Religious Education Association
Annual Meeting, 7 July 2021
Collaborative Session
“Embodyed Digital Pedagogies for Trauma-informed Teaching and Learning in Religious Contexts”

Presenters:
Mary Hess, Professor of Educational Leadership, Luther Seminary
Kate Ott, Associate Professor of Christian Social Ethics, Drew Theology School
Darryl W. Stephens, Director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry and Director of United Methodist Studies, Lancaster Theological Seminary

Religious learning environments are shaped by the bodies present. Embodied realities include race, sexuality, gender, and accompanying trauma histories. These realities shape both digital and physical classroom spaces. This collaborative session critically examines embodied aspects of digital pedagogies, addressing issues of trauma, race, gender, and sexuality as they intersect within a religious or theological learning context. Presenters bring together sexuality-related pedagogies including trauma theory, perspective transformation, embodiment, and anti-racism with digital pedagogies such as digital storytelling. Special attention is given to how technological issues like impression management and social surveillance impact embodiment and trust when seeking to create a trauma-informed digital space that is often restricted by religious taboos about sexuality. Participants are invited to consider how in-person and digital spaces require different pedagogical choices affecting experiences of embodiment. Take-aways include specific trauma-informed pedagogical practices and interventions for digital spaces, adaptable for congregational settings, secondary education, as well as theological education classrooms.

Keywords: online learning, digital pedagogy, trauma-informed pedagogy, trauma, sexuality, embodiment, race, antiracism

Session Outline
I. Welcome

II. Shared covenant

III. Weaving / braiding the learning experience. Brief overview of pedagogical theories and primary concerns:
   A. Sexuality and digital pedagogy - Kate Ott
   B. Embodiment and trauma-informed pedagogy - Darryl Stephens. See background reading (Stephens 2020).
   C. Digital storytelling and anti-racism - Mary Hess

https://www.flickr.com/photos/martinlabar/164971
IV. Pulling the Threads: Roundtable discussion among Kate, Darryl, and Mary about differences and overlaps that arise among the three foci above.

V. Bio break followed by guided movement exercise

VI. Conversation Starters putting pedagogical theories into concrete teaching examples

VII. Participants gather into small groups to workshop the Conversation Starters

VIII. Large group open discussion

Meet the Presenters
Mary Hess is a professor of educational leadership in a seminary context. She has extensive experience teaching with and educating about digital pedagogies. Concerns of embodied learning, with special attention to race and gender are part of her scholarship including manuscripts and articles on digital pedagogy, whiteness studies, embodied theological education, and pedagogical approaches. Mary is currently researching digital story-telling as a method theological inquiry. https://meh.religioused.org

Kate Ott is a Christian social ethicist and sexuality educator. She is a seminary instructor, who teaches in a variety of in-person, hybrid, and online modalities and facilitates faith-based workshops on sexuality education, digital literacy, and professional ethics. She is author and editor of works on digital ethics, sexuality and pedagogy, and faith-based sexuality education. Kate is currently researching digital sexualities and antiracism. http://www.kateott.org

Darryl W. Stephens is a scholar of Christian social ethics, clergy, and theological educator. He teaches in both church and academy, online and in-person, and brings research expertise in the areas of sexual ethics and theological education. He is the author and editor of several works on teaching sexuality and embodiment. Darryl is currently researching trauma-informed ethics and pedagogy. https://ethicsconsidered.com

RESOURCES (see also https://meh.religioused.org/web/rea2021/)
Trauma-informed pedagogy draws on trauma theory of Herman, van der Kolk, and Manakem as well as theological works by West and Rambo and writings in religious education by Crumpton, Keefe-Perry, Moon, Stephens, and Hess. Sexuality and embodiment education draws on theories of transformative learning, perspective transformation, and embodied learning across religious and theological studies addressed in Teaching Sexuality and Religion in Higher Education, edited by Stephens and Ott. Antiracist and liberatory pedagogy draws on works by Freire, Schneider, Hess, Wimberly, and others. Digital pedagogies in religious contexts draw on Doehring, Arjona, Hess, Ott, Campbell, and others.

Background readings on Sexuality, Gender, Race, and Trauma


**Research on pedagogy**


---

Practical helps


Wholistic Sexuality Pictorial Definitions—Our Whole Lives and Interagency Gender Working Group https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sHXfXb2pIUfUxmWafVDeVh4qs26Pluv/view?usp=sharing

International Transgender Terms - https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/learn/terms


The Wabash Center's blog series: Teaching and Learning During Crisis (https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/category/teaching-and-learning-during-crisis/)


Trauma-Informed Pedagogies in the Religious Studies Classroom
Empathy and the Religious Studies Classroom
Teaching Religion as Anti-Racism Education