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DETERMINING OUR OWN TEMPOS

EXPLORING SLOW PEDAGOGY, CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT,
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Being Slow means that you control the rhythms of your own life. You decide how fast you have to go in any given context. If today I want to go fast, I go fast; if tomorrow I want to go slow, I go slow. What we are fighting for is the right to determine our own tempos.

Carlo Petrini

Key concepts and values in the Slow Living movement speak to many questions and tensions arising around calls for change in higher education, porous work/life boundaries, rapid developments in technology, concerns about sustainability, and a desire to question assumptions and move beyond tips and tricks to more fundamental issues in curriculum and pedagogy. We propose a framework for Slow learning and teaching

that incorporates various trends in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment with implications for the role of technology and for professional development.



The key to Slow Living (Honoré, 2004) is an emphasis on balance, reflection, and deliberation. The more time available for reflecting and assessing, the more fully we can commit to developing our ideas and practices. In Slow writings, terms such as *careful, reflective, mindful, considered,* and *attentive* are common. The Slow movement is a response to the speed and changeability of modern life; it involves wellness, meditation, simplicity, creativity, mindfulness, and complexity. It considers the best use of time, not as “a slow-motion version of postmodern life” but as “the negotiation of different temporalities, deriving from a commitment to occupy time more attentively” and “investing it with significance through attention and deliberation” (Parkins & Craig, 2006, p. 3).

The Slow movement advocates a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace in the face of a “more, faster, better culture” and its negative consequences, including isolation, distraction, decreased satisfaction, and stress (Levy, 2006). Its beginning can be traced to the Slow Food movement, founded in 1984 by Carlo Petrini, who was disturbed by the effects of fast food on Italian culinary traditions. It has become an international movement, aiming to preserve the best of regional cuisines; encourage the farming of plants, seeds, and animals appropriate to the local ecosystem; and make eating a deliberate and pleasurable event (Petrini, 2001).

The movement has greatly diversified. It includes facets like Slow Art, Slow Travel, and Slow Money. The slow science movement (see <http://www.slow-science.org>) stresses the importance of having time to plan, fail, retry, and reflect as critical to effective learning. In broader terms, Berthelsen created the World Institute of Slowness, presenting a vision for an entire “Slow Planet” and a need to teach the world the way of Slow, including Slow Education. Meredith and Storm (2009) summarize slow living as follows: “Slow Living means structuring your life around meaning and fulfillment. Similar to ‘voluntary simplicity’ and ‘down-shifting,’ it emphasizes a less-is-more approach, focusing on the quality of your life . . . Slow Living addresses the desire to lead a more balanced life and to pursue a more holistic sense of well-being in the fullest sense of the word.”

Honoré (2004) chronicles the worldwide trend toward slowing life down, and his work has also laid the foundation for Slow Parenting

(Honoré, 2008), arguing that young people's lives are accelerated in many aspects (he refers to "academic hot-housing") and calling for giving children the time and space to explore the world on their own terms, including who they want to be. In short, "A growing body of evidence suggests that children learn better when they learn at a slower pace." Honoré cites Holt, author of a 2002 manifesto calling for "Slow Schooling": "At a stroke, the notion of the slow school destroys the idea that schooling is about cramming, testing, and standardizing experience" (Honoré, 2004, p. 255). Priesnitz (2000) summarizes Langer's (1998) work on mindfulness, sketching an outline of Slow learning to stress the importance of examining the world at the learner's own speed, relishing, questioning, and comprehending the experiences encountered, and reflecting on the outcomes. Slow, mindful learning is oriented away from rapid results or competitive features and toward inquiry, dialogue, and learner autonomy.

Developing attitudes to learning and instruction in the academy are sufficiently congruent with various aspects of the slow movement that we can justify the use of the term *Slow teaching*. A large cluster of concepts (including cooperative learning, project-based learning, service-learning, contemplative pedagogy, social constructivism, metacognitive learning strategies, student autonomy, and integrative learning) points in the direction of quality over quantity; of deeper processing of smaller amounts of material; of making multiple connections among new concepts, fresh data, the real world, and the individual learner. Slow teaching has things to say about the use of technology, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and faculty development; in each case, we offer a sketch of those implications.

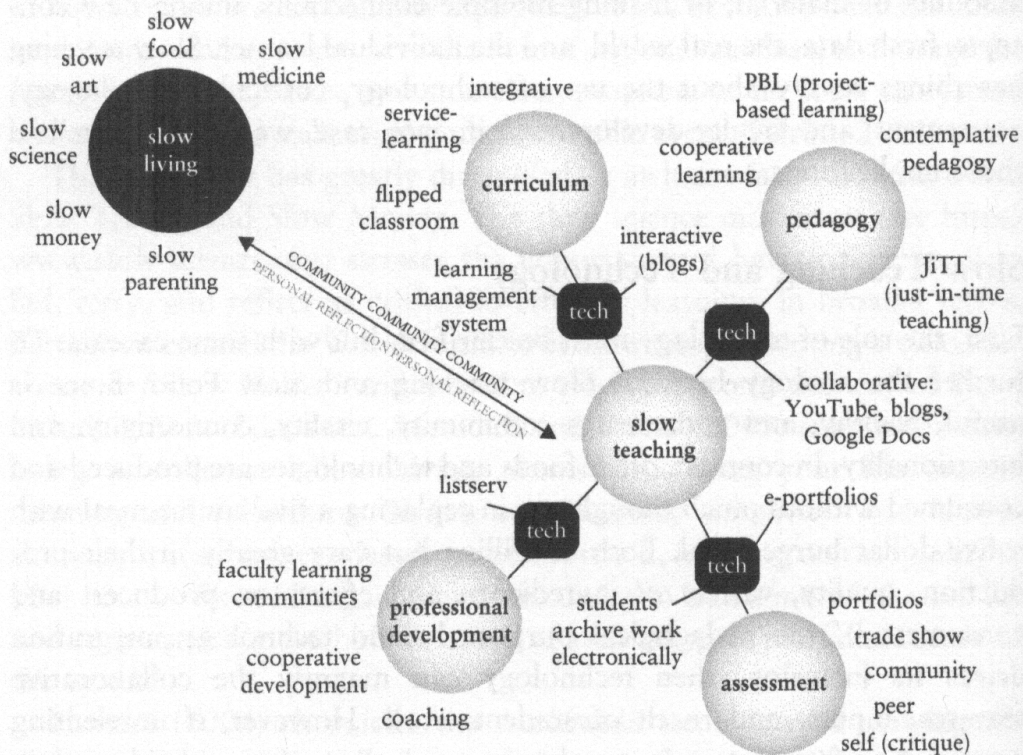
Slow Teaching and Technology

First, the role of technology must be clarified, but with some caveats. To further the analogy between Slow teaching and Slow Food: Some is useful, healthy, and underscores community, vitality, connectivity, and intentionality. In contrast, other foods and technologies are produced and consumed without much thought, as in replacing a five-course meal with a five-dollar burger deal. Both are filling but vary greatly in their production, quality, variety of ingredients, and effects on producers and consumers. If the pedagogical purpose behind technology integration drives its inclusion, then technology can magnify the collaborative features, inputs, and reach of student work. However, if unrelenting pressures on faculty to adopt technology are allowed to override a clear

understanding of both benefits and costs, then it simply replaces one tired, unreflective pedagogical practice with another.

In other words, if the tools drive the teaching, then technology is an add-on, a distraction, or a gimmick. If, however, the teaching shifts to explore new possibilities for using the tools, then collaboration, empowerment, and efficiency will follow. For example, merely transcribing lecture notes onto PowerPoint slides posted online deploys the tool, but the curriculum, pedagogy, and level of engagement remain unchanged. Conversely, if a class uses Twitter to discuss readings outside class and talk to experts in the field, then several things have shifted: in-class time is freed up for workshop and peer critique, and students establish a link to the real world while discussing discipline-relevant topics. We recommend that technology integration decisions be carefully weighed, considering work/life balance, speed, intentionality, and informational and mental capacity. Efficient knowledge acquisition for the sake of speed is no match for deep engagement, regardless of the tools used. Figure 19.1 displays some of the technological tools and enhancements for the curricular and pedagogical issues we discuss in this chapter.

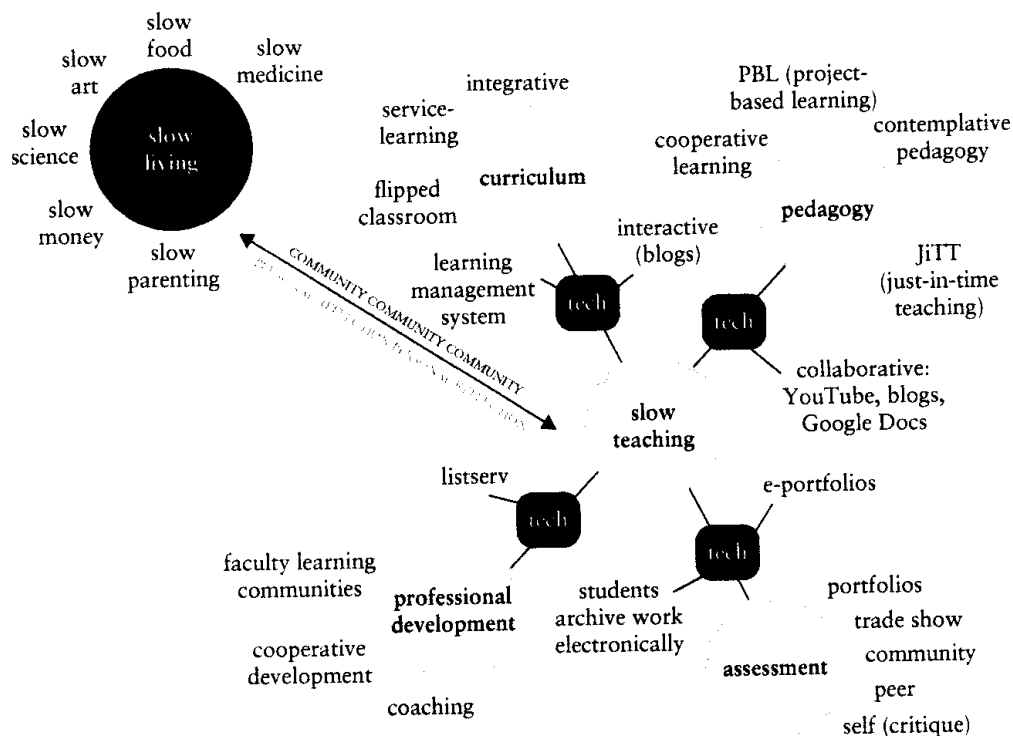
Figure 19.1 A Possible Framework for Slow Teaching with Technological Enhancements



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Figure 19.1 A Possible Framework for Slow Teaching with Technological Enhancements



Slow Teaching and the Curriculum

Significant shifts in accounts of effective learning will carry pedagogical implications but must also be considered in curricular terms. The movement from what Applebee (1996) calls “knowledge-out-of-context” to “knowledge-in-action” includes emphases on critical thinking, mindfulness and individual reflection, cooperative learning, and empowerment of lifelong, autonomous learners. This is summarized as *curriculum as conversation*; thus, for Applebee, planning a course syllabus has two crucial steps: selecting worthwhile content and facilitating relevant conversations about that content. Limiting content to a feasible amount is vital: “The essence of conversation is that it must allow interaction: among teacher and students, among students, among students and the texts they read or watch or listen to. If there is too much material to cover—and pressure for coverage is usually the villain here—dialogue is almost of necessity supplanted by monologue, in which the teacher reverts to telling students what they need to know” (p. 56).

This villainous urge to maximal coverage has also been diagnosed as *anupholsteryphobia*. It was Stanlee Brimberg (of the Bank Street School for Children in New York City) who coined this delicious term, defined as the fear of not covering all the material. Interviewed by learner.org about his own practice, Brimberg (n.d.) notes the diversity of students in terms of prior knowledge, skills, and learning styles. Content has to be made accessible in different formats and media, and time is a key element:

One of the things that is really important to me is that kids have time to really digest a piece of content. I think what happens too often is that the pacing is driven by the content. The luxury at Bank Street—which shouldn't be a luxury; I think it really should be the way that it is—is that we will bite off a little bit less and we'll go over it in a number of different ways over a longer period of time. You need to have that information reinforced by reencountering it. So the more times you can go over it, the better—and of course—there's a limit. One of your most precious resources, maybe the most precious, is time.

The *anupholsteryphobia* concept is addressed in terms of college curricula by the St. John's University Center for Teaching and Learning (1999), heading its newsletter with this “not-very-funny joke”: “Which condition most often afflicts university professors? Anupholsteryphobia—the dreaded fear of not covering the material. On the serious side of this issue is the fact that when faculty members begin to take student learning more seriously, they also begin to question some long

held assumptions—like the importance of covering the material. This questioning of assumptions is likely to set off shock waves elsewhere in the curriculum” (p. 1).

We propose that there is a key link between this issue of coverage and that of signature pedagogies (SP) (Shulman, 2005)—instructional procedures that are deeply compatible with the core values of a particular discipline. SPs involve identifying each discipline’s deep structure and following the path from there to the signature events that embody them. Shulman (2005, p. 52) defined SPs as “the types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions . . . elements of instruction and of socialization that teach disciplinary novices to think, to perform, and to act with integrity to the discipline.” Textbook examples of SP are hospital rounds in medical education, legal case studies, and the critique in the arts. Two recent collections (Chick, Haynie, & Gurung, 2012; Gurung, Chick, & Haynie, 2009) survey SPs across multiple disciplines. The commonality is that the traditional curriculum must make room for ways to overtly incorporate the core values, thinking, and behaviors of each discipline.

A clear example is the work of Calder (2006) in history. Encouraged by the shrinking of “the mystique of coverage,” he identifies an increasing realization among history teachers that everything of significance can no longer be included; that effective history instruction is becoming oriented to “uncoverage” (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998): the design of classroom experiences to expose key ideas of historical inquiry that are neither readily observed nor easily mastered. In a survey course of American history from World War II, Calder includes a documentary film for each major topic. This in itself is not new; however, he is also determined that his students understand how a historian watches such films, processes the information and images, and reflects on the value (much as, perhaps, a medical student must learn to look at and interpret X rays or MRI images). This metacognitive dimension, crucial to “uncoverage,” requires classroom time and thus reduces “coverage.” In terms of syllabus design, then, SPs can provide important criteria for selecting material: Which topics will best facilitate the exposure of students to core values and discipline-specific behavioral and cognitive patterns?

In addition to the amount of material in a course syllabus, there is also the issue of pacing, which Timpson and Bendel-Simso (1996) identify as a key decision area for university instruction. They note:

While everyone believes that students need to be challenged intellectually, it is surprising how often we teachers find ourselves faintly

apologetic for an ambitious class plan. Haven't almost all of us, at one time or another, assured our students that the material "really isn't all that difficult"? This sort of reassurance, however, can be misguided, since the message given is mixed. (p. 16)

In other words, calibration of the difficulty of learning tasks and materials, on the one hand, and of the time available for completion and mastery, on the other, is tricky. The importance of getting this right is neatly captured in Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow, where optimal learning experiences are located in the flow channel and the levels of challenge and resources (particularly time) are suitably balanced. This dilemma is seen in Glasgow's (1997) case for student-centered, problem-based learning: "Teaching less content in a more relevant way can be scary. What must be left out? Educational inertia is at work here. Rigor should be defined not by the amount of information to memorize or the number of chapters covered, but by the complexity of solving a real problem" (p. 68).

Problem solving and introspection can be meaningfully related to experiential learning. A prominent example in recent years has been community service-learning, which has been identified as an aspect of signature pedagogies in disciplines such as psychology (Peden & Van Voorhis, 2009), women's studies (Hassel & Nelson, 2012), and physical therapy (Schaber, Marsh, & Wilcox, 2012). In all cases, class or online time again must be devoted to examining the menu of possible placements; going over the procedures for documenting the project; sharing stories, case studies, and insights; relating cognitive and affective responses; measuring their own effectiveness; and analyzing broader issues through critiques of individual experiences.

Slow Teaching and Pedagogy

Slow teaching in curricular terms, then, means limiting the amount of material in order to incorporate various process elements. In pedagogical terms, the key point is this: the postponing of the instructor's direct participation to the best possible moment. Rather, the teacher provides a structure and facilitates the sequence of tasks. Using concepts and procedures from "the flipped classroom," JiTT (just-in-time teaching) (Millis, 2010) and naked teaching (Bowen, 2012), resources are provided in advance for students to access and organize relevant information. Coming to class, they engage in cooperative tasks, generating problem solving, critical thinking, brainstorming, and integrative processes that culminate

in contemplative, reflective, and evaluative codas (see Millis, 2010, for specific cooperative tasks for use in JiTT). Slow teachers wait patiently for the appropriate timing, form, and content of their participation. Direct instruction is brief, relevant, and integrated for maximum impact. Learning is scaffolded, permitting students to develop their own understanding, rehearse and consolidate new strategies of language and thought, and apply them in fresh contexts.

One key to Slow pedagogy is cooperative learning and the use of such well-tested procedures as jigsaw reading (Kagan, 1992). Another valuable collaborative tool is a procedure provided by the Faculty Development team at the Academy of Art University (AAU) in San Francisco: the Gallery Walk Critique (<http://faculty.academyart.edu/resource/PlanningClass4.html>), which combines a well-established cooperative learning technique, the gallery walk (Academy of Art University, 2009; Kagan, 1992), with a central signature pedagogical move in the arts, the critique. Klebesadel and Kornetsky (2009) describe the critique as “a means of understanding and evaluating the students’ work . . . a formative mode of feedback . . . to reinforce technical skills, change behavior, or modify thinking to improve performance” (pp. 101–102). Students learn about creative processes and the subjective and objective aspects of assessment and confront the various value systems and criteria for excellence in their field. The critique enables students to learn simultaneously about their field and about their own creative process, developing successful artists who can apply their critical sensibility to their own work and development, as well as to that of others.

Discussing the critique in studio art education, Klebesadel and Kornetsky (2009) emphasize the importance of “the students and the teacher developing a collaborative or team-like relationship that influences all the projects in the class” (p. 112). They also underscore the value of peer critiques. However, no specific procedures are mentioned. Similarly, Sims and Shreve (2012) affirm that “a common aim of the crit [sic] is for students to become practiced in articulating their critical and contextual awareness and judgments, ideally with decreasing intervention from the teacher” (p. 61). Again, no specific procedure is offered. The AAU faculty development team provides a step-by-step guide for the gallery walk version: students prepare a critique form to post beside their work, introducing the piece and posing a focus question; everyone then circulates, writing their comments in the space provided; individuals summarize the feedback provided and write a summary, including the implications for their future work. The instructor may indicate trends noted across the class as well as consulting with individual students.

In other words, rather than taking student work one at a time and leading the critique, the teacher structures the processes of peer feedback and self-assessment and examines those outcomes before adding comments or indicating the insights of greatest value. The procedure permits students to work at their own pace, lingering at items of particular interest and carefully formulating their feedback, thus developing the personal and professional critical sensibility that is the key learning outcome.

The use of time is a common issue for debate in the cooperative learning literature. Lakey (2010) describes how teachers naturally worry about time when facilitating group learning and reports the common plaint: "There's not enough time to get everything done . . . !" The key, he suggests, is to recognize that there is always enough time to complete important tasks; we must let go of the less important. In a Slow teaching approach, such collaborative procedures are complemented by opportunities for individual reflection and contemplation. Barbezat and Pingree (2012) describe how contemplative exercises can sharpen attention, enrich comprehension, foster the integration of new material with personal experiences, and generate new insights. They show how simple exercises can be deployed across the curriculum to enrich learning, peer relationships, and self-knowledge. An example of classroom practice is provided by Palmer and Zajonc (2010). Patricia Owen-Smith (2010), of Emory University, reports positive outcomes (students more present, attentive, open, alert, creative) from playing meditative, soulful, and lyrical music for seven to nine minutes at the start of each class and urging students to practice contemplation and stillness. In short, Slow pedagogy replaces the direct transmission of knowledge with collaborative and individual procedures promoting critical thinking, reflection, and introspection.

Slow Teaching and Assessment

If the Slow curriculum involves difficult decisions about limiting content to make room for conscious, deep, and deliberate processing and Slow pedagogy indicates postponing, limiting, and even eliminating direct instruction in favor of team tasks, experiential learning, and individual reflection, then Slow assessment in the academy means continuing the move from summative (terminal, relatively brief) to formative (continuous, time-consuming) procedures. Elements requiring critical reflection, peer, and self-assessment and catalogues of emerging skills and insights are incorporated at regular intervals, invoking the use of tools such as journals, blogs, wikis, and podcasts. This trend can be seen most clearly in

courses that incorporate a significant project, such as a community service-learning requirement. The most compelling product of formative assessment is the portfolio, a rich, integrated blend of artifacts, reflection on the significance of those artifacts, and self-assessment. What the portfolio as an assessment instrument may lack in reliability, some argue, is more than compensated for by the variety and depth of its validity (Lynch & Shaw, 2005).

Thus, assessment becomes tightly woven into curriculum, which in turn becomes more explicit, with assessment procedures and criteria being discussed at the outset and regularly revisited. Discussing signature pedagogies in professional education for physical therapists, especially structured fieldwork, Schaber et al. (2012) note recent challenges to the implicit curriculum, resulting in more specific and concrete orientations to courses in terms of the modes and patterns of relating other participants in the learning experience: peers, fieldwork supervisors, clients, other professionals, and so on. Promoting such a multirelational approach means procedures and tools for students to document all of these interactions and reflect on learning outcomes from both the content and the form of their experiences, covering cognitive, performative, and affective domains.

Additional feedback may also come from beyond the class as community and online partners are invited to participate. For example, students in the master's program in language education at the Monterey Institute present their curriculum design projects in a trade fair format. Each team has worked with an existing language program and has interacted with administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders to establish needs and has then accordingly produced syllabus designs, lesson plans, and materials, which they display in booths. The event is open to all who contributed to the project as well as the MIIS campus community. Students divide their time between welcoming visitors, explaining the project and answering questions, and visiting other booths and exploring and critiquing the work of their peers. Students thus learn not just from their own efforts and outcomes but also from those of their colleagues, and a key learning outcome is the ability to present one's work to interested persons who are not versed in the terminology and conceptual frameworks of one's field.

The trade fair approach adds a further dimension to Slow assessment: the public. Drafts and final products are shared among students for multi-iterative processes like writing, art, and design projects such as the MIIS curriculum example and are increasingly shared with the world beyond through blogs, websites, videos, and the like. These public elements, we

note, have the potential to engender accountability for learning beyond the teacher or campus.

In fields where the client is the final judge of a work's quality (such as translation, design, writing, and advertising), students who tackle an authentic assignment collaboratively under a teacher's management must develop positive interdependence in order to succeed. The faculty member steps back to the role of project manager and facilitator and serves as a resource to students where guidance and coaching is needed and as the quality control assurance to the client. The collaborative results can surpass what students and even professionals achieved working solo (Kiraly, 2000).

In short, the essence of Slow assessment might be captured in an analogy from Slow Food: the meal is subject to commentary and assessment dish by dish, course by course; time is allocated between courses for these conversations; after dessert has been discussed, no one leaves the table: everyone lingers to review the meal as a whole and make plans for preparing such feasts in the future.

Slow Teaching and Professional Development

At the core of our own conversations around Slow teaching and collaborative professional development have been the questions and tensions arising around calls for change in higher education, porous work/life boundaries, coping with the rate of change in technology, concerns about sustainability, and a desire to question assumptions and move beyond tips and tricks. It is therefore of vital importance that the incorporation of Slow Living principles in the academy embrace professional development.

Faculty developers have long debated the breadth of the mandate in working with faculty members, especially newly appointed assistant professors. Riley (2009) summarizes the case for addressing a wide spectrum of issues, including three kinds of support: personal, relational, and professional. In terms of pace, she cites Brammer (1991), who argues that new faculty "need time and space to reflect and take hold of the new possibilities ahead" (p. 361). Here we note three approaches to faculty development—professional conversations, coaching, and faculty writing groups—which we believe honor this call for a measured, whole-person strategy and echo the themes of Slow Living.

Professional conversations (Shaw, & Cole, 2011) are based on the work of Edge (2002) in combining the themes of empowerment, respect, empathy, and mutuality with Rogerian listening techniques to produce a framework for a pair of colleagues to interact. One, the speaker, has

a professional issue (often a challenge in instruction or assessment) to raise and explore; the other, the understander, is an active listener who seeks clarification and explication but may not make suggestions or give advice. The procedure fosters deep critical thinking about learning and teaching and promotes autonomy as participants develop confidence and skills in clearly identifying difficulties and laying out possible solutions and an action plan.

In our faculty development work at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, professional conversations are often witnessed by a collegial group, all familiar with the procedure. Discussion after the conversation both debriefs the two participants, finding new insights into the two roles, and continues to explore the topic, leaving all with a deeper understanding of and renewed commitment to personal and professional development.

The case for coaching in the development of educators (Joyce & Showers, 1982) demonstrates that simple exposure to and basic training in new techniques will not increase the active pedagogical repertoire of the great majority of teachers. Only a highly driven, self-motivated 5 percent can attend a workshop, return to their classroom, and successfully and regularly implement the new procedure. The rest of us need additional support in the form of a colleague, a peer coach, who will exchange observations, provide feedback, check perceptions and assumptions, and mutually reflect on successes and frustrations—all in an empathetic and confidential setting. The key to successful coaching is that the partner who is to teach and be observed is able to dictate those aspects of the lesson (and they must be few in number and specific) to be observed and later discussed. Coaching is not evaluative, and it is not a broad-spectrum opportunity to comment on many aspects of a colleague's teaching. It is focused, deliberate, and therefore slow.

These same practices and values are clearly being incorporated into faculty development in the academy. Boye and Meixner (2011) describe a peer observation model promoting self-reflection and fostering a community of reflective and collaborative practitioners. Little and Palmer (2011) also present a nonjudgmental model of individual consultations in which the coaching process provides descriptive rather than prescriptive feedback, thus stimulating the faculty member's own creativity and resources and leading to greater self-confidence, autonomy, and motivation to continue to improve.

The third example is the faculty writing group. Ambos, Wiley, and Allen (2009) describe in terms of time management an issue to be

addressed in professional development in the academy: moving faculty members from “binge writing” (blocks of days in semester breaks devoted to frantic, continuous writing) to a more moderate (slow) approach, writing regularly for short periods of time. This transformation is approached through the Scholarly Writing Institute. Davis, Provost, and Major (2011) emphasize that faculty developers use writing groups not just to empower participants to fulfill scholarly and research expectations but also to meet key Slow Living goals: “establish equilibrium in work practices, and maintain work-life balance” (p. 31). In terms of the latter, one participant describes the writing group as “a place where colleagues can ‘feed their souls’ through creative writing . . . where you can breathe and share your creative work with your peers and discuss it in supportive and substantive ways” (p. 39). Davis et al. conclude, “Faculty writing groups create a safe space for members to take creative and intellectual risks and to be their authentic, full selves” (p. 41). The emphasis on holistic development at a measured pace by taking risks and being creative in a secure, supportive environment echoes many key facets of Slow Living.

Conclusion

We close with the acknowledgment that the picture we have sketched of Slow learning and teaching is an idealized, utopian vision of the possible culmination of a variety of developments in the academy. From our own work, we are very much aware of the normal pace of faculty development: that the movement from “coverage” to “uncoverage,” from teacher-centered to learner-centered procedures, from slide-supported lectures to experiential and contemplative procedures, while discernible, is generally not rapid. We also stress that students may not be ready for Slow learning experiences: they will need orientation, preparation, and support. Developments in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment should be carefully brought together and integrated, and the role of technology should continue to be studied and clarified. In addition, behind the practice, we look forward to learning more about the neuroscience of Slow learning and teaching. How, for example, do social media and online resources influence how students learn, access and process new information, and reach new insights? How can mindfulness meditation practices have an impact on curriculum and pedagogy in the academy? What place might the sensible and person-centered notions of Slow Living find on college campuses? How much control might we have over the tempos of our life?

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