

Educational Developers Caucus Grant 2015 - Proposal

Title

A Framework and Comprehensive Resource for Building the Capacity of Educational Developers

Contact information

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Project Mini-Description

We will establish a formal, cross-Centre mentorship network between the staff of two Educational Development units at Ontario Colleges. The resulting community-building activities, meeting schedules and formats, guiding questions and reflection templates will be collated into a virtual handbook for inter-institutional, network-based mentorship to be shared with the EDC community.

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Project Full Description

Over the past 20 years, the scope of influence for Teaching Centres has expanded rapidly, and with it the number of educational developers (ED) employed at post-secondary institutions (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach, 2006). ED staff play critical roles in ensuring institutional success, being called upon to lead initiatives and craft policy in areas such as technology-enabled learning, curriculum development, and the SOTL (McDonald & Stockley, 2008; Dawson, Britnell & Hitchcock, 2009). Within Centres, EDs are assuming varied roles each requiring a unique set of competencies (Dawson, Britnell & Hitchcock, 2009).

Given the expansion of the profession and the evolving role of EDs as change agents, the EDC acknowledged a need for greater mentorship at all levels. In 2013, a working group explored models for ED mentorship resulting in an emerging body of scholarship (EDC Website, 2015; Timmermans, 2013) and the development of a number of valuable mentorship resources (Mentor Map – Dawson and Dawson, 2014; ED Competency Matrices – Rodgers, 2013; ED Competencies Self-Assessment – Dawson, 2015). The time is ripe to draw these resources together to inform a systematic, comprehensive mentorship strategy for EDs.

Many of the tools developed through the EDC working group are predicated on a Network-based mentorship framework (Roquemore, 2013). Network mentorship does away with the more traditional one-on-one relationship in favour of a broad and deep mentoring network. Individuals are encouraged to ask themselves, “What do I need and who might best be able to offer this to me?” Once identified, these needs for professional development, emotional support, and substantive feedback may be met in multiple ways by multiple mentors (Roquemore, 2013). The Network mentorship framework has been applied to faculty and a number of guides help scaffold the creation of such mentorship matrices within the academy (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2009; Cartwright, 2008). ***To date, no similarly comprehensive handbooks have been developed to foster this form of mentorship between EDs.***

We propose the establishment of a formal, cross-Centre mentorship network between the staff of two ED units at Ontario Community Colleges. Through this process, we will develop a virtual ‘handbook’ to support inter-institutional, network-based mentorship among EDs. The resulting community-building activities, meeting schedules and formats, guiding questions, reflection templates, and other tools will be collated, organized into a searchable resource and shared widely with the ED community.

Within the Ontario Community College system, collaboration typically happens within regions. Therefore, staff at Niagara College (Western Region) and St. Lawrence College (Eastern Region) do not have the opportunity to network and collaborate despite the fact that their colleges are of similar size and their ED units similarly structured. At the EDC conference in Winnipeg (February 2015), Natasha Hannon and Louise Chatterton Luchuk discovered the overlapping mandates of their newly established Centres. Upon returning to their home colleges, they scheduled monthly meetings to share resources and insights. This grant proposal extends the connection established between them in order to build the professional capacity of their ED staff.

Intended Outcomes/Deliverables

The intended outcomes of the Networked Mentorship project are four-fold: (1) to engage staff at two Ontario College Teaching Centres in a focused, inter-institutional mentorship network; (2) to apply Appreciative Inquiry to the design and evaluation of this project; (3) to expand the competencies of educational developers at NC and SLC; (4) to generate a body of resources which the ED community can use to initiate and sustain cross-institutional mentorship.

Rationale

The Networked Mentorship project and resulting Guide embody the EDC grant mandate by:

- (1) *Building Professional Capacity: Developing Job Skills* – This mentorship network will provide crucial orientation to staff new to educational development, the college system, and/or their role within NC or SLC. The Networked Mentorship project will advance the work of each Centre by encouraging the sharing of processes, programs, and resources developed at each institution separately in order to refine practices and build on each other's successes.
- (2) *Engaging our Communities; Building Resources* – Staff at two ED units will engage in a year-long mentorship process. The participants will document their activities and reflections, compiling these into a Mentorship Guide to help other Centres broker similar inter-institutional arrangements.
- (3) *Organizational Development; Facilitating Change* - This endeavor helps ED staff to critically examine barriers to and levers for change at each of the participating institutions. The two Units will be able to work strategically, sharing approaches, rationales, and guiding documents to manage key initiatives and to respond to the evolving mandates of their Colleges.
- (4) *Developing Leadership Skills; Administrative/Management Skills* – The co-applicants will be applying best practices in mentorship, building key skills in the management of ED staff. The ED staff will gain a greater awareness of current and upcoming trends in post-secondary education, expanding their visions for the future of teaching and learning at their home institutions. The Mentorship Guide will serve as a valuable resource for managers and aspiring leaders in the ED profession.

Timeline

This initiative will be completed between June 2015 and June 2016, culminating in the publication of a Mutual Mentorship Guide for Educational Developers.

- (1) June – August 2015: Conduct a scan of existing mentorship literature and resources.
- (2) September 2015: Coordinate the first, two-day meeting of ED staff from Niagara College at SLC. Conduct an Appreciative Inquiry on-site at SLC to design the elements of an ideal inter-Centre mentorship program.
- (3) October 2015 – April 2016: Arrange for regular inter-Centre meetings (both large-group and one-on-one) via web-conferencing. Develop and refine templates, guiding questions, suggested readings, and reflections for the Mentorship Guide.

- (4) April – June 2016: Collate and publish the Networked Mentorship Guide for Educational Developers in an on-line format that will be licensed under the Creative Commons.
- (5) Late May 2016: Coordinate a closing, two-day face-to-face meeting of Educational Development staff from SLC at Niagara College. Use the Appreciative Inquiry framework to conduct a collective reflection on the past year and gather narratives regarding the impact of the Mentorship initiative. Collaboratively review elements of the Mentorship framework and handbook.
- (6) June 2016: Present the Mentorship framework, guide and evidence of impact at STLHE.

Budget

Item (including any applicable taxes)

Travel to St. Lawrence College (5 staff from Niagara CAE)

Rental Car - \$100/day x 2 days = \$200

Fuel = \$200

Overnight Accommodation in Kingston (5 staff from Niagara CAE)

3 rooms x \$160/night x 1 nights = \$480

Meals in Kingston (5 staff from Niagara CAE)

\$250

Travel to Niagara College (8 staff from SLC)

Rental Car – 2 cars x \$100/day x 2 days = \$400

Fuel = \$400

Overnight Accommodation in Niagara (8 staff from SLC)

* NB: Shared accommodation where possible

6 rooms x \$160/night x 1 night = \$960

Meals in Niagara (8 staff from SLC)

\$400

In-Kind Contributions

Long Distance + Web Conferencing Fees

Staff time (Manager, Educational Developers) in support of the development of the Mentorship Framework and Virtual Handbook

Office Space; Materials + Supplies

Total amount requested from the EDC Grant Program = \$3000

References

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- Dawson, T. & D. Dawson (2014). *Growing our Own: Developing a Mentoring Framework for the Future of our Profession*. Workshop presented at the EDC Conference, Calgary, Alberta. Retrieved 11 April 2015 from <http://www.stlhe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Educational-Developers-Mentoring-Map.pdf>.
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- McDonald, J., and Stockley, D. (2008). Pathways to the profession of educational development: An international perspective. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 13(3), 213-218.
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Agreements

- I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the author(s).
- I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described below).