

Dan Reeve: Hi and welcome to another Applied Learning podcast. This time I sit down with Marina Jaffey and we talk about how she incorporates Applied Learning into her classes. Alright, Marina, first off, maybe a little bit about yourself, what area do you teach, what class in particular do you really think about Applied Learning, and how does that roll in as part of the program you're in?

Marina Jaffey: Yeah, hi Dan Reeve. I've been teaching here at Camosun since 1994. So, coming up to 25 years and ever since I can remember, I joined the department, Applied Learning has been a part of what we do. In the Marketing Department, we hear from employers about how much they love hiring our grads because the grads... these students have had some actual real world experience and the Applied Learning projects allow for that. My colleagues and I really like Applied Learning because we see our students being more engaged with the content, it's a more fun learning environment in the classroom and students enjoy it as well because they see the relevance of what they're learning and how it's applied in the real world. So, that's a little bit of background in terms of Applied Learning in the courses that I teach.

Dan Reeve: Great, and is there... we'll be probably exploring a few different examples, but is there one example just to get us started where you can think of where you've really made a conscious effort to say "okay, we're going to really, we're going to make this really an applied experience"?

Marina Jaffey: Yeah, well, in the school of business, in the marketing department, we require our students to work in teams quite a lot and often there are challenges, issues that come up in a team and I teach a fourth year course which... it's our sales management course, but really it's a leadership course with a sales focus and so I was thinking, "How can I capitalize on the experience that these fourth-year students have and provide an opportunity for them to share that bad experience in working with teams with say our first-year students?"

And so, the Applied Learning project that I'd like to use as an example is the one that I developed for that sales management course. It's an integrated course. So, I worked with Catherine Mack. Cath was teaching our first-year marketing course. She and I worked together to develop a project for both classes that would see my students, our fourth-year students, being peer mentors for our first-year business students. And so, these 2 classes work together on a joint project. We actually invited high school students from the local area into our Interurban campus and our students worked in their teams to create activities for the high school students to give them some exposure of the, what it's like to study here at the college. Overall, it worked really well.

The fourth year students, in my class, went through... I had developed a series of workshops to help them develop their leadership skills, their team work skills, their coaching and mentoring skills, and after they had been through that learning then we were able to partner with our first year students and actually see some peer mentoring, peer coaching take place. The growth that I saw in

both sets of students was phenomenal. It wasn't without its challenges but, the fourth-year students actually had a chance to be leaders and act as leaders. They were so proud of the fact that they could share their learning with the first-year students and the first-year students really benefited as well because they were getting some inside tips and coaching around how to work effectively in a team. Especially if there might be conflict or communication issues on that team.

Dan Reeve: Right and it must be nice to hear that from a peer. You know.

Marina Jaffey: Yes, yeah.

Dan Reeve: Not just the instructor. Okay, well it sounds like there's a lot of thought and a lot of intention that goes behind that set up and that work with you. We're going to slowly unpack that if you don't mind. I want to ask a series of questions and they are around the principles. There's 8 Applied Learning principles. We're going to sort of go through all of them if we can and talk a little bit about each.

So the first principle is intention. It sounds here like, how do you decide that an experience or application, is the best way for students to learn a particular concept or theory or idea?

Marina Jaffey: So keeping with that Sales Management course example or Applied Learning example, we knew in the department, in our department, that students were having challenges working in a team. I was looking for a way that we could help our students be more effective in a team experience. I've been speaking with Anita Ferris, around coaching, Alaine Pattison, here in our department... is also a certified coach at my son's school. They do a lot of coaching and also peer coaching as well as one-on-one coaching and so I thought "How could we...? This may be an opportunity for our more senior students to be able to engage with our first-year students and share their learning around how to work effectively in a team"

So, the first thing I did... planning is so important whenever you're looking at an Applied Learning project and this one was a little bit risky as well because I wasn't sure...how we might pair our fourth-year students to be peer mentors or coaches.

And so I did a pilot. I planned a pilot of this, and I invited students from DECA, which is a business club here in the school. Some senior members of our DECA Club volunteered to be peer mentors and peer coaches. I developed a series of 4 workshops for those peer mentors and it was definitely... a joint effort.

I had people... Karen Stephens from the School of Business, deliver the "Working Effectively in a Team" module. Anita Ferris delivered the "Coaching" modules for the students. Anna Stein delivered the "Communicating Effectively in an Intercultural Environment" module and then Janet Stark and I focused on

Project Management skills for the students. So we had those 4 modules and then we paired the peer mentors, after the training, with a second-year marketing group and had those peer mentors work with the student groups in the second-year course around working effectively in teams, working through issues that had come up with some of those teams in the class. Based on the learning from that pilot, Catherine Mack and I then decided that we would try this with our actual courses. My course was the fourth-year Sales Management. Cath's was the first-year marketing. We looked at having a joint project for the students to work on together so they had some time to work on it joint project as well as teams within their course only.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: The first time we offered that was last fall, fall of 2017 and overall, the student feedback was really positive, but it's definitely, if I were to give advice to anybody thinking about doing an Applied Learning project, that planning and preparation piece is really important. Also, don't be afraid if things might not always go the way you would expect them to go and that's okay. It's a...you know, Catherine and I were really open with our students. When we started this project last fall I said "You know, this is the first time through. We are really excited about it and we're really open to your feedback and how it's working for you"

Dan Reeve: That's a really great model. A lot of these teams will be touching on a nice job here. I want to take us just one step back right to the essence of this. With intention, it seemed like you identified one core issue or maybe there was a couple. It really seemed like, how do we have students help other students learn how to work in teams?

Marina Jaffey: That's right.

Dan Reeve: The project sort of aside from that, did the intention, the starting point was simply what's the... and tell me if I'm getting this right, was how can we get students to embrace the idea of teamwork? Was that your starting, sort of, intention? [crosstalk 00:10:43]

Marina Jaffey: And how can we support our students when they're asked to work in teams and things don't go well. How can we support them when that happens?

Dan Reeve: Right, and that's of course all part of any work that there's going to be work that goes better than expected, but there might be some that goes off the rails and that's all part of the makeup. Okay, let's talk a little bit, let's move on... and this seems like really a strength that you show a lot of and that's sort of the second stages. Talked a lot about planning, preparedness. How do you know when you're ready to try an Applied Learning activity?

Marina Jaffey: Really being clear on what the objective is. I knew that our students were being asked to work in teams. They needed some support. How fast can we support our students and so knowing that this was an opportunity to help students, really helped me affirm, to myself, why I was doing this. Also, it was a big leap of faith, but I knew that I had the support. I was working with Catherine Mack, who's a very seasoned instructor. She and I were working together, so there was trust there, that this would run smoothly, that it would be well organized and being prepared I think, being as well prepared for an Applied Learning project as possible, helps me. The fact that I did a pilot, as I mentioned earlier, I wasn't sure how this was going to roll out, whether or not our students would want this, but that pilot really helped me to see what kind of skills the fourth-year students needed to develop in order to become effective peer mentors.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: Then formalizing that as part of the curriculum-

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: To ensure that those peer mentors in training were getting, developing the skills that they would need in order to be effective as peer mentors.

Dan Reeve: Okay. What was your thought process? I want to go through your thought process because it seems like you really put a lot of, sort of time and energy before you began. Can you just walk us through your thought process. Consider like equipment, logistics, learning materials for the students this is in a pre-planning phase. How does that roll out? What are you thinking about and where do you and Cathy talk, thinking about when you're thinking about how can we get this thing going?

Marina Jaffey: So, because in Applied Learning project, there were 2 different classes working together, we knew we wanted a joint project that would work for both groups of students. The idea came out that "why don't we connect with the local high schools to invite them in so we could showcase what it's like to be a School of Business student?" We wanted to connect with community. We wanted it to be integrated, so we had 2 different courses working together. Both Cath and I, after we had our initial planning discussion, went away and developed fairly detailed, thorough project overview guidelines for the students. That included timeline. We had the schedule mapped out over the 14 weeks about what is going to happen when. There were a couple of different sessions, joint sessions, that I had organized for both classes. One was around networking skills and how to communicate effectively with people from the community. That was something that I had planned.

We also wanted to plan enough from opportunities for the two different classes to get to know one another and develop a relationship. That had to be scheduled in. I found when I started to map out a schedule, it was a visual eye

glance of what's going to happen when over the course of the semester. That also helped determine what resources are required when. "Do we need to bring in guest speakers? If so, we need to book them. If we need a larger space" because we had 2 classes getting together. I had to book that space well in advance. So by mapping out what's happening when, what are the learning outcomes, what are the deliverables. That helps an instructor see what's needed.

Dan Reeve: And were you using like a physical calendar? Were you using a syllabus or sort of-

Marina Jaffey: My tendency is to... I have a schedule, a 14-week schedule as part of my syllabus.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: And I also have a comprehensive project overview and guideline document-

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: That I hand to students. It's in both, but I really do find... and of course D2L I also use for indicating what checklist-

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: And what's due when-

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: And students like that because when students are asked to be involved in a more complex project, their stress levels go up. One way to help them feel that things are in control, that they have control, is to have very clear guidelines and very clear timelines. What's due when and then they can work with that.

Dan Reeve: Right. It sounds like you break it into bit size pieces.

Marina Jaffey: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: So that the students aren't, they may see the big picture, but there's a bite size. Okay, in this period we need to get X, Y, and Z done and then we move onto the next and the next.

Marina Jaffey: And just my point before we move on, because we were working with an external group, the high schools, their timelines are very different as well and so I had to be in touch with those high schools 6 months before this project was scheduled to run. Just so that they would have enough time to organize things on their end. So again, if there's an external client or an external organization

involved in an Applied Learning project, making sure that there's plenty of leave time that's planned for.

Dan Reeve: Alright, wow that's like a master class in planning right there. We're going to talk a little bit and you've already talked about an internal, but the third idea around Applied Learning is authenticity and what is it about your student experience and activities that ties it to current and foundational practices in the field? The why of this production.

Marina Jaffey: Yes, well from my class it's a leadership class. It's pretty difficult to learn how to be an effective leader simply by reading in the textbook. Looking at the theory behind leadership. Immediately a person has to try out those skills, learn, get feedback, reflect, and then tweak their behaviors a little bit and try it again.

This Applied Learning program project really allowed these fourth-year students to be leaders. They've planned as a group how they were going to be and work together. Anita Farriss led a coaching session where each team in my class developed a design, what Anita calls a designed alliance. They work through what the expectations are of one another, how they want this team to function, what's going to happen if things aren't going as planned and so my students in their [inaudible 00:19:21] in their Sales Management teams developed that designed alliance and then they led the first year students through that process. They've done it themselves. They are teaching it to the first-year students and then they're actually living that as they work on this integrated project together. So again, that's the beauty of Applied Learning in my mind. It's where students, they learn something and then they try it out. They see, oh Gosh, you know, I did this really well. Maybe I can improve a little bit here. It's that ongoing reflection, practice.

Dan Reeve: That rolls in very nicely because it's hard and it's important as other listeners of other podcasts know that all of these practices and principles all tie together. While we're pulling them apart into 8 principles. They really roll together as a stream. Reflection is the next principle. It sounds like that's built into the practices of both you and Cath's design and implemented and then through your students. So Let's unpack that if we can for just a minute. What reflective questions do you have students consider once they've completed part or either part of the project or a cycle of the project as they go through it?

Marina Jaffey: Right, and this is actually where the coaching model is so effective because Anita Farriss worked through with the students "What are some good reflective questions to ask if you're wanting to improve your own coaching practice?"

For the...for each coaching session or peer coaching, peer mentoring session that my students had with the first-year students, they would first set a plan and so they'd have some goals in place. They'd identify what resources do we need for this peer mentoring, peer coaching session. Then after each peer mentoring, peer coaching session students would meet to reflect on what worked well.

What would they want to see more of if they were to do this again. So they had to do this reflection after every meeting with their first-year counterparts.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: So it happens throughout the semester and then there was a larger reflection piece at the end of the course. It was an opportunity for teams to reflect as well as for individuals to reflect.

Dan Reeve: Okay. I think you've covered from the student's perspective. What about for you? When and how did you reflect on the AL activity?

Marina Jaffey: Again, this is why I really like working with an integrated, on an integrated Applied Learning project because I'm working with a colleague, and a colleague whom I really respect. Throughout the semester, Cath and I would meet and say: "Okay, what are you hearing from your students? What are your thoughts on how this is working? Is there anything we need to tweak as we move forward, is there something that's missing that we think the students might need?"

We had these ongoing discussions throughout the term. Then we also had our students do a reflection at the end and so then after the semester finished, Cath and I met, and we had a list of, each came with a list of things that seemed to work well. What we might change moving forward next time. We also identified some resources from the department that might be helpful moving forward with this project. That was really critical to make sure during the semester that our students are getting what they need and that it's working. Especially the first time through when it was new for us.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: But also at the end, to really take the time and say, "yeah!!!"

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: "This worked well" That sense of accomplishment after-

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: Because it was a lot of work. That's one thing about Applied Learning projects, is they're often much more time consuming than other kinds of projects or running activities.

Dan Reeve: And that's certainly true the first couple times through.

Marina Jaffey: It is. Yes.

Dan Reeve: Okay. What about students' reflection. How did that impact, when you're going through it at the end of the semester, how did students reflections impact your reflections. So when Cath and you are sitting down, you're probably seen or read some of the student's reflections, how does that impact the project going forward?

Marina Jaffey: Well, students... the feedback that we heard from students very much reaffirmed that this is on the right track. They saw the value in the learning. Often our students rolled their eyes and said "not another team project!" and we really, I heard from my students that developing a designed alliance really made sense to them and it was something that they took seriously and saw the value of. It wasn't just a box they could tick off and say "Okay, we've got that team charter out of the way" It was a value to the students and that really reaffirmed why we're doing this.

Dan Reeve: Great. Okay. The next set of principles are, and you've covered frankly, a lot this terrain. It looks sort of outward. The first 4 principles are more internal to the instructor. The people building the Applied Learning and though the relationship from the builder to the student is fairly direct, the next set of questions are a little bit more, how it runs in practice, how the Applied Learning idea or concept or project rolls out. So, how do you prepare yourself to guide an experiential learning activity? How do you set yourself up the first time? You don't want the students to roll their eyes and say "Hey there's a team project for everyone"

Marina Jaffey: Right. I think it's really important to be positive and to have a clear idea in my mind why I'm doing this and what the benefit of doing it is and sharing that with the students and also being transparent. I told my students, you know in this case you're the guinea pigs. We're going to try this. I think it's going to be great, but this is something that we're in together. We're learning together.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: I need you, the students to tell me if there's something that they need, if there's something that I can do for them. These students in fourth year, they've got, most of them are going to be graduating after this semester. Some of them are post-degree diploma students. So they already have a degree so there's that level of maturity and life experience that they bring to the classroom. I think appealing to that experience and knowledge and ability in our learners, help give them a sense of pride in what they can do and what they're able to do.

Dan Reeve: Great, great, And I think that's very true. It sounds like you've sort of explained the process of walking your students through the Applied Learning process. Does your preparation differ if you're working with community partner?

Marina Jaffey: Yes. It adds a different level of complexity to the planning process. As I mentioned earlier, timelines often need to be considered and so it's not, when you're dealing with an external partner you need to plan much further in



advance. Also, be open to things perhaps not going the way you had thought they would go. For example, case in point, originally we were going to have Camosun students go out to the high schools because we've done that in previous years and we didn't think anything of that. But then about a week before our students were scheduled to go out to the high schools, we found out that, they can't do that because they need criminal record checks and "Oh oh, what's going to happen?" So, there was some mad scrambling to switch it around so the high schools could come to Camosun.

Dan Reeve: Right.

Marina Jaffey: And so, yes, that was a stressful situation, but you know it worked out and I think out worked out for the better. It made a lot of sense to showcase our campus. I think again for an instructor going into an Applied Learning project that does involve an external partner, be open to things that can come up, that's you hadn't necessarily planned for and put your creative thinking cap on and look for different possible solutions to those issues.

Dan Reeve: Right. It sounds like there's kind of, we forget sometimes at Camosun that not everyone works in the college timeframe whether that's 4-month time frame or simply aligning high school classes and the way their time table works with the steady Tuesday and Thursday at 2 o'clock classes that Camosun works with. There's always those levels of forethought that need to go in to adjust Camosun's timeline to the rest of the world, which is often beating to a different drum. Alright, excellent. Let's move on now and again, some of these are themes we've touched on before. Question, principle 6 is around monitoring reflection and continuous improvement. How do you assess your student's experience when things don't go as planned? Inevitably, things will go sideways at some point and how do you assess the situation, whether you need to modify it or maybe you need to let it roll? How do you assess that in sort of a monitoring reflection or monitoring process as you're going through an Applied Learning experience?

Marina Jaffey: Right. Well, I think it depends on the case. Being open and flexible to what has happened, if things do not go as planned. For example, in this peer mentoring, peer coaching Applied Learning project, we ended up having to have our students working much larger groups to host the high school students here on campus because not all the schools could come here. That changed things a little bit. But taking a look at one of my learning outcomes because ultimately that's what I need to ensure we meet. Just being flexible and being fair. As long as I see my students trying their best to meet what the deliverables are, under the circumstances, then that's all I can ask for. Again, being...thinking creatively, keeping your learning outcomes in mind, asking the students, especially if you're working with upper-level students, "What do you think is a fair way to assess in this case?" Taking their feedback into account might be appropriate depending on the situation.

Dan Reeve: Great, great. So that moves us on. It's interesting. There's been lots of talk about this sort of an open pedagogy, where you're really laying out to your students through the whole process. How you're going to walk them through this and whether that's the steps you're going to take...the planning, the process, the need for flexibility, the showcasing of curiosity, and flexibility as you're rolling through this. "Hey we need to do it differently because we couldn't go to the high schools, now we have to go somewhere else" and in some ways you're showing real-life activity. The best laid plan needs to also be flexible because reality will step in and your planning will need to adjust.

Marina Jaffey: Yes.

Dan Reeve: So, let's move to the next step then, which is assessment and evaluation. How do you structure your formative and summative assessment of your students?

Marina Jaffey: Right. I often ask the students to reflect and do a self-assessment. I'll look at that as part of a mark. I find that rubrics are helpful as well so that students have a clear idea in their mind how they are going to be evaluated and what I'm looking for when I do assess. Having clear expectations that the students understand how they're going to be graded on the different aspects of the project is most important.

Dan Reeve: Right. That sounds great. Now this is the... in some ways this is the broad question of Applied Learning and we're asking this of people who use Applied Learning, obviously you appreciate it, but put it out there none the less, what evidence do you have that Applied Learning activities deepens students understanding of concepts of theories and of ideas?

Marina Jaffey: It's often student feedback. They'll let me know whether the learning experience has been good or not. I see it reflected in their grades as well and I do see grades going up when Applied Learning projects are being used because the students are engaged. They feel that they are doing something meaningful and in this case it was an opportunity for our...senior students to give back to the school and help be mentors of our first-year students. There was that real sense of pride. Also, I think recognition and celebration should be an important part of it as well, by celebrating at the end or in this case we celebrated at the end of the project, the hard work that students put into this project often reaffirms in the students' mind that "Hey, yes, I really did make a difference and this is being acknowledged and recognized" and so that helps build their confidence and their skills and abilities when they go out into the world of work.

Dan Reeve: That's a great point and that leaves us to the very last point which you've already touched on a little bit, but how do you celebrate student transformation?

Marina Jaffey: Acknowledging the specific things that students have accomplished through their work on the project. I'll often invite the external client or the

representative from an external organization in as part of that celebration. In this case we brought both classes together, so again the fourth-year and first-year students had an opportunity to celebrate and be acknowledged together. We'll sometimes invite the Dean or the Chair in to also acknowledge the students' contribution. In some of the Applied Learning projects, a client will actually use the work that the students have produced. When students see that, they really do know that what they have done is significant and that it is of value.

Dan Reeve: That's great. Having an outside client, especially as a fourth-year student to have someone out there in the world using your work, your ideas, your effort I think probably gives you a lot of confidence that you're ready.

Marina Jaffey: Absolutely and we encourage our students to develop a portfolio of the work and their accomplishments while they're here at the college. Often there is an aspect of an Applied Learning project that they can then incorporate into their portfolio.

Dan Reeve: Okay. Well, thank you very much. Are there any last ideas or reflections you have since the beginning of the interview that you want to add?

Marina Jaffey: If there's an instructor who's considering incorporating an Applied Learning project into his or her course, I would just say, "Do it!" Overall I think students really appreciate the opportunity to learn by doing and no matter whether it's a complex project or something really basic. It doesn't matter. It's an opportunity for students to learn by doing, connect with others in the class, and to develop the skills that they need in order to be successful in life and in their career.

Dan Reeve: Great. Well thank you very much Marina. This is a great interview and I really appreciate your time.

Marina Jaffey: You are welcome.