

# LIVING LIBRARY: INTEGRATING SPECULATIVE MEDIA TO REIMAGINE CARE, CURRICULUM, AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

*Earl E. Lee, PhD*

Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ

## Purpose

Health professions education remains entrenched in Eurocentric, biomedical paradigms. This project seeks to reimagine nursing pedagogy by integrating speculative media to cultivate empathy, cultural intelligence, and community-driven care. These creative practices provide transformative spaces where future nurses can envision equitable healthcare systems and develop the critical consciousness needed to address structural inequities in practice.

## Literature Review

Traditional nursing and health professions education is largely grounded in Eurocentric, biomedical, and positivist paradigms that uphold hierarchical, content-driven teaching. These models often marginalize Indigenous knowledge systems, uphold whiteness as normative, and fail to cultivate critical consciousness about power, race, and systemic inequities in healthcare (Cleofas; Iheduru-Anderson & Waite, 2022).

Scholars have begun to advocate for transformative pedagogies that center justice, cultural responsiveness, and relational care:

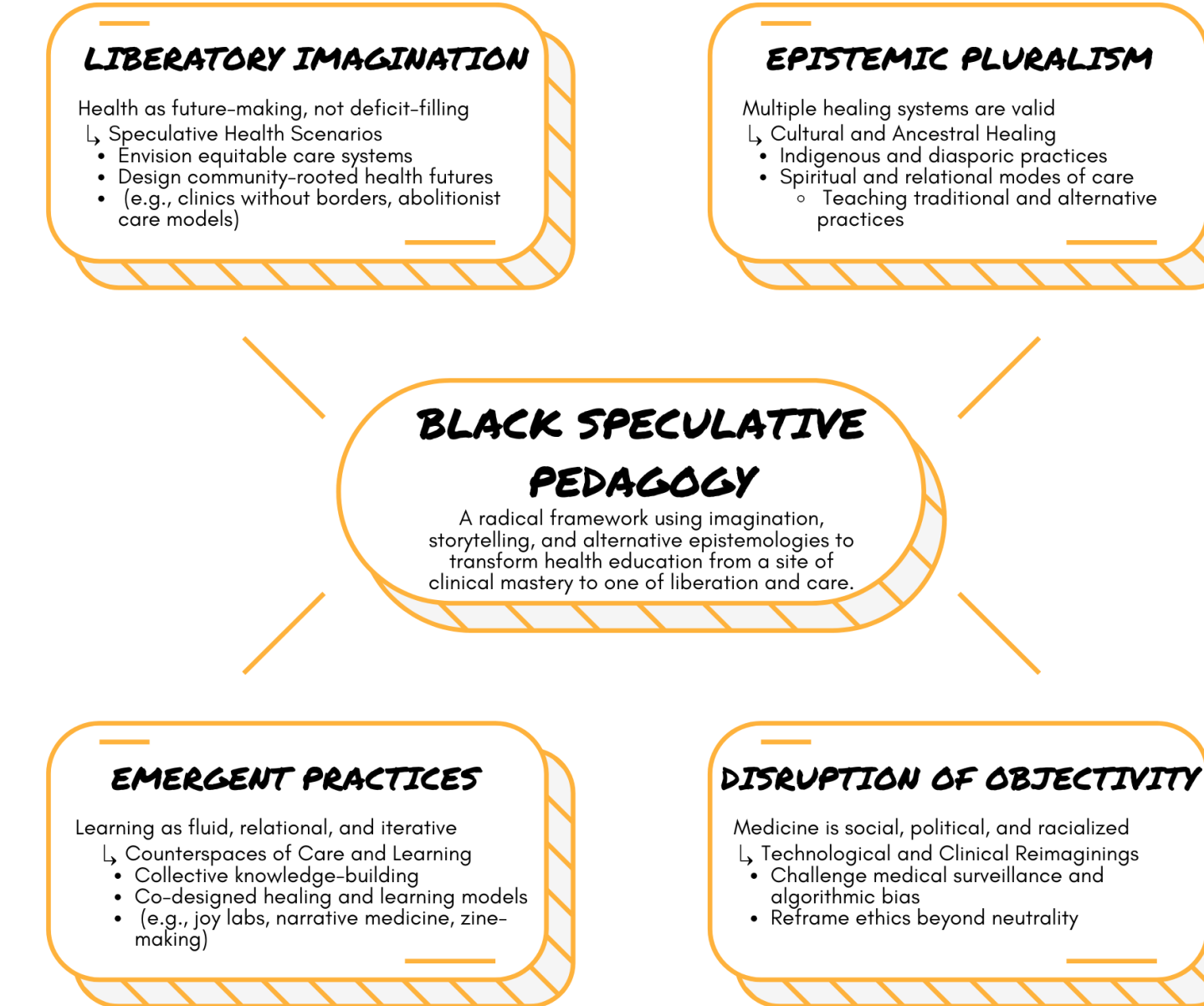
- Narrative Pedagogy encourages engagement with stories, art, and reflection to humanize learning (Brown et al., 2008).
- Antiracist and Decolonial Pedagogies challenge racialized power structures and reframe the role of the nurse as an agent of systemic change (Iheduru-Anderson & Alexander, 2022; De Souza, ).
- Critical Race Theory and Freirean Approaches reveal how nursing curricula have perpetuated oppression through "banking" education and a narrow clinical gaze (Treinen et al., 2022).
- Cultural Safety and Kinship Frameworks rooted in Indigenous traditions (e.g., Māori and Aboriginal care) teach nurses to reverse the clinical gaze, practice relational care, and refuse participation in harmful systems (Dillard-Wright et al., 2023).

However, the literature reveals resistance to these changes, limited institutional support, and emotional discomfort among educators. Despite the promise of emerging models, few studies have explored speculative media and radical imagination as pedagogical strategies for transforming nursing education.

This project responds to that gap by integrating speculative fiction, zine-making, and creative media into a toolkit designed to help faculty foster empathy, cultural intelligence, and community-centered care.

## Framework

Black Speculative Pedagogy is a radical educational framework rooted in radical imagination, critical pedagogy, and Afrofuturism/Africanfuturism. It challenges the exclusionary logics of Western science by centering Black storytelling, world-building, and liberatory inquiry as legitimate forms of scientific knowledge production. Emerging from the intersection of speculative thought and justice-driven education, this pedagogy calls for the transformation, not reform. Its core tenets include Liberatory Imagination, Epistemic Pluralism, Disruption of Objectivity, and Emergent Practice. In health education, Black Speculative Pedagogy invites learners to interrogate histories of exclusion, reimagine ethical futures, and design community-rooted, culturally grounded approaches to care.



## Project Plan

The project proposes a Living Library — an open-access, evolving faculty toolkit organized into thematic portals. Each portal offers ready-to-use teaching materials that center marginalized communities and social justice in healthcare through the lens of Black Speculative Pedagogy (radical imagination, speculative fiction, critical pedagogy). The library helps educators integrate cultural intelligence, empathy, and equity into their curriculum without needing to redesign entire courses.

### Structure of Each Portal

Each *portal* in the Living Library will include:

- ◆ **Theme:** Focus on a marginalized population or care-related issue
- ◆ **Speculative Prompt:** A narrative, short story, zine, image, or media clip
- ◆ **Learning Objective:** Clearly stated outcomes related to cultural intelligence, relational care, or health equity
- ◆ **Facilitation Guide:** Class activity instructions, discussion prompts, reflection questions
- ◆ **Supplemental Materials:** Optional readings, multimedia links, or case studies
- ◆ **Assessment Suggestions:** Ideas for reflection essays, zines, or creative projects

### Anticipated Outcomes

- ◆ Short-term:
  - Faculty will have plug-and-play tools to teach cultural intelligence and equity
  - Students will engage creatively with diverse lived experiences.
- ◆ Long-term:
  - Curriculum transformation
  - Potential for course mapping and student certification in inclusive practice

## Sample Portal

**Theme:** Reimagining gender-expansive, affirming healthcare

**Prompt:** Imagine a future where health isn't managed in clinics but in constellation homes, soft spaces of collective nourishment. Healthcare isn't administered; it's offered through kinship, ritual, rest, and technologies co-designed by queer healers and AI doulas. What would it feel like to be held, not fixed?

**Activities:**

- **Design the Future:** Students create a full speculative health ecosystem, mapping out a care hub, ritual, or system that supports trans thriving.
- **Future Health Bill of Rights:** Draft a declaration for a post-binary healthcare system. What are the rights of a patient in a care system not designed around medical gatekeeping?
- **"Carecast" Audio Journal:** Have students record an audio diary from the perspective of a trans patient in the year 2080, reflecting on their care experience.

## Implementation Strategies

### Phase 1: Toolkit Development

- Develop 2-3 initial Living Library Portals, including brief facilitation guides and creative assessment options.
  - Ex: Trans Care Futures, Reimagining Eldercare, Rest as Resistance

### Phase 2: Faculty Support and Engagement

- Host faculty workshops to introduce the toolkit as entry points and create a faculty feedback loop for iterative improvements.

### Phase 3: Institutional Integration and Expansion

- Begin curriculum mapping to identify where these and other opportunities are embedded.
- Propose a certificate or passport-type program for students to add to their portfolio.

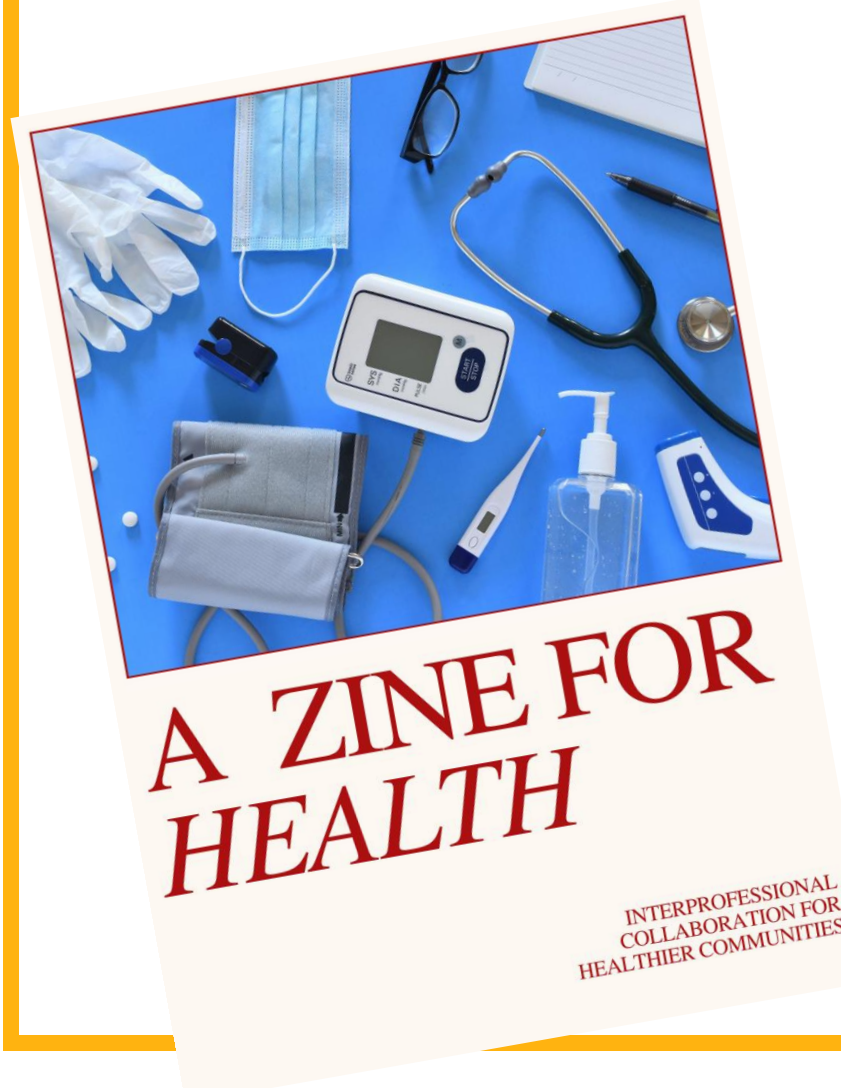
### Assessment Mechanism

- Faculty and Student Reflections
- Qualitative Learning Outcomes from Zines and Other Speculative Media

## References

- Brown, S. T., Kirkpatrick, M. K., Mangum, D., & Avery, J. (2008). A Review of Narrative Pedagogy Strategies to Transform Traditional Nursing Education. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 47(6), 283–286. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20080601-01>
- De Souza, R. (2022). Using arts-based participatory methods to teach cultural safety. In J. Dillard-Wright, J. Hopkins-Walsh, & B. Brown (Eds.), *Nursing a Radical Imagination: Moving from Theory and History to Action and Alternate Futures* (1st ed., pp. 152–166). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003245957>
- Dillard-Wright, J., Iradukunda, F., Souza, R. D., & Valderama-Wallace, C. (2023). No as an act of care: A glossary for kinship, care praxis, and nursing's radical imagination. In *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Nursing*. Routledge.
- Iheduru-Anderson, K. C., & Alexander, G. R. (2022). Critical Race Theory: A Framework for the Re-Education of American Nurses. *Creative Nursing*, 28(3), 177–183. <https://doi.org/10.1891/CN-2022-0021>
- Iheduru-Anderson, K., & Waite, R. (2022). Illuminating antiracist pedagogy in nursing education. *Nursing Inquiry*, 29(4), e12494. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12494>
- Lee, E. E. (2025). *Stories of Freedom, Stories of Possibilities: Black Speculative Pedagogy as a Blueprint for STEM Transformation* [Ph.D., Arizona State University]. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3202665189/abstract/A22685FC66E8441CPQ/1>
- Treinen, K. P., Abbott-Anderson, K., & Kuechle, L. (2022). Paolo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed: A Way Past Oppression for the Nursing Profession. *Creative Nursing*, 28(3), 161–166. <https://doi.org/10.1891/CN-2022-0026>

DREAMING  
UP A FUTURE  
of THRIVING  
for TRANS  
FUTURIST  
THINKERS







## LIVING LIBRARY: INTEGRATING SPECULATIVE MEDIA TO REIMAGINE CARE, CURRICULUM, AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Earl Lee, PhD

### Biography

---

Earl Lee (they/them) is a leader in higher education and a researcher working at the intersection of inclusive excellence, health equity, and science and technology studies. With 13 years of experience, they lead transformative initiatives that promote equity, belonging, and institutional change in higher education. Currently, Earl serves as the Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence at Arizona State University's Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, where they collaborate with faculty, staff, and senior leadership to implement equity-driven strategies that foster student success, faculty development, and inclusive teaching and learning.

Their research and practice are grounded in community-engaged and imaginative approaches, including storytelling, speculative design, and participatory methods, which aim to challenge systemic barriers in the health and STEM fields. They emphasize co-creating educational and research models that uplift marginalized voices and local knowledge systems, both in the U.S. and globally. Their work highlights how liberation is embodied in Black creative texts, serving as a lens to better understand the complex relationships between knowledge and power, innovation and inequity, and the future and justice.

Whether leading organizational strategy or conducting vital research, Earl is dedicated to building futures where justice, creativity, and care shape the foundation of our institutions.

### Contact Information

---



Earl Lee, PhD  
Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence & Clinical Assistant Professor  
Arizona State University  
earl.lee.1@asu.edu