

Learners as Co-Creators of an Open Access Book

Enilda Romero-Hall

This paper focuses on an intersectional feminism approach to writing assignments in which students served as co-creators of knowledge engaged in the development of an open-access book titled *Motivation in Learning, Training, and Development: A Collection of Essays*, while enrolled in the *Principles of Learner Motivation* synchronous online course of a graduate-level program majoring in Instructional Design and Technology. This paper includes a description of the instructional activity, the context of the activity, the materials used, the instructions provided to the learners, and a discussion of the effectiveness of the activity. This instructional activity showcases how (a) learners can be scaffolded as co-creators through a learning experience and (b) instructors can nurture a safe and supporting community that leads to intellectual advancement and greater societal impact.

Keywords: Feminist Pedagogy; Synchronous Online; Open Access; Book

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this teaching practice brief is to discuss the opportunities offered by an intersectional feminism approach to a writing activity in a synchronous online course.



Enilda Romero-Hall
The University of Tennessee Knoxville
Email: eromeroh@utk.edu

Intersectional feminism is a theoretical lens that postulates social issues as an interlock between gender, race, class, and queerness, amongst other factors (Crenshaw, 1989). As an instructor, I aim to embed intersectional feminist pedagogy in course design to ensure the development of deep human connections that fundamentally change the learning space dynamics (Romero-Hall, 2022). Intersectional feminist tenets are central to the design of all of my courses, but it was particularly important as part of the *Principles of Learner Motivation* synchronous online course that I taught in the summer of 2020 after the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world coped with the uncertainty of the pandemic, I felt that the intersectional feminist tenets infused learning experiences of my students with equitable practices such as learner agency, accountable collaboration, empowerment, social action, critical views of power, and community building. Ideally, the students' participation in course activities of the *Principles of Learner Motivation* class would serve as a venue to focus on their intellectual growth and an opportunity to share their knowledge as co-creators with our larger scholarly net-

work, while engaging with a community of supportive peers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

This article focuses on an instructional activity in which students served as co-creators of knowledge engaged in the development of an open-access book titled, *Motivation in Learning, Training, and Development: A Collection of Essays*, while enrolled in the *Principles of Learner Motivation* synchronous online course of a graduate-level program majoring in Instructional Design and Technology. During the 6-week summer course, the co-creators were asked to engage in an individual writing assignment related to the main topic of the course (i.e., motivation). However, the co-creators were also made aware that these individual efforts would lead to an accountable collaboration where students would produce an open-access, edited book to support the immediate needs of our scholarly network who were at that time coping with *Pandemic Pedagogy* (Miller et al., 2021). The 13 co-creators enrolled in the course also had the option to opt out from participating in the open-access publication of their writing assignment. Giving students the option to opt-out of sharing their writing assignments in a public, open access format was important because (a) they have a right to privacy, (b) it respected their autonomy, (c) it gave them an opportunity to consent to the dissemination of their intellectual property publicly, and (d) they did not have to feel coerced to share a work-in-progress draft of their work.

CONTEXT

The *Principles of Learner Motivation* course focuses on theories and concepts of human motivation. In this course, students explore what motivates individuals to learn and examine strategies, techniques, and interventions that promote and sustain learner motivation. It was a graduate-level, elective course offered primarily to students majoring in Instructional Design and Technology, but it was also open to other learners with an interest in learner motivation. Ideally, after completing the course the learners would be able to: a) identify and describe the basic tenets of various theories of motivation, b) compare and contrast the con-

tributions that the various motivational theories offer to the field of instructional design, c) select appropriate principles derived from given theories and apply those principles within practical design situations, and d) analyze motivational problems in learning and performance and design effective solutions.

To reconcile my intersectional feminist practice and the course objectives, I designed and implemented the book chapter writing assignment instructional activity. Writing assignments are a common occurrence in higher education at all levels. However, the intention to publish the book chapters in an open-access format shifted this traditional course activity and created an opportunity to increase learner agency, empowerment, and social action. In addition, the co-creators had the opportunity to participate in a peer-review process. This peer-reviewed process helped dismantle long-standing power structures that solely focused on instructor-to-learner feedback and instead included in-depth, constructive peer-to-peer feedback.

MATERIALS

All of the materials for the course were hosted in the learning management system (LMS) that was used by the higher education institution (i.e., Blackboard). However, the synchronous online meetings for the *Principles of Learner Motivation* course occurred via Zoom. As part of the instructional activity, the co-creators were encouraged to use MS Word or Google documents to write the drafts of their book chapters. During the double-blind peer-review process of the instructional activity, a Peer Review Form (see Appendix A) in MS Word format was used by the co-creators to provide detailed feedback to their peers. The submission of the completed Peer Review Form was facilitated using the LMS. Once the peer review period was finalized, I shared the completed Peer Review Forms with the book chapter authors via email. For the final preparation of the edited book, the co-creators were introduced to *Pressbook* (<https://pressbooks.com/>) as the digital publishing platform of the open-access book. *Pressbook* is a user-friendly self-publishing platform used by educators and educational institutions to create, adapt, and share accessible, interactive, open-web books.

INSTRUCTIONS

Below, you will find a comprehensive outline of the instructions for the *book chapter writing assignment*. This outline encompasses subheadings and the precise language used in the instructions provided to the co-creators:

- 1. General Information about the Activity:** “Based on the motivation theories and instructional design practices that are covered throughout the semester, you will write a paper on motivation. This is not just a paper that you will write for a course that only your instructor will read. This paper is going to be a book chapter in the open-access book that we are going to write as a class. Yes, your paper will be published and shared widely. Therefore, I expect that you will do your very best writing. We will be publishing our open-access book using Pressbook.”
- 2. Breakdown of the Approximate Word Count:** “Your paper will be between 2,000–2,500 words in length. References should come from respectable, peer-reviewed research journals, textbooks, and/or websites. A minimum of 10 references are required, with at least 8 references from peer-reviewed journals. Your paper should follow American Psychological Association’s (APA) writing style and guidelines. The topic should reflect your interests and pursuits in motivational topics. It should include the following: an introduction (approximately 500 words), a literature review (approximately 500 words), practical recommendations for instructors and instructional designers (approximately 500 words), and a conclusion (approximately 500 words).”
- 3. Double-Blind Peer-Review Process:** “To help you through the writing process, we will be conducting a peer review of your paper (a minimum of four completed pages of your paper with in-text citations and a reference list). We will do a double-blind review process. All students will be required to complete a review form. Points will be given for the completed review form.”
- 4. Final Version of the Book Chapter:** “Based on the motivation theories and in-

structional design practices that are covered throughout the semester, you will write a paper on motivation. Your paper will be between 2,000–2,500 words in length. References should come from respectable, peer-reviewed research journals, textbooks, and/or websites. A minimum of 10 references are required, with at least 8 references from peer-reviewed journals. Your paper should follow the APA writing style and guidelines. The topic should reflect your interests and pursuits in motivational topics.”

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

To assess the effectiveness of the instructional activity, the co-creators submitted the final version of the book chapter writing assignment to me, the instructor, for evaluation. The final versions were assessed using a rubric to ensure they met quality guidelines for publication. The quality guidelines included a) a clear and well-developed introduction, b) a review of the literature providing an overview of the educational issue addressed and convincing support for the paper, c) defined future and anticipated implications, d) writing that was clear, concise, and logical with the use of logical transitions, conventional grammar, and punctuation, e) citations and referencing complying with the APA style formatting, and f) the use of reputable sources.

The review of the instructor, using the rubric, showed an overall high quality of book chapters that met and exceeded the quality guidelines of the instructional activity. The average score obtained by the co-creators was 23.15 out of 25 possible points established by the rubric. Additionally, the effectiveness of the instructional activity also showed in the variety of topics related to learner motivation that the co-creators chose to address in their book chapters such as:

- “The Confidence Gap”
- “Stereotype Threat: An Approach to Motivating Non-English-Speaking Students to Speak Up Confidently”
- “Becoming an All You Can Be Warrior: An Analysis of Female Motivation into Joining the Military”

- “The Role of Self-Attribution in Occupational Choice”
- “Ousting Stereotypes and Exploring the Academic Motivation of Black Students”
- “Motivational Effects of Gaming Among Children”
- “Does a Growth Mindset Contribute to Learner Motivation and Can Growth Mindset Principles be Integrated with Instruction?”
- “How Does Disability Impact Motivation? Considering Motivational Design for Diverse Learners”
- “Extrinsic Motivation within the Workplace”

Of the 13 co-creators enrolled in the course, 11 chose to publish their final book chapters as part of the open-access book. Two co-creators did not feel that their book chapters were ready for publication, so I offered them an open invitation to contact me once they determined they were ready to publish their chapter as part of the book. Overall, the outcome of this instructional activity that embedded intersectional feminist pedagogy in its core, showcases how learners as co-creators can be scaffolded through the learning process while also providing a safe and supporting community that leads to intellectual advancement and a greater societal impact. The open-access book can be accessed using this link: <https://pressbooks.pub/motivationleap/front-matter/about-this-book/> (Romero-Hall, 2020). Other educators are free to share (i.e., copy, distribute, and transmit the work) and remix (i.e., transform and build upon the work); however, they must give proper credit and indicate if changes are made. Also, this open-access book may not be used for commercial purposes.

Reflecting on this *book chapter writing assignment*, I noted that incorporating a practice peer review exercise at the beginning of the semester would have been beneficial. Such an exercise would have helped the co-creators feel more confident in their ability to provide feedback to their peers. Also, this instructional activity took place during an intensive summer course. If integrated into the regular semester, I would extend the length of the chapters to allow students the opportunity to explore further into the topics they were exploring.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

REFERENCES

- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory and anti-racist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989 (1): <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- Miller, A.N., Sellnow, D.D. & Strawser, M.G. (2021). Pandemic pedagogy challenges and opportunities: instruction communication in remote, HyFlex, and BlendFlex courses. *Communication Education*, 70(2), 202–204, DOI: 10.1080/03634523.2020.1857418
- Romero-Hall, E. (Ed.) (2020). *Motivation in learning, training, and development: A collection of essays*. Pressbook. <https://doi.org/10.48497/vdqg-dq75>
- Romero-Hall, E. (2022). Navigating the instructional design field as an Afro-Latinx woman: A feminist autoethnography. *TechTrends*, 66(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-021-00681-x>

APPENDIX A: PRINCIPLES OF LEARNER MOTIVATION PEER REVIEW FORM

Please rate: Scale 1 (poor) to 8 (excellent)

Category	Rating
Adequacy of the background provided	
Adequacy of the literature review	
Clarity of presentation	
Organization of the chapter	
Grammar and spelling	

Please provide detailed answers to the following questions:

Based on your numerical rating in Part I, explain in detail how the chapter does or does not provide sufficient background information and a literature review regarding its topic. Include in your assessment thoughts and recommendations as to how the author(s) can augment this area of the manuscript.

Please provide your opinion as to whether or not the issues, problems, and trends described in this chapter are given appropriate emphasis. Supply specific recommendations as to how the author(s) can improve in this area.

Explain any serious over-emphasis or under-emphasis of any issues/problems in the chapter. Please provide a critical and constructive assessment by offering suggestions as to how the chapter can be improved and enhanced in this area.

In your opinion, what are the strengths of this chapter? Please describe how these specific strengths contribute to the value and quality aspects of this chapter and how said strengths can be utilized to make the weak areas of the chapter more effective.

Please provide your opinion as to whether or not the references used in this chapter are sufficient, appropriate, and up to date. If not, please suggest the relevant references you feel are necessary for the author(s) to include.
