

2015 EDC Grants Program Application Form

1. Title

A Study Exploring How Canadian Teaching and Learning Centres Assess Their Work

2. Contact Information

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3. Project Mini-Description

There is general consensus that teaching and learning centres have a positive impact on promoting and supporting a culture that values teaching and learning, yet there is limited evidence on how centres assess their work. This project aims to explore approaches that centres take to assess their programs, services, initiatives, and consultations; and propose assessment frameworks.

4. Project Description

There is general consensus that teaching and learning centres have a positive impact on promoting and supporting a culture that values teaching and learning, yet there is limited evidence on how centres assess their work. At our centre we are at a stage of developing and redefining our scope of practice and articulating our philosophy to educational development. This includes identifying our activities, programming, and resources, and most importantly assessing the results of our work—be those outputs, outcomes and/or impact.

The focus for educational developers is now influencing and implementing strategic institutional teaching and learning initiatives rather than responding only to the learning needs of instructors. This paradigm shift has positioned educational developers with a unique role of becoming predictive in their work by anticipating and effecting institutional changes and new directions. In his paper, *Reflections on the changing nature of educational development*, Graham Gibbs called for a need for educational developers to recognize and assess their own activities in a different light.

Not to mention, launching and sustaining teaching and learning initiatives requires time and resources, so there is obviously significant value in knowing which of

those are successful and which require further improvement or perhaps need to be discontinued. In times of increasing financial constraint and limited resources, it becomes critical that centres provide clear evidence of the impact and value of their initiatives. Dee Fink in 2013 noted that teaching and learning centres “need to understand how well they are supporting this goal of [institutional] self-transformation and how well they are self-transforming themselves” (p. 47). Fundamental to understanding how centres are self-transforming themselves and what indicators they use to inform future practice, is exploring the approaches that centres take to assess their work. The Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo has already developed an assessment framework (STLHE pre-conference program, 2015). Do other centres have similar categories to evidence their impact? What data are they collecting to assess their activities, programs, initiatives, and consultations? What do their evaluation forms look like? The main question guiding this research is: *How do centres assess the impact of their services and programming?*

The outcome, at the end of the one-year project, is to have a comprehensive analysis of assessment models that Canadian teaching and learning centres currently have in place. Another outcome is to discuss best practices and develop frameworks for assessing various components of our work through a Think Tank activity. Thus, we aim to:

- Use a collaborative process to explore approaches that centres are currently taking to assess their programs, services, initiatives, and consultations; and
- Propose frameworks for assessment.

This study is informed by several models developed by authors such as Chalmers and Di Gardiner (2015), Gilbert and Gibbs (1999), Guskey (2000), Kreber and Brook (2001), Stes, Clement, and Van Petegem (2007), and Kirkpatrick (2008). The approach we will take is to conduct an environmental scan of centres in Canada to find out what is typically assessed and how. For this purpose, a survey will be developed and administered to Canadian teaching and learning centres. We also intend to collect artefacts and thematically analyze those. Addressing this component of the research will be the focus of this study. However, we will, to some extent, be able to propose frameworks for assessing centres’ work.

This research connects to several themes of the EDC living plan. By assessing the work that we do, will help us *Build Professional Capacity* and *Develop Leadership Skills*. We need to recognize those initiatives that are successful, celebrate and communicate those, and ultimately assess their impact. This project is not a solitary endeavour. We aim to *Engage our Community* through a Think Tank with centres facing similar issues to brainstorm, discuss, share and develop some best practices and appropriate assessment of teaching and learning processes, practices and programs for the purpose of enhancing the *Teaching and Learning Quality*. Findings from this inquiry will be disseminated through publications (IJAD; CJSOTL), and conference presentations (STLHE 2016 conference, EDC 2015 conference; and ICED).

Added post-review: I will submit a summary to the EDC community to be posted on their website.

Added post-review:

- As indicated in the proposal, in addition to the EDC theme of engaging our community, this study addresses Building Professional Capacity and Developing Leadership Skills, by recognizing those initiatives that are successful, celebrating and communicating those, and ultimately assessing their impact.
- The goal of the study is not to identify assessment frameworks that centres have in place but to explore how centres assess their work and use those findings to develop frameworks.
- The survey will be administered online via the STLHE listserv.
- Artefacts will be searching the centres web sites for any documents that might refer to assessment of their work.
- The survey findings will be used to host a Think Tank at the STLHE 2016 conference and get feedback on proposed assessment frameworks
- Chalmers and Di Gardiner is already cited in the proposal and I will add articles that were recently published in Studies in Educational Evaluation.

Study Timeline:*June-August 2015*

- Recruit an Educational Development Associate
- Conduct a literature review
- Design the survey
- Submit ethics application

September-December 2015

- Refine the survey based on input from the ethics process
- Prepare and submit interim report to EDC
- Administer the survey

January 2016

- Conduct a preliminary analysis of the survey data
- Start a thematic analysis of the artefacts

February 2016

- Present preliminary results to the EDC annual conference

March-May 2016

- Complete data analysis

June 2016

- Use the survey findings to host a Think Tank at the STLHE 2016 conference

Added post-review: Our main objective is to explore approaches that centres are currently using to assess their programs and we will present what those are by the end of this project June 15, 2016. I agree with reviewer 2 that due to time constraints we might not get to the second desired outcome of proposing assessment frameworks.

5. Budget

Item (including any applicable taxes)	Cost
Salaries	2750.00
One Educational Development Associate (EDA) – a contract graduate student position	
110 hours at \$25 per hour	233.00
plus	
Benefits	
\$25 per hour x 8.5%= 2.12 x 110 hours	
Total Costs	2983.00
Less matching funding obtained from other sources	0.00
Less in-kind contributions	
Total amount requested from the EDC Grant Program	2983.00

6. 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).

References

Cilliers, F. J., & Herman, N. (2010). Impact of an educational development programme on teaching practice of academics at a research-intensive university. *International Journal for Academic Development, 15*(3), 253-267.

Gibbs, G. (2013). Reflections on the changing nature of educational development. *International Journal for Academic Development, 18*(1), 4-14.

Gilbert, A. & Gibbs, G. (1999). A proposal for an international collaborative research programme to identify the impact of initial training on university teachers. *Research and Development in Higher Education, 21*, 131-143.

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Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1998). *Evaluating training programs: The four levels* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

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