



## Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

### The President's Message

#### What's Inside:

The President's Message ..... Pg 1-2

STLHE Newsletter Co-Editors ..... Pg 2

Moving Forward in Canada? ..... Pg 3

2010 Conference Report..... Pg 4

Inaugural Issue of CJSoTL/RCACEA ..... Pg 5

A Wildly Original Brainchild.....Pg 7

EDC Corner..... Pg 8

Educational Development Centre Database..... Pg 8

Mandatory Certification ..... Pg 9

STLHE Green Guides ..... Pg 10

On-Line Seminars ... Pg 11

Call for Newsletter Submissions ..... Pg 11

**Arshad Ahmad,**  
*STLHE President*

While September marks a new year for students, many of us start a few months earlier to begin a new cycle of planning and preparation. Ideally, summer holidays are our opportunity to celebrate, reflect, and renew.

The STLHE Conference was a big part of the celebration and this Newsletter highlights some of the precious moments we experienced together. For members who participated in our 30th annual conference in Toronto last June,

Not enough for a summer of reflection? Perhaps you are more inclined to use a broader brush. Listen to Liz Coleman, President of Bennington College, who reinvents liberal arts education and offers a scathing commentary on why academics are "learning more and more about less and less." She goes on to say "... when the impulse is to change the world, the academy is more likely to engender a learned helplessness than to create a sense of empowerment." <http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/>

**STLHE was created 30 years ago, precisely to provide a space for renewal. Our distinguished collective has grown on the premise of giving back, voluntarily, through which we renew ourselves in the service to improve teaching and learning in Canada.**

the G20 protests, reported earthquakes and tornadoes were mere distractions, thanks to our gracious hosts from OCAD and Ryerson universities whose singular focus on *Creative Teaching & Learning* made us feel at home and engaged us with memorable conversations.

Meanwhile, Alastair Summerlee, President of Guelph and 3M Fellow, offered a provocative proposition to "Destroy Undergraduate Education." Understandably, this fired up fellow panelists leading a session entitled "Higher Education in 2035: Blind Curves Ahead or Open Roads" at the 25th anniversary of the 3M National Teaching Fellowships. Alastair's comments are echoed on the popular TED website (<http://www.ted.com>) known for *ideas worth spreading*. On this site, Sir Ken Robinson gives a couple of inspirational talks on how to bring on the learning revolution. His bestseller *The Element* argues that schools kill creativity and suggests how we might nourish the unique talents that every student brings. Closer to home, and hot off the press is *Ivory Tower Blues: a University System in Crisis*, co-authored by STLHE member and 3M Fellow, Anton Allahar.

[liz-coleman\\_s\\_call\\_to\\_reinvent\\_liberal\\_arts\\_education.html](http://liz-coleman_s_call_to_reinvent_liberal_arts_education.html).

Hmmm. This stuff is not mere rhetoric, but a call to take on the grand educational issues of our time. Here's a chance to make a significant difference. And yet, back to school, creatures of habit, we also come back to the rhythms that define us—to increasing responsibilities that can tie us.

As the summer provided some welcome respite for my reflections, it also regulated my renewal, which I like to think of as a timeless ritual that offers hope and possibility. Thinking about things differently, the core of human learning is the most exciting part of our vocation and as educators we know how to excel at this. If we listen to Goethe, *We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden.*

Another clue lies in the "we."

STLHE was created 30 years ago, precisely to provide a space for renewal. Our distinguished collective has grown on the premise of giving back, voluntarily,



through which we renew ourselves in the service to improve teaching and learning in Canada. If we dream in the land of the giants and borrow for a moment Liz Coleman's idea to move (community) service from an extra curricular activity into the mainstream of how we spend our time, what impact might this shift have on the production of knowledge and how students learn?

Sarah and Roger raise these kinds of essential questions in their first co-editorial. They deserve a response. And while the Society gains the most from the contributions from each of its members, we on the STLHE Board, who have been appointed and elected to serve you, must also do our part.

During the summer, we took stock of our strategic directions, thanked the good work of those who served before us and welcomed new faces, some of whom are introduced in this Newsletter. But the new faces that are not mentioned reveal a startling fact: 64% of the participants who

joined us in Toronto (or 477 out of 744) indicated that this was their first STLHE Conference. Our membership is now over 1,000, and almost half are new members!

This is why we not only want to welcome you, but also intend to find new ways through which we can connect with you. This may be a first—expect to hear frequently from your regional representatives, with more online engagement from us, which we hope we will receive from you as well.

The same is true for new directions to strengthen our intent to improve bilingualism. We embrace the new position of Chair, Bilingual Advocacy, and give our blessings

to Aline Germain-Rutherford to take concrete action in advancing the support for and involvement of our Francophone colleagues. Let's do our share to help and support Aline's leadership in this important endeavor.

New initiatives are not mutually exclusive and do not replace our efforts in advancing the increasing importance of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Congratulations are in order for *CJSOTL*—its premier issue showcasing the depth of expertise within our Society.

Nor do we stand still, given the growth in our partnerships and alliances that give us reach. Our collective role advocates inclusivity and gives voice to the diversity that defines our

membership. This diversity is reflected in our governance, representing small and large institutions, our two constituencies of educational developers and 3M National Teaching Fellows, and special interest groups—college educators, writing centres, teaching assistants—not to mention mainstream faculty and students from coast to Canadian coast.

This fall we celebrate teaching and encourage reflection on how we can renew ourselves. Large doses of renewal are good for us, as one of my colleagues reminded me. "In life, almost everything in excess is toxic, with the possible exception of one thing—learning." Watch out Canada, here we go!

## Co-Editor's Co-Editorial



**Sarah Keefer and Roger Moore**  
*STLHE Newsletter Co-Editors*



Each new president, each new board, each new editor marks a new beginning. So here, at the beginning of new things, the new co-editors, Sarah and Roger, would like to remind you of the words of another slightly different type of editor, U. S. President John F. Kennedy. Suitably paraphrased for our purposes, JFK might well have said "Ask not what STLHE can do for you; ask rather what you can do for STLHE." So, the new editors pose these questions to you, our STLHE members who are the readers of this Newsletter: "What are the means by which you as educators will help to (re)shape the direction of higher education in Canada in the second decade of the twenty-first century? In what ways do you imagine yourselves becoming engaged participants in the STLHE of this second decade? And how can you contribute to help develop your Newsletter which is the heartbeat of communication among university and college teachers and education consultants from coast to coast?"

If we relate this directly to the mission which drives teaching and learning, we should consider re-examining the traditional W5 in that light:

**Who are we teaching?** Do we know our students as individuals? Are we familiar with their learning preferences and skills? Do we know their names? Can we recognize them as they walk around campus? Do we encourage them to talk to us? And since the students of 2010 are very unlike the students of 1990 or 2000, how are we allowing for that difference?

**What are we teaching?** Are we teaching a subject, and nothing more? Are we modelling a way of life, of nurturing, of caring? Are we aware of how much – and what – our individual students actually take in? What are we doing to encourage communication between them and us on this crucial issue?

**When do we teach?** Do we only teach in class or in the laboratory, when prescribed class time dictates that we have to? How and what do we teach them in our out-of-class time? How

are our everyday lives a teaching and learning model for our students? Are there opportunities that we can find to deepen the teaching / learning experience for both us and our students?

**Where do we teach?** This is a follow-up to the "when" question. Are we teaching mindfully, aware every moment of our day, in class and out of it, in the laboratory and out of it, in the library or lecture hall and out of it, that we are role models for our students? They learn from our existence, our responses, and from our reactions to our subject matter and our audience. What do their perceptions of our day-to-day performances teach them?

**Why do we teach?** Consider those who teach because they couldn't do anything else. Consider those who teach to fund their research. Consider those who teach to persuade others that their point of view on life – whatever it might be – is the only acceptable one. Consider other possibilities. Where do you fit in? Consider too what your life would be like if you didn't teach. Is teaching an all-devouring life-time commitment of yours? Do you teach to transform, develop, and nurture your students?

**Why exactly do you teach?** This is a conversation that we wish to begin with every member of STLHE who is willing to answer these questions. There will be room in future editions for some of your individual responses and we the editors will welcome them in print. But for now, do some thinking, contact either (or both) of us with your initial reactions, and above all, join us on the way into the next decade, where a vibrant conversation can only make Canadian teaching in Higher Education a stronger force in the future.

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# The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning:

## Moving Forward in Canada?

**Nicola Simmons**

*STLHE Vice-President, SoTL Portfolio*

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is a growing movement in which post-secondary educator-scholars conduct research about teaching and learning for the purpose of enhancing student learning. While interest in SoTL continues to grow in Canada, we are still in the early stages of making this work public. As Gary Poole (2010) has noted, "the effective dissemination of this research is one of many challenges associated with SoTL as an emerging field" (p. 3).

The new *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* admirably addresses this challenge, providing a peer-reviewed publication venue for SoTL scholars, and thus making a significant contribution to the SoTL landscape. If you haven't already done so, please visit <http://www.cjsotl-rca-cea.ca/> to read past issues and for the call for submissions.

In addition, in May, 2010, under the excellent leadership of Richard Gale, Mount Royal University, the Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE/SAPES), sponsored the 2010 Canadian Leadership Forum on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

This event focused on how institutions initiate and encourage faculty research into student learning to support ongoing activities and initiatives, contribute to internal surveys and studies, and address new challenges facing post-secondary education locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. More than 100 participants represented universities, colleges, government and the non-profit sector from nine Canadian provinces and more than fifty institutions from across Canada (Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning).

The Forum also resulted in an article in *University Affairs*. That article poses a question that has implications for the STLHE SoTL portfolio (which I oversee), and that is the extent to which we're truly moving forward. Charbonneau (2010) notes that "the [SoTL] concept is gaining traction in Canada but has not yet become "the kind of national movement that we'd hoped."

As with many other ventures, we experience pockets of innovation (Ontario examples are the creation of SoTL Ontario and also the *Opportunities and New Directions* conference at the University of Waterloo and the resulting peer-reviewed publication), but we are



*Gary Poole, Jennifer Meta-Robinson, Joy Mighty, and Nicola Simmons after signing STLHE's formal agreement to become an ISSOTL External Affiliate.*

still not experiencing unified national progress in SoTL work and its dissemination. Clearly, initiatives such as the Mount Royal symposium and the new *CJSOTL* journal will help in this regard. It's also easy to list challenges to SoTL advancement, in particular that while education is provincially directed, research is federally funded, and that advocacy for improving a federal research focus on SoTL would help (Charbonneau, 2005; Christensen Hughes, 2006; Poole, 2009; Poole, Taylor, & Thompson, 2007).

I wholeheartedly agree with these challenges, but I've also been thinking this year about how I can work within these constraints, and so am now pondering what's happening at the provincial level and how the provincial 'pockets of innovation' can be mapped towards a national perspective.

Towards that end, members of the SoTL Advisory Panel will be presenting at ISSOTL in Liverpool in October. In an *international café* format, we'll showcase the particular initiatives of our own institution and geographic areas, and invite participants to join us in exploring what can be learned from our experience navigating the Canadian SoTL landscape that can inform, and be informed by, other international contexts. We hope this session will build towards synthesizing guiding principles for SoTL growth that could transcend regional and national boundaries.

A parallel project will be to begin collecting regional information about SoTL initiatives for posting on the new SoTL part of the STLHE website, something we are in the process of building. We're interested in any regional or local SoTL news and any accounts of the history of SoTL growth in Canada. If you have something you can share, or would like to join the team compiling this work, please contact Nicola Simmons at [nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca).

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# STLHE 2010 Conference Report

**Judy Britnell,**  
*Ryerson University*

**Kareen McCaughan,**  
*OCAD University*

This year's STLHE Conference drew on our creativity, given the G20, the earthquake, the tornado, and the overwhelming number of individuals who wanted to attend and present. Regardless, the Conference was fun and exciting, and attendees told us they were glad to be here and appreciated that the conference went ahead despite trying circumstances.

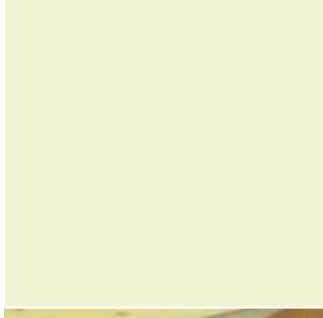
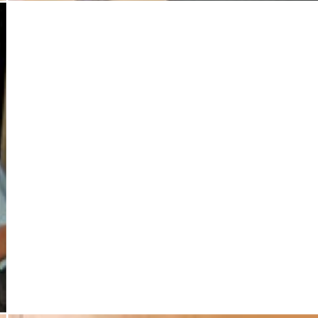
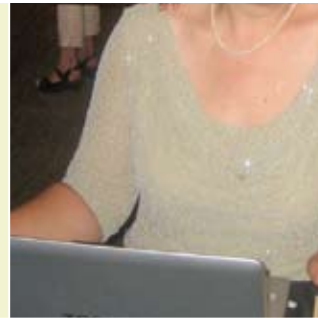
Feedback shows that most Conference participants were more than satisfied with the Conference preparations such as the website, registration process, plenaries and value and variety of concurrent sessions.

"It was overall an excellent conference..."  
 "This was my first conference and I hope to come back every year"  
 "The plenary sessions ... were superb"  
 "It was inspiring to talk/discuss/learn from others who value teaching and learning so highly"  
 "I came to network, and boy did!!"

Do the conference organizers wish that all of the evaluations were this positive? Of course we do, but although many positive comments were received, we also received suggestions for improvement. STLHE members can be assured that we will synthesize all suggestions for improvement (along with the accolades) in the final report that will be sent to the STLHE Board this fall. In spite of the many challenges that we encountered before and during the conference, record numbers of higher education professionals, faculty and students registered for this conference, 742 in all.

**Note:**  
 Michael Wesch, Sue Keller Mathers and the Alan Blizzard plenary presentations can be viewed on the STLHE website:  
<http://luna.ccs.ryerson.ca/stlhe2010/>

We, the co-hosts, are grateful for the opportunity and look forward to STLHE Conference 2011 in Saskatchewan!



# Inaugural Issue of CJSoTL/RCACEA



**Dianne Batemann and  
Dieter Schönwetter**  
Co-Editors, CJSoTL/RCACEA

We are delighted to announce the publication of the inaugural issue of *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (CJSoTL) / *La revue canadienne sur l'avancement des connaissances en enseignement et en apprentissage* (RCACEA), the official, trans-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, electronic publication of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

CJSoTL/RCACEA seeks to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning in Canadian post-secondary institutions. It therefore provides an avenue for a wide range of educators, including faculty members, administrators, academic librarians, educational developers, learning resource specialists, and graduate students, to discuss ways of enhancing student learning



experiences through systematic inquiry into teaching and learning in all disciplines.

We anticipate the journal will make a significant contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning, and invite submissions, in either English or French, from anyone, including international colleagues, interested in discussing teaching and learning issues relevant to different types of institutions in the Canadian context.

The inaugural issue exemplifies this significant contribution to the SoTL literature with the following articles:

**Diverse Methodological Approaches and Considerations for SoTL in Higher Education**

Harry Hubball and Anthony Clarke

**Exploring a New Model and Approach to the Scholarship of Teaching: The Scholarship Teaching Academy**

Fay Patel

**Educational Development Websites: What Do They Tell Us About How Canadian Centres Support the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning?**

Ros A. Woodhouse and Kristin A. Force

**The Effectiveness of Library Instruction: Do Student Response Systems (Clickers) Enhance Learning?**

Diane Buhay, Lisa A. Best, and Katherine McGuire

**The Effect of Performance Feedback on Student Help-Seeking and Learning Strategy Use: Do Clickers Make a Difference?**

Debra L. Dawson, Ken N. Meadows, and Tom Haffie

**Foundation Skills for Scientists: An Evolving Program**

Teresa Dawson, Sarah Fedko, Nancy Johnston, Elaine Khoo, Sarah King, Saira Mall, Mary Olaveson, Janice Patterson, Kamini Persaud, Frances Sardone, Zohreh Shahbazi, Allyson Skene, Martha Young, and Clare A. Hasenkamp

**A Report on the Implementation of the Blooming Biology Tool: Aligning Course Learning Outcomes with Assessments and Promoting Consistency in a Large Multi-Section First-Year Biology Course**

Angie O'Neill, Gülnur Birol, and Carol Pollock

**Is "Safety" Dangerous? A Critical Examination of the Classroom as Safe Space**

Betty J. Barrett

We invite you to read these exceptional articles and learn more about the journal by visiting [HYPERLINK "http://www.cjsotl-rcacea.ca/"](http://www.cjsotl-rcacea.ca/) <http://www.cjsotl-rcacea.ca/>

## Announcement



The STLHE Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Aline Germain-Rutherford to its newly-formed position of Chair, Bilingual Advocacy. Her responsibilities are:

- To take concrete action in advancing support for and involvement of Francophone colleagues.
- To serve as an ambassador for the Society at teaching and learning events/activities, and spearhead projects furthering the Society's presence in Francophone regions of Canada and overseas.
- To create a network of Francophone members who would attend events/activities sponsored by the Society.

- To increase and promote the quality of the Society's bilingual communications.
- To increase the visibility and participation of Francophone members in all aspects of the Society's activities.

Aline brings a wealth of expertise to the Board of Directors, partnered with an enthusiasm for our work. We are fortunate to have a colleague who is extraordinarily committed to the health and stewardship of the Society, and we are stronger with the addition of this talented individual.

# 3M

## 25th Anniversary Celebrations

**Ron Smith,**  
Chair,  
Council of 3M National Teaching Fellows

The Council of 3M National Teaching Fellows celebrated the 25th anniversary of the 3M National Teaching Fellowships in Toronto this past June. Over 100 of the 248 Fellows attended, together with many enthusiastic students, and representatives from our sponsors: 3M Canada, Maclean's, and Studentawards.

The opening reception, sponsored by STLHE, was followed the next day by a panel on "Higher Education in 2035: Blind Curves Ahead or Open Roads," by a World Café with many local high school and university students attending and by a powerful

presentation by award-winning poet, Louise Halfe. The day ended with a fabulous banquet hosted by 3M Canada.

This wonderful event helped us to rekindle old friendships and to make new ones, to

discuss things that matter with passion, discipline and humor, and to look forward to the future with renewed energy and commitment.

We were delighted to welcome the 2010 cohort into our Fellowship:

- Olenka Bilash,  
*University of Alberta*
- Kimberley Brooks,  
*McGill University*
- Anthony Clarke,  
*University of British Columbia*
- Clare Hasenkampf,  
*University of Toronto Scarborough*
- Zopito Marini,  
*Brock University*
- Alan Morgan,  
*University of Waterloo*
- Jean Nicholas,  
*Université de Sherbrooke*
- Uttandaraman Sundararaj,  
*University of Calgary*
- Angela Thompson,  
*St. Francis Xavier University*
- Elizabeth Wells,  
*Mount Allison University*

On this occasion we also said goodbye to Arshad Ahmad, Coordinator of the 3M Program for the past ten years, as he steps into his new shoes as STLHE President. Arshad has led the Fellowship program tirelessly, with verve, creativity, and – when needed – firmness. He has been a tall tower of strength and his shoes are big ones to fill. We are all grateful to Arshad for his leadership. Arshad will be replaced by Ron Marken, a 1987 3M Fellow, who wears a size 10 only, but he promises to give everything he has to the Program.

The 3M Council Executive has the opportunity and the responsibility to identify projects we can work on that will make a difference to the quality of teaching and learning in our universities for the next 25 years. We look forward to continuing support from STLHE members. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.



Arshad Ahmad presents memento to Brian Young, President of 3M Canada, to honour the 25-year partnership.

# A Wildly Original Brainchild

**Arshad Ahmad,**  
STLHE President

## The 3M President has an Idea

At the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC some twenty-five years ago, the President of 3M Canada, John Myser, asked some of the guests how they came to be who they were. Remarkably, several of them responded by saying a university teacher had made a significant difference in their lives.

Later, back at 3M Canada's head office in London, Ontario, John Myser knew he was on to something special. He had a vision to recognize exceptional teachers for making a difference by creating the "Stanley Cup of Teaching."

So John asked his assistant, Roy Duxbury, to solicit proposals from the university community. Duxbury approached Doug Wright, President of the University of Waterloo, to organize a conference for engineers, with the help of Chris Knapper, Director of the TRACE Office. The idea was eventually passed the idea on to a group of Southern Ontario instructional developers who were becoming the embryonic core of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

It didn't take long for Alan Blizzard, Mei-Fei Elrick, and Dale Roy to generate a series of proposals for 3M Canada. One of the proposals included bringing together outstanding teachers to a retreat, under the guidance of a facilitator. It also included another radical concept: equal recognition for teaching excellence *and* for leadership in teaching.

## Men in Dark Suits Are Impressed

The Society didn't expect the proposal to be approved, especially after several 3M representatives showed up in suits at the 5th annual STLHE Conference in Ottawa and saw faculty in shorts and t-shirts, gathered informally, playing games and encouraging active learning with utter abandon. Chris Knapper, the President of STLHE at the time, recalls: "my heart sank ... I thought this was definitely the end of that idea."

Instead, John Myser saw something completely different—a progressive group of teachers brushing cobwebs away from the Ivory Tower—so the company adopted the idea of lifetime fellowships.

Chris Knapper ran the 3M Program from Waterloo in 1986, and then handed it to Dale Roy, who nurtured it at McMaster for the next fourteen years. The overall quality of the program is a tribute to Dale's contributions, from selection to celebration. His skill at coordinating a growing community of exceptional teachers from all disciplines was appreciated not only by STLHE, but also by two exceptional stewards of the Program within 3M Canada.

Mike Calhoun was one of these champions. In a large corporation like 3M Canada, Mike had seen many sponsorships come and go. He ensured support year after year and was present when we were. With a twinkle in his eye, Mike was the face of 3M Canada welcoming and connecting us.

The second champion was Greg Snow. Greg has been with the 3M Program since its inception and personifies our defining history.

## A Think Tank Gives Birth

By 2001, the Fellowship had grown to 150 members. There was a need for the Fellows to organize and share collectively, just as they had done as a cohort each year at Montebello. So, in 2003, despite the SARS epidemic, the Fellows gathered in Toronto for a Think Tank. As a result, dozens of regional and national teaching and learning initiatives were created. To harness this energy, the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows was formed, and Alex Fancy was elected as Chair.

During this event, we were introduced to Sue Romyn from 3M Canada. Sue and Alex became the face of what many have described as the ultimate in public-private partnership. In one grass roots initiative, the Fellows contributed to a published collection of stories on *Making a Difference / Toute la Difference*. The narratives comprising *Silences* soon followed, because Ken Clarke from 3M Canada encouraged and supported the publication long before it had taken the shape it did.

The Council is now in its seventh year, and is currently chaired by Ron Smith. The entire Executive marvels at the respect and trust 3M Canada continues to place in us, and the entire Fellowship is indebted to the company for its ongoing generosity and leadership.

## Memories of Montebello

Each year, the 3M Retreat at Montebello brings together ten inspired teachers. They mingle, chat, share and dream together over exceptional meals and fine wine. The big deal is these men and women are crazy about teaching, and nothing can stop them talking about it.

Their passion for student learning extracts the air from a room and replaces it with pure oxygen. Ideas rise to the surface, outlines take shape, and action plans emerge. Then another amazing thing happens—they are catapulted into the energy centre of a genuine fellowship, now 250-strong.

2009 Fellow, Hamzeh Roumani, expressed it best: "Like a flock of birds, now turning gracefully in concert, we shape and influence those around us. The teacher's impact multiplies immeasurably and infinitely."

Work gets done because it matters. Lives are changed, universities are affected, and students are transformed.

Myser and his entourage visited Montebello and saw the Fellows as he had imagined them. They really were the Champions he had hoped for in his vision more than a quarter of a century ago.

The 3M National Teaching Fellowship was a wildly original idea. It was conceived as the Stanley Cup of teaching; Maclean's magazine refers to it as Teaching's Nobel. To us, on the occasion of our silver jubilee, all of this makes perfect sense.



# EDC

## Educational Developers Caucus



It is my great pleasure and honour to be writing my first column as the new EDC Chair, and I want to acknowledge that, through the contributions of past Chairs, Teresa Dawson and Joy Mighty, and Vice-Chairs, Lynn Taylor, Alice Cassidy, and Trevor Holmes, I truly do “stand on the shoulders of giants.” It is because of their mentorship that I feel at all able to rise to the task ahead of me! While of course I feel some trepidation, I join an extraordinary executive in Ruth Rodgers, Secretary; Janice MacMillan, Treasurer; Jeanette McDonald, Vice-Chair (Communications); and our new Vice-Chair (Professional Development) Paola Borin. My warmest thanks to them and also to our membership for the kind welcome. I would be remiss in not also thanking Sylvia Avery for the ongoing wonderful support she provides for our work.

What an exciting year is ahead of us! Our ED resource is evolving and growing under the new guidance of Marla Arbach, who has done a fantastic job building on the past efforts of Cathy Baillie and Jennifer Jasper to create a blog for new and archived resources (see <http://edcresourcereview.blogspot.com/>). We’re looking forward to our annual conference at Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, February 23 (pre-conference), 24-25, 2011. Watch for further information at <http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/constituencies/edc/EDC%20Conference/2011.php>. We’ll be getting ready for another round of EDC grants <http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/constituencies/edc/Grants/index.php> and we’ll

also begin planning for the first of our institutes to provide professional development for both new and experienced developers.

The theme of this newsletter, *Exploring, Shaping, Knowing*, serves as a great motto for me as incoming EDC Chair. Taken in reverse order, *knowing* the EDC membership is my first priority, one I can only achieve by asking for input and hearing your ideas and goals. I’ll also be looking closely at the data collected in the recent STLHE survey of membership where it pertains to the EDC. Second, the executive and I will be working on *shaping* the direction for this next year and the future based on our Living Plan (see <http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/constituencies/edc/documents.php>; scroll down for the plan and overview) and EDC members’ additional suggestions. Furthermore, we’ll focus with members on *exploring* additional ways to enhance the collegial experiences and professional development of our members—both present and future.

Wishing you a wonderful start to the academic New Year!

**Nicola Simmons**  
EDC Chair, University of Waterloo  
[nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca)

## Educational Development Centre Database

A national team of researchers, funded by two Educational Developers Caucus grants, has compiled a database of Canadian Educational Development Centres. The thirty-nine guiding questions for data collection were derived from an extensive review of international educational development literature, and data were collected via websites and then verified and amended by centre directors. The database includes items such as institutional size, centre size, types of activities and programs offered, partnerships in the institution, etc.

The research team considers this to be a preliminary resource and expects to add to the database over the next year, but in the meantime, the database and accompanying notes can be viewed at <http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/constituencies/edc/resources/index.php>.

If your institution’s centre is not represented, please contact Nicola Simmons at [nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca). We have a great deal of data from centres that we still hope to verify and then post!

# Should a Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning and Teaching be Mandatory for Academics?



International column for HERDSA/POD/STLHE newsletters, July, 2010

**Geoffrey Crisp,**  
*HERDSA President*

David Gosling recently published an article in SEDA's (Staff and Educational Development Association) magazine *Educational Developments*<sup>1</sup> on the extent to which Post Graduate Certificates in Higher Education learning and teaching (PgCerts) have become mandatory requirements for many new university academics in the UK. The UK has been particularly pro-active in having policies requiring completion of a PgCert as a condition of continuing academic employment. In Australia, most higher education institutions (HEIs) would have a mandatory professional development requirement for new academics, and would provide access to a formal qualification equivalent to the UK PgCert, although only a small number of institutions have made completion of the PgCert a requirement for continuing employment. Many Australian HEIs provide free or subsidised access to PgCerts to a limited number of their own academics. David pointed out that a number of countries have embraced the idea of mandatory professional development for new academics, including the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Japan and Sri Lanka. While other countries, such as the USA, have been reluctant to move down this path. In the USA, more significant emphasis is placed on the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) rather than newly appointed Faculty, as GTAs are seen as the pool from which future academics will be drawn. David posited that the move towards embedding a mandatory component of professional development for the teaching component of an academic's practice probably has more to do with government regulatory requirements on HEIs than representing a recognition of the inherent merits of PgCert programs.

The nature of PgCert programs can vary between countries and indeed between institutions; in the UK, SEDA plays a key role in maintaining standards around these programs through a formal recognition process; the Professional Development Framework provides recognition for the professional development programs of UK higher education institutions and the individuals who complete those programs. In Australia, there is currently no formal national recognition process for academics' professional development, although informal benchmarking frequently takes place through the activities of the Foundations Colloquium<sup>2</sup>

and CADAD (Council Australian Directors of Academic Development).<sup>3</sup>

The move towards mandating professional training in educational practice through PgCerts includes a recognition that completing a PhD in a core discipline and undertaking discipline-based research is not necessarily the most appropriate training for teaching, especially when that teaching might involve large classes with students from diverse cultures or social backgrounds. The issue of standards and the quality of teaching in HEIs is sometimes a controversial topic, especially when the discussion includes stakeholders outside of the specific discipline being investigated. How is teaching quality measured in HEIs and what would an acceptable standard of educational practice look like in each discipline? In Australia, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)<sup>4</sup> has commissioned a major program of consultations with the higher education sector in order to define academic standards in the disciplines in preparation for the work of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. These standards will include higher education learning and teaching. The ALTC has already sponsored a major project on Teaching Quality Indicators and the project proposed a set of indicators for recognising and rewarding quality teaching.<sup>5</sup>

We have become accustomed to the almost universal use of student feedback as a proxy measure of teaching quality, and at the same time, we have witnessed research questioning the ability of this feedback to quantify teaching quality validly and reliably. Some institutions have reworded their documentation around the use of student feedback to make a clear distinction between students' perceptions or experiences of the teacher and the teaching environment, and the evaluation of the teacher or the teaching environment, which is usually undertaken by peers. Peer evaluation has become more popular, but mostly for formative or developmental purposes, and more reluctantly for the summative purposes of promotion and annual reviews. The main issues still preventing a more widespread adoption of summative peer review include the need to offer acceptable professional training for peer reviewers to ensure validity, reliability and fidelity within

evaluations and the workload issues for both reviewer and reviewed.

Despite all this activity in "professionalising" higher education teaching, a question still posed by senior administrators is whether there is a direct, causal correlation between academics completing a PgCert and the quality of their teaching? I am sure all universities that offer PgCerts can provide evidence that there is a positive correlation for their programs; the bigger question is how we explain the high quality teaching delivered by a large number of academics who have never completed a PgCert. Completing a PgCert is no guarantee that high quality teaching will be the result, yet the majority of academics who do complete a PgCert will likely apply their new or affirmed learnings to their educational practices. Even academics who have not completed a PgCert can be positively influenced by their own readings of the educational literature and the activities of their colleagues who are engaged in the scholarship of learning and teaching. Should we expect all academics to complete a PgCert or should we require all academics to provide evidence of professional development that has enhanced the quality of their educational practice? Ignoring professional development associated with one's practice is not an acceptable path for academics, so the issue may be more about finding appropriate mechanisms by which to offer a range of development or enhancement activities that cover the breadth of academics' needs, rather than mandating one type of activity that will not necessarily cover all the aspects of an academic's work.

Geoffrey Crisp is the President of HERDSA. He is the Director of the Centre of Learning and Professional Development and Director, Online Education at the University of Adelaide. Contact: [geoffrey.crisp@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:geoffrey.crisp@adelaide.edu.au)

<sup>1</sup> Gosling, D. (2010). *Educational Developments*, SEDA, Issue 11.2; <http://www.seda.ac.uk/publications.html>

<sup>2</sup> Foundations Colloquium; <http://www.flinders.edu.au/teach/foundations/colloquia/>

<sup>3</sup> CADAD; <http://www.cadad.edu.au>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.altc.edu.au/standards>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.altc.edu.au/teaching-quality-indicators>

## Book Review - Green Guide #10

# The Portfolio Process

Herteis, Eileen, M. and Nicola Simmons.  
(2010) *The Portfolio Process*. STLHE Green Guides for Teaching , #10.

**Roger Moore**  
STLHE Newsletter Co-Editor

Eileen M. Herteis and Nicola Simmons have offered readers of STLHE Green Guide 10, entitled *The Portfolio Process*, a remarkably detailed account of what it means to be a committed teacher at the university level, and indeed at any level. They do so with a careful revision of pedagogical theory which is then applied to actual teaching situations. At all stages, readers are invited to put down the Green Guide and to reflect on their current readings. The reflections can be based on the readers' own experiences, on a set of questions for the readers to answer, or else on the relationship between theoretical text and practical teaching situation. Indeed, reflection and analysis is at the centre both of the portfolio process (for teachers and learners) and of the methodology applied by the authors to the teaching – learning situation.

The book begins with a definition of the learning portfolio and of its potential benefits (pp. 9-14). This opening section also includes a table (p. 14) that focuses on the contrasts between traditional assessments (isolated facts and skills in single assessment, acquisition of knowledge, what is learned, de-personalized knowledge outside student, instructor chosen benchmarks), and knowledge that is acquired through the learning portfolio process (facts and skills integrated over time, analysis of value of knowledge, how learning is valuable, personalized knowledge integrated with self, student chosen benchmarks). The authors' ability to reach out beyond the portfolio process itself, as demonstrated in this opening section, ensures both the readability of the book and its price-

less reflections on the teaching process itself.

"Section 2: Portfolios as a Reflective Process" (pp. 15-24) include three moments (pp. 19, 23, 24) when readers are again invited to put down the book and think about what they are reading. This section also emphasizes the importance of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (p. 16) and it is this interface between theory, reflection, and practical experience that is so critical.

"Section 3: Portfolios and Assessment" (pp. 25-30) applies Bloom's taxonomy (p. 29) and its revisions to the learning process as demonstrated within portfolio construction. This is an extremely useful review of how the learning and teaching process may be conceived by the individual teacher. "Section 4: Evolution of a Portfolio Assignment" (pp. 31-39) is a very practical section, with some excellent examples, on the construction of portfolios. More important, perhaps, it asks readers to evaluate their own assessment process and again there are two "put the book down" moments (pp. 33, 38) for reader reflection.

"Section 5: Additional Considerations" (pp. 41-50) demonstrates, again with practical examples, the wonderful variety and range of work that is possible within a presented portfolio, be the presentation electronic or textual. Indeed, the potential for multi-media in online portfolios is tremendous. However, one word of warning: in the same way that a book should not be judged merely by its cover, the learning portfolio should be judged on the basis of its contents, analysis, and ability to

provoke reflection. While it may be tempting to make a judgement based merely on the cover photo, this should never be done.

"Section 6: Conclusion (pp. 51-52)" summarizes briefly the advantages that portfolios present, and it ends with a powerful statement on teaching and learning by portfolio: "the portfolio process enriches learning for students and for their teachers. When teachers do this—when you do this—you cannot escape engaging in scholarly teaching and its enduring quest for improvement" (p. 52). It is this "enduring quest for improvement" that comes through so strongly throughout this teaching guide and, in the opinion of this reviewer, *The Portfolio Process* by authors Eileen M. Herteis and Nicola Simmons is a *tour de force* that should be compulsory reading for all teachers at the university and college levels.



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## Teaching & Learning Rhythms: Tools to Enhance Student Engagement

Presented by: Alex Fancy

**Event Date: 10/14/2010**  
**Time: 12:00 pm Central Time**

In this online seminar, multiple teaching award winner Alex Fancy will train professors and instructors in how to capture that elusive flow when teaching seems effortless and students are excited and eagerly involved in learning. Participants will also receive a brief white paper outlining the theory behind this recommended approach to teaching, along with 100 questions for self-assessment of your teaching performance.

**This video online seminar will cover:**

- Ways to resolve ongoing issues of "flow" in the classroom
- Finding the right balance between information and reflection, repetition and variation, and low and high energy in your classroom
- Engaging students as "co-managers" of learning
- Why rhythm and balance are essential to shaping classroom communities
- Ways to manage a disengaged student
- Working with natural ebbs and flows in the teaching dynamic

## Connect Learning Across Courses with Curriculum Mapping

Presented by: Peter Wolf

**Event Date: 11/3/10**  
**Time: 12:00 pm Central Time**

In this seminar Peter Wolf will explain what curriculum maps are and how they can be used to improve the overall educational program at your institution.

**This audio online seminar will cover:**

- Getting started with curriculum mapping
- Using cross-curriculum development to enhance and reinforce learning
- Three main types of mapping: structure, alignment and evidence
- High-tech and no-tech ways to map curricula
- How program outcomes can be used to guide curriculum decisions
- Incorporating structure, outcomes and evidence into mapping activities
- Enhancing curriculum mapping with technology

## Call for Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your articles, book reviews, photos, and other teaching and learning news to the co-editors for consideration in the STLHE Newsletter.

Submissions must be in accordance with STLHE Newsletter Writing Guidelines. See Newsletter section of STLHE website for details.

If you have a recent publication you would like to have reviewed, or if you have suggestions regarding the new format of the Newsletter, please contact the co-editors. We would like to hear from you!

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## Electronic Discussion

The STLHE electronic mail forum, active since October 1988, supports the exchange of opinions, ideas and experiences concerning teaching and learning in higher education. To subscribe, contact the list coordinator: Russ Hunt, email [hunt@stu.ca](mailto:hunt@stu.ca) or visit Communication at [www.stlhe.ca](http://www.stlhe.ca).

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