you have and borrowed from your time simulator seemed like they're well ingrained in the way you set a course. Maybe you can talk a little bit about the evidence you see in terms of that these applied learning activities really deepen the students' conceptual understanding.

Kerry-Ann: I get that back through critical reflections, in the sim world, the students have or should be writing a longer critical, more than just the debriefing process and through those experience or through those reflections which instructors often pass along to me, I can see the evolution. I can also visually see it from where they were with the time we started to the end. In terms of this theory class, I'm still working that out. It's the first time I'm trying this stuff. I've had some unsolicited feedback from a few students which was really positive, which was great. I'd love to get probably some more specific, especially around the simulation, the "Improv" stuff I've done so I don't really know just yet to be quite honest. Again, I'm trying something.

Dan Reeve: All right. The last question has to do with acknowledgement and first of, I think it anyone listening will admire the amazing work and the amazing practice, I want to say, craft you've built into being so ready to take your long experience in applied learning and be ready to use it in a somewhat unfamiliar turf for this, the relational course. But how do you celebrate student transformation?

Kerry-Ann: How do I celebrate student transformation?

Dan Reeve: You said you've sort of see it through the semester.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah, it's so rewarding to get unsolicited feedback from students in emails where they go, "That was one of the best classes I've ever had" or "I can't tell you how much I now understand this concept or theories as opposed to when I haven't before" or "Kerry, why don't we do more of this?" That's when I get to understand.

Dan Reeve: So how do you celebrate their transformation?

Kerry-Ann: How do I celebrate their transformation?

Dan Reeve: And out here, let me stop for a second. I'll tell you my favorite quote. She said "I don't do it enough" and it just, when she said that, I'm trying to remember, I'm sorry, I can't remember who it was. I thought, yeah, that's right. Just because you give someone a great mark or they showed great improvement, you've maybe chatted to them informally or even if they get a scholarship, those are all well and good, but it feels like there's something else there in that transformation that making that human contact.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah. Speaking to the relationship aspect of cover. Yeah. And some of the research I've done with Michelle Bass and Mirth McCallister in the college around IDE, that is the magical piece. And it's interesting in a class of 41, I think when you do applied learning, you inevitably learn every person's name and you make connections to them on a totally different level because they are active participants in your everyday class and I value that tremendously and I couldn't imagine actually doing it any other way. I guess I seek that relationship out. I guess when I moved from simulation working with eight to 10 students and then working with 41, I still want to make that connection and I think it's a way you can do it with applied learning because you're working with them, they're working with you. They're not just in the class. It's like you're the same. You're all together. Yeah.

Dan Reeve: And so in some ways that transformation is something that happens sort of organically and like I find it, and maybe this is a reflection on that kind of, you said when students write you those emails or even just like they thank you for a class, they just on their way out, they're like thanks. You know that that's kind of like, "Oh, that class worked for them." I don't think they're just being polite and I think that that reverse thing sometimes there's maybe what instructors could do is like when someone made a really good comment just afterwards. "Thank you for that great comment."

Kerry-Ann: I think it's [inaudible 00:29:23] that came to our conversation say a couple of years ago here at CAMOSUN and was talking about the leader in all of us and I do take every opportunity to thank students. I just finished about six and a half, seven hour day today and I think I had a super... it was long because I had a super engaged group and I thank them for that. I said "This is a really exciting day. Thank you so much for being present and so engaged today." When I was doing some of the Improv Sims, I had a student who sat down. I mean these are scenarios, right? Some students sit down and they've got their computer in front of them or just kind of making it through. But some students they sit down and they look in the eye and you're like, "Oh my gosh, you can be such an awesome nurse."

Kerry-Ann: They connect to you. So I try to give students. I try to say thank you as well, that acknowledgement. I see where you're getting at. I do thank students for their engagement and because I think they do put themselves out there when we ask them to do these things and we need to acknowledge it.

Dan Reeve: I agree with you wholeheartedly. Any final thoughts that have percolated through? Anything you want to add to this conversation? I mean, I know you've got a lot more to add. We could easily have a second round of questions and another podcast.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah. I don't know. I think students' enthusiasm drives your enthusiasm, so if you can start to do something that's exciting, their enthusiasm drives your enthusiasm and you just get more and more excited about trying out things. I think that's cyclical.

Dan Reeve: I agree.

Kerry-Ann: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: Okay. Well thank you very much. It's been a great interview. I appreciate your time and yeah, I look forward to hearing this on podcast.

Kerry-Ann: Thanks.