

Final Report – EDC grants 2008 program

Project Title: The Faculty Development Literature: A Characterization of Practice and the Thinking Underpinning Practice

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Project Overview: The EDC funding was used to finish a literature review of the faculty development literature that was published 1994-2008. Our purpose for conducting this literature review was to examine the theories, assumptions and values that underpin development practices and to determine how these were similar to and different from our own. Thus a primary outcome of this project is the development of an analytic tool that others and we may use to analyze, evaluate and situate different educational development activities and programs. The reader may ask ‘why this is important?’ We would argue that such understanding is key to intellectual growth for educational developers themselves and to the growth of innovative practice and research in our field. This final report is organized according to the section in the EDC grant proposal entitled ‘**Activities to be completed**’.

1. Update found literature to include that from 2008

This aspect was completed in the Fall of 2008. Adding the 2008 literature to that already identified, our team identified (through reading paper abstracts and using broad inclusion/exclusion criteria developed by the team) over 1,000 papers in all that described faculty development practices and were possible inclusions for the literature review.

2. Finish reading and characterizing literature

Each of the papers identified (#1 above) was read by at least 2 readers and a decision was made as to a match with our more detailed inclusion/exclusion criteria; if included, notes were taken to document details about the papers and a ‘Characterization Framework’ was filled out (see Appendix 1). In the end, we retained 140 papers in our literature review drawn from the published peer-review literature and from the ‘grey literature.

The characterization framework grew from our realization that elements of thinking about academic development and the academic development practice often clustered together and were evident in descriptions of a particular initiative or process – we named these clusters and referred to them as “broad characterizations’. Through the review process, we continually refined the elements under each broad characterization. We also identified additional broad characterizations as they emerged. Essentially, we followed an emergent coding process (Huberman, 2002) as used in the analysis of qualitative data. Once the broad characterizations and the associated elements appeared stable, the characterization framework was applied to each included paper. In the end, we had seven characterizations as follows:

- **Skills-focused** (*Teaching improvement requires acquisition/enhancement of observable teaching skills and techniques*)

- **Approach focused** (*Teaching improvement requires mastery of a particular integrated approach to teaching*)
- **Process focused** (*Teaching improvement requires change in the individual teacher's conceptions of teaching and learning*)
- **Disciplinary focused** (*Teaching improvement requires strong pedagogical knowledge of the discipline being taught*)
- **Institutional focus/dissemination focus** (*Teaching improvement requires a coordinated plan on the part of an institution, faculty or department*)
- **Scholarship of teaching** (*Teaching improvement requires individual research into teaching practice*)
- **Community of Practice** (*Teaching improvement requires faculty to share their expertise in their subject area, teaching, and curriculum development*)

Under each broad characterization, we identified between five and nine elements (see Appendix 1). Elements refer to the evaluation of the activity/process, the literature cited and specifics about the program design. It is important to note that we do not consider any characterization better than or more evolved than any other – these characterizations are meant to be descriptive and explanatory of academic development work.

We found that most papers had a single or primary focus and could be described under a single broad characterization in our framework. Sometimes however, a paper had an identifiable focus but we found evidence of one or more elements listed under other broad characterizations.

3. Reread and review all papers included in the review because the characterizations have emerged over time and earlier papers may not have been considered in light of all aspects associated with all characterizations.

Once the Characterization Framework (i.e., no other revisions were made as we read), the team members went back and reread papers that were characterized prior to the establishment of the final version of the Characterizations Framework (Appendix 1) and made the changes, if necessary. This aspect was completed in late spring of 2009.

4. Decide how to represent the review (narrative, Tables, Figures etc.).

We have decided to show the findings of our literature review in a number of ways and have not completed all aspects of this. We are submitting with this report the Excel table we have developed which lists the literature by author and date and indicates how each paper was characterized in our framework.

5. Dissemination of findings: Conference papers and published papers

We have not gotten as far with this as anticipated due to C. Amundsen's medical leave this Fall. Included with this final report is the paper proposal accepted for presentation at the Society for Research in Higher Education (8-10 Dec. in Wales, UK). There will also be a proposal to present our findings at STLHE in June 2010. As well, and the final product of this research, will be a paper submitted for publication in Jan/Feb 2010.

Budget allocation:

As indicated in the EDC grant proposal, all of the \$2500. was spent for a Research Assistant (Alicia Kronberg, MA student at SFU) for the following tasks.

1) Search for relevant literature from 2008; 2) Maintain and update the RefWorks database; 3) Read selected papers and meet regularly with Cheryl Amundsen (the second reader) to make decisions about inclusion in the review and fit with in the characterization format; 4) Consult about data representation.

115 hours of RA time @ \$20.00/hour = \$2300.

8% benefits = \$200.

Total requested - \$2500.

The \$2500. grant was placed in a SFU research account number 25-170238 and paid out to Alicia Kronberg over the last year.

Appendix 1 – Characterization Framework

RefWorks ID#:

Reader Name:

Characterization:

Author, date, journal:

An article is categorized based on its PRIMARY EMPHASIS. The key ideas that primarily characterize and differentiate the categories are listed at the beginning of each category:

Skills-focused (<i>Teaching improvement requires acquisition/enhancement of observable teaching skills and techniques</i>)	
	Emphasis on observable behaviours
	Emphasis on developing teaching techniques
	Evaluation of success is based on change in student perception (or documentation of another) of discrete observable skills.
	Largely generic, not discipline based
	Draws on relevant literature (e.g. course evaluation literature)
Approach focused (<i>Teaching improvement requires mastery of a particular integrated approach to teaching</i>)	
	Emphasis on learning to use a particular methodology /strategy/approach
	There is integrity, coherence, integration in the blending of the actions that make up the approach
	There is a theoretical, ideological or empirical basis for the approach
	Measured by how well/consistently the approach is adopted by teachers who have been trained in the approach (e.g. consistency, frequency of uptake, evidence of approach)
	Design of training models the approach being taught
Process focused (<i>Teaching improvement requires change in the individual teacher's conceptions of teaching and learning</i>)	
	Assumption is that reflection leads to conceptual change which in turn leads to change in teaching behaviour.
	Design of activity is to prompt and support individual reflection
	Draws on reflection literature (e.g., Schon, Mezirow...) or conceptions (Ramsden, Entwistle etc.)
	Includes a collegial element to aid individual reflection
	Evaluation is of individual change at conceptual or action level or both (e.g. a qualitative nature and comes from interviews, narratives, change on perception of teaching scales)
Disciplinary focused (<i>Teaching improvement requires strong pedagogical knowledge of the discipline being taught</i>)	
	Assumption that teaching will be different (at least in part) depending on the discipline.

	Rationale is based on the structure of knowledge in different disciplines
	Rationale is based on academics identifying best with disciplinary culture, knowledge and practices
	Disciplinary understanding is the foundation on which to link/build knowledge of teaching and learning
	Activities are characterized by scholarly discussion
	Evaluation is based mostly on reflection – ability to articulate why you are doing what you are doing

Institutional focus/dissemination focus (*Teaching improvement requires a coordinated plan on the part of an institution, faculty or department*)

	Infrastructure based on strategic planning
	Assumes that thing to be diffused is usable throughout the department, faculty or institution that is the focus of diffusion.
	Evaluation is about success of the diffusion, with teaching development as one aspect
	Top down approach
	Includes focus on human resources development
	Draws on the literature of change and organizational change

Scholarship of teaching (*Teaching improvement requires individual research into teaching practice*)

	Includes institutional plan for teaching development through Scholarship of T&L (SoTL) approach
	Instructors choose the topic of their SoTL project
	Evidence of effectiveness is provided at the institutional level of the initiative
	Evidence of effectiveness is provided at the level of the individual SoTL project
	Collegial element to SoTL project design, implementation or analysis.
	Draws on SoTL literature

Community of Practice (*Teaching improvement requires faculty to share their expertise in their subject area, teaching, and curriculum development*)

	Faculty development work is peer-based
	Work is distributed in nature, not hierarchical
	Work does not rely on others outside of the unit
	Self-organizing initiative
	Peer-to-peer feedback (multiple ways of getting/giving feedback)
	Does not require formal evaluation of impact, but faculty participation suggests value
	Involves consultation with academic developers
	Involves mentoring among community members

	Focus of activity is chosen by the group
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